

THE BLACK STALLION

based on the novel

by
Walter Farley

This draft:

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PLEASE NOTE:

The first 29 pages of this draft are intact from an earlier draft. They include the boat and island sequences.

After page 29 begins a totally revised draft of all the sequences to be shot in Toronto. Page and scene numbers are consecutive, however, they start from number 1 again, as though a separate script. The production board and progress reports for Toronto shooting will be based on these numbers.

THE BLACK STALLION

It is 194⁷~~9~~.

1

EXT. ARABIAN SEA - DAY

The tramp steamer "Drake" knifes through the Arabian Sea, westward bound in calm water.

2

INT. CABIN - DAY

In their cabin aboard the "Drake" Alec Ramsey (a shy, somewhat coddled boy of 12) and his father Edwin Ramsey III (a gentle, soft-spoken, bespectacled archaeologist in his mid-forties) are carefully unpacking a box of ancient artifacts from a recent dig.

The cabin is crowded with many such boxes--and with several slatted crates containing heroic sculptures.

Alec's father removes several clay pots from the box, catalogues them on his chart, then gently lifts a small bronze horse--blackened with age--out of the box. He turns it in his hand, admiring its beauty.

FATHER

Who knows...maybe this is old Bucephalus himself.

ALEC

Bucephalus?

FATHER

Alexander's horse. Alexander the Great. The boy who conquered the world.

Alec reaches for the bronze horse.

ALEC

Tell me.

EXECUTIVE CREDITS ROLL AS:

Alec's father pushes his glasses up on his forehead and reaches for his pipe, packing it with his finger.

FATHER

As the story goes...there was this horse. A black horse. Black as six feet down a bear's throat....

Alec giggles as his father lights his pipe.

FATHER

And powerful. So powerful no one could ride him...though everybody in Macedonia tried...the men tried, the women tried, the children tried...then the dogs tried, and the cats, and the chickens....

ALEC

(giggling)

Father!

FATHER

(growing serious)

One boy held back...watching, waiting...coming to love this great black horse from a distance.... And the horse watched him, too.

ALEC

This was Alexander.

FATHER

(nods)

Alexander.... Then, after everyone else had been thrown by the horse, Alexander, still just a boy, walked out and mounted him.

ALEC

He could ride him?

FATHER

The only one who could. It was as if the horse had been waiting...waiting just for him. From that moment on they were inseparable. They were like one...the boy and the horse.... Together they led an

army against the great Persian
Empire...and conquered it....

Alec, absorbed in the story, can hear the distant sounds of
charging horses in battle.

FATHER

They fought and conquered hostile
tribes all the way to India,
3,000 miles from home...as far as
the world went then....

(takes a deep breath)

That's where Bucephalus died.
Alexander built a glorious city
there and named it Bucephala...
in honor of the great black horse
that had carried him across the
world.... And then Alexander
himself died.

Alec thinks a long moment.

ALEC

That's sad. That's a sad story.

FATHER

(warmly)

Sad?... Maybe. But just think....

(movingly)

What a wonderful thing...a
friendship like that....

Alec stares at the bronze horse, then nods, understanding.

EXECUTIVE CREDITS END AS:

3

EXT. ARABIAN PORT - DAY

The "Drake" sails into a small Arabian port on the Red Sea.

4

EXT. ARABIAN PORT - DAY

Alec and his father lean against the ship's gunwale as the
"Drake" bumps against the landing, docking.

5

EXT. ARABIAN STREET - DAY

A huge swarm of excited, chattering natives moves down the

street toward the landing, some enormous, unseen force from within violently jerking the swarm from one side of the street to the other.

The swarm is followed by an open limousine, an Arab (white turban, European clothes, obviously wealthy) waving a whip and cursing directions at the swarm from the back seat.

6

EXT. LANDING - DAY

Alec flinches as a sudden, shrill whistle fills the air and a mighty black horse, a white scarf blinding its eyes, erupts from the swarm, rearing, its forelegs striking out at the terrified natives who desperately cling to the ropes that hold it.

The Arab jumps out of the limousine and rushes at the horse, beating the raging animal with his whip, driving it toward the gangplank.

7

EXT. SHIP - DAY

Alec's father slowly takes his glasses off and hands them to Alec as the horse is pulled and driven up the gangplank, the Arab continuously lashing it across the hindquarters with his whip.

As the swarm passes, Alec's father reaches up and jerks the whip from the Arab and throws it into the water.

FATHER

(firmly)

No more.

The Arab glares at him. Alec's father glares back, no hint of weakness in his eyes. The Arab clenches his fists, then thinks better of it and moves on.

Alec exhales, relieved. His father reaches down for his glasses. Alec opens his hand: the glasses are bent out of shape.

ALEC

I guess I squeezed them.

His father leans over and pulls Alec close, patting his shoulder. Together they watch the natives drive the screaming, fighting horse across the deck.

8

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

It is night. Alec is lying on the top bunk, thoughtfully watching his father catalogue artifacts in the dim light of a desk lamp below.

ALEC

Father....

His father turns, looking up at him over the top of his glasses.

ALEC

(proudly)

I'm gonna tell Mother what you did.

FATHER

(softly)

We'll be glad to see her, won't we.... You go to sleep now. It's late.

They exchange smiles, and Alec turns over, bringing the bronze horse from under the sheets where he can stare at it.

9

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Alec wakes with a start. He turns his head, listening: from some distant place on the ship he can hear the Stallion kicking and screaming.

Alec looks over the bunk: his father is sleeping soundly below.

Alec listens again, the screams seeming to beckon him.

10

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Alec, wearing pajamas, skulks across the empty deck in the moonlight, following the Stallion's screams.

He hugs the walls, creeping toward a stateroom door in the distance.

11

EXT. STATEROOM DOOR - NIGHT

Alec squats down by the stateroom door: on the other side the Stallion is raging.

Alec carefully lifts the bar from the door, pushes the door open to a narrow crack and peeks inside, his eyes surveying the once luxurious stateroom: everywhere there is broken and scattered furniture, the carpet is ripped to shreds, huge holes have been kicked belly-high in the mahogany wall paneling.... And in the middle of the room, securely held by a dozen ropes tied to spikes driven into the floor, stands the Black Stallion, its body covered by a dripping sweat-foam lather, its eyes hate-filled and wide, its teeth bared and snapping at the ropes that bind it.

Alec, his eyes welling, watches the horse struggle a few moments, then sadly pulls the door shut.

12

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

It is morning. Alec hurries through the dining room, then plops himself down at a table where a couple is breakfasting. They look up, surprised.

ALEC

(his words running together)

Good morning my name is Alec Ramsey
I'm from Flushing New York may I
have some sugar...please?

The couple exchanges curious glances.

WOMAN

Certainly, young man... Our
name is Byers. Ovil and Ernest.
We're from....

But Alec has already dumped the entire bowl of sugar cubes into his pocket and moved on to the next table.

13

EXT. DECK - MORNING

Alec, his pockets bulging with sugar cubes, hurries through the sunning passengers on deck.

14

EXT. STATEROOM - DAY

Alec glances cautiously over his shoulder, then silently lifts the bar from the stateroom door.

15

INT. STATEROOM - DAY

The Stallion ceases struggling against the ropes as Alec, his eyes wide with fear, steps inside the stateroom.

For a long moment Alec and the Stallion stare at each other across the room, then Alec takes a handful of sugar cubes from his pocket and steps nervously toward the horse.

ALEC
(extends sugar cubes,
whispers)
It's sugar...see? Sugar for you,
boy....

The Stallion's ears prick forward as Alec, barely breathing, moves closer.

ALEC
(whispers)
Did they hurt you, boy?...
Did they hurt you?

Alec is within reach of the Stallion's mouth now. He stops, trying to smile through his fear, and slowly extends his trembling hand toward the horse.

The Stallion suddenly explodes into a screaming, struggling frenzy. Alec, startled, drops the sugar and turns, ready to run.... Instantly he is lifted high into the air by the Arab who has walked up behind him, unseen.

The Arab shakes him, cursing, then throws him rolling toward the door.

Alec sends a frightened glance over his shoulder and scampers out the door.

The Arab turns and kicks the sugar cubes beyond the Stallion's reach.

16
EXT. STATEROOM - DAY

The Arab emerges from the stateroom, bars the door and turns to leave. A waterbomb crashes down on his head, drenching him, knocking his turban sideways.

The Arab angrily glances up, catching just a glimpse of a running boy on the bridge above.

17
INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Alec is in his bunk, gently turning the bronze horse in his hand. Below, his father is cataloging artifacts as before.

And, from the distant stateroom, he can hear the sounds of the Stallion's continuing struggle.

Helpless, Alec squeezes his eyes shut and clutches the bronze horse to his chest.

18

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Outside, high winds roll clouds in front of the moon and push waves to huge swells.

19

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Lightning flashes, illuminating the cabin. The ship rolls violently, waking Alec's father with a start.

Again the cabin tilts: chairs slide across the floor; artifacts tumble off the desk, crashing to the floor.

Alec's father shakes his son awake.

FATHER

Alec! Alec!

Alec's eyes pop open. Lightning flashes again, illuminating his father's face in front of him: there is fear there.

The cabin tilts crazily as a huge wave slaps against the porthole. Alec, unconsciously holding the bronze horse, is thrown into his father's arms.

20

INT. PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

Alec (putting on a life jacket) and his father emerge from their cabin and make their way through the screaming, hysterical passengers in the flooded passageway.

21

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Alec and his father emerge from the stairway to the deck, shielding their faces with raised arms against the storm. A sailor joins them, motioning toward a lifeboat being lowered in the distance.

FATHER
(shouting to Alec)
The lifeboat...get to the
lifeboat!

Alec, afraid and confused, holds on to his father. His father kneels down, embraces his son, then motions to the sailor to help Alec to the lifeboat.

Alec glances over his shoulder as he is pulled away: his father is already helping other passengers out of the passageway.

They exchange a last look.

22

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Alec and the sailor make their way across the wind-swept deck toward the lifeboat. A shrill scream fills the air above the storm. Alec looks toward the stateroom, the door closed and barred.

There is a sudden explosion deep within the ship, and the ship lurches terribly. The sailor loses his grip on Alec and tumbles across the deck.

Alec crawls toward the stateroom.

23

EXT. STATEROOM - NIGHT

Alec lifts the bar from the stateroom door and flings it open. All sound is lost in a huge clap of thunder as the Stallion charges out the door, dragging ropes behind, then races across the deck, jumps the gunwale and disappears into the churning ocean.

24

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Alec gets to his feet, looking toward the lifeboat: the Arab is there, shoving people aside in his effort to climb aboard.

A huge wave sweeps over the deck, momentarily obscuring Alec's view. When he looks again, there is no one there...only the lifeboat hanging upside down from the ropes.

Alec, horrified, runs toward the passageway.

ALEC
(screaming)
Father!

Another wave rolls over the ship, washing Alec across the deck and into the sea. His life jacket is ripped off upon impact.

25
INT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Alec, unable to swim, thrashes wildly underwater, trying to regain the surface, the bronze horse still tightly held in his hand.

All about him the underwater is filled with sinking debris and drowned and drowning passengers (including the Arab?); then the Stallion, swimming, passes overhead, dangling ropes still tied to its neck and body.

Alec desperately reaches out as a rope glides by. He grabs it...dropping the bronze horse which turns ever so gently on its certain way to the bottom of the sea.

26
EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The Stallion swims away from the ship, battling the huge waves. Behind him Alec pops to the surface, clutching the rope. *

27
EXT. SHIP - NIGHT

Alec turns, looking back at the ship as the stern and propellers roll skyward, then slowly sink into the boiling ocean.

Alec screams with anguish: he and the Stallion are virtually alone on the vast, storm-tossed ocean.

28
EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The Stallion swims on through the calming sea, towing Alec behind.

29
EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Alec has tied a wide loop in the rope and thrown it over his shoulders, under his arms.

Suddenly the rope slackens. Alec, fear-struck, gulps his lungs full of air, and sinks.

Ahead, the Stallion treads water for a moment, sniffing the air, then changes directions and swims on, guided by some inner compass.

The rope pulls taut and Alec surfaces, coughing his lungs free of water.

30

EXT. OCEAN - MORNING

It is morning and still the Stallion swims on, towing an exhausted Alec behind.

31

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Alec turns his sun-blistered face skyward, squinting toward the noonday sun; then listlessly dips his head into the water, seeking relief.

The Stallion suddenly screams and Alec is jerked forward. Alec wipes the salt water from his eyes, shakes his head clear, and strains to look forward, beyond the swimming horse: there, no more than a quarter-mile away, is an island.

Alec frantically churns the water with his legs, trying to help.

32

EXT. BREAKERS - DAY

A hundred yards from the beach the Stallion swims into the breakers and he and Alec are tossed like corks, disappearing into the surf.

Then the Stallion's head reappears, inside the breakers now.

Screaming, the Stallion finds his footing in the shallow water and plunges toward the beach, jerking Alec through the surf behind him.

33

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The Stallion thunders out of the water onto the beach and races inland.

Alec is dragged along behind, his elbows and face plowing through the sand.

With his last energy Alec works the loop over his shoulders and ducks his head through, freeing himself. He rolls end over end as the Stallion races on, disappearing over a sand dune in the distance.

Alec tries to stand, then tumbles over face down on the sand, unconscious.

34

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

Alec lies motionless on the beach as the sun goes down.

35

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

It is morning. Alec wakes, trying to shield his swollen eyes from the brilliance of the rising sun.

He struggles to his feet and gazes bewildered out over the now gentle sea...then he sadly lowers his head, his eyes finding the Stallion's tracks in the sand.

36

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Alec, weakly dragging his feet in the sand, follows the tracks inland.

37

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Alec, panting, tops a small sand dune. From where he stands he can survey the tiny island: it is barren except for a few scrawny trees, bushes, and clumps of sun-parched grass. On the other side of the island huge rock cliffs jut straight up from the sea.

Alec walks on, following the Stallion's tracks.

38

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Alec stops, peering into the distance: there stands the Stallion, drinking from a small spring-fed pool surrounded by trees.

The Stallion (the ropes and harnesses now gone) brings its head alertly up as Alec half-runs, half-stumbles toward the pool... then it whistles, rears, and charges.

Alec falls back on the sand as the Stallion stops abruptly in front of him, rearing, violently tossing head and mane.

Alec stands up, then takes a few careful steps toward the pool. Again the horse charges, cutting him off, jealously guarding the water.

Alec, tears of frustration rolling down his cheeks, turns and staggers away.

39

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Alec has found a small berry bush and is cramming berries into his mouth, the juice streaming down his chin and chest.

40

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Alec, huddled against a tree near the beach, sadly stares out across the dark ocean. He is terribly alone.

41

EXT. POOL - MORNING

It is morning. The Stallion is grazing near the pool. A sudden noise brings its head up. It sniffs the air, then again grazes, satisfied its domain is safe.

Alec's head pops up behind a sand dune, then it disappears as he crawls from dune to dune, sneaking his way toward the pool.

Almost there he jumps to his feet and runs toward the spring, thirst getting the better part of caution.

The horse charges. Alec turns and runs, the Stallion nipping at his rear.

At last the Stallion stops. Alec runs a few more steps, then falls. The Stallion stands watching him.

ALEC

(desperately)

I'm just a little guy....
I won't drink much.

The Stallion stands his ground.

ALEC

Please....

The horse rears. Alec runs up the crest, then turns and stares back at the Stallion, wiping his tears, his frustration turning to anger.

ALEC
(defiantly)
Alright, horse!

42

EXT. ROCK CLIFF - DAY

Alec stands at the top of the rock cliff, staring down at the stoney shore where a greenish-yellow moss grows on the rocks at the water's edge.

43

EXT. ROCK CLIFF - DAY

Alec slowly climbs down the cliff, pausing midway to eagerly devour bird eggs from a nest in the rocks.

44

EXT. ROCK CLIFF - DAY

Alec gathers moss from the rocks at the base of the cliff; then looks toward the top of the cliff, an idea forming.

45

EXT. POOL - DAY

The Stallion jerks his head up from the pool.

ALEC
(shouting)
Hey! Hey!

It is Alec, standing on top of a sand dune in the distance, his hands behind his back.

ALEC
Look!... Look here, horse!

Alec brings a handful of moss from behind his back and begins munching on it, making faces and sounds as if it were the tastiest stuff ever.

The Stallion pricks its ears, watching intently. Alec turns and walks defiantly away.

