

SYNOPSIS OF SCREENPLAYS

by

Howard W. Hallman

COMPLETED

Lead, Kindly Light (a Christmas story)

Lead, Kindly Light depicts a group of earthy, querulous, skeptical, and mostly irreverent travelers stranded by a raging blizzard in a small church in the middle of Nebraska on Christmas eve. The pastor persuades them to put on the Christmas pageant in three segments: the versions of Luke, Matthew, and John. As a result, conflicts among the travelers are resolved and personal transformations occur.

The opening segment of *Lead, Kindly Light* shows a diverse group in their natural habitat: ranchers unloading a flock of sheep at a stockyard, a female rock band in rehearsal, a pair of scientists engaged in debate, a businessman and government official in a motel lobby, a general and lieutenant leaving a military base. We become acquainted with them as they filter into a diner part way across Nebraska on the day before Christmas with a raging blizzard outside. Conflicts emerge among them. A highway patrol officer arrives, and she leads them west in a convoy behind a snow plow. After 80 miles they take shelter in a small town church.

The pastor, after taking them in and having a parishioner call around for food and bedding, realizes that he has a potential cast for a Christmas eve pageant. At first many of the travelers resist, but finally all of them agree to participate. As they are cast in roles and begin to consider the Christmas

story, personal transformations commence for several of them and conflict among them begins to resolve. Then they present the story of Jesus' origin as told by Luke, Matthew, and John, each version in sequence with music by the rock band. Each version is interrupted by surprising occurrences that complete personal transformations. A film crew that arrived on a bus videotapes the pageant for later broadcast, at which time, so the Pastor announces, subtitles will be added when carols and hymns are sung so that viewers may join in the singing. The intent is to bring in viewers as participants.

The script for *Lead, Kindly Light* runs 103 pages. The screenplay is based upon a stageplay with the same title, which received five performances in December 1983 at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C.

On the Road to Emmaus (an Easter story)

On the Road to Emmaus is derived from the account in Luke 24:13-36 where the resurrected Jesus walks to Emmaus with two travelers, who don't recognize him. In the course of the trip Jesus draws on the law of Moses and the prophets to explain why it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and then enter into his glory. In the screenplay this is accomplished through a series of flashbacks to Moses, Elijah, Jesus transfigured with the two of them on a mountaintop, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah I, Jeremiah, and Isaiah II. The Voice of God (a man and woman in unison) is heard from time to time. The travelers finally recognize Jesus when he breaks bread with them in Emmaus. They rush back to Jerusalem to share the news with other followers of Jesus.

The script to *On the Road to Emmaus* is 33 pages. With extended action of some scenes, the screenplay would run 45 to 50 minutes.

Destiny

Destiny, as does the book of Job in the Bible, deals with the central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? The screenplay focuses on the remarkable success of the leading character, followed by dire adversity.

To establish that he is a good man, he is confronted with three strong temptations -- money, sex, and power -- and refuses to succumb. Then he is subjected to tragic losses: death of his daughter, her husband, and two children in an avalanche; murder of his son and daughter-in-law; loss of job, house, and possessions; and finally terminal cancer. As these calamities occur, four counselors discuss with him and his wife why God allows suffering. Before he dies, he comes to the realization that God is not omnipotent but rather all-loving and therefore suffers with us.

The script for *Destiny* runs 76 pages and would fit into a 90 minute time slot. The screenplay contains more talk than physical action (the same as Job and, for instance, some of George Bernard Shaw's plays), but with skilled direction the three temptations and the emotional content of the debate can provide effective drama.

TREATMENT

The First Earth Assembly

The First Earth Assembly is set in the year 2010 as delegates are gathering in Kigali, Rwanda for the first meeting of the new Earth Assembly. This body is taking the place of the United Nations. But unlike the UN, which has representatives of governments, delegates to the Earth Assembly are elected directly by citizens in all nations on Earth. The screenplay

alternates between two levels, two times: contemporary maneuvering to choose an Assembly president and a series of flashbacks to the heroic past of some of the citizen delegates. The latter would take the largest segment of time to portray.

There are a dozen flashbacks, each a self-contained mini-drama, plus conversational revelation of the experience of three other citizen delegates. These are persons who have stood up against oppressive governments, put their lives on the line to quell ethnic conflict, displayed courage through nonviolent action, helped poor people improve their lives, and served as forces of peace and reconciliation. These events have occurred in Cyprus, Iraq, Colombia, Nigeria, Chechnya, India, United States (inner city), Kazakhstan, Palestine, China, Philippines, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Rwanda.

These flashbacks are interspersed with efforts of the president of the United States (elected as a citizen delegate) to win support for the Assembly presidency through traditional methods of power politics and diplomacy.

The pivotal scene is a visit to the Burying Ground near Kigali where Hutus and Tutsis symbolically buried their differences in 1998. This remembrance enables the citizen delegates to put aside differences that have arisen among them and agree on a candidate for president, the delegate from Rwanda. She is elected at the first session of the Earth Assembly as the U.S. president, who has been formally nominated, withdraws.

The treatment for *The First Earth Assembly* runs 27 pages. When fully developed, the screenplay would be of mini-series length, long enough for three to four two-hour time slots.

UNDER DEVELOPMENT

A Family Drama

This drama, not yet titled, exposes four generations of father-son conflict. In the end the grandfather achieves a new understanding concerning his long-dead father and is able to forgive him posthumously. This opens the possibility for the grandfather's reconciliation with his own son, who in turn achieves mutual reconciliation and forgiveness with his son (the grandson in the story).

The screenplay will fit in a two-hour time slot.

A Sports Story

The story depicts the 1944 football season of a Midwestern high school with the final year of World War II in the background. Apart from gridiron action, focus is upon working out interpersonal relationships among team members: a hotshot sophomore trying to displace the senior tailback; a Mennonite whose brother is a conscientious objector to the war, a matter resented by a Czech-American, whose homeland is occupied by the Nazi; the arrival of a Polish refugee who wants to play this American game; the third year of racial integration in the league with flareups on and off the field; the wise guidance of the coach as he forges team spirit.

With four victories and five defeats, it is a losing season. But when the players meet at their 10th high school reunion, their conversation reveals how adversity on the playing field strengthened them in the following years as they faced various challenges of life. Someone remarks, "It was a losing season, but it made winners of us all."

The story is mainly a flashback, told by a grandfather in the 1990s to his grandson. The grandfather was the team's quarterback. It ends with

the appearance of three other main players from the team, now in their late sixties.

The completed screenplays and treatment are registered with Writers Guild of America.

For further information, contact:

*Howard W. Hallman
897-3668
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817*

Phone: 301

Fax: 301 896-0013

July 1996

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 1, 1996

Ms. Debra Rodman
Debra Rodman Agency
1212 North Angelo Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Ms. Rodman:

I am seeking an agent to represent me in marketing some teleplays I have written and others under development. Would you be interested?

I am writing you for three reasons: (1) The Writers Guild agency list indicates that you will consider new writers. (2) According to the Guild, you represent Robert McKee, who wrote the screenplay, *Abraham*, produced by and shown on TNT. This suggests that you have an interest in religious topics, a focus of some of my works. (3) You have connections with TNT, which would be valuable to me, as I will explain.

Enclosed is the synopsis of three completed screenplays and a summary of the treatment of a fourth, plus a brief sketch of another one under development. The screenplays are *Lead, Kindly Light* (a Christmas story), *On the Road to Emmaus* (an Easter story), and *Destiny*, which seeks an answer to the question of why if God is good, people suffer. The treatment is called *The First Earth Assembly* and is set in 2010. In the works is a family drama dealing with intergenerational conflict.

Lead, Kindly Light could be a made-for-television movie, produced for a commercial network or one of the cable movie channels. I thought that *On the Road to Emmaus* might fit on the Faith and Values channel, but my inquiry revealed that none of their producers is looking for new scripts at this time. So I wonder whether TNT would be interested because they have done the Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses series. *Emmaus* is shorter, running 45 to 50 minutes.

If you agree to become my agent, I would ask you to submit the treatment of *The First Earth Assembly* to Turner Network Television. I suggest TNT because several years ago Ted Turner sponsored a contest for a novel on how peace came about. I made no attempt to write such a novel but did think about some ideas along these lines. During the past year I decided to work out the plot for a screen drama with the hope that Mr. Turner might be interested in producing it for TNT. But you may have some other ideas for a possible market.

The family drama I am writing is the kind of screenplay that the Hallmark Hall of Fame produces. Whether I can achieve that quality of excellence remains to be seen, but that's what I'm shooting for.

I am semi-retired from a career in public service, working mostly for nonprofit organizations. I am the author of nine books published by social science and university presses and more than 250 articles, papers, and

Ms. Debra Rodman

May 1, 1996

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reports. *Lead, Kindly Light* is derived from a stageplay with the same title, which received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. in December 1983.

If you would like to see the three completed scripts and the treatment, please let me know. I am working freelance and therefore am in a position to travel to confer with you and prospective producers and to be on site if one of my screenplays is produced.

If, however, after reviewing my material you decide not to represent me, please return the synopsis to me in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Mon-Thurs: 301 694-2859; Fri-Sat: 301 897-3668
620-0232

Fax: 301

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Phone: 301 897-3668

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July 10, 1996

The Endeavor Agency
350 South Beverly Blvd., #300
Beverly Hills, CA 92012

Dear Friends:

I am seeking an agent to represent me in marketing some teleplays I have written and others under development. Would you be interested?

I am writing you for two reasons: (1) According to the Writers Guild you represent Lionel Chetwynd, who wrote the screenplays, *Moses and Jacob*, produced by and shown on TNT. This suggests that you have an interest in religious topics, a focus of some of my works. (2) You have connections with TNT, which would be valuable to me, as I will explain.

Enclosed is the synopsis of three completed screenplays, a summary of the treatment of a fourth, plus a brief sketch of two others under development. The screenplays are *Lead, Kindly Light* (a Christmas story), *On the Road to Emmaus* (an Easter story), and *Destiny*, which seeks an answer to the question of why if God is good, people suffer. The treatment is called *The First Earth Assembly* and is set in 2010. In the works are a family drama dealing with intergenerational conflict and a sports story.

Lead, Kindly Light could be a made-for-television movie, produced for a commercial network or one of the cable movie channels. I thought that *On the Road to Emmaus* might fit on the Faith and Values channel, but my inquiry revealed that none of their producers is looking for new scripts at this time. So I wonder whether TNT would be interested because they have done the Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses series. *Emmaus* is shorter, running 45 to 50 minutes.

If you agree to become my agent, I would ask you to submit the treatment of *The First Earth Assembly* to Turner Network Television. I suggest TNT because several years ago Ted Turner sponsored a contest for a novel on how peace came about. I made no attempt to write such a novel but did think about some ideas along these lines. During the past year I decided to work out the plot for a screen drama with the hope that Mr. Turner might be interested in producing it for TNT. But you may have some other ideas for a possible market.

The family drama I am writing is the kind of screenplay that the Hallmark Hall of Fame produces. Whether I can achieve that quality of excellence remains to be seen, but that's what I'm shooting for. The sports story shows the drama of the 1944 season of a high school football team and reveals how the adversity of a losing season made them winners in later life.

The Endeavor Agency

July 10, 1996

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I am semi-retired from a career in public service, working mostly for nonprofit organizations. I am the author of nine books published by social science and university presses and more than 250 articles, papers, and reports. *Lead, Kindly Light* is derived from a stageplay with the same title, which received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. in December 1983. At one time I took a course in television production at American University to gain a feel for technical aspects of this medium.

If you would like to see the three completed scripts and the treatment, please let me know. I am working freelance and therefore am in a position to travel to confer with you and prospective producers and to be on site if one of my screenplays is produced.

If, however, after reviewing my material you decide not to represent me, please return the synopsis to me in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
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August 8, 1996

Ms. Jackie Thompson
Quillco Agency
3104 W. Cumberland Court
Westlake Village, CA 91362

Dear Ms. Thompson:

As you requested, I am sending a copy of my screenplay, LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT so that you can consider whether to represent me in marketing this screenplay, and potentially other screenplays in the future. Also enclosed are a signed copy of the liability release form and a stamped, self-address envelope in case you want to return the script to me.

As I previously indicated, I have flexibility in my schedule so that I can go to Southern California to meet with you and potential producers and directors as appropriate and later to be available during production.

If you need any further information, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

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September 7, 1996

Ms. Jackie Thompson
Quillco Agency
3104 W. Cumberland Court
Westlake Village, CA 91362

Dear Ms. Thompson:

A month ago at your request I am sent you a copy of my screenplay, LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT so that you could consider whether to represent me in marketing this screenplay, and potentially other screenplays in the future. Since then I have completed another screenplay: a sports story entitled A GLORIOUS SEASON, which I am in process of registering with the Writers Guild of America. Would you be interested in reviewing this script as well?

A GLORIOUS SEASON depicts the 1944 football season of a Midwestern high school with the final year of World War II in the background. Apart from gridiron action, focus is upon working out interpersonal relationships among team members: a hotshot sophomore trying to displace the senior tailback; a Mennonite whose brother is a conscientious objector to the war, a matter resented by a Czech-American, whose homeland is occupied by the Nazi; the arrival of a Polish refugee who wants to play this American game; the third year of racial integration in the league with flareups on and off the field; the wise guidance of the coach as he forges team spirit. Events of World War II

appear briefly through newsreel clips, a flashback to the Polish refugee and his family fleeing the Nazis, reports of battle injury of a brother and death of a former player, return of the brother with a missing arm.

With four victories and five defeats, it is a losing season. But when the players meet at their 10th high school reunion, their conversation reveals how resolution of conflict and adversity on the playing field strengthened them in the following years as they faced various challenges of life. Someone remarks, "It was a losing season, but it made winners of us all." Another indicates, "Considering the effects on us then and since, I'd say it was a glorious season."

The story is mainly a flashback, told by a grandfather in the 1990s to his grandson. The grandfather was the team's quarterback. It ends with the appearance of three other main players from the team, now in their late sixties.

If you would like to receive the script for *A GLORIOUS SEASON*, please send me a copy of your liability release form.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

One

We appear on stage in the great drama of Life. We know that the drama started before our birth, but we do not know how it began. We come to realize that the drama will continue after we have finished our part, but we do not know how it will end. Yet, we want to know what Life is all about. We want to understand the Universe in which we live.

At birth we are totally dependent. But we have our five senses -- sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, enabling us to perceive the people around us and our physical environment. In our growing mind we store up these perceptions and attach meaning to them. Gradually we develop the capacity to reason so that we can analyze, sort out, and categorize our observations. We also develop a faculty for intuition that offers us knowledge going beyond logical, sequential thought. Perhaps that comes first as the touch and voices of parents and others convey their feelings toward us.

Communication is an essential trait of human life. We have this capacity at birth: at first simply crying and some physical movement, then building our own vocabulary of sound, facial expressions, and other body gestures. We hear words and tone of voice, we see the faces and gestures of others, and we sense their touch.

As we develop our capacity for speech, we repeat sounds of those around us and apply them to persons, things, and activities. For a while we also make up our own sounds and have a unique vocabulary, perceived as childish babble by adults. But to communicate effectively we must learn the words, phrases, sentences, and eventually the language structure of those around us. We acquire our

language first from parents and other family members, then from playmates and other caregivers, from teachers and other persons we encounter.

We also pick up vocabulary from television, radio, and reading.

Language not only provides names for things, phenomena, actions, and feelings but also contains concepts and particular patterns of thinking. Thus, in acquiring our language we learn how those around us view the drama of Life, what it all means. For belief is embedded in language. From other actors on stage we learn what has come before, as far as they know, though none of them were present at the beginning. We also become aware of what they believe lies ahead. Their explanations, some contradictory, become an important input for us as we seek our own understanding.

Symbols as language.

Through language current understanding of structure of Universe (such as, three story, etc.).

DESTINY

A Reading Drama

by

Howard W. Hallman

January 1994

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Bethesda, MD 20817*

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Friday & Saturday: (301) 897-3668*

Note

This drama deals with the question of why is there suffering if God is good. Although written as a play, it is intended primarily for reading and discussion.

It can, though, be staged or given a dramatic reading before an audience. All performance rights are reserved by the author. Therefore, his written permission and payment of a performance fee is required for any such presentation. To make such an arrangement, write to:

*Howard W. Hallman
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817*

Characters

Caleb Pendleton, professor of biogenetics at a midwestern university

Judith, his wife

Ruth, their daughter

Michael, their son

Stuart Price, professor of economics

Nancy O'Shaughnessy, professor of psychology

George Madison, professor of political science

Rev. Raymond Thompson, university chaplain

Act I. Springtime, mid-1980s

Scene 1. A small conference room

Scene 2. Next day in a biology laboratory

Scene 3. A few days later in Caleb's and Judith's bedroom

Scene 4. A half hour later at a tennis court

Scene 5. A week later in Pendleton kitchen

Scene 6. Same day at biology laboratory

Scene 7. An hour later in a small conference room

Scene 8. One week later in Pendleton living room

Act II. Seven years later

Scene 1. A small conference room

Scene 2. Same day in Pendleton living room

First musical interlude

Scene 3. Six months later, same place

Second musical interlude

Scene 4. Several months later, same place

Third musical interlude

Scene 5. A few months later, same place

Fourth musical interlude

Scene 6. Six months later in Caleb's bedroom

ACT ONE

Scene 1. Springtime in mid-1980s at a mid-western university.

A small conference room. Nancy, George, and Stuart are seated at a table.

NANCY: You know, when we first got this assignment, I thought it was pretty dumb. And so did you, Stuart.

STUART: Yeah, I sure did, Nancy. Why us, of all the faculty?

GEORGE: Before we make our decision, why don't we listen to the instructions again?

NANCY: That's a good idea, George. Do you have them?

GEORGE: Yes, I brought the tape.

He picks up a portable tape recorder and pushes the play button.

VOICE OF AUSTIN: Greetings! I have asked you to perform this task for very

AUSTIN

CLARK: important reasons.

STUART: *(Cynically)* Thank you very much!

NANCY: Shhh!

VOICE OF AUSTIN
CLARK: In this era of relativity and situation ethics, the idea of goodness is rapidly receding. People are saying that there is no such thing as absolute good or absolute evil. Only that some things are better and less bad in particular situations. They say no one can be judged good or bad in terms of what is proper conduct for all of mankind. Rather only as what seems most workable in a particular situation.

NANCY: As if he were an authority on ethics.

VOICE OF AUSTIN
CLARK: I maintain that this is nonsense. There are indeed good men and good women as well as bad ones. What our age needs -- and especially our university -- are examples of good persons to serve as role models for others. It is for this reason that I am asking you to select such a good person from among the faculty whom we can recognize in June at the commencement

ceremony.

STUART: *And prolong the ceremony another fifteen minutes.*

VOICE OF
AUSTIN *To help you make your recommendation, I suggest that you*

CLARK: *conduct a survey of the faculty to determine their opinion.*

When you are done, I would like you to meet with me to offer

your recommendations of who should receive the "good person"
award.

GEORGE: *Thus spake the exalted chairperson, Austin V. Clark.*

STUART: *What a strange task -- to pick a good person.*

NANCY: *Especially since we ourselves can't agree on the characteristics*
of a good person.

STUART: *It's the quaintness of the term that amuses me.*

NANCY: *You sure don't think of the chair of the board of regents as a*
good person.

GEORGE: *No, not the way he made his fortune manipulating the*

commodities market. The thousands of small farmers he ruined. I think his middle initial -- "V" -- must stand for "vicious".

STUART: Remember, George, it was all legal in a free market economy.

NANCY: But hardly ethical, Stuart.

STUART: If he's as bad as you claim, why have three governors in a row appointed him as chairman of the board of regents? And besides, the legislature respects him.

NANCY: Money speaks.

GEORGE: And buys access to power.

STUART: Well, it's not our job to figure out the chairman's motives. All we have to do is select a good person on the faculty.

NANCY: George, your design of a faculty survey was certainly effective.

GEORGE: I just borrowed the methodology from studies of community power structure.

STUART: *(Picking up tabulation sheets)* My computer printout shows a surprising consensus.

GEORGE: *(Looking over his copy of the sheets)* But the returns from the School of Engineering seem to be incomplete.

STUART: Yes, they couldn't figure out what "goodness" is.

NANCY: I understand that Chaplain Thompson objected to the whole idea, insisting that no one is good but God.

GEORGE: What would expect him to say? And in the Philosophy Department when individual nominations came in to the review panel, they had a three hour debate on what is good. I was told that they systematically explored the views of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, contemporary existentialists, and many more.

NANCY: Did they reach agreement?

GEORGE: Not on the definition. In fact, they almost came to blows -- if

you can imagine philosophers fighting. But they did achieve a consensus on a nominee: Caleb Pendleton, professor of biogenetics.

NANCY: *(Leafing through the printout)* So did most of the other departments.

STUART: Yes, Professor Pendleton leads three to one over the next person on the list.

GEORGE: Then he's the winner. Do either of you know him?

NANCY: Yes, I do. I served with him on an all-university research committee last year.

GEORGE: What's he like, Nancy?

NANCY: Quiet, but with a subtle sense of humor. Strong and determined. Courteous.

STUART: What's his specialty?

NANCY: Recombinant DNA research.

STUART: What's that?

NANCY: Gene-splicing.

GEORGE: He sounds like a good choice. But don't you think we ought to test him ourselves?

STUART: How? You know we haven't been able to agree on what makes a person good.

NANCY: Yes, but remember when we first met, we had some ideas on the negative -- the things a good person wouldn't do. Why don't we test Professor Pendleton that way?

GEORGE: Okay. We can determine the most common character flaws of people and find out if Professor Pendleton is susceptible to temptation.

STUART: Like what?

GEORGE: Like power. An obsessive drive for power. And misuse of power once you have it. The political history of the world is

strewn with supposedly good men, and some good women, too, who succumbed to the drive for power.

NANCY: What about sex? In psychology we find that many aberrations of behavior derive from a person's sexual desire. And you certainly read about such cases all the time in the daily newspapers, and not just in the weekly scandal sheets.

STUART: Also, money.

GEORGE: Right. Money is the root of all evil!

STUART: It's not money per se, but rather the excessive love of it.

GEORGE: So why don't we each test him for the weakness we nominated.

Stuart, you on money. Nancy, on sex.

STUART: That's a good choice.

GEORGE: And I on power.

NANCY: Good idea. If he passes our tests, we can indeed certify him as a good person and nominate him to the chairperson for the

award.

STUART: I'll go along with that.

GEORGE: Then it's agreed.

Scene 2. The next day in a biology laboratory.

Caleb is work on an experiment on a lab bench. Michael enters, carrying some books.

MICHAEL: Dad, can I bother you for a few minutes?

CALEB: Certainly, Michael, any time.

MICHAEL: I just came from my anatomy class where I'm getting swamped.

CALEB: What's the trouble?

MICHAEL: It's all the memory work. Hundreds of terms.

CALEB: I'm sure you can manage.

MICHAEL: I never was good at memorizing things. If I flunk this course, i'll never get into med school.

CALEB: When I took anatomy, I had the same problem until I got the hang of it.

MICHAEL: How did you do it?

CALEB: You know that old song? The knee bone's connected to the thigh bone, the thigh bone's connected to the hip bone, et cetera?

MICHAEL: What's that got to do with it?

CALEB: Well, technically the patella is connected to the femur which fits into the acetabulum.

MICHAEL: How can you remember that after all these years?

CALEB: Functionalism. That's the secret.

MICHAEL: How's that?

CALEB: Every bone, tendon, muscle, artery, and all the other parts of the body have specific functions to perform, and they're all connected systematically. So instead of simply memorizing a

long list of individual parts, I analyzed the detailed workings of the functional systems and all the names fell into place.

MICHAEL: I guess the prof has said something like that, but not as clearly.

CALEB: Just don't be discouraged. You'll make a fine doctor, Michael.

MICHAEL: If I get through pre-med, med school, internship, residency.

Boy, that's a long time. And if I can afford it.

CALEB: You know I've told you that your mother and I will help you all we can. And you can borrow the rest.

MICHAEL: That's what worries me. How would I ever pay it back?

CALEB: Banks know that young doctors are good risks.

MICHAEL: But what if I don't go into the usual lucrative practice?

CALEB: Such as?

MICHAEL: Well, Betty and I were talking -- she's the one I had over to the house last Sunday -- that when we both finish med school, maybe we should go into the inner city to serve the poor, or

something like that.

CALEB: *That's certainly a worthy calling.*

MICHAEL: *We wouldn't make a lot of money but would still have our debts.*

CALEB: *I could continue to help you.*

MICHAEL: *I don't want to be dependent forever.*

CALEB: *Don't worry about it, son. It's the same offer my father made me when I talked about being a medical missionary.*

MICHAEL: *You never told me about that.*

CALEB: *I haven't? About the time I met Albert Schweitzer?*

MICHAEL: *Who's he?*

CALEB: *When he was a young man, he was a noted musician and theologian in Germany. Then he became a doctor and opened a hospital in Africa.*

MICHAEL: *Oh yeah. I guess I've heard of him. When did you meet him?*

CALEB: *When I was 14. Dr. Schweitzer gave a lecture on Goethe in*

Aspen. My father was a generous donor to his mission, so we got to go to a private party in his honor. It was very inspiring. I decided right on the spot to be a medical missionary, just like Schweitzer.

MICHAEL: Why didn't you go?

CALEB: Two reasons. During my second year in medical school I got really excited about DNA and the practical applications of biogenetics. Second, I was in love with this girl who was determined to be a lawyer and would never consent to settling abroad, particularly in some undeveloped country. So I decided to stay in the United States and concentrate on DNA research.

MICHAEL: And you married Mom!

CALEB: It was the right decision on both counts.

Stuart enters.

STUART: Excuse me. I'm looking for Professor Pendleton.

CALEB: I am he. And this is my son, Michael.

STUART: I'm Stuart Price from the Business School.

MICHAEL: Dad, I've got to get to the library. See you at home tonight.

CALEB: Goodbye, son.

MICHAEL: Nice to meet you, Professor Price.

STUART: And you too, Michael.

Michael leaves.

CALEB: *(To Stuart)* How can I help you?

STUART: Actually it is I who may be able to help you.

CALEB: In what way?

STUART: You see, one of the informal services I render on campus is to connect faculty with good investment opportunities and to help them cash in on their research.

CALEB: Well, I don't have a lot to invest, with two children in college.

STUART: But your wife works, too, as an attorney, so you are a two-income household.

CALEB: How do you know?

STUART: I do my homework.

CALEB: But I've got other expenses.

STUART: Yes, I know. You support an elderly uncle in a nursing home.

CALEB: You do do your homework.

STUART: It's very commendable for a nephew to look after a bachelor uncle. Anyway, it's not investments I've come to talk about. It's your research.

CALEB: If you're going to advise me to form a corporation to market new life forms, you can forget it. I've already turned down three or four offers. I just don't think it's proper for professors, subsidized as we are, to incorporate to gain private profit.

STUART: No, I've got a different kind of deal. A friend of mine in

Mexico has a friend in Cuba, who has contacts in China. The Chinese are searching for ways to achieve greater food production and want to buy into American biogenetic research -- not officially, but through backdoor channels. They'll pay very well.

CALEB: No, I'm not the one for that.

STUART: I understand that you've been working on ways to transfer genes of nitrogen-producing bacteria into wheat. The wheat would then be able to extract nitrogen directly from the air and vastly increase its yield.

CALEB: I'm working on it, but there's still a lot to learn.

STUART: But you're ahead of everybody else in the world. The Chinese are looking for new kinds of wheat for their northern plains.

CALEB: I'm not interested.

STUART: You do have some heavy financial burdens -- your children's

education, and getting your son through medical school will be real burden, even for a two-income family. Your uncle's expenses. You'll want to give your daughter a nice graduation present this spring. Her wedding later in the summer could cost you five grand.

CALEB: I'll manage.

STUART: Payments would go to a numbered Swiss bank account. I'm talking big money. Six figures a year for the next ten years. There would be absolute secrecy. No one would ever find out.

CALEB: No, thank you.

STUART: You could buy a fishing lodge in Minnesota. Or a condo in Vail for your family's skiing outings. Maybe both.

CALEB: *(Indignant)* No, I said! My services are not for sale to the Chinese.

STUART: What if I worked it out so you were dealing completely with a

third party. If you don't like the Latinos, I have a Canadian colleague with whom we could work.

CALEB: It has nothing to do with the Hispanics. It's just not the kind of deal I want to get involved with. I can solve my financial problems in other ways. And even if I run into difficulties, I'd never go the route you're suggesting.

STUART: *(Backing off)* Okay, okay. I'm just trying to be of service. You're the master of your own fate.

CALEB: I'm not sure how completely that is so, but at least I'm in control of who I work for.

STUART: I'll tell you, though, if I get any leads on any good investments you might approve of, I'll let you know.

CALEB: Humph! *(Gestures to show Stuart the way out.)*

STUART: All right, I'm going.

Scene 3. A few days later at the Pendleton house in Caleb's and Judith's bedroom. Judith is taking clothes from a chest of drawers and packing a suitcase on the bed as she talks with Ruth.

RUTH: How long will you be gone this time, Mom?

JUDITH: The convention lasts five days.

RUTH: What do you lawyers talk about all that time?

JUDITH: Lots of things. I'm on a panel discussing nonjudicial resolution of domestic disputes.

RUTH: Whatever that is.

JUDITH: Settling family quarrels out of court. We'll have a number of sessions on revisions to the ethical code. Lots of other legal issues. And the chief justice will speak at the annual banquet.

RUTH: You didn't used to go to these things.

JUDITH: When you and Michael were younger, I didn't want to be away from you.

RUTH: How does Daddy feel about your traveling?

JUDITH: Oh, he doesn't mind. Sometimes he's so absorbed in his research that he scarcely notices that I'm around. He may not even be aware that I'm gone.

RUTH: And when Daddy goes off to conferences, don't you worry?

JUDITH: About what?

RUTH: Oh, you know. That he might meet another woman, and uh....

JUDITH: *(Laughing)* Oh, Ruth, heavens no! That's the last thing I would worry about. Remember when I went to his conference in San Francisco three years ago? The most boring time I ever had. All they did was talk shop, day and night. Not nearly as much fun as the bar association. Why are you asking all these questions?

RUTH: I've been think about David since he lined up this sales job after graduation. A month after our wedding he'll have to go off for

a training program. I can go with him, but later he'll travel on his own quite a bit, and, well, you know.

JUDITH: It's a matter of trust.

RUTH: Oh, I trust him. I really do. But it's all so new and so different.

Caleb enters dressed in a tennis warmup, carrying a racket and balls.

JUDITH: I have confidence in both of you.

CALEB: Confidence in whom?

JUDITH: In Ruth and David.

CALEB: Of course, a fine couple. *(He gives Ruth a hug.)*

JUDITH: Let's see. I've still got some things in the dryer.

She leaves.

RUTH: Are the odd couples having another doubles match, Daddy?

CALEB: We're really not that odd, Ruthie. Just because my partner has a long gray beard and our opponents are like Mutt and Jeff.

RUTH: Well, I think you're funny.

CALEB: Don't forget. I'm the one who taught you how to play tennis.

RUTH: Yes, and I remember how you used to beat me all the time.

CALEB: Until your high school coach taught you how to chop. Do you let David win sometimes?

RUTH: Are you kidding? He trounces me every chance he gets. But I can still outski him.

CALEB: He's a good man, Ruthie. You've chosen well.

RUTH: I've chosen?

CALEB: Of course. The woman always chooses, although in the old days she let the man think he decided.

Judith enters with some clothing.

RUTH: Like Mom chose you?

CALEB: Exactly. *(Hugging Judith)* You know how pushy these lawyers are.

JUDITH: *(Pushing him away good naturedly)* Caleb, let me go. I'll be late for my flight.

RUTH: You two old lovebirds!

Scene 3. One-half later at a tennis court.

Nancy is seated on a bench, bouncing tennis balls on her racket and on the ground. She is dressed in a short tennis skirt. She glances at her wristwatch and looks around. Caleb enters, dressed in his tennis warmup, carrying racket and balls.

NANCY: Hi, Caleb! Looking for a game?

CALEB: Why hello, Nancy. No, I've come to meet some fellows for a doubles match.

NANCY: I haven't seen anyone.

CALEB: Not a distinguished looking bearded man, about my age? Or a tall man and a little short guy?

NANCY: No, none of them. In fact nobody's around. I was hoping I could pick up a game. Would you volley with me while you wait for your partners?

CALEB: Might as well. *(He takes off his warmup.)*

As the conversation continues, Nancy starts to flirt with verbal nuance and body movement.

NANCY: I haven't seen you around much lately.

CALEB: No, not since our committee finished its report.

NANCY: I've missed being with you.

CALEB: You have?

NANCY: Sure. Have you missed me?

CALEB: Well, uh, I....

NANCY: That's okay. You don't have to answer. I really warm to the strong, silent type, especially someone as handsome as you.

CALEB: Handsome? A stodgy old fellow like me?

NANCY: You're not stodgy. *(Looking him over)* You've got a good physique and nice legs.

CALEB: *(Drawing back a little and laughing nervously)* That's a new one.

NANCY: Yes, really, you do.

CALEB: My wife wouldn't agree. She's always trying to get me to diet.

NANCY: It's surprising she has time to notice you, what with all her lawyering and running off to conventions.

CALEB: She's a very good attorney. Do you know her?

NANCY: No, but I've heard about her through the campus grapevine.
Don't you ever get lonely when she's away.

CALEB: I miss her, if that's what you mean.

NANCY: Don't you long for female companionship?

CALEB: I'm usually too busy.

NANCY: Oh, Caleb, you ought to have more fun.

CALEB: Fun?

NANCY: Yes, why not come over to my apartment for drinks when you're through playing tennis. *(She reaches out to touch him.)*

CALEB: *(Drawing back)* Is this what you mean by a pick-up game?

NANCY: I just think that men and women ought to get better acquainted, if you know what I mean.

He looks around squeamishly.

Don't worry, your partners needn't find out. Nor your wife.

CALEB: I'll tell you straight, Nancy. I don't fool around. My covenant with Judith is too strong. But if I did, a person like you would certainly be on the top of my list.

NANCY: That's the nicest put down I've ever had, Caleb. Come on.

Let's volley some.

They leave for the court.

Scene 5. A week later in the Pendleton kitchen.

Ruth and Michael are seated at a table.

RUTH: Michael, what are you going to get Daddy for his birthday?

MICHAEL: I don't know. It gets harder every year. I'm tired of buying a shirt and necktie.

RUTH: And he must be tired of the ties you pick out.

MICHAEL: Watch it.

RUTH: Remember the crazy things we've given him over the years?

MICHAEL: Yes, like the sweater you knitted when you were in junior high.

RUTH: It was a little baggy.

MICHAEL: And one sleeve was longer than the other.

RUTH: But he wore it anyway. He's always been a good sport. Even the time you gave him a rabbit.

MICHAEL: I was just a kid and had only two dollars to spend. It was just after Easter and they were on sale.

RUTH: What ever happened to Doc?

MICHAEL: He got away. Or maybe Dad took him to his lab.

RUTH: Oh, that's awful! He never would have done that.

MICHAEL: No, probably not. I know. I'll get him some fishing lures.

 The guys down at Al's Sport Shop will know the kind he likes.

RUTH: I think I'll give him a box of chocolates.

MICHAEL: Chocolates? That's what we give Mom.

RUTH: Yes, I know. But do you ever notice that Daddy usually eats at
 least half of them.

MICHAEL: Including the ones you punch out to avoid the soft ones.

RUTH: Yes, chocolates it will be.

Scene 6. The same day at the biology laboratory

Caleb is busy at his workbench. George enters.

GEORGE: Professor Pendleton?

CALEB: Yes.

GEORGE: I'm George Madison of the Political Science Department. I've come to ask your help on a class project.

CALEB: I know nothing about politics.

GEORGE: That's precisely why I've come to you. You see, I have a graduate seminar on political campaigning and we want some real experience. Since there are no major campaigns for public office this spring, we're looking for something in campus politics.

CALEB: You should've done it in the fall for the student elections.

GEORGE: It's a spring semester course. We have discovered, though, that in a about a month the Biology Department will be electing a new chairperson, and I understand that you're a candidate.

CALEB: Some of my colleagues have suggested my name.

GEORGE: And you're running?

CALEB: Not exactly. I'm willing to serve. Indeed, I would feel honored to be selected. But we don't campaign for the position.

GEORGE: Well, I've heard that one of your younger colleagues, Professor Danielson, is mounting a campaign.

CALEB: So I've noticed.

GEORGE: And it doesn't bother you?

CALEB: Well, yes it does, but not because he's campaigning.

GEORGE: What then?

CALEB: It's his emphasis.

GEORGE: Emphasis?

CALEB: He's one of the younger group of superb technicians who see research as the primary focus of a university with teaching almost an ancillary function.

GEORGE: And you disagree?

CALEB: Of course. The university exists to teach. Research is important because you can't teach properly unless you're close to the frontier of knowledge. But teaching has to remain central.

GEORGE: And if Danielson gets elected chairperson, he'll switch priorities?

CALEB: To the extent he can. That's what I'm afraid of.

GEORGE: And you'd like to prevent that?

CALEB: Yes, I would.

GEORGE: Would you say any other professor who shares your views on teaching could defeat Danielson.

CALEB: Probably not.

GEORGE: Could you?

CALEB: Perhaps. But it's not certain.

GEORGE: Then that's why you need an effective campaign. My students

and I will assist you.

CALEB: *In what way?*

GEORGE: *I'm teaching them about both positive and negative campaigning. On the positive side, we'll help you formulate a position paper on where you want the department to go, and we'll work behind the scenes to build up a network of supporters.*

CALEB: *And the negative?*

GEORGE: *We've done some preliminary research and have hit paydirt. It happens that my department coordinates an interdisciplinary program on science and public policy. This year one of the science students in the course is in the same field of biology as Danielson. We enlisted his help, and he came up with a startling discover -- that ten years ago Danielson plagiarized a substantial portion of his doctoral dissertation*

from a Japanese report.

CALEB: He did?

GEORGE: Yes. You see, our student served two years in the Army in Japan, learned Japanese, and knew the professor who did the study.

CALEB: Plagiarism is a serious charge. Are you certain? Mr.

Danielson impresses me as very bright and wouldn't need to cheat.

GEORGE: I can document it.

CALEB: That's very disturbing.

GEORGE: In your campaign you wouldn't be the one to disclose it. We would slip it to someone else in your department, who could quietly circulate it.

CALEB: But that would destroy young Danielson's career.

GEORGE: He would deserve it.

CALEB: That's awfully harsh treatment.

GEORGE: But think of the gain. It would assure your selection as chairperson. Consider all the good you could accomplish. You would be in a position to maintain a strong teaching emphasis. You would be able to draw in more faculty who share your views that biogenetic research should benefit humankind.

CALEB: I suppose I could.

GEORGE: Your selection could help stop the trend toward commercialization of university research which Danielson and his crowd are drawn to.

CALEB: You know about that?

GEORGE: Yes, I follow the trends -- maybe with a little envy because we in political science don't have that much to market.

CALEB: Certainly as department head I would discourage that.

GEORGE: Then you'll do it? Use us to handle your campaign?

CALEB: No, I won't.

GEORGE: You won't? Why not?

CALEB: I simply cannot be a party to ruining a man's reputation.

Plagiarism is wrong, but what's past is past.

GEORGE: Not even for the greater good you could accomplish?

CALEB: No, not even for that. *(He heaves a big sigh.)*

Scene 7. An hour later in a small conference room.

Stuart and Nancy are seated at the table.

STUART: Well, I think we have our man.

NANCY: If George's test produces the same results as ours.

STUART: He went there more than an hour ago. He should be back by now.

NANCY: Here he is.

George enters.

GEORGE: You're both right. He's truly a good man. I couldn't find a chink.

NANCY: So it's confirmed. We'll notify Mr. Clark that Caleb Pendleton deserves the "good person" award.

STUART: I agree. But I wonder why.

NANCY: Yes, what are his underlying motivations?

GEORGE: I tried to find out after my testing was done. He reminds me most of a Sunday school teacher I had in junior high before I quit going, but he says he's not an active church member.

NANCY: So he's a humanist?

GEORGE: No, he professes to be a Christian believer.

STUART: But he's not really one of those sanctimonious do-gooders.

GEORGE: No, he isn't.

NANCY: Maybe it's his Quaker grandfather's influence. The one he's

named after.

GEORGE: How do you know that?

NANCY: I asked him. It's such an old-fashioned name, I wanted to know its origin.

GEORGE: Possibly. But he told me he grew up as a Presbyterian.

STUART: Yeah. His father made a lot of money when he moved to the Midwest from Pennsylvania to start a tool factory. Around here most of the rich are Presbyterians.

GEORGE: He says he couldn't reconcile predestination with all the openness of creation he observed in biological studies. Science is always willing to consider new truths, he claims, while church dogma is closed. "Locked up" was his term, separated from real life. I can certainly agree with that.

NANCY: Whatever the source of his motivation and beliefs, he seems to have integrated science and philosophy, religion and ethics.

It's made him a good person worthy of the award.

GEORGE: *Agreed.*

All three clasp hands in center of table.

Scene 8. One week later in the Pendleton living room.

Judith is hugging Caleb.

JUDITH: *Oh, Caleb. I'm so proud of you.*

CALEB: *It's the last thing in the world I expected. It's certainly
nothing I ever aspired to.*

JUDITH: *Never, ever?*

CALEB: *Well, I'll admit that now and then when I've been frustrated
over something or other, I've thought I could run this university
better. But I never imagined that they would appoint a
biologist as university president. I don't know anything about
fundraising.*

JUDITH: *Luckily you have a chairperson who does.*

CALEB: *You mean Austin Clark. Yes, the rich always know other rich people.*

JUDITH: *What was this "good person" award business, anyway?*

CALEB: *It seems that it was something Clark cooked up to identify somebody the faculty would respect. He was tired of all the turmoil caused by Dr. Robinson, who has tried to apply business management techniques to the university.*

JUDITH: *Yes, it was a mistake to bring in a corporation manager as president.*

CALEB: *I think Robinson realized that, too, in resigning after three years.*

Michael and Ruth burst in.

RUTH: *(Hugging Caleb) Oh, Daddy, I just heard the good news. I'm so excited.*

CALEB: I'm a little excited myself.

MICHAEL: *(Hugging Caleb)* Congratulations, Dad.

CALEB: Thanks, son.

MICHAEL: Does this mean we'll move to the president's house?

JUDITH: Yes, toward the end of June.

RUTH: Can we have my wedding reception in the garden?

CALEB: I suppose.

JUDITH: If we can get everything unpacked and arranged by August.

CALEB: I'm sure we can.

MICHAEL: If it would help, I can postpone my trip to Alaska.

CALEB: We'll see. It's too soon to figure those things out.

The doorbell rings.

MICHAEL: I'll get it. *(He leaves.)*

RUTH: Mom, we can cancel the reservation we made for the reception at the country club, can't we?

JUDITH: I think so. Let's give them a call.

Judith and Ruth leave as Michael enters with Raymond.

MICHAEL: Dad, Rev. Thompson is here to see you.

RAYMOND: Professor Pendleton, I'm Ray Thompson, university chaplain.

CALEB: Yes, I know who you are.

Michael leaves.

RAYMOND: I just heard the news about your appointment. I came by to congratulate you.

CALEB: It was an unexpected honor, and also a challenge of unknown dimensions.

RAYMOND: From what I've heard about you, you'll serve the university exceedingly well.

CALEB: I hope so.

RAYMOND: I've always had a close working relationship with the president. I hope that it will continue with you.

CALEB: I'm sure it will. It can start by your participation in my inauguration.

RAYMOND: With pleasure.

CALEB: After that we can get better acquainted. I've seen you at faculty meetings, but we haven't done a lot together.

RAYMOND: No, we haven't. But you know, a week ago I had a dream in which you appeared.

CALEB: Really?

RAYMOND: Yes, a strange dream. You see, some students asked me to preach in chapel on the Book of Revelations. It was a real challenge because I've never been able to grasp all the symbolism there. For instance, the number seven keeps appearing: seven angels with trumpets, seven seals, seven bowls of wrath.

CALEB: Yes, I'm aware that for some people "seven" has a magical quality.

RAYMOND: *In my dream there was parade along University Drive.*

Students were lining up, cheering. At the head of the parade were seven huge cattle. Black angus. You know, the kind doctors and car dealers raise for tax purposes.

CALEB: *It sounds like you were having pharaoh's dream. The one Joseph interpreted.*

RAYMOND: *Exactly. A man was riding on the first steer, and the other cattle followed without riders. At the time I didn't know who it was, but I now I realize that the rider was you.*

CALEB: *Me?*

RAYMOND: *Yes, you. Seven days later you are appointed university president. So maybe it means that you will have seven prosperous years.*

CALEB: *Let's hope so. And what came next? Seven skinny cows for seven years of adversity?*

RAYMOND: No, not at all. Next came four riders on horseback. The first was a beautiful woman with long flowing hair, riding a pure white horse. She had a suckling child strapped to her breast with a sling. She held the reins in one hand and with her other arm was flinging spears, which became lightning when they struck.

Next came a wild-eyed, shaggy-haired man, carrying a submachine gun. His horse appeared bright red. When it got close I realized that it was roan, covered with blood. He was followed by a scraggly mob.

The third rider couldn't have been a greater contrast. He was dressed in a three-piece, gray flannel suit, riding upright on an enormous black stallion. When I looked close, I saw a mobile telephone attached to the saddle horn.

The fourth and last horse was pale gray. The rider seemed to

be a knight in armor. As the horse passed me, the rider's visor fell open, and I saw not a face but a human skull.