ALEC
(over his shoulder)
None for you.

The Stallion watches Alec disappear over the dune, then paws the ground, clearly bothered.

46

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Alec is walking along the beach, gathering driftwood. He glances over his shoulder: the Stallion is watching him from a distant sand dune.

Alec drops his driftwood, digs some moss out of his pocket and chomps on it, further taunting the Stallion.

47

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Alec is frantically rubbing two sticks together. A wisp of smoke rises. Alec jams the sticks into a pile of dried grass and blows on it. A spark jumps, then a flame appears. Alec piles on kindling, building a fire.

Then he proudly leans back on his heels, warming his hands.

48

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Just beyond the firelight's reach stands the Stallion, watching silently.

49

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Alec is asleep on his back, the moonlight illuminating his face.

A moment later a shadow passes over him. Alec's eyes pop open: the Stallion is directly over him, rearing, screaming....

Alec turns to his left to roll out of the way: there is a coiled snake, inches from his face, ready to strike. Alec rolls the other way as the Black's hooves crash down on the serpent.

Again and again the Stallion rears and strikes the snake; then, nostrils trembling, he moves away into the darkness.

Alec lets his fear settle a moment, then pushes a stick through the torn earth, lifting the pulverized snake. Terrified, he slings it away, then stares into the darkness where the Stallion has vanished.

50

EXT. ROCK CLIFF - DAY

Alec is at the base of the cliff, gathering moss. A small rock tumbles down the side of the cliff.

Alec looks up: the Stallion is standing at the top of the cliff, watching him.

ALEC
(smiles, names the horse)
Good morning...Black.

51
EXT. POOL - DAY

Alec, carrying an armload of moss, climbs a sand dune and looks toward the pool where the Stallion is drinking.

Alec takes a deep, worried breath and walks slowly toward the horse, offering the moss.

ALEC
Look, Black...look what I've
got....

The Stallion dances nervously, then bares his teeth and charges.

Alec squeezes his eyes shut, not moving. The Stallion stops in front of him, tossing his head and mane, rearing.

Alec slowly opens his eyes.

ALEC
(manfully)
You're not gonna scare me off....

The Stallion paws the ground, settling.

Alec sets the moss down and takes a tentative step toward the pool. The Black rears. Alec grabs the moss.

ALEC
No water...no moss. Understand?

The Stallion eyes him. Alec drops the moss and eases toward the water. The Stallion watches, deciding. Alec takes another step...then another. The Stallion offers no protest.

Alec, mustering his courage, turns his back like a bullfighter, strides to the pool and, falling to his knees, drinks deeply.

Alec jumps into the pool, joyfully splashing water into his face, then looks toward the Stallion: the Stallion looks back, his mouth full of moss.

Alec smiles at him. They've made a trade.

52

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Alec, carrying a bucket made from a turtle shell, races down the beach trying to whack a fleeing crab with a long stick.

His hair is longer now, his skin tan. Weeks have passed since he and the Stallion first made their trade.

Alec chases the crab to its hole in the sand, falls to his knees and begins digging it out.

The Stallion walks up behind him and curiously sticks his nose into the bucket of crabs. One reaches up and pinches him.

The Stallion jerks his head back, turning over the bucket of crabs. They quickly scurry away in all directions.

Alec gives chase, whacking this way and that with his stick... then he freezes, his eyes growing wide: there, on the distant horizon, is a ship.

Alec, frantic with hope, begins waving his hands.

ALEC

(shouting)

Here! Here! Help us! We're here!

Alec races down the beach toward the rock cliff, the highest point on the island.

The Stallion stays on the beach, watching him run.

53

EXT. ROCK CLIFFS - DAY

Alec stumbles to the top of the cliff.

ALEC

(waving frantically)

Help! We're here! Help!...

But the ship sails on.

At last Alec sits down, bringing his knees up under his chin, barely able to contain his tears as he watches the ship disappear over the horizon.

After a moment the Stallion walks up behind him.

ALEC
(sadly)
They couldn't see us, Black....

54

EXT. POOL - DAY

Alec, carrying his bucket, and the Stallion return to the pool where Alec has built a lean-to from driftwood and branches.

55

EXT. POOL - NIGHT

It is night. Alec is sitting in front of his campfire at the pool's edge, sipping his crab soup and staring despondently into the fire.

In the distance he can hear the sound of the Stallion thundering along the beach.

56

EXT. ROCK CLIFF - MORNING

Alec (followed by the Stallion, both silhouetted against the rising sun) carries an armload of driftwood to the top of the cliff, drops it in a pile and goes back for more.

57

EXT. ROCK CLIFF - DAY

Alec drops a final armload of driftwood on the chest-high pile.

58

EXT. ROCK CLIFF - DAY

Alec, sweating, fashions two fat upright columns from the twigs, then begins weaving them together at the top.

We are too close to see what he is making.

59

EXT. POOL - DAY

Alec, on his knees, scoops mud from the bottom of the pool and loads it onto a sled he has fashioned from driftwood.

The Stallion watches curiously.

60

EXT. ROCK CLIFFS - DAY

Alec works mud against the wooden armature he has created, smoothing it with the flat of his hand against the twigs.

61

EXT. ROCK CLIFFS - DAY

Alec, mud-covered himself, ties his tattered shirt to the end of a long branch.

Behind him the Stallion is nervously snorting and pawing the ground. Alec smiles at him, then raises the branch upright and leans it against the structure he has created from twigs and mud.

Alec proudly steps back to admire his finished work: it is a huge mudman, facing the ocean, its arms outstretched...a beacon to any passing ship.

62

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

It is night. Alec and the Stallion walk along the beach.

The Stallion begins dancing on the sand, tossing his head, then he trots away in front of Alec.

Alec, laughing, runs after him. The Stallion breaks into a slow gallop. Alec runs faster, trying to catch up.

ALEC

(running)

Wait for me.... Hey...wait
for me....

The Stallion bolts forward, leaving Alec far behind.

Alec runs a few more steps, then falls, exhausted.

Alec sits up as the Stallion zooms past, running in the opposite direction.

Alec stands to watch, his eyes full of admiration for this magnificent animal, as the sound of its thundering hooves disappears down the beach in the distance.

63

EXT. POOL - MORNING

The Stallion trots out to meet Alec as he returns to the pool with an armload of moss.

ALEC
Hungry, huh?...all that running.

The Stallion begins eating out of his hands. Alec drops the moss, then pats the Stallion's neck, moving toward his side. The Stallion seems not to care.

Alec tries to lift the upper part of his body onto the horse's back. The Stallion shies.

ALEC
Whoa, Black...easy....

Alec tries again. And again the Stallion shies. Alec, frustrated, picks up the pile of moss, carries it over to the pool, and drops it under a small tree, all the while smiling innocently at the Black.

ALEC
Come on, boy.... You can eat here.

The Stallion hesitates, then walks over and begins eating again.

Alec climbs the tree, scoots out on a limb just above the Stallion's back, takes a deep breath, and drops down. The Stallion steps out of the way and Alec splashes into the pool.

The Stallion glances innocently at him, then continues eating.

64
EXT. POOL - MORNING

Again Alec is in the tree, directly over the Stallion. He swings down, landing on the Stallion's back.

For a moment he sits there, smiling proudly, then the Black gives one mighty pitch and Alec is thrown over his head and into the pool again.

Alec glares at the Stallion as he innocently chomps the moss, then splashes a handful of water at him.

65
EXT. BEACH - DAY

Alec walks toward the beach, carrying the moss. The Stallion, irritated, follows.

66
EXT. BEACH - DAY

Alec walks chest-deep into the water, then turns and offers the moss to the Stallion on the beach.

ALEC

Want it, boy?... You'll have to come and get it.

The Stallion hesitates, then reluctantly enters the water, shaking his head in protest, as Alec urges him forward with promises of the moss.

ALEC

Good boy, Black. Good boy. Come on now.

Alec feeds the Black a handful of moss, then works his way over to his back. A wave lifts Alec and he climbs aboard. The Black explodes, churning the water. Alec is thrown off.

67

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Another wave lifts Alec onto the Stallion's back, and again the Stallion explodes, throwing him off.

68

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Again Alec is lifted to the Stallion's back and again he is thrown off, disappearing into the water.

The Stallion curls his lips and bobs his head up and down, anxiously watching the water, waiting for Alec to surface.

Alec, unseen by the Black, surfaces behind him, reaches over and gives him a terrific whack on the rear. The Stallion, startled, whirls and gives chase. Alec swims away, laughing.

69

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

It is later. Alec is proudly sitting on the Stallion's back, the horse offering no protest.

The Stallion turns and walks through the water toward the beach. Surprised, Alec instantly grabs a handful of mane.

ALEC

(fearful)

Whoa, Black. Whoa, boy.
Where're we going?

The Stallion steps out of the water and walks down the beach.

Alec, gaining confidence, slowly releases one hand from the Stallion's mane.

70

EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON

Alec, totally confident now, is riding with his hands on his thighs as the Stallion walks down the beach.

Alec's hands fly for the mane as the Stallion breaks into a butt-bouncing trot.

ALEC
(painfully, in rhythm
with the trot)
Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!

The Stallion trots on down the beach.

71

EXT. BEACH - LATE AFTERNOON

The Stallion breaks into a smooth, even gallop. Alec hangs on with both hands, almost falling.

Alec slowly finds his balance, then begins harmonizing with the motion of the horse.

Alec smiles as the Stallion gallops across the wet sand.

72

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

Alec and the Stallion gallop down the beach as the sun sets.

73

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The great white ball of the moon is rising over the sea. Still Alec and the Stallion gallop down the beach.

The Stallion snorts, signalling the final phase of Alec's lesson. Alec instinctively reaches down for a better grip on the horse's mane as the Black breaks into a run.

For a moment Alec is in danger of falling--then, as with the gallop--he leans forward and harmonizes with the motion.

Tears from the wind roll down Alec's cheeks as the Black races on.

Alec, fully caught up in the exhilaration of the run now and prompted by some primordial surge from within his being, reaches down for a better grip on the Stallion's mane...then he stretches wide his legs, tightens his jaw, and gives the Black a powerful kick in the flanks.

ALEC
(screaming)
Heeeeeeyaaaaaa!

The Stallion screams and bolts forward, thundering flat-out down the beach, silhouetted against the moon, a worthy rider upon his back....

74

EXT. POOL - NIGHT

Both exhausted, Alec and the Black return to the pool. Alec slides from the Stallion's back and together they drink deeply of the water.

His thirst quenched, Alec stands and warmly hugs the Stallion's neck.

ALEC
'It's you and me, Black....
You and me.

75

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Alec has constructed a tennis racket-like scoop by lacing twigs across the fork of a stick and is standing knee-deep and rigid in the water, only his eyes moving as they follow the dark shadows that swim in front of him.

Months have passed: Alec's stringy hair is shoulder-length, his skin is a deep brown. And there is a confidence in his face. He knows how to survive.

A fish swims across his scoop. Alec jerks it up, pitching the fish high into the air toward the beach where the Stallion stands watching.

Startled, the Black shies to dodge the scaly missile.

Alec laughs; then turns to continue fishing. Suddenly his eyes grow wide and unbelieving: coming over the breakers in the distance is a boat, five men rowing. And behind them, anchored, is a freighter.

Alec drops the scoop and runs shouting toward their landing point.

76

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The sailors beach their boat and watch aghast as Alec, his long hair flowing, runs toward them, waving.

CAPITAN

My God, what've we got here!

Alec rushes up, out of breath, and bounces from sailor to sailor, embracing them.

The Capitan kneels down, holding Alec tightly to calm him.

CAPITAN

(softly)

Easy...easy now. You're alright. Hey now...easy there....

(motions)

We saw your sign.

Alec glances toward his mudman-beacon, tears of joy running down his cheeks.

ALEC

(settling)

We were on the "Drake."

CAPITAN

The "Drake"! Who's with you, boy? Somebody else make it?

ALEC

The Black...just the Black and me...we're the only ones....

Alec turns, scanning the beach with his eyes. The Stallion has disappeared.

ALEC

(confused)

Black...?

(shouts down beach)

Black! Black!

CAPITAN

Easy, son. Who's this black?

ALEC

A horse....

The Capitan and sailors exchange glances.

CAPITAN

Don't you worry, fella. We'll
get you home.

Alec pulls away, scanning the beach for the Stallion.

ALEC

Not without Black.

The Capitan motions: the sailors grab Alec, lift him, struggling,
off his feet and carry him toward their boat.

CAPITAN

We've got to go, son.

ALEC

(screaming)
Black! Black!

77

EXT. SAND DUNE - DAY

The Stallion tops a sand dune: in the distance he can see Alec
and the sailors fighting.

He screams, rears, bares his teeth, and charges toward them.

78

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The startled sailors look up as the Black thunders toward
them, head held high, mane and tail flying, teeth bared for
combat.

They drop Alec and rush to launch the boat. Alec tries to run
toward the horse, but the Capitan grabs him and tosses him
into the boat as the sailors shove it into the water.

The sailors jump inside and quickly man the oars, putting
distance between them and the raging Stallion which is tearing
up the beach at the water's edge.

The Capitan sighs, relieved; then the Stallion plunges into the
water after them.

CAPITAN
(surprised)
Row! Row! Row for the ship!

ALEC
(shouting)
Swim, Black! Come on, boy!
Swim!

The Capitan grabs Alec, covering his mouth.

CAPITAN
We can't take him, son.

Alec bites the Capitan's hand.

ALEC
Swim, Black! Swim!

CAPITAN
Row, boys! Row!

The sailors put their backs into it, rowing with everything they've got, the Stallion swimming after them.

79

EXT. FREIGHTER - DAY

The Capitan climbs aboard the freighter, carrying the still-struggling Alec over his shoulder.

Below them the sailors scramble to get on board before the Black reaches them.

On deck Alec breaks free, scampers to the gunwale and climbs up, holding onto a guideline for balance.

CAPITAN
You get down from there, boy.

The Capitan angrily steps toward him. Alec flexes, ready to jump into the water. The Capitan freezes.

ALEC
(defiantly)
Black comes with us.

CAPITAN
(outraged)
No sir! I will not bring a horse on board this ship!

No sir, absolutely not! This is not a horse ship! No sir!

ALEC
I won't go without him.

The Capitan folds his arms across his chest.

ALEC
Alright.... Goodbye then.

Alec lets go of the guideline, intending to jump.

CAPITAN
Wait!

The Capitan curses under his breath and looks over the rail at the Stallion treading water.

CAPITAN
(to Alec)
You're really trying me, boy.
You know that?

Alec nods, a thin smile forming. The Capitan shakes his head, bewildered, then turns to the crew.

CAPITAN
(shouting)
Get the hoist! Move now! Move!
We've got a horse to load
here! Don't stand there
gawking. Move!

The sailors scramble to obey.

CAPITAN
(sadly to himself)
Horse ship....

80

EXT. FREIGHTER - DAY

Alec, the Capitan, and sailors look up as the hoist swings out over them, dangling a net belly-band attached to a long cable.

CAPITAN
(worried)
You sure you can do it?

Alec reaches up, grabbing the dangling belly-band.

ALEC
I can do it.

The Capitan motions to the hoist operator.

CAPITAN
(to hoist operator)
Up! Raise 'im up!... Easy...
easy or by god I'll have
your ears!

Alec, hanging onto the belly-band, is lifted up over the gunwale, then swung out over the water.

The Capitan and sailors crowd the gunwale, watching anxiously as Alec is lowered into the water.

81
EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Alec, pulling the belly-band, swims over to the Stallion.

CAPITAN
You've got to get it under
him. You be careful. Swim
deep.

Alec nods, takes a deep breath and submerges, pulling the belly-band after him.

CAPITAN
(to hoist operator)
Slack! Let's have some slack
in that line!...

The sailors stare down at the dark water as the belly-band disappears beneath the surface.

82
INT. UNDERWATER - DAY

Alec, his cheeks puffed out, dives deep. He looks up: the Stallion's legs are like driving pistons directly above him.

83
EXT. FREIGHTER - DAY

The Capitan and sailors anxiously watch the water, waiting for Alec to surface.

CAPITAN
Where is he?...Where is he?...
He oughta be up....

After what seems an incredibly long time Alec pops to the surface on the other side of the Black. He raises the belly-band for them to see.

They cheer wildly.

CAPITAN
Hook it up, boy. Careful...
careful.

Alec swims to the Black, then reaches across its back, straining to hook the belly-band to the cable.