Then I noticed that the crowds had vanished and that I was alone on the street. There was a strange light, as occurs at twilight after a thunderstorm. All was quiet, and I had a sense of perfect peace. Then I awoke.

CALEB: Sounds like your home-video version of the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

RAYMOND: Perhaps. Nevertheless, I believe that dreams have meaning. Sometimes God communicates to us in that manner. I didn't really identify the rider on the first steer as you until today. Now I'm sure that it is a good omen for your presidency.

CALEB: I hope so. And the other riders? Do you think they're giving you a message for me?

RAYMOND: Indeed, I do. But exactly what, I'm not sure. All I can say is,

Professor Pendleton, you should be careful not to let prosperity
lead to your downfall.

CALEB: What will be, will be.

RAYMOND: That may be so, but beware of what the future holds. Beware.

End of Act One.

ACT TWO

Scene 1. Seven years later in a small conference room.

Stuart, Nancy, and George are seated around a table.

NANCY: George, you called us together. What do you have in mind?

GEORGE: It's been seven years since we had the strange task of picking somebody for Austin Clark's "good person" award and wound up selecting the next university president. I thought it would be fun to reminisce.

STUART: I'd say we did surprisingly well. Caleb Pendleton has been an excellent president. He got through the uproar four years ago when the Biology Department unseated Danielson as chairperson after someone discovered his plagiarism. These days the faculty is content, and the students aren't unhappy, which is about as much as you can expect. And the endowment fund has increased substantially.

NANCY: The university has moved up in national academic rankings. Human services training is highly rated. We had our first winner of a Nobel prize in physics.

GEORGE: And, of course, the national basketball championship.

STUART: You can't attribute that to the president.

GEORGE: Maybe not, but it's all part of seven good years. We've all come to know Caleb personally, and I think we can all agree that he's a topnotch person.

STUART: Yes, he is.

NANCY: Given what we knew about our crazy assignment, our three tests were as good as any.

STUART: Perhaps. But as I've thought about it since, I think we really omitted one very important test of goodness: can he stand adversity? That's truly the test of a good person.

GEORGE: Right you are. I certainly see that in politics. Somebody gets

elected by a landslide and is on top of the world. Then things fall apart. How he acts then tells far more about him as a person than when he's top dog.

NANCY: *Or her.*

GEORGE: *Okay, him or her. Top dog or top cat.*

Nancy winces.

STUART: *What goes up always comes down. Like in the business cycle when prosperity is always followed by recession.*

NANCY: *Stuart, if your cycle theory applies to human life, we may have a chance to observe how Caleb responds to adversity.*

GEORGE: *Maybe we will. It will be interesting to behold.*

STUART: *It certainly will.*

Scene 2. The same day in the Pendleton living room.

Caleb, Judith, and Michael are seated. Ruth brings in a cake with seven

lighted candles and places it on the coffee table.

RUTH: *(As she enters)* Happy anniversary, Daddy!

CALEB: Anniversary?

RUTH: It's been seven years since your inauguration.

CALEB: So it has.

RUTH: I thought we should have a small celebration before Michael
leaves.

CALEB: Do you blow out anniversary candles?

JUDITH: Of course.

RUTH: Make a wish.

Caleb ponders for a moment and then blows out the candles. Laughter.

MICHAEL: What'd you wish for, Dad?

CALEB: For seven more wonderful years.

RUTH: Oh, you shouldn't have told us. Now it won't come true.

MICHAEL: Oh, Ruthie, that's superstition.

Judith cuts and serves the cake.

JUDITH: I'm sorry Bobby and Susie aren't here. They like cake so much.

RUTH: You know how Bobby has been pestering his father for his own fishing pole. This was the only chance David had to take him to the sports store before we leave for Minnesota. Of course, Susie had to go along.

CALEB: I think I was five, like Bobby, when I got my first fishing pole.

RUTH: How old were you when you learned to ski?

CALEB: Oh, that wasn't until I got to college.

RUTH: We're going to start Bobby next winter.

JUDITH: We miss Betty, too, Michael.

MICHAEL: Tomorrow she'll be back from saying goodbye to her folks.

JUDITH: Peru seems so far away for you to go.

MICHAEL: It's where we're needed, and where Betty and I could work together to apply our medical skills.

JUDITH: I'm still worried about your debts. It's cost a lot to educate two doctors. How can you expect to repay them with the low pay you'll be receiving?

MICHAEL: Don't worry, Mom. The bank's given us an extension. And we really appreciate you and Dad co-signing the note.

CALEB: It's the least we could do.

JUDITH: But the interest keeps accumulating.

MICHAEL: Dad has always encouraged public service, and you do a lot of pro bono legal work.

CALEB: Judy, I'm sure it'll work out eventually. They should be doing things like this when they're young. Remember, you didn't earn much your first year of legal practice, nor did I as an assistant professor. Now things have worked out very well for us.

JUDITH: I know, but I do worry. You've never been very practical about

money, Caleb.

MICHAEL: At least Ruth has married prosperously. David has had a meteoric rise in his company.

RUTH: He's the youngest vice president for sales they've ever had, and he's earned it.

JUDITH: I'm so proud of all of you.

CALEB: So am I.

MICHAEL: It's getting too sentimental for me. I'm going up to the attic to get some gear.

RUTH: I'll go with you. I haven't been up there for several years. I've forgotten what I've stored.

Doorbell rings. Judith leaves to answer it.

CALEB: I think some of your dolls are still there. Maybe Susie could have them.

MICHAEL: Or maybe some of my old trucks. At age three Susie should

have a choice.

Ruth and Michael leave. Judith returns with Raymond.

RAYMOND: *Caleb, I just dropped by for a few minutes to congratulate you on seven good years.*

CALEB: *Sit down, Ray. Have some cake.*

RAYMOND: *No, thank you.*

JUDITH: *Are you sure?*

RAYMOND: *Yes, I had a late lunch.*

CALEB: *It has been seven good years.*

RAYMOND: *The accolades you received at the university senate last week were well deserved. It's unusual for the faculty to have such praise for the administration.*

CALEB: *I still feel that I'm part of the faculty, even though I have time to teach only one course each year.*

JUDITH: *Things have gone well, and for our family, too. Almost too*

well. In fact sometimes in the dark of night I awaken in apprehension. All these good things can't go on forever. Life just isn't unbroken happiness.

CALEB: It's not been all that easy running a big university, though I'll admit it's gone better than I expected.

RAYMOND: Yes, I use you as an example with the students I counsel. I tell them there are two ways to go, that the Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish. You are my primary illustration of one who walks in the way of the Lord, Caleb -- even if you aren't a churchman in the conventional sense.

CALEB: Don't overdo it, Ray.

RAYMOND: After all, you're the only person I've ever known who's been certified as a "good person". *(Chuckles)*

CALEB: Oh that. It was just Austin Clark's eccentricity. I never made

that claim for myself.

RAYMOND: *But you have prospered.*

CALEB: *I don't feel my success has been an award for goodness. Nor if Judy's anxieties come to fruition and things turn out bad, I'll not look upon it as punishment. What will be, will be, often without regard to what we do or don't do.*

RAYMOND: *You're wrong, Caleb. If there is no connection between conduct and just deserts, there would be no basis for personal ethics.*

CALEB: *You don't think people act rightly out of a sense of what is right, regardless of outcome?*

RAYMOND: *Maybe a few do, part of the time, but it's a pretty weak thread to hold society together. No, to do what is good, people have to expect reward, if not in this life, then in the next life -- all in God's fair judgment.*

CALEB: I guess it's your job to think about these things. As for me, I tend to live day by day, doing my best, accepting the good and the bad, struggling forward but not looking too far ahead or agonizing on what's behind.

RAYMOND: You're more of an existentialist than I thought, Caleb.

CALEB: Not so in the usual meaning, Ray, for I see our existence as part of a broader, enduring, though steadily evolving order. I perceive God as the underlying creative and sustaining force of life, yet ever present to us personally.

JUDITH: You two are getting too profound for me. I'd rather get more directly involved in the struggle of good and evil by attacking the weeds in my garden.

CALEB: Of course, Judy, weeds have their place in the natural order. They exist because....

JUDITH: *(Breaking in fondly)* Oh Caleb, do you have to have a scientific

explanation for everything?

Music interlude, such as an upbeat Bach choral.

Scene 3. Six months later in Pendleton living room.

Caleb, Judith, and Raymond are dressed somberly and are bowed in prayer.

RAYMOND: And dear Lord, who art the Father of all the families of the earth, look with compassion upon this bereaved family, and pour thy heavenly comfort into their hearts. Enrich with thy presence those who mourn and be their refuge and strength in this time of sorrow. Hear us for thy mercy's sake. Amen.

The doorbell rings.

CALEB: I'll get it. *(He leaves.)*

JUDITH: We appreciate your kind words, Raymond.

RAYMOND: It's the least I can do, Judith.

Caleb returns with Stuart, Nancy, and George. With her greeting Nancy buzzes Judith on the cheek. Judith offers her hand to George and Stuart.

GEORGE: *(To Judith)* We dropped by to offer our condolence.

NANCY: It's a tragic loss.

STUART: I know you'll miss them.

CALEB: *(Gesturing)* Won't you sit down? *(They sit.)*

They didn't have a chance. The avalanche came during the night without warning.

JUDITH: The poor babies. It was my grandson's first day skiing. Ruth called from the lodge at supper time, telling how well he had done.

STUART: Were others lost, too?

JUDITH: No, only our dear family.

CALEB: The lodge manager said it was a freak accident. They were in a cabin just below a steep slope. They've never had so much

snow as this year, and never an avalanche before.

JUDITH: *Oh why, oh why did it happen to them? A loving mother, a devoted father, two beautiful children. Just as life was beginning for them.*

RAYMOND: *I know it was a great loss for both of you. I share your sorrow.*

JUDITH: *Why did God allow this to occur?*

RAYMOND: *God often works in ways we don't always understand, Judith. Maybe he chose to call them to himself. He does that sometimes with the brightest and the best. Who are we to know? We must have faith in God's goodness. Indeed, in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.*

JUDITH: *(Indignant) Where do you see good in this? What was God's purpose, anyway?*

STUART: *I don't think you can blame it on God. Contrary to the*

language of insurance policies, you really can't call this an "act of God".

JUDITH: How do you explain it?

STUART: These things happen by chance. Who the victims are is a matter of random selection with no particular malice toward them. It's nothing they've done, good or bad. It's like in the market economy. Some gain, some suffer. But overall the results work out for the best.

JUDITH: As if an unseen hand guides destiny. Is that what you're arguing, Stuart?

STUART: That's the 18th century term. Today we're more sophisticated. Statistical analysis shows us trends and probabilities. We know that a certain number of people die every year from accidents, others by heart diseases, still others by cancer. No one can predict with certainty who the victims

will be, but we can calculate probabilities.

JUDITH: *There's little comfort in that.*

STUART: *No, but that's the way life is.*

NANCY: *It's not all random, though. I've done research in hospital emergency rooms and a surprising large number of so-called accidents can be said to be self-inflicted. Many people are drawn to their own destruction. I won't say that was the case for your daughter and her family, but I have noticed that people who live in guilt or deep despair are high risktakers. They get into situations of great danger, almost with the hope that something will happen.*

CALEB: *No, I'll not buy that at all. Ruthie was buoyantly happy. She enjoyed skiing for its sheer exhilaration. She loved life and certainly wouldn't have placed her children in jeopardy.*

GEORGE: *Well, I find that human beings are often the cause of such*

mishaps. Drunk drivers, industrial polluters, manufactures of faulty products. Who, for instance, built that cabin beneath the steep slope? No doubt it was the developer who wanted to profit by using every possible inch of land. Yet inevitably there would be very heavy snow and an avalanche. Ever so much suffering is caused by human actors -- acting out of ignorance, or greed, or some other expression of self-interest. Ruth and her family were as much victims of human failure as an act of nature.

RAYMOND: That's what you would expect from sinful humankind. But don't worry. God will judge those whose wrongfulness caused this tragedy. For God is just, and none of us can escape his righteous judgment. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

JUDITH: But what about the innocent victims? Didn't Jesus insist that

the eighteen killed when the tower of Siloam fell were no worse offenders than other Jerusalem residents?

RAYMOND: *Yes, but he also told his listeners, "unless you repent you will likewise perish." Maybe in this unexpected event God is sending a message to you, Caleb.*

CALEB: *You think it's punishment for my wrongdoing? Do you think I'm overly proud of my accomplishments? Do I have hidden faults which must be atoned for? Are you claiming divine retribution?*

RAYMOND: *I didn't say that exactly. However, none of us is free from sin. Too often we follow the desires of our own hearts rather than God's holy way. We stray like lost sheep. God chastens us for our shortcomings and rebukes us for our transgressions. Do you think that God would pervert justice?*

CALEB: *I refuse to accept this sorrow as judgment on Ruth and her*

family, or on us. I don't believe that God functions in this manner.

GEORGE: Then you would agree with Stuart and me that the cause was a combination of human error and impersonal forces of nature. We don't need to rely on outmoded superstitions about a God who doesn't exist.

RAYMOND: George, you deny the existence of God? Come to chapel some Sunday, and let me introduce you.

GEORGE: I tried that when I was an undergraduate. I went to church for a whole semester and never found God there.

CALEB: If you'll take the time, I can put you in touch with God.

GEORGE: And how would you do that?

CALEB: I can offer you two ways. First, there's a technique of centering down, as the Quakers call it, to put your deeper consciousness in touch with the presence of God, with the

indwelling spirit, the light within. It takes discipline but provides an awarding experience.

Second, we could spend some time in my old laboratory to work through the genetic process and explore the course of evolution. You would be able to discover evidence of God the creator, working over the course of time.

GEORGE: Surely there are other hypotheses, like natural selection.

CALEB: But nothing else explains the purposefulness of creation.

GEORGE: Well, if this God of yours is so purposeful and creative, why did he create a world with such uncontrollable natural forces?

CALEB: The irony, which I can't fully explain, is that my family was the tragic victim of one of the greatest gifts of the world: the constancy of nature. Under identical conditions H₂O changes from liquid to solid always at the same temperature. In a particular circumstance, water vapor in the air always turns to

snow and falls to the ground. Gravity is constant. The characteristics of mass and friction of various substances never change. When there is a lot of water vapor drifting in cold air, there will be great snowfalls. At certain places the weight of the snow will produce an avalanche. It's an inevitable process.

GEORGE: Sounds like scientific determinism to me.

CALEB: No, not at all. The same constancy of nature enables living creatures to walk, run, jump, and fly as they determine. The predictability of chemical reactions enables us to utilize our ingenuity to produce medicines. The regularity of the earth's rotation gives us predictable day and night and the seasons so that we can plant crops at appropriate times. We can't expect God to alter the course of nature precipitously for benefit of even the best people.

RAYMOND: You're taking too much away from God, Caleb. I believe he

can intervene and determine when these natural laws will have their effects, and when they can be set aside -- even though we don't understand how and why. I've read of a number of cases where people have survived accidents which can be explained only by providential intervention.

NANCY: Yes, I have, too.

RAYMOND: For example, there was this man in a car hit by a truck. He was knocked into the back seat, and the car was crushed except for the small space he occupied. All he got was a few scratches. And there are dozens of other cases like that. Yes indeed, I believe in God's miraculous powers.

CALEB: I don't rule out remarkable coincidences that produce unexpected results and seem to have a higher purpose. Synchronicity is what some people call it. Yet, in the broader order of nature there is considerable indeterminacy.

Physicists note this in their work in quantum mechanics. Mass and motion within the structure of the atom interact in ways which are immeasurable and unpredictable. Overall there are probabilities that certain effects will occur, but a particular occurrence is uncertain and indeterminate.

NANCY: Yes, that seems to be so in micro-physics.

CALEB: Working at a somewhat larger scale, the genetic code places fingerprints on a fetus while in the mother's womb, but the exact pattern is not only unpredictable but also unique. So also the weather on a particular day is different from that of any other day, though sometimes similar. Perfect weather prediction is impossible because of indeterminacy caused by the interaction of a multiplicity of forces. Yet, each force has constant laws of behavior that can be understood, and we can work out some comprehension of their relationships.

STUART: *Where does God come in to all this, Caleb?*

CALEB: *God works through these forces in numerous creative ways and utilizes them to achieve far-ranging purposes. But I'm doubtful that God can intervene in specific events to alter the forces of nature, such as suspend the law of gravity to prevent an avalanche. Nevertheless, in the long run God's purposes are fulfilled.*

JUDITH: *But in the short run, Ruth, David, Bobby, and Susie are dead.*
(She weeps.)

CALEB: *Yes, in the here and now we suffer and grieve. Affirming a higher purpose saves us not from our sorrow. Nor is it a matter of our goodness or our sinfulness. The travail of nature penetrates our lives because we are a part of nature. We suffer as all nature suffers.*

JUDITH: *So you conclude that suffering is inevitable?*

CALEB: Yes. In one sense, it's natural. Our destiny. An inescapable part of life. Like breathing and eating. All we can do is endure, as best we can.

He comforts her in her sorrow.

Musical interlude, such as a somber Bach choral.

Scene 4. Several months later in Pendleton living room.

Caleb, Judith, Raymond, Stuart, Nancy, and George are gathered, again dressed somberly.

JUDITH: It was good of you to stop by. We need friends at times like this.

NANCY: That's what friends are for.

CALEB: I hope you can come to the service tomorrow in the university chapel. Their bodies are arriving tonight.

STUART: You can count on us.

GEORGE: Do you have any details on how it happened?

CALEB: Michael and Betty had this small clinic in the middle of a shantytown on a hillside outside Lima. They were serving mothers and children particularly but would take anyone who came. It was straight medical practice, and nothing else. However, the revolutionaries are trying to oust all Americans, no matter what they are doing. Michael was never one to be intimidated.

JUDITH: Like his father.

CALEB: Like his mother, too. He refused to go. So they shot him and Betty in cold blood and set fire to their clinic. The residents turned on the perpetrators and would have killed them except for the intervention of governmental soldiers. But by then it was too late. Michael and Betty were dead.

Caleb shows his grief. Judith sobs.

RAYMOND: Yes, I'm sure they were doing God's work. All I can say is blessed are those who suffer for the Lord. As we share in Christ's sufferings, through Christ we share abundantly in his comfort, too.

JUDITH: *(Weeping)* Why should it happen to them? They were serving people, not exploiting them.

GEORGE: Unfortunately they were victims of larger social forces of which they and all of us are a part. For many decades there have been gross inequalities in Peru and other countries of Latin America. The rich exploit the poor and keep them subjugated. They control the government, the banks, and the church. U.S. corporations have long been part of the system of exploitation. Our own government has supported the corporations, given guns and planes to dictators, and sent in the CIA to undermine

social reform. So we share in maintaining an unjust society.

CALEB: But they were there to help remedy injustice.

GEORGE: Yes, but what have any of the rest of us done to put an end to despotism? I mean you, me, and all the others. To the extent that we haven't acted, we have allowed injustice to go uncorrected. It's our own disinterest, what Rev. Thompson would call sins of omission, which contributed to your son's death.

JUDITH: Oh, that's not fair. You can't expect us to take up every cause of injustice in the whole world.

CALEB: Of course, we can't. We have to concentrate on a few things we can accomplish.

GEORGE: That may be true, but then that means you have to accept the risk that you and your loved ones suffer as the byproduct of uncorrected wrong.

STUART: *George, you seem to be an adherent of the do-gooder's belief that human actions can cure social ills, that if we could merely alter social and economic conditions, that no one would suffer any more. That's just not true.*

GEORGE: *So what's your explanation, Stuart?*

STUART: *Personally I think there's a lot to be said for the folk wisdom in many parts of the world which recognizes that humans are powerless to change the course of nature and the action of the gods. Filipino folk culture, for instance, contains a belief in the wheel of fortune, turning every year, moved by some unknown force. If a person has a bad year, he merely hopes next year will be better, but he accepts whatever fate bestows upon him. Sure, we'd all like to be dealt a new hand with better cards, but there isn't much we can do to overcome our fate.*

RAYMOND: *Stuart, you believe that we can't change our fate while George*

insists that we can correct the world's injustice if we only try harder. I see it differently from both of you. There is a cosmic force of evil loose in the world. Sometimes it moves in on the weak and takes over their lives. But at other times Satan mobilizes his forces against where God's goodness seems to have its greatest stronghold. Satan seems to be challenged to fight hardest against the best of God's people. I really think that's why the revolutionaries murdered Michael and Betty and burned their clinic.

STUART: You're saying that Satan exists outside God's power?

RAYMOND: Yes, he does. The Bible and world history offer considerable evidence of Satan's malevolent cunning. He tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Throughout his healing ministry Jesus cast out evil spirits who had taken possession of people. Paul continually confronted the power of the devil and even felt that

his own thorn in the flesh came from Satan. I've seen plenty of examples in modern times.

NANCY: Whether evil can be so personified, I'm not certain. But I do know that there are dark forces within the human psyche -- within you, me, and everybody -- which seek to undermine the so-called higher motivations of love and kindness. They take hold of people, cause illnesses, produce bizarre conduct, destroy personal relationships, drive individuals away from people who love them. The victims seem powerless to overcome the destructive forces flowing from within.

RAYMOND: Right you are. No less a figure than St. Paul wrote, "I do not the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

CALEB: I'm sorry, Ray, but I simply cannot accept your dualism. It goes against what I know about the unity of the natural order. A single set of physical laws is present throughout the universe

as far as science can behold. Events once attributed to evil powers, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, lightning, drought, and floods, can all be explained as natural phenomena. Likewise mental illness and other behavioral aberrations have natural causes, some of them a matter of chemical imbalance, though we still have a lot to learn.

RAYMOND: How do you see it then, Caleb?

CALEB: Within the overall unity of the natural order, there is also interaction and interdependency. For example, plants produce flowers whose nectar attracts bees which fertilize blossoms as they gather their food. Birds eat fruit and spread seeds. The food cycle of species consuming species, for all its harshness, demonstrates interdependency.

NANCY: Yes, I suppose that's true.

CALEB: So also there is social interdependency, though as a geneticist, I

know less about it. But as university president I am impressed about how much the university depends upon innumerable persons playing their roles: the men at the power plant, the crews from buildings and grounds, bookkeepers and secretaries, the development office, dorm managers, the bookstore, and lots more. Classroom teaching and research could never occur without this complex support system.

RAYMOND: I never thought of it that way.

CALEB: I have also seen how inequities can develop, such as lack of women in administrative positions -- which we're now overcoming, and how protests against such inequities can disrupt the smooth functioning of the system.

GEORGE: That's for sure.

CALEB: Mike and Betty were caught up in a set of social forces of which they were a part but which was broader and deeper than what

they were doing. I don't understand why they were victims, but I can't accept the contention that Satan attacked them because they were God's outpost. Anyway, why would the supreme creator create a deviant, antagonistic force? And if the force of evil counterbalances the force of good, what assurance do we have that Satan won't triumph?

RAYMOND: I didn't mean to imply that Satan would win ultimately. We know that God is omnipotent, and when he decides to act, he can and will overcome the forces waged against his kingdom.

GEORGE: All your God talk again. It's not somebody I know. I even read a book on meditation as you suggested, Caleb, but I still can't make contact.

CALEB: Keep trying, George.

JUDITH: If God is omnipotent, Raymond, why doesn't God act to stop suffering? Why didn't God prevent Michael's and Betty's

death?

RAYMOND: *God's ways are sometimes inscrutable, but he is just. Even Job, for all his questioning of God's actions, ultimately bowed in contrition and said to God, "I know that thou can do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted."*

CALEB: *No, I can't accept that conclusion.*

RAYMOND: *You're saying that God isn't omnipotent?*

CALEB: *Yes, I am. Omnipotence is a theoretical construct of philosophers who themselves longed for power, who thought they could make a better world if they reigned as philosopher-kings.*

RAYMOND: *But the Bible speaks of God the Almighty.*

CALEB: *The writings of priests, who would like to control everything. They projected such powers onto God.*

RAYMOND: *You're treading on thin ice, Caleb.*

CALEB: Well, let me tell you. I've held power, and it's no blessing. In fact, it's a hellish situation.

RAYMOND: But not if you combine it with omniscience, as God does. He is both all-knowing and all-powerful.

CALEB: All knowing? No, that even makes it worse because you perceive the consequences of your power. Take, for instance, the controversy that raged a couple of years ago when I awarded tenure in the Sociology Department to Peter Hansen.

NANCY: Yes, and turned down Elizabeth Brady.

CALEB: Exactly. The departmental faculty deadlocked on six ballots, so the decision went to an all-university committee, which couldn't decide either. So it came to me. As I studied their credentials, I found that they were both highly rated as teachers but that Ms. Brady, though five years younger, had published more papers and had innovated a new field survey

technique. So on those grounds the university should retain her services.

NANCY: Right, she should've been promoted.

CALEB: But I also knew that Hansen had a handicapped child who needed expensive medical treatment and that his wife worked as a real estate agent to help pay the bills. Even if he could get appointed elsewhere, it would be hard for her to transfer her business. On the other hand, Ms. Brady's husband was a freelance writer and could work anywhere. So this was the basis for the decision.

RAYMOND: All things considered, it was the right choice.

CALEB: It caused me a lot of trouble at home, though, because Judy insisted I was needlessly subjective and unfair.

JUDITH: That's for sure.

GEORGE: But it turned out all right. Liz quickly received a very good

appointment back east, and she's just been put in charge of a major research project.

CALEB: Yes, but her husband refused to move. Claimed his roots were too deep in the Midwest to relocate. So they separated and divorced.

STUART: There were probably other factors in their relationship that you didn't know about.

CALEB: But if I were omniscient, as Raymond insists God is, I would have known and would have to worry about that and manipulate an endless chain of consequences. No, in exercising power I had to choose, and this caused pain and suffering. Ray, does your all-powerful God likewise knowingly cause suffering for humankind?

RAYMOND: Uh...No, I don't think that he does. That's the work of Satan.

CALEB: Then Satan limits God's power?

RAYMOND: *Only because God lets him.*

CALEB: *But if God is good, why doesn't God stop Satan and put an end to suffering.*

RAYMOND: *It doesn't work that way.*

CALEB: *No, it doesn't. But for other reasons than your explanation.*

RAYMOND: *Then why?*

CALEB: *To tell the truth, I haven't figure it out completely. Sometimes I think that it's chaos that exists impersonally and independently of God's domain. Indeed, that's what the myth in the first chapter of Genesis indicates. Out of chaos, God created order. But God's creative activities are not yet completed.*

From that perspective, the murders of Michael and Betty are a product of the chaos of social existence, just as another kind of chaos occurs in the randomness of physical existence. It wasn't

the will of God.

STUART: *So your explanation is that we're still waiting for God to gain an upper hand over chaos.*

CALEB: *God has accomplished a tremendous work so far, but there is much more to do. And on the social side, God can't do it alone but needs us as allies in the struggle.*

GEORGE: *That's an interesting theory, but it still doesn't explain suffering. If God is good, as Rev. Thompson claims, why is there so much suffering in creation. Caleb, do you really believe that God is good?*

CALEB: *Yes, I do. But I'm still working out why we suffer. Meanwhile, I feel my losses intensely. (He sobs.)*

JUDITH: *And so do I. (She weeps.)*

Musical interlude, such as a somber Bach choral.

Scene 5. A few months later in the Pendleton living room.

Caleb, Judith, Raymond, Stuart, Nancy, and George are there, dressed less somberly than in the previous scene.

NANCY: *(To Caleb)* We came immediately after we heard that Austin Clark had dismissed you from the university presidency.

STUART: After all, we are the ones who got you into it.

GEORGE: It's totally unfair.

RAYMOND: I don't see how it could do it by himself.

GEORGE: You know how he controls the board.

STUART: It's because of your department, George. Hiring that Marxist political scientist.

NANCY: Who the legislature wanted fired.

CALEB: Well, if I hadn't stood up for academic freedom, we couldn't maintain a great university.

NANCY: But what was that about the Latino connection?

CALEB: It seems that the publicity about Michael's murder got our board chairman started. He wove a strange web of connections through some of my former international associates in biogenetic research on food production. Claimed I was aligned with communist radicals in Latin America.

NANCY: What nonsense!

GEORGE: What stupidity!

STUART: I'm sure Mr. Clark was wrong in your case, but I can understand the reasons for his concern.

JUDITH: We have to move out of this house, too. And all the furniture belongs to the university. On top of that we've had the expense of defending against the law suit, which the board of regents won't reimburse us for.

NANCY: I was the most ridiculous case I ever heard about.

GEORGE: Yeah. It took an unscrupulous lawyer to dream up a malpractice suit by those students and their parents against the university president because he wouldn't fire a Marxist professor.

JUDITH: I'll admit it's those kind of frivolous suits that's giving the law profession a bad name.

CALEB: But hardly frivolous in the cost of legal defense.

JUDITH: Even though Caleb won, it's seriously depleted our personal savings. And to add to our economic woes Caleb is unemployed.

CALEB: Well, they say that trouble sometimes comes in triplets: job, house, money.

GEORGE: If you'd like, I'll organize a campaign among the faculty and students to keep your presidency. You're popular. We could shut this place down.

JUDITH: We could go to court with a claim that your contract was violated.

CALEB: But I've always served at the pleasure of the board.

JUDITH: At least we should try for a monetary settlement.

CALEB: No, I think a protest campaign and legal action would be both futile and unnecessarily divisive. What is it, anyway?

Position, material possessions.

RAYMOND: That's the spirit. Remember it was Job who said, "Naked came I from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

JUDITH: That's fine for you to say, Raymond, with your secure position.

CALEB: You still have your legal practice, dear. With no children, no grandchildren, that's enough income

JUDITH: Don't forget, we have to pay off Michael's and Betty's debts

from medical school.

CALEB: I guess I could become a consultant. Unless I decide to settle down as a housespouse.

JUDITH: Housespouse? There would be the cost of cooking lessons!

CALEB: Surely cooking isn't much different from my lab work.

JUDITH: Uh-oo!

Laughter

NANCY: Besides your learning that new skill, Caleb, there may be another benefit to all the calamities that have befallen you.

CALEB: Really?

NANCY: Yes. I've noticed that adversity often helps strengthen character.

CALEB: Aren't I tough enough already?

JUDITH: In what manner, Nancy?

NANCY: Consider the small child learning to walk. She or he has to fall

down many times before developing the necessary coordination. Athletes have to go through a lot of painful exercise and constant practice to hone their skills. Musicians have to play technical studies over and over before they can undertake sonatas and concertos. Athletes and musicians alike are much better performers as a result of disciplined preparation.

JUDITH: Lawyers, too.

NANCY: Likewise people develop psychological strength when they face and overcome challenges. I've seen very shy students who are afraid to go to job interviews, but after they force themselves to try a few times, their self-confidence grows enormously. The same thing happens to housewives who enter the labor market, and to widows who become the sole support for their children. We may not welcome adversity, but it produces moral and psychological growth.

RAYMOND: I fully agree. As St. Paul indicated, "suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us."

Furthermore, on some occasions God deliberately uses adversity to test our strength and steadfastness, as he did when he contested with Satan over Job's faithfulness.

CALEB: No, I can't agree with that. God would never purposefully inflict individual suffering.

STUART: You know, sometimes I think that in the larger perspective, evil doesn't exist at all but is merely part of the broader good. You certainly see this in economic progress. For instance, historically in many parts of the earth repeated drought led people to develop irrigation systems. Damaging floods are now contained by levees and dams. The lightning rod was invented as a protective measure. The cutoff of

middle-eastern oil in the 1970s led to the development of more efficient automobiles.

GEORGE: *You're saying that necessity is the mother of invention.*

STUART: *Exactly.*

GEORGE: *But what about the blacks who were displaced by mechanization of cotton production?*

STUART: *It gave them an opportunity for better life in the city.*

GEORGE: *Do you know what that was like? And what about middle-aged workers who lose their jobs when factories close?*

STUART: *It removes obsolete facilities thereby strengthening the national economy.*

GEORGE: *In effect you're saying that some have to suffer for the broader good. Evil remains, and individual hardship, too.*

STUART: *That's the way the world is made.*

JUDITH: *Well, if God is really good, why didn't God create the world*

differently? I can think of lots of ways it could be better. I'd have less pain, less social conflict. I'd give people challenges but not beyond their strength. And, Nancy, I've seen people crushed rather than strengthened by what they were forced to bear. I'd assure that innocent people wouldn't suffer.

RAYMOND: That's what God wanted in the first place, Judith. Before Adam sinned, the Garden of Eden offered a much better existence.

CALEB: So you explain it with the myth of Adam's fall, do you, Ray?

RAYMOND: Call it myth if you like, Caleb, but it's still true that humankind is incorrigibly corrupt. We all have sinful Adam within us. The desire to trespass into God's domain, to seek the forbidden fruit. Sin begets sin, through all the generations.

JUDITH: And what about Austin Clark? How does he fit in?

RAYMOND: From what I've heard of our board chairman, he must be a field

commander in Satan's army.

CALEB: *Well, frankly, I don't accept your notion of original sin.*

RAYMOND: *Then how do you think human evil started? Aren't we all selfish sinners?*

CALEB: *It's true that we all express self-interest, but I don't define it as sin. Coded into life is an instinct to survive. You see it in the one-cell protozoa, like the amoeba, and in the more complex coelenterata, like sea anemones and jellyfish. More developed species show a strong will to survive individually in quite sophisticated ways -- through food gathering, flight, and fight.*

STUART: *It's every creature looking out for itself.*

CALEB: *But there's more to it. Different life forms also seek preservation of their species. For instance, parent birds attack cats to save their young. In human beings the will to live takes many expressions, personally and socially. This is the*

foundation of self-interest in all its manifestations.

NANCY: Yes, self-interest does appear in many different ways.

CALEB: Unfortunately self-interest can become excessive. Sometimes group and national expressions of self-interest threaten other people's lives -- even the whole human race when you think of nuclear weapons. If there is such a thing as sin, it's excessive self-regard. This leads to actions harmful to others. It blocks us from constructive connection to society. It separates us from God.

RAYMOND: But somebody must have been the first sinner, and it's been handed down ever since. We all share in Adam's guilt.

CALEB: Personally I can't fathom first cause. I observe who I am, how other people and other species behave. I see the survival instinct in all of them, each born as a new being. That's what they inherit from genetic stock. Each acts it out in ways that

you might call sinful, but because of the individual's own basic nature. There is no need for a primeval Adam to instruct us.

JUDITH: That's interesting speculation, but it doesn't explain why we're the victim of the chairman's actions. Why shouldn't he suffer instead of us? If there ever was an evil old man, it is he.

RAYMOND: That's another one of God's mysteries. As he used the Assyrians and Babylonians to chastise Israel, so God sometimes uses evil people to discipline his chosen persons who have drifted from his ways. As later the Assyrians and Babylonians were taken down, so also God will eventually take care of the chairman. But when and how is not for us to say. All you can do, Caleb, is accept God's judgment.

CALEB: I really don't see it that way.

RAYMOND: How do you understand it?

CALEB: Surely my personal shortcomings -- what you call sin -- aren't

all that bad. I am paying the price of free will, which is another of the great gifts of humankind.

JUDITH: *I agree with you that it's a precious gift, darling, but it is also one of our most perilous possessions.*

CALEB: *True. But on the positive side free will is the source of human growth and creativity. Free will enables us to examine our world, question handed-down knowledge, work out our own understanding, make choices, bring about improvements, determine our own fate to some extent. It's the basis of artistic accomplishments and the foundation of moral character.*

STUART: *It is also a source of error, wrongful behavior, self-suffering, and cruelty to others.*

CALEB: *Indeed it is. That's the cost, but it's worth it. Furthermore, I'm beginning to understand that you have to know evil to truly*

appreciate the good.

GEORGE: That's all right for you to say. But for all you've suffered, others have suffered unendurably more. Blacks in America, Jews in Hitler's Germany, oppressed people in the Third World. What's loss of job and money compared to that?

CALEB: Remember, I've lost children and grandchildren, too.

GEORGE: Yes, that was great sorrow. But what about Auschwitz where three million Jews were exterminated? And Hiroshima and the slaughter of other wars? Where was your just God in these events, Rev. Thompson? Caleb, you can talk all you like about the regularity of nature, interconnections of humankind, free will and moral choice, and what you call excessive self-interest. But how do you explain genocide?

STUART: Yes, how do you?

GEORGE: For myself I'm about convinced that Nancy's explanation of

dark forces of the inner psyche explain it. Or maybe even his idea of Satan (*gesturing to Raymond*). You yourself have admitted that God isn't omnipotent. Is your God good? Is he just? Or does he really exist at all? Maybe your sense of the indwelling spirit is merely self-hypnosis. Perhaps your detection of patterns in evolution is your rationalization of events which just happened by chance.

RAYMOND: Of course, God exists, George. He is the Supreme Being, the Lord of Creation, who requires that we all worship and serve him.

NANCY: He, him. Why not she, her?

STUART: Or why not nothing at all? We're modern people who no longer need the myth of a Supreme Being to explain things.

CALEB: Yes, George, God exists. God is real, Stuart. But instead of thinking of God as a being -- our Father in heaven, or our

Father and Mother in heaven, Nancy -- I perceive of God as a force. The creative force of the universe, present everywhere.

NANCY: God as a force, you say? Not a being? That's certainly a different approach.

CALEB: Yes, it as a force that God creates. But it is not a distant, impersonal force but rather a force with which we interact.

GEORGE: Interact with an abstract force? That doesn't seem real.

CALEB: It's no abstraction, George. It's very real.

GEORGE: How do you know for sure?

CALEB: My grandfather taught me that there is that of God in every person. I used to think that he meant that everyone is worthy of dignity and respect. That's true, but I have also come to understand that in the depths of our being we have access to this awesome creative force. As we interact, we realize that God is a loving force.

Furthermore, as I observe the universe I have become aware of God's action as an integrating force, constantly striving to overcome chaos of nature and human society. I know all that with certainty.

GEORGE: Yes, but you haven't offered a satisfactory explanation of suffering.

CALEB: When I work it out, I'll let you know.

GEORGE: Please do because until I solve this riddle, I'll remain a disbeliever.

Musical interlude, such as a Bach choral (perhaps "Komm, Susser Tod").

Scene 6. Six months later in Caleb's bedroom.

Caleb is in bed asleep. Raymond is sitting beside the bed. Judith enters with Nancy, Stuart, and George.

JUDITH: Caleb's been very uncomfortable the last few days, but he insisted on coming home.

STUART: When I visited him at the hospital a couple of weeks ago, he was very chipper. He was talking about getting back to his lab to work on a new experiment.

JUDITH: He's had his ups and downs, but he'll never get back to the lab. Just yesterday he was in deep despair because he felt that he may have brought on the cancer by not being able to handle adversity properly. He's read that underlying psychological factors can cause cancer.

NANCY: Well, yes, there has been some research along those lines. In fact, certain personality types get particular types of cancers. But there are also environmental factors. For instance, there is a high incidence in certain lines of work. And I dare say his exposure to chemicals in the laboratory over the years must be

the decisive factor.

JUDITH: *That's what his doctor told him. Caleb says that if that's the case, it's worth the price. He feels his scientific contributions required taking the risk. Yet, he retains this nagging doubt that he himself may be responsible.*

Caleb stirs, awakens, and raises his head.

CALEB: *Who's there?*

JUDITH: *It's George, Stuart, and Nancy.*

They move to the bedside.

CALEB: *Have you come to test me some more? Or to counsel me?*

NANCY: *Neither. We're friends who just want to spend some time with you.*

CALEB: *I don't have much left, but I'm happy to share it. Why are you looking so solemn, Stuart. Has the stock market fallen? Or is it the natural pessimism of your profession?*

STUART: I can't disguise it, can I? I feel deeply sorrowful to see you suffer so. I keep thinking of the poet who wrote that we live in a vale of tears.

NANCY: *(To Stuart)* You're a cheerful one!

CALEB: That's all right. I know I'm dying. It's my destiny. And yours, too, all of you.

RAYMOND: But none of you need to despair. After all, they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

GEORGE: That's from the Bible, isn't it?

RAYMOND: That's right.

GEORGE: I've been reading a lot of Bible lately, but I still can't find God. And I've come across some writers who are as glum as Stuart. Like the one who wrote, "I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wiseman has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. Yet I perceived that one fate comes to

all of them. *Vanity of Vanity!*"

RAYMOND: *Oh, that's the preacher in Ecclesiastes. He was the supreme pessimist.*

CALEB: *Yes, far too pessimistic.*

RAYMOND: *The trouble with that view is that it takes too short a perspective of time. As St. Paul explained, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."*

GEORGE: *And when will this be?*

RAYMOND: *At the end of time. At the moment of the last judgment. The voice of prophecy has revealed to us the words of Christ, "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay everyone for what he has done."*

CALEB: *You know, just as I haven't been able to comprehend first cause, neither can I grasp end-time. I can't even say whether I*

expect my spirit to continue after my body dies. If it does, will it be an immediate rebirth, or will I waken only on judgment day? If the latter, I probably won't be aware of the time gap in between.

NANCY: *Like a long night's sleep.*

CALEB: *Something like that. If it occurs, I'll accept continued life in the spirit as a bonus. Yet, the uncertainty doesn't really bother me. Life has been fulfilling with all its joys and sorrows.*

He has a coughing spell. Judith gives him some water.

JUDITH: *You'd better rest a while.*

GEORGE: *Yes, we'll be on our way.*

CALEB: *No, stay. (To George) You and I have a matter to complete.*

GEORGE: *We do?*

CALEB: *Yes, some months ago you asked: what about Auschwitz? This was really a vast magnification of the question of why God*

would let anyone suffer, especially the innocent.

GEORGE: It still perplexes me.

CALEB: I've come to realize that God suffers with us.

RAYMOND: You're speaking of Christ the suffering servant, God the Son.

CALEB: No, I'm talking about God in God's full nature. The suffering God.

RAYMOND: You're claiming that God, the Almighty One, can suffer. Caleb, that's not really possible.

CALEB: No, not the almighty. The all-loving God, the creative force of the universe. What I've long perceived in biology to be God's integrating power in creation, I now understand to be love.

JUDITH: God's love for us?

CALEB: God's love for all creatures. And you cannot love without suffering. Didn't we learn that, Judy, in loving each other, in raising our children, and in losing them?

JUDITH: Yes, that's so.

CALEB: So God, too, experiences the suffering of love. Thus, the personification of God as Father, and as Mother, too, is understandable. Think of God's agony when Jesus, who lived as a true son of God, was crucified.

JUDITH: Yes, it must have been great sorrow for God.

CALEB: But as God didn't abandon Jesus, so God never abandons us. Not when we suffer from natural causes or from human cruelty. Not when we bring suffering on ourselves. Not even when we ourselves are cruel. *(Coughs)*

RAYMOND: But don't forget the hope and promise contained in Christ's resurrection.

CALEB: Yes, that was God's fulfillment, but the crucifixion had to come first. As God suffered with Jesus on the cross, so God suffers with all of us in life and death. That's also part of our destiny.

And how God must have suffered at Auschwitz, at Hiroshima, and at all other sites of man's cruelty to man.

GEORGE: *I suppose you're right.*

NANCY: *Does this realization ease your own suffering? Does it take away the pain to believe that God suffers with you?*

CALEB: *No, the physical pain is still there, but the anguish of my soul is gone. (Sighs) I'm at peace with myself. I'm at peace with God.*

He coughs again. Judith comforts him. He clasps her hand, looks at her lovingly, and silently forms the words, "Oh Judy". Sighs deeply. Closes his eyes. His head slumps as he dies. Judith releases his hand and places it on his chest.

JUDITH: *God's peace be with you, Caleb.*

The end.

DESTINY

A Reading Drama

by

Howard W. Hallman

February 1994

6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Monday-Thursday: (301) 694-2859
Friday & Saturday: (301) 897-3668

This drama deals with the question of why is there suffering if God is good. Although written as a play, it is intended primarily for reading and discussion.

Characters

Caleb Pendleton, professor of biogenetics at a midwestern university

Judith, his wife

Ruth, their daughter

Michael, their son

Stuart Price, professor of economics

Nancy O'Shaughnessy, professor of psychology

George Madison, professor of political science

Rev. Raymond Thompson, university chaplain

Act I. Springtime, mid-1980s

Eight scenes. Caleb and his family are introduced. Stuart, Nancy, and George test him with temptations of money, sex, and power. He doesn't succumb. As a "good person", Caleb is appointed university president.

Act II. Seven years later

Six scenes. Successively Caleb's daughter and her family are killed in an avalanche, Caleb's son and daughter-in-law are murdered by revolutionaries in South America, Caleb is fired as university president and evicted from the president's house, and Caleb is afflicted with terminal cancer. As this unfolds, Caleb, Judith, Stuart, Nancy, George, and Raymond discuss why such calamities can strike good people if God is good and just. The final scene offers Caleb's solution.

Act II, Scene 6. Six months later in Caleb's bedroom.

Caleb is in bed asleep. Raymond is sitting beside the bed. Judith enters with Nancy, Stuart, and George.

JUDITH

Caleb's been very uncomfortable the last few days, but he insisted on coming home.

STUART

When I visited him at the hospital a couple of weeks ago, he was very chipper. He was talking about getting back to his lab to work on a new experiment.

JUDITH

He's had his ups and downs, but he'll never get back to the lab. Just yesterday he was in deep despair because he felt that he may have brought on the cancer by not being able to handle adversity properly. He's read that underlying psychological factors can cause cancer.

NANCY

Well, yes, there has been some research along those lines. In fact, certain personality types get particular types of cancers. But there are also environmental factors. For instance, there is a high incidence in certain lines of work. And I dare say his exposure to chemicals in the laboratory over the years must be the decisive factor.

JUDITH

That's what his doctor told him. Caleb says that if that's the case, it's worth the price. He feels his scientific contributions required taking the risk. Yet, he retains this nagging doubt that he himself

may be responsible.