CAPITAN
Careful now...careful of the
horse....

With a final thrust Alec hooks the two together.

The Capitan excitedly motions to the hoist operator.

CAPITAN
Bring 'im up...easy.... Move
away now, boy, we got 'im.

The cable goes taut as Alec, overcome with joy, swims in front of the frightened Stallion and pats his head reassuringly.

CAPITAN
(shouting)
Get back! Get away from that
horse!

But Alec cannot hear above the sound of grinding gears. Alec looks up as the terrified Stallion, kicking wildly, is slowly lifted above him.... Then a foreleg strikes out and hits Alec a glancing blow on the forehead.

Alec falls back, losing consciousness, and slowly sinks into utter blackness.

INT. DINING ROOM NIGHT

- 4

Alec, in suit and tie, is setting the table. He tries to remember where to put the spoon and the knife. He handles the silverware awkwardly.

VOICE (OS)

The knife goes on the right.

Alec nods and switches knife and fork.

Belle Ramsay comes in from the kitchen, carrying a huge roast. She puts it down in the center of the table.

Belle is wearing an evening dress and has a gardenia in her hair. She smiles at Alec and goes back to the kitchen.

We pull back and see that the dining room is laced with colored streamers and crepe paper decorations.

Belle comes in from the kitchen again, carrying a platter of fried chicken. She puts it on the table, adding it to the roast, potatoes, yams and jello mold.

BELLE

I remembered you liked roast beef and so, I made a roast. But then, my fried chicken, you always loved my fried chicken, I couldn't decide which to make, so... (shrugs)...I made both. Maybe I made too much. I guess I made too much.

Belle picks up the fork and knife to carve the roast, but doesn't know how. She hands the tools to Alec.

BELLE

Here, you carve.

Alec slowly begins to imitate the way his father used to carve. Belle looks at him lovingly.

BELLE

You've grown.

Alec looks up at her shyly.

BELLE

I've changed my hair, did you notice?

Alec smiles at her.

ALEC
You look pretty.

Alec hands Belle a plate stacked high with roast beef. She makes him a plate of steaming potatoes and chicken.

BELLE
So. Here we are. How's your dinner?

ALEC
Oh, I like it. It's swell.

He starts eating in big hearty gestures to demonstrate how much he like it.

ALEC
These are all my favorite things Mom.

^{nod} BELLE
I ~~try~~ to remember your favorites.

Belle looks out through the kitchen and past the window and sees the huge Black Stallion chewing grass in the backyard. She shakes her head (to herself) and turns back to Alec.

BELLE
What do you want to do after supper? We could play cards. I could teach you how to play gin rummy.

Alec nods, trying to appear excited.

ALEC
Sure, that would be great. I always wanted to know how to play gin rummy.

Belle smiles at him and jumps up from the table to go to the kitchen again. She returns with a beautiful frosted birthday cake with twelve candles.

Alec looks up surprised.

BELLE
I missed your birthday.

She puts the cake down in front of Alec and lights the candles.

BELLE
I love this part. I always love the part where you light the candles. Okay, Alec - make a wish. Now close your eyes and blow.

Alec smiles at her, takes a deep breath and blows out all the candles.

REVISED 8/8/77

SC. 5 deleted.

A7 EXT. BACKYARD NIGHT

Alec comes out of the back door and walks to his horse in the backyard.

He spreads himself out under the huge tree, and lies on his back, looking up at the stars.

As the Black gently nuzzles him, the boy falls asleep.

INT. ALEC'S BEDROOM NIGHT (formerly part of scene 6)

Belle looks out the window down in the backyard and watches Alec sleeping with the Black. She smiles.

EXT. BACKYARD NIGHT

7

Black's POV: We see Belle open the porch door and walk toward the horse. We look down and see Alec curled up at the Black's feet, sound asleep.

Belle walks carefully toward her son. The Black starts to nort at her, jealously guarding the boy. Belle leans in and throws a blanket over Alec. She starts to walk away, and then turns and looks straight at the Black. She moves closer to the horse.

BELLE

Ah, Black...I just want to say,
ah...thank you for saving my son.
This is probably isn't what you're
used to...(she points to the yard)...
it isn't what I'm used to. But,
I hope you'll be happy.

She tucks the blanket around Alec and heads back for the house.

The Black follows her with his eyes, and we see her turn off the porch light and shut the door.

CUT TO MORNING.

8

EXT. YARD MORNING

The birds are beginning to chirp. The sky is now pink in the east. The Black stands guard over a still sleeping Alec. The Black listens as a truck stops in front of the house, followed by some loud

CONTINUED

clattering noises. Suddenly he sees a big square object moving towards him over the fence, and the gate opens and the thing enters the yard.

A face appears behind the square, a ^{GARBAGE MAN} strangely turbaned, wild-eyed man. The Black rears and screams and strikes out. The face yells and the big object flies into the air and crushes on the sidewalk, scattering garbage everywhere.

Alec's eyes snap open just as the Black plunges through the gate and around the house. Belle's face pops into the window upstairs just as Alec rounds the house in pursuit. There's a terrible commotion in the front yard. Two garbage men are trying to crouch behind their cans next to their truck in the street. The Black is sending the garbage cans flying. Another man lays sprawled on the lawn.

Alec yells at the Black just as the Black lunges in front of a passing car. The horn honks and the Black tears off down the street in front of the car. Alec runs madly after. The Black careems through an intersection as almost hit by another car. Alec loses sight of him as he tears off down and out another street.

Belle tries to help the man in the lawn as the wild-eyed fellow emerges from his dented can. Belle looks off down the empty street.

EXT. STREETS OF FLUSHING DAY 9

The Black's POV:

Running down Alec's street, past sleeping houses. We hear the sound of the Black's hooves pounding concrete. He runs down the center of the street, under the leafy boughs of trees.

He runs past a mailman on morning rounds. The mailman drops his bag and leaps into bushes as the Black roars past him.

EXT. STREETS OF FLUSHING DAY 10

Alec's POV:

Alec runs down his driveway and into the street just in time to see the Black leap over a fence and disappear from sight.

ALEC (yells)
No, boy, no! Come back!

The mailman pulls himself to his feet. The Black is gone.

EXT. STREETS OF FLUSHING DAY

11 // 6

The Black's POV:

We are in the business section of town. Shops are just beginning to open up. The grocery store is accepting deliveries in the back as the stallion runs by, knocking over tomato cartons spilling them to the pavement.

the box boy leaps aside as the horse screams by.

EXT. STREETS OF FLUSHING DAY

12

Alec's POV:

Alec has managed so far to follow the Black's trail. We see signs of the horse: spilled trash cans, broken tree branches.

Alec runs past the grocery store and sees hundreds of tomatoes smashed all over the parking lot. The box boy is still in a state of shock.

ALEC
Which way did he go?

The boy lifts an arm and points the direction. Alec runs off.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL AREA DAY

13

Sirens wail in the distance as the Black races past factories. Smokestacks puff black smoke into the early morning sky. We see workers in overalls lining up to punch into work.

The Black runs past them.

EXT. PARK DAY

14

Alec runs through a small, tree lined park. He runs right through a group of pigeons, sending them flying into the air and smack into a little kid on roller skates. They both tumble to the ground.

ALEC
Did you see my horse?

the kid puts his glasses back on and picks up his lunchpail.

BOY (enviously)
You have a horse.

Alec runs out of the park.

15

EXT. TAVERN DAY

A wobbly drunk comes ruolling out of a tavern. He tries to straighten his tie and make himself presentable.

The Black Stallion is standing at the curb, drinking water from a puddle in the gutter.

The Black looks up at the man. The man looks at the Black. The Black starts running down the street again.

EXT. TAVERN DAY

Alec is standing in the street, looking up and down it, wondering which way to go.

He sees the drunk on the sidewalk.

ALEC

You didn't see a big black horse, did you?

The man looks at Alec as if that was a silly question and shakes his head no.

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE DAY

16

The Black, lathered from running, bounds around a corner and comes upon a truck loading sides of beef. The Black rears up in horror, turns around and runs the opposite direction.

EXT. GOLF COURSE DAY

17

Alec is dragging himself across the long grassy slopes. He hears some movement in the trees and runs over.

He lifts up a branch and peeks into the woods, but he sees nothing. Discouraged, he sits and rests staring out across the golf course.

EXT. ALLEY WAY DAY

18

An old red pickup truck is stopped in traffic at the end of an alley. We see the Black running right toward it, down the narrow alley.

VIEW on the Black from inside the truck: the horse comes running and in one graceful leap, jumps right over the hood of the truck.

VOICE (OS)

What the.....?

VIEW on the pickup: the driver, who we have not seen, quickly backs his truck up, hitting the car behind him, and takes off after the Black.

EXT. GRAVEYARD DUSK 19

Alec is tiptoeing through the graveyard. He walks slowly and sadly through tombstones, trying not to step on the graves.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS DUSK 20

The Black is running down the tracks.

The red pickup is following in hot pursuit on the bumpy road that runs alongside.

EXT. TRESTLE DUSK 21

Alec is walking along the side of a reservoir. Finally he drops to the ground at the side of the water and sobs. Overhead we hear a train roll along the bridge.

EXT. WOODS DUSK 22

The old pickup is driving erratically along the country road.

We see the Black dodging in front of it. Finally the horse ditches into the forest. The pickup comes to an abrupt halt. Then it backs up and goes around the forest, trying to pick up the horse's trail on the other side of the trees.

EXT. DOWNTOWN NIGHT 23

Alec is walking the streets in a somewhat seedy side of town. Fancy men and women are going in and out of nightclubs.

VIEW on the exterior of an all-night movie house. Alec stops at the ticket booth as the rain begins to pour.

EXT. POWER STATION NIGHT 24

The Black runs through the gate of a deserted power station. We hear the gate slam shut as he runs into the compound. He has accidentally trapped himself.

He runs in circles along the high chain-link fence, trying to find a way out. The buzz of electricity grows louder and covers the sound of his screams.

We see the red pickup drive up to the gate.

REVISED AUGUST 5, 1977

INT. MOVIEHOUSE NIGHT SC 25 (Neville's dialogue was shot)

Alec is slumped down in a seat. He is falling asleep, but the sudden blare of a trumpet wakes him up.

VIEW ON THE SCREEN:

The newsreel comes on. We see JIM NEVILLE, sportscaster, standing at trackside, holding a microphone.

NEVILLE

It comes as no surprise that again this week both Sun Raider, the fiery red stallion from the west, and Cyclone, the sleek grey from the east have won their races with ease, and they have won them with monotonous regularity.

We see film clips of both horses crossing the finish lines. Alec stares at the screen.

NEVILLE

But hey, hey, let's see these two champions run head to head and perhaps race fans will be treated to the Match Race of the Century. This is hey, hey, Jim Neville at Belmont.

At the sight of the horses, Alec begins to cry. As Neville signs off, Alec slips down in his chair to the floor. The feature begins and we see Alec lying on the floor of the theatre, surrounded by popcorn and crumpled paper cups, crying himself to sleep.

EXT. MOVIEHOUSE DAWN SC. 26

Alec sits outside the theater in the early morning fog, dejected. He hears the sound of horse's hooves down the alley and looks up.

We see an enormous shadow move toward him, and then, the shadow of a wagon. We hear a voice humming and the scrape of iron wheels on pavement. the figure comes into view.

It is an old sway back white horse drawing a vegetable cart driven by an old black man with a white beard. The wagon approaches Alec and the old man calls out:

OLD MAN

What happened to you?

ALEC
Everything.

Old man laughs.

OLD MAN
Everything. That's a lot.
Can't be all that bad. Everything?

ALEC
Have you seen....

Alec jumps off the stoop and approaches the cart closer.

OLD MAN
You lost a black horse?

ALEC
Do you know where he is?
Have you seen him?

Alec excitedly comes closer to the old man. The man lights his pipe, then leans out to his white horse.

OLD MAN
Napoleon, didn't you tell me
you saw a Black Stallion?

Napoleon whinnies. The old man nods and nods at Alec.

Alec looks at the horse, then at the old man.

ALEC
What did he say?

The old man laughs.

OLD MAN
He say "yeah", not far away,
down the road, around the corner.
You don't go south, you don't go
north. You go with the morning
star. Pretty soon a line of skinny
trees with a lot of grass. You stop
and listen and pretty soon you see
what you want.

The old man turns to go.

OLD MAN
It's a beautiful day. It's going
to be a beautiful day.

The old man and Napoleon saunters on down the street with the old man calling out " Strawberries, etc."

SNOE

Look for a long line of skinny trees, and cross a field of rye. You'll find what you're looking for.

Snoe turns to go.

SNOE

The sun's coming out. It's going to be a beautiful day. Giddy-up Napoleon.

Napoleon takes a last look at Alec and saunters down the wet street, his plume bouncing as he walks.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD DAY

27

There are fields and fields of blowing green grass rustling in the wind. The tiny figure of Alec moves along in the distance. He's on the outskirts of town. It's very quiet. His feet crunch along on the gravel road. His mind is in a fog. Then he sees them—a long line of trees blowing in the wind. It seems sad and dark and sorrowful, but they are there, just as the old man had said. A shrill whistle comes to him from the wind. His eyes widen. It comes again from down the road. He starts running. He hears it again, coming from the old barn at the end of the meadow. He dashes off the road, through the grass, and up to the tumble down building. He finds a small door and pushes inside into an immense darkness.

INT. BARN DAY

28

The tiny figure of Alec stands below on the floor of a huge barn. Hay and old junk is piled everywhere. An old carriage stands at one end. Everything is dusty, spiders dance in their webs, the wind howls through cracks in the weathered wood. Alec's eyes strain to see into the black crannies and recesses of the labyrinthian space. He hears the horse, but cannot see him. Cautiously he makes his way across the floor whispering for the Black.

As he passes a pile of dark things, a stack of tin pails clatter to the floor, and several panicked chickens spring into the air before him, cackling madly. All of this lets loose a holocaust of things, flapping wings and screeches, something up in the air over his head in the rafters, something big moving against the slashes of light piercing the ceiling of the barn.

Alec backs up, looking above, looking for a place to run. Suddenly a door flies open. A hunched crab figure stands blazing against the light. As Alec's feet go from under him, he falls down through the floor in a shower of hay into a dark hole below.

INT. BARN - continued SC 29

A shrill whistle fills the air and then the Black Stallion is before him, rearing. Alec is caught momentarily between the terror and joy. He leaps to the Black and they try to find a way out.

Heavy footsteps thud on the floor above. A huge door creaks and slams. Something is moving downstairs creaking in the darkness surrounding them. It stops. The Black snorts and paws the ground and it is silent for a moment.

A raspy voice comes from the darkness:

VOICE

Hey, what are you doing
down there?

ALEC

I'm getting my horse.

VOICE

You better stay away from him,
he's a killer. Just back away,
slow and quiet.

ALEC

I'm not afraid of him. but you better
be mister - we're gonna bust outta
here, and you ain't gonna stop us.

VOICE

Hey, wait a minute.

ALEC

You're a thief.

The stairs resume creaking and a dark figure begins to descend.

VOICE

Nobody's a thief around here,
except you. You listen to me,
nobody's a thief.

The figure emerges out of the darkness and into the light. It's a small, short, unkempt little man, his head surrounded by frizzy white hair.

MAN

Hey, do you mind telling me
what you think you're doing

} in some takes,
not all

ALEC

I'm getting my horse.

MAN

This is my place and I've
been think' that this is my horse.

ALEC
No, he's mine.

HENRY
(eyes them both sternly, then softens)
Well, maybe he is, but he's wild.
It took me all night to catch him.
Just be glad the cops didn't get
him before I did. What are you going
to do with him?

ALEC
I'm going to take him home.

HENRY
Home.

REVISED 8/8/77

EXT. HENRY'S BARN DAY 30

Henry opens the door for Alec and the Black. The outside of the barn now looks like paradise. Alec starts to lead the Black down the driveway. Henry follows him, wiping his face.

HENRY

You kept a horse like that in your backyard? Haa, what do you think they build barns for? Stalls? Pastures? This horse needs room to run.

Alec looks out the green fields. Suddenly the Black bolts off. Alec starts after him frightened that he will be lost again. Henry stops him.

HENRY

Let him go, it's all fenced in. I was going to turn him out as soon as he calmed down. What do you call him?

ALEC

The Black.

HENRY

The Black. And what's your name?

ALEC

Alec Ramsay. I guess I better go home...

they look at the horse running around the yard.