Caleb stirs, awakens, and raises his head.

CALEB

Who's there?

JUDITH

It's George, Stuart, and Nancy.

They move to the bedside.

CALEB

Have you come to test me some more? Or to counsel me?

NANCY

Neither. We're friends who just want to spend some time with you.

CALEB

I don't have much left, but I'm happy to share it. Why are you looking so solemn, Stuart. Has the stock market fallen? Or is it the natural pessimism of your profession?

STUART

I can't disguise it, can I? I feel deeply sorrowful to see you suffer so. I keep thinking of the poet who wrote that we live in a vale of tears.

NANCY

(To Stuart) You're a cheerful one!

CALEB

That's all right. I know I'm dying. It's my destiny. And yours, too, all of you.

RAYMOND

But none of you need to despair. After all, they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

GEORGE

That's from the Bible, isn't it?

RAYMOND

That's right.

GEORGE

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RAYMOND

Oh, that's the preacher in Ecclesiastes. He was the supreme pessimist.

CALEB

Yes, far too pessimistic.

RAYMOND

The trouble with that view is that it takes too short a perspective of time. As St. Paul explained, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be

revealed to us."

GEORGE

And when will this be?

RAYMOND

At the end of time. At the moment of the last judgment. The Revelation to John has disclosed the words of Christ, "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay everyone for what he has done."

CALEB

You know, just as I haven't been able to comprehend first cause, neither can I grasp end-time. I can't even say whether I expect my spirit to continue after my body dies. If it does, will it be an immediate rebirth, or will I waken only on judgment day? If the latter, I probably won't be aware of the time gap in between.

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JUDITH

You'd better rest a while.

GEORGE

Yes, we'll be on our way.

CALEB

No, stay. (To George) You and I have a matter to complete.

GEORGE

We do?

CALEB

Yes, some months ago you asked: what about Auschwitz? This was really a vast magnification of the question of why God would let anyone suffer, especially the innocent.

GEORGE

It still perplexes me.

CALEB

I've come to realize that God suffers with us.

RAYMOND

You're speaking of Christ the suffering servant, God the Son.

CALEB

No, I'm talking about God in God's full nature. The suffering God.

RAYMOND

You're claiming that God, the Almighty One, can suffer. Caleb, that's not really possible.

CALEB

No, not the almighty. The all-loving God, the creative force of the universe.¹ What I've long perceived in biology to be God's integrating power in creation, I now understand to be love.

JUDITH

God's love for us?

¹ In previous scenes Caleb has rejected the concept of God as All-Powerful and All-Knowing, emphasizing instead that God is All-loving. He has also offered the idea that God is a force rather than a being.

CALEB

God's love for all creatures. And you cannot love without suffering. Didn't we learn that, Judy, in loving each other, in raising our children, and in losing them?

JUDITH

Yes, that's so.

CALEB

So God, too, experiences the suffering of love. Thus, the personification of God as Father, and as Mother, too, is understandable. Think of God's agony when Jesus, who lived as a true son of God, was crucified.

JUDITH

Yes, it must have been great sorrow for God.

CALEB

But as God didn't abandon Jesus, so God never abandons us. Not when we suffer from natural causes or from human cruelty. Not when we bring suffering on ourselves. Not even when we ourselves are cruel. (Coughs)

RAYMOND

But don't forget the hope and promise contained in Christ's resurrection.

CALEB

Yes, that was God's fulfillment, but the crucifixion had to come first. As God suffered with Jesus on the cross, so God suffers with all of us in life and death. That's also part of our destiny. And how

God must have suffered at Auschwitz, at Hiroshima, and at all other sites of man's cruelty to man.

GEORGE

I suppose you're right.

NANCY

Does this realization ease your own suffering? Does it take away the pain to believe that God suffers with you?

CALEB

No, the physical pain is still there, but the anguish of my soul is gone. (Sighs) I'm at peace with myself. I'm at peace with God.

He coughs again. Judith comforts him. He clasps her hand, looks at her lovingly, and silently forms the words, "Oh Judy". Sighs deeply. Closes his eyes. His head slumps as he dies. Judith releases his hand and places it on his chest.

JUDITH

God's peace be with you, Caleb.

The end.

DESTINY

A Reading Drama

by

Howard W. Hallman

April 1994

6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

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Note

This drama deals with the question of why is there suffering if God is good. Although written as a play, it is intended primarily for reading and discussion.

It can, though, be staged or given a dramatic reading before an audience. All performance rights are reserved by the author. Therefore, his written permission and payment of a performance fee is required for any such presentation. To make such an arrangement, write to:

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Characters

Caleb Pendleton, professor of biogenetics at a midwestern university

Judith, his wife

Ruth, their daughter

Michael, their son

George Madison, professor of political science

Nancy O'Shaughnessy, professor of psychology

Stuart Price, professor of economics

Rev. Raymond Thompson, university chaplain

Act I. Springtime, mid-1980s

Scene 1. A small conference room

Scene 2. Next day in a biology laboratory

Scene 3. A few days later in Caleb's and Judith's bedroom

Scene 4. A half hour later at a tennis court

Scene 5. A week later in Pendleton kitchen

Scene 6. Same day at biology laboratory

Scene 7. An hour later in a small conference room

Scene 8. One week later in Pendleton living room

Act II. Seven years later

Scene 1. A small conference room

Scene 2. Same day in Pendleton living room

First musical interlude

Scene 3. Six months later, same place

Second musical interlude

Scene 4. Several months later, same place

Third musical interlude

Scene 5. A few months later, same place

Fourth musical interlude

Scene 6. Six months later in Caleb's bedroom

Synopsis

Act I. Caleb and his family are introduced. Stuart, Nancy, and George test him with temptations of money, sex, and power. He doesn't succumb. Proven to be a good person to the satisfaction of the board chairman, Caleb is appointed university president.

Act II. Successively Caleb's daughter and her family are killed in an avalanche, Caleb's son and daughter-in-law are murdered by revolutionaries in South America, Caleb is fired as university president and evicted from the president's house, and Caleb is afflicted with terminal cancer. As this unfolds, Caleb, Judith, George, Nancy, Stuart, and Raymond discuss why such calamities can strike good people if God is good. The final scene offers Caleb's solution.

ACT ONE

Scene 1. Springtime in mid-1980s at a mid-western university.

A small conference room. Nancy, George, and Stuart are seated at a table.

NANCY

You know, when we first got this assignment, I thought it was pretty dumb. And so did you, Stuart.

STUART

Yeah, I sure did, Nancy. Why us, of all the faculty?

GEORGE

Before we make our decision, why don't we listen to the instructions again?

NANCY

That's a good idea, George. Do you have them?

GEORGE

Yes, I brought the tape.

He picks up a portable tape recorder and pushes the play button.

VOICE OF AUSTIN CLARK

Greetings! I have asked you to perform this task for very important reasons.

STUART

(Cynically) Thank you very much!

NANCY

Shhh!

VOICE OF AUSTIN CLARK

In this era of relativity and situation ethics, the idea of goodness is rapidly receding. People are saying that there is no such thing as absolute good or absolute evil. Only that some things are better and less bad in particular situations. They say no one can be judged good or bad in terms of what is proper conduct for all of mankind. Rather only as what seems most workable in a particular situation.

NANCY

As if he were an authority on ethics.

VOICE OF AUSTIN CLARK

I maintain that this is nonsense. There are indeed good men and good women as well as bad ones. What our age needs -- and especially our university -- are examples of good persons to serve as role models for others. It is for this reason that I am asking you to select such a good person from among the faculty whom we can recognize in June at the commencement ceremony.

STUART

And prolong the ceremony another fifteen minutes.

VOICE OF AUSTIN CLARK

To help you make your recommendation, I suggest that you conduct a survey of the faculty to determine their opinion. When you are done, I would like you to meet with me and offer your recommendations of whom

should receive the "good person" award.

GEORGE

Thus spake the exalted chairperson, Austin V. Clark.

STUART

What a strange task -- to pick a good person.

NANCY

Especially since we ourselves can't agree on the characteristics of a good person.

STUART

It's the quaintness of the term that amuses me.

NANCY

You sure don't think of the chair of the board of regents as a good person.

GEORGE

No, not the way he made his fortune manipulating the commodities market. The thousands of small farmers he ruined. I think his middle initial -- "V" -- must stand for "vicious".

STUART

Remember, George, it was all legal in a free market economy.

NANCY

But hardly ethical, Stuart.

STUART

If he's as bad as you claim, why have three governors in a row appointed him as chairman of the board of regents? And besides, the legislature respects him.

NANCY

Money speaks.

GEORGE

And buys access to power.

STUART

Well, it's not our job to figure out the chairman's motives. All we have to do is select a good person on the faculty.

NANCY

George, your design of a faculty survey was certainly effective.

GEORGE

I just borrowed the methodology from studies of community power structure.

STUART

(Picking up tabulation sheets) My computer printout shows a surprising consensus.

GEORGE

(Looking over his copy of the sheets) But the returns from the School of Engineering seem to be incomplete.

STUART

Yes, they couldn't figure out what "goodness" is.

NANCY

I understand that Chaplain Thompson objected to the whole idea, insisting that no one is good but God.

GEORGE

What would you expect him to say? And in the Philosophy Department when individual nominations came in to the review panel, they had a three hour debate on what is good. I was told that they systematically explored the views of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, contemporary existentialists, and many more.

NANCY

Did they reach agreement?

GEORGE

Not on the definition. In fact, they almost came to blows -- if you can

imagine philosophers fighting. But they did achieve a consensus on a nominee: Caleb Pendleton, professor of biogenetics.

NANCY

(Leafing through the printout) So did most of the other departments.

STUART

Yes, Professor Pendleton leads three to one over the next person on the list.

GEORGE

Then he's the winner. Do either of you know him?

NANCY

Yes, I do. I served with him on an all-university research committee last year.

GEORGE

What's he like, Nancy?

NANCY

Quiet, but with a subtle sense of humor. Strong and determined.

Courteous.

STUART

What's his specialty?

NANCY

Recombinant DNA research.

STUART

What's that?

NANCY

Gene-splicing.

GEORGE

He sounds like a good choice. But don't you think we ought to test him ourselves?

STUART

How? You know we haven't been able to agree on what makes a person

good.

NANCY

Yes, but remember when we first met, we had some ideas on the negative -- the things a good person wouldn't do. Why don't we test Professor Pendleton that way?

GEORGE

Okay. We can determine the most common character flaws of people and find out if Professor Pendleton is susceptible to temptation.

STUART

Like what?

GEORGE

Like power. An obsessive drive for power. And misuse of power once you have it. The political history of the world is strewn with supposedly good men, and some good women, too, who succumbed to the drive for power.

NANCY

What about sex? In psychology we find that many aberrations of behavior derive from a person's sexual desire. And you certainly read about such cases all the time in the daily newspapers, and not just in the weekly scandal sheets.

STUART

Also, money.

GEORGE

Right. Money is the root of all evil!

STUART

It's not money per se, but rather the excessive love of it.

GEORGE

So why don't we each test him for the weakness we nominated.

Stuart, you on money. Nancy, on sex.

STUART

That's a good choice.

GEORGE

And I on power.

NANCY

Good idea. If he passes our tests, we can indeed certify him as a good person and nominate him to the chairperson for the award.

STUART

I'll go along with that.

GEORGE

Then it's agreed.

Scene 2. The next day in a biology laboratory.

Caleb is work on an experiment on a lab bench. Michael enters, carrying some books.

MICHAEL

Dad, can I bother you for a few minutes?

CALEB

Certainly, Michael, any time.

MICHAEL

I just came from my anatomy class where I'm getting swamped.

CALEB

What's the trouble?

MICHAEL

It's all the memory work. Hundreds of terms.

CALEB

I'm sure you can manage.

MICHAEL

I never was good at memorizing things. If I flunk this course, i'll never get into med school.

CALEB

When I took anatomy, I had the same problem until I got the hang of it.

MICHAEL

How did you do it?

CALEB

You know that old song? The knee bone's connected to the thigh bone,
the thigh bone's connected to the hip bone, et cetera?

MICHAEL

What's that got to do with it?

CALEB

Well, technically the patella is connected to the femur which fits into the
acetabulum.

MICHAEL

How can you remember that after all these years?

CALEB

Functionalism. That's the secret.

MICHAEL

How's that?

CALEB

Every bone, tendon, muscle, artery, and all the other parts of the body have specific functions to perform, and they're all connected systematically. So instead of simply memorizing a long list of individual parts, I analyzed the detailed workings of the functional systems and all the names fell into place.

MICHAEL

I guess the prof has said something like that, but not as clearly.

CALEB

Just don't be discouraged. You'll make a fine doctor, Michael.

MICHAEL

If I get through pre-med, med school, internship, residency. Boy, that's a long time. And if I can afford it.

CALEB

You know I've told you that your mother and I will help you all we can.

And you can borrow the rest.

MICHAEL

That's what worries me. How would I ever pay it back?

CALEB

Banks know that young doctors are good risks.

MICHAEL

But what if I don't go into the usual lucrative practice?

CALEB

Such as?

MICHAEL

Well, Betty and I were talking -- she's the one I had over to the house last Sunday -- that when we both finish med school, maybe we should go into the inner city to serve the poor, or something like that.

CALEB

That's certainly a worthy calling.

MICHAEL

We wouldn't make a lot of money but would still have our debts.

CALEB

I could continue to help you.

MICHAEL

I don't want to be dependent forever.

CALEB

Don't worry about it, son. It's the same offer my father made me when I talked about being a medical missionary.

MICHAEL

You never told me about that.

CALEB

I haven't? About the time I met Albert Schweitzer?

MICHAEL

Who's he?

CALEB

When he was a young man, he was a noted musician and theologian in Germany. Then he became a doctor and opened a hospital in Africa.

MICHAEL

Oh yeah. I guess I've heard of him. When did you meet him?

CALEB

When I was 14. Dr. Schweitzer gave a lecture on Goethe in Aspen. My father was a generous donor to his mission, so we got to go to a private party in his honor. It was very inspiring. I decided right on the spot to be a medical missionary, just like Schweitzer.

MICHAEL

Why didn't you go?

CALEB

Two reasons. During my second year in medical school I got really excited about DNA and the practical applications of biogenetics. Second, I was in love with this girl who was determined to be a lawyer and would never consent to settling abroad, particularly in some undeveloped country. So I decided to stay in the United States and concentrate on DNA research.

MICHAEL

And you married Mom!

CALEB

It was the right decision on both counts.

Stuart enters.

STUART

Excuse me. I'm looking for Professor Pendleton.

CALEB

I am he. And this is my son, Michael.

STUART

I'm Stuart Price from the Business School.

MICHAEL

Dad, I've got to get to the library. See you at home tonight.

CALEB

Goodbye, son.

MICHAEL

Nice to meet you, Professor Price.

STUART

And you too, Michael.

Michael leaves.

CALEB

(To Stuart) How can I help you?

STUART

Actually it is I who may be able to help you.

CALEB

In what way?

STUART

You see, one of the informal services I render on campus is to connect faculty with good investment opportunities and to help them cash in on their research.

CALEB

Well, I don't have a lot to invest, with two children in college.

STUART

But your wife works, too, as an attorney, so you are a two-income household.

CALEB

How do you know?

STUART

I do my homework.

CALEB

But I've got other expenses.

STUART

Yes, I know. You support an elderly uncle in a nursing home.

CALEB

You do do your homework.

STUART

It's very commendable for a nephew to look after a bachelor uncle.

Anyway, it's not investments I've come to talk about. It's your research.

CALEB

If you're going to advise me to form a corporation to market new life forms, you can forget it. I've already turned down three or four offers. I just don't think it's proper for professors, subsidized as we are, to incorporate to gain private profit.

STUART

No, I've got a different kind of deal. A friend of mine with contacts in Asia has told me about a government-sponsored institute that wants to buy into the latest developments in recombinant DNA research in the United States -- not officially, but through backdoor channels. They'll pay very well.

CALEB

No, I'm not the one for that.

STUART

I understand that you've been working on ways of splicing bits of DNA to cure ailments derived from hereditary defects. This institute is particularly interested in this line of research.

CALEB

I'm working on it, but there's still a lot to learn. Whenever I make and verify discoveries, I publish the results for everyone to read.

STUART

But they want to obtain information on the latest technology, long ahead of publication.

CALEB

I'm not interested.

STUART

You do have some heavy financial burdens -- your children's education, and getting your son through medical school will be real burden, even for a two-income family. Your uncle's expenses. You'll want to give your daughter a nice graduation present this spring. Her wedding later in the summer could cost you five grand.

CALEB

I'll manage.

STUART

Payments would go to a numbered Swiss bank account. I'm talking big

money. Six figures a year for the next ten years. There would be absolute secrecy. No one would ever find out.

CALEB

No, thank you.

STUART

You could buy a fishing lodge in Minnesota. Or a condo in Vail for your family's skiing outings. Maybe both.

CALEB

(Indignant) No, I said! My services are not for sale to an undisclosed foreign institute, or anyone else.

STUART

It would solve all your financial problems.

CALEB

It's just not the kind of deal I want to get involved with. I can take care of my personal finances in other ways. And even if I run into difficulties, I'd

never go the route you're suggesting.

STUART

(Backing off) Okay, okay. I'm just trying to be of service. You're the master of your own fate.

CALEB

I'm not sure how completely that is so, but at least I'm in control of who I work for.

STUART

I'll tell you, though, if I get any leads on any good investments you might approve of, I'll let you know.

CALEB

Humph! *(Gestures to show Stuart the way out.)*

STUART

All right, I'm going.

Scene 3. A few days later at the Pendleton house in Caleb's and Judith's bedroom. Judith is taking clothes from a chest of drawers and packing a suitcase on the bed as she talks with Ruth.

RUTH

How long will you be gone this time, Mom?

JUDITH

The convention lasts five days.

RUTH

What do you lawyers talk about all that time?

JUDITH

Lots of things. I'm on a panel discussing nonjudicial resolution of domestic disputes.

RUTH

Whatever that is.

JUDITH

Settling family quarrels out of court. We'll have a number of sessions on revisions to the ethical code. Lots of other legal issues. And the chief justice will speak at the annual banquet.

RUTH

You didn't used to go to these things.

JUDITH

When you and Michael were younger, I didn't want to be away from you.

RUTH

How does Daddy feel about your traveling?

JUDITH

Oh, he doesn't mind. Sometimes he's so absorbed in his research that he scarcely notices that I'm around. He may not even be aware that I'm gone.

RUTH

And when Daddy goes off to conferences, don't you worry?

JUDITH

About what?

RUTH

Oh, you know. That he might meet another woman, and uh...

JUDITH

(Laughing) Oh, Ruth, heavens no! That's the last thing I would worry about. Remember when I went to his conference in San Francisco three years ago? The most boring time I ever had. All they did was talk shop, day and night. Not nearly as much fun as the bar association. Why are you asking all these questions?

RUTH

I've been think about David since he lined up this sales job after graduation. A month after our wedding he'll have to go off for a training program. I can go with him, but later he'll travel on his own quite a bit,

and, well, you know.

JUDITH

It's a matter of trust.

RUTH

Oh, I trust him. I really do. But it's all so new and so different.

Caleb enters dressed in a tennis warmup, carrying a racket and balls.

JUDITH

I have confidence in both of you.

CALEB

Confidence in whom?

JUDITH

In Ruth and David.

CALEB

Of course, a fine couple. (He gives Ruth a hug.)

JUDITH

Let's see. I've still got some things in the dryer.

She leaves.

RUTH

Are the odd couples having another doubles match, Daddy?

CALEB

We're really not that odd, Ruthie. Just because my partner has a long gray beard and our opponents are short and tall like Mutt and Jeff.

RUTH

Well, I think you're funny.

CALEB

Don't forget. I'm the one who taught you how to play tennis.

RUTH

Yes, and I remember how you used to beat me all the time.

CALEB

Until your high school coach taught you how to chop. Do you let David

win sometimes?

RUTH

Are you kidding? He trounces me every chance he gets. But I can still
outski him.

CALEB

He's a good man, Ruthie. You've chosen well.

RUTH

I've chosen?

CALEB

Of course. The woman always chooses, although in the old days she let
the man think he decided.

Judith enters with some clothing.

RUTH

Like Mom chose you?

CALEB

Exactly. *(Hugging Judith)* You know how pushy these lawyers are.

JUDITH

(Pushing him away good naturedly) Caleb, let me go. I'll be late for my flight.

RUTH

You two old lovebirds!

Scene 3. One-half later at a tennis court.

Nancy is seated on a bench, bouncing tennis balls on her racket and on the ground. She is dressed in a short tennis skirt. She glances at her wristwatch and looks around. Caleb enters, dressed in his tennis warmup, carrying racket and balls.

NANCY

Hi, Caleb! Looking for a game?

CALEB

Why hello, Nancy. No, I've come to meet some fellows for a doubles match.

NANCY

I haven't seen anyone.

CALEB

Not a distinguished looking bearded man, about my age? Or a tall man and a little short guy?

NANCY

No, none of them. In fact nobody's around. I was hoping I could pick up a game. Would you volley with me while you wait for your partners?

CALEB

Might as well. *(He takes off his warmup.)*

As the conversation continues, Nancy starts to flirt with verbal nuance and body movement.

NANCY

I haven't seen you around much lately.

CALEB

No, not since our committee finished its report.

NANCY

I've missed being with you.

CALEB

You have?

NANCY

Sure. Have you missed me?

CALEB

Well, uh, I....

NANCY

That's okay. You don't have to answer. I really warm to the strong, silent type, especially someone as handsome as you.

CALEB

Handsome? A stodgy old fellow like me?

NANCY

You're not stodgy. *(Looking him over)* You've got a good physique and nice legs.

CALEB

(Drawing back a little and laughing nervously) That's a new one.

NANCY

Yes, really, you do.

CALEB

My wife wouldn't agree. She's always trying to get me to diet.

NANCY

It's surprising she has time to notice you, what with all her lawyering and running off to conventions and to Washington to appear before the

Supreme Court.

CALEB

She's a very good attorney. Do you know her?

NANCY

No, but I've heard about her through the campus grapevine. Don't you ever get lonely when she's away.

CALEB

I miss her, if that's what you mean.

NANCY

Don't you long for female companionship?

CALEB

I'm usually too busy.

NANCY

Oh, Caleb, you ought to have more fun.

CALEB

Fun?

NANCY

Yes, why not come over to my apartment for drinks when you're through playing tennis. *(She reaches out to touch him.)*

CALEB

(Drawing back) Is this what you mean by a pick-up game?

NANCY

I just think that men and women ought to get better acquainted, if you know what I mean.

He looks around squeamishly.

Don't worry, your partners needn't find out. Nor your wife.

CALEB

I'll tell you straight, Nancy. I don't fool around. My covenant with Judith is too strong. But if I did, a person like you would certainly be on the

top of my list.

NANCY

That's the nicest put down I've ever had, Caleb. Come on. Let's
volley some.

They leave for the court.

Scene 5. A week later in the Pendleton kitchen.

Ruth and Michael are seated at a table.

RUTH

Michael, what are you going to get Daddy for his birthday?

MICHAEL

I don't know. It gets harder every year. I'm tired of buying a shirt
and necktie.

RUTH

And he must be tired of the ties you pick out.

MICHAEL

Watch it.

RUTH

Remember the crazy things we've given him over the years?

MICHAEL

Yes, like the sweater you knitted when you were in junior high.

RUTH

It was a little baggy.

MICHAEL

And one sleeve was longer than the other.

RUTH

But he wore it anyway. He's always been a good sport. Even the time you gave him a rabbit.

MICHAEL

I was just a kid and had only two dollars to spend. It was just after

Easter and they were on sale.

RUTH:

What ever happened to Doc?

MICHAEL

He got away. Or maybe Dad took him to his lab.

RUTH

Oh, that's awful! He never would have done that.

MICHAEL

*No, probably not. I know. I'll get him some fishing lures. The guys
down at Al's Sport Shop will know the kind he likes.*

RUTH

I think I'll give him a box of chocolates.

MICHAEL

Chocolates? That's what we give Mom.

RUTH

Yes, I know. But do you ever notice that Daddy usually eats at least half of them.

MICHAEL

Including the ones you punch out to avoid the soft ones.

RUTH

Yes, chocolates it will be.

Scene 6. The same day at the biology laboratory

Caleb is busy at his workbench. George enters.

GEORGE

Professor Pendleton?

CALEB

Yes.

GEORGE

I'm George Madison of the Political Science Department. I've come to

ask your help on a class project.

CALEB

I know nothing about politics.

GEORGE

That's precisely why I've come to you. You see, I have a graduate seminar on political campaigning and we want some real experience. Since there are no major campaigns for public office this spring, we're looking for something in campus politics.

CALEB

You should've done it in the fall for the student elections.

GEORGE

It's a spring semester course. We have discovered, though, that in a about a month the Biology Department will be electing a new chairperson, and I understand that you're a candidate.

CALEB

Some of my colleagues have suggested my name.

GEORGE

And you're running?

CALEB

Not exactly. I'm willing to serve. Indeed, I would feel honored to be selected. But we don't campaign for the position.

GEORGE

Well, I've heard that one of your younger colleagues, Professor Danielson, is mounting a campaign.

CALEB

So I've noticed.

GEORGE

And it doesn't bother you?

CALEB

Well, yes it does, but not because he's campaigning.

GEORGE

What then?

CALEB

It's his emphasis.

GEORGE

Emphasis?

CALEB

He's one of the younger group of superb technicians who see research as the primary focus of a university with teaching almost an ancillary function.

GEORGE

And you disagree?

CALEB

Of course. The university exists to teach. Research is important because you can't teach properly unless you're close to the frontier of

knowledge. But teaching has to remain central.

GEORGE

And if Danielson gets elected chairperson, he'll switch priorities?

CALEB

To the extent he can. That's what I'm afraid of.

GEORGE

And you'd like to prevent that?

CALEB

Yes, I would.

GEORGE

Would you say any other professor who shares your views on teaching could defeat Danielson.

CALEB

Probably not.

GEORGE

Could you?

CALEB

Perhaps. But it's not certain.

GEORGE

Then that's why you need an effective campaign. My students and I will assist you.

CALEB

In what way?

GEORGE

I'm teaching them about both positive and negative campaigning. On the positive side, we'll help you formulate a position paper on where you want the department to go, and we'll work behind the scenes to build up a network of supporters.

CALEB

And the negative?

GEORGE

We've done some preliminary research and have hit paydirt. It happens that my department coordinates an interdisciplinary program on science and public policy. This year one of the science students in the course is in the same field of biology as Danielson. We enlisted his help, and he came up with a startling discover -- that ten years ago Danielson plagiarized a substantial portion of his doctoral dissertation from a Japanese report.

CALEB

He did?

GEORGE

Yes. You see, our student served two years in the Army in Japan, learned Japanese, and knew the professor who did the study.

CALEB

Plagiarism is a serious charge. Are you certain? Mr. Danielson

impresses me as very bright and wouldn't need to cheat.

GEORGE

I can document it.

CALEB

That's very disturbing.

GEORGE

In your campaign you wouldn't be the one to disclose it. We would slip it to someone else in your department, who could quietly circulate it.

CALEB

But that would destroy young Danielson's career.

GEORGE

He would deserve it.

CALEB

That's awfully harsh treatment.

GEORGE

But think of the gain. It would assure your selection as chairperson. Consider all the good you could accomplish. You would be in a position to maintain a strong teaching emphasis. You would be able to draw in more faculty who share your views that biogenetic research should benefit humankind.

CALEB

I suppose I could.

GEORGE

Your selection could help stop the trend toward commercialization of university research which Danielson and his crowd are drawn to.

CALEB

You know about that?

GEORGE

Yes, I follow the trends -- maybe with a little envy because we in

political science don't have that much to market.

CALEB

Certainly as department head I would discourage that.

GEORGE

Then you'll do it? Use us to handle your campaign?

CALEB

No, I won't.

GEORGE

You won't? Why not?

CALEB

I simply cannot be a party to ruining a man's reputation. Plagiarism is wrong, but what's past is past.

GEORGE

Not even for the greater good you could accomplish?

CALEB

No, not even for that. *(He heaves a big sigh.)*

Scene 7. An hour later in a small conference room.

Stuart and Nancy are seated at the table.

STUART

Well, I think we have our man.

NANCY

If George's test produces the same results as ours.

STUART

He went there more than an hour ago. He should be back by now.

NANCY

Here he is.

George enters.

GEORGE

You're both right. He's truly a good man. I couldn't find a chink.

NANCY

So it's confirmed. We'll notify Mr. Clark that Caleb Pendleton deserves the "good person" award.

STUART

I agree. But I wonder why.

NANCY

Yes, what are his underlying motivations?

GEORGE

I tried to find out after my testing was done. He reminds me most of a Sunday school teacher I had in junior high before I quit going, but he says he's not an active church member.

NANCY

So he's a humanist?

GEORGE

No, he professes to be a Christian believer.

STUART

But he's not really one of those sanctimonious do-gooders.

GEORGE

No, he isn't.

NANCY

Maybe it's his Quaker grandfather's influence. The one he's named after.

GEORGE

How do you know that?

NANCY

I asked him. It's such an old-fashioned name, I wanted to know its origin.

GEORGE

Possibly. But he told me he grew up as a Presbyterian.

STUART

Yeah. His father made a lot of money when he moved to the Midwest from Pennsylvania to start a tool factory. Around here most of the rich are Presbyterians.

GEORGE

He says he couldn't reconcile predestination with all the openness of creation he observed in biological studies. Science is always willing to consider new truths, he claims, while church dogma is closed. "Locked up" was his term, separated from real life. I can certainly agree with that.

NANCY

Whatever the source of his motivation and beliefs, he seems to have integrated science and philosophy, religion and ethics. It's made him a good person worthy of the award.

GEORGE

Agreed.

All three clasp hands in center of table.

Scene 8. One week later in the Pendleton living room.

Judith is hugging Caleb.

JUDITH

Oh, Caleb. I'm so proud of you.

CALEB

It's the last thing in the world I expected. It's certainly nothing I ever aspired to.

JUDITH

Never, ever?

CALEB

Well, I'll admit that now and then when I've been frustrated over something or other, I've thought I could run this university better. But I

never imagined that they would appoint a biologist as university president. I don't know anything about fundraising.

JUDITH

Luckily you have a chairperson who does.

CALEB

You mean Austin Clark. Yes, the rich always know other rich people.

JUDITH

What was this "good person" award business, anyway?

CALEB

It seems that it was something Clark cooked up to identify somebody the faculty would respect. He was tired of all the turmoil caused by Dr. Robinson, who has tried to apply business management techniques to the university.

JUDITH

Yes, it was a mistake to bring in a corporation executive as president.

CALEB

I think Robinson realized that, too, in resigning after three years.

Michael and Ruth burst in.

RUTH

(Hugging Caleb) Oh, Daddy, I just heard the good news. I'm so excited.

CALEB

I'm a little excited myself.

MICHAEL

(Hugging Caleb) Congratulations, Dad.

CALEB

Thanks, son.

MICHAEL

Does this mean we'll move to the president's house?

JUDITH

Yes, toward the end of June.

RUTH

Can we have my wedding reception in the garden?

CALEB

I suppose.

JUDITH

If we can get everything unpacked and arranged by August.

CALEB

I'm sure we can.

MICHAEL

If it would help, I can postpone my trip to Alaska.

CALEB

We'll see. It's too soon to figure those things out.

The doorbell rings.

MICHAEL

I'll get it. (He leaves.)

RUTH

Mom, we can cancel the reservation we made for the reception at the country club, can't we?

JUDITH

I think so. Let's give them a call.

Judith and Ruth leave as Michael enters with Raymond.

MICHAEL

Dad, Rev. Thompson is here to see you.

RAYMOND

Professor Pendleton, I'm Ray Thompson, university chaplain.

CALEB

Yes, I know who you are.

Michael leaves.

RAYMOND

I just heard the news about your appointment. I came by to congratulate you.

CALEB

It was an unexpected honor, and also a challenge of unknown dimensions.

RAYMOND

From what I've heard about you, you'll serve the university exceedingly well.

CALEB

I hope so.

RAYMOND

I've always had a close working relationship with the president. I hope that it will continue with you.

CALEB

I'm sure it will. It can start by your participation in my inauguration.

RAYMOND

With pleasure.

CALEB

After that we can get better acquainted. I've seen you at faculty meetings, but we haven't done anything together.

RAYMOND

No, we haven't. But you know, a week ago I had a dream in which you appeared.

CALEB

Really?

RAYMOND

Yes, a strange dream. You see, some students asked me to preach in chapel on the Book of Revelations. It was a real challenge because I've never

been able to grasp all the symbolism there. For instance, the number seven keeps appearing: seven angels with trumpets, seven seals, seven bowls of wrath.

CALEB

Yes, I'm aware that for some people "seven" has a magical quality.

RAYMOND

In my dream there was parade along University Drive. Students were lining up, cheering. At the head of the parade were seven huge cattle. Black angus. You know, the kind doctors and car dealers raise for tax purposes.

CALEB

It sounds like you were having pharaoh's dream. The one Joseph interpreted.

RAYMOND

Exactly. A man was riding on the first steer, and the other cattle

followed without riders. At the time I didn't know who it was, but I now I realize that the rider was you.

CALEB

Me?

RAYMOND

Yes, you. Seven days later you are appointed university president. So maybe it means that you will have seven prosperous years.

CALEB

Let's hope so. And what came next? Seven skinny cows for seven years of adversity?

RAYMOND

No, not at all. Next came four riders on horseback. The first was a beautiful woman with long flowing hair, riding a pure white horse. She had a suckling child strapped to her breast with a sling. She held the reins in one hand and with her other arm was flinging spears, which became lightning

when they struck.

Next came a wild-eyed, shaggy-haired man, carrying a submachine gun. His horse appeared bright red. When it got close I realized that it was roan, covered with blood. He was followed by a scraggly mob.

The third rider couldn't have been a greater contrast. He was dressed in a three-piece, gray flannel suit, riding upright on an enormous black stallion. When I looked close, I saw a mobile telephone attached to the saddle horn.

The fourth and last horse was pale gray. The rider seemed to be a knight in armor. As the horse passed me, the rider's visor fell open, and I saw not a face but a human skull.

Then I noticed that the crowds had vanished and that I was alone on the street. There was a strange light, as occurs at twilight after a thunderstorm. All was quiet, and I had a sense of perfect peace. Then I awoke.

CALEB

Sounds like your home-video version of the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

RAYMOND

Perhaps. Nevertheless, I believe that dreams have meaning. Sometimes God communicates to us in that manner. I didn't really identify the rider on the first steer as you until today. Now I'm sure that it is a good omen for your presidency.

CALEB

I hope so. And the other riders? Do you think they're giving you a message for me?

RAYMOND

Indeed, I do. But exactly what, I'm not sure. All I can say is, Professor Pendleton, you should be careful not to let prosperity lead to your downfall.

CALEB

What will be, will be.

RAYMOND

That may be so, but beware of what the future holds. Beware.

End of Act One.

ACT TWO

Scene 1. Seven years later in a small conference room.

Stuart, Nancy, and George are seated around a table.

NANCY

George, you called us together. What do you have in mind?

GEORGE

It's been seven years since we had the strange task of picking somebody for Austin Clark's "good person" award and wound up selecting the next university president. I thought it would be fun to reminisce.

STUART

I'd say we did surprisingly well. Caleb Pendleton has been an excellent president. He got through the uproar four years ago when the Biology Department unseated Danielson as chairperson after someone discovered his plagiarism. These days the faculty is content, and the students aren't unhappy, which is about as much as you can expect. And the endowment

fund has increased substantially.

NANCY

The university has moved up in national academic rankings. Human services education is highly rated. We had our first winner of a Nobel prize in physics.

GEORGE

And, of course, the national basketball championship.

STUART

You can't attribute that to the president.

GEORGE

Maybe not, but it's all part of seven good years. We've all come to know Caleb personally, and I think we can all agree that he's a topnotch person.

STUART

Yes, he is.

NANCY

Given what we knew about our crazy assignment, our three tests were as good as any.

STUART

Perhaps. But as I've thought about it since, I think we really omitted one very important test of goodness: can he stand adversity? That's truly the test of a good person.

GEORGE

Right you are. I certainly see that in politics. Somebody gets elected by a landslide and is on top of the world. Then things fall apart. How he acts then tells far more about him as a person than when he's top dog.

NANCY

Or her.

GEORGE

Okay, him or her. Top dog or top cat.

Nancy winces.

STUART

What goes up always comes down. Like in the business cycle when prosperity is always followed by recession.

NANCY

Stuart, if your cycle theory applies to human life, we may have a chance to observe how Caleb responds to adversity.

GEORGE

Maybe we will. It will be interesting to behold.

STUART

It certainly will.

Scene 2. The same day in the Pendleton living room.

Caleb, Judith, and Michael are seated. Ruth brings in a cake with seven lighted candles and places it on the coffee table.

RUTH

(As she enters) Happy anniversary, Daddy!

CALEB

Anniversary?

RUTH

It's been seven years since your inauguration.

CALEB

So it has.

RUTH

I thought we should have a small celebration before Michael leaves.

CALEB

Do you blow out anniversary candles?

JUDITH

Of course.

RUTH

Make a wish.

Caleb ponders for a moment and then blows out the candles. Laughter.

MICHAEL

What'd you wish for, Dad?

CALEB

For seven more wonderful years.

RUTH

Oh, you shouldn't have told us. Now it won't come true.

MICHAEL

Oh, Ruthie, that's superstition.

Judith cuts and serves the cake.

JUDITH

I'm sorry Bobby and Susie aren't here. They like cake so much.

RUTH

You know how Bobby has been pestering his father for his own fishing pole. This was the only chance David had to take him to the sports store before we leave for Minnesota. Of course, Susie had to go along.

CALEB

I think I was five, like Bobby, when I got my first fishing pole.

RUTH

How old were you when you learned to ski?

CALEB

Oh, that wasn't until I got to college.

RUTH

We're going to start Bobby next winter.

JUDITH

We miss Betty, too, Michael.

MICHAEL

Tomorrow she'll be back from saying goodbye to her folks.

JUDITH

Peru seems so far away for you to go.

MICHAEL

It's where we're needed, and where Betty and I could work together to apply our medical skills.

JUDITH

I'm still worried about your debts. It has cost a lot to educate two doctors. How can you expect to repay them with the low pay you'll be receiving?

MICHAEL

Don't worry, Mom. The bank's given us an extension. And we really appreciate you and Dad co-signing the note.

CALEB

It's the least we could do.

JUDITH

But the interest keeps accumulating.

MICHAEL

Dad has always encouraged public service, and you do a lot of pro bono legal work.

CALEB

Judy, I'm sure it'll work out eventually. They should be doing things like this when they're young. Remember, you didn't earn much your first year of legal practice, nor did I as an assistant professor. Now things have worked out very well for us.

JUDITH

I know, but I do worry. You've never been very practical about money, Caleb.

MICHAEL

At least Ruth has married prosperously. David has had a meteoric rise in his company.

RUTH

He's the youngest vice president for sales they've ever had, and he's earned it.

JUDITH

I'm so proud of all of you.

CALEB

So am I.

MICHAEL

It's becoming too sentimental. I'm going up to the attic to get some gear.

RUTH

I'll go with you. I haven't been up there for several years. I've forgotten what I've stored.

Doorbell rings. Judith leaves to answer it.

CALEB

I think some of your dolls are still there. Maybe Susie could have them.

MICHAEL

Or maybe some of my old trucks. At age three Susie should have a choice.

Ruth and Michael leave. Judith returns with Raymond.

RAYMOND

Caleb, I just dropped by for a few minutes to congratulate you on seven good years.

CALEB

Sit down, Ray. Have some cake.

RAYMOND

No, thank you.

JUDITH

Are you sure?

RAYMOND

Yes, I had a late lunch.

JUDITH

Not even a small piece.

RAYMOND

Well, all right.

She serves him.

CALEB

It has been seven good years.

RAYMOND

The accolades you received at the university senate last week were well deserved. It's unusual for the faculty to have such praise for the administration.

CALEB

I still feel that I'm part of the faculty, even though I have time to teach

only one course each year.

JUDITH

Things have gone well, and for our family, too. Almost too well. In fact sometimes in the dark of night I awaken in apprehension. All these good things can't go on forever. Life just isn't unbroken happiness.

CALEB

It's not been all that easy running a big university, though I'll admit it's gone better than I expected.

RAYMOND

Yes, I use you as an example with the students I counsel. I tell them there are two ways to go, that the Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish. You are my primary illustration of one who walks in the way of the Lord, Caleb -- even if you aren't a churchman in the conventional sense.

CALEB

Don't overdo it, Ray.

RAYMOND

After all, you're the only person I've ever known who's been certified as a "good person". (Chuckles)

CALEB

Oh that. It was just Austin Clark's eccentricity. I never made that claim for myself.

RAYMOND

But you have prospered.

CALEB

I don't feel my success has been an award for goodness. Nor if Judy's anxieties come to fruition and things turn out bad, I'll not look upon it as punishment. What will be, will be, often without regard to what we do or don't do.

RAYMOND

You're wrong, Caleb. If there is no connection between conduct and just deserts, there would be no basis for personal ethics.

CALEB

You don't think people act rightly out of a sense of what is right, regardless of outcome?

RAYMOND

Maybe a few do, part of the time, but it's a pretty weak thread to hold society together. No, to do what is good, people have to expect reward, if not in this life, then in the next life -- all in God's fair judgment.

CALEB

I guess it's your job to think about these things. As for me, I tend to live day by day, doing my best, accepting the good and the bad, struggling forward but not looking too far ahead or agonizing on what's behind.

RAYMOND

You're more of an existentialist than I thought, Caleb.

CALEB

Not so in the usual meaning, Ray, for I see our existence as part of a broader, enduring, though steadily evolving order. I perceive God as the underlying creative and sustaining force of life, yet ever present to us personally.

JUDITH

You two are getting too profound for me. I'd rather get more directly involved in the struggle of good and evil by attacking the weeds in my garden.

CALEB

Of course, Judy, weeds have their place in the natural order. They exist because....

JUDITH

(Breaking in fondly) Oh Caleb, do you have to have a scientific explanation for everything?

Music interlude, such as an upbeat Bach choral.

Scene 3. Six months later in Pendleton living room.

Caleb, Judith, and Raymond are dressed somberly and are bowed in prayer.

RAYMOND

And dear Lord, who art the Father of all the families of the earth, look with compassion upon this bereaved family, and pour thy heavenly comfort into their hearts. Enrich with thy presence those who mourn and be their refugee and strength in this time of sorrow. Hear us for thy mercy's sake.

Amen.

The doorbell rings.

CALEB

I'll get it. (He leaves.)

JUDITH

We appreciate your kind words, Raymond.

RAYMOND

It's the least I can do, Judith.

Caleb returns with Stuart, Nancy, and George. With her greeting Nancy buzzes Judith on the cheek. Judith offers her hand to George and Stuart.

GEORGE

(To Judith) We dropped by to offer our condolence.

NANCY

It's a tragic loss.

STUART

I know you'll miss them.

CALEB

(Gesturing) Won't you sit down? (They sit.)

They didn't have a chance. The avalanche came during the night without warning.

JUDITH

The poor babies. It was my grandson's first day skiing. Ruth called from the lodge at supper time, telling how well he had done.

STUART

Were others lost, too?

JUDITH

No, only our dear family.

CALEB

The lodge manager said it was a freak accident. They were in a cabin just below a steep slope. They've never had so much snow as this year, and never an avalanche before.

JUDITH

Oh why, oh why did it happen to them? A loving mother, a devoted father, two beautiful children. Just as life was beginning for them.

RAYMOND

I know it was a great loss for both of you. I share your sorrow.

JUDITH

Why did God allow this to occur?

RAYMOND

God often works in ways we don't always understand, Judith. Maybe he chose to call them to himself. He does that sometimes with the brightest and the best. Who are we to know? We must have faith in God's goodness. Indeed, in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.

JUDITH

(Indignant) Where do you see good in this? What was God's purpose, anyway?

STUART

I don't think you can blame it on God. Contrary to the language of insurance policies, you really can't call this an "act of God".

JUDITH

How do you explain it?

STUART

These things happen by chance. Who the victims are is a matter of random selection with no particular malice toward them. It's nothing they've done, good or bad. It's like in the market economy. Some gain, some suffer. But overall the results work out for the best.

JUDITH

As if an unseen hand guides destiny. Is that what you're arguing, Stuart?

STUART

That's the 18th century term. Today we're more sophisticated. Statistical analysis shows us trends and probabilities. We know that a certain number of people die every year from accidents, others by heart diseases, still others by cancer. No one can predict with certainty who the

victims will be, but we can calculate probabilities.

JUDITH

There's little comfort in that.

STUART

No, but that's the way life is.

NANCY

It's not all random, though. I've done research in hospital emergency rooms and a surprising large number of so-called accidents can be said to be self-inflicted. Many people are drawn to their own destruction. I won't say that was the case for your daughter and her family, but I have noticed that people who live in guilt or deep despair are high risktakers. They get into situations of great danger, almost with the hope that something will happen.

CALEB

No, I'll not buy that at all. Ruthie was buoyantly happy. She enjoyed

skiing for its sheer exhilaration. She loved life and certainly wouldn't have placed her children in jeopardy.

GEORGE

Well, I find that human beings are often the cause of such mishaps. Drunk drivers, industrial polluters, manufactures of faulty products. Who, for instance, built that cabin beneath the steep slope? No doubt it was the developer who wanted to profit by using every possible inch of land. Yet inevitably there would be very heavy snow and an avalanche. Ever so much suffering is caused by human actors -- acting out of ignorance, or greed, or some other expression of self-interest. Ruth and her family were as much victims of human failure as an act of nature.

RAYMOND

That's what you would expect from sinful humankind. But don't worry. God will judge those whose wrongfulness caused this tragedy. For God is just, and none of us can escape his righteous judgment. "Vengeance is

mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

JUDITH

But what about the innocent victims? Didn't Jesus insist that the eighteen killed when the tower of Siloam fell were no worse offenders than other Jerusalem residents?

RAYMOND

Yes, but he also told his listeners, "unless you repent you will likewise perish." Maybe in this unexpected event God is sending a message to you, Caleb.

CALEB

You think it's punishment for my wrongdoing? Do you think I'm overly proud of my accomplishments? Do I have hidden faults which must be atoned for? Are you claiming divine retribution?

RAYMOND

I didn't say that exactly. However, none of us is free from sin. Too

often we follow the desires of our own hearts rather than God's holy way.

We stray like lost sheep. God chastens us for our shortcomings and rebukes us for our transgressions. Do you think that God would pervert justice?

CALEB

I refuse to accept this sorrow as judgment on Ruth and her family, or on us. I don't believe that God functions in this manner.

GEORGE

Then you would agree with Stuart and me that the cause was a combination of human error and impersonal forces of nature. We don't need to reply on outmoded superstitions about a God who doesn't exist.

RAYMOND

George, you deny the existence of God? Come to chapel some Sunday, and let me introduce you.

GEORGE

I tried that when I was an undergraduate. I went to church for a whole

semester and never found God there.

CALEB

If you'll take the time, I can put you in touch with God.

GEORGE

And how would you do that?

CALEB

I can offer you two ways. First, there's a technique of centering down, as the Quakers call it, to put your deeper consciousness in touch with the presence of God, with the indwelling spirit, the light within. It takes discipline but provides an awarding experience.

Second, we could spend some time in my old laboratory to work through the genetic process and explore the course of evolution. You would be able to discover evidence of God the creator, working through the progression of time.

GEORGE

Surely there are other hypotheses, like natural selection.

CALEB

But nothing else explains the purposefulness of creation.

GEORGE

Well, if this God of yours is so purposeful and creative, why did he create a world with such uncontrollable natural forces?

CALEB

The irony, which I can't fully explain, is that my family was the tragic victim of one of the greatest gifts of the world: the constancy of nature. Under identical conditions H₂O changes from liquid to solid always at the same temperature. In a particular circumstance, water vapor in the air always turns to snow and falls to the ground. Gravity is constant. The characteristics of mass and friction of various substances never change. When there is a lot of water vapor drifting in cold air, there will be great snowfalls. At certain places the weight of the snow will produce an

avalanche. It's an inevitable process.

GEORGE

Sounds like scientific determinism to me.

CALEB

No, not at all. The same constancy of nature enables living creatures to walk, run, jump, and fly as they determine. The predictability of chemical reactions enables us to utilize our ingenuity to produce medicines. The regularity of the earth's rotation gives us predictable day and night and the seasons so that we can plant crops at appropriate times. We can't expect God to alter the course of nature precipitously for benefit of even the best people.

RAYMOND

You're taking too much away from God, Caleb. I believe he can intervene and determine when these natural laws will have their effects, and when they can be set aside -- even though we don't understand how and

why. I've read of a number of cases where people have survived accidents which can be explained only by providential intervention.

NANCY

Yes, I have, too.

RAYMOND

For example, there was this man in a car hit by a truck. He was knocked into the back seat, and the car was crushed except for the small space he occupied. All he got was a few scratches. And there are dozens of other cases like that. Yes indeed, I believe in God's miraculous powers.

CALEB

I don't rule out remarkable coincidences that produce unexpected results and seem to have a higher purpose. Synchronicity is what some people call it. Yet, in the broader order of nature there is considerable indeterminacy. Physicists note this in their work in quantum mechanics. Mass and motion within the structure of the atom interact in ways which are immeasurable

and unpredictable. Overall there are probabilities that certain effects will occur, but a particular occurrence is uncertain and indeterminate.

NANCY

Yes, that seems to be so in micro-physics.

CALEB

Working at a somewhat larger scale, the genetic code places fingerprints on a fetus while in the mother's womb, but the exact pattern is not only unpredictable but also unique. So also the weather on a particular day is different from that of any other day, though sometimes similar. Perfect weather prediction is impossible because of indeterminacy caused by the interaction of a multiplicity of forces. Yet, each force has constant laws of behavior that can be understood, and we can work out some comprehension of their relationships.

STUART

Where does God come in to all this, Caleb?

CALEB

God works through these forces in numerous creative ways and utilizes them to achieve far-ranging purposes. But I'm doubtful that God can intervene in specific events like a micro-manager to alter the forces of nature, such as suspend the law of gravity to prevent an avalanche. Nevertheless, in the long run God's purposes are fulfilled.

JUDITH

But in the short run, Ruth, David, Bobby, and Susie are dead. (She weeps.)

CALEB

Yes, in the here and now we suffer and grieve. Affirming a higher purpose saves us not from our sorrow. Nor is it a matter of our goodness or our sinfulness. The travail of nature penetrates our lives because we are a part of nature. We suffer as all nature suffers.

JUDITH

So you conclude that suffering is inevitable?

CALEB

Yes. In one sense, it's natural. Our destiny. An inescapable part of life. Like breathing and eating. All we can do is endure, as best we can.

He comforts her in her sorrow.

Musical interlude, such as a somber Bach choral.

Scene 4. Several months later in Pendleton living room.

Caleb, Judith, Raymond, Stuart, Nancy, and George are gathered, again dressed somberly.

JUDITH

It was good of you to stop by. We need friends at times like this.

NANCY

That's what friends are for.

CALEB

I hope you can come to the service tomorrow in the university chapel.

Their bodies are arriving tonight.

STUART

You can count on us.

GEORGE

Do you have any details on how it happened?

CALEB

Michael and Betty had this small clinic in the middle of a shantytown on a hillside outside Lima. They were serving mothers and children particularly but would take anyone who came. It was straight medical practice, and nothing else. However, the revolutionaries are trying to oust all Americans, no matter what they are doing. Michael was never one to be intimidated.

JUDITH

Like his father.

CALEB

Like his mother, too. He refused to go. So they shot him and Betty in cold blood and set fire to their clinic. The residents turned on the perpetrators and would have killed them except for the intervention of governmental soldiers. But by then it was too late. Michael and Betty were dead.

Caleb shows his grief. Judith sobs.

RAYMOND

Yes, I'm sure they were doing God's work. All I can say is blessed are those who suffer for the Lord. As we share in Christ's sufferings, through Christ we share abundantly in his comfort, too.

JUDITH

(Weeping) Why should it happen to them? They were serving people, not exploiting them.

GEORGE

Unfortunately they were victims of larger social forces of which they and all of us are a part. For many decades there have been gross inequalities in Peru and other countries of Latin America. The rich exploit the poor and keep them subjugated. They control the government, the banks, and the church. U.S. corporations have long been part of the system of exploitation. Our own government has supported the corporations, given guns and planes to dictators, and sent in the CIA to undermine social reform. So we share in maintaining an unjust society.

CALEB

But they were there to help remedy injustice.

GEORGE

Yes, but what have any of the rest of us done to put an end to despotism? I mean you, me, and all the others. To the extent that we haven't acted, we have allowed injustice to go uncorrected. It's our own disinterest, what Rev. Thompson would call sins of omission, which

contributed to your son's death.

JUDITH

Oh, that's not fair. You can't expect us to take up every cause of injustice in the whole world.

CALEB

Of course, we can't. We have to concentrate on a few things we can accomplish.

GEORGE

That may be true, but then that means you have to accept the risk that you and your loved ones suffer as the byproduct of uncorrected wrong.

STUART

George, you seem to be an adherent of the do-gooder's belief that human actions can cure social ills, that if we could merely alter social and economic conditions, that no one would suffer any more. That's just not

true.

GEORGE

So what's your explanation, Stuart?

STUART

Personally I think there's a lot to be said for the folk wisdom in many parts of the world which recognizes that humans are powerless to change the course of nature and the action of the gods. Filipino folk culture, for instance, contains a belief in the wheel of fortune, turning every year, moved by some unknown force. If a person has a bad year, he merely hopes next year will be better, but he accepts whatever fate bestows upon him. Sure, we'd all like to be dealt a new hand with better cards, but there isn't much we can do to overcome our fate.

RAYMOND

Stuart, you believe that we can't change our fate while George insists that we can correct the world's injustice if we only try harder. I see it

differently from both of you. There is a cosmic force of evil loose in the world. Sometimes it moves in on the weak and takes over their lives. But at other times Satan mobilizes his forces against where God's goodness seems to have its greatest stronghold. Satan seems to be challenged to fight hardest against the best of God's people. I really think that's why the revolutionaries murdered Michael and Betty and burned their clinic.

STUART

You're saying that Satan exists outside God's power?

RAYMOND

Yes, he does. The Bible and world history offer considerable evidence of Satan's malevolent cunning. He tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Throughout his healing ministry Jesus cast out evil spirits who had taken possession of people. Paul continually confronted the power of the devil and even felt that his own thorn in the flesh came from Satan. I've seen plenty of examples in modern times.

NANCY

Whether evil can be so personified, I'm not certain. But I do know that there are dark forces within the human psyche -- within you, me, and everybody -- which seek to undermine the so-called higher motivations of love and kindness. They take hold of people, cause illnesses, produce bizarre conduct, destroy personal relationships, drive individuals away from people who love them. The victims seem powerless to overcome the destructive forces flowing from within.

RAYMOND

Right you are. No less a figure than St. Paul wrote, "I do not the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

CALEB

I'm sorry, Ray, but I simply cannot accept your dualism. It goes against what I know about the unity of the natural order. A single set of physical

laws is present throughout the universe as far as science can behold. Events once attributed to evil powers, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, lightning, drought, and floods, can all be explained as natural phenomena. Likewise mental illness and other behavioral aberrations have natural causes, some of them a matter of chemical imbalance, though we still have a lot to learn.

RAYMOND

How do you see it then, Caleb?

CALEB

Within the overall unity of the natural order, there is also interaction and interdependency. For example, plants produce flowers whose nectar attracts bees which fertilize blossoms as they gather their food. Birds eat fruit and spread seeds. The food cycle of species consuming species, for all its harshness, demonstrates interdependency.

NANCY

Yes, I suppose that's true.

CALEB

So also there is social interdependency, though as a geneticist, I know less about it. But as university president I am impressed about how much the university depends upon innumerable persons playing their roles: the men at the power plant, the crews from buildings and grounds, bookkeepers and secretaries, the development office, dorm managers, the bookstore, and lots more. Classroom teaching and research could never occur without this complex support system.

RAYMOND

I never thought of it that way.

CALEB

I have also seen how inequities can develop, such as lack of women in administrative positions -- which we're now overcoming, and how protests against such inequities can disrupt the smooth functioning of the system.

GEORGE

That's for sure.

CALEB

Mike and Betty were caught up in a set of social forces of which they were a part but which was broader and deeper than what they were doing. I don't understand why they were victims, but I can't accept the contention that Satan attacked them because they were God's outpost. Anyway, why would the supreme creator create a deviant, antagonistic force? And if the force of evil counterbalances the force of good, what assurance do we have that Satan won't triumph?

RAYMOND

I didn't mean to imply that Satan would win ultimately. We know that God is omnipotent, and when he decides to act, he can and will overcome the forces waged against his kingdom.

GEORGE

All your God talk again. It's not somebody I know. I even read a book on meditation as you suggested, Caleb, but I still can't make contact.

CALEB

Keep trying, George.

JUDITH

If God is omnipotent, Raymond, why doesn't God act to stop suffering? Why didn't God prevent Michael's and Betty's death?

RAYMOND

God's ways are sometimes inscrutable, but he is just. Even Job, for all his questioning of God's actions, ultimately bowed in contrition and said to God, "I know that thou can do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted."

CALEB

No, I can't accept that conclusion.

RAYMOND

You're saying that God isn't omnipotent?

CALEB

Yes, I am. Omnipotence is a theoretical construct of philosophers who themselves longed for power, who thought they could make a better world if they reigned as philosopher-kings.

RAYMOND

But the Bible speaks of God the Almighty.

CALEB

The writings of priests, who would like to control everything. They projected such powers onto God.

RAYMOND

You're treading on thin ice, Caleb.

CALEB

Well, let me tell you. I've held power, and it's no blessing. In fact, it's a hellish situation.

RAYMOND

But not if you combine it with omniscience, as God does. He is both all-knowing and all-powerful.

CALEB

All knowing? No, that even makes it worse because you perceive the consequences of your power. Take, for instance, the controversy that raged a couple of years ago when I awarded tenure in the Sociology Department to Peter Hansen.

NANCY

Yes, and turned down Elizabeth Brady.

CALEB

Exactly. The departmental faculty deadlocked on six ballots, so the decision went to an all-university committee, which couldn't decide either. So it came to me. As I studied their credentials, I found that they were both highly rated as teachers but that Ms. Brady, though five years younger, had

published more papers and had innovated a new field survey technique. So on those grounds the university should retain her services.

NANCY

Right, she should've been promoted.

CALEB

But I also knew that Hansen had a handicapped child who needed expensive medical treatment and that his wife worked as a real estate agent to help pay the bills. Even if he could get appointed elsewhere, it would be hard for her to transfer her business. On the other hand, Ms. Brady's husband was a free lance writer and could work anywhere. So this was the basis for the decision.

RAYMOND

All things considered, it was the right choice.

CALEB

It caused me a lot of trouble at home, though, because Judy insisted I

was needlessly subjective and unfair.

JUDITH

That's for sure.

GEORGE

But it turned out all right. Liz quickly received a very good appointment back east, and she's just been put in charge of a major research project.

CALEB

Yes, but her husband refused to move. Claimed his roots were too deep in the Midwest to relocate. So they separated and divorced.

STUART

There were probably other factors in their relationship that you didn't know about.

CALEB

But if I were omniscient, as Raymond insists God is, I would have known

and would have to worry about that and manipulate an endless chain of consequences. No, in exercising power I had to choose, and this caused pain and suffering. Ray, does your all-powerful God likewise knowingly cause suffering for humankind?

RAYMOND

Uh....No, I don't think that he does. That's the work of Satan.

CALEB

Then Satan limits God's power?

RAYMOND

Only because God lets him.

CALEB

But if God is good, why doesn't God stop Satan and put an end to suffering.

RAYMOND

It doesn't work that way.

CALEB

No, it doesn't. But for other reasons than your explanation.

RAYMOND

Then why?

CALEB

To tell the truth, I haven't figure it out completely. Sometimes I think that it's chaos that exists impersonally and independently of God's domain. Indeed, that's what the myth in the first chapter of Genesis indicates. Out of chaos, God created order. But God's creative activities are not yet completed.

From that perspective, the murders of Michael and Betty are a product of the chaos of social existence, just as another kind of chaos occurs in the randomness of physical existence. It wasn't the will of God.

STUART

So your explanation is that we're still waiting for God to gain an upper hand over chaos.

CALEB

God has accomplished a tremendous work so far, but there is much more to do. And on the social side, God can't do it alone but needs us as allies in the struggle.

GEORGE

That's an interesting theory, but it still doesn't explain suffering. If God is good, as Rev. Thompson claims, why is there so much suffering in creation. Caleb, do you really believe that God is good?

CALEB

Yes, I do. But I'm still working out why we suffer. Meanwhile, I feel my losses intensely. *(He sobs.)*

JUDITH

And so do I. *(She weeps.)*

Musical interlude, such as a somber Bach choral.

Scene 5. A few months later in the Pendleton living room.

Caleb, Judith, Raymond, Stuart, Nancy, and George are there, dressed less somberly than in the previous scene.

NANCY

(To Caleb) We came immediately after we heard that Austin Clark had dismissed you from the university presidency.

STUART

After all, we are the ones who got you into it.

GEORGE

It's totally unfair.

RAYMOND

I don't see how it could do it by himself.

GEORGE

You know how he controls the board.

STUART

It's because of your department, George. Hiring that Marxist political scientist.

NANCY

Who the legislature wanted fired.

CALEB

Well, if I hadn't stood up for academic freedom, we couldn't maintain a great university.

NANCY

But what was the business about an international communist network?

CALEB

It seems that the publicity about Michael's murder got our board chairman started. He wove a strange web of connections out of my

international activities in biogenetic research. Claimed I was aligned with communists because I attended a conference in Moscow prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union.

NANCY

What nonsense!

GEORGE

What stupidity!

STUART

I'm sure Mr. Clark was wrong in your case, but I can understand the reasons for his concern.

JUDITH

We have to move out of this house, too. And all the furniture belongs to the university. On top of that we've had the expense of defending against the law suit, which the board of regents won't reimburse us for.

NANCY

I was the most ridiculous case I ever heard about.

GEORGE

Yeah. It took an unscrupulous lawyer to dream up a malpractice suit by those students and their parents against the university president because he wouldn't fire a Marxist professor.

JUDITH

I'll admit it's those kind of frivolous suits that's giving the law profession a bad name.

CALEB

But hardly frivolous in the cost of legal defense.

JUDITH

Even though Caleb won, it's seriously depleted our personal savings. And to add to our economic woes Caleb is unemployed.

CALEB

Well, they say that trouble sometimes comes in triplets: job, house,

money.

GEORGE

If you'd like, I'll organize a campaign among the faculty and students to keep your presidency. You're popular. We could shut this place down.

JUDITH

We could go to court with a claim that your contract was violated.

CALEB

But I've always served at the pleasure of the board.

JUDITH

At least we should try for a monetary settlement.

CALEB

No, I think a protest campaign and legal action would be both futile and unnecessarily divisive. What is it, anyway? Position, material possessions.

RAYMOND

That's the spirit. Remember it was Job who said, "Naked came I from

my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

JUDITH

That's fine for you to say, Raymond, with your secure position.

CALEB

You still have your legal practice, dear. With no children, no grandchildren, that's enough income

JUDITH

Don't forget, we have to pay off Michael's and Betty's debts from medical school.

CALEB

I guess I could become a consultant. Unless I decide to settle down as a housewife.

JUDITH

Housewife? There would be the cost of cooking lessons!

CALEB

Surely cooking isn't much different from my lab work.

JUDITH

Uh-oo!

Laughter

NANCY

Besides your learning that new skill, Caleb, there may be another benefit to all the calamities that have befallen you.

CALEB

Really?

NANCY:

Yes. I've noticed that adversity often helps strengthen character.

CALEB

Aren't I tough enough already?

JUDITH

In what manner, Nancy?

NANCY

Consider the small child learning to walk. She or he has to fall down many times before developing the necessary coordination. Athletes have to go through a lot of painful exercise and constant practice to hone their skills. Musicians have to play technical studies over and over before they can undertake sonatas and concertos. Athletes and musicians alike are much better performers as a result of disciplined preparation.

JUDITH

Lawyers, too.

NANCY

Likewise people develop psychological strength when they face and overcome challenges. I've seen very shy students who are afraid to go to job interviews, but after they force themselves to try a few times, their self-confidence grows enormously. The same thing happens to housewives

who enter the labor market, and to widows who become the sole support for their children. We may not welcome adversity, but it produces moral and psychological growth.

RAYMOND

I fully agree. As St. Paul indicated, "suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us." Furthermore, on some occasions God deliberately uses adversity to test our strength and steadfastness, as he did when he contested with Satan over Job's faithfulness.

CALEB

No, I can't agree with that. God would never purposefully inflict individual suffering.

STUART

You know, sometimes I think that in the larger perspective, evil doesn't exist at all but is merely part of the broader good. You certainly see this in

economic progress. For instance, historically in many parts of the earth repeated drought led people to develop irrigation systems. Damaging floods are now contained by levees and dams. The lightning rod was invented as a protective measure. The cutoff of middle-eastern oil in the 1970s led to the development of more efficient automobiles.

GEORGE

You're saying that necessity is the mother of invention.

STUART

Exactly.

GEORGE

But what about the blacks who were displaced by mechanization of cotton production?

STUART

It gave them an opportunity for better life in the city.

GEORGE

Do you know what that was like? And what about middle-aged workers who lose their jobs when factories close?

STUART

It removes obsolete facilities thereby strengthening the national economy.

GEORGE

In effect you're saying that some have to suffer for the broader good. Evil remains, and individual hardship, too.

STUART

That's the way the world is made.

JUDITH

Well, if God is really good, why didn't God create the world differently? I can think of lots of ways it could be better. I'd have less pain, less social conflict. I'd give people challenges but not beyond their strength. And, Nancy, I've seen people crushed rather than strengthened by what they were

forced to bear. I'd assure that innocent people wouldn't suffer.

RAYMOND

That's what God wanted in the first place, Judith. Before Adam sinned, the Garden of Eden offered a much better existence.

CALEB

So you explain it with the myth of Adam's fall, do you, Ray?

RAYMOND

Call it myth if you like, Caleb, but it's still true that humankind is incorrigibly corrupt. We all have sinful Adam within us. The desire to trespass into God's domain, to seek the forbidden fruit. Sin begets sin, through all the generations.

JUDITH

And what about Austin Clark? How does he fit in?

RAYMOND

From what I know of our board chairman, he must be a field

commander in Satan's army.

CALEB

Well, frankly, I don't accept your notion of original sin.

RAYMOND

Then how do you think human evil started? Aren't we all selfish sinners?

CALEB

It's true that we all express self-interest, but I don't define it as sin. Coded into life is an instinct to survive. You see it in the one-cell protozoa, like the amoeba, and in the more complex coelenterata, like sea anemones and jellyfish. More developed species show a strong will to survive individually in quite sophisticated ways -- through food gathering, flight, and fight.

STUART

It's every creature looking out for itself.

CALEB

But there's more to it. Different life forms also seek preservation of their species, even to the extent of individuals risking their own lives. For instance, parent birds attacking cats to save their young.

JUDITH

You're right. The same thing occurs among human beings. Frequently parents make many sacrifices for their children. It's a very a strong instinct.

CALEB

Therefore, acting from self-interest is a natural expression, derived from the will to live and the desire to continue our species. It has numerous manifestations, personal and social.

NANCY

Yes, that's true. Self-interest does appear in many different forms.

CALEB

Unfortunately self-interest can become excessive. Sometimes group

and national expressions of self-interest threaten other people's lives -- even the whole human race when you think of nuclear weapons. If there is such a thing as sin, it's excessive self-regard. This leads to actions harmful to others. It blocks us from constructive connection to society. It separates us from God.

RAYMOND

But somebody must have been the first sinner, and it's been handed down ever since. We all share in Adam's guilt.

CALEB

Personally I can't fathom first cause. I observe who I am, how other people and other species behave. I see the survival instinct in all of them, each born as a new being. That's what they inherit from genetic stock. Each acts it out in ways that you might call sinful, but because of the individual's own basic nature. There is no need for a primeval Adam to instruct us.

JUDITH

That's interesting speculation, but it doesn't explain why we're the victim of the chairman's actions. Why shouldn't he suffer instead of us? If there ever was an evil old man, it is he.

RAYMOND

That's another one of God's mysteries. As he used the Assyrians and Babylonians to chastise Israel, so God sometimes uses evil people to discipline his chosen persons who have drifted from his ways. As later the Assyrians and Babylonians were taken down, so also God will eventually take care of the chairman. But when and how is not for us to say. All you can do, Caleb, is accept God's judgment.

CALEB

I really don't see it that way.

RAYMOND

How do you understand it?

CALEB

Surely my personal shortcomings -- what you call sin -- aren't all that bad. I am paying the price of free will, which is another of the great gifts of humankind.

JUDITH

I agree with you that it's a precious gift, darling, but it is also one of our most perilous possessions.

CALEB

True. But on the positive side free will is the source of human growth and creativity. Free will enables us to examine our world, question handed-down knowledge, work out our own understanding, make choices, bring about improvements, determine our own fate to some extent. It's the basis of artistic accomplishments and the foundation of moral character.

STUART

It is also a source of error, wrongful behavior, self-suffering, and cruelty

to others.

CALEB

Indeed it is. That's the cost, but it's worth it. Furthermore, I'm beginning to understand that you have to know evil to truly appreciate the good.

GEORGE

That's all right for you to say. But for all you've suffered, others have suffered unendurably more. Blacks in America, Jews in Hitler's Germany, oppressed people in the Third World. What's loss of job and money compared to that?

CALEB

Remember, I've lost children and grandchildren, too.

GEORGE

Yes, that was great sorrow. But what about Auschwitz where three million Jews were exterminated? And Hiroshima and the slaughter of other

wars? Where was your just God in these events, Rev. Thompson? Caleb, you can talk all you like about the regularity of nature, interconnections of humankind, free will and moral choice, and what you call excessive self-interest. But how do you explain genocide?

STUART

Yes, how do you?

GEORGE

For myself I'm about convinced that Nancy's explanation of dark forces of the inner psyche explain it. Or maybe even his idea of Satan (*gesturing to Raymond*). Caleb, you yourself have admitted that God isn't omnipotent. Is your God good? Is he just? Or does he really exist at all? Maybe your sense of the indwelling spirit is merely self-hypnosis. Perhaps your detection of patterns in evolution is your rationalization of events which just happened by chance.

RAYMOND

Of course, God exists, George. He is the Supreme Being, the Lord of Creation, who requires that we all worship and serve him.

NANCY

He, him. Why not she, her?

STUART

Or why not nothing at all? We're modern people who no longer need the myth of a Supreme Being to explain things.

CALEB

Yes, George, God exists. God is real, Stuart. But instead of thinking of God as a being -- our Father in heaven, or our Father and Mother in heaven, Nancy -- I perceive of God as a force. The creative force of the universe, present everywhere.

NANCY

God as a force, you say? Not a being? That's certainly a different

approach.

CALEB

Yes, it is as a force that God creates. But it is not a distant, impersonal force but rather a force with which we interact.

GEORGE

Interact with an abstract force? That doesn't seem real.

CALEB

It's no abstraction, George. It's very real.

GEORGE

How do you know for sure?

CALEB

My grandfather taught me that there is that of God in every person. I used to think that he meant that everyone is worthy of dignity and respect. That's true, but I have also come to understand that in the depths of our

being we have access to this awesome creative force. As we interact, we realize that God is a loving force.

Furthermore, as I observe the universe I have become aware of God's action as an integrating force, constantly striving to overcome chaos of nature and human society. I know all that with certainty.

GEORGE

Yes, but you haven't offered a satisfactory explanation of suffering.

CALEB

When I work it out, I'll let you know.

GEORGE

Please do because until I solve this riddle, I'll remain a disbeliever.

Musical interlude, such as a Bach choral (perhaps "Komm, Susser Tod").

Act II, Scene 6. Six months later in Caleb's bedroom.

Caleb is in bed asleep. Raymond is sitting beside the bed. Judith enters with Nancy, Stuart, and George.

JUDITH

Caleb's been very uncomfortable the last few days, but he insisted on coming home.

STUART

When I visited him at the hospital a couple of weeks ago, he was very chipper. He was talking about getting back to his lab to work on a new experiment.

JUDITH

He's had his ups and downs, but he'll never get back to the lab. Just yesterday he was in deep despair because he felt that he may have brought on the cancer by not being able to handle adversity properly. He's read that underlying psychological factors can cause cancer.

NANCY

Well, yes, there has been some research along those lines. In fact, certain personality types get particular types of cancers. But there are also environmental factors. For instance, there is a high incidence in certain lines of work. And I dare say his exposure to chemicals in the laboratory over the years must be the decisive factor.

JUDITH

That's what his doctor told him. Caleb says that if that's the case, it's worth the price. He feels his scientific contributions required taking the risk. Yet, he retains this nagging doubt that he himself may be responsible.

Caleb stirs, awakens, and raises his head.

CALEB

Who's there?

JUDITH

It's George, Stuart, and Nancy.

They move to the bedside.

CALEB

Have you come to test me some more? Or to counsel me?

NANCY

Neither. We're friends who just want to spend some time with you.

CALEB

I don't have much left, but I'm happy to share it. Why are you looking so solemn, Stuart? Has the stock market fallen? Or is it the natural pessimism of your profession?

STUART

I can't disguise it, can I? I feel deeply sorrowful to see you suffer so. I keep thinking of the poet who wrote that we live in a vale of tears.

NANCY

(To Stuart) You're a cheerful one!

CALEB

That's all right. I know I'm dying. It's my destiny. And yours, too, all of you.

RAYMOND

But none of you need to despair. After all, they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

GEORGE

That's from the Bible, isn't it?

RAYMOND

That's right.

GEORGE

I've been reading a lot of Bible lately, but I still can't find God. And I've come across some writers who are as glum as Stuart. Like the one who wrote, "I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wiseman has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. Yet I perceived that one fate comes to all of them. Vanity of Vanity!"

RAYMOND

Oh, that's the preacher in Ecclesiastes. He was the supreme pessimist.

CALEB

Yes, far too pessimistic.

RAYMOND

The trouble with that view is that it takes too short a perspective of time. As St. Paul explained, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

GEORGE

And when will this be?

RAYMOND

At the end of time. At the moment of the last judgment. The Revelation to John has disclosed the words of Christ, "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay everyone for what he has done."

CALEB

You know, just as I haven't been able to comprehend first cause, neither can I grasp end-time. I can't even say whether I expect my spirit to continue after my body dies. If it does, will it be an immediate rebirth, or will I waken only on judgment day? If the latter, I probably won't be aware of the time gap in between.

NANCY

Like a long night's sleep.

CALEB

Something like that. If it occurs, I'll accept continued life in the spirit as a bonus. Yet, the uncertainty doesn't really bother me. Life has been fulfilling with all its joys and sorrows.

He has a coughing spell. Judith gives him some water.

JUDITH

You'd better rest a while.

GEORGE

Yes, we'll be on our way.

CALEB

No, stay. *(To George)* You and I have a matter to complete.

GEORGE

We do?

CALEB

Yes, some months ago you asked: what about Auschwitz? This was really a vast magnification of the question of why God would let anyone suffer, especially the innocent.

GEORGE

It still perplexes me.

CALEB

I've come to realize that God suffers with us.

RAYMOND

You're speaking of Christ the suffering servant, God the Son.

CALEB

No, I'm talking about God in God's full nature. The suffering God.

RAYMOND

You're claiming that God, the Almighty One, can suffer. Caleb, that's not really possible.

CALEB

No, not the almighty. The all-loving God, the creative force of the universe. What I've long perceived in biology to be God's integrating power in creation, I now understand to be love.

JUDITH

God's love for us?

CALEB

God's love for all creatures. And you cannot love without suffering. Didn't we learn that, Judy, in loving each other, in raising our children, and

in losing them?

JUDITH

Yes, that's so.

CALEB

So God, too, experiences the suffering of love. Thus, the personification of God as Father, and as Mother, too, is understandable. Think of God's agony when Jesus, who lived as a true son of God, was crucified.

JUDITH

Yes, it must have been great sorrow for God.

CALEB

But as God didn't abandon Jesus, so God never abandons us. Not when we suffer from natural causes or from human cruelty. Not when we bring suffering on ourselves. Not even when we ourselves are cruel. *(Coughs)*

RAYMOND

But don't forget the hope and promise contained in Christ's resurrection.

CALEB

Yes, that was God's fulfillment, but the crucifixion had to come first. As God suffered with Jesus on the cross, so God suffers with all of us in life and death. That's also part of our destiny. And how God must have suffered at Auschwitz, at Hiroshima, and at all other sites of man's cruelty to man.

GEORGE

I suppose you're right.

NANCY

Does this realization ease your own suffering? Does it take away the pain to believe that God suffers with you?

CALEB

No, the physical pain is still there, but the anguish of my soul is gone.
(Sighs) I'm at peace with myself. I'm at peace with God.
He coughs again. Judith comforts him. He clasps her hand, looks at her lovingly, and silently forms the words, "Oh Judy". Sighs deeply. Closes his

eyes. His head slumps as he dies. Judith releases his hand and places it on his chest.

JUDITH

God's peace be with you, Caleb.

The end.

Characters

Caleb Pendleton, professor of biogenetics at a midwestern university

Judith, his wife

Ruth, their daughter

Michael, their son

George Madison, professor of political science

Nancy O'Shaughnessy, professor of psychology

Stuart Price, professor of economics

Rev. Raymond Thompson, university chaplain

Act I. Springtime, mid-1980s

Scene 1. A small conference room

Scene 2. Next day in a biology laboratory

Scene 3. A few days later in Caleb's and Judith's bedroom

Scene 4. A half hour later at a tennis court

Scene 5. A week later in Pendleton kitchen

Scene 6. Same day at biology laboratory

Scene 7. An hour later in a small conference room

Scene 8. One week later in Pendleton living room

Act II. Seven years later

Scene 1. A small conference room

Scene 2. Same day in Pendleton living room

First musical interlude

Scene 3. Six months later, same place

Second musical interlude

Scene 4. Several months later, same place

Third musical interlude

Scene 5. A few months later, same place

Fourth musical interlude

Scene 6. Six months later in Caleb's bedroom

Synopsis

Act I. Caleb and his family are introduced. Stuart, Nancy, and George test him with temptations of money, sex, and power. He doesn't succumb. Proven to be a good person to the satisfaction of the board chairman, Caleb is appointed university president.

Act II. Successively Caleb's daughter and her family are killed in an avalanche, Caleb's son and daughter-in-law are murdered by revolutionaries in South America, Caleb is fired as university president and evicted from the president's house, and Caleb is afflicted with terminal cancer. As this unfolds, Caleb, Judith, George, Nancy, Stuart, and Raymond discuss why such calamities can strike good people if God is good and just. The final scene offers Caleb's solution.

DESTINY
A Reading Drama

by
Howard W. Hallman

6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Monday-Thursday: (301) 694-2859

Friday & Saturday: (301) 897-3668

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Characters

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Judith, his wife

Ruth, their daughter

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Act II (6 scenes). *After seven good years successively Caleb's daughter and her family are killed in an avalanche, Caleb's son and daughter-in-law are murdered by revolutionaries in South America, Caleb is fired as university president and evicted from the president's house, and Caleb is afflicted with terminal*

cancer. After each calamity Caleb, Judith, George, Nancy, Stuart, and Raymond discuss why such disasters can strike good people if God is good and just. The final scene offers Caleb's solution.

Act II, Scene 6. Six months later in Caleb's bedroom.

Caleb is in bed asleep. Raymond is sitting beside the bed. Judith enters with Nancy, Stuart, and George.

JUDITH

Caleb's been very uncomfortable the last few days, but he insisted on coming home.

STUART

When I visited him at the hospital a couple of weeks ago, he was very chipper. He was talking about getting back to his lab to work on a new experiment.

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He's had his ups and downs, but he'll never get back to the lab. Just yesterday he was in deep despair because he felt that he may have brought on the cancer by not being able to handle adversity properly. He's read that underlying psychological factors can cause cancer.

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Caleb stirs, awakens, and raises his head.

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Who's there?

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April 1994

DESTINY

A screenplay by

Howard W. Hallman

c 1996

6508 Wilmett Road
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301 694-2859

Fax: 301 620-0232

FADE IN:

EST - UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

We see entrance to the university with a sign "State University". CUT TO inner campus. It is early spring with forsythia blooming. CUT TO Administration Building.

CUT TO:

INT - LARGE OFFICE

AUSTIN V. CLARK is seated at a large desk in a pretentious office. His desk is neatly organized with several stacks of reports and computer printouts. He is leafing through a directory. From different pages he writes down three names. He buzzes his SECRETARY. She enters and comes to his desk. He hands her the names and gives her instructions (which we don't hear).

CUT TO:

INT - OUTER OFFICE

Secretary comes out door and closes it, revealing a sign: "Austin V. Clark, Chairman, Board of Regents". She goes to her desk and starts making phone calls.

CUT TO:

INT - MODEST SIZE OFFICE

STUART PRICE is seated in front of computer, which shows a graph on the screen. The phone rings. He listens, acknowledges the message, and scribbles a note on a pad.

CUT TO:

INT - SEMINAR ROOM

NANCY O'SHAUGHNESSEY is conducting a seminar for a dozen graduate students, who are sitting in a circle in comfortable chairs. An aide comes in and hands her a note. Nancy excuses herself, goes to an outer room, picks up the phone, listens, replies, and then returns to the seminar room.

CUT TO;

INT - CLASSROOM

GEORGE MADISON is lecturing a class of undergraduates. He is pointing to a chart with the heading "Congress Makes A Law" and a diagram of the steps of the legislative process. An aide enters and hands him a note. He puts it in his pocket and continues his lecture.

CUT TO:

INT - CHAIRMAN'S OUTER OFFICE

Stuart and Nancy are sitting in easy chairs. George enters. Secretary phones to tell Clark they are there. She then beckons them to enter Clark's office.

CUT TO:

INT - CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

As Stuart, Nancy, and George enter, Chairman Clark greets them and guides them to an area with a sofa and three upholstered arm chairs on either side of a coffee table.

AUSTIN

Thank you for coming on short notice.

STUART

That's all right.

AUSTIN

Do you know one another?

(To Nancy)

You, of course, are Professor Nancy O'Shaughnessy of the Psychology Department.

NANCY

Yes, I know George Madison of Political Science [gesturing to George], and I just met Stuart Price of the Business School in your outer office.

AUSTIN

Good! Then we can get down to business. The university is about to receive a grant from an anonymous benefactor who wants to recognize and award one of

our faculty as a "good person". I want you to help me pick the recipient.

STUART

"Good person" -- what do you mean by that?

AUSTIN

The donor feels that there's a disturbing trend in our society that has infused our campus. Many are insisting that all conduct is relative, that nothing can be judged good or bad any more. Others are practitioners of situation ethics. They focus on what works rather than what is right or wrong.

George, Nancy, and Stuart look at one another in puzzlement.

AUSTIN (Cont.)

The donor, and I agree with him, believes that we need to reestablish the distinction between the good and the bad. One way we can do this is to identify good persons who can serve as role models for others.

NANCY

What do you want us to do?

AUSTIN

I want you to survey the faculty, get their nominations, and have them vote, department by department, on who they consider to be a good person among their peers. At Commencement in June we'll announce the award for the faculty member receiving the most votes.

STUART

How much is the award?

AUSTIN

\$2,000. Not a lot, but it's the recognition that counts.

GEORGE

Why us?

AUSTIN

Because all of you grew here in the Midwest and weren't corrupted by the dubious ethics of the East or California. And you've been on the campus for fifteen years or more, so you know many of the faculty.

NANCY

That's not an easy assignment.

AUSTIN

I'm sure you can do it. How long do you think it will take?

GEORGE

A carefully designed and tested survey will take about six weeks.

AUSTIN

That's too long. I'll give you three weeks. Come back and see me when you're finished.

STUART

We'll do the best we can.

AUSTIN

I expect nothing but the best.

The three professors get up, shake hands with Clark, and depart.

CUT TO:

INT - FACULTY LOUNGE

CLOSE UP of Stuart's hands pouring coffee into a mug from a carafe. DRAW BACK as he adds cream and sugar and joins Nancy and George, who have carried coffee mugs to a table.

STUART

What a stupid assignment! Good and bad. Right and wrong. What quaint concepts!

NANCY

As if Chairman Clark were an authority on ethics.

GEORGE

Yeah, the way he made his fortune manipulating the commodities market. The thousands of small farmers he ruined. I think his middle initial -- "V" -- must stand for "vicious".

STUART

Remember, George, it was all legal in a free market economy.

NANCY

But hardly ethical, Stuart.

STUART

If he's as bad as you claim, why have three governors in a row appointed him as chairman of the board of regents? And besides, the legislature respects him.

NANCY

Money speaks.

GEORGE

And buys access to power.

STUART

Well, it's not our job to figure out the chairman's motives. All we have to do is select a good person on the faculty.

NANCY

As if that were an easy task. How are we going to do that?

STUART

Maybe we should start by defining what we mean by a good person.

GEORGE

A good person is one who is kind and considerate of others.

NANCY

But what about inner motivation? I've seen people who use politeness as a mask for manipulation.

STUART

We could never survey the faculty for motives. We should look for persons who contribute to the larger social good.

NANCY

That's too impersonal.

GEORGE

And besides, who can determine what's good for society?

STUART

It's what brings the greatest happiness to the greatest number.

NANCY

Too nebulous. We should look for personal qualities, like fidelity to one's mate.

GEORGE

And rule out those who aren't.

STUART

Isn't that too intrusive? But we could eliminate the bossy types who like to dominate others.

NANCY

And discard those who value economic gain over human relationships.

GEORGE

No, it's an impossible task to specify what

O

a good person is. Instead we should borrow a leaf from community power studies. We ask people who they consider the leaders are in their community but let them use their own definition of leaders. We can do the same for the faculty. We'll simple ask them to identify (Cont.)

GEORGE (Cont.)

who they consider good persons to be among their peers.

NANCY

That makes sense to me.

STUART

I'll go along with that.

GEORGE

I've got a couple of graduate students who can help us by distributing the survey and tabulating the results.

NANCY

Good! Then we're on our way.

CUT TO:

EXT - UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Spring has advanced three weeks. Leaves are mostly out on the trees. Dogwood trees are in bloom. George walks across the campus carrying a pile of computer printouts. He enters a building.

CUT TO:

INT - CONFERENCE ROOM

Nancy and Stuart are sitting at a table. George enters and hands each of them a computer printout. They examine them.

GEORGE

Here are the results. You'll note a surprising consensus.

STUART

The returns from the School of Engineering seem to be incomplete.

GEORGE

Yes, they couldn't figure out what goodness is.

NANCY

I understand that Chaplain Thompson objected to the whole idea, insisting that no one is good but God.

GEORGE

What would you expect him to say?
And in the Philosophy Department when

individual nominations came in to the review panel, they had a three hour
(Cont.)

GEORGE (Cont.)

debate on what is good. I was told that they systematically explored the views of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, contemporary existentialists, and many more.

NANCY

Did they reach agreement?

GEORGE

Not on the definition. In fact, they almost came to blows -- if you can imagine philosophers fighting. But they did achieve a consensus on a nominee: Caleb Pendleton, professor of biogenetics.

STUART

(Leafing through the printout)
So did most of the other departments.

GEORGE

Yes, Professor Pendleton leads three to one over the next person on the list.

STUART

Then he's the winner. Do either of you

3

know him?

NANCY

Yes, I do. I served with him on an all-university research committee last year.

GEORGE

What's he like, Nancy?

NANCY

Quiet, but with a subtle sense of humor. Strong and determined. Courteous.

STUART

What's his specialty?

NANCY

Recombinant DNA research.

STUART

What's that?

NANCY

Gene-splicing.

GEORGE

He sounds like a good choice. But don't you think we ought to test him ourselves?

4

STUART

How? You know we weren't able to agree on what makes a person good.

NANCY

Yes, but remember when we first met, we had some ideas on the negative -- the things a good person wouldn't do. Why don't we test Professor Pendleton that way?

GEORGE

Okay. We can determine the most common character flaws of people and find out if Professor Pendleton is susceptible to temptation.

STUART

Like what?

GEORGE

Like power. An obsessive drive for power. And misuse of power once you have it. The political history of the world is strewn with supposedly good men, and some good women, too, who succumbed to the drive for power.

NANCY

What about sex? In psychology we find

that many aberrations of behavior derive from a person's sexual desire. And you certainly read about such cases all the time in the daily newspapers, and not just in the weekly scandal sheets.

STUART

Also, money.

GEORGE

Right. Money is the root of all evil!

STUART

It's not money per se, but rather the excessive love of it.

GEORGE

So why don't we each test him for the weakness we nominated. Stuart, you on money. Nancy on sex. And I on power.

NANCY

Good idea. If he passes our tests, we can indeed certify him as a good person and nominate him to the chairperson for the award.

STUART

I'll go along with that.

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GEORGE

Then it's agreed.

CUT TO:

INT - SCIENCE LABORATORY

CALEB PENDLETON is looking into a microscope. His son, MICHAEL, enters, carrying some textbooks.

MICHAEL

Dad, can I bother you for a few minutes?

CALEB

Certainly, Michael, any time.

MICHAEL

I just came from my anatomy class where I'm getting swamped.

CALEB

What's the trouble?

MICHAEL

It's all the memory work. Hundreds of terms.

CALEB

I'm sure you can manage.

MICHAEL

7

*I never was good at memorizing things.
If I flunk this course, I'll never get into
med school.*

CALEB

*When I took anatomy, I had the same
problem until I got the hang of it.*

MICHAEL

How did you do it?

CALEB

*You know that old song? The knee
bone's connected to the thigh bone, the
thigh bone's connected to the hip bone, et
cetera?*

MICHAEL

What's that got to do with it?

CALEB

*Well, technically the patella is connected
to the femur which fits into the
acetabulum.*

MICHAEL

*How can you remember that after all
these years?*

CALEB

Functionalism. That's the secret.

MICHAEL

How's that?

CALEB

Every bone, tendon, muscle, artery, and all the other parts of the body have specific functions to perform, and they're all connected systematically. So instead of simply memorizing a long list of individual parts, I analyzed the detailed workings of the functional systems and all the names fell into place.

MICHAEL

I guess the prof has said something like that, but not as clearly.

CALEB

Just don't be discouraged. You'll make a fine doctor, Michael.

MICHAEL

If I get through pre-med, med school, internship, residency. Boy, that's a long time. And if I can afford it.

CALEB

You know I've told you that your mother and I will help you all we can. And you can borrow the rest.

MICHAEL

That's what worries me. How would I ever pay it back?

CALEB

Banks know that young doctors are good risks.

MICHAEL

But what if I don't go into the usual lucrative practice?

CALEB

Such as?

MICHAEL

Well, Betty and I were talking -- she's the one I had over to the house last Sunday -- that when we both finish med school, maybe we should go into the inner city to serve the poor, or something like that.