HENRY

Well Alec Ramsay, you take your Black home, but don't call on Henry Dailey next time he runs off...he sure acts like a different horse.

Alec looks around and nods at Henry.

HENRY

I'm making some pancakes. Would you like breakfast?

Alec smiles a hungry yes and the two walk toward the house.

REVISED 7/8/77

INT. HENRY'S FRONT ROOM DAY SC 31 (SHOT)

Alec is washing down the last of his pancakes with Henry's coffee. The Black is grazing outside. Alec is just finishing telling a story.

ALEC

...there was this fight out on the dock with the Black and another big brown horse. So I took off my sweater and....

HENRY

You put it around his eyes.

ALEC

How'd you know that?

HENRY

And then what happened?

ALEC

Well, I got him home and he kicked the garbage man and ran off.

HENRY

Kicked the garbage man....
kicked the garbage man.

Henry laughs and gets up and starts searching for something on his shelves. He finds a book, a large old worn atlas, and brings it back to the table. He pushes away the dirty dishes, opens the book and points to a map of Arabia.

ALEC

What's that?

HENRY

Just wanted to find out something
...page 472...472...ah...there we
are. You say he was loaded
on the ship at Jeddah. Get over here
so you can see.

Alec comes up behind Henry looking over his shoulder at the map.

HENRY

He must have come from
the high land. This here's
camel country.

ALEC
He ain't a camel.

HENRY
I didn't say he was a camel.
I said this was camel country
on the map.

Alec shakes his head. He looks out at the Black trotting in the yard.

HENRY
He's something I've never
seen before. He's a mystery
horse.

Henry closes the atlas and pours himself another cup of coffee.

ALEC
Henry, what would you say
about someone riding in that
field?

HENRY
That field over there?
All over my spring oats?

Alec smiles and jumps up from the table.

HENRY
Isn't there somebody you'd
better telephone first?

EXT. FIELD DAY SC.32 (SHOT)

The Black's POV:

running at last again. The green field moves under his feet as he zooms over the meadow.

Alec is holding onto the horse's mane, his head low against the neck. They are riding again, just like they did on the island.

INT. BARN DAY SC. 33 (SHOT)

Belle and Henry sit inside the barn while Alec is still riding outside. They glance outside at him.

HENRY
Let him ride free now.

INT. BARN DAY SC. A33 (new scene)

Alec, still on the Black, and Henry walk through the barn door. Alec jumps off the horse and wanders into the barn, following Henry. Henry is shifting bales of hay and picking up pieces of junk.

HENRY

Don't worry about the horse.
He'll be alright. I let a
friend of mine use this stall.
The barn here needs a lot of work.
I'm really not much of a farmer.
I tried cows, that didn't work.
Five every morning - too early.
Then I tried chickens, (makes face)
...drove me nuts.

Alec laughs. Henry leads him over to an empty stall. The gate is off it's hinge and the place is dirty and dusty.

HENRY

See that stall back there. Tell
you what I'll do. If you clean
it out, fix it up, I'll make a
deal, real reasonable.

Alec looks around.

ALEC

How much?

Henry smiles.

HENRY

Maybe I'd better talk to someone
in your family who handles the
money.

INT. BARN DAY SC. 33

Belle and Henry sit inside the barn while Alec is still riding outside. They glance outside at him.

HENRY

Let him ride free now.

continued

Finally she turns to Henry. Before she can speak he says:

HENRY

You've got a fine little lad there,
Mrs. Ramsay.

BELLE

Thank you Mr. Dailey.

HENRY

Hank. Call me Hank.

BELLE

Hank, you know a lot about
horses, don't you?

HENRY

Oh I know a little about
horses.

BELLE

That's a very wild horse,
isn't it?

HENRY

Yeh, he's wild alright.

Belle nods and looks at Alec in the field again.

HENRY

If you're worried about
your little boy riding him, he can
handle him. If anything that
Black likes your little boy
to ride him.

BELLE

Do you think we could keep that horse
here?

HENRY

Board him here?

BELLE

Board him.

HENRY

Sure you can board him here.

Belle moves here near Henry and sits down by him.

BELLE

Look Mr. Dailey...

HENRY

Hank.

BELLE

We don't have a lot of money.

HENRY

Money's not important.

BELLE

I could pay you \$10.00.

HENRY

For a little feed, space is free I feel.

BELLE

I want to pay you.

HENRY

What would you say to \$5.00 a month?

BELLE

Five dollars, that would be fine. It's a deal.

They shake hands. They stand together looking out at Alec ride the Black.

HENRY

He can ride him alright.

INT. CAR DAY SC. 34 (SHOT)

Belle is in her car. Alec gets in and shuts the door. She is trying to appear calm, but is really stern. She can't get the car started.

ALEC

Mom? You mad.

BELLE

No, I'm not mad, why should I be mad. You disappear for an entire night. So! I sit by the telephone, what should I do? Call the hospitals, call the police, call the missing persons bureau. Yes, I'm a little mad Alec.

ALEC

I'm sorry. But I had to look for him. I just couldn't give up looking.

BELLE

Don't you think I could have helped you. I mean you just get back and you're gone again.

Alec fiddles with something on the dashboard. Belle tries to start the car again, but can't.

BELLE

You're not along like you were before. I'm here. I don't want you getting too big for your britches. I mean we're gonna start over again. We gotta have some rules. A new deal.

Belle gives up on the car and sits back. She takes a deep breath.

BELLE

Who is that man?

ALEC

Who, Henry? I like him. I think it's a good place for the Black.

BELLE

I made a very good deal for the horse.

She tries the starter again in vain.

ALEC

Try the choke, it might work.

Belle does and the car starts. She smiles at Alec.

BELLE

So okay. It's a clean slate?

Alec nods.

ALEC

A clean slate.

BELLE

I mean, we could let the horse move into the house if that's what you really wanted. We could fix up a room, get him some nice clothes, and give him piano lessons.

Alec doesn't laugh.

BELLE

It's a joke Alec. It's a joke.

As they drive away, Snoe passes them in his wagon. Alec follows him through the window.

BELLE tries the starter again. Nothing.

BELLE

I think it will work out just fine.
I want you to know I made a very
good deal for the horse.

Alec smiles at her.

ALEC

Why don't you try the choke?

Belle does. The car starts. She smiles at Alec.

BELLE

So, we start over?

Alec nods.

BELLE

I mean, I'd let the Black move
into the house if that's what
you really wanted. We could fix
up a room for him, get him some decent
clothes, a nice soft bed, and give
him piano lessons.

She is surprised that Alec isn't laughing.

Alec is up on his knees staring out the window. Coming up the
main road as Belle turns out of the driveway is the old man the
horse drawn wagon. Snow passes Alec and Napoleon, in a plume hat,
nods his head at the boy.

Alec follows the wagon with his eyes and sees it turn into
Henry's driveway.

INT. SCHOOL DAY

35

Alec is sitting near the back of the room. We see he has an
incredibly embarrassed look on his face. We look around the room
and see the faces of the seventh grade, in various stages of
boredom. Kids are scratching their noses and drawing pictures.

We notice that now and then, a child tries to sneak a look at Alec.
It is obvious that Alec has become something of an oddity at school.

A pretty red haired girl is smiling at Alec.
The teacher, a gentle pinched face woman, speaks:

MRS. DUNBAR

Becky Lighthill, will you
read next please.

INT SCHOOL DAY

Alec is sitting near the back of the classroom. The room has a dreamy, hazy quality to it, Alec's POV. He watches the teacher and the children with the definite eye of an outsider.

A girl diagrams a sentence on the blackboard.
Three or four tough gusy sit in the back rolling spit balls.
Two girls play with dolls under their desks.
A boy reads a comic book hidden behind a schoolbook.

Alec looks at the things on his desk: sharp pencils, pink erasers, new notebook, clean white paper. Everything looks odd and foreign to him.

The teacher looks at her roll book to see who will be the next to work at the blackboard.

TEACHER

Thank you Pamela. alright who would like to diagram the next sentence.

WHIFF SAMPLE, a young toughie in a black satin jacket and peg pants, with his hair greased back tight against his head, rolls a huge spitball and takes careful aim.
It hits Alec right in the back of the head.

WHIFF

Oh, my apologizes Hero.

His gang laughs. Alec ignores him. The teacher catches the action.

TEACHER

Whiff Sample has volunteered. How nice.

Whiff groans and walks to the board.

TEACHER

Let's try, "the quick brown fox jumped over the lazy black dog".

Whiff groans again.

TEACHER

We don't need a critic in the class Whiff.
Just start writing.

Whiff begins to draw lines and scribble words.

ammended 8/8/77

A pretty re-haired girl has her eye on Alec. He looks up, she smiles at him. This is BECKY LIGHTHILL. She leans over and whispers to Alec.

BECKY

Hi. (pause) I think you must be
the bravest boy in the whole world.
(pause) Honest.

Alec turns red.

Whiff is struggling at the board. One of his buddies hits him dead on with a spitball.

Becky whispers to ALEc again.

BECKY

Did you really bring the horse back with you?

Alec nods.

Whiff has just been hit by the spitball and yells at his pal.

WHIFF

Knock it off lunkhead, or I'll cream you.

TEACHER

Mr. Sample, do I have to send you to the
principal again?

Whiff gets stung by a spitball again and turns and hurls his chalk. The teacher grabs him by the collar. and heads for the door.

TEACHER

Mr. Dunbar, Mr. Dunbar. Help!

SCENE #36
INT HALLWAY DAY

Alec is trying to get out the classroom door. Whiff and the boys block the way.

Kids, in twos and threes step by the blockade. Alec tries it alone. Whiff steps in front of him blocking the entire door. Alec looks up at him. Noone moves for a moment, then finally Whiff moves slowly out of the doorway and ALEc walks past him.

The red head pulls a piece of paper out of her book and comes to the front of the classroom.

BECKY

I've done something a little crazy Mrs. Dunbar. I hope it's alright.

Mrs. Dunbar nods of course. Becky clutches her paper to her throat.

BECKY

I realized that right here, in our own lifetimes, in our own backyard, was an adventure as wonderful as anything you could ever read in a book. So I wrote my essay as a romantic poem, dedicated to Alec Ramsay.

VIEW on Alec: he's turning red.
Becky begins, with flare and drama.

BECKY

Alec Ramsay's heroic adventure,
by B.Lighthill, Seventh grade,
English.

"The ocean roared and spit waves
into the sky.
Crash, fire, screams. ^{boy}
She wrapped her liquid arms around
a strong young and pulled him slowly,
down into her dark depths.
But suddenly, a mysterious wild beast
ripped the boy from her grasp, and
together they swam until they reached
a rocky coast.
And behold, lost from the world,
they survived, a horse and a boy,
and with courage and manhood,
they found a way back from their
island to their home.
What great adventure awaits them now?
Time will only tell.

Becky returns to her seat.

From the far corner of the room we hear a loud raspberry noise.
Alec lowers his head and stares at his feet.

REVISED 8/3/77

INT. HALLWAYS DAY 36 (not shot)

Alec is trying to get out of school as quickly as possible.

At the doorway he is blocked by Whiff Sample and his buddies. Whiff is a toughie, greased black hair and a black satin jacket.

Alec has to wait for Whiff to move out of his way. After a long threatening look, Whiff finally steps back.

INT. BARN DAY 37 (revised 8/3/77, may be re-shot)

The Black's POV:

The Black is in his stall, next to Napoleon. Napoleon takes an occasional grab at the Black's feed and the stallion nips the white horse playfully.

Alec comes in on his bike, jumps off, drops his school books to the ground and runs to his horse. Alec feeds sugar to the Black.

ALEC

Hiya Black, want some sugar.

The Black takes the sugar. Alec notices the old man in the shadows of the white horse's stall.

OLD MAN

So we meet again. Are you following me or am I following you?

Alec smiles at the old man. He finds this old man incredibly mysterious.

ALEC

I don't know. (pause)
Do you know Henry?

OLD MAN

I know Henry very very well, Alec.

ALEC

How'd you know my name. (pause)
And who are you?

SNOE

Snoe. Just call me Snoe. The Black and Napoleon here, they've been friends a long time. They won't fight. They're real friends.

ALEC

Like the sun and the moon.

SNOE

You ever seen a solar eclipse?
 No, you're too new to this earth.
 I saw one, in Port au Prince, summer
 of 1893. On one particular day
 in that particular place, the moon
 slid right over the sun and for a
 moment time stood still. For as far
 as the eye could see--darkness
 covered everything. Yes, sir, ever
 since that eclipse, I keep my
 eyes wide open and watch how
 things come to pass, side by side,
 together, all one.

He motions with his fingers in a gesture of lining up his
 two forefingers and then laughs.

Alec smiles.

INT. SECRET ROOM DAY

38

Alec is exploring the barn. He pushes open a door and we are in a
 room full of hidden treasure.

In the dim light Alec sees the sparkle of gold cups. The room is
 in remarkably good order as opposed to the disheveled nature of the
 rest of Henry's place. The walls are covered with old fading
 photographs of horses and jockeys and race track things. On one
 wall is a horseshoe of long dead roses. There is a gold plated
 plaque that reads "Henry Dailey - Trainer of the Year".

Alec shifts his gaze around the room taking in its information
 with awe and wonder. He begins to realize that the photos are
 mostly of a much younger Henry. Several show young Henry and Snoe
 together. The room has some of the feelings of a forgotten shrine.

Alec slowly backs out fo the room and closes the door gently.

EXT. HENRY'S PORCH DAY A39 Revised 8/1/77

Henry is playing solitaire on his porch. His cat Ebinezzer
 walks across the table. Now and then, Henry cheats a play.

HENRY

Bugs, bugs, bugs.

Alec comes and sits down near Henry (comes out of the house first)
 He has come from the secret room and is full of questions.

ALEC

Henry...

HENRY

What?

ALEC
Did you ever used to train
race horses?

Henry eyes him suspiciously.

HENRY
Yeah, I trained em.

Henry continues playing cards. He fumbles nervously. Alec watches him with a whole new interest.

ALEC
Do you still do it?

HENRY
Nope.

We see the Black running in the field behind them. Alec watches Black.

ALEC
Henry, is the Black fast?

HENRY
Yes, he's fast.

ALEC
Fast enough to be a racehorse?

HENRY
Alec, the Black's a desert horse.
He's fast, but he's got no papers.
Fast or no, I don't think they'd let
him race with thoroughbreds. Thorough-
breds are different. They're born and bred
to you. You mold them, bring them
to the races...watch them win.
(pause)
A lot of work...worth it though.

Henry goes back to his solitaire game. Alec moves closer.

ALEC
Henry, can I ask you a question?

HENRY
Sure.

ALEC
Why did you stop training?

Henry answers softly.

HENRY
I got tired.

He looks sad at his memories.

ALEC

Do you ever think about doing
it again?

HENRY

Sure, I think about it.
When you're on a race track,
it gets into your blood, never
lets you go, keepscalling you
back... may I ask you a question?

ALEC

Sure.

HENRY

You ever been to a race track?

ALEC

No.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RACETRACK STABLES EARLY A.M.

39

The dawn casts a golden hue everywhere.

Henry and Alec walk through the track stables, Henry very familiar in these surroundings. Several older grooms nod hello to him. Alec is wide eyed with excitement. He stops to watch the horses being bathed and walked and draped in elaborate robes. He is thrilled with the pagentry. He runs to catch up with Henry.

EXT. TRACK EARLY A.M.

40

Through the early morning mist beautiful horses run before the rising sun, their breath spurting like puffs of smoke from their nostrils.

Some of the riders stand straight up in their stirrups, galloping easily. Others crouch low driving their mounts with flailing whips. The horses are lead prancing and proud to and from the track by devoted grooms.

Alec stands with Henry at the rail. He can almost hear trumpets heralding these royal kings of the horse world.

Henry watches each horse breeze past. His manner is calm, but his eyes burn with attention.

HENRY

(almost to himself)
There's nothing like it.

ALEC

Like what?

HENRY

Racing...making a champion...
winning.

Alec thinks this over. Henry doesn't take his eyes from the track.

ALEC

Is the Black fast Henry?

HENRY (offhanded)

He's fast.

ALEC (pressing the point)

Fast enough to be a race horse?

HENRY

I'd love to see him on a track.

ALEC

Do you really think he can be
a race horse?

Henry turns to Alec, his attention drawn from the track for the first time. He notices the boy's excitement and begins to grow a little excited himself. But he checks himself and turns back to watch the thoroughbreds.