CALEB

That's certainly a worthy calling.

O

MICHAEL

We wouldn't make a lot of money but
would still have our debts.

CALEB

I could continue to help you.

MICHAEL

I don't want to be dependent forever.

CALEB

Don't worry about it, son. It's the same
offer my father made me when I talked
about being a medical missionary.

MICHAEL

You never told me about that.

CALEB

I haven't? About the time I met Albert
Schweitzer?

MICHAEL

Who's he?

CALEB

When he was a young man, he was a
noted musician and theologian in
Germany. Then he became a doctor and
opened a hospital in Africa.

1

MICHAEL

*Oh yeah. I guess I've heard of him.
When did you meet him?*

CALEB

*When I was twelve. Dr. Schweitzer gave
a lecture on Goethe in Aspen. My father
was a generous donor to his mission, so
we got to go to a private party in his
(Cont.)*

CALEB (Cont.)

*honor. It was very inspiring. I decided
right on the spot to be a medical
missionary, just like Schweitzer.*

MICHAEL

Why didn't you go?

CALEB

*Two reasons. During my second year in
medical school I got really excited about
DNA and the practical applications of
biogenetics. Second, I fell in love with a
girl who was determined to be a lawyer
and would never consent to settling
abroad, particularly in some undeveloped
country. So I decided to stay in the
United States and concentrate on DNA*

2

research.

MICHAEL

And you married Mom!

CALEB

It was the right decision on both counts.

Stuart enters.

STUART

Excuse me. I'm looking for Professor Pendleton.

CALEB

I am he. And this is my son, Michael.

STUART

I'm Stuart Price from the Business School.

MICHAEL

Dad, I've got to get to the library. See you at home tonight.

CALEB

Goodbye, son.

MICHAEL

Nice to meet you, Professor Price.

3

STUART

And you too, Michael.

Michael leaves.

CALEB

(To Stuart)

How can I help you?

STUART

Actually it is I who may be able to help you.

CALEB

In what way?

STUART

You see, one of the informal services I render on campus is to connect faculty with good investment opportunities and to help them cash in on their research.

CALEB

Well, I don't have a lot to invest, with two children in college.

STUART

But your wife works, too, as an attorney, so you are a two-income household.

CALEB

4

How do you know?

STUART

I do my homework.

CALEB

But I've got other expenses.

STUART

Yes, I know. You support an elderly uncle in a nursing home.

CALEB

You do do your homework.

STUART

It's very commendable for a nephew to look after a bachelor uncle. Anyway, it's not investments I've come to talk about. It's your research.

CALEB

If you're going to advise me to form a corporation to market new life forms, you can forget it. I've already turned down three or four offers. I just don't think it's proper for professors, subsidized as we are, to incorporate to gain private profit.

STUART

No, I've got a different kind of deal. A

5

friend of mine with contacts in Asia has
(Cont.)

STUART (Cont.)

told me about a government-sponsored
institute that wants to buy into the latest
developments in recombinant DNA
research in the United States -- not
officially, but through backdoor channels.
They'll pay very well.

CALEB

No, I'm not the one for that.

STUART

I understand that you've been working on
ways of splicing bits of DNA to cure
ailments derived from hereditary defects.
This institute is particularly interested in
this line of research.

CALEB

I'm working on it, but there's still a lot to
learn. Whenever I make and verify
discoveries, I publish the results for
everyone to read.

STUART

But they want to obtain information on
the latest technology, long ahead of

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publication.

CALEB

I'm not interested.

STUART

You do have some heavy financial burdens -- your children's education, and getting your son through medical school will be real burden, even for a two-income family. Your uncle's expenses. Your daughter's wedding in the summer could cost you five grand.

CALEB

I'll manage.

STUART

Payments would go to a numbered Swiss bank account. I'm talking big money. Six figures a year for the next ten years. There would be absolute secrecy. No one would ever find out.

CALEB

No, thank you.

STUART

You could buy a fishing lodge in

Minnesota. Or a condo in Vail for your family's skiing outings. Maybe both.

CALEB

No, I said! My services are not for sale to an undisclosed foreign institute, or anyone else.

STUART

It would solve all your financial problems.

CALEB

It's just not the kind of deal I want to get involved with. I can take care of my personal finances in other ways. And even if I run into difficulties, I'd never go the route you're suggesting.

STUART

Okay, okay. I'm just trying to be of service. You're the master of your own fate.

CALEB

I'm not sure how completely that is so, but at least I'm in control of who I work for.

STUART

I'll tell you, though, if I get any leads on

8

any good investments you might approve of, I'll let you know.

CALEB

Humph!

Caleb gestures to show Stuart the way out.

STUART

All right, I'm going.

CUT TO:

EXT - RANCH STYLE HOUSE - DAY

The Pendleton's house. A spacious ranch house with well kept yard but not ostentatious.

CUT TO:

INT- MASTER BEDROOM

JUDITH PENDLETON, Caleb's wife, is taking clothes from a chest of drawers and packing a suitcase on the bed as she talks with her daughter, RUTH.

RUTH

How long will you be gone this time, Mom?

JUDITH

The convention lasts five days.

RUTH

What do you lawyers talk about all that time?

JUDITH

Lots of things. I'm on a panel discussing nonjudicial resolution of domestic disputes.

RUTH

Whatever that is.

JUDITH

Settling family quarrels out of court. We'll have a number of sessions on revisions to the ethical code. Lots of other legal issues. And the chief justice will speak at the annual banquet.

RUTH

You didn't used to go to these things.

JUDITH

When you and Michael were younger, I didn't want to be away from you.

RUTH

How does Daddy feel about your traveling?

JUDITH

Oh, he doesn't mind. Sometimes he's so absorbed in his research that he scarcely notices that I'm around. He may not even be aware that I'm gone.

RUTH

And when Daddy goes off to conferences, don't you worry?

JUDITH

About what?

RUTH

Oh, you know. That he might meet another woman, and uh....

JUDITH

Oh, Ruth, heavens no! That's the last thing I would worry about. Remember when I went to his conference in San Francisco two years ago? The most boring time I ever had. All they did was talk shop, day and night. Not nearly as much fun as the bar association. Why are you asking all these questions?

RUTH

1

I've been think about David since he lined up this sales job after graduation. A month after our wedding he'll have to go off for a training program. Since I've decided to finish my degree, I can't go with him. And, well, you know.

JUDITH

It's a matter of trust.

RUTH

Oh, I trust him. I really do. But it's all so new and so different.

Caleb enters dressed in a tennis warmup, carrying a racket and balls.

JUDITH

I have confidence in both of you.

CALEB

Confidence in whom?

JUDITH

In Ruth and David.

CALEB

Of course, a fine couple.

Caleb gives Ruth a hug.

JUDITH

2

Let's see. I've still got some things in the dryer.

Judith leaves.

RUTH

Are the odd couples having another doubles match, Daddy?

CALEB

We're really not that odd, Ruthie. Just because my partner has a long gray beard and our opponents are short and tall like Mutt and Jeff.

RUTH

Well, I think you're funny.

CALEB

Don't forget. I'm the one who taught you how to play tennis.

RUTH

Yes, and I remember how you used to beat me all the time.

CALEB

Until your high school coach taught you how to chop. Do you let David win sometimes?

RUTH

Are you kidding? He trounces me every chance he gets. But I can still outski him.

CALEB

He's a good man, Ruthie. You've chosen well.

RUTH

I've chosen?

CALEB

Of course. The woman always chooses, although in the old days she let the man think he decided.

Judith enters with some clothing.

RUTH

Like Mom chose you?

CALEB

Exactly. [Hugging Judith] You know how assertive these lawyers are.

JUDITH

*(Pushing him away good naturedly)
Caleb, let me go. I'll be late for my*

4

flight.

RUTH

You two old lovebirds!

CUT TO:

EXT - TENNIS COURT - DAY

Nancy is seated on a bench, bouncing tennis balls on her racket and on the ground. She is dressed in a short tennis skirt. She glances at her wristwatch and looks around. Caleb enters, dressed in his tennis warmup, carrying racket and balls.

NANCY

Hi, Caleb! Looking for a game?

CALEB

Why hello, Nancy. No, I've come to meet some fellows for a doubles match.

NANCY

I haven't seen anyone.

CALEB

Not a distinguished looking bearded man, about my age? Or a tall man and a little short guy?

NANCY

5

No, none of them. In fact nobody's around. I was hoping I could pick up a game. Would you volley with me while you wait for your partners?

CALEB

Might as well.

Caleb takes off his warmup. As the conversation continues, Nancy starts flirting with verbal nuance and body movement.

NANCY

I haven't seen you around much lately.

CALEB

No, not since our committee finished its report.

NANCY

I've missed being with you.

CALEB

You have?

NANCY

Sure. Have you missed me?

CALEB

Well, uh, I....

NANCY

6

That's okay. You don't have to answer.
I really warm to the strong, silent type,
especially someone as handsome as you.

CALEB

Handsome? A stodgy old fellow like me?

NANCY

You're not stodgy. [Looking him over]
You've got a good physique and nice legs.

CALEB

[Drawing back a little and laughing
nervously] That's a new one.

NANCY

Yes, really, you do.

CALEB

My wife wouldn't agree. She's always
trying to get me to diet.

NANCY

It's surprising she has ti

CALEB

She's a very good attorney. Do you
know her?

NANCY

7

No, but I've heard about her through the campus grapevine. Don't you ever get lonely when she's away?

CALEB

I miss her, if that's what you mean.

NANCY

Don't you long for female companionship?

CALEB

I'm usually too busy.

NANCY

Oh, Caleb, you ought to have more fun.

CALEB

Fun?

NANCY

Yes, why not come over to my apartment for drinks when you're through playing tennis.

She reaches out to touch him.

CALEB

(Drawing back) Is this what you mean by a pick-up game?

NANCY

I just think that men and women ought to get better acquainted, if you know what I mean.

Caleb looks around squeamishly.

NANCY (Cont.)

Don't worry, your partners needn't find out. Nor your wife.

CALEB

I'll tell you straight, Nancy. I don't fool around. My covenant with Judith is too strong. But if I did, a person like you would certainly be on the top of my list.

NANCY

That's the nicest put down I've ever had, Caleb. Come on. Let's volley some.

Caleb and Nancy go onto the court and start volleying.

CUT TO:

INT- KITCHEN

Ruth and Michael are in the Pendleton kitchen. Ruth is drinking orange juice, and Michael is making a sandwich.

RUTH

*Mike, what are you going to get Daddy
for his birthday?*

MICHAEL

*I don't know. It gets harder every year.
I'm tired of buying a shirt and necktie.*

RUTH

*And he must be tired of the ties you pick
out.*

MICHAEL

Watch it.

RUTH

*Remember the crazy things we've given
him over the years?*

MICHAEL

*Yes, like the sweater you knitted when
you were in junior high.*

RUTH

It was a little baggy.

MICHAEL

And one sleeve was longer than the other.

RUTH

O

But he wore it anyway. He's always been a good sport. Even the time you gave him a rabbit.

MICHAEL

I was just a kid and had only two dollars to spend. It was just after Easter and they were on sale.

RUTH

What ever happened to Doc?

MICHAEL

He got away. Or maybe Dad took him to his lab.

RUTH

Oh, that's awful! He never would have done that.

MICHAEL

No, probably not. I know. I'll get him some fishing lures. The guys down at Al's Sport Shop will know the kind he likes.

RUTH

I think I'll give him a box of chocolates.

MICHAEL

1

Chocolates? That's what we give Mom.

RUTH

*Yes, I know. But do you ever notice that
Daddy usually eats at least half of them.*

MICHAEL

*Including the ones you punch out to avoid
the soft ones.*

RUTH

Yes, chocolates it will be.

CUT TO:

INT - SCIENCE LABORATORY

Caleb is pouring liquid from a beaker into a test tube. George enters.

GEORGE

Professor Pendleton?

CALEB

Yes.

GEORGE

*I'm George Madison of the Political
Science Department. I've come to ask
your help on a class project.*

2

CALEB

I know nothing about politics.

GEORGE

That's precisely why I've come to you. You see, I have a graduate seminar on political campaigning and we want some real experience. Since there are no major campaigns for public office this spring, we're looking for something in campus politics.

CALEB

You should've done it in the fall for the student elections.

GEORGE

It's a spring semester course. We have discovered, though, that in about a month the Biology Department will be electing a new chairperson, and I understand that you're a candidate.

CALEB

Some of my colleagues have suggested my name.

GEORGE

And you're running?

CALEB

Not exactly. I'm willing to serve. Indeed, I would feel honored to be selected. But we don't campaign for the position.

GEORGE

Well, I've heard that one of your younger colleagues, Professor Danielson, is mounting a campaign.

CALEB

So I've noticed.

GEORGE

And it doesn't bother you?

CALEB

Well, yes it does, but not because he's campaigning.

GEORGE

What then?

CALEB

It's his emphasis.

GEORGE

4

Emphasis?

CALEB

He's one of the younger group of superb technicians who see research as the primary focus of a university with teaching almost an ancillary function.

GEORGE

And you disagree?

CALEB

Of course. The university exists to teach. Research is important because you can't teach properly unless you're close to the frontier of knowledge. But teaching has to remain central.

GEORGE

And if Danielson gets elected chairperson, he'll switch priorities?

CALEB

To the extent he can. That's what I'm afraid of.

GEORGE

And you'd like to prevent that?

CALEB

5

Yes, I would.

GEORGE

Would you say any other professor who shares your views on teaching could defeat Danielson.

CALEB

Probably not.

GEORGE

Could you?

CALEB

Perhaps. But it's not certain.

GEORGE

Then that's why you need an effective campaign. My students and I will assist you.

CALEB

In what way?

GEORGE

I'm teaching them about both positive and negative campaigning. On the positive side, we'll help you formulate a position paper on where you want the department to go, and we'll work behind the scenes to build up a network of

supporters.

CALEB

And the negative?

GEORGE

We've done some preliminary research and have hit paydirt. It happens that my department coordinates an interdisciplinary program on science and public policy. This year one of the science students in the course is in the same field of biology as Danielson. We enlisted his help, and he came up with a startling discover -- that ten years ago Danielson plagiarized a substantial portion of his doctoral dissertation from a Japanese report.

CALEB

He did?

GEORGE

Yes. You see, our student served two years in the Army in Japan, learned Japanese, and knew the professor who did the study.

CALEB

Plagiarism is a serious charge. Are you

7

certain? Mr. Danielson impresses me as very bright and wouldn't need to cheat.

GEORGE

I can document it.

CALEB

That's very disturbing.

GEORGE

In your campaign you wouldn't be the one to disclose it. We would slip it to someone else in your department, who could quietly circulate it.

CALEB

But that would destroy young Danielson's career.

GEORGE

He would deserve it.

CALEB

That's awfully harsh treatment.

GEORGE

But think of the gain. It would assure your selection as chairperson. Consider all the good you could accomplish. You would be in a position to maintain a strong teaching emphasis. You would be able to draw in more faculty who share your views that biogenetic research should benefit humankind.

CALEB

I suppose I could.

GEORGE

Your selection could help stop the trend toward commercialization of university research which Danielson and his crowd are drawn to.

CALEB

You know about that?

GEORGE

Yes, I follow the trends -- maybe with a little envy because we in political science don't have that much to market.

CALEB

Certainly as department head I would discourage that.

GEORGE

Then you'll do it? Use us to handle your campaign?

CALEB

No, I won't.

GEORGE

You won't? Why not?

CALEB

I simply cannot be a party to ruining a man's reputation. Plagiarism is wrong, but what's past is past.

GEORGE

Not even for the greater good you could accomplish?

CALEB

No, not even for that.

Caleb heaves a big sigh.

CUT TO:

INT - SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM

Stuart and Nancy are seated at a conference table.

O

STUART

Well, I think we have our man.

NANCY

If George's test produces the same results as ours.

STUART

He went there more than an hour ago. He should be back by now.

NANCY

Here he is.

George enters.

GEORGE

You're both right. He's truly a good man. I couldn't find a chink.

NANCY

So it's confirmed. We'll notify Mr. Clark that Caleb Pendleton deserves the "good person" award.

STUART

I agree. But I wonder why.

NANCY

Yes, what are his underlying motivations?

1

GEORGE

I tried to find out after my testing was done. He reminds me most of a Sunday school teacher I had in junior high before
(Cont.)

GEORGE (Cont.)

I quit going, but he says he's not an active church member.

NANCY

So he's a humanist?

GEORGE

No, he professes to be a Christian believer.

STUART

But he's not really one of those sanctimonious do-gooders.

GEORGE

No, he isn't.

NANCY

Maybe it's his Quaker grandfather's influence. The one he's named after.

GEORGE

How do you know that?

NANCY

I asked him. It's such an old-fashioned name, I wanted to know its origin.

GEORGE

Possibly. But he told me he grew up as a Presbyterian.

STUART

Yeah. His father made a lot of money when he moved to the Midwest from Pennsylvania to start a tool factory. Around here most of the rich are Presbyterians.

GEORGE

He says he couldn't reconcile predestination with all the openness of creation he observed in biological studies. Science is always willing to consider new truths, he claims, while church dogma is closed. "Locked up" was his term, separated from real life. I can certainly agree with that.

NANCY

Whatever the source of his motivation and beliefs, he seems to have integrated

3

science and philosophy, religion and ethics. It's made him a good person worthy of the award.

GEORGE

Agreed.

All three clasp hands in center of table.

CUT TO:

INT -- LIVING ROOM

In the Pendleton living room Judith is hugging Caleb.

JUDITH

Oh, Caleb. I'm so proud of you.

CALEB

It's the last thing in the world I expected. It's certainly nothing I ever aspired to.

JUDITH

Never, ever?

CALEB

Well, I'll admit that now and then when I've been frustrated over something or other, I've thought I could run this university better. But I never imagined

4

that they would appoint a biologist as university president. I don't know anything about fundraising.

JUDITH

Luckily you have a chairperson who does.

CALEB

You mean Austin Clark. Yes, the rich always know other rich people.

JUDITH

What was this "good person" award business, anyway?

CALEB

It seems that it was something Clark cooked up to identify somebody the faculty would respect. He was tired of all the turmoil caused by Dr. Robinson, who has tried to apply business management techniques to the university.

JUDITH

Yes, it was a mistake to bring in a corporation executive as president.

CALEB

5

*I think Robinson realized that, too, in
resigning after three years.*

*Michael and Ruth burst in. Ruth hugs Caleb, and Michael shakes his
hand*

RUTH

*Oh, Daddy, I just heard the good news.
I'm so excited.*

CALEB

I'm a little excited myself.

MICHAEL

Congratulations, Dad.

CALEB

Thanks, son.

MICHAEL

*Does this mean we'll move to the
president's house?*

JUDITH

Yes, toward the end of June.

RUTH

*Can we have my wedding reception in the
garden?*

CALEB

6

I suppose.

JUDITH

If we can get everything unpacked and arranged by August.

CALEB

I'm sure we can.

MICHAEL

If it would help, I can postpone my trip to Alaska.

CALEB

We'll see. It's too soon to figure those things out.

The doorbell rings.

MICHAEL

I'll get it.

Michael leaves.

RUTH

Mom, we can cancel the reservation we made for the reception at the country club, can't we?

JUDITH

I think so. Let's give them a call.

Judith and Ruth leave as Michael enters with REV. RAYMOND THOMPSON, university chaplain.

MICHAEL

Dad, Rev. Thompson is here to see you.

RAYMOND

Professor Pendleton, I'm Ray Thompson, university chaplain.

CALEB

Yes, I know who you are.

MICHAEL

Excuse me, I've got some studying to do.

Michael leaves.

RAYMOND

I just heard the news about your appointment. I came by to congratulate you.

CALEB

It was an unexpected honor, and also a challenge of unknown dimensions.

RAYMOND

8

From what I've heard about you, you'll serve the university exceedingly well.

CALEB

I hope so.

RAYMOND

I've always had a close working relationship with the president. I hope that it will continue with you.

CALEB

I'm sure it will. It can start by your participation in my inauguration.

RAYMOND

With pleasure.

CALEB

After that we can get better acquainted. I've seen you at faculty meetings, but we haven't done anything together.

RAYMOND

No, we haven't. But you know, a week ago I had a dream in which you appeared.

CALEB

Really?

RAYMOND

Yes, a strange dream. You see, some students asked me to preach in chapel on the Book of Revelations. It was a real challenge because I've never been able to grasp all the symbolism there. For instance, the number seven keeps appearing: seven angels with trumpets, seven seals, seven bowls of wrath.

CALEB

Yes, I'm aware that for some people "seven" has a magical quality.

[Note: An option would be to depict the dream sequence on screen with Raymond's narration as voice over, cutting occasionally to Caleb and Raymond for comments.]

RAYMOND

In my dream there was parade along University Drive. Students were lining up, cheering. At the head of the parade were seven huge cattle. Black angus. You know, the kind doctors and car dealers raise for tax purposes.

CALEB

It sounds like you were having pharaoh's dream. The one Joseph interpreted.

O

RAYMOND

Exactly. A man was riding on the first steer, and the other cattle followed without riders. At the time I didn't know who it was, but I now I realize that the rider was you.

CALEB

Me?

RAYMOND

Yes, you. Seven days later you are appointed university president. So maybe it means that you will have seven prosperous years.

CALEB

Let's hope so. And what came next? Seven skinny cows for seven years of adversity?

RAYMOND

No, not at all. Next came four riders on horseback. The first was a beautiful woman with long flowing hair, riding a

1

pure white horse. She had a suckling child strapped to her breast with a sling. She held the reins in one hand and with her other arm was flinging spears, which became lightning when they struck.

Next came a wild-eyed, shaggy-haired man, carrying a submachine gun. His horse appeared bright red. When it got close I realized that it was roan, covered with blood. He was followed by a scraggly mob.

The third rider couldn't have been a greater contrast. He was dressed in a three-piece, gray flannel suit, riding upright on an enormous black stallion. When I looked close, I saw a mobile telephone attached to the saddle horn.

The fourth and last horse was pale gray. The rider seemed to be a knight in armor. As the horse passed me, the rider's visor fell open, and I saw not a face but a human skull.

Then I noticed that the crowds had vanished and that I was alone on the street. There was a strange light, as occurs at twilight after a thunderstorm.

2

All was quiet, and I had a sense of perfect peace. Then I awoke.

CALEB

Sounds like your home-video version of the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

RAYMOND

Perhaps. Nevertheless, I believe that dreams have meaning. Sometimes God communicates to us in that manner. I didn't really identify the rider on the first steer as you until today. Now I'm sure that it is a good omen for your presidency.

CALEB

I hope so. And the other riders? Do you think they're giving you a message for me?

RAYMOND

Indeed, I do. But exactly what, I'm not sure. All I can say is, Professor Pendleton, you should be careful not to let prosperity lead to your downfall.

3

CALEB

What will be, will be.

RAYMOND

*That may be so, but beware of what the
future holds. Beware!*

DISSOLVE TO:

RAYMOND

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DISSOLVE TO:

DINING ROOM

years later Nancy, George, and Stuart are having lunch with Chairman Clark in his private dining
A WAITER is serving soup.

AUSTIN

I'm glad you all could have lunch with me today. I invited you to thank you

for helping me select Caleb Pendleton as university president seven years ago.

GEORGE

Has it been that long?

AUSTIN

Yes, and it's been seven good years.

NANCY

Caleb has been an excellent president.

These days the faculty is content, and the students aren't unhappy, which is about as much as you can expect.

STUART

The endowment fund has increased substantially.

AUSTIN

Yes, and Dr. Pendleton got us through the uproar four years ago when the Biology Department unseated Danielson as chairman after someone discovered his plagiarism.

GEORGE

The university has moved up in national academic rankings. Human services education is highly rated. We had our first winner of a Nobel prize in physics.

STUART

And, of course, the national basketball

championship.

GEORGE

You can't attribute that to the president.

STUART

Maybe not, but it's all part of seven good years.

NANCY

And most of all we've come to know Caleb much better personally. I'm sure we can all agree that he's a topnotch person.

STUART

Yes, he's the best there is.

AUSTIN

I remember when you presented Dr. Pendleton's name to me, you told me about the three tests you applied.

GEORGE

Oh, yes, how he rejected easy opportunity for sex, power, and money.

AUSTIN

I've thought about that many times since then. Those were good tests, but you left out one crucial test of a good person.

NANCY

What's that?

AUSTIN

How well he can stand adversity. That's the test of true character.

STUART

What do you mean?

AUSTIN

Over the years I've seen businessmen rise to the top of the corporate ladder and make lots of money. I've seen politicians elected by a landslide. They are sitting on top of the world. Then things fall apart. How they act then tells far more about them than when they are top dog.

STUART

Yes, it's like the business cycle when prosperity is followed by recession. The true test of a business is how it performs on the downside.

AUSTIN

So if misfortune should befall Dr. Pendleton, how do you suppose he would react? Would his good qualities prevail or would flaws in his character emerge?

Would his composure crack? What he become bitter?

NANCY

I hope it doesn't come to that. But if Stuart's cycle theory applies to human life, we may have a chance to observe how Caleb responds to adversity.

GEORGE

I too hope it doesn't happen. But it would certainly be interesting to behold.

AUSTIN

It sure would.

CUT TO:

EXT - LARGE HOUSE WITH COLUMNS - DAY

The university president's house, now occupied by Caleb and Judith Pendleton, with a spacious, well-tended yard.

CUT TO:

INT - LIVING ROOM

In the living room of the house, the Pendleton family is gathered: Caleb, Judith, Michael, his wife BETTY, and DAVID, Ruth's husband. Ruth, accompanied by her children, BOBBY (age 5) and SUSIE (age 3), carries in a cake with seven lighted candles. She places it on the coffee

table in front of Caleb.

RUTH

Happy anniversary, Daddy!

CALEB

Anniversary?

RUTH

It's been seven years since your inauguration.

CALEB

So it has.

RUTH

I thought we should have a small celebration before Mike and Betty leave for Peru.

CALEB

Do you blow out anniversary candles?

JUDITH

Of course.

RUTH

Make a wish.

Caleb ponders for a moment and then blows out the candles.

Laughter.

BOBBY

What'd you wish for, Granddad?

CALEB

For seven more wonderful years.

RUTH

*Oh, you shouldn't have told us. Now it
won't come true.*

MICHAEL

Oh, Ruthie, that's superstition.

Judith cuts and serves the cake.

BOBBY

Give me a big piece, Grandma.

RUTH

What else do you say, Bobby?

BOBBY

Please.

SUSIE

Me, too -- please.

BETTY

Just a small slice for me, please. I'm on

a
diet.

CALEB

You better eat up. You don't know what the food will be like in Lima.

JUDITH

Peru seems so far away for you to go.

MICHAEL

It's where we're needed, and where Betty and I could work together to apply our medical skills.

JUDITH

I'm still worried about your debts. It has cost a lot to educate two doctors. How can you expect to repay them with the low pay you'll be receiving?

MICHAEL

Don't worry, Mom. The bank's given us an extension. And we really appreciate you and Dad co-signing the note.

CALEB

It's the least we could do.

JUDITH

But the interest keeps accumulating.

MICHAEL

Dad has always encouraged public service, and you do a lot of pro bono legal work.

CALEB

Judy, I'm sure it'll work out eventually. They should be doing things like this when they're young. Remember, you didn't earn much your first year of legal practice, nor did I as an assistant professor. Now things have worked out very well for us.

JUDITH

I know, but I do worry. You've never been very practical about money, Caleb.

MICHAEL

At least Ruth has married prosperously. David has had a meteoric rise in his company.

RUTH

He's the youngest vice president for sales they've ever had, and he's earned it.

DAVID

I admit that I've worked hard, but I've been lucky, too. A bunch of executives

took early retirement and left a lane
open for me to move toward the top.

JUDITH

I'm so proud of all of you.

CALEB

So am I.

BOBBY

But what about my fishing pole?

DAVID

Oh, yes. I promised Bobby that I'd buy
him his own fishing pole before we leave
for vacation in Minnesota. Finish your
cake, Bobby, then we'll go now.

Bobby stuffs the rest of his cake in his mouth. Susie does likewise.

SUSIE

(With mouth full)

Can I come, too, Daddy.

DAVID

You sure can, Princess.

SUSIE

I can I have a pole, too?

DAVID

We'll see about that.

David, Bobby, and Susie leave.

CALEB

Bobby is certainly an outdoor fellow.

RUTH

Yes, he is. We're hoping he can learn to ski next winter.

CALEB

He's lucky I didn't have a chance to learn until I was in college.

MICHAEL

I need to go up to the attic to get some gear. Want to come, Betty?

BETTY

I'd love to. It's always fun to look for forgotten treasures.

JUDITH

Oh dear, you'll see how much we've accumulated in this house in seven years.

The doorbell rings. Judith goes to answer it.

RUTH

I'll go with you, Mike. I haven't been up

there for a couple of years. I've forgotten what I've stored.

CALEB

I think we still have some of your dolls, Ruthie. Maybe Susie would like to have them.

MICHAEL

Or maybe some of my old trucks. Susie ought to have a choice.

Ruth, Michael, Betty leave. Judith returns with Raymond.

RAYMOND

Caleb, I just dropped by for a few minutes to congratulate you on seven good years.

CALEB

Sit down, Ray. Have some cake.

RAYMOND

No, thank you.

JUDITH

Are you sure?

RAYMOND

Yes, I had a late lunch.

JUDITH

Not even a small piece.

RAYMOND

Well, all right.

Judith she serves cake to Raymond.

CALEB

It has been seven good years.

RAYMOND

The accolades you received at the university senate last week were well deserved. It's unusual for the faculty to have such praise for the administration.

CALEB

I still feel that I'm part of the faculty, even though I have time to teach only one course each year.

JUDITH

Things have gone well, and for our family, too. Almost too well. In fact sometimes in the dark of night I awaken in apprehension. All these good things can't go on forever. Life just isn't unbroken happiness.

CALEB

It's not been all that easy running a big

university, though I'll admit it's gone better than I expected.

RAYMOND

Yes, I use you as an example with the students I counsel. I tell them there are two ways to go, that the Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish. You are my primary illustration of one who walks in the way of the Lord, Caleb -- even if you aren't a churchman in the conventional sense.

CALEB

Don't overdo it, Ray.

RAYMOND

After all, you're the only person I've ever known who's been certified as a good person.

CALEB

Oh that. It was just Austin Clark's eccentricity. I never made that claim for myself.

RAYMOND

But you have prospered.

CALEB

I don't feel my success has been an award

*for goodness. Nor if Judy's anxieties
come to fruition and things turn out bad,
I'll not look upon it as punishment.
What will be, will be, often without
regard to what we do or don't do.*

RAYMOND

*You're wrong, Caleb. If there is no
connection between conduct and just
deserts, there would be no basis for
personal ethics.*

CALEB

*You don't think people act rightly out of a
sense of what is right, regardless of
outcome?*

RAYMOND

*Maybe a few do, part of the time, but it's
a pretty weak thread to hold society
together. No, to do what is good, people
have to expect reward, if not in this life,
then in the next life -- all in God's fair
judgment.*

CALEB

I guess it's your job to think about these

things. As for me, I tend to live day by day, doing my best, accepting the good and the bad, struggling forward but not looking too far ahead or agonizing on what's behind.

RAYMOND

You're more of an existentialist than I thought, Caleb.

CALEB

Not so in the usual meaning, Ray, for I see our existence as part of a broader, enduring, though steadily evolving order. I perceive God as the underlying creative and sustaining force of life, yet ever present to us personally.

JUDITH

You two are getting too profound for me. I'd rather get more directly involved in the struggle of good and evil by attacking the weeds in my garden.

CALEB

Of course, Judy, weeds have their place in the natural order. They exist because....

JUDITH

(Breaking in fondly)

Oh Caleb, do you have to have a scientific

explanation for everything?

Judith leaves.

RAYMOND

Caleb, I didn't want to say anything in front of Judith, but as I walked up to your house, a wave of foreboding swept over me.

CALEB

How's that?

RAYMOND

Remember my dream I told you about when you were selected president?

CALEB

The one with the seven fat steers and the four horsemen?

RAYMOND

That's the one. Well, your seven good years have come and you're prospered, just like in my dream. Does that mean that the four horsemen will now enter your life? If so, how? To what effect?

CALEB

Ray, we're good friends, and I respect you greatly. But I'm also a scientist. I deal

in world of cause and effect. Frankly I don't believe that what you dream can affect my life, for good or ill.

RAYMOND

I wouldn't claim that my dreams can cause anything to happen in other people's lives. Rather it's more like a prophesy, a look into the future. As if God is communicating through me.

CALEB

Like the prophets of old?

RAYMOND

I'm not so pretentious to claim such exalted powers. But I do believe that God sends messages through dreams.

CALEB

Well, Ray, if your horsemen come after me, I'll do my best to deal with whatever they attempt to do to me.

RAYMOND

I know you will, Caleb. We'll hope and pray for the best possible outcome.

CUT TO:

EXT - GARDEN - DAY

Judith is working in her garden. She is humming a tune. The background music picks up the tune. Through a series of DISSOLVES we see the passing of the seasons in the garden: the flowers of July and August, mums in September, first frost in October, leaves turning color and falling, blustery wind through leafless trees, snow covering the garden.

CUT TO:

EXT - FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Snow covers the ground of the university president's house. Nancy, George, and Stuart, dressed in overcoats, are walking up the cleared sidewalk.

CUT TO:

INT - LIVING ROOM

The living room inside is decorated for Christmas, which occurred a few days ago. The Christmas tree has a few scattered toys under it. Unlit candles on the mantle are half-consumed. Caleb and Judith are sitting together on the sofa. Raymond is seated in a upholstered chair. They are bowed in prayer.

RAYMOND

And dear Lord, who art the Father of all the families of the earth, look with compassion upon this bereaved family and pour thy heavenly comfort into their hearts. Enrich with thy presence those

who mourn and be their refugee and
strength in this time of sorrow. Hear us
for thy mercy's sake. Amen.

The doorbell rings.

CALEB

I'll get it.

He leaves

JUDITH

We appreciate your kind words,
Raymond.

RAYMOND

It's the least I can do, Judith.

Caleb returns with Stuart, Nancy, and George. Judith and Raymond
rise to greet them. With her greeting Nancy buzzes Judith on the
cheek. Judith offers her hand to George and Stuart.

GEORGE

We dropped by to offer our condolence.

NANCY

It's a tragic loss.

STUART

I know you'll miss them.

CALEB

Won't you sit down?

They sit down with Caleb and Judith sitting together on the sofa.

CALEB (Cont.)

They didn't have a chance. The avalanche came during the night without warning.

[Option: Depict the avalanche and its consequences with voice over narration.]

JUDITH

The poor babies. It was my grandson's first day skiing. Ruth called from the lodge at supper time, telling how well he had done.

STUART

Were others lost, too?

JUDITH

No, only our dear family.

CALEB

The lodge manager said it was a freak accident. They were in a cabin just below a steep slope. They've never had so much snow as this year, and never an avalanche before.

JUDITH

*Oh why, oh why did it happen to them?
A loving mother, a devoted father, two
beautiful children. Just as life was
beginning for them.*

RAYMOND

*I know it was a great loss for both of you.
I share your sorrow.*

JUDITH

Why did God allow this to occur?

RAYMOND

*God often works in ways we don't always
understand, Judith. Maybe he chose to
call them to himself. He does that
sometimes with the brightest and the
best.*

JUDITH

That's hard to believe.

RAYMOND

*Who are we to know? We must have
faith in God's goodness. Indeed, in
everything God works for good with those
who love him, who are called according to
his purpose.*

JUDITH

Where do you see good in this? What was God's purpose, anyway?

STUART

I don't think you can blame it on God. Contrary to the language of insurance policies, you really can't call this an "act of God".

JUDITH

How do you explain it?

STUART

These things happen by chance. Who the victims are is a matter of random selection with no particular malice toward them. It's nothing they've done, good or bad. It's like in the market economy. Some gain, some suffer. But overall the results work out for the best.

JUDITH

As if an unseen hand guides destiny. Is that what you're arguing, Stuart?

STUART

That's the 18th century term. Today we're more sophisticated. Statistical analysis shows us trends and probabilities. We know that a certain number of people

die every year from accidents, others by heart diseases, still others by cancer. No one can predict with certainty who the victims will be, but we can calculate probabilities.

JUDITH

There's little comfort in that.

STUART

No, but that's the way life is.

NANCY

It's not all random, though. I've done research in hospital emergency rooms and a surprising large number of so-called accidents can be said to be self-inflicted. Many people are drawn to their own destruction. I won't say that was the case for your daughter and her family, but I have noticed that people who live in guilt or deep despair are high risktakers. They get into situations of great danger, almost with the hope that something will happen.

CALEB

No, I'll not buy that at all. Ruthie was buoyantly happy. She enjoyed skiing for

its sheer exhilaration. She loved life and certainly wouldn't have placed her children in jeopardy.

GEORGE

Well, I find that human beings are often the cause of such mishaps. Drunk drivers, industrial polluters, manufactures of faulty products. Who, for instance, built that cabin beneath the steep slope? No doubt it was the developer who wanted to profit by using every possible inch of land. Yet inevitably there would be very heavy snow and an avalanche. Ever so much suffering is caused by human actors -- acting out of ignorance, or greed, or some other expression of self-interest. Ruth and her family were as much victims of human failure as an act of nature.

RAYMOND

That's what you would expect from sinful humankind. But don't worry. God will judge those whose wrongfulness caused this tragedy. For God is just, and none of us can escape his righteous judgment. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

JUDITH

But what about the innocent victims? Didn't Jesus insist that the eighteen killed when the tower of Siloam fell were no worse offenders than other Jerusalem residents?

RAYMOND

Yes, but he also told his listeners, "unless you repent you will likewise perish." Maybe in this unexpected event God is sending a message to you, Caleb.

CALEB

You think it's punishment for my wrongdoing? Do you think I'm overly proud of my accomplishments? Do I have hidden faults which must be atoned for? Are you claiming divine retribution?

RAYMOND

I didn't say that exactly. However, none of us is free from sin. Too often we follow the desires of our own hearts rather than God's holy way. We stray like lost sheep. God chastens us for our shortcomings and rebukes us for our transgressions. Do you think that God

would pervert justice?

CALEB

I refuse to accept this sorrow as judgment on Ruth and her family, or on us. I don't believe that God functions in this manner.

GEORGE

Then you would agree with Stuart and me that the cause was a combination of human error and impersonal forces of nature. We don't need to reply on outmoded superstitions about a God who doesn't exist.

RAYMOND

George, you deny the existence of God? Come to chapel some Sunday, and let me introduce you.

GEORGE

I tried that when I was an undergraduate. I went to church for a whole semester and never found God there.

CALEB

If you'll take the time, I can put you in touch with God.

GEORGE

And how would you do that?

CALEB

I can offer you two ways. First, there's a technique of centering down, as the Quakers call it, to put your deeper consciousness in touch with the presence of God, with the indwelling spirit, the light within. It takes discipline but provides an awarding experience.

Second, we could spend some time in my old laboratory to work through the genetic process and explore the course of evolution. You would be able to discover evidence of God the creator, working through the progression of time.

GEORGE

Surely there are other hypotheses, like natural selection.

CALEB

But nothing else explains the purposefulness of creation.

GEORGE

Well, if this God of yours is so purposeful

and creative, why did he create a world with such uncontrollable natural forces?

CALEB

The irony, which I can't fully explain, is that my family was the tragic victim of one of the greatest gifts of the world: the constancy of nature. Under identical conditions H₂O changes from liquid to solid always at the same temperature. In a particular circumstance, water vapor in the air always turns to snow and falls to the ground. Gravity is constant. The characteristics of mass and friction of various substances never change. When there is a lot of water vapor drifting in cold air, there will be great snowfalls. At certain places the weight of the snow will produce an avalanche. It's an inevitable process.

GEORGE

Sounds like scientific determinism to me.

CALEB

No, not at all. The same constancy of nature enables living creatures to walk, run, jump, and fly as they determine. The predictability of chemical reactions

(Cont.)

CALEB (Cont.)

enables us to utilize our ingenuity to produce medicines. The regularity of the earth's rotation gives us predictable day and night and the seasons so that we can plant crops at appropriate times. We can't expect God to alter the course of nature precipitously for benefit of even the best people.

RAYMOND

You're taking too much away from God, Caleb. I believe he can intervene and determine when these natural laws will have their effects, and when they can be set aside -- even though we don't understand how and why. I've read of a number of cases where people have survived accidents which can be explained only by providential intervention.

NANCY

Yes, I have, too.

RAYMOND

For example, there was this man in a car hit by a truck. He was knocked into the back seat, and the car was crushed except for the small space he occupied. All he got was a few scratches. And there are dozens of other cases like that. Yes indeed, I believe in God's miraculous

powers.

CALEB

I don't rule out remarkable coincidences that produce unexpected results and seem to have a higher purpose.

Synchronicity is what some people call it. Yet, in the broader order of nature there is considerable indeterminacy.

Physicists note this in their work in quantum mechanics. Mass and motion within the structure of the atom interact in ways which are immeasurable and unpredictable. Overall there are probabilities that certain effects will occur, but a particular occurrence is uncertain and indeterminate.

NANCY

Yes, that seems to be so in micro-physics.

CALEB

Working at a somewhat larger scale, the genetic code places fingerprints on a

(Cont.)

CALEB (Cont.)

fetus while in the mother's womb, but the exact pattern is not only unpredictable but also unique. So also the weather on a particular day is different from that of

any other day, though sometimes similar. Perfect weather prediction is impossible because of indeterminacy caused by the interaction of a multiplicity of forces. Yet, each force has constant laws of behavior that can be understood, and we can work out some comprehension of their relationships.

STUART

Where does God come in to all this, Caleb?

CALEB

God works through these forces in numerous creative ways and utilizes them to achieve far-ranging purposes. But I'm doubtful that God can intervene in specific events like a micro-manager to alter the forces of nature, such as suspend the law of gravity to prevent an avalanche. Nevertheless, in the long run God's purposes are fulfilled.

JUDITH

But in the short run, Ruth, David, Bobby, and Susie are dead.

Judith weeps.

CALEB

Yes, in the here and now we suffer and grieve. Affirming a higher purpose saves us not from our sorrow. Nor is it a matter of our goodness or our sinfulness. The travail of nature penetrates our lives because we are a part of nature. We suffer as all nature suffers.

JUDITH

So you conclude that suffering is inevitable?

CALEB

Yes. In one sense, it's natural. Our destiny. An inescapable part of life. Like breathing and eating. All we can do is endure, as best we can.

Judith cries on Caleb's shoulder as he comforts her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - APPLE TREE - DAY

We see an apple tree in full bloom as we hear transitional music. CLOSE UP of blossoms with bees flying into them. DRAW BACK to entire tree. After a while the wind picks up, and blossoms start falling and accumulate in piles on the ground

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - LIVING ROOM

CLOSE UP of a bouquet of spring flowers on coffee table in Pendleton living room. *DRAW BACK* to show Raymond, Stuart, Nancy, and George taking seats to join Caleb and Judith.

JUDITH

It was good of you to stop by. We need friends at times like this.

NANCY

That's what friends are for.

CALEB

I hope you can come to the service tomorrow in the university chapel. Their bodies are arriving tonight.

STUART

You can count on us.

GEORGE

Do you have any details on how it happened?

[Option: Depict the event with voice over narration.]

CALEB

Michael and Betty had this small clinic in the middle of a shantytown on a hillside outside Lima. They were serving mothers and children particularly but

would take anyone who came. It was straight medical practice, and nothing else. However, the revolutionaries are trying to oust all Americans, no matter what they are doing. Michael was never one to be intimidated.

JUDITH

Like his father.

CALEB

Like his mother, too. He refused to go. So they shot him and Betty in cold blood and set fire to their clinic. The residents turned on the perpetrators and would

(Cont.)

CALEB (Cont.)

have killed them except for the intervention of governmental soldiers. But by then it was too late. Michael and Betty were dead.

Caleb shows his grief. Judith sobs.

RAYMOND

Yes, I'm sure they were doing God's work. All I can say is blessed are those who suffer for the Lord. As we share in Christ's sufferings, through Christ we share abundantly in his comfort, too.

JUDITH

(Weeping)

Why should it happen to them? They were serving people, not exploiting them.

GEORGE

Unfortunately they were victims of larger social forces of which they and all of us are a part. For many decades there have been gross inequalities in Peru and other countries of Latin America. The rich exploit the poor and keep them subjugated. They control the government, the banks, and the church. U.S. corporations have long been part of the system of exploitation. Our own government has supported the corporations, given guns and planes to dictators, and sent in the CIA to undermine social reform. So we share in maintaining an unjust society.

CALEB

But they were there to help remedy injustice.

GEORGE

Yes, but what have any of the rest of us done to put an end to despotism? I mean you, me, and all the others. To

the extent that we haven't acted, we have allowed injustice to go uncorrected. It's our own disinterest, what Rev. Thompson would call sins of omission, which contributed to your son's death.

JUDITH

Oh, that's not fair. You can't expect us to take up every cause of injustice in the whole world.

CALEB

Of course, we can't. We have to concentrate on a few things we can accomplish.

GEORGE

That may be true, but then that means you have to accept the risk that you and your loved ones suffer as the byproduct of uncorrected wrong.

STUART

George, you seem to be an adherent of the do-gooder's belief that human actions can cure social ills, that if we could merely alter social and economic conditions, that no one would suffer any more. That's just not true.

GEORGE

So what's your explanation, Stuart?

STUART

Personally I think there's a lot to be said for the folk wisdom in many parts of the world which recognizes that humans are powerless to change the course of nature and the action of the gods. Filipino folk culture, for instance, contains a belief in the wheel of fortune, turning every year, moved by some unknown force. If a person has a bad year, he merely hopes next year will be better, but he accepts whatever fate bestows upon him. Sure, we'd all like to be dealt a new hand with better cards, but there isn't much we can do to overcome our fate.

RAYMOND

Stuart, you believe that we can't change our fate while George insists that we can correct the world's injustice if we only try harder. I see it differently from both of you. There is a cosmic force of evil loose in the world. Sometimes it moves in on the weak and takes over their lives. But at other times Satan mobilizes his forces against where God's goodness seems to have its greatest stronghold. Satan seems to be challenged to fight hardest

against the best of God's people. I really think that's why the revolutionaries murdered Michael and Betty and burned their clinic.

STUART

You're saying that Satan exists outside God's power?

RAYMOND

Yes, he does. The Bible and world history offer considerable evidence of Satan's malevolent cunning. He tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Throughout his healing ministry Jesus cast out evil spirits who had taken possession of people. Paul continually confronted the power of the devil and even felt that his own thorn in the flesh came from Satan. I've seen plenty of examples in modern times.

NANCY

Whether evil can be so personified, I'm not certain. But I do know that there are dark forces within the human psyche -- within you, me, and everybody -- which seek to undermine the so-called higher motivations of love

and kindness. They take hold of people, cause illnesses, produce bizarre conduct, destroy personal relationships, drive individuals away from people who love them. The victims seem powerless to overcome the destructive forces flowing from within.

RAYMOND

Right you are. No less a figure than St. Paul wrote, "I do not the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

CALEB

I'm sorry, Ray, but I simply cannot accept your dualism. It goes against what I know about the unity of the natural order. A single set of physical laws is present throughout the universe as far as science can behold. Events once attributed to evil powers, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, lightning, drought, and floods, can all be explained as natural phenomena. Likewise mental illness and other behavioral aberrations have natural causes, some of them a matter of chemical imbalance, though we still have a lot to learn.

RAYMOND

How do you see it then, Caleb?

CALEB

Within the overall unity of the natural order, there is also interaction and interdependency. For example, plants produce flowers whose nectar attracts bees which fertilize blossoms as they gather their food. Birds eat fruit and spread seeds. The food cycle of species consuming species, for all its harshness, demonstrates interdependency.

NANCY

Yes, I suppose that's true.

CALEB

So also there is social interdependency, though as a geneticist, I know less about it. But as university president I am impressed about how much the university depends upon innumerable persons playing their roles: the men at the power plant, the crews from buildings and grounds, bookkeepers and secretaries, the development office, dorm managers, the bookstore, and lots more. Classroom teaching and research could never occur without this complex support system.

RAYMOND

I never thought of it that way.

CALEB

I have also seen how inequities can develop, such as lack of women in administrative positions -- which we're now overcoming, and how protests against such inequities can disrupt the smooth functioning of the system.

GEORGE

That's for sure.

CALEB

Michael and Betty were caught up in a set of social forces of which they were a part but which was broader and deeper than what they were doing. I don't understand why they were victims, but I can't accept the contention that Satan attacked them because they were God's outpost.

Anyway, why would the supreme creator create a deviant, antagonistic force?

And if the force of evil counterbalances the force of good, what assurance do we have that Satan won't triumph?

RAYMOND

I didn't mean to imply that Satan would win ultimately. We know that God is

omnipotent, and when he decides to act, he can and will overcome the forces waged against his kingdom.

GEORGE

All your God talk again. It's not somebody I know. I even read a book on meditation as you suggested, Caleb, but I still can't make contact.

CALEB

Keep trying, George.

JUDITH

If God is omnipotent, Raymond, why doesn't God act to stop suffering? Why didn't God prevent Michael's and Betty's death?

RAYMOND

God's ways are sometimes inscrutable, but he is just. Even Job, for all his questioning of God's actions, ultimately bowed in contrition and said to God, "I know that thou can do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted."

CALEB

No, I can't accept that conclusion.

RAYMOND

You're saying that God isn't omnipotent?

CALEB

Yes, I am. Omnipotence is a theoretical construct of philosophers who themselves longed for power, who thought they could make a better world if they reigned as philosopher-kings.

RAYMOND

But the Bible speaks of God the Almighty.

CALEB

The writings of priests, who would like to control everything. They projected such powers onto God.

RAYMOND

You're treading on thin ice, Caleb.

CALEB

Well, let me tell you. I've held power, and it's no blessing. In fact, it's a hellish situation.

RAYMOND

But not if you combine it with omniscience, as God does. He is both all-knowing and all-powerful.

CALEB

All knowing? No, that even makes it worse because you perceive the consequences of your power. Take, for instance, the controversy that raged a couple of years ago when I awarded tenure in the Sociology Department to Peter Hansen.

NANCY

Yes, and turned down Elizabeth Brady.

CALEB

Exactly. The departmental faculty deadlocked on six ballots, so the decision went to an all-university committee, which couldn't decide either. So it came to me. As I studied their credentials, I found that they were both highly rated as teachers but that Ms. Brady, though five years younger, had published more papers and had innovated a new field survey technique. So on those grounds the university should retain her services.

NANCY

Right, she should've been promoted.

CALEB

But I also knew that Hansen had a

handicapped child who needed expensive medical treatment and that his wife worked as a real estate agent to help pay the bills. Even if he could get appointed elsewhere, it would be hard for her to transfer her business. On the other hand, Ms. Brady's husband was a free lance writer and could work anywhere. So this was the basis for the decision.

RAYMOND

All things considered, it was the right choice.

CALEB

It caused me a lot of trouble at home, though, because Judy insisted I was needlessly subjective and unfair.

JUDITH

That's for sure.

GEORGE

But it turned out all right. Liz quickly received a very good appointment back east, and she's just been put in charge of a major research project.

CALEB

Yes, but her husband refused to move. Claimed his roots were too deep in the Midwest to relocate. So they separated and divorced.

STUART

There were probably other factors in their relationship that you didn't know about.

CALEB

But if I were omniscient, as Raymond insists God is, I would have known and would have to worry about that and manipulate an endless chain of consequences. No, in exercising power I had to choose, and this caused pain and suffering. Ray, does your all-powerful God likewise knowingly cause suffering for humankind?

RAYMOND

Uh....No, I don't think that he does. That's the work of Satan.

CALEB

Then Satan limits God's power?

RAYMOND

Only because God lets him.

CALEB

But if God is good, why doesn't God stop Satan and put an end to suffering.

RAYMOND

It doesn't work that way.

CALEB

No, it doesn't. But for other reasons than your explanation.

RAYMOND

Then why?

CALEB

To tell the truth, I haven't figure it out completely. Sometimes I think that it's chaos that exists impersonally and independently of God's domain. Indeed, that's what the myth in the first chapter of Genesis indicates. Out of chaos, God created order. But God's creative activities are not yet completed.

From that perspective, the murders of Michael and Betty are a product of the chaos of social existence, just as another kind of chaos occurs in the randomness of physical existence. It wasn't the will of God.

STUART

So your explanation is that we're still waiting for God to gain an upper hand over chaos.

CALEB

God has accomplished a tremendous work so far, but there is much more to do. And on the social side, God can't do it alone but needs us as allies in the struggle.

GEORGE

That's an interesting theory, but it still doesn't explain suffering. If God is good, as Rev. Thompson claims, why is there so much suffering in creation. Caleb, do you really believe that God is good?

CALEB

Yes, I do. But I'm still working out why we suffer. Meanwhile, I feel my losses intensely.

Caleb sobs.

JUDITH

And so do I.

Judith weeps. She and Caleb try to console one another.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - YARD - DAY

A dogwood tree has deep red leaves and red berries of autumn. As transitional music plays, show other views of fall colors. A gardener rakes leaves into a large burlap sheet, bundles it up, and drags it to a compost pile. A gust of wind scatters some of the leaves.

CUT TO:

INT - LIVING ROOM

Caleb, Judith, Raymond, Stuart, Nancy, and George are in the Pendleton living room.

NANCY

Caleb, we came immediately after we heard that Austin Clark had dismissed you from the university presidency.

STUART

After all, we are the ones who got you into it.

GEORGE

It's totally unfair.

RAYMOND

I don't see how it could do it by himself.

GEORGE

You know how he controls the board.

STUART

*It's because of your department, George.
hiring that Marxist political scientist.*

NANCY

Who the legislature wanted fired.

CALEB

*Well, if I hadn't stood up for academic
freedom, we couldn't maintain a great
university.*

NANCY

*But what was the business about an
international communist network? It
seems like such an archaic accusation.*

CALEB

*It seems that the publicity about Michael's
murder got our board chairman started.
He wove a strange web of connections out
of my international activities in
biogenetic research. Claimed I was
aligned with communists because I
attended a conference in Moscow prior to
the breakup of the Soviet Union.*

NANCY

What nonsense!

GEORGE

What stupidity!

STUART

I'm sure Mr. Clark was wrong in your case, but I can understand the reasons for his concern.

JUDITH

We have to move out of this house, too. And all the furniture belongs to the university.

RAYMOND

What about the house you used to live in, and the furniture?

CALEB

We sold the house and put the furniture in storage.

JUDITH

What we put aside from the sale of the house has pretty much been exhausted defending against the law suit. And the board of regents has refused reimbursement.

NANCY

It was the most ridiculous case I ever heard about.

GEORGE

Yeah. It took an unscrupulous lawyer to dream up a malpractice suit by those students and their parents against the university president because he wouldn't fire a Marxist professor.

JUDITH

I'll admit it's those kind of frivolous suits that's giving the law profession a bad name.

CALEB

But hardly frivolous in the cost of legal defense.

JUDITH

Even though Caleb won, it's seriously depleted our personal savings. And to add to our economic woes Caleb is unemployed.

CALEB

Well, they say that trouble sometimes comes in triplets: job, house, money.

GEORGE

If you'd like, I'll organize a campaign among the faculty and students to keep your presidency. You're popular. We

could shut this place down.

JUDITH

We could go to court with a claim that your contract was violated.

CALEB

But I've always served at the pleasure of the board.

JUDITH

At least we should try for a monetary settlement.

CALEB

No, I think a protest campaign and legal action would be both futile and unnecessarily divisive. What is it, anyway? Position, material possessions.

RAYMOND

That's the spirit. Remember it was Job who said, "Naked came I from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

JUDITH

That's fine for you to say, Raymond, with your secure position.

CALEB

*You still have your legal practice, dear.
With no children, no grandchildren,
that's enough income.*

JUDITH

*Don't forget, we have to pay off Michael's
and Betty's debts from medical school or
forfeit our furniture and the bonds we
put as collateral when we consigned their
notes.*

CALEB

*I guess I could become a consultant.
Unless I decide to settle down as a
housespouse.*

JUDITH

*Housespouse? There would be the cost of
cooking lessons!*

CALEB

*Surely cooking isn't much different from
my lab work.*

JUDITH

Uh-oo!

Laughter

NANCY

Besides your learning that new skill, Caleb, there may be another benefit to all the calamities that have befallen you.

CALEB

Really?

NANCY:

Yes. I've noticed that adversity often helps strengthen character.

CALEB

Aren't I tough enough already?

JUDITH

In what manner, Nancy?

NANCY

Consider the small child learning to walk. She or he has to fall down many times before developing the necessary coordination. Athletes have to go through a lot of painful exercise and constant practice to hone their skills. Musicians have to play technical studies over and over before they can undertake sonatas and concertos. Athletes and musicians alike are much better performers as a result of disciplined preparation.

JUDITH

Lawyers, too.

NANCY

Likewise people develop psychological strength when they face and overcome challenges. I've seen very shy students who are afraid to go to job interviews, but after they force themselves to try a few times, their self-confidence grows enormously. The same thing happens to
(Cont.)

NANCY (Cont.)

housewives who enter the labor market, and to widows who become the sole support for their children. We may not welcome adversity, but it produces moral and psychological growth.

RAYMOND

I fully agree. As St. Paul indicated, "suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us." Furthermore, on some occasions God deliberately uses adversity to test our strength and steadfastness, as he did when he contested with Satan over Job's faithfulness.

CALEB

No, I can't agree with that. God would never purposefully inflict individual suffering.

STUART

You know, sometimes I think that in the larger perspective, evil doesn't exist at all but is merely part of the broader good.

NANCY

How's that?

STUART

You certainly see this in economic progress. For instance, historically in many parts of the earth repeated drought led people to develop irrigation systems. Damaging floods are now contained by levees and dams. The lightning rod was invented as a protective measure. The cutoff of middle-eastern oil in the 1970s led to the development of more efficient automobiles.

GEORGE

You're saying that necessity is the mother of invention.

STUART

Exactly.

GEORGE

But what about the blacks who were displaced by mechanization of cotton production?

STUART

It gave them an opportunity for better life in the city.

GEORGE

Do you know what that was like? And what about middle-aged workers who lose their jobs when factories close?

STUART

It removes obsolete facilities thereby strengthening the national economy.

GEORGE

In effect you're saying that some have to suffer for the broader good. Evil remains, and individual hardship, too.

STUART

That's the way the world is made.

JUDITH

Well, if God is really good, why didn't God create the world differently? I can think of lots of ways it could be better. I'd have less pain, less social conflict. I'd give people challenges but not beyond their strength. And, Nancy, I've seen people crushed rather than strengthened by what they were forced to bear. I'd assure that innocent people wouldn't suffer.

RAYMOND

That's what God wanted in the first place, Judith. Before Adam sinned, the Garden of Eden offered a much better existence.

CALEB

So you explain it with the myth of Adam's fall, do you, Ray?

RAYMOND

Call it myth if you like, Caleb, but it's still true that humankind is incorrigibly corrupt. We all have sinful Adam within us. The desire to trespass into God's domain, to seek the forbidden fruit. Sin begets sin, through all the generations.

JUDITH

And what about Austin Clark? How

does he fit in?

RAYMOND

From what I know of our board chairman, he must be a field commander in Satan's army.

CALEB

Well, frankly, I don't accept your notion of original sin.

RAYMOND

Then how do you think human evil started? Aren't we all selfish sinners?

CALEB

It's true that we all express self-interest, but I don't define it as sin. Coded into life is an instinct to survive. You see it in the one-cell protozoa, like the amoeba, and in the more complex coelenterata, like sea anemones and jellyfish. More developed species show a strong will to survive individually in quite sophisticated ways -- through food gathering, flight, and fight.

STUART

It's every creature looking out for itself.

CALEB

But there's more to it. Different life forms also seek preservation of their species, even to the extent of individuals risking their own lives. For instance, parent birds attacking cats to save their young.

JUDITH

You're right. The same thing occurs among human beings. Frequently parents make many sacrifices for their children. It's a very a strong instinct.

CALEB

Therefore, acting from self-interest is a natural expression, derived from the will to live and the desire to continue our species. It has numerous manifestations, personal and social.

NANCY

Yes, that's true. Self-interest does appear in many different forms.

CALEB

Unfortunately self-interest can become excessive. Sometimes group and

national expressions of self-interest threaten other people's lives -- even the whole human race when you think of nuclear weapons. If there is such a thing as sin, it's excessive self-regard. This leads to actions harmful to others. It blocks us from constructive connection to society. It separates us from God.

RAYMOND

But somebody must have been the first sinner, and it's been handed down ever since. We all share in Adam's guilt.

CALEB

Personally I can't fathom first cause. I observe who I am, how other people and other species behave. I see the survival instinct in all of them, each born as a new being. That's what they inherit from genetic stock. Each acts it out in ways that you might call sinful, but because of the individual's own basic nature. There is no need for a primeval Adam to instruct us.

JUDITH

That's interesting speculation, but it doesn't explain why we're the victim of the chairman's actions. Why shouldn't he suffer instead of us? If there ever was

an evil old man, it is he.

RAYMOND

That's another one of God's mysteries. As he used the Assyrians and Babylonians to chastise Israel, so God sometimes uses evil people to discipline his chosen persons who have drifted from his ways. As later the Assyrians and Babylonians were taken down, so also God will eventually take care of the chairman. But when and how is not for us to say. All you can do, Caleb, is accept God's judgment.

CALEB

I really don't see it that way.

RAYMOND

How do you understand it?

CALEB

Surely my personal shortcomings -- what you call sin -- aren't all that bad. I am paying the price of free will, which is another of the great gifts of humankind.

JUDITH

I agree with you that it's a precious gift, darling, but it is also one of our most

perilous possessions.

CALEB

True. But on the positive side free will is the source of human growth and creativity. Free will enables us to examine our world, question handed-down knowledge, work out our own understanding, make choices, bring about improvements, determine our own fate to some extent. It's the basis of artistic accomplishments and the foundation of moral character.

STUART

It is also a source of error, wrongful behavior, self-suffering, and cruelty to others.

CALEB

Indeed it is. That's the cost, but it's worth it. Furthermore, I'm beginning to understand that you have to know evil to truly appreciate the good.

GEORGE

That's all right for you to say. But for all you've suffered, others have suffered unendurably more. Blacks in America, Jews in Hitler's Germany, oppressed

people in the Third World. What's loss of job and money compared to that?

CALEB

Remember, I've lost children and grandchildren, too.

GEORGE

Yes, that was great sorrow. But what about Auschwitz where three million Jews were exterminated? And Hiroshima and the slaughter of other wars? Where was your just God in these events, Rev. Thompson? Caleb, you can talk all you like about the regularity of nature, interconnections of humankind, free will and

(Cont.)

GEORGE (Cont.)

moral choice, and what you call excessive self-interest. But how do you explain genocide?

STUART

Yes, how do you?

GEORGE

For myself I'm about convinced that Nancy's explanation of dark forces of the inner psyche explain it. Or maybe even

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Rev. Thompson's idea of Satan
(gesturing to Raymond).

Caleb, you yourself have admitted that
God isn't omnipotent. Is your God good?
Is he just? Or does he really exist at
all?

STUART

Yes, does he?

GEORGE

Maybe your sense of the indwelling spirit
is merely self-hypnosis. Perhaps your
detection of patterns in evolution is your
rationalization of events which just
happened by chance.

RAYMOND

Of course, God exists, George. He is the
Supreme Being, the Lord of Creation,
who requires that we all worship and
serve him.

NANCY

He, him. Why not she, her?

STUART

Or why not nothing at all? We're
modern people who no longer need the

myth of a Supreme Being to explain things.

CALEB

Yes, George, God exists. God is real, Stuart. But instead of thinking of God as a being -- our Father in heaven, or our Father and Mother in heaven, Nancy -- I perceive of God as a force. The creative force of the universe, present everywhere.

NANCY

God as a force, you say? Not a being? That's certainly a different approach.

CALEB

Yes, it is as a force that God creates. But it is not a distant, impersonal force but rather a force with which we interact.

GEORGE

Interact with an abstract force? That doesn't seem real.

CALEB

It's no abstraction, George. It's very real.

GEORGE

How do you know for sure?

CALEB

My grandfather taught me that there is that of God in every person. I used to think that he meant that everyone is worthy of dignity and respect. That's true, but I have also come to understand that in the depths of our being we have access to this awesome creative force. As we interact, we realize that God is a loving force.

Furthermore, as I observe the universe I have become aware of God's action as an integrating force, constantly striving to overcome chaos of nature and human society. I know all that with certainty.

GEORGE

Yes, but you haven't offered a satisfactory explanation of suffering.

CALEB

When I work it out, I'll let you know.

GEORGE

Please do because until I solve this riddle, I'll remain a disbeliever.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - YARD

We see bare trees, bare lawn as transitional music plays. Then clusters of crocus in bloom, daffodils with buds, then daffodils in full bloom.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - BEDROOM

A bouquet of daffodils sits on a bedside table in Caleb's bedroom. Caleb is in bed asleep. Raymond is sitting beside the bed. Judith enters with Nancy, Stuart, and George [Note: This scene should be slowly paced with pauses after some speeches.]

JUDITH

Caleb's been very uncomfortable the last few days, but he insisted on coming home.

STUART

When I visited him at the hospital a couple of weeks ago, he was very chipper. He was talking about getting back to his lab to work on a new experiment.

JUDITH

He's had his ups and downs, but he'll never get back to the lab. Just

yesterday he was in deep despair because he felt that he may have brought on the cancer by not being able to handle adversity properly. He's read that underlying psychological factors can cause cancer.

NANCY

Well, yes, there has been some research along those lines. In fact, certain personality types get particular types of cancers. But there are also environmental factors. For instance, there is a high incidence in certain lines of work. And I dare say his exposure to chemicals in the laboratory over the years must be the decisive factor.

JUDITH

That's what his doctor told him. Caleb says that if that's the case, it's worth the price. He feels his scientific contributions required taking the risk. Yet, he retains this nagging doubt that he himself may be responsible.

Caleb stirs, awakens, and raises his head.

CALEB

Who's there?

JUDITH

*It's George, Stuart, and Nancy.
Raymond is still here, too.*

They move to the bedside. Caleb sits up part way as Judith helps adjust his pillows.

CALEB

*Have you come to test me some more?
Or to counsel me?*

NANCY

*Neither. We're friends who just want to
spend some time with you.*

CALEB

*I don't have much left, but I'm happy to
share it. Why are you looking so solemn,
Stuart? Has the stock market fallen?
Or is it the natural pessimism of your
profession?*

STUART

*I can't disguise it, can I? I feel deeply
sorrowful to see you suffer so. I keep
thinking of the poet who wrote that we
live in a vale of tears.*

NANCY

(To Stuart)

You're a cheerful one!

CALEB

That's all right. I know I'm dying. It's my destiny. And yours, too, all of you.

RAYMOND

But none of you need to despair. After all, they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

GEORGE

That's from the Bible, isn't it?

RAYMOND

That's right.

GEORGE

I've been reading a lot of Bible lately, but I still can't find God. And I've come across some writers who are as glum as Stuart. Like the one who wrote, "I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wiseman has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. Yet I perceived that one fate comes to all of them. Vanity of Vanity!"

RAYMOND

*Oh, that's the preacher in Ecclesiastes.
He was the supreme pessimist.*

CALEB

Yes, far too pessimistic.

RAYMOND

*The trouble with that view is that it takes
too short a perspective of time. As St.
Paul explained, "I consider that the
sufferings of this present time are not
worth comparing with the glory that is to
be revealed to us."*

GEORGE

And when will this be?

RAYMOND

*At the end of time. At the moment of
the last judgment. The Revelation to
John has disclosed the words of Christ,
"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my
recompense, to repay everyone for what
he has done."*

CALEB

*You know, just as I haven't been able to
comprehend first cause, neither can I*

grasp end-time. I can't even say whether I expect my spirit to continue after my body dies. If it does, will it be an immediate rebirth, or will I waken only on judgment day? If the latter, I probably won't be aware of the time gap in between.

NANCY

Like a long night's sleep.

CALEB

Something like that. If it occurs, I'll accept continued life in the spirit as a bonus. Yet, the uncertainty doesn't really bother me. Life has been fulfilling with all its joys and sorrows.

Caleb has a coughing spell. Judith gives him some water.

JUDITH

You'd better rest a while.

GEORGE

Yes, we'll be on our way.

CALEB

No, stay. [To George] You and I have a matter to complete.

GEORGE

We do?

CALEB

Yes, some months ago you asked: what about Auschwitz? This was really a vast magnification of the question of why God would let anyone suffer, especially the innocent.

GEORGE

It still perplexes me.

CALEB

I've come to realize that God suffers with us.

RAYMOND

You're speaking of Christ the suffering servant, God the Son.

CALEB

No, I'm talking about God in God's full nature. The suffering God.

RAYMOND

You're claiming that God, the Almighty One, can suffer. Caleb, that's not really possible.

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CALEB

No, not the almighty. The all-loving God, the creative force of the universe. What I've long perceived in biology to be God's integrating power in creation, I now understand to be love.

JUDITH

God's love for us?

CALEB

God's love for all creatures. And you cannot love without suffering. Didn't we learn that, Judy, in loving each other, in raising our children, and in losing them?

JUDITH

Yes, that's so.

CALEB

So God, too, experiences the suffering of love. Thus, the personification of God as Father, and as Mother, too, is understandable. Think of God's agony when Jesus, who lived as a true son of God, was crucified.

JUDITH

Yes, it must have been great sorrow for

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God.

CALEB

But as God didn't abandon Jesus, so God never abandons us. Not when we suffer from natural causes or from human cruelty. Not when we bring suffering on ourselves. Not even when we ourselves are cruel.

Caleb coughs.

RAYMOND

But don't forget the hope and promise contained in Christ's resurrection.

CALEB

Yes, that was God's fulfillment, but the crucifixion had to come first. As God suffered with Jesus on the cross, so God suffers with all of us in life and death. That's also part of our destiny. And how God must have suffered at Auschwitz, at Hiroshima, and at all other sites of human cruelty.

GEORGE

I suppose you're right.

NANCY

Does this realization ease your own suffering? Does it take away the pain to believe that God suffers with you?

CALEB

No, the physical pain is still there, but the anguish of my soul is gone. [Sighs] I'm at peace with myself. I'm at peace with God.

Caleb coughs again. Judith comforts him. He clasps her hand, looks at her lovingly, and silently forms the words, "Oh Judy". Sighs deeply. Closes his eyes. His head slumps as he dies. Judith releases his hand and places it on his chest.

JUDITH

God's peace be with you, Caleb.

FADE OUT TO BLACK

Show closing credits over a dark screen with closing music, such as J.S. Bach's "Komm Süßer Tod" ("Come Sweet Death").

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Ms. Mary Catherine Dean, Senior Editor
Abingdon Press
201 Eighth Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37202

Dear Ms. Dean:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God also suffers.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* as a reading drama, intended to be read by individuals and used in discussion groups, and not merely as a script for a stage play. I recognize that as a play it doesn't have as much action and personality conflict as many drama groups seem to prefer. Therefore, the market as a play intended for stage production is likely to be limited. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion (like the Book of Job).

I first wrote *DESTINY* in 1987 and tried unsuccessfully to get it presented by a couple of drama groups in the Washington, D.C. area. At that time I sent it as a play script to Abingdon Press, where it was referred to your church resources division and rejected because it didn't fall within Abingdon's line of

seasonal plays. Recently I have revised *DESTINY*, refined my ideas, and broken up some of the long speeches. I now call it a reading drama and hope that you will review it with readers as the primary market.

Of course, *DESTINY* could be rewritten as a novelette with narrative description of setting and movement of characters and with dialogue transformed to "he said, she replied, he exclaimed, she objected, he continued," etc. However, I prefer the more succinct format of drama.

I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and active in Methodists United for Peace with Justice. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C.

If you decide that *DESTINY* is unsuitable for Abingdon Press, please return my manuscript in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

January 13, 1994

Ms. Mary Catherine Dean, Senior Editor
Abingdon Press
201 Eighth Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37202

Dear Ms. Dean:

On September 27, 1993 I sent you a manuscript for a reading drama entitled DESTINY. On November 29 I phoned to find out where you were in the review of the manuscript and left a message in your voice mail. The next day Shirley Briese (sp?) called to say that the manuscript was still being read. I called Ms. Briese on January 3, 1994, and she said that she would check again and let me know. I called her again on January 5, and she indicated that she still had no answer from the reviewing editor.

I am convinced that there is a market for my reading drama. If Abingdon Press is not interested, I want to try other publishers. Therefore, I will start trying elsewhere on January 28 if I have not received a positive response from Abingdon by then. I won't formally withdraw the manuscript from Abingdon, but I will be pursuing other possibilities simultaneously.

If you decide that DESTINY is unsuitable for Abingdon Press, please return my manuscript in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope previously provided.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

January 29, 1994

Ms. Mary Catherine Dean, Senior Editor
Abingdon Press
201 Eighth Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37202

Dear Ms. Dean:

I suppose that any system has its glitches now and then. Because I believe that my reading drama, *DESTINY*, would be appropriate for Abingdon Press, I am sending you another copy. Please don't review it merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed. Just as the book of Job is.

DESTINY deals with the age-old question: if God is good, why do people suffer? In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university president and other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer. The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain discuss with him why God allows these calamities to occur. Finally Caleb comes to the realization that God suffers with us. If you want a quick look at this concluding message, you might read the finally scene, beginning on page

56.

I first wrote DESTINY in 1987 and tried unsuccessfully to get it produced as a stage play. Last summer a friend of mind, suffering from cancer, was trying to deal with the question, "why me?" I discussed my thought that many things unfavorable to us happen in the unfolding of God's natural order but that God suffers with us. I let him read the play, and he said it was very helpful to gain that perspective. This encouraged me to work out some revisions in DESTINY and submit it to you as a reading drama. I believe that others would be interested in considering this perspective.

If you conclude that DESTINY is unsuitable for Abingdon Press, please return it to me in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

January 31, 1994

Religious Books Editor
Harper San Francisco
1160 Battery Street
San Francisco, CA 94111

Dear Friend:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university president and suffers other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer.

The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain discuss with him why God allows these calamities to occur. Finally Caleb comes to the realization that God suffers with us.

I first wrote *DESTINY* in 1987 and tried unsuccessfully to get it produced as a stage play. In recent months a friend of mine, suffering from cancer, was trying to deal with the question, "why me?" I discussed my thought that many things unfavorable to us happen in the unfolding of God's natural order but that God suffers with us. I let him read the play, and he said it was very helpful to gain that perspective. This encouraged me to work out some revisions in *DESTINY* and to seek a publisher for it as a reading drama. I believe that others would be interested in considering this perspective.

I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and an officer of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports.

If you would like to discuss DESTINY with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Harper San Francisco, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 13, 1994

Mr. Marshall Johnson
Editorial Director, Fortress Press
Augsburg Fortress Publisher
Box 1209, 426 S. Fifth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55440

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and

daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university president and suffers other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer. The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain discuss with him why God allows these calamities to occur. Finally Caleb comes to the realization that God suffers with us.

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I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and an officer of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports.

Mr. Marshall Johnson

April 13, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Fortress or Augsburg Presses, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 13, 1994

Mr. Richard Brown, Senior Editor
Pilgrim Press
700 Prospect Avenue, East
Cleveland, OH 44115

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university president and suffers other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer. The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain discuss with him why God allows these calamities to occur. Finally Caleb

comes to the realization that God suffers with us.

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I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and an officer of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports.

Mr. Richard Brown

April 13, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Pilgrim Press, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 13, 1994

Mr. Frank Oveis
Vice President and Senior Editor
Crossroad Publishing Co.
370 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Oveis:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university president and suffers other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer. The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain

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*I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and an officer of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports.*

Mr. Frank Oveis
April 13, 1994
Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by *Crossroad*, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 13, 1994

Mr. Jon Pott
Vice President and Editor-in-chief
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
255 Jefferson Avenue, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Dear Mr. Pott:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

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Mr. Jon Pott

April 13, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Eerdmans, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 13, 1994

Mr. Stephen J. Carter
Vice President and Editor
Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63118

Dear Mr. Carter:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

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Mr. Stephen J. Carter

April 13, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Concordia, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 13, 1994

Mr. Thomas Cahill
Director, Religious Publishing
Doubleday
666 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

Dear Mr. Cahill:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

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*I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and an officer of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports.*

Mr. Thomas Cahill

April 13, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Doubleday, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 13, 1994

Mr. Robert D. McIntyre, Publisher
Westminster Press
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202

Dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

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I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and an officer of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports.

Mr. Robert D. McIntyre

April 13, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Westminster Press, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 5, 1994

Mr. Robert Moluf, Editorial Director
Augsburg Press
Box 1209, 426 S. Fifth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55440

Dear Mr. Moluf:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university

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Mr. Robert Moluf

May 5, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Augsburg Press, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 5, 1994

Mr. Bruce Barbour, Vice President
Thomas Nelson Publishers
P.O. Box 14100
Nashville, TN 37214-1000

Dear Mr. Barbour:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university

president and suffers other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer. The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain discuss with him why God allows these calamities to occur. Finally Caleb comes to the realization that God suffers with us.

I first wrote *DESTINY* in 1987 and tried unsuccessfully to get it produced as a stage play. In recent months a friend of mine, suffering from cancer, was trying to deal with the question, "why me?" I discussed my thought that many things unfavorable to us happen in the unfolding of God's natural order but that God suffers with us. I let him read the play, and he said it was very helpful to gain that perspective. This encouraged me to work out some revisions in *DESTINY* and to seek a publisher for it as a reading drama. I believe that others would be interested in considering this perspective.

I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and an officer of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports.

Mr. Bruce Barbour

May 5, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Thomas Nelson Publishers, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 5, 1994

Ms. Ann Spangler, Editor-in-Chief
Servant Publications
P.O. Box 8617
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

Dear Ms. Spangler:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university

president and suffers other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer. The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain discuss with him why God allows these calamities to occur. Finally Caleb comes to the realization that God suffers with us.

I first wrote *DESTINY* in 1987 and tried unsuccessfully to get it produced as a stage play. In recent months a friend of mine, suffering from cancer, was trying to deal with the question, "why me?" I discussed my thought that many things unfavorable to us happen in the unfolding of God's natural order but that God suffers with us. I let him read the play, and he said it was very helpful to gain that perspective. This encouraged me to work out some revisions in *DESTINY* and to seek a publisher for it as a reading drama. I believe that others would be interested in considering this perspective.

I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and an officer of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports.

Ms. Ann Spangler

May 5, 1994

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Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 19, 1994

Mr. Mark Chimsky, Editor-in-Chief
Collier Books
866 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Chimsky:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university

president and suffers other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer. The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain discuss with him why God allows these calamities to occur. Finally Caleb comes to the realization that God suffers with us.

I first wrote *DESTINY* in 1987 and tried unsuccessfully to get it produced as a stage play. In recent months a friend of mine, suffering from cancer, was trying to deal with the question, "why me?" I discussed my thought that many things unfavorable to us happen in the unfolding of God's natural order but that God suffers with us. I let him read the play, and he said it was very helpful to gain that perspective. This encouraged me to work out some revisions in *DESTINY* and to seek a publisher for it as a reading drama. I believe that others would be interested in considering this perspective.

I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and an officer of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports.

Mr. Mark Chimsky

May 19, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to discuss *DESTINY* with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. If you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Collier Books, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

June 8, 1994

Mr. Thomas Cahill
Director, Religious Publishing
Doubleday
666 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

Dear Mr. Cahill:

On April 13, 1994 I sent you a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. I want to inquire, first, whether you received it, and second, where you are in your review.

DESTINY is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I have written *DESTINY* primarily as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

Like all authors, I hope that you will decide to publish my work. But if your decision is negative, please return the manuscript in the self-addressed envelope I included in my submission.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

July 19, 1994

Editor, Religious Books
Bantam Books
666 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

Dear Editor:

In book stores I see a lot of your paperback books in the religion section. This leads me to propose a book for your consideration. It is a reading drama entitled *DESTINY* and deals with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I am enclosing a brief synopsis and the final scene. If you would like to receive the entire manuscript, I will be pleased to send it.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus

establishing him to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university president and suffers other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer. The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain discuss with him why God allows these calamities to occur. Finally Caleb comes to the realization that God suffers with us, a thought he articulates in the final scene.

I first wrote *DESTINY* in 1987 and tried unsuccessfully to get it produced as a stage play. In recent months a friend of mine, suffering from cancer, was trying to deal with the question, "why me?" I discussed my thought that many things unfavorable to us happen in the unfolding of God's natural order but that God suffers with us. I let him read the play, and he said it was very helpful to gain that perspective. This encouraged me to work out some revisions in *DESTINY* and to seek a publisher for it as a reading drama. I believe that others would be interested in considering this perspective.

I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and board chair of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports (see *vita*).

Religion Editor, Bantam Books

April 13, 1994

Page two.

If you would like to receive the complete manuscript of DESTINY, please let me know. But if you conclude that you are not interested in considering my reading drama, please return the excerpt in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

October 9, 1995

Mr. Robert Ellsberg
Editor-in-chief
Orbis Books
P.O. Box 308
Maryknoll, NY 10545

Dear Mr. Ellsberg:

I am submitting for your consideration a manuscript entitled *DESTINY*. It is a reading drama dealing with a central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? After exploring a variety of answers, the drama indicates that all-loving God suffers with us.

I ask you to consider *DESTINY* not merely as a stage play, for I know there would be limited market. Rather look at it as a work to be read and discussed, just as the book of Job is. It could, of course, be put on as a play or given a staged reading, but I think the far greater market would be for individual reading and group discussion.

In Act I the main character, Caleb Pendleton, is tested with three temptations: wealth, sex, political power. He doesn't succumb, thus establishing himself to be a good person. In Act II he successively loses a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren in an avalanche; a son and

daughter-in-law, slain by rebels in Latin America; his position as university president and suffers other economic loss; and finally is afflicted with cancer. The three professors who tested him with the temptations plus the chaplain discuss with him why God allows these calamities to occur. Finally on his deathbed Caleb comes to the realization that God suffers with us.

I first wrote DESTINY in 1987 and tried unsuccessfully to get it produced as a stage play. A couple of years ago a friend of mine, suffering from cancer, was trying to deal with the question, "why me?" I discussed my thought that many things unfavorable to us happen in the unfolding of God's natural order but that God suffers with us. I let him read the play, and he said it was very helpful to gain that perspective. This encouraged me to work out some revisions in DESTINY. Now I am seeking a publisher for DESTINY as a reading drama so that others may consider my perspective.

I am a United Methodist, husband of an ordained minister, and chair of Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy. A previous drama of mine, *Lead, Kindly Light*, a Christmas play, received five performances at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Over the years I have had nine books published by university and social science presses on employment and training programs, neighborhoods, and metropolitan governance plus over 250 articles and reports. I am now writing a book on democratic participation, which is my main field.

Mr. Robert Ellsberg
October 9, 1995
Page two.

If you would like to discuss DESTINY with me, please call me at one of the numbers listed below. However, if you decide that it is unsuitable for publication by Orbis Books, please return the manuscript in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

*Mon-Thurs: 301 694-2859; Fri-Sat: 301 897-3668
620-0232*

Fax: 301

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

A Screenplay

by

Howard W. Hallman

c 1996

6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

301 694-2859

Fax: 301 620-0232

1

FADE IN:

EXT - OUTSIDE THE GATE OF JERUSALEM - DAY

CLEOPAS and HANNAH walk through the northwest gate leading out of Jerusalem around 30 A.D. It is mid-afternoon on a sunny day in April. They are part of a crowd of people pushing their way through a clutter of merchants selling their wares outside the gate. Roman soldiers guarding the gate seem apprehensive and watch travelers suspiciously as they leave.

As Cleopas and Hannah walk beyond the city walls down a dusty road, the crowd thins out, and they are mostly alone. As they talk, Jesus, dressed in drab garments with head covering, gradually approaches from a converging side path.

CLEOPAS

It still seems hard to believe what Mary Magdalene reported this morning.ⁱ

HANNAH

Yes, and also Mary, the mother of James, Joanna, and the other women.

CLEOPAS

The stone rolled away and his body gone.

HANNAH

And two men in dazzling clothes, so Mary

Magdalene told us.

CLEOPAS

None of us would believe her.

HANNAH

Peter, of course, had to find out for himself.

CLEOPAS

Yes, he ran to the tomb, and all he found was the linen clothes. Nothing else.

They walk along in reflective silence.

HANNAH

So much has happened in recent weeks. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. His confrontation with the chief priests and scribes in the temple.

CLEOPAS

And then his arrest, mocking by the soldiers, the trial. The people turning against him.

HANNAH

*The pain and humiliation of crucifixion.
(Sobbing)*

*His death and burial in the tomb that
Joseph made available.*

CLEOPAS

*And now three days later, the empty
tomb.*

*Jesus comes onto the roadway and joins Cleopas and Hannah as they
continue walking. They do not recognize him.*

JESUS

Good day, my friends.

CLEOPAS

Good day.

JESUS

Where are you headed?

HANNAH

We're going to our home in Emmaus.

JESUS

I'm going in that direction, too.

CLEOPAS

Then will you join us?

JESUS

Yes, if I may. Thank you.

CLEOPAS

You're most welcome. I'm Cleopas, and this is my wife, Hannah.

JESUS

I'm pleased to know you.

HANNAH

We're always glad to have company on this journey.

JESUS

If I may ask, what were you discussing so intently as I came up?ⁱⁱ

CLEOPAS

Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place in these days?

JESUS

What things?

CLEOPAS

The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. But our

5

chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

HANNAH

We have followed him since he began his ministry in Galilee. We had hoped that he was one to redeem Israel.

CLEOPAS

Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

HANNAH

Today some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning. When they didn't find his body there, they came back and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

CLEOPAS

Some of those who were with us also went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But they didn't see him.

JESUS

Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have

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declared.

They stop walking.

CLEOPAS

What do you mean?

JESUS

Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?

HANNAH

Necessary that he must suffer? How can that be?

JESUS

So that the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms can be fulfilled.ⁱⁱⁱ

HANNAH

I don't understand.

JESUS

Then let me explain it to you.

They start walking again.

JESUS (Cont.)

Let's begin with Moses. You know his story: How when he was a baby his mother hid him in the reeds along the Nile to escape Pharaoh's decree that all Hebrew baby boys be drowned. How Pharaoh's daughter found him and raised him as her own son. How when Moses was grown up, he killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew. How he fled to the land of Midian to escape Pharaoh's wrath. There Moses married Zipporah, a daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian.^{iv}

HANNAH

I've heard that story since I was a girl. It's one of my favorites.

JESUS

After a long time the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites still groaned under the slavery and cried out. Their cry for help arose up to God. God heard their groaning and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that their descendants would reside in a bountiful land.^v

CLEOPAS

Yes, I remember. God looked upon the Israelites and took notice of them.

HANNAH

As God has always cared for us.

JESUS

So God called Moses as he was tending his father-in-law's flocks beyond the wilderness on Horeb, the mountain of God.^{vi} In my mind's eye I can see him now.

Jesus makes a sweeping gesture toward the field they are passing.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT -MT. HOREB - DAY

Moses is tending his flock on the mountain side with its sparse vegetation. Not far away he notices a bush that is on fire. He approaches it and observes that although the bush is blazing it is not consumed.^{vii}

MOSES

What a strange sight this is. Why isn't the bush burned up?

VOICE OF GOD

(Man and woman in unison,^{viii}
coming out of bush)

Moses! Moses!

MOSES

Here I am.

VOICE OF GOD

Come no closer! Remove the sandals
from your feet, for the place on which
you are standing is holy ground.

Moses is astonished, but he removes his sandals.

VOICE OF GOD

I am the God of your father, the God of
Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of
Jacob.

Moses hides his face.

VOICE OF GOD

I have observed the misery of my people
who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry
on account of their taskmasters.
Indeed, I know their sufferings. I have
come down to deliver them from the

10

Egyptians.

Moses uncovers his face and stares at the burning bush.

VOICE OF GOD (Cont.)

Come, Moses, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

MOSES

Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

VOICE OF GOD

I will be with you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.

MOSES

If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?", what shall I say to them?

VOICE OF GOD

I AM WHO I AM. Thus, you shall say to the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you."

Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, "The Lord, the God of your ancestors has appeared to me saying, `I have given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" They will listen to your voice.

MOSES

But suppose they do not believe me or listen to me, but say, "The Lord did not appear to you."

VOICE OF GOD

What is that in your hand?

MOSES

A staff.

VOICE OF GOD

Throw it on the ground.

Moses throws the staff to the ground, and it becomes a snake. Moses draws back from it.

VOICE OF GOD

Reach out your hand and seize it by the

12

tail.

Moses reaches out his hand and grasps the snake, which becomes a staff in his hand.

VOICE OF GOD

*With this staff you shall perform signs.
Then the elders of Israel and the people
will know that the God of Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob has appeared to you.*

MOSES

*But, my Lord, I have never been eloquent,
neither in the past nor even now that you
have spoken to your servant. I am slow
of speech and slow of tongue.*

VOICE OF GOD

*Who gives speech to mortals? Who
makes them mute or deaf, seeing or
blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go,
and I will be with your mouth and teach
you what you are to speak.*

MOSES

O my Lord, please send someone else.

VOICE OF GOD

What of your brother, Aaron, the Levite?

13

I know that he can speak fluently. Even now he is coming out to meet you. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. I will be with your mouth and with his mouth. He shall speak for you to the people.

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah are now farther along the road than when Jesus started telling about Moses.

JESUS

And so Moses went back to the Israelites, gathered them together, and led them out Egypt.

CLEOPAS

The exodus! What a great event for our people!

JESUS

On the third new moon after the Israelites came out of Egypt, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and camped before the mountain of God. Moses went alone upon the mountain.^{ix}

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Moses walks up the mountain. As he looks ahead, he can see a thick cloud covering the top. He keeps climbing. There is thunder, lightning, and blast of a trumpet. The mountain shakes violently. Smoke rises.*

CUT TO:

EXT - FOOT OF MOUNTAIN - DAY

The people are gathered at the foot of the mountain, looking upward at the rising smoke. When it thunders, they tremble.

CUT TO:

Moses continues up the mountain. The trumpet is louder. Then more thunder. We see but do not hear Moses speaking. The answer comes in thunder, alternating with Moses speaking.

CUT BACK AND FORTH to the people at the foot of the mountain and Moses in conversation with the thunder. Finally we hear the Voice of God (man and woman in unison) coming as a roar out of the smoke.

VOICE OF GOD

Moses, go now to the people. Speak to them the words I have told you.

Moses makes his way down the mountainside. He sees the people standing at the foot of the mountain. They look up and see him coming. As he approaches them, they gather around, greatly excited.

MOSES

Hear the words of the Lord, spoken to me on the mountain.^{xi}

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself an idol. You shall not bow down to idols or worship them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

DRAW BACK to show Moses continuing to address the people, but we do not hear what he is saying.

JESUS v.o.

And so Moses told the people all of the

commandments: how they should act toward God and toward one another.

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

CLEOPAS

Just last week a scribe came up to Jesus in the temple and demanded that Jesus tell him which commandment is first of all.