HENRY

The Black's a desert horse.
He's got endurance, he's well
muscled, but he's made for lopin'
sand, not track.

Alec refuses to believe Henry's explanation. He looks at Henry expectantly. Henry grows nervous under Alec's stare.

HENRY

What do you want from me kid?

Henry looks at the horses on the track. He turns to Alec and back again.

HENRY

It's a big job...building a race horse. Hard work, long hours...not much fun.

- (Henry retreats into his own mind momentarily)
I was the one of the best.

Henry drums his fingers on the rail, lost in thought. He no longer even sees the horses running in front of him. He turns to Alec.

HENRY

You never really get it out of your system..

ALEC

When do we start?

HENRY

Tomorrow.

Alec and Henry smile broadly. They walk off toward Henry's truck. As they go Henry's excitement bursts forth in a little tune he begins to sing...."Forget your troubles come on get happy, You got to chase all your cares away...."

INT. SCHOOL DAY

41

Alec is sitting near the back of the room. Every five seconds he looks up at the clock on the wall. It is five minutes to three.

Mrs. Dunbar is writing a sentence on the blackboard, which is already covered with diagrams of sentences.

MRS. DUNBAR

"the teacher opened her blue notebook and slowly read the first page."

All right, what is our noun here?

A boy taps Alec on the shoulder and passes him a note. The boy jerks a thumb at Becky, who smiles at Alec. Alec takes the note and shuffles it back and forth on his desk for a minute. He keeps watching the clock. Finally he opens it. It reads:
I want to see your horse. Wait for me on the steps after school.
Signed Becky V. Lighthill, Esquire.

SCENE #41
 ammended 8/8/77

New Sc 41

T SCHOOL DAY

The seventh grade is standing in a single line in a half circle around the classroom. A spelling bee.
 Alec stands next to Becky.

Alec is watching the clock. The hand moves slowly toward three o'clock.

The teacher is passing out words. She reaches Whiff.

TEACHER

Personality.

Whiff laughs and points to himself. The children laugh.

WHIFF

Personality. P-U-R, S-U-N,
 Al is A-L, (Whiff waves across the room
 at a boy who must be named AL)
 A-T-E-E. Personality.

The teacher shakes her head no. Whiff shrugs and goes to his seat, dropping himself down and putting his heavy boot on the seat in front of him.

Becky passes ALEC a note. He opens it. It reads:
 I want to see your horse. Wait
 for me after school. Signed, Becky
 V. Lighthill, Esq.

Alec checks the clock.

TEACHER

Alec Ramsey, geography.

Alec rolls his eyes and wipes his brow. He looks at the clock .
 Only seconds to go.
 Becky whispers to him.

BECKY

George Eats Old Gray Rats And Paints
 Houses Yellow.

The bell rings. Alec runs for the door.

BECKY

Alec, wait for me!

Alec keeps running. He turns and yells to Becky.

ALEC

I can't stop now!

She loses sight of him. She raises a determined fist in the air and shouts:

BECKY

I'm going to see your horse!

Alec looks over his shoulder at Becky. She nods hopefully. The bell goes off. Alec dashes out of the room.

INT. HALLWAYS DAY

42

Alec runs down the school corridor with Becky running after him. She drops her books on the stairway.

BECKY
Alec, wait for me.

Alec is just moving out of sight. Becky shakes her fist in the air.

BECKY
I'm going to see your horse!

EXT. FIELD DAY

43

Black's POV: the Black races playfully across the field. He bucks and kicks up his heels. He pricks his ears and focuses his attention toward the barn. A long whip snaps the air. Henry shows Alec how to pop it while holding a longe line in the other hand.

Alec stands in the center of the field. The Black is with him - head high, mane flowing in the breeze. Alec snaps one end of the longe line to the Black's halter. He asks the horse to move out around him. He pops the whip and the Black reacts violently, bounding off, pulling the boy with him. Alec tries vainly to control the horse, to get him to circle calmly but the Black is upset at the sight of the whip. Henry watches from the fence shouting directions.

HENRY
You can hold him boy.
Make him do it.

Snoe watches from his window.

EXT. BARN DAY

44

Alec stands at the Black's head, his hand on the halter. He strokes the Black's neck and talks to him. The Black turns suspiciously to watch Henry who stands at his side with the racing saddle. Henry turns to Alec who tightens his hold. Henry slowly eases the saddle up onto the Black but before he can grasp the cinch, the Black explodes in a rear pulling the boy up with him and dumping the saddle to the ground. Henry picks up the saddle and tries again. As he moves to the horse, the Black circles around Alec refusing to stand still.

They corner him against a fence and Henry slides the saddle up. The Black kicks up his heels and the saddle goes flying. Alec is knocked to the ground. The Black shakes his head defiantly then bends to nuzzle the boy.

ALEC

Once more Henry. He'll let us do it. I know he will.

Alec pulls some sugar from his pocket and feeds it to the Black. He talks softly to him. Henry disappears and returns from the barn with extra ropes tied to the cinch. The Black eyes Henry disapprovingly but Alec keeps talking to him. Henry holds the saddle poised above the Black. Alec grabs the ropes and pulls them tight. The Black stands quivering about to let loose but containing himself.

Henry nods toward the field and Alec lets the Black free to run. He takes off venting his fury in a raging gallop. Henry slaps Alec on the back, triumphantly.

Alec sits in the saddle, his knees tucked up, his body leaning forward. Henry is with him giving instructions about how to hold his hands and move his legs. Alec is squeezing a little rubber ball with his right hand. He sits on top of Napoleon. Henry leads the Black saddled and bridled and fidgeting to Alec. Alec on Napoleon, ponies the Black around the field at a slow gallop. The Black is impatient, throwing his head and almost ripping Alec from Napoleon's back.

INT. ALEC'S BATHROOM DAY/NIGHT

45

Alec exhausted, sits chin deep in a tub of steaming water.

EXT. FIELD DAY

46

Alec is up on the Black in the racing saddle. Henry watches from the fence as they gallop around the field. He shouts instructions. Alec crouches lower on the Black in response. He bends his body forward. The Black obeys Alec's signals running in long, flowing, powerful strides. Henry smiles as they pass and gives Alec an OK sign.

INT. ALEC'S BEDROOM NIGHT 47

The clock on the nightstand clicks loudly; it read 1:30.

Alec rolls over and checks the clock. He is wide awake and fully dressed. He slips out of the room.

EXT. ALEC'S HOUSE NIGHT 48

The back door opens slowly and Alec slips out. He grabs his bike and wheels it noiselessly down the driveway.

EXT. BARN NIGHT 49

Alec rides his bicycle up to the door. A truck is parked outside with a horse trailer attached.

INT. BARN NIGHT 50

Alec enters. It is pitch dark.

ALEC (whispers)
Henry?

HENRY'S VOICE
I'm back here Alec.

ALEC
Henry, where are you?

HENRY
Everything's all set.

Napoleon neighs loudly.

HENRY'S VOICE
Shh...you old nag. This doesn't concern you. Get over here Alec and keep them quiet.

Alec calms the two horses.

ALEC
they know something's up too.

Henry steps into a moon beam. He carries a bridle and saddle. He leaves the barn with them and then returns empty handed.

HENRY
They always do. Alright...bring him out, here now.

They lead the Black out of the barn.

EXT. BARN NIGHT

51

Alec emerges leading the Black. But the Black fights against being loaded again into the trailer. Alec tugs and pulls, but the Black is dead set against getting in.

HENRY

Let's think about this.

The Black whistles loudly. From inside the barn, we hear Napoleon whistle back.

ALEC (alarmed)

No, Henry. He'll go. Here, hold him for a minute.

Henry snaps his fingers and goes into the barn. He comes out with Napoleon

HENRY

Snoe won't mind and I've got a feeling it'll make the Black happy.

Henry leads Napoleon up the ramp and into the stall. Alec leads the Black easily into the van. Henry nods, staisfied. They close up the back.

EXT. ROAD NIGHT

52

The pickup hauling the horse trailer rattles through the dark.

INT. PICKUP NIGHT

53

Henry drives.

HENRY

Secrecy's the key word now. Let's keep this under our hats.

Henry winks at Alec. Alec nods assent as Henry swings the truck down a long lane. The headlights illuminate a sign at the edge of the road: BELMONT.

Henry stops the truck before a large iron gate and beeps the horn twice. A high pitched voice comes from nowhere.

VOICE

That you Henry?

HENRY

Yeah...Jake...everything okay?

JAKE (OS)

Okay.

From the darkness comes the rattle of keys. A white head appears behind the gate. The gate swings open.

Henry drives the truck through the gate and down a road between a large complex of buildings.

ALEC
Who was that?

HENRY
That's Jake. We go way back.
Used to be in the same racket.

Henry pulls the truck to a stop between some outbuildings.
Henry backs Napoleon down the ramp.

Jake appears from the shadows. He is a grizzled old man with a twinkle still in his eyes.

JAKE
That's the champ I'm risking
my job for?

HENRY
Hold on Jake. You haven't seen
this grey devil run yet.

JAKE
Have you been drinking Henry?

HENRY
Wait until you see him go.

JAKE
I've been wondering what
happened to you Henry. You've
been in the nut house, huh?

There's a loud scream from inside the trailer.
Alec backs the Black out.
He snorts, tosses his man and prances. Alec tries to steady him.
Jake turns. His eyes widen. He whistles a low sound in amazement
and spits in the dirt.
Henry is pleased with his little joke and with Jake's response to
the Black.

JAKE
Let's see him move.

EXT. BELMONT TRACK NIGHT

54

ALEC and the Black ride onto the track. Henry, Jake and Napoleon
stand at the rail.

(CONTINUED)

HENRY

Yeah...There...That'll be the start...Now, take him around once easy...All we want him to do is get the feel of the track ...Easy!

Alec and the Black turn at the post.
Two stopwatches appear and gleam in the moonlight.
Alec balances on the racing saddle like a veteran--his knees held up to his chin.
He looks around.

WHAT HE SEES:

Two mute figures and Napoleon at the rail.
He looks back.

WHAT HE SEES:

The Black's head pointed down the empty track.

BACK TO SCENE:

ALEC

Okay. Here goes!

He tightens the reins...and speaks in the Black's ear.

ALEC

...C'mon...Let's go!

55

The Stallion bolts forward.
The stopwatches click.
The boy and big horse streak off down the track.
Alec teeters above the Black's sawing neck.
The horse is running too fast!
Alec pulls on the reins.
The Stallion rips the reins from his hands.
They surge around the first turn and into the backstretch.

JAKE

He's too much for your boy...

HENRY

He'll handle it...He'll handle it!! Relax, Alec!...Run him out!

JAKE

Way too much horse for that boy!

(CONTINUED)

HENRY

HELL! It's the kid's first try!
 He'll learn...Just hang on, Alec!
 ...Hang on!

Henry looks apprehensive.
 The streaking horse roars down the backstretch again.
 The two old men stand...transfixed.
 Alec hangs onto the Black's mane as they whirl around the
 far turn.
 The broken reins fly in the wind.
 The Black thunders.
 Alec hangs on grimly.
 He is exhausted.

WHAT HE SEES:

The blurred white rail flashing by.
 They thunder into the stretch.

BACK TO SCENE:

Tears from the wind stream down Alec's face.

HE SPOTS SOMETHING:

The old gray form of Napoleon lopes out onto the track.

BACK TO SCENE:

The Black whips by...but notices him.
 The Black's speed slackens.
 Alec glances over his shoulder and sees the old gray horse running
 after them.
 The Black slows almost to a walk.
 Alec's shaky hands retrieve the reins.
 The old horse wheezes as he comes up on the outside. He reaches
 his nose up to the Black's and trots on.
 Napoleon takes three strides to every one of the Black's.
 Napoleon races on...his eyes straight down the track.
 The Black playfully prances beside him.

The old horse gradually slows and finally stops. Worn out.
 The Black stops.

Henry and Jake run up. 56
 Henry helps Alec down. The boy's unsteady feet touch the ground.
 The Black blows heavily, a white lather shines on his body.
 Breathless, Napoleon stands beside him.

(CONTINUED)

ALEC
 (gasping for air)
 Looks...like...we got...two
 racers.

HENRY
 (laughs, excited)
 Don't know what got into old
 Nappy.

Alec looks at his bloody hands.

HENRY
 Take it easy, son...Here!

Henry rips his handkerchief in two and wraps Alec's hands.

ALEC
 I'm all alright...I...just...
 couldn't--

HENRY
 I know.

ALEC
 Next time...It'll be different...

Alec turns to the Black.

ALEC
 I better walk him.

Henry nods. Alec, the Black and Napoleon move down the track at a slow walk. Henry looks after them. Jake looks at Henry's stopwatch.

JAKE
 Did you get what I got?

He can't believe what the watches read.

HENRY
 He's got speed that hasn't been
 tapped yet.

JAKE
 He flies alright. Think you
 got another Chang?

HENRY
 Maybe.

Jake notices the strange look in Henry's eyes. He studies him for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

Hey...you're not thinking about...
You're not...?

Henry looks back at him and narrows his eyes.

JAKE

Cyclone?.....You're crazy.
You really are out of your mind...
You are thinking about Cyclone!!
Cyclone's not going to have any
business with this horse...You're
never going to get them in a race.
The horse is wild. You saw him zigging
and zagging down the track.

Jake looks at Henry who is obviously not concerned with his objections.
He tries another tack.

JAKE

What about his papers?

HENRY

We don't have any.

Alec and the two horses walk up. For a moment there is only the sound
of the horses. .

Alec, the Black and Napoleon walk up to the two men. Jake looks again
at the Black and Alec and Henry. He nods his head, shakes it and
laughs to himself.

JAKE

Too much! (chuckles some more)
You're too much! (he turns to
Alec) He's got me crazy too.

HENRY

How's that Jake?

JAKE

Thinking.....

Henry mutters an affirmative sound. He and Jake stare at the Black.

JAKE

You'll count this old man in on
anything, won't you?

Henry nods yes and winks at Jake.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

57

VIEW on Alec's bedroom:

We see changes in the room. The walls are covered with pictures of horses and the regalia of horse racing. There is a new curtain over the window, a piece of material with patterns of a tropical island, palm trees and water. A picture of Mr. Ramsey is taped to the mirror.

The alarm goes off and Alec wakes up. He lies there for a moment, and then suddely pulls his hands from under the covers and looks at them. They are wrapped in white bandages.

Alec grins. It wasn't a dream.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

58

Alec, washed and dressed, opens a closet door, looking for something to wrap around his wounded hands.

From downstairs we hear Belle, teaching piano lessons.

BELLE (OS)
Cynthia, pick it up, a little faster.

The tempo of the piano increases, along with the mistakes. Belle is singing along with the tune.

Alec opens the closet and we look in.

VIEW in closet:

Stacked on the shelves are his father's personal belongings: a shaving kit, some ties, a couple of hats and other little items that Belle has obviously removed from sight -- things that would be too painfull for her to confront every day.

VIEW on Alec's face: re-living his own thoughts about his father.

Alec reaches in and pulls out a leather glove. He starts to put it over his hand, and stops.

BELLE (OS)

Alec, want to got to the market with me?

Alec quickly replaces the glove and gently closes the closet door.

CUT TO:

INT. SODA SHOP KITCHEN DAY SA

VIEW on Alec: almost hidden behind a stack of dirty dishes we see Alec, scrubbing plates. He looks exhausted as he brushes the hair off his sweaty forehead.

We hear the clatter of more dishes being added to the tall pile and the sound of children's voices laughing coming from the tables in the front room.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 60

Alec is sitting in a bathtub, filled with steaming water. He is leaning back, up to his neck.

With one hand he is squeezing a rubber ball.

With the other he is turning the pages of a big book which is resting on the edge of the tub.

We can read the title: ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

CUT TO:

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - DAY 61

Henry's pickup is parked in front of the porch. It has been washed and polished.

We see Henry emerge from his house, dressed in a crumpled brown suit which has seen better days.

Henry goes to the truck, does a last minute polish up with his handkerchief, gets in and drives away.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRACKSIDE NIGHT SC. 63 (SHOT)

Henry paces nervously by the rail. Alec stands by with the Black. Jake watches Henry, and then, finally speaks up.

JAKE

You're dreaming Henry. He ain't going to show. He doesn't even remember us. We're ancient history.

Henry is embarrassed.

HENRY

Maybe he'll come and maybe he won't. He's a busy man.