JESUS

And how did he reply?

CLEOPAS

He said, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."^{xii}

JESUS

That's what Moses taught long ago. It's in the fifth book of Moses.^{xiii}

HANNAH

Jesus also told the scribe that second

17

great commandment is "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."^{xiv}

JESUS

Yes, that's also from the law of Moses. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.^{xv}

CLEOPAS

That's what Jesus said, too.

They walk on for a bit in silence.

JESUS

Moses taught the Israelites many other things as they journeyed in the wilderness. He prepared them for their entrance into the promised land. And he foretold their future.

CUT TO:

An older Moses talking to a group of people.

MOSES

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people. You shall heed such a prophet, for God will put words in his mouth and he will speak everything that God

commands.

(Cont.)

MOSES (Cont.)

Anyone who does not heed the words
that the prophet speaks in God's name,
God will hold accountable.^{xvi}

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

JESUS

Was not Jesus of whom you speak such a
prophet?

HANNAH

Truly he spoke the word of God.

CLEOPAS

All who followed him felt that way. So
why did our rulers turn against him?

JESUS

The road for prophets is never easy.
Remember how it was with Elijah, the
Tishbite, who lived when Ahab was king of
Israel.

You will recall that after Ahab married
Jezebel, daughter of the king of the

Sidonians, he built for her an altar for Baal, and joined her in worshiping Baal. By this and other deeds Ahab did more to provoke the anger of God than all the kings of Israel who were before him. So God send Elijah to Ahab.^{xvii}

DISSOLVE TO:

Elijah dressed in plain garb is standing before Ahab and Jezebel as they sit on their thrones in the royal court.

ELIJAH

As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.

As Jezebel watches scornfully, Ahab beckons to a pair of soldiers, but Elijah leaves on his own untouched.

DISSOLVE TO:

Elijah is at a small pool in a wadi where ravens are bringing him food.

JESUS v.o.

And so drought and famine came throughout the land. As for Moses, God sent him east of the Jordan to the Wadi

*Cherith, where the ravens brought food
to him.^{xviii}*

DISSOLVE TO:

*Elijah is seated in a small room where a middle-aged woman is serving
him food.*

JESUS v.o.

*As the drought continued, the wadi dried
up. So the Lord sent Elijah to Sidon,
where a widow fed him.^{xix}*

DISSOLVE TO:

The widow is weeping.

JESUS v.o.

*But then the widow's son died, and she
blamed Elijah.*

CUT TO:

Elijah carries the boy, alive again, into the room.

JESUS v.o.

*Elijah went to the boy and brought him
back to life.^{xx}*

ELIJAH

See, your son is alive.

WIDOW

*Now I know that you are a man of God,
and the word of the Lord in your mouth
is truth.*

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah walking along the road.

CLEOPAS

*That reminds me of the first time we saw
Jesus. We were visiting my uncle in
Capernaum and noticed a large crowd
surrounding the house of Simon Peter
and Andrew. Jesus was there, expelling
unclean spirits from those possessed. He
healed a man who was paralyzed and
cleansed a leper.*

HANNAH

*The people first believed in Jesus because
he healed the sick.*

JESUS

*So was not this a sign that Jesus was a
man of God, like Elijah? A sign as*

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*powerful as the staff Moses carried away
from Mount Horeb?*

CLEOPAS

Indeed, it was.

They walk a bit in silence.

JESUS

*Elijah endured much more when he
followed God's command and confronted
the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.*

CLEOPAS

*I know the story well. When I was a boy
my rabbi liked to act it out.*

*Jesus and Hannah sit on large stones at the side of the road as Cleopas
acts out the scene on Mount Carmel.^{xxi}*

CLEOPAS (Cont.)

*First the prophets of Baal built an altar,
piled wood on it, took a bull, cut it to
pieces, lay it on wood, but put no fire to
it. From morning until noon the
prophets of Baal called on the name of
Baal to bring fire, but none came.*

Elijah said to them -- and this is the part

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I like best -- "Cry louder! Perhaps Baal has gone on a journey! Or maybe he is asleep and must be awakened!" But no fire came. Then it was Elijah's turn.

Elijah built an altar with twelve stones.

JESUS

Yes, one for each of the tribes of the sons of Jacob.

CLEOPAS

He built a trench around the altar, lay wood on it, and then the slaughtered bull.

DISSOLVE TO:

Atop Mount Carmel there are two altars piled with wood with a cut-up bull on each. One is surrounded by prophets of Baal. Elijah is completing his altar. A crowd of people is watching.

CLEOPAS v.o.

Next Elijah had them fill the trench with water and pour water over the wood.

Prophets of Baal pour water out of jars over Elijah's altar. Elijah stands by his altar and looks toward the sky above.

ELIJAH

O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your bidding. Answer me, O Lord, so that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.

The wood bursts into flames, consuming the offering and licking up the water in the trench. The people fall on their faces. Then they arise and shout in excitement.

CROWD

The Lord indeed is God! The Lord indeed is God!

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah start walking along the road again.

JESUS

Yes, Elijah prevailed. The people seized the prophets of Baal, and Elijah killed them in the Wadi Kishen. Soon thereafter the rain came, and the drought ended.^{xxii}

Yet, all was not well for Elijah.

CUT TO:

Elijah walking in the wilderness and sitting down under a solitary broom tree. He acts according to the following narration.

JESUS v.o.

Jezebel was furious and threatened to kill Elijah. He fled into the wilderness. He came to a solitary broom tree and sat down, despairing for his life. Elijah fell asleep. Then angel of the Lord came, fed him, and sent him on his way.^{xxiii}

DISSOLVE TO:

Elijah is entering a cave on the side of a mountain.

JESUS v.o.

After forty days and forty nights Elijah arrived at Horeb, the mount of God. There the word of God came to him.^{xxiv}

VOICE OF GOD

What are you doing here Elijah?

ELIJAH

I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. The Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets. I alone am left. Now they are seeking my life, to take it away.

VOICE OF GOD

Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.^{xxv}

Elijah stands in front of the cave. A great wind arises, so strong that rocks are blown, tumbling down the mountain, crashing near where he stands. He looks around for God but sees no one.

Then an earthquake rumbles, splitting the earth in front of where Elijah stands. Again he looks for God but sees no one.

A fire arises from the earth and burns on all sides of Elijah. He retreats into the cave.

The fire goes out. An eerie silence prevails. Elijah wraps a mantle around his face and steps out of the cave. Silence still prevails. Then he hears a whispering voice.

VOICE OF GOD

(whispering)

What are you doing here, Elijah?

ELIJAH

I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. I alone am left, and they are trying to take my life.

VOICE GOD

Go and return. You will anoint Jehu as king of Israel and Elisha as prophet in your place. More will die. Yet I will let
(Cont.)

VOICE OF GOD (Cont.)

live seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.

Elijah leaves the cave and goes down the mountain.

JESUS v.o.

And so Elijah did as God told him.

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

HANNAH

When I think of Elijah at the mouth of the cave, I recall the psalm that says, "Be still, and know that I am God!"^{xxvi}

JESUS

And the people respond:

*"The Lord of hosts is with us,
the God of Jacob is our refuge."^{xxvii}*

They walk along in silence for a while. Then:

CLEOPAS

My friend, it's interesting that you speak of Moses and Elijah. Today as we are eating our noonday meal with Jesus' closest disciples, Peter told us how he, James, and John had seen a vision of Moses and Elijah with Jesus on a mountaintop.

JESUS

Had they not told you before?

HANNAH

No, Jesus made them promise to tell no one until he had risen from the dead.

JESUS

And now they believed he had?

HANNAH

Peter and the women believed, for they had seen the empty tomb.

CLEOPAS

It happened when we were still in the north, just after Jesus had spent a week teaching in the villages of Caesarea Phillipi.

HANNAH

I missed that trip because I had to care for my mother.

CLEOPAS

It was early morning when Jesus invited Peter, James, and John to go up the mountain to pray.

DISSOLVE TO:

Jesus, Peter, James, and John reach the mountaintop with clouds hovering close by.^{xxviii}

CLEOPAS v.o.

Often Jesus went apart to pray. Sometimes alone, but at other times he took several disciples with him.

Jesus goes apart to pray but still within sight of the disciples. Peter, James, and John sit silently together. They are drowsy but don't fall asleep. A cloud approaches Jesus at ground level and encompasses him. The cloud goes by. Jesus stands in bright sunlight with dazzling white garments. He is talking with Moses and Elijah, also dressed in radiant white garments. The disciples are astonished. In a daze Peter goes toward Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, but James and John hold back.

PETER

Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three dwellings: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

A bright cloud comes, overshadowing them all.

VOICE OF GOD

This is my Son, my Chosen. Listen to him.

The cloud passes by. Moses and Elijah are gone. Peter, James, and John have fallen on their faces with awe and fear. Jesus with radiant face comes to the three disciples and touches them.

JESUS

Arise. Have no fear.

They get up, puzzled but still in awe. The foursome start descending the mountain.

JESUS

Tell no one of the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.^{xxix}

CUT TO:

Jesus, Peter, James, and John come to the base of the mountain where other disciples, including Cleopas, are with a man, a boy, and a small crowd.

CLEOPAS v.o.

I'll never forget the radiant look on the face of the Master as he came down the mountain.

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

JESUS

What happened then?

CLEOPAS

Jesus cured an epileptic body who the disciples hadn't been able to heal.

HANNAH

He was always healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, helping the lame to walk.

CLEOPAS

Such compassion, such love, even for sinners other people rejected.

JESUS

With his concern for the poor and downtrodden, he was following the course of prophets who preceded him. Such as Amos.

CLEOPAS

Amos, the shepherd of Takoa?

JESUS

Yes, that Amos. He was from Judah in the south, but he felt drawn to Israel, the northern kingdom because transgressions against God were worse there.

CUT TO:

Amos addresses a crowd in the marketplace of Samaria.

AMOS

Thus says the Lord:

For three transgressions of Israel,
and for four, I will not revoke the
punishment;

because they sell the righteous for silver,
and the needy for a pair of sandals.

They trample the head of the poor
into the dust of the earth,
and push the afflicted out of the way.

Father and son go in to the same girl,
so that my holy name is profaned.

They lay themselves down beside every altar
on garments taken in pledge.

And in the house of their God they drink
wine bought with fines they imposed.^{xxx}

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the roadway.

CLEOPAS

Just this past week Jesus went into the
temple and drove out the money
changers and those selling doves. He
told them,

"It is written `my house shall be called a

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house of prayer,' but you are making it a
den of robbers."^{xxxi}

JESUS

Yes, a prophet of righteousness, like
Amos.

CUT TO:

Amos continues addressing the crowd.

AMOS

Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,
and bring righteousness to the ground!
Therefore because you trample
on the poor and take from them
levies of grain,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not dwell in them.
You have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.^{xxxii}

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

JESUS

Strong words of condemnation, but Amos
also taught the way of the Lord.

HANNAH

And so did Jesus.

CUT TO:

Amos continues addressing the crowd.

AMOS

*Seek good and not evil,
that you may live.
And so the Lord, the God of hosts,
will be with you.
Hate evil and love good,
and establish justice in the gate.^{xxxiii}*

*Let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an everflowing
stream.^{xxxiv}*

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

CLEOPAS

*Yes, Jesus had the same concerns as
Amos. I remember that he warned:
"Woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your
consolation.*

Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry."^{xxxv}

HANNAH

But Jesus also taught:

"Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled."^{xxxvi}

JESUS

A modern prophet like the prophets of old, warning the rich and consoling the poor. And did he not also have the great forgiving love which Hosea taught was God's great quality?

CLEOPAS

Alas, Hosea. How he suffered for his own wife's infidelity.

JESUS

As God suffered for Israel's unfaithfulness.

CUT TO:

Hosea addresses a group of people.

HOSEA

Hear the word of the Lord, O people of
 Israel, for the Lord has an indictment
 against the inhabitants of the land.
 There is no faithfulness or loyalty,
 and no knowledge of God in the land.
 Swearing, lying, and murder, and
 stealing
 and adultery break out;
 bloodshed follows bloodshed.
 Therefore, the land mourns,
 and all who live in it languish.^{xxxvii}

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

HANNAH

Hosea's deep sorrow for his people
 reminds me of Jesus when recently he
 stood on the hillside looking over
 Jerusalem. He lamented, "Jerusalem,
 Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets
 and stones those who are sent to it!
 How often have I desired to gather your
 children together as a hen gathers her
 brood under her wings, but you were not
 willing."^{xxxviii}

CUT TO:

Hosea continues addressing the crowd.

HOSEA

*You have plowed wickedness,
you have reaped injustice,
you have eaten the fruit of lies.
Because you have trusted in your power
and in the multitude of your
warriors,
therefore the tumult of war shall rise
against your people, and all your
fortresses shall be destroyed.
Thus, it shall be done to you
because of your great wickedness.*

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

CLEOPAS

*Just as Jesus warned that Jerusalem will
be surrounded by armies and the temple
destroyed.^{xxxix}*

CUT TO:

Hosea continues addressing the crowd.

HOSEA

Here the words of the Lord.

VOICE OF GOD

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I call my son.
How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, O Israel?
My heart recoils within me;
my compassion grows warm and
tender.
I will not execute my fierce anger.
I will not again destroy Ephraim.
For I am God and no mortal,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come in wrath.^{x1}

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

JESUS

God the Holy One, who comes not to
destroy but to show compassion. Was
Jesus, your Master, like that?

HANNAH

Yes, he was. I recall that one day he told
us, "Love your enemies. Do good to
those who hate you. Bless those who

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curse you. Pray for those who abuse you. Be merciful, just as your Father in Heaven is merciful."^{xli}

CLEOPAS

Indeed, Jesus was like the greatest prophets.

JESUS

He was more than like the prophets, for they foretold his coming, that he would be God's anointed one, the Messiah.

CLEOPAS

The Messiah, the anointed one of God? Who foretold this?

JESUS

Isaiah for one. Don't you remember?

CUT TO:

Isaiah I is on a hillside addressing a crowd of people.

ISAIAH I

A shoot shall come out from
the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out his roots.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,

*the spirit of wisdom and
understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and
the fear of the Lord.
His delight shall be the fear of the Lord.
Righteousness shall be the belt
around his waist and faithfulness
the belt around his loins.*

*The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling
together,
and a little child shall lead them.^{xlii}*

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

CLEOPAS

*Once when I was talking with one of
Jesus' brothers, he told me about the first
time Jesus was in his hometown of
Nazareth after he was baptized. As was
his custom, he went to the synagogue on
the sabbath. All knew him as a bright
young man who knew the scriptures
inside and out. So they invited him to
read from the scroll of Isaiah. He*

unrolled it until he found a certain passage.

JESUS

*I think I know the passage he chose:
"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim
release to the captives and
recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free
to proclaim the year of the Lord's
favor."^{xliii}*

HANNAH

How did you know?

Jesus smiles but says nothing.

CLEOPAS

Then Jesus said, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." At first they spoke well of him. But then some became angry and forced him out of town.

JESUS

Such is the fate of prophets, especially among their own people. That's why

Moses resisted God's call on Mount Horeb, claiming to be slow of tongue. Elijah didn't want to leave the wilderness to confront Ahab and Jezebel. And Jeremiah insisted that he was too young to be a prophet.

CUT TO:

Jeremiah as a young man sitting on a stone in an olive grove.

VOICE OF GOD

Jeremiah, before I formed you in the womb I knew you. And before you were born I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations.^{xliv}

JEREMIAH

Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.

VOICE OF GOD

Do not say, "I am only a boy" for you shall go to all to whom I send you. And you shall speak whatever I command you.

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

JESUS

It's an awesome experience to be called by God.

CLEOPAS

Jesus' brother also told me that when Jesus was twelve years old, his parents took him to the Passover festival in Jerusalem. On their way back to Nazareth, they realized Jesus wasn't with them. They hurried back to Jerusalem and found him in the temple talking with the teachers. When they admonished him

(Cont.)

CLEOPAS (Cont.)

for causing them anxiety, Jesus replied, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"^{xlv}

JESUS

So Jesus must have heard God's call at an early age. Do you think he ever had any doubts?

CLEOPAS

I don't know whether he had doubts, but

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his first disciples have told us that Jesus revealed to them that after his baptism by John he spent forty days in the wilderness praying to God and resisting temptation to misuse his power.

JESUS

Yes, just as Moses and Elijah spent time alone in the wilderness.

HANNAH

But like them Jesus persisted and obeyed God's call.

JESUS

So did Jeremiah, who delivered God's words to rulers who didn't want to hear.

CUT TO:

Jeremiah as an adult addresses rulers in the temple in Jerusalem.

JEREMIAH

*The Lord said to me,
"Conspiracy exists among the people of
Judah and the inhabitants of
Jerusalem. They have gone after other
gods to serve
them.*

The house of Israel and the house of
Judah have broken the covenant I
made with their ancestors."^{xlvi}

Therefore, says the Lord,
"Assuredly I am going to bring disaster
upon them that they cannot escape.
Though they cry out to me, I will not
listen to them.

Your gods have become as many as your
towns, O Judah,
And as many as the streets of Jerusalem
are the altars you have set up to

(Cont.)

JEREMIAH (Cont.)

shame, altars to make offerings to
Baal.

But your gods will never save you in time
of trouble."

Thus says the Lord,
"As you have forsaken me and served
foreign gods in your land,
so you shall serve strangers in a land
that is not yours."^{xlvii}

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

JESUS

And so the people of Judah and Israel
were carried to captivity in Babylon.
When that occurred, Jeremiah grieved
with them in heartfelt lamentation.

HANNAH

And so did the psalmist:
"By the rivers of Babylon --
There we sat down and there we wept
when we remembered Zion."^{xlviii}
It touches my heart every time I hear
these words.

JESUS

The same for me. But also note that
Jeremiah held forth the promise of
return.

CUT TO:

Jeremiah is talking to a group of ordinary people.

JEREMIAH

The word of God has come to me, saying:
"The days are surely coming when I will
restore the fortunes of my people Israel
and Judah. I will bring them back to

the land of their ancestors, and they shall take possession of it."^{xlix}

"The days are surely coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand out of the land of Egypt -- the covenant that they broke."

VOICE OF GOD

In this new covenant I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

JESUS

Is it not clear that Jesus, God's Messiah, has come to fulfill God's pledge for a new covenant, written upon the hearts of the

people?

CLEOPAS

You may be correct. This morning Andrew told us that just three nights ago, Jesus offered his twelve closest disciples the cup after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."¹ Little did they know that he would be dead within twenty four hours. And that he was giving his blood of life.

HANNAH

But how can God's covenant be fulfilled through the blood of an innocent man, a man so gracious and loving?

JESUS

That, too, was foretold -- in the latter part of the book of Isaiah.

CUT TO:

Isaiah II is seated at a table writing on a scroll.

ISAIAH II v.o.

The servant of the Lord grew up

like a young plant,
like a root out of dry ground.
He had no form or majesty that
we should look at him.
He was despised and rejected by others,
a man of suffering and acquainted
with infirmity,

(Cont.)

ISAIAH II v.o. (Cont.)

And as one from whom others hide
their faces.
He was despised, and we held him
of no account.^{li}

He looks up from his writing.

ISAIAH II

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases.
Yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our trans-
gressions, crushed for our inequities.
Upon him was the punishment
that made us whole.
And by his bruises we are healed.^{lii}

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

CLEOPAS

*Made whole by his punishment? How
can that be?*

JESUS

Listen quietly.

CUT TO:

Isaiah II addresses a small group of people.

ISAIAH II

*The righteous one, my servant,
shall make many righteous.
And he shall bear our iniquities.
Therefore, says the Lord, I will
allot him a portion with the great
because he poured out himself to death
and was numbered with the
transgressors.
Yet he bore the sin of many and made
intercession for the transgressors.^{liii}*

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah continue walking along the road.

HANNAH

It doesn't seem fair. We have followed him for three years. We know that he was a good and righteous man. He certainly didn't deserve to be put to death.

JESUS

Did he ever warn you that this might happen to him?

CLEOPAS

I never heard him say so. But today we learned that Jesus had told the twelve who he first called in Galilee.

HANNAH

Peter says that three times the Master informed them that he would be handed over to the Gentiles, mocked and spat upon. After they flogged him, they would kill him. But on the third day he would rise again.

CLEOPAS

Peter admitted that they didn't understand what Jesus meant. But now they do.

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JESUS

It was necessary.

HANNAH

But why?

JESUS

Do you remember how Moses saved the Israelites from poisonous serpents in the wilderness?

CLEOPAS

No, not really.

JESUS

It occurred at one of the many times the people were discouraged and became rebellious.

DISSOLVE TO:

In the wilderness Moses is surrounded by a group of angry people.^{liv}

FIRST ISRAELITE

Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

SECOND ISRAELITE

There is no food and no water.

THIRD ISRAELITE

What food we have is miserable.

Snakes appear and start biting the people. Moses goes off a ways.

JESUS v.o.

Because of their rebellion the Lord sent poisonous serpents. They bit the people, and many Israelites died. This made them realize the error of their ways.

People rush over to Moses.

SECOND ISRAELITE

We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you.

FIRST ISRAELITE

Pray to the Lord to take the serpents away from us.

Moses prays to God.

JESUS v.o.

Moses prayed for the people, and God replied to him.

VOICE OF GOD

55

Make a serpent of bronze and set it upon a pole. Everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.

Moses fashions a serpent out of bronze and sets it at the top of a pole. Persons who were bitten by serpents and are near death look at the bronze serpent on the pole, revive, and rejoice.

CUT TO:

Jesus, Cleopas, and Hannah have paused in their walk along the road. As Jesus talks, he lifts his arms as if on the cross.

JESUS

Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so that the people might live, so also the Son of Man had to be lifted up so that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^{lv}

They walk on in silence for a while. Then:

CLEOPAS

That may explain the cross, but what about the empty tomb?

JESUS

You said that Jesus thrice told his disciples that he would be killed but would rise again.

HANNAH

Yes, that's what Peter said.

JESUS

And when the women found the tomb empty this morning, were they not asked, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen."

HANNAH

So they said.

JESUS

Then indeed he lives again.

CLEOPAS

But if he lives, how will we know?

JESUS

You will know what you will know.

CLEOPAS

But what will be the sign?

JESUS

*Oh, faithless generation, must you always
seek a sign?*

*They have now entered the village of Emmaus. They approach a
house.^{lvi}*

CLEOPAS

*Here we are in Emmaus. We're staying
at our friends' house while they are away.*

JESUS

Thank you for letting me walk with you.

Jesus walks ahead as if he were going on.

HANNAH

*Won't you stay with us? It is almost
evening and the day is nearly over.
There's food here and a place for you to
sleep.*

JESUS

As you wish.

*They enter the house. Hannah brings out a basin of water and towels
so that they can wash. She then places a loaf of bread, a jar of wine,
cups, plates, and other food on the table. As they sit down, Jesus
removes his headcovering. He takes the bread and breaks it.*

JESUS

*Blessed be thou, Lord our God, Ruler of
the universe, who brings forth bread from
the earth.^{lvii}*

Jesus places a piece of bread on the plates of Cleopas and Hannah.

CLEOPAS

Master, it is you!

HANNAH

It's true! You live!

*Cleopas and Hannah stand up and raise their faces and arms toward
heaven.*

CLEOPAS

*O give thanks to God who remembered us
when we were cast down!^{lviii}*

HANNAH

Give thanks to the God of heaven!

They look around and discover that Jesus has left.

CLEOPAS

He's gone!

HANNAH

It was he -- the Master!

CLEOPAS

*Were not our hearts burning within us
while he was talking to us on the road?*

HANNAH

*Yes, as he was opening the scriptures to
us.*

CLEOPAS

*We must return to Jerusalem and tell the
others.*

HANNAH

Yes, let's go quickly.

Cleopas and Hannah rush out the door. We see them walking rapidly at intervals along the road at dusk and then in moonlight. They walk by landmarks they passed on their way to Emmaus. They hurry through the gate into Jerusalem. The merchants have dispersed, but the Roman soldiers are still on guard. Cleopas and Hannah rush down a narrow street, into a house, up some stairs, and into a large room where the disciples are gathered.^{lix}

CLEOPAS

Jesus is alive! We have seen him!

JAMES

The Lord has risen indeed! He has appeared to Simon!

PETER

Yes, I saw him as I walked through the Kidron Valley below the Mount of Olives. Where did you meet him?

HANNAH

He walked with us as we made our way to Emmaus!

CLEOPAS

He spent the journey explaining the scriptures about himself.

JOHN

And you recognized him?

CLEOPAS

Not as we walked along the road.

HANNAH

Only when he ate with us in Emmaus did we know it was he.

THOMAS

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How did you know him? Do you have proof?

CLEOPAS

We knew him when he broke the bread.

JOHN

Of course, in the breaking of bread.

JAMES

As he has broken bread with us many times.

PETER

As he did three nights ago.

JOHN

We will always remember him in the breaking of bread.

The group is abuzz with excitement. DRAW BACK as John picks up a loaf of bread, breaks it, and hands pieces to those present. Several persons crowd around Cleopas and Hannah to hear more of their story. Final credits appear as this occurs.

As an option, a choir sings (voice over) "Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread", words by James Montgomery, tune: "St. Flavian".

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*Be known to us in breaking bread,
But do not then depart;
Savior, abide in us, and spread
Thy table in our heart.*

*There sup with us in love divine;
Thy body and thy blood,
That living bread, that heavenly wine,
Be our immortal food.*

FADE OUT

NOTES

This screenplay derives from the story in Luke 24:13-35 about how two persons are walking to Emmaus and Jesus, resurrected but unrecognized, joins them. Luke identifies one as Cleopas but doesn't name the other. Somewhere I read the suggestion that the second person could well have been a woman. This makes sense because many women were disciples of Jesus.

Part of the dialogue is derived from the Bible, using the New Revised Standard Version, with some adjustments to achieve a flow of conversation. Endnotes indicate passages used.

i. The account of Mary Magdalene visiting the tomb comes from Luke 24:1-11.

s phase of the conversation derives from Luke 24:17-26.

ke 24:44.

odus 2:1-22.

odus 2:23-25.

odus 3:1.

is account and the following dialogue are derived from Exodus 3:2 to 4:17.

Genesis 1:27 indicates: "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; and female he created them." If both male and female are part of the image of God, so also the voice

and can be conceived as male and female simultaneously.

Exodus 19:1, 20.

Exodus 19:16-25.

Exodus 20:1-6.

Mark 12:29-30.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

Mark 12:31.

Matthew 22:40.

xvi. Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19; also see Acts 3:22 and 7:37.

xvii. I Kings 16:31-33.

xviii. Deuteronomy 17:3-4.

xix. I Kings 17:7-8.

xx. I Kings 17-24.

I Kings 18:20-40.

I Kings 18:41-46.

I Kings 19:1-8.

I Kings 19:8-10.

I Kings 19:11-18.

Psalm 46:10.

Psalm 46:11.

Luke 9:28-36.

xxix. Matthew 17:9.

Amos 2:6-8.

Matthew 21:12-13.

xxxii. Amos 5:7, 11-13.

xxxiii. Amos 5:14-15.

xxxiv. Amos 5:21, 23-24.

xxxv. Luke 6:24-25.

Luke 6:20-21.

Hosea 4:1-3.

. Matthew 23:37.

Luke 21:5-6, 20.

sea 11: 1, 8-9.

ke 6:27-28, 36.

aijah 11:1-3, 5-6.

Luke 4:16-19.

Jeremiah 1:4-7.

Luke 2:41-49.

Jeremiah 11:9-13.

Jeremiah 5:19.

Psalms 137:1.

Jeremiah 30:3.

Corinthians 11:25.

Isaiah 53:2-3.

Isaiah 53:4-5.

Isaiah 53:11-12.

Numbers 21:4-9.

John 3:14-15.

Luke 24:28-32.

This was the blessing in common use in Jesus' day according to Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist: Theology and History of the Eucharist Prayer*. (University of Notre Dame Press, 1968). p. 102.

Psalms 136: 23, 26.

Luke 24:33-35.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Extra text:

JESUS

Yes, me, too. I love the psalms. Do you remember the one that starts, "O give thanks, to the Lord, for he is good"?"

CLEOPAS

Yes, of course, "for his steadfast love endures forever."

They walk in rhythm to the psalm.

JESUS

"O give thanks to the God of gods"

CLEOPAS, HANNAH

"for his steadfast love endures forever."

JESUS

"O give thanks to the Lord of lords"

CLEOPAS, HANNAH

"for his steadfast love endures forever."

JESUS

"Who alone does great wonders"

CLEOPAS, HANNAH

"for his steadfast love endures forever."

JESUS

"Who by understanding made the heavens"

CLEOPAS, HANNAH

"for his steadfast love endures forever."

JESUS

"Who spread out the earth on the waters"

CLEOPAS, HANNAH

"for his steadfast love endures forever."

JESUS

"Who made the great lights"

CLEOPAS, HANNAH

"for his steadfast love endures forever."

JESUS

"The sun to rule over the day"

CLEOPAS, HANNAH

"for his steadfast love endures forever."

JESUS

"The moon and stars to rule over the night"

CLEOPAS, HANNAH

"for his steadfast love endures forever."

JESUS

"O give thanks to the God of heaven"

CLEOPAS, HANNAH

"for his steadfast love endures forever."

JESUS

Yes, truly we are grateful for all God has done for us.

JESUS

This Jesus you speak of, you say he was from Nazareth?

CLEOPAS

Yes, that's where he grew up.

JESUS

I imagine that as a boy he must have roamed the hills of Galilee. I've been there and had a strong feeling of being

close to God.

HANNAH

We didn't know Jesus when he was growing up, but I've notice how he has often gone apart from the crowds up a hillside to pray.

HANNAH

Yes, I believe that God is always with us. Why then did Moses have to go to Mount Horeb to find God, and Elijah to the cave?

JESUS

A prophet needs preparation before facing the multitudes and those who have turned against God.

CLEOPAS

And Jesus, too. He often went apart to pray alone. And one of his first disciples told me that after John the Baptist him in the Jordan River, Jesus went into the wilderness alone for forty days.

HANNAH

Tested, you say.

i. Psalm 136.

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

February 29, 1996

Ms. Linda Hanick
74 Trinity Place, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10006

Dear Ms. Hanick:

On January 29, 1996 I sent you a screenplay entitled *Lead, Kindly Light*. Now that I have learned there may be an outlet for religious screenplays, I have taken two other works of mine and transformed them into screenplays. At the risk of overdoing it, I am sending them to you for your consideration.

The first is *On the Road to Emmaus*. It is derived from the story found in Luke 24:13-36 where the resurrected Jesus walks to Emmaus with two travelers, who don't recognize him. In the course of the trip Jesus draws on the law of Moses and the prophets to explain why it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and then enter into his glory. In the screenplay this is accomplished through a series of flashbacks to Moses, Elijah, Jesus transfigured with the two of them on a mountaintop, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah I, Jeremiah, and Isaiah II. The Voice of God is heard from time to time. The travelers finally recognize Jesus when he breaks bread with them in Emmaus. They rush back to Jerusalem to share the news with other followers of Jesus.

The second is entitled *Destiny*. As does the book of Job, it deals with the central issue of theodicy: if God is good, why do people suffer? The screenplay first establishes that the lead character is a good man because he

refuses succumb to temptations of money, sex, and power. Then he is subjected to tragic losses: death of his daughter, her husband, and two children in an avalanche; murder of his son and his wife; loss of job, house, and possessions; and finally terminal cancer. As these calamities occur, four counselors discuss with him and his wife why God allows suffering. Before he dies, he comes to the realization that God is not omnipotent but rather all-loving and therefore suffers with us. The screenplay admittedly contains more talk than action, as does Job and some of George Bernard Shaw's plays, but with skilled direction the three temptations and the emotional content of the debate can provide effective drama.

I would appreciate learning whether you would be interested in producing one or both of these screenplays. If not, can you suggest any other possible outlet? If you decide that these screenplays aren't suitable for your production company, please return them to me in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Mon-Thurs: 301 694-2859; Fri-Sat: 301 897-3668

Fax: 301

620-0232

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

M-Th: 301 694-2859; F-Sa: 301 897-3668
Fax: 301 620-0232

Fax Message

To: *Bruno Caliandro*
Faith and Values Network

Fax: *212 964-5966*

Date: *February 29, 1996*

No of pages: *1*

Dear Mr. Caliandro:

*A month ago I sent you a synopsis of a screenplay entitled *Lead, Kindly Light*. I sent the entire script to Linda Hanick, whose name you had given me, and I am waiting to hear from her.*

Now that I have learned there may be an outlet for religious screenplays, I have taken two other works of mine and transformed them into this art form. I sent copies to Ms. Hanick and would appreciate any other leads you can suggest. For example, when we talked on the phone, you mentioned that the Mormons produce screenplays. I would be interested in learning who a suitable contact would be in the Mormon community.

One of my new screenplays is *On the Road to Emmaus*. It is derived from the story found in Luke 24:13-36 where the resurrected Jesus walks to Emmaus with two travelers, who don't recognize him. In the course of the trip Jesus draws on the law of Moses and the prophets to explain why it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and then enter into his glory. In the screenplay this is accomplished through a series of flashbacks to Moses, Elijah, Jesus transfigured with the two of them on a mountaintop, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah I, Jeremiah, and Isaiah II. The Voice of God is heard from time to time. The travelers finally recognize Jesus when he breaks bread with them in Emmaus. They rush back to Jerusalem to share the news with other followers of Jesus.

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Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

A GLORIOUS SEASON

A Screenplay by

Howard W. Hallman

c 1996

6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Phone: 301 897-3669

Fax: 301 896-0013

FADE IN:

INT - STUDY

SCOTT (age 14) is looking at pictures on the wall of his granddad's study. In some pictures Granddad is standing with well-known figures. Others are group pictures at various ages of his life: high school football, fellow soldiers, college fraternity, law school class, high school class reunions. There are diplomas for Paul E. Parker and award plaques for Judge Paul E. Parker. As GRANDDAD enters the room, Scott zeroes in on the picture of the high school football team and points to it.

SCOTT

Granddad, who are they?

GRANDDAD

That's my high school football team,
Scott.

SCOTT

You played football?

GRANDDAD

Of course. I was quarterback.

SCOTT

You were?

Granddad takes the picture from the wall and points to some of the

players.

GRANDDAD (Cont.)

Sure. And these were my teammates: Spike, who was my best friend, Fast Eddy, Hank the Tank, Steady Freddy, Bulldog, Roberto, Rusty, Flash, Dutch, and Pudge. And also Billy, Lefty, Stan the Man, and some others.

SCOTT

Did everyone have a nickname?

GRANDDAD

Just about.

SCOTT

What did they call you, Granddad?

GRANDDAD

I was Zeke.

SCOTT

Zeke? That's funny.

GRANDDAD

Yes, Zeke. It's short for my middle name, Ezekiel.

SCOTT

So that's what the "E" stands for. I never knew. Judge Paul Ezekiel Parker.

And did you win? Were you champions?

GRANDDAD

As one of my teammates expressed it, we had a glorious season. But we didn't realize it until ten years later.

SCOTT

What do you mean?

GRANDDAD

It's a long story.

SCOTT

Tell me about it. It's raining out, so we can't go on the picnic Grandma has planned.

Granddad holds up the picture and looks at it.

GRANDDAD

As I look back on it, the three weeks of practice before our first game was as important to the team as the nine games we played. We started practice the Monday before Labor Day, a week before

school started.

SCOTT

*The same for my middle school team
when I get back home next week.*

GRANDDAD

*Here in Lofton the weather was hot and
dry, as it often is in the prairie in August.*

As Granddad continues talking, show establishing shots of Lofton in the 1940s, a prairie town with a population around 10,000: an aerial shot of the town, the high school and football field, the business district around the county courthouse square, a billboard on the courthouse grounds supporting the fighting men in World War II, churches, a park, concluding with a residential street, the house where Zeke lives with a silver star in the window, connoting that a member of the family is in the armed service, and a sign by the entrance saying "The Parkers".

GRANDDAD (Cont.) v.o.

Lofton had a population of about 10,000 then. We played in the South Central League. Some of the other schools were larger, some smaller. The smaller ones drew in a lot of farm boys, who were tough and highly competitive.

World War II was in its final year, though

we didn't know it at the time. The Allies had landed in Normandy on June 6 and were driving the Germans back to their homeland. The Russians were doing likewise on the eastern front. The Japanese were steadily retreating from the Pacific Islands they had captured earlier.

We were all interested in the progress of the war because our older brothers and guys we knew from previous teams were in the service, many of them in combat. And besides, as soon as we turned 18 we would be drafted. That would be the following spring and summer for me and other seniors on our team.

But we were mostly concerned about getting ready for our opening game. We knew we had a challenging season ahead of us.

CUT TO:

INT - LARGE KITCHEN

It's the Monday before Labor Day, 1944. Zeke's MOM is pouring coffee for DAD and cocoa for ZEKE, who are seated at the kitchen table. They are eating bacon and eggs over easy and hot biscuits with

butter and honey.

DAD

I'll miss you at the store, Paul. You've been a good help to me this summer.

ZEKE (aka Paul)

You can find another hardware clerk and storeroom helper. The Lions are calling, and I've got to go.

MOM

I'm so afraid you'll get hurt, Paul. I wish you would play in the band, like your brother Clyde did.

DAD

Let him be, Martha. I played football in my day and enjoyed it.

MOM

Yes, Henry, but your knee aches every time we have damp weather.

DAD

It was worth it.

LAURA, Zeke's sister, who will soon enter Lofton High School as a sophomore, comes in.

LAURA

What was worth it?

DAD

Football.

LAURA

I wish I could play.

MOM

Oh, Laura.

An auto horn honks outside.

ZEKE

That's Spike. I've gotta go.

Zeke places his remaining bacon and egg between two slices of biscuit, takes a final swig of cocoa, grabs a canvas bag (containing T-shirts, sox, and a jockey strap), and rushes out the back door, eating his sandwich as he goes.

CUT TO:

EXT - A TRUCK AT CURBSIDE - DAY

SPIKE is sitting behind the wheel of a '43 Chevy pickup truck, which has "Anderson Seed and Feed Company" painted on the door. He is tall and slender and wears a long bill baseball cap. Zeke hops on the

running board and climbs into the cab next to Spike. Spikes put the truck in gear and drives off.

ZEKE

This is it, Spike. I've been waiting all summer for football to start.

SPIKE

And even longer to start as quarterback.

ZEKE

That's for sure. Now it's my turn.

SPIKE

Zeke, your arm oughta be in shape after throwing to me the last few weeks.

ZEKE

I'll be looking for you, Spike: left end, down and out; left end, buttonhook; left end, crossing.

SPIKE

Yeah! We're ready.

They drive into the parking lot between the high school gym and football field.

ZEKE

I thought we'd be first. But there's

Rusty's Model-T.

SPIKE

*Yeah. Rusty and Bob got back in town
Saturday night.*

ZEKE

*You'd think with his dad as a dealer,
Rusty could get better car than that heap
of junk.*

SPIKE

I'd love to have one.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

*RUSTY and BOB are examining the schedule posted on the bulletin
board. Rusty with reddish hair is fairly tall, big-boned, and
powerfully built. Bob is shorter but muscular.*

BOB

*Rusty, I see we start with Kepler as usual.
It's good to have a non-league game first.*

RUSTY

*And we get Ashmont second. I'm
looking forward to that game. Bob,
remember that talkative kid who played*

left end. I hope he's back. I've got something to settle with him.

BOB

We almost beat them, but they ended up as league champs.

Zeke and Spike enter, carrying canvas bags with their stuff.

RUSTY

This year we'll be champs. If these guys come through for us.

SPIKE

We will. I promise you.

ZEKE

So how was wheat harvest?

BOB

Just great. We hitchhiked to Amarilla where we hooked up with a crew and moved north with them through Oklahoma, Western Kansas, and ended up in Montana. Made lots of moola.

ZEKE

I've always wanted to work harvest. What'd you do?

RUSTY

Mostly drove trucks full of wheat from
the combine to the elevator.

As they are talking PUDGE, EDDY, and BASIL enter, each carrying a small canvas bags. As his nickname implies, Pudge is quite large but a little soft. Eddy is shorter than Zeke, trim and agile. Basil is small, thin, and wears horn-rimmed glasses.

BOB

But a couple of times me and Rusty got
to drive the combine.

RUSTY

That's a powerful feeling.

SPIKE

In other words, you just sat on your
fannies all day. It's nothing like lifting
100 pound sacks of chicken feed all
summer, like I did.

RUSTY

Yeah? I've got muscles to prove
otherwise. Wanna arm wrestle?

Rusty peels off his shirt and flexes his muscles.

PUDGE

I'll call you on that, Rusty.

RUSTY

Pudge, you won't stand a chance.

Rusty gets on his knees on one side of a bench and places his right arm in an upright position. Pudge does likewise on the other side of the bench.

ZEKE

I'll give the count. One, two, three.

As the others watch, Rusty and Pudge grunt and groan until finally Rusty forces Pudge's arm backward.

PUDGE

Two out of three.

BOB

No, let me have him.

Bob takes Pudge's place opposite Rusty. Without a count they start with much huffing and puffing. It looks as if Rusty is winning, but Bob overcomes him. In the middle of their struggle NICK, their coach, steps out of the equipment room.

NICK

(Goodnaturedly)

O.K. Save your energies for practice.

RUSTY

Ah, Nick. It's just a friendly little competition.

NICK

I know you're all eager for the new season. I hope you're all in great shape.

BOB

You bet we are!

ZEKE

Ready and willing!

EDDY

Can't wait to get started!

As conversation continues, RICHARD, CLIFF, and MIKE drift in and listen.

NICK

Eddy, who's this skinny kid with glasses you brought in?

EDDY

This is Basil Fox. He wants to be our place kicker.

NICK

Aren't you in the band?

BASIL

Yes, I play bassoon. But this year I want to be on the football team. Eddy says you need someone to kick points after touchdowns.

NICK

You ever kick before?

BASIL

Sure. For the last two months I've been practicing with Pudge centering and Eddy holding the ball.

EDDY

He's terrific, Nick.

NICK

Your parents will have to sign a permission slip, Basil.

BASIL

They already did.

Basil hands the form to Nick.

NICK

Looks O.K. You can ask the coaches in the equipment room if they have a

uniform small enough for you. And the rest of you can get your stuff, too.

The players move into the equipment room where assistant coaches DAVE and HAL give each player a helmet, shoulder pads, blocking pads for linemen, hip pads, practice jersey, pants with thigh pads, shoes, and a combination lock. They return to the locker room and choose lockers with friends together (Zeke and Spike; Bob and Rusty; Eddy, Pudge, and Basil). They pull white T-shirts, jockey strap, and sox from their bags and begin changing from their street clothes to their practice uniforms. Nick chats with different players. FRED and GORDON, a pair of African Americans, enter from the outside door. Mike, Cliff, and Richard come out from the equipment room. Mike and Cliff take lockers at the end of Zeke's row, and Richard chooses one near Zeke's.

FRED

Coach, have you got a place on the team for my cousin?

NICK

Fred, he's welcome to try out if he lives in Lofton.

FRED

He does. He's come to live with us. This is Gordon. He'll be a senior. Last year he was on the varsity at his school in Kansas City. I think he can help us have a winning season.

NICK

Anyone who can help us can make the team. What position do you play, Gordon?

GORDON

Mostly end, but sometimes I filled in at running back and ran back punts and kickoffs.

NICK

Your best chance is at right end. Both last year's starter and backup graduated.

FRED

It'd better be right end, Gordie. I don't want you competing with me for a place in the backfield.

Fred and Gordon go to the equipment room. ROGER, WALLY, HANK, and several others enter and move on to the equipment room. In a corner Mike and Cliff start putting on their uniforms and converse. Zeke and Richard overhear them.

MIKE

You know, Cliff, I liked it better as it was before when the colored weren't allowed to play.

CLIFF

Yeah, before Fred's old man, the Rev. Montgomery and Zeke's minister at the Methodist Church forced the league to let Negroes¹ play with us.

ZEKE

They did the right thing.

MIKE

They shouldn't have meddled.

RICHARD

You're wrong, Mike. It's only fair that if Negroes are drafted into the Army, they ought to be allowed to play football.

MIKE

I didn't know you like the colored people, Richard. Or can I call you Richie?

CLIFF

Don't let his mamma hear you. She insists on Richard for her sweet boy.

MIKE

There's going to be trouble if we get too many colored boys playing in the league.

¹ "Negro" is the preferred, polite term of the 1940s.

ZEKE

There doesn't have to be.

DOC, the trainer, small of size, arrives, carrying a black bag (full of first aid items). Players continue to put on their equipment and practice uniforms.

RUSTY

*Hey, Doc, what you got in your bag?
Your lunch?*

DOC

*Naw. Just the usual stuff of my trade:
tape, gauze, monkey blood, Ben Gay, a
couple of splints.*

BASIL

(To Eddy)

What's monkey blood?

EDDY

Mercurochrome.

DUTCH enters with STAN. JIRI, CHUCK, and PAT follow behind.

DUTCH

*Coach, I want you to meet Stanislaw
Krasinski². He's from Poland. His*

² Pronounced "Stanislav Krashinski".

family escaped from the Nazis. They're staying with us on our farm. Stan is enrolling in the 11th grade and wants to play American sports.

NICK

Everyone's welcome to try out for the team. Do you speak English, Stan?

STAN

Tak, I mean yes, I do.

DUTCH

I think he should try out for guard. I'll teach him the plays and the tricks of the position.

NICK

Dutch, aren't you afraid he'll beat you out? He's bigger than you.

DUTCH

He's welcome to try.

Dutch and Stan go to the equipment room. Nick follows them. Pat, Chuck, and Jiri remain behind to claim their lockers.