Lightning illuminates the sky and outlines the empty grandstands. The Black is getting jumpy. Alec can barely keep hold of him. Henry checks his watch.

Rain begins to fall. Henry searches the darkness. Sees nothing. He goes to the rail and grabs the Black's halter, pulling him onto the track. He is upset, forgets his normal caution around the horse.

JAKE

Watch him...the rain..he's spooky.

HENRY

Just means he'll run faster.

Alec heads out for the track.

ALEC

Let's go.

Henry pulls the Black and the horse rears up, violently. He catches Henry in the arm. Alec runs to Henry.

ALEC

Black, shame on you.

Henry is lying on the track, blood oozing from his arm. Jack rushes to his side.

JAKE

It's deep...you okay?

We see headlights come in the gate and head toward the track. Henry looks up at them. They slowly circle the entire track.

HENRY

It's alright...it's alright.

Henry's eyes are glued to the cream colored Packard that leads the parade of four cars around the track, finally stopping at the infield.

HENRY

It's him.

Alec looks at Henry.

ALEC

Henry, you okay?

HENRY

You've got to take more than a few bruises in this business. I'll fix it later...come on... get out there.

Alec gets on the Black and spins him around the track. He starts moving down the track, into the darkness. It's pouring now.

We see the tips of cigars and cigarettes glow behind the windshields of the parked cars.

HENRY (to Alec)

It's going to be muddy out there, take it easy.

Alec walks the Black to a starting position. He looks back at the cars. They seem a million miles away.

SC.64 Suddenly the Black bolts forward.- SC 64
He tears down the track, completely disappearing from sight in the rain.

Inside the cars, we see cigars glow and luminous stopwatches tick off seconds.

Silence.

We can not see the Black and Alec.

Suddenly we hear the faint sound of horse hooves, and then horse and rider return to view. They have circled the track with incredible speed.

Alec is heaving, gasping for breath.

His hands are gripping the black mane.

We see his eyes droop shut.

He swoons, weaving in the saddle.

EXT. TRACKSIDE NIGHT SC. 65

The face of Jim Neville is looking up at the Black. The rain drips over his glasses and we see an incredible look in his eyes as he stares at the horse.

Over the Black's back we see Alec being cut loose from the horse's mane. He is unconscious.

NEVILLE

Where did you get this animal?

Henry lifts Alec off the horse and lays him on the ground. Slowly Alec comes to.

NEVILLE

If he went like that with the kid, think what he'll do with Mendoza or Tiny....

Alec's POV:

He looks up from the ground and sees a cluster of strangers circled around him, men in suits and women in fox furs. Henry is leaning over him.

ALEC

Did I fall off?

HENRY

Fall off? If he were still running, you'd still be riding.

Alec looks at this hands and sees clumps of black hair.

ALEC

He did good, didn't he?

HENRY

Real good son. Just fine. How you feeling?

Neville leans in over Henry. Alec sees him.

ALEC

Woozy. I'm okay.

Henry helps Alec to his feet. The crowd starts back to their cars. Jake holds Alec up, tries to get him to walk.

Alec's POV:

Neville comes up to Henry and puts his arm over his shoulder.

NEVILLE

What are you after Dailey?

HENRY

He's everything I told you, right?

NEVILLE (reserved, guarded)
I wasn't disappointed.....

HENRY
Disappointed? You never saw a
horse run like that.

NEVILLE
This could put you back in the action,
hey, Dailey?

HENRY
Oh, come on Neville, don't
play hard guy with me. We need
a race, we both know which race.
You're the only guy who could
do it.

NEVILLE (toying with Henry)
Maybe...

HENRY
Then...you'll help us?

NEVILLE
I didn't say that. But let me
tell you...I'll never let my
reputation ride with that kid.
You have to bring in a real rider,
from Miami, or the coast.

HENRY
Just get us in. That's all we're
asking. Just get us in that race.

INT. HENRY'S FRONT ROOM DAY 66

Alec and Henry are sitting in the front room, listening to Jim Neville's afternoon show. We hear Neville's voice:

NEVILLE (VO)

Hey, hey! Yes, I know, I'm the guy who said there wasn't a horse in the world who could beat that rarin' red bundle of dynamite, Sun Raider, or even Cyclone. And I'm the guy who suggested the Match Race between two thoroughbreds that's now just two weeks off. The race was to settle one thing: who the fastest horse in the country is. But now, in my mind the race will no longer prove who's the fastest horse on fourlegs because I've seen a horse that can beat them both. Hey hey! You horse fans are going to crown the winner at Chicago and it isn't true. There is another horse. It isn't fair to tell you that this horse has never been seen on a track, probably never will because he lacks the necessary papers. But I know a horse, right here in New York, a Mystery Horse. Who could make the other two eat his dust. Hey, hey!

The program fades out. Alec and Henry look up at each other, anxious and excited. Alec beams at Henry and raises crossed fingers. Henry chucks him under the chin and they walk out the front door.

EXT. FRONT YARD DAY 66A -

Henry and Alec are sitting on the grass in the front yard relaxing.

ALEC

Did they hear that program all over the country?

HENRY

They sure did. All the way from California to New York.

ALEC

We could be famous maybe.

Henry nods. Alec looks at him intently.

ALEC

I hear what Neville said...
about that other rider. Henry,
you know that no one can ride the
Black but me. You know that.

HENRY

Hey look, it'll be no small
miracle to even get that Black
into the race.

ALEC

It's me and the Black, you know
that. It will always be just me
and the Black.

HENRY

Alec, listen to me. Sometimes in
life you have to compromise. By that
I mean you have to give up something
you don't want to give up. Do you
understand?

Alec shakes his head no.

ALEC

You know no one can ride the Black
but me, and the Black won't let 'em,
and I won't let 'em.

Pause. Henry knows this is true.
Alec puts his hands on Henry's shoulders.

ALEC

Promise me, promise me, you'll
let me and the Black ride together.

Henry looks at Alec. He is caught in dilemma. He nods.

HENRY

I promise.

Henry crosses his heart.

ALEC
You promise?

Henry looks at the boy.

HENRY
I promise.

EXT. FIELD DAY

67

Alec is sitting in the middle of the field, plopped down in the tall grass. He is just daydreaming, watching little creatures crawl through the blades. He has a ladybug walking over his thumb.

Suddenly he gets hit on the head with a huge clump of dirt. He immediately rolls over on his stomach, ready to stalk the intruder.

He slithers along the ground as we see another dirt clod come dlying. Alec pulls a clump from the ground, arming himself for the attack. He moves cautiously through through the growth, and we hear someone moving low and quiet toward him.

Suddenly, Becky leaps up and bombards Alec with dirt and grass. He starts to fight back, but stops. She is a girl. Becky makes herself comfortable on the grass, sitting cross legged.

BECKY
So, where is he Ramsay?
I came-to
see your horse, invitation
or no invitation.

Alec sits a short distance from her. He is flipping his pocket knife into the dirt, over and over. Becky starts weaving small yellow flowers into a wreath.

BECKY
Well, I'm waiting.

Alec shrugs.

ALEC
Well, I guess I'd better tell you the truth.

Becky stops her weaving.

BECKY (disillusioned)
No horse?

Alec shakes his head sadly.

REVISED AUGUST 10, 1977

ALEC
No horse.

BECKY
Rats. Just my frowsy luck.

Alec lies back in the grass and gives a long shrill whistle. Becky looks at him.

BECKY
If I didn't know you were
a decent guy, I'd think you
were a good liar Ramsay.

Alec looks up at her with apologetic eyes and puts a long blade of grass in his teeth. He whistles again. He pulls the blade through his teeth, biting it like a corn on the cob.

Suddenly we hear the sound of a thundering stallion. Becky turns and looks over her shoulder. Coming toward her, running like wild fire is the Black Stallion. She turns back to Alec.

He has jumped up to his feet, waving his arms at the Black, playing his daredevil game.

BECKY (screams)
Alec!

The horse comes running. Becky buries her head in her arms. She looks up again. The stallion has come within a hair of Alec, then circles him and runs away again. Alec and the Black play their unique game of tag.

Becky is enraptured.

INT. BARN DAY SC. 68

Alec and Becky are walking on a catwalk in the huge dark barn. Behind them we see the last rays of sunlight filter in through the splintered walls.

ALEC
Come with me, we will march
into India!

Becky salutes. Alec marches.

ALEC
I am Alexander the Great and nothing
can stop me. The mighty Bucephalus
will lead us.

Alec keeps marching back and forth. Becky stops.

BECKY
Oh the desert. I'm so hot.
Water, water...

ALEC
Help me, I'm in quicksand.

BECKY
I'll save you. Oh water...

ALEC
We'll find an oasis.

Becky and Alec climb up a ladder to higher plateau in barn.
Becky goes to edge and in gesture of futility says:

BECKY
No, no, I can't go on, don't
try to stop me. Farewell cruel
world!

Becky throws herself off the catwalk. She lands in a pile of
fresh hay. Alec looks down at her.

ALEC
I'll save you!

Alec jumps after her. The two lie for a moment in the hay,
exhausted from their playing. Then Becky props herself up
and looks at Alec.

BECKY
How come you don't ever play with
the other kids? They think you're
stuck up or something.

ALEC
Me? I ain't stuck up.

BECKY
What is it then?

ALEC
I don't know. I got used to
being by myself I guess..and I've
got things to do.

BECKY
Like what?

Alec looks confused. He can't tell her the secret.

ALEC

You know, things...with the Black and Henry...I can't tell you, it's a secret.

BECKY

I love secrets. Could I guess.

Alec nods his head yes.

BECKY

(to herself)..Henry and the Black.
...a circus, you're gonna run away and join a circus.

He shakes his head no.

BECKY

A rodeo. A wild rodeo rider.

He shakes his head no.

BECKY

Okay. So don't tell me.
What's this?

Becky has found a dusty, rusty old trunk. She opens the lid.

BECKY

Hidden treasure! They're beautiful!

Becky pulls out some old jockey silks. Their faded colors shimmer in the light. Becky puts one on and holds one out to Alec.

BECKY

Here, try one on.

Alec puts it on.

BECKY

Gosh, you look like a king.

Becky pulls an old riding whip out of the trunk and hands it to Alec.

Alec takes the whip and climbs to the tope of the catwalk again. He holds the whip above his head and yells out:

ALEC

In the name of Phillip of Macaroni....
with cheese...I will conquer the world.

He leaps.

Note: this page replaces the first 5/8 of page 43

Becky takes out a whip and taps Alec on both shoulders.

BECKY

I, Guinivere, dub you Sir Lancelot,
protector of King Arthur and the
Knights of the Round Table.

Alec takes the whip and raises it above his head.

ALEC

In the name of Philip of Macedonia,
I will conquer the world.

Becky pulls out a riding glove and tries to put it on Alec.

BECKY

Slay the dragon and return to
the castle.

Alec looks at the glove and pulls it off his hand. He suddenly
looks very sad.

ALEC

I don't want to play anymore...

He crosses over to the Black's stall.

BECKY

Alec, what's the matter.

Alec goes to the Black and leans his head against the horse's neck.

INT. SNOE'S ROOM DAY SC. 69 (REVISED 7/6/77) (SHOT)

It is late afternoon and a light rain is falling. The barn is quiet.
The door to Snoe's room is open and Snoe is sitting by his window.

Alec comes to his door and taps on it.

SNOE

It's open.

Alec walks in and starts looking around at the odd collection of
things Snoe has on his wall and shelves.

ALEC

It's quiet here today.

SNOE
Nothing wrong with that.

Alec picks up one of Snoe's old books and starts looking through it.

ALEC
The Black doesn't want to play.
He's just standing there, looking
at the rain.

SNOE
Maybe the Black is blue today,
ever think of that?

ALEC
Blue, no.

Snoe watches the rain.

SNOE
It's the rain...the rain, Alec.

ALEC
Snoe, we're going to show everybody
that he's the fastest horse in the
world.

SNOE
Have you taken a look at the
horse lately? He has a strange
look in his eye.

Alec stops looking through the books and looks up at Snoe.

ALEC
The Black? What?

SNOE
You know that horse is
wrestling with something, something
I just can't put my finger on.

Snoe looks up at Alec.

SNOE
You know that horse is afraid
of his own shadow. You believe me.

Alec gets up and goes to the window.

SNOE

It's a shadow. It might be
you. It might be you.

Alec looks at Snoe, confused and a little mad.

SNOE

He is one proud animal. He
follows you like a magnet, with
his eye, every move you make.
(Snoe's eyes wander around)
He trusts you, but his heart, his
heart tells him different. You know
him?

ALEC

I know him.

Snoe sits back and reflects for a moment.

SNOE

Maybe you better let him
have another look at you.
I feel that you'd better
let that horse stay wild, it's
his soul, Alec. You better
let him stay wild.

CUT TO SC. 70

SCENE # 70
amended 2/9/77

INT CLASSROOM DAY

The seventh grade is having penmanship lessons, all of them are leaning over blue-lined paper, practicing capital letters with leaky fountain pens.

Alec is near the back of the room, making curly 'B's'. We see Becky sitting next to him.

A small boy with a huge canvas bag comes into the room, obviously from picking up his afternoon papers for his after route. The boy sits down near Whiff and very excitedly, passes a paper to him.

Whiff opens it up and we see the headline:
THE MYSTERY HORSE IS IN

Whiff smirks and passes the paper on. We see it getting closer and closer to Alec. Whiff whispers to his gang.

WHIFF

Mystery Horse, bah...a cheap stunt.
Boy, I hate to see these carnal men
move in and mess up a good clean
sport like horse racing.

The paper reaches Alec. He opens it. His face bursts into a gigantic grin and he leaps out of his seat, jumping for joy.

Everyone in the class looks at him. He quickly sits down again and reads the paper under his desk.

WHIFF

Don't get so excited Hero, it ain't
wise.

Becky is watching curiously, trying to get a look at the paper.

WHIFF

That horse, whom ever he is, ~~HE'S A LOSER~~
X hasn't got any more chance than an ice
cube in hell.

Alec turns to Whiff.

ALEC

You want to bet on it?

WHIFF

You talking to me Hero?

SCENE #70
amended 8/9/77

The teacher takes a look at the whispers.

TEACHER

Gentlemen, back to your pens please.

Alec raises two fingers. The teacher nods and he starts out of the room. As he leaves his desk, Becky grabs the newspaper. Alec passes Whiff and stops.

ALEC

My knife says it's the Mystery Horse.

WHIFF

Okay sucker, your knife against my jacket.

They shake on it.

Alec leaves the room
at Alec, but he is go

ine. She looks up

SCENE #70 A
amended 8/9/77

INT SCHOOL HALLWAY D.

Alec is running down th
he starts down the outs:

SCENE#71
amended 8/9/77

EXT COUNTRY ROADS DAY

Alec is running down the
both screech to a stop wh
other's arms, yelling and

ng up it. They
ump into each
around in the dirt.

Finally Alec starts off in the direction he came. He hollars back to Henry:

ALEC

Remember your promise Henry!

Henry waves. He has a worried look on his face.

He looks back at Henry, standing by his truck.

ALEC
Remember your promise Henry.

Henry nods as the boy takes off. Henry has a worried look on his face.

EXT. STREETS DAY

72

Alec is skipping toward home. Becky catches up with him.

BECKY
Hey Ramsay, wait up. You hear all this about the Mystery Horse. Isn't it thrilling? I'm going to ask my dad if we can go. A mystery horse!

Alec smiles at her.

BECKY
Do you think the Mystery Horse could win?

ALEC
You ought to know. You've seen him.

Becky stops for a moment, confused. Then her face breaks into a smile.

BECKY
You mean...the Black?

Alec nods, Becky starts to scream and Alec put his hand over her mouth.

ALEC
It's a secret.

Alec nods her head, her eyes like saucers.

INT. RAMSAY LIVING ROOM DAY SC 73 (SHOT)

Alec walks sheepishly into living room and sits down on sofa. Belle is sitting comfortably reading the newspaper.

BELLE

Do you want me to read your horoscope?

ALEC

Sure.

BELLE

You have a difficult task ahead of you in the near future, handle it with care. Mine says to take things slowly today.

Alec nods.

ALEC

Would you like me to wash the dishes or mow the lawn or anything?

BELLE

Sure. You can make the beds and vacuum too.

Alec starts straightening up the roo. He lays the Sports section of the paper on her lap.

ALEC

Here Mom. Have you read this yet?

Alec goes to the window and moves the curtain back and forth two times, a signal.

BELLE

It's just more about this mystery horse. Last year it was free aluminium ball point pens. This year it's a mystery horse. The lengths they go to to get people to go to a horse race.

ALEC

The Black is the mystery horse.

The doorbell rings.

ALEC

And I'm going to ride him.

Alec bolts for the door. Belle drops the newspaper and follows him.

BELLE

What are you talking about?
Say that again.

The bell rings again. They have moved into the front hall.

ALEC

The Black is the mystery horse,
and I'm going to race.

BELLE

That horse is not the mystery
horse, and even if he were you
are not going to ride him.

ALEC

It was a secret Mom. I told you
as soon as I could.

BELLE

A boy your age does not have
secrets from his mother.

ALEC

Someone's at the door.

She turns and opens the door. Henry is standing in doorway. He
takes off his hat.

HENRY

Good evening, Mrs. Ramsay.

She closes the door.

BELLE

The Black is the mystery horse
and you're going to ride him?

She opens the door again.

BELLE

What fascinating timing. Now what's
going on with you two and that
horse? See I knew it, I knew
something was going on.

Alec pulls Henry into the room.

REVISED 7/21/77

HENRY

I guess you've talked with Alec here?

BELLE

I would like the whole story from you.

HENRY

Gosh, Mrs. Ramsay, it's a long story.

Henry nudges Alec out of the room, motioning him to go upstairs.

INT. STAIRS DAY

SC 74

(SHOT)

Alec starts up the stairs. He tugs one foot after another, hearing his mother and Henry talk.

BELLE (VO)

You've got to be kidding.
Let Alec ride in a horse race.
He could get killed.

HENRY (VO)

Now, now Mrs. Ramsay. I think you're exaggerating.

BELLE (VO)

Exaggerating! Don't lie to me Mr. Dailey.

HENRY (VO)

Hank.

BELLE (VO)

Mr. Dailey...what are you trying to do to him, feeding him these dreams. He's only a little boy! How did this happen?

INT. ALEC'S BEDROOM DAY

SC 75

(SHOT)

Alec is sitting on his bed, carressing the stone horse. The voices continue.

HENRY (VO)

I'd be mighty proud to have a son that could ride a stallion.

BELLE (VO)

I'd still be proud of him if he couldn't ride a merry-go-round.

SC 75 continued

Alec has his head bowed, he is straining to hear the conversation, but can't get it all.

HENRY (VO)

I've grown to know your boy pretty well over the last few months, Mrs. Ramsay. This race is pretty important to him. He has his heart and soul wrapped up in it... (softly, as if he has discovered it for himself)... I wouldn't do anything that might hurt him.

BELLE (VO)

Good day Mr. Dailey.

Alec hears the front door slam and his mother come up stairs.

INT. ALEC'S BEDROOM DAY SC 76 (SHOT)

Alec sitting on his bed. Has stone horse in hand, waiting for Belle. She enters and sits down opposite him on chair by the window.

BELLE

So what happened to the new deal, the clean slate, huh? I can't let you do it. I can't let you ride in a horse race. You know that.

Belle looks at the horse and takes it from Alec's hand.

BELLE

What's this?

ALEC

Alexander the Great's horse. Dad gave it to me, before the storm. Alexander's father gave it to him before he died. No one could ride him but Alexander. He was wild! They rode through the whole world. But dad didn't know. I never told you everything.

BELLE

You never have to tell me everything.

ALEC

I was in the water. I couldn't breathe. I hollered for dad... dad. I looked over and saw the Black. I grabbed for him.

BELLE

But he you saved you Alec. That's a wonderful miracle, and you saved the Black. Now I have you both. Alec, what can I do?

ALEC

I gotta ride him. I love you Mom. Dad loved you too.

BELLE

So Alec. Should I make some of my fried chicken to take to this race?

Alec looks up smiling and excited.

ALEC

You mean I can race?

BELLE

Yes, yes, you can ride. I guess you have to, don't you.

Belle hugs Alec.

CUT TO SCENE 77

Page 52 deleted.

The night breeze blows in Alec's window as the sun sets.

BELLE
You want to race?

ALEC
I have to.

Belle nods. Then she shakes her head, she can't believe that she is going along with this, but now she has no other choice.

BELLE
Okay. Tomorrow?

Alec nods.

BELLE
Tomorrow. The sooner the better, let's get this over with. So, what does the owner's mother wear in the winner's circle.

Belle wipes Alec's eyes.

ALEC
Do you really think he can win, Mom?

BELLE
Of course he's going to win. If I'm letting you ride...how could you lose?

Belle looks at Alec and shakes her head. The two give each other a long hug.

CUT TO TRAIN

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

77

Alec runs across the meadow in the moonlight. As he gets closer to the barn he hears the Black screaming.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

78

Alec opens the barn door and the first thing he sees is the Black, lathered and jolting back and forth in the small stall. Then he sees Henry behind the stall, trying to calm the horse down.

ALEC

Henry, what's the matter, what happened?

HENRY

Nothing happened, get away from him. He's just scared, he knows what's coming. I've seen it a thousand times in racehorses. They can feel it closing in on them. It's fear...

ALEC

But the Black has never been scared.

Henry has given up trying to wrestle the horse down and finally opens the stall and lets him run through the barn. Henry looks different, drawn, moody.

HENRY

He's been getting jumpier. Horses can sense these things, Alec - he can smell it.

ALEC

Are you scared, Henry?

HENRY

Of course you are...we're both...

ALEC

The Black knows you're scared.

HENRY

Damn right, any moron would be scared out of his wits. This is a big race Alec. We're all acting like we're in some goddam fairy tale or something.

(CONTINUED)

ALEC
I can handle it.

Henry is sitting on a bale of hay, his head in his hands. He is shaking. The Black has calmed down as the man and boy talk.

HENRY
No...no...I can't take the chance, you could get hurt, the Black could get hurt. I've seen it happen.

ALEC
What?

Henry gets up and starts pacing alongside the Black.

HENRY
Have you ever seen a horse fall? Have you ever stood by and heard a horse's leg snap. It's ugly, the ugliest noise in the world... there's nothing you can do, just stand there and put them down.

ALEC
Put them down?

HENRY
Put a bullet through their head, and they go down, understand?

Henry leaves his story unfinished. He and Alec stand at opposite ends of the barn in silence.

HENRY
...this isn't a fairy story here Alec.

Suddenly the barn door slams and we hear rustling. Becky bursts in, carrying a pillowcase over her shoulder.

BECKY
Well, I've done it, thrown it all away, given up everything - exile.

HENRY
Who the hell is that?

ALEC
Becky. What are you doing? Exile?

(CONTINUED)

BECKY

I'm going to Chicago with you.
I wouldn't miss it for anything.
But (she whispers) let's keep it
on the q.t.

HENRY

She's what?

BECKY

Yes, isn't it exciting. Oh, look
at the Black. He wants to run al-
ready. I can hardly believe it. The
Mystery Horse.

(to Henry)

Aren't you just shaking inside?

Alec motions Becky to be quiet.

HENRY

This is the last straw, Alec,
it's off.

Becky throws her pillowcase to the floor.

BECKY

The race is off. That's absurd!
You wouldn't stand in the way of
this, it's bigger than all of us.

HENRY

Alec, your mother won't let you
ride.

ALEC

Yes she will. She told me, and
she's coming too. She's making
fried chicken.

Henry looks exasperated.

HENRY

Fried chicken... This thing is
turning into a three ring circus.
Don't you see what I'm trying to
tell you. This isn't a kid's game!

(CONTINUED)

BECKY

You can't do this to me. This is the ultimate moment in my entire life. I had to make a lot of plans to pull this off. I had to get Jody Henricks to have a slumber party so I could say I was going and if anybody blabs I could get killed. Do you have any idea what I'm risking?

Henry looks at Alec and shakes his head.

BECKY

Look at this. I had this made. I had to bribe my mother's tailor, but I thought probably in the rush, no one thought...

Becky pulls a shiny black silk horse robe out of the pillowcase. She spreads it on the ground. Stitched in white, it reads: THE BLACK.

Henry throws up his hands.

BECKY

If we have to, we'll go alone. We don't need him.

Alec crosses to Henry.

ALEC

I can't go without Henry, he's my trainer.

Alec takes Henry's hand.

ALEC

I trust you.

Henry is touched, almost in tears. He tries to perk up, but he's still not convinced. Becky clutches her hands to her throat.

BECKY

We're going?

HENRY (mumbles)

Yeah, yeah, we're going. Who am I to stand in the way of a great adventure. I'm the only person with any sense in this group, I can see that. I'm just the only person who's ever even been to a goddam horse race...

CUT TO TRAIN:

New Sc. 80

SCENE #80
ammended 8/10/77

INT BOXCAR DAY/NIGHT

We hear the sound of metal wheels rolling along iron railing. The sound of a low blues harmonica comes in over the train noises.

The Black's POV:
Out the window: past farmlands, small villages, empty spaces. Melancholy. The horse turns his gaze back into the room. We see Belle, Becky, SNoe. Alec is sitting on the stall gate and Henry is in the corner, pouring over racing forms.

Belle is passing out her fried chicken. Everyone takes one, politely.

BELLE

Mr. Dailey, can I offer you a leg?

Henry takes one.

Belle salts a celery stalk and feeds it to the Black.

BELLE

I always wanted to be a hobo, jump trains...
camp out...over the Rockies...up to Alaska...

No response.
Belle starts humming.

BELLE

Why don't we sing? Anybody got a song?

No response.
Belle looks around and shakes her head

BELLE

Come on you deadbeats...

We're headed for the bigtime...
"Crazy Rhythm you go your way...."

Suddenly Belle jumps up on the platform and goes into a song and dance number. As the song nears an end, the Black again looks out the window and we see night fall.

4720

SCENE # A80
new

New Sc 80A

INT BOXCAR DAY

The train has just left the station. Everybody is settling in: Becky is piling hay for seats, Henry and Alec are getting the Black comfortable. Snoe is smoking his pipe.

Belle is sneezing...hay fever.

Suddenly the door slides open and Jim Neville pops in.

NEVILLE

The horse alright? Got everything you need?

Neville throws a bundle to Alec. Its the Black's robe.

NEVILLE

Got to keep that horse under wraps. Cyclone and Sun Raider here we come... flying by the seat of our pants!

He crooks a finger at Henry.

NEVILLE

Dailey, come up front. I want to talk to you.

Alec gives Neville a suspicious look.
Henry sheepishly follows Neville out of the car.

New Sc. 81

SCENE #81
ammended 8/10/77

INT BOXCAR NIGHT

Alec is lying on a cot next to Belle. He is wide awake. A look around the car: Henry is lying on his back, staring at the ceiling. Becky is asleep in a pile of hay. Snoe is sitting under the window, playing his flute.

Alec gets out from under Belle's arm and covers her with a blanket. He goes to the Black, stares at him a moment and then goes to Snoe.

SNOE

How's the fuzzie wussies?

ALEC

Fuzzy what?

SNOE

Butterflies...you know,
down in yourstomach.

ALEC

Yeah, I guess that's it...maybe I'm
worried.

It was so simple on the island.

SNOE

When you choose a path, you've
got to follow it to the end.
You've gone too far to turn around now.
You've taken aim with the Black
and you already let him loose.
Like an arrow. All you can you
do is let him fly where he will.

I tell you Alec, that horse...
he's going to make you smile.

Alec leaves Snoe and goes back to the Black. He crawls into the stall and lies down in the hay at the horses feet. He stares up and sees that the Black is looking out the window at the moon.

Slowly Alec's eyes fall closed and he sleeps.

DISSOLVE into dream.

EXT. TRAIN NIGHT

79

A locomotive engine riding down the track. Great puffs of white steam shoot into the moonlit sky.

INT. BOXCAR NIGHT

80

We hear the sound of a harmonica, and the metallic rolling noise of wheels on iron railing.

The Black's POV:

Staring out the window, watching farmlands, small villages and huge empty spaces roll by. The sound of the wheels begins to blend with the sound of taps.

The horse turns from the window and we see Belle tap dancing. She has pushed back the straw from a circle of the wooden floor and as Snoe plays his harmonica, Belle dances.

BELLE

"Is it the Chattanooga choochoo
call me home..."

We see the boxcar is full. Alec is sitting on the Black's back, on top of the black silk robe. Napoleon is standing next to them. Becky is passing out fried chicken and Henry is sitting back on a cot, watching Belle with amazement.

BELLE

(continues singing)

The tempo of the wheels again takes over the sound of the tap dancing and the Black looks out the window at the moon.

INT. BOXCAR LATER THAT NIGHT

81

Alec is lying on the cot next to his mother. Becky is asleep in a soft pile of hay and Henry is asleep, or at least he appears to be.

Alec is wide awake. Under the window, in the moonlight, we see Snoe. He is taking a number THREE off of one of Henry's old jockey silks and is sewing it onto a beautiful piece of black silk.

Alec goes over to Snoe and stands beside him, staring out the window at the moon and stars. The Black is jumpy, Napoleon nuzzles him to calm him down. Alec looks at his horse, lovingly.

ALEC

What do horses think about Snoe?

SNOE

Well my boy, the horse thinks about running. Birds think about flying, fish about swimming, horses about running. You and me, we have eyes on the front of our heads, but take a look at the Black, his eyes are on the side. You know why?

Alec shakes his head no.

SNOE

The horse is a hunted animal, we're the hunters, like wolves and lions. A colt can run just minutes after it's born, it's natural. And they never really stop running. It's a blessing and a curse.

The Black is staring out the window at the moon, his profile lined up behind Alec's.

SNOE

I think the Black wishes he had wings. He has the mind of an eagle, he soars.

Alec lies down in the hay at the Black's feet. Snoe hums the boy to sleep as the Black gently nuzzles his neck.

As if in a dream, Alec hears the roar of the ocean. He is running on the beach with the Black, then, they lift off and are flying. The roar of the ocean gets louder and the clouds and waves take on form.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRACK - DAY

82

The sound of the train blends into the sound of the crowd.

Alec stands by the rail at the track. He watches the horses pass under the finish wire. He looks at the crowd in the stands. He turns and walks slowly toward the barn alone.

EXT. TRACK STABLES - DAY

83

Alec brushes the Black. He is lost in the shadows of the stall. Henry is oiling tack. He purposely doesn't look up as Jim Neville arrives. With Neville is a slight but well-seasoned man, Spider Spinoza.

(CONTINUED)

JULY 29, 1977

A83 INT. JOCKEY'S ROOM DAY A83 (new scene)

Rows of silks hang from the ceiling of the room and from the lockers against the wall. Several jockeys lounge about. Two are playing cards. Another enters dripping wet from the showers.

We move through the room towards three silks hanging separately on the far wall. One set is the black and purple Mystery Rider silks complete with plumed helmet. As we move, we overhear snatches of conversation.

JOCKEY 1

That Neville...he'll do anything for publicity.

JOCKEY 2

I bet that mystery horse won't even show up.

JOCKEY 3

That mystery horse is a fugitive from the glue factory.

JOCKEY 4

Yeah..and that's straight from the horse's mouth.

JOCKEY 5

Whose gonna wear that monkey suit? Did you see those colors?

JOCKEY C

Those colors beat him anyway.

JOCKEY S

Who is going to ride?...Mendoza?

JOCKEY C

Spider?

JOCKEY S

I don't care who rides...I'm going to beat you both.

JOCKEY C

Oh yeah. Cyclone has never even been pushed to his limit...You want to bet on it?

INT. TRACK STABLES DAY SC. 83

The Black is standing in stall, kept separate from the other horses, in a relatively deserted stable area. Alec is in the stall with him, Henry is outside the stall pulling tack from a trunk, and Snoe is sitting on a bale of hay a few stalls away.

Some grooms are sweeping out other stalls. It's relatively quiet.

We hear a loud commotion from the end of the hall and we see JIM NEVILLE enter with his entourage and some members of the press. He is exclaiming about the race, playing big man in front of the reporters. He stops in front of the Black's stall.

NEVILLE

Hey, hey boys. Take a look.
Four legs and a mass of sleek
muscle that spells history in
the making.

The Black gets a little excited and Alec stands at the stall door. Henry motions to back away.

NEVILLE

Back, back boys. All these
strangers make him nervous.
Right boy, that's better now, eh?
Gentlemen, Jim Neville's mystery
horse!

Alec exchanges looks with Snoe and Henry. Photographers flash cameras.

REPORTER

What's his story Jim? Where'd
you find him?

NEVILLE

Now boys, if I told you, he wouldn't
be the mystery horse, would he?
This thing is big, and that's the
way I want you to play it -- mystery
from head to tail -- topped off by
the mystery rider.
Hiya, kid. this is goin' to be a
college education for you. You'll
never regret it.

Alec looks puzzled and stares hard at Neville. He looks to Henry - who made him a promise he would ride the horse.

HENRY (nervous)

Boys, really not too close.

A84 INT. JOCKEY SHOWER ROOM DAY A84 (new scene)

Spider Mendoza is taking a shower. He wears the Mystery Rider mask to conceal his identity. He does a little dance in the water and sings a few bars of "La Cucaracha."

He picks up a towel as he finishes the shower and moves down the hall into the steam room.

As Spider sits with steam rising all around him, Henry moves to the door and peeks in. Henry slams the door shut and props it closed with a chair. He looks in one final time at Spider and waves him a so-long.

Spider's masked face appears in the steam room window. He sees Henry streaking off with his mystery silks. He tries to get out banging on the door and shouting in Spanish.

B84 INT. JOCKEY ROOM DAY A84 (new scene)

Alec stands in the deserted jockey room staring at the silks hanging from the ceiling.

Henry enters from the shower room carrying the black and purple mystery silks. He is in a hurry but trying to keep quiet. He motions to Alec to act the same. Together they pull off Alec's street clothes and button him into the silks.

In the distance can be heard muffled POUNDING and snatches of SNATCHES PHRASES.

ALEC

What's that?

HENRY (in a whisper)

Don't worry..it's just
someone taking a bath.

Henry continues to help Alec change into the silks swiftly.

84 INT. WEIGH-IN ROOM DAY 84

A large scale monopolizes the center of the room. The Clerk of Scales sits nearby, behind his desk. Three red coated valets wait with the two match race jockeys.

CLERK OF SCALES

Rider number 1...

Jockey 6 dressed in red and white dotted silks walks to the scales and steps on. The needle rests at 123 lbs. after the valet hands him the saddle and lead pad.

VALET 1

Rider number one, Sir.

CLERK OF SCALES

Add two lbs....got that George?
Okay number one.

the valet puts two lead weights on top of the saddle.

JOCKEY C

Thank you, sir

Jockey C hands his tack back to the valet as he leaves the scale. They cross to the far table where another official hands the jockey his arm band with the number 1 and hands the valet a saddle blanket also with the number 1.

CLERK OF SCALES

Rider number two please.

Jockey S in blue and gold diamond patterned silks moves to the scale with his valet. He steps on and the valet hands him the tack.

VALET 2

Rider number two, Sir.

CLERK OF SCALES

Add 1 1/2 lbs...Okay..thank you.

Jockey S and his valet move to the far table and pick up the arm band and saddle blanket for number 2.

CLERK OF SCALES

Rider number three...

The third valet moves into position near the scales alone.

CLERK OF SCALES (annoyed)

Rider number three please!
(Pause)...humpf...mystery rider...

The jockey room door creaks open. All eyes turn and register surprise. Henry and Alec enter. Alec is dressed as the Mystery Rider. The mask and helmet obscure his face. Henry carries his old, worn racing saddle and pad. They move sheepishly across the hall to the weigh-in room. Henry hands the tack to the valet. The clerk of Scales is incredulous. He gets up from his desk and walks to Alec eyeing him suspiciously.

CLERK OF SCALES

...the Mystery Rider?...
Alright..on the scales.

The Clerk returns to his desk as Alec climbs on the scales and the valet hands him the saddle. The Clerk looks up expecting to find the needle in its usual place.

CLERK OF SCALES (sternly)
Rider on the scales please!

VALET 3
He's on the scales Sir.

The Clerk leans over even more incredulous. He checks the scale reading.

CLERK OF SCALES
Alright...add them on.

The valet puts a handful of weights on Alec's saddle. The needle moves but is still far below the weight of the other jockeys.

CLERK OF SCALES
Add more...

The valet adds several more weights to Alec's growing pile. The Clerk leans over and taps the scale to be sure it is reading accurately.

CLERK OF SCALES
....more...

The valet adds still more.

CLERK OF SCALES (laughing)
Take one off..I think we finally made it.

Alec climbs off the scale and hands the saddle and weights to the valet. As he moves to the far table Jockey C taps him on the shoulder.

JOCKEY C
Hey Mystery Mouse...a jokes a joke.
But when that gate pops open, you just
stay out of the way...here, have
a cigarette.

Jockey C hands Alec the cigarette he has been smoking. Alec takes it and inhales a big puff. He blows the smoke back into the jockey's face with a cough.

ALEC
Thanks!

A85 INT. JOCKEY SHOWER ROOM DAY

Spider Mendoza is wrinkled skin and Mystery mask finally pushes his way through the steam room door. The chair flies across the room. Spider flies after it as he rushes out to tell Neville what has happened. He is still shouting to himself in Spanish.

REVISED 7/25/77

85 INT. SADDLING PADDOCK DAY SC 85

The crowd applauds approval as Cyclone draped in white robe moves with a flowing stride around his groom.

Sun Raider in gold robe with blue trim prances savagely around his groom at the far end of the paddock.

The crowd laughs as Snoe and Napoleon move into the paddock and make their way slowly to the end stall..two old friends supporting each other.

Eyes turn. There's a momentary hush and then spontaneous applause as the Black in flowing satin robe enters the arena with Alec and Henry. Flashbulbs pop. The Black's eyes blaze. His nostrils flare. He jumps and circles furiously. He whistles a challenge to the other stallions. Alec struggles to retain control and move the Black into his stall near Napoleon.

Blankets are whipped off the horses and each one is paraded before the cheering fans. The Black prances wildly.

Valets glide into place. The saddling ritual begins. Pads and straps are buckled onto the horses backs.

Cyclone and his entourage leave the saddling barn with Sun Raider's group right behind. Alec, as the mystery rider, Henry and the Black are the last to leave. The crowd flows with them as they move through the gate, the Black raging with energy.

SC 86 EXT. PADDOCK DAY SC 86

The crowd is electric with mumblings and applause as the three magnificent animals circle once around the paddock.

Sun Raider fidgets and chomps on his bit. The Black paws the ground and throws his head. Alec uses all his strength to keep the Black in line.

ANNOUNCER

Riders up!

The other jockeys are boosted into the saddle by their grooms. The owners smile for photographers. Trainers give their last instructions.

Henry gives Alec a leg up and over the Black. The Black paws at the ground. He whistles another challenge to the other horses and arches his neck. Henry winces as Sun Raider returns. The Black screams. Cyclone and Sun Raider with their jockeys aboard head for the tunnel.

SC 86 continued

HENRY

We'll keep him back so there
won't be any trouble.

He strokes the Black's neck. He nods at Henry and they move into line far behind the other horses.

SC 87 EXT. TUNNEL DAY SC 87

Cyclone, Sun Raider and the Black are lead through the tunnel toward the track. Spectators lean over the rail, stretching to get a glimpse of the horses. Tension fills the air. The horses prance. The jockeys bouncing on their backs.

Halfway down the tunnel Henry stops the Black and moves to Alec.

HENRY

There isn't much to tell you.
You know more about handling the
Black than I do. You know what
to do. Just stay on him and ride
like you never have before.

ALEC (incredibly calm)

Don't worry Henry. He'll do it.

Henry gives Alec's leg a squeeze. He turns to the Black.

HENRY

Take good care of my boy.

87A EXT. TRACK DAY 87A

Cyclone, Sun Raider and the Black sweep onto the track galloping slowly down to the 1st pole and circling back to the starting gate.

Alec is distracted by the overflowing crowd. People are stuffed into the stands..perched on nearby rooftops. Their noise is almost deafening. The Black strains to get to the other stallions. Alec tries hard to hold him in.

They move to the waiting gate crew. Cyclone slips easily into the gate.

TO BE CONTINUED

87

Alec and the Black move onto the track. Napoleon whinnies. Alec is distracted by the overflowing crowd - people are stuffed into the stands perched on rooftops. The Black only sees the stallions ahead. He chafes at the bit, dancing. Alec hold him in.

The people strain to get their first view of the Mystery Horse. 88ft

Neville sits in his press box. He smiles, self satisfied, pointing 89ft out the Black to his entourage.

NEVILLE (as radio announcer)

And so ladies and gentlemen,
now you see him - the Mystery Horse -
the one you've been calling
Neville's Folly - and believe you
me, you better keep your eyes on him.

The Black approaches Cyclone and Sun Raider at the starting gate. 90

STARTER

Okay, Joey, get Cyclone in here,
on the rail...good.

The Black's ears go back. Alec sticks with him as he rears high into the air screaming his challenge to Sun Raider who answers the scream. The starter looks anxious.

STARTER

Let's get that horse under control...

Alec pulls the Black down and backs him off. A gatekeeper moves forward to help Alec. The Black jumps and dances away.

ALEC

Just leave us alone, I can
handle him.

STARTER

Alright, pull Sun Raider in.

The gatekeeper moves away.

Sun Raider is loaded into the gate. Alec gets the Black behind the gate. He struggles to keep control. Sun Raider breaks from the gate and lashes out. The Black plunges back at Sun Raider, rearing and screaming, pawing the air. There is a flurry of stabbing hooves. Alec pulls hard turning the Black away. Sun Raider strikes once more catching the Black's foreleg. The gate crew grab Sun Raider and put him back in the gate. The Black goes after Sun Raider and Alec is able to maneuver him into position. The gate snaps closed.

The crowd is aghast.

Alec leans forward stroking the Black's neck, trying to soothe him. He looks down.

He gasps.

There is blood streaming from the Black's foreleg.
He throws one leg over the saddle about to climb down.

ALEC

Oh, no - Black.

The starter bell rings. The gates pop open.

ANNOUNCER (OS)

They're off.

Alec is caught half-half out of the saddle.

Cyclone and Sun Raider pound ahead for position. Alec stands in his stirrups hauling on the reins. But the Black wants to run.

91pt

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS BOX DAY

89pt

NEVILLE

(sinking despite himself)
It's Sun Raider breaking on top and moving ahead. There's some problem with the Mystery Horse. He's barely off the post. His rider's pulling him in. Too bad...it's a two horse race again.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRACK DAY

The Black is furious, foaming at the bit.
He throws his head from side to side trying to lunge ahead.
The wind whips Alec's face.
He keeps struggling to stop the Black.
Cyclone and Sun Raider are 3/8 of a mile ahead, coming into backstretch.
In front of the stands, Alec pulls even harder on the Black's reins.
He momentarily checks his speed. Alec almost falls off from the saddle.
Suddenly there is no contact with the Black's mouth..the reins have snapped.
The Black has his head. Alec leans low over the Black's neck pleading with him to stop.

91pt

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS BOX

NEVILLE

Into the first turn and down the backstretch it's still Sun Raider by three with Cyclone keeping the pace...BUT WAIT A MINUTE...you should

89pt

NEVILLE (CONTINUED)

see this...that Mystery Horse
won't quit. He doesn't stand
a chance but that horse is all heart.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRACK

The crowd is alive.
The Black begins to very slowly gain on the horses ahead.
Alec tugs on the Black's mane.
Into the far turn, Cyclone begins to gain on Sun Raider.

91 pt

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS BOX

NEVILLE

Cyclone is moving up on
the outside. They're in the
far turn with Sun Raider ahead
by a length. Cyclone is making
a real drive. They're neck and
neck coming down the stretch,
but this is a two mile race...can
they go they distance?

89 pt

CUT TO:

EXT. TRACK

The crowd roars as the thoroughbreds pass before them.
The Black responds to the noise as his final challenge.
He lengthens his stride. It's as if he were flying.
there's no stopping him now.

91 pt

CONTINUED

The pounding of hooves almost hypnotizes Alec, the rythm catches his soul. He sees a blur of white rail fly past. He responds to some inner feeling.

He reaches for his cap and goggles. He yanks them from his head and they sail behind. He screams a wild primordial scream, flings his feet from the stirrups and crouches low over the Black, hands and mane entwined. They are running now as they did on the island - full out - wild and free.

The crowd is on its feet. Everyone is straining to see. Roaring.

CUT TO:

Belle's hand flies to her mouth. Becky jumps up and down.

CUT TO:

Neville puts his glasses to his eyes. He can't believe what he sees. Neville begins to eat his microphone.

CUT TO:

Henry is pale and still with commotion all around him. Snoe watches puffing on his pipe.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRACK - DAY

Cyclone pushes ahead of Sun Raider going into the first turn. The Black begins to narrow the distance between himself and the stallions in front. Into the backstretch the Black is $\frac{1}{4}$ mile behind Sun Raider. He is moving faster than anyone could imagine a horse could move. The racing fans have never seen a race like this. They are beside themselves.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS BOX - DAY

NEVILLE

This is remarkable...No one told this horse he couldn't do it...he's running as if he's still in the race.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRACK - DAY

The Black is eating up the distance. Swallowing it as if it wasn't there. Into the far turn Sun Raider begins to gain on Cyclone. The Black is an $\frac{1}{8}$ mile behind...a $\frac{1}{16}$ mile behind coming into the stretch. But the Black swings way wide and to the outside. Spectators fly in all directions thinking he may fly through the rail. The Black spurtson again.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS BOX - DAY

89 comp

NEVILLE

(his voice is screaming)

There's no way...but this big
black horse from nowhere is eating
up the track...He's still gaining

CUT TO:

EXT. TRACK - DAY

91 comp

The Black is thundering down the track. Sun Raider's jockey sees him out of the corner of his eye and moves his horse over to block. The Black roars up behind Sun Raider whose hind quarters churn in front of his nose. The Black swings around the red horse. He barrels past his eyes on Cyclone ahead. They are only a few yards from the finish wire. Cyclone's jockey doesn't even know they are there. With an incredible burst the Black roars past Cyclone and under the wire. Cyclone and Sun Raider slow up as their jockies stand in the stirrups to slow them. The Black keeps on running. He sweeps through the first turn and down the backstretch. The screaming of the crowd is deafening. People all across the nation get the results on their radio sets...the Black has won the match race of the decade.

CUT TO:

Everyone cheering - ecstatically.

88 comp

CUT TO:

92

The Black jumps the fence and gallops across the infield.
He slows and finally comes to a stop near the pond.

He is limping noticeably.

Alec slides to the ground and sinks to his knees looking at the wound.

The crowd slowly begins to hush apprehensively. There is blood everywhere.

Alec rips off his shirt and wraps it around the Black's leg.

ALEC

Oh, Black...please be alright.
Please be alright.

The makeshift bandage seems to work, then blood seeps through the folds of the black cloth.

Alec's head begins to swim. Voices from the past call to him.

HENRY (VO)

....the sound of the leg snapping,
it's the ugliest sound in the world.

SNOE (VO)

...I have a feeling you better leave
that horse wild...it's his soul.

FATHER (VO)
 ...Alexander watched and learned
 the horse's secret...

HENRY (VO)
 ...put him down...put a bullet in
 his head.

SNOE (VO)
 ...a hunted animal...it's a blessing
 and a curse.

FATHER (VO)
 ...one day Bucephalus died, and soon
 after, Alexander died, of a broken
 heart.

The voices mingle over and with another vision.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ISLAND MORNING

93

Alec is riding the Black alone on the island. The feeling is quiet and muted. They race along the beach and up a hill. The Black tenses in preparation for a daredevil leap across a deep cavern. The colors of the scene keep fading as if the image is slowly vanishing. The Black makes his leap and they gallop away into the distance.

A strange voice drifts through the silent void.

VET (OS)
 I don't know...he's lost a lot
 of blood...
 (pause)
 But he's got legs like iron.
 with a little rest, I think he'll
 be good as new.

HENRY (OS)
 Alec, Alec - do you hear that?

EXT. TRACK INFIELD

94

Henry is shaking and hugging Alec.

HENRY
 He's going to be okay.
 He's alright.

ALEC (coming out of his fog) .
....what?

Alec throws his arms around the Black's neck.

MUSIC SWELLS.

95

The crowd pours from the stands into the infield converging in the small figures of Alec and Henry and the Black.
A roar fills the air - Henry and Alec embrace soon joined by Belle and Becky. Belle grabs Alec in her arms.

Through the crowd comes Napoleon and through the cheering multitude Alec sees Snoe waving in the distance.

He turns and removes the Black's saddle, and all the straps and gear from him. Then the roses go around the Black's neck.
Alec smiles with tears in his eyes and the Black prances free before all.

THE END