PAT

Gee, Chuck, I has hoping that the kraut wouldn't want to play this year.

CHUCK

Me, too, Pat. We don't need a Nazi sympathizer on our team.

JIRI

What do you mean, Nazi?

CHUCK

He's German, isn't he, Jiri³? Dietrich Lutz.

JIRI

That's right. I forgot that.

ZEKE

Oh, come on. Dutch is from a Mennonite family. His ancestors have been in this country for 200 years. Jiri, how long has your family, the Janaceks,⁴ been here?

JIRI

That's beside the point.

³ Pronounced "Yiri".

⁴ Pronounced "Yana-chek".

PAT

Yeah, but Dutch's brother is a draft dodger.

ZEKE

He's a conscientious objector. The Mennonites are pacifists.

CHUCK

Then Dietrich shouldn't be playing football.

Chuck, Jiri, and Pat go into the equipment room. By now Bob and Rusty are fully dressed for practice. Bob wanders around.

BOB

Where are Ray and Tom?

SPIKE

Haven't you heard? Ray joined the Navy in July. And Tom's dad took a job at a California shipyard and moved his family out there.

BOB

That's going to be tough on us. They were starters at center and fullback last year and our linebackers on defense. We need their experience.

ZEKE

We'll have to do without them. But we've got other talent to take their place. Richard was a good center on the JV last year, and Hank had playing time last year as a blocking back.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

BILLY and LEFTY, a pair of sophomores, approach the locker room entrance. Billy is big for his age and athletic looking. Lefty is medium height and wiry.

LEFTY

This is a waste of time, Billy. You know Nick told sophomores to wait until this afternoon to report.

BILLY

I think he'll make an exception for us, Lefty, since we did so well as ninth graders on the junior varsity last year.

LEFTY

I don't want to start the season on Coach's bad side. I'm not going in.

BILLY

He'll be glad to see me.

Billy opens the door and walks in.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

Billy enters.

BILLY

Here I am! Ready to get suited up.

NICK

Billy, I thought you knew that sophomores aren't suppose to show up until the afternoon practice.

BILLY

Since I'm going to be on the varsity this year, I thought I should start practicing with these guys from the very beginning.

NICK

You'll be on the varsity if you play well and comply with my rules. See you this afternoon, Billy.

BILLY

Ah, Nick, let me suit up now.

NICK

You heard what I said.

Rusty and Pudge move behind Billy, pick him up, and carry him to the door as he unsuccessfully tries to get free.

RUSTY

See you this afternoon, Billy.

BILLY

*Isn't anyone going to help me? Eddy?
Zeke?*

EDDY

You ain't worth saving, kid.

ZEKE

You know the rules, Billy.

Rusty and Pudge deposit Billy outside the locker room as the players roar in laughter.

NICK

*I want to see everyone on the field in
fifteen minutes to start warm up
exercises.*

BOB

Let's go get 'em!

Amid cheers, players who are dressed for practice stream outside.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

Granddad, how come your teammates didn't work out first in the weight room?

GRANDDAD

We didn't have weight rooms in those days, Scott. The guys got in shape through their summer jobs. I lifted lots of boxes at my dad's hardware store. And beginning around August 1st, I ran two miles every evening to build up my wind.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are on the field, loosening up before the coaches emerge. Spike is running around catching Zeke's passes. Cliff is throwing to Mike and Chuck as they go down for passes. Fred and Gordon are tossing a ball back and forth. In pairs Bob and Rusty, Jiri and Roger are banging one another with practice blocks. Dutch is teaching Stan to block. Richard is practicing centering to Pat. Others are similarly

engaged except that Eddy, Pudge, Basil, and Hank are standing around, talking and laughing.

CUT TO:

EXT - THE STANDS -DAY

Billy and Lefty are in the stands looking on.

BILLY

Look how lazy Eddy is. He'd better watch out 'coz I'm going to beat him out for the tailback spot.

LEFTY

He's pretty good.

BILLY

I'm even better. And Lefty you ought to be able to take the quarterback spot away from Zeke. You're a better passer.

CUT TO Zeke throwing as Billy speaks, then back to Lefty.

LEFTY

Naw, I'm shooting to replace Cliff as backup quarterback. Then I can start next year after Zeke graduates.

CUT TO Cliff throwing as Lefty speaks, then back to Billy.

BILLY

I'm going to be a starter this year.

CUT TO;

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The three coaches come out and assemble the team into rows to prepare for calisthenics. Nick gets Bob and Zeke to help him lead. Nick starts the jumping jack then eases off as the players continue. Show montage of jumping jack; knee-bend, jack-knife; legs spread touching opposite toes with hands; sit-ups; push-ups; running in place circling the arms; duck waddle. Sweat streams down their faces. Dave and Hal, the assistant coaches, stroll among the players, offering encouragement and goading the slackers.

NICK

Now around the track.

Zeke and Bob lead the players to the cinder track around the football field. Soon the backs and ends are in the lead and linemen are lagging behind. After 100 yards Gordon has opened a sizable lead. Eddy and Fred are running together behind several other backs.

EDDY

Haven't you told your cousin that we don't overdo? Nick will expect all of us to run that fast.

FRED

Don't worry. Gordie's a sprinter. He won't last.

At the far side of the track Gordon slows down, clutching his side, and Hank, Zeke, Pat, and Cliff catch up with him. As they round the final curve, Bob, Rusty, Richard, and Dutch are in the middle of the pack. Pudge, Stan, Jiri, and Roger are 30 yards behind the leaders. Basil is last of all.

NICK

Now that you're warmed up, we'll do some sprints. Go to the end zone and divide into three groups: backs, ends, and linemen.

BASIL

What about me?

NICK

You can join the backs.

Show a montage of the players dividing into the three groups and racing. Dave serves as starter at the goal line. Nick with a stopwatch and Hal are at the forty yard line judging the winners. Doc watches them. Players from each group stand in upright position at the goal line. Dave barks, "Ready, set, go."

Among the backs Eddy goes all out and wins with Fred close at his heels. Zeke, Hank, and Pat contest for third until Hank falters in the last five

yards, and Zeke and Pat tie. Cliff is sixth followed by other backfield candidates. Basil trips and falls at the 20 yard line and gives up.

Among the ends Gordon easily wins. Chuck edges out Mike for second, and Spike is fourth. Others bring up the rear.

When the linemen run, Dutch, Richard, and Bob are bunched together with Dutch winning with a last burst of speed. Roger, Jiri, Stan, and Wally are next. Pudge and a couple of other tackle candidates give out at the 30 yard line and coast the final ten yards.

When the top four finishers in each group run to see who is the fastest man, Gordon is an easy winner over Eddy. Fred beats Chuck in the battle for third place. Zeke and Mike are in a virtual tie for fifth.

DOC

And the winner is Flash Gordon!

Nick gathers the players around him.

NICK

The rest of the morning we're going to work on fundamentals of blocking and tackling.

FLASH (aka Gordon)

(To Fred)

Freddy, when are we going to start playing football?

FRED

This is the beginning of football, Lofton style, Gordie.

In a montage of action, Dave and Hal demonstrate different offensive and defensive stands and various kinds of blocks. Players pair off by position and block one another: guards on guards, tackles on tackles, and so forth. Among the ends Mike has the greatest knack, and Flash is most inept. Hank and other prospective fullbacks knock against one another zestfully. In contrast halfback and quarterbacks block each other halfheartedly until Nick comes over and glowers at them.

For tackling practice Nick sets up three lines of linemen. Backs and ends run through carrying a ball at half-speed and are tackled by each lineman in turn. The backs and ends take their place at the end of the line and have a turn at tackling.

Nick looks at his wristwatch.

NICK

I can see most of you have lots more to learn, but that's enough for now. Once more around the track. Then I'll see you again at four this afternoon.

The players groan but dutifully jog around the track. Neither Flash nor any others have any ambition to show off their speed. After their lap they walk slowly to the locker room.

FLASH

This guy's a tough dude. We never worked this hard in K.C.

FRED

That's why he always has a winning team.

Zeke comes up to Fred and Flash.

ZEKE

Glad to have you with us, Flash. You've got good speed. I hope you can catch, block, and tackle as well.

FLASH

I've got good hands.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A bunch of sophomores are milling around the entrance to the locker room with Billy and Lefty closest to the door. They include DON and SAM, JOE and NATE (a pair of African Americans), and some others.

BILLY

Why are they making us wait so long?

LEFTY

It's almost three. Then they'll let us in.

Dave opens the door, and the prospects push there way in.

CUT TO:

INT - LOCKER ROOM

Billy is first to reach the equipment room where Hal is stationed, then joined by Dave. Don and Sam are next in line.

BILLY

I want number 36, Hal. That was Brad Henderson's number.

DON

Billy, you think you're as good as Brad? He was all-state two years ago when Lofton was undefeated.

SAM

And now he's starring at the Naval Academy.

HAL

We're retired 36 in Brad's honor.

BILLY

Well then since I'm going to be twice as good as Brad, give me number 72.

HAL

If you're half as good, I'll be satisfied.

Hal gives Billy number 18.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

A montage of: opening calisthenics with sophomores joining the juniors and seniors; the sophomores running a lap with Billy not exerting himself; Billy easily winning the sprint; Hal working with sophomores on blocking and tackling drills; Nick working with backs and ends on ball handling; Dave teaching linemen combination blocks and other fine points of line play. Finally Nick whistles them to the center of the field.

NICK

That's enough for today. You've worked hard, so you can skip the final lap. It's going to be hot tomorrow so we'll start the morning practice at eight o'clock.

CUT TO:

INT - KITCHEN OF PARKER HOUSE

Zeke enters, looking bushed. Laura is helping Mom with the dishes, but they've save a plate of food for Zeke. Dad is listening to the evening news on the radio.

DAD

Hi, Son. How was practice?

ZEKE

Great!

MOM

You look exhausted.

ZEKE

I'm a little tired.

Zeke flops into a chair at the kitchen table and starts eating. The newscaster reports that U.S. and French troops have forced the Germans out of Marseille and troops are patrolling all the streets of Paris to be certain there are no Germans left.

MOM

I wish we knew where Clyde is now.

DAD

From what the evening paper says, his unit helped liberate Paris last Friday.

MOM

I hope he's all right.

ZEKE

If I know Clyde, he borrowed a trombone somewhere and marched with a band along the Champs Elysees.

MOM

You're always such an optimist, Paul.

LAURA

I suppose you think your team is going to be league champ.

ZEKE

We have a good chance. You think we don't?

LAURA

You might if guys in my class get a chance to play.

ZEKE

Like who? Lefty and Joe? Don and Sam? Billy?

LAURA

Billy's good, but he's too stuck up.

Dad smiles in amusement, and Zeke digs into his food.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players are getting into their pads and uniforms. Many are stiff and sore, groaning and complaining.

HANK

I can't understand why I ache all over this morning. All summer I've worked hard on the farm from dawn to dusk.

EDDY

I know what you mean. I've played baseball nearly every day since school was out. I oughta be in great shape for football.

DOC

Don't you guys know? Each activity, each sport has its own set of muscles.

BOB

Thank you, Doctor.

Bob throws a wet towel at Doc.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are in rows at one end of the field completing their calisthenics. Nick blows his whistle.

NICK

Gather in. We'll save our lap around the

*track till the end of practice. I have
some things to say to you.*

The players gathering around Nick.

NICK

*We have a long, tough schedule ahead of
us, but I know we'll do well. Sure, the
majority of last year's starters graduated,
and Ray and Tom, who we expected to
return as linebackers, have left town.
But as I look around, I see lots of talent.
You'll all have a fair chance.*

FRED

(To Flash)

Gordie, that applies to you.

FLASH

We'll see about that.

NICK

*We've had a winning season every year
since I've been at Lofton High. We're
going to have a winning season this year.*

EDDY

We'll be the champs.

NICK

You may ask, what makes a winning team? It requires each of you to develop your skills to the utmost. That means hard work. You may not like these twice a day workouts while your classmates are enjoying their last week of summer vacation...

PUDGE

(To someone nearby)

That's for sure.

NICK

...But you'll be glad for the conditioning once regular games begin. Isn't that right, Spike?

SPIKE

Whatever you say, Nick.

NICK

A winning team requires teamwork.

As he continues, Nick looks directly first at Eddy, then Billy.

NICK (Cont.)

As a matter of fact, if I had a choice between mediocre players who played

well together and a bunch of brilliant players each seeking his own glory, I would take the less talented ones.

Teamwork is founded on loyalty. Loyalty to one another. Loyalty to your coaches. The coaches loyalty to you.

You come from many different backgrounds. You are part of different social groups at school. You sophomores are just coming together from the two junior high schools. But on the field and in the locker room I expect you to be like one big, happy family.

RUSTY

Like me and my brother, Bob.

Rusty gives Bob a brotherly nudge.

NICK

So even as you go hard at one another in scrimmage and compete for the eleven positions on the team, never lose sight of the fact that we're all united in the quest to be a winning team.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

How come only eleven positions? We have 22 on our team: eleven on offense, eleven on defense.

GRANDDAD

In our day we all played both ways.

SCOTT

Gee, how could you do that?

GRANDDAD

We were tough!

CUT BACK TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

NICK

Now this morning I want all prospective passers, backs, ends, and centers to stay with go with Hal and me at the this end of the field for passing drills. Guards and tackles go to the far end with Dave to continue working on blocking and tackling. This afternoon we'll divide up into teams. O.K., let's go.

As they start assembling for passing drill, Zeke takes Spike aside.

ZEKE

Spike, with your experience you're a leadpipe cinch to be left end.

SPIKE

That's what I expect.

ZEKE

Maybe a little slow, but surehanded.

SPIKE

And deceptive!

ZEKE

It'll be interesting to see who wins out as right end. I thought it was going to be a contest between Mike and Chuck, coming off good years as JV ends last year. But this Flash Gordon looks pretty sharp.

SPIKE

He's fast. But can he catch?

ZEKE

We'll soon find out.

As the passers and receivers gather, Mike approaches Cliff.

MIKE

Cliff, buddy, I hope you'll make me look good, and those colored boys look bad.

CLIFF

I'll do what I can.

Show montage of the practice, especially the passing. Zeke and Cliff take snaps from Richard and throw mostly to upperclassmen but Nick lets Billy join them. Lefty and a couple other sophomores take snaps from Wally and have mostly sophomores as receivers. For each group the receivers form two lines, right and left, alternating between them. The passers stand three yards between the centers and call directions for each receiver: slant across the middle, down and out, buttonhook, in the flat, deep and in. They call for the ball with "ready, set, hike."

Spike is sure-handed and reaches high for balls. Eddy has good moves, Billy not quite as good. Fred has a knack for catching balls thrown low or behind him. The three main competitors for right end eye one another apprehensively. Flash shows his speed and has good hands, Mike displays fancy footwork, and Chuck makes difficult catches. On one toss Cliff deliberately throws low to Fred, who grabs it at his shoe top. On another toss Cliff throws behind flash.

NICK

Cliff, you've got to learn to adjust to a speedy receiver.

Billy approaches Nick.

BILLY

How about me throwing some, Nick?
When Brad was tailback, he was the chief
passer.

NICK

Not today, Billy, but I'll give you a chance
later in the week.

After a few more passes, Nick calls the players together for another
round of tackling practice. Show brief montage of tackling. Then
Nick assembles the players again in a circle.

NICK

We're going to divide into teams this
afternoon and start running some plays.
During the midday break Dave, Hal, and I
will figure out team assignments. They'll
be posted when you return at four o'clock.

On your way out this morning, pick up
your playbooks from Dave. Look
especially at plays from short punt
formation. That's what we'll start with
today. Later in the week we'll try some
double wing plays and then work from
T-formation.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

Players in street clothes are looking over list of teams posted on bulletin board. Zeke and Spike walk toward their lockers.

SPIKE

It's about what I expected.

ZEKE

Yeah, for now. But I think that right end still isn't settled.

SPIKE

We'll see.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are entering the field for afternoon practice. Fred and Flash walk together.

FLASH

You were wrong, Freddy. I told you your coach wouldn't give me a chance. I know I'm better than Mike at right end.

FRED

You're new here, Gordie. You've got to prove your stuff in scrimmage. Hang in there. You can be a starter.

The players gather on the sidelines near the 50 yard line. The coaches are on the field.

NICK

I want the first team to line up on the 50 in short punt.

EDDY

Yeah. Let's go.

RUSTY

Charge!

The first team players charge onto the field and take their positions: Spike at left end, Pudge left tackle, Dutch left guard, Richard center, Bob right guard, Rusty right tackle, Mike right end, Hank fullback (blocking back in short punt), Fred right halfback, Eddy tailback, and Zeke quarterback.

NICK

Now I want the second team opposite of them in defensive position. The rest of you can watch the ones playing your position to get an idea of what you're supposed to do.

The second team players charge out to their positions with a six man line of Chuck left end, Jiri left tackle, Joe left guard, Don and Sam standing together at right guard, Roger at right tackle, and Flash at

right end. Linebackers are Wally (center on offense) and Nate (fullback). Pat and Cliff are defensive halfbacks (cornerbacks), and Billy is deeper in the center as safety.

ROGER

(To Don and Sam)

Are we going to have two right guards?

DON

Nick wants us to alternate.

Wally edges up to Richard.

WALLY

Enjoy your day with the first squad,
Richard. I expect to displace you by the
end of the week.

To everyone's amazement Richard growls at Wally, half in fun, half serious.

PUDGE

That's what we need! A tough bulldog
in the center.

RUSTY

Attaway to go, Bulldog.

NICK

Okay, I want the first squad to run through some plays at half speed with light blocking. Defenders yield some with the blocks and no tackling.

The first team huddles.

ZEKE

Let's start with 36 on two.

Zeke claps his hands, and the team breaks huddle. Linemen crouch in position. Backs stand with hands on their knees.

ZEKE (Cont.)

Ready. Set. Hike. One, two, three.

On "two" Bulldog (aka Richard) centers the ball to Eddy. Others make light blocks to clear the way for an off tackle run to the right.⁵

Show a montage of the first team going through other running plays from short punt, with a few mix ups and an occasional fumble. After a while the second team goes on offense with Nate as blocking back, Fred right halfback, Billy tailback, and Cliff quarterback. They make more mistakes than the first team. As challengers Billy and Pat strut more than Eddy and Fred, and some of the second team linemen block aggressively until Nick admonishes them.

NICK

⁵ The author can supply a playbook for this and other plays.

Save the rough stuff for a real scrimmage.

After a while Nick brings all the players together.

NICK

*You're off to a good start, fellows.
Tomorrow morning we'll get into double
wing plays. In the afternoon we'll work
from T-formation. So study your
playbooks tonight. On Thursday we'll
mix them together in our first
scrimmage.*

*It's been such an easy workout this
afternoon, two laps around the track and
into the showers.*

The players moan but obediently head for the cinder track.

CUT TO:

EXT - CURBSIDE AT ZEKE'S HOUSE - DAY

Zeke climbs into Spike's pickup.

SPIKE

*Zeke, it's the day we've been waiting for.
Our first scrimmage.*

ZEKE

We're ready for it.

SPIKE

Yeah, it'll be the first test of how good we're going to be.

ZEKE

Winners, that's for sure.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Show montage of the scrimmage. The first team starts from its own 20 and runs plays from the three sets: short punt, double wing, T-formation. Eddy is a proficient runner, cuts back well. Fred does well, too. Zeke hits Spike and Mike on a couple of short passes. Eddy makes a touchdown with a ten yard run off tackle to the right, eluding Billy at the goal line. In the end zone Eddy tosses the ball to Billy.

EDDY

It's your turn, Billy Boy. Let's see what you can do.

BILLY

You'll never stop me.

The second team runs a series of plays with Don and Sam alternating at right guard. Billy is a good runner but doesn't get as good lead blocks as Eddy did. On the second team Flash especially is a poor blocker and can't handle Pudge, linebacker Hank, or even Spike on his

side of the line. On one play Eddy tackles Billy just as he seems to be free.

EDDY

It's a little different than JV, huh, kid?

BILLY

Lucky tackle. It'll never happen again.

After making a couple of first downs, the second team doesn't gain on two running plays. Cliff tries to pass to Flash, but Fred intercepts and is run out of bounds. The first team runs a few plays (with Mike dropping one pass he should have caught). On the three yard line, Wally moves from linebacker to center in a seven man line.

WALLY

(To Bulldog)

Okay, puppy dog, let's see if you can handle me.

On the play Bulldog drives Wally back as Hank plunges over center for a touchdown.

EDDY

Attaway to go, Hank the Tank.

Bob gives Wally a hand to help him up.

BOB

Never mess with a bulldog, Wally.

On their next possession the second team works the ball from their own 20 to their 45. On second and eight Cliff drops back to pass. Rusty comes crashing in and tackles him as he starts to throw. Cliff gets up holding his arm as Nick and Doc come running in.

CLIFF

I think it's broken.

Nick feels his arm gently.

NICK

I think you're right. Dave, will you drive Cliff to Dr. Sullivan's office? Doc can go with you.

Cliff, Dave, and Doc leave the field.

NICK

That's enough scrimmage for now. Each team can now go off on its own to run plays. Lefty, you take Cliff's place. And the third and fourth squads can find a spot to run through some plays.

As the teams go their separate ways, Flash seeks out Fred.

FLASH

Cousin, what's the idea of intercepting me? Trying to make me look bad?

FRED

This is football, cousin. To me you're the same as any other opponent.

The teams run plays on their own. After a while a scuffle breaks out between Don and Sam on the second team. They start throwing punches at one another.

ROGER

Fight! Fight!

Players come running from all over the field to watch the fight. Nick and Hal come up, push their way through the crowd, and each grab one of the combatants.

NICK

What's this all about?

SAM

This Pershing prissy pushed me.

DON

This Lindbergh lollipop shoved me.

NICK

(Laughing)

So it's junior high stuff. It's time for you to grow up. You're playing for Lofton High now. We're all one team. Look at Bob and Rusty. They're best friends

even though Bob went to Lindbergh Junior High and Rusty went to Pershing.

RUSTY

It's the other way around.

NICK

See what I mean. It's so unimportant that I don't even remember where you attended junior high.

ZEKE

(To Spike)

He knows. Nick knows everything about everyone of us.

NICK

We're not having any fighting on this team. Don and Sam, you can cool off by sitting on benches on the opposite sides of the field for the rest of this morning's practice. Stanislaw, do you think you know the plays well enough to join the second team?

STAN

I think so.

WALLY

I'll help you. I played guard last year.

DUTCH

Nice going, Stan.

As the players leave to reassemble their teams, Basil approaches Nick.

BASIL

When are we going to have tryouts for kickers, Nick?

NICK

We'll get to that on Monday.

CUT TO:

EXT - IN FRONT OF MOVIE THEATER - EVENING (TWILIGHT)

The theater marquee indicates "In Society with Abbott and Costello". Zeke arrives with BARBARA, Spike with JOANNE. They are chatting amiably. The boys buy tickets. They go into the theater.

CUT TO:

INT - IN THE THEATER

On the screen is a newsreel of U.S. forces fighting the Germans in France near the German border. The foursome is seated with the girls in the middle. Zeke and Spike have fallen asleep. Barbara and Joanne look at one another and shrug.

CUT TO:

IN SPIKE'S CAR AT LIONS DEN DRIVE-IN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Spike is behind the wheel in front seat of his dad's car with Joanne next to him. Zeke and Barbara are in the back seat. A food tray is on the window next to Spike. They are eating hamburgers, french fries, and milk shakes.

BARBARA

Zeke, I hope you're not going to be tired like this all season.

ZEKE

No, we won't be, Barbara. Our dads insisted we work today, and we're a little pooped after twice a day practice.

SPIKE

The regular season will be easy by comparison. I promise you that, Joanne.

JOANNE

Spike, it better be.

Joanne pops a french fry into Spike's mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Hank, Nate, Billy, and Roger are gathered to compete for punter. Richard and Wally are there to center. Eddy, Fred, Zeke, and Pat are downfield to catch the kicks. Nick is standing behind the punters to observe. Other players are elsewhere on the field in blocking and tackling drills.

HANK

What're you doing here, Roger? You're a lineman. Are you trying to pirate my job?

ROGER

(Laughing heartedly)

Naw. I just want to get out of blocking drills. But I'll beat you out if I can.

HANK

I won't let you, Jolly Roger. And you, Billy?

BILLY

I'm going to be a triple threat: run, pass, and kick.

NICK

Okay, boys, let's go.

Richard and Wally alternate at center. Hank starts with a booming kick. Roger does almost as well. Nate squibs one off the side of his foot. Billy boots a short kick, end over end. In the next round Hank and Roger repeat their performance. Nate does a little better. Billy

fumbles the snap, picks up the ball, and kicks poorly.

NICK

That's enough for you, Billy. You can join the receivers now.

BILLY

I know I can kick better than I did.

NICK

You can try again next year.

As Billy joins the receivers, Eddy greets him.

EDDY

Kid, I've seen a wounded quail fly better than your kicks.

BILLY

Watch your lip.

Billy clenches his fist, almost cocks his arm, thinks better of it, and takes his position to receive punts. Hank, Roger, and Nate each kick once more.

NICK

Good work, Hank. You've got the job. You did all right, too, Roger. You'll be backup. Keep working at it, Nate. We may need you before the season is over.

On kickoffs Hank does best. Jolly (aka Roger) is less successful. Basil tries but can't get much distance. Wally gives it a try, but Nate proves to be second best to Hank on kickoffs.

Zeke holds for the point-after-touchdown competition with Richard and Wally alternating at center. With Eddy cheering him on, Basil hits four out of five. Hank and Nate try but lack the touch. Wally takes a turn kicking and is better than the two backs but not as good as Basil.

NICK

I wouldn't have thought it, Basil, but you're pretty good.

BASIL

Thanks, Nick.

NICK

Do you have to wear your glasses?

BASIL

I can't see without them.

NICK

Then we'll have to devise some kind of protective mask.

BASIL

Maybe I can borrow Pudge's catcher's

mask.

NICK

No, that won't do. I'll ask Jim Dugan in industrial arts to make something for you.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

Granddad, how come none of the Lofton players wore faceguards? We're required to wear them.

GRANDDAD

Nobody did in the '40s. Faceguards came in later.

SCOTT

Why didn't Basil wear contacts?

GRANDDAD

They hadn't been invented, either.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Basil is walking upfield with Nick.

BASIL

Coach, now that I've had my tryout, may I skip the rest of this morning's practice. I'd like to join the band for the Labor Day parade. I'll be my last chance to be in the marching band.

NICK

Sure. Actually I'm going to cut practice short this morning in case anyone wants to join one of the craft groups in the parade. But we've got passing practice first. You may leave now if you want.

BASIL

Thanks, Nick.

CUT TO ends and backs lined up for passing practice with Zeke and Lefty taking turns throwing to first and second team backs and ends. A couple sophomores passers are throwing to others. Nick is watching. After Billy takes one turn as a receiver, he approaches Nick.

BILLY

Nick, you promised me a chance to throw some.

NICK

Go ahead. Let's see what you can do.

Billy throws several passes hard but wild, sometimes behind the

receiver, sometimes too far ahead or too high. Zeke and Lefty watch with amusement. Eddy comes up.

EDDY

Kid, let me show you how a tailback should throw.

Eddy's throws are more accurate but without much zip. His longer throws wobble. Spike pantomimes a shotgun shooting at them. Nick laughs.

NICK

You guys better stick to the running game.

ZEKE

Lefty, I think we can sleep easy tonight.

LEFTY

We sure can.

Billy sulks off, but Eddy is nonchalant about it. Zeke completes the session with a tight spiral to Spike deep and in.

As the players start leaving the field, Dutch approaches Flash.

DUTCH

Flash, Stan is staying out a while to work

on his blocking. Would you like to join us?

FLASH

I guess I better. Nick seems to expect ends to be blockers, too.

DUTCH

Why don't you get Joe to work with us?

FLASH

Okay. Hey, Joe. Come over here.

All the other players leave the field as Dutch instructs Stan and Flash how to block better with Joe serving as defender. Nick notices this as he leaves the field.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players are getting dressed for practice.

PUDGE

*Boy, I'm glad school has finally started.
No more twice a day practices.*

EDDY

Who did you get for English?

PUDGE

Miss Simpson.

EDDY

You'll be sorry. I had her last year, and she's tough.

SPIKE

I hope no one's taking world history from Mr. Morris. He doesn't like football players.

RUSTY

Oh no! Why didn't somebody warn me? Bob and Bulldog are in the class, too.

FLASH

Aren't there any easy courses in this school?

RICHARD

Chemistry with Mr. Weaver is not bad. He used to play football,

FLASH

I wish I'd known that. I love science.

ZEKE

Bob, I heard you're taking Spanish.

BOB

No me llamo Bob. Me llamo Roberto.⁶

BASIL

Mucho gusto, Roberto!⁷

RUSTY

I didn't know you spoke Spanish, Basil.

EDDY

He knows everything. He's all A's.

SPIKE

Along with Zeke and Bulldog.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are gathered around Nick. They are sweaty and dirty.

NICK

The last thing I want to do today is to practice fumble recovers. Bob, show 'em how it's done.

ROBERTO (aka Bob)

⁶ "I'm not Bob. My name is Roberto."

⁷ "Please to meet you."

No me llamo Bob. Me llamo Roberto.

NICK

*No me importa lo que te llamem en el
clasa español. Todavía eres Bob para
mí.⁸*

FLASH

(To Eddy)

Nick knows everything, too.

EDDY

You're catching on.

*Nick rolls a ball out. Roberto pounces on it, grasps it to his chest with
both arms, brings his legs up into a fetal position.*

*Show a brief montage of other players recovering fumbles, not all of
them successfully. Hal hands Nick a clipboard.*

NICK

*Now we're going to divide into teams for
Friday night's intrasquad game. We're
mixing players from the first and second
teams into units of equal strength and
experience.*

Wearing gold jerseys the line will consist

⁸"I don't care what they call you in Spanish class. You're still Bob to
me."

of Spike, Jiri, Dutch, Wally, Stan, Rusty,
and Flash. In the backfield will be Nate,
Fred, Billy, and Zeke.

ZEKE

(Under his breath to Spike)

Oh no, I'm stuck with Billy.

NICK

The white team will have Chuck, Pudge,
Joe, Bulldog, Bob, Jolly Roger, and Mike
on the line, and Hank, Pat, Eddy, and
Lefty in the backfield.

These two units can work together at
Thursday's practice so as you can get used
to one another.

As they break up, Nick seeks out Zeke.

NICK

Zeke, I'd like to see you in my office in a
few minutes.

ZEKE

Whatever you say.

CUT TO:

INT - NICK'S OFFICE

Nick is behind a desk. Zeke is seated in front.

NICK

Zeke, I know you're not happy having Billy on your team.

ZEKE

What makes you think so?

NICK

I could see it in your eyes when I announced the team. But whether you like him personally, he's your teammate. Furthermore, you're the team leader on the field. It's your job to get your team working effectively as a unit.

ZEKE

I'll try.

NICK

I know Billy's brash, but you've got to remember that he just turned 15 this summer. He's inexperienced and has a lot to learn. You can help him.

ZEKE

I doubt that he'll listen to me.

NICK

*He will if you approach him as a friend,
not an adversary.*

ZEKE

I'll do what I can.

NICK

*This is important to me and to the whole
team because Billy's our running back of
the future.*

ZEKE

Not this year?

NICK

*No, he's not ready yet. If you're afraid
that helping him will enable him to
displace Eddy, you needn't worry.*

ZEKE

I heard Billy ran a faster 40 than Eddy.

NICK

*That's true, but Eddy knows many more
tricks of the trade, both as a tailback and
a safety.*

ZEKE

I'll do whatever you say, Nick.

Jiri enters Coach's office.

JIRI

May I talk to you, Nick?

NICK

Sure.

JIRI

Privately.

NICK

*I doubt that you have anything to say
that you can't say in front of Zeke.*

JIRI

*I'm not sure of that, but -- oh heck -- I
might as well.*

Jiri sprawls in a chair.

JIRI (Cont.)

*The thing is, Nick, I don't want to play
next to Dutch.*

NICK

What's the problem?

JIRI

He's German, and his people have occupied my parents' homeland, Czechoslovakia.

NICK

He may be of German descent, but he's thoroughly American.

JIRI

But his brother is a draft dodger, and I bet Dutch will be, too. They're cowards.

NICK

Dutch's brother is back east performing alternative service at a hospital where he has allowed himself to be infected with a tropical disease to help doctors find a cure. He's no coward.

ZEKE

I didn't know that.

NICK

And Dutch is courageous, too. He's the first from the Mennonite community to play football. His family and the church elders opposed him, but he came out anyhow because he likes sports. Jiri, you couldn't have a better teammate.

JIRI

Couldn't I play on the other side of the line or on the white team?

NICK

I make team assignments. If you don't want to play, I've got several promising tackles to take your place.

ZEKE

Jiri, we want you on the gold team.

JIRI

I'll have to think about it.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

The teams are ready to start the intrasquad game under field lights. There are three referees, two volunteers on the yardage chains, and another on the down sign. A small crowd has gathered in the stands. Hal and Dave are coaching the two teams from the sidelines. Nick is in the press box watching and taking notes as play progresses. Nate is preparing to kick off for the gold team. Jiri is lined up next to Dutch. The white team is spread out to receive with Eddy standing on the 10 yard line. The referee blows his whistle to start play. From the gold 40 Nate kicks a short kickoff that Eddy fields on the 20 and returns to the 35.

Show a montage of play action, including friendly matchups of the guards and tackles: Roberto versus Dutch, Rusty versus Pudge, Stan versus Joe, and Roger versus Jiri. Show: Eddy running off tackle; Pat going the other way; Hank plunging up the middle; Eddy trying to sweep around end; with down marker showing 3rd and 8 Lefty overthrowing a pass to Chuck; Hank punting; Billy fielding the punt deep in gold territory and making 15 yards on the runback.

The gold team huddles.

ZEKE

Short punt 36 on two.

(Clapping hands)

Let's go!

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

Granddad, how come Zeke started with
36 every time.

As Granddad answers, GRANDMA comes in with the mail and places it on Granddad's desk.

GRANDDAD

First of all, it was a familiar play they
could execute well and settle their nerves.
Second, sending the tailback off-tackle to
the strong side, led by pulling linemen --

which 36 did -- has long been the most powerful running play in football. It was the foundation of the single wing. It carried over into short punt. It became a basic play of the T-formation. It's been a staple of many Superbowl winners.

GRANDMA

Paul, I don't see how you can be so rhapsodic about a football play.

GRANDDAD

Darling, every sport features a distinctive play that players use decade after decade. In basketball it's the pick-and-roll. In baseball it's the double play

SCOTT

Soccer has a pick-and-roll, too.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

The gold team lines up in short punt. Zeke gives the count: "Ready, set, hike, one, two." Wally centers the ball to Billy, who runs to the left as his interference goes right. Billy runs into Mike, who tackles him for a five yard loss. The gold team forms a new huddle.

ZEKE

You ran the wrong way, Billy. 36 goes
to the right.

BILLY

I got mixed up.

ZEKE

That's O.K. We all make mistakes.
We'll run the same play again, this time
on one.

This time Billy does it right and gains five yards. In this and subsequent plays Flash shows great improvement as a blocker. Show montage of several plays by gold: Fred making a gain; Zeke hitting Spike with a pass; Billy running again; Nate plunging; Zeke underthrowing Flash; then Nate punting. Eddy makes a strong return, and the white team moves down the field and scores as Eddy runs off tackle to the right from the 15, gets past the line of scrimmage, cuts back and eludes Billy to score. Basil wearing a white jersey kicks the extra point and celebrates his first success in a game.

Billy returns Hank's kickoff fifteen yards. Show a quick montage of several plays (including Flash catching a pass and running well) until the gold team is on the white 5 with second and goal. From short punt Zeke hands the ball to Fred on a reverse off tackle to left and Fred scores. Basil comes out with a gold jersey. Wally's snap is high. By the time Zeke places the football on the ground for Basil to kick, Bulldog comes charging in, blocks the kick, and levels Basil. Zeke gives Basil a hand to help him up.

ZEKE

Welcome to tackle football, Basil.

Show the final play of the half with white running the ball as the linesman sounds his gun. As they players leave the field the scoreboard shows: White 7, Gold 6. In the locker room Nick addresses the players.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players are resting on benches.

NICK

From where I was sitting I saw some good playing and some bad. For the most part you know your plays, though I saw several lineman who tried to block the wrong man. Everyone must know his assignment on every play.

I saw some half-hearted blocking. If you want to play for the Lions, you've got to block hard. And I saw too many missed tackles. But you're off to a good start. In the second half play hard, execute well, and have fun.

To receive the second half kickoff the gold team has both Billy and Fred back deep. Hank's kickoff goes to Fred, who makes a 20 yard return.

After several plays the gold team has the ball near the white 40. Billy gets the ball off tackle to the right. Behind good blocking he gets through the line of scrimmage and cuts to the outside. Ahead is Eddy playing safety. As Billy fakes left and then right to get around Eddy, Pat, playing defensive halfback on the other side, comes across and clobbers Billy. As he goes down, Billy fumbles the ball, which rolls out of bounds. Billy lies breathless on the ground. Doc and Hal rush out, and determine that Billy has the wind knocked out of him. Doc straddles Billy, grabs his belt, and lifts him up and down to help get him breathing normally again. Billy is helped to the sideline. On the field Fred shifts to tailback, and a substitute comes in to play right halfback.

As play resumes, the gold teams continues its march down the field and scores with a pass over the middle from Zeke to Spike. Basil wearing a gold jersey makes the extra point.

The scoreboard shows white 7, gold 13, fourth quarter. The white team has the ball. Billy is playing again, now as safety on defense. Hank scores for the white team with a three yard plunge. Basil, wearing a white jersey, is wide with the extra point. Cut to the gold team in possession with Zeke throwing and missing Spike on a long pass down the sideline as the gun sounds, ending the game. Show final score on scoreboard: White 13, Gold 13. The players leave the field. Zeke and Spike are walking together and catch up with Billy and Lefty.

ZEKE

Good game, guys.

BILLY

You ain't see nothing left.

The pairs walk their separate ways.

SPIKE

That kid still has a lot to learn.

CUT TO:

INT - SHOWER ROOM

Eddy is showering near Pudge, Roberto, and Rusty. As Billy comes in, Eddy starts singing in a loud voice.

EDDY

(Singing)

I'll sing you a true song of Billy the Kid.

I'll sing of the terrible run that he did.

*Cut down by Pat Kelly who once was his
friend.*

*The young tailback's run now reached its
sad end.*

The players erupt in laughter. Billy flushes in anger, starts to go after Eddy, but thinks better of it. He storms out of the showers, hurries back to his locker, quickly dresses, and heads out of the locker room. As he passes the showers, he hears more singing amidst laughter.

SEVERAL VOICES v.o.

(Singing)

I'll sing you a true song of Billy the Kid.

I'll sing of the terrible run that he did.

CUT TO:

INT - MOVIE THEATER

Spike, Joanne, Barbara, and Zeke are watching a newsreel about U.S. tanks smashing through the Siegfried line. This time the boys are wide awake. The feature comes on with Bing Crosby in "Going My Way."

CUT TO:

INT - LIONS DEN RESTAURANT

The two couples are sitting in a booth at the Lions Den, eating hamburgers and french fries and drinking shakes.

SPIKE

And then Billy left without even taking a shower. I bet he's still mad at Eddy.

JOANNE

You boys aren't very nice to poor Billy.

ZEKE

What's the matter, Joannie? Got a crush on him?

JOANNE

I think he's cute.

CUT TO:

EXT - STEPS IN FRONT OF LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Students are on the front steps of Lofton High during the lunch break. Eddy, Pudge, Basil, Rusty, and Bob are standing half way up, telling jokes and laughing hilariously. Billy, Lefty, and a couple of girls walk by. Laura is standing not far away. Eddy starts whistling the "Billy the Kid" tune. Billy approaches him closely.

BILLY

Eddy, I'd settle this with you right now, once and for all, if you didn't have your bodyguards to protect you.

EDDY

I don't need bodyguards for dealing with twerps like you. But I'm not going to fight you and get suspended from the team and miss the opening game Friday night.

BILLY

Then I challenge you to a race. If I beat you, you'll have to apologize to me in front of the team and call me Fast Billy.

EDDY

A race it will be. In full football gear at the start of practice this afternoon.

BILLY

Agreed.

Billy strides off confidently with his group.

RUSTY

Eddy, you can't outrun him.

EDDY

I can beat him in a race. You'll see.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Eddy is one of the early arrivals on the field for practice. He performs a few warmup exercises, jogs a little, and runs at half speed. Billy comes on the field with Lefty and followed by several sophomores. Eddy comes up to him. Zeke and Bulldog are near by.

EDDY

I'm ready when you are.

BILLY

Any time. We'll start at the goal line and run to the 40.

EDDY

Only the 40? I thought you wanted a real race, kid. Let's go from goal line to goal line. Just like it is when I run back a kickoff for a touchdown.

BILLY

It's your funeral. I'll be out of sight in a hundred yards.

EDDY

We'll need a starter and a judge at the finish.

ZEKE

I'll volunteer as starter. And why don't you have Bulldog be the judge? You know he's fair.

EDDY

That's all right with me.

BILLY

Me, too.

Bulldog and several other players trot to the far goal line as Eddy, Billy, and Zeke go to the near goal line. Billy lays his helmet on the ground and kneels into a sprinter's crouch with his knuckles on the goal line.

EDDY

This isn't a track meet, kid. It's football.

We're running backs. Stand up on two feet and put your helmet on.

Billy stands up, puts on his helmet, and tightens the chin strap.

BILLY

I can whip you any way we start. And that's the last time you'll call me "kid".

Eddy and Billy stand like milers getting ready to race, Eddy on the left and Billy on the right. Zeke stands beside them on the goal line. Bulldog waves from the far end of the field. Unnoticed by the competitors, Nick comes through the gate and onto the field alongside the running track.

ZEKE

Go on hike. O.K., get ready. Set. Hike.

Eddy and Billy take off. Billy gets a faster start and gains an early lead. By the 30 yard line he is about two yards ahead of Eddy and begins drifting left in front of him. At the 50 Billy looks around to his left to see how far ahead he is, but he doesn't see Eddy because Eddy has shifted to his right and is starting to close. At the far 40 Billy looks to his right and breaks his stride. Eddy uses this opportunity to catch up by the 25. At the 10 Billy runs out of steam, and Eddy pulls ahead with a final sprint to win by a yard.

Eddy and Billy gasp for air, hands clutching their sides, and walk off separately. Zeke trots down to the finishing line. As he arrives, the two runners come back together.

EDDY

From now on, you can call me Fast Eddy.

BILLY

O.K., Fast Eddy. You can call me Slow Billy if you want, but please not Billy the Kid.

EDDY

No, you're not slow, Billy. You just challenged the wrong person. You're Wild Bill.

At the other end of the field Coach blows his whistle to assemble the players. Eddy puts his arm around Billy's shoulders as they walk together down the field.

CUT TO end of calisthenics as Coach gathers the players around him.

NICK

I'm proud of the way you played last Friday evening. The quarterbacks called a good mixture of plays. Running backs ran hard. Pass receivers ran good routes, and defenders did a pretty good job keeping up with them. Blocking was

better in the second half, but tackling needs improvement.

As a result of the intrasquad game, I'm making one change in team assignment. Flash, I'm promoting you to first team. I always knew you could catch passes and run with the ball. In the game I saw a lot of good, hard blocking. I know it's the result of extra practicing you did all week with Dutch, Stan, and Joe. You others can take a lesson from that.

I've already talked to Mike about this switch and told him that he'll get playing time. So will you, Chuck. The two of you will have your chance next year when Spike and Flash graduate.

Today I want teams to run through their plays. Then we'll have light contact work between team. Tuesday and Wednesday we'll have hard scrimmage, and then a light work out on Thursday. By then we should be ready for our opening game against Kepler.

The players disperse to form teams. As the first team assembles, Zeke offers his hand to Flash.

ZEKE

Congratulations, Flash. I'm glad you're on our team. Your speed should help us.

FLASH

Thanks a lot. I'll do my best.

EDDY

You're a welcome addition -- as long as you knock down the opposing players when I run the ball your way.

FLASH

I'll clear the way for you, Fast Eddy, if you do the same for me on end-arounds.

CUT TO:

INT - PARKER FAMILY KITCHEN

The Parkers -- Mom, Dad, Zeke, and Laura -- are having dinner at the dinette in the kitchen.

LAURA

How did the race come out, Paul?

ZEKE

What race?

LAURA

You know, the one between Billy and Eddy. Everybody in school knows they were going to race. And about the song Eddy sang in the shower.

ZEKE

Oh, that. Eddy won -- naturally.

LAURA

How come Eddy picks on Billy that way?

ZEKE

I thought you didn't like Billy?

LAURA

It's not that. I just don't think you seniors should pick on us sophomores.

ZEKE

Anyway they're friends now. Eddy invited Billy to go duck hunting with him and Pudge on Saturday.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are dirty from scrimmaging. From the second team's 20 yard line, the first team runs a double reverse from double wing with the ball going from Zeke to Fred to Eddy. Zeke as lead blocker levels

*Mike, the defense end, and Eddy races down the sideline to score.
Nick blows his whistle.*

NICK

*Good blocking and running. Zeke, if you
get a chance, you can run this play
against Kepler Friday night. O.K, that's
all for today.*

*As the players leave the field, a man with a suit and tie comes out of the
stands and approaches Nick.*

SPIKE

Who's that, Zeke?

ZEKE

I think it's Mike's old man.

Zeke and Spike walk within hearing distance of Nick and the visitor.

MIKE'S DAD

*You're favoring the colored boys. It's not
fair to those who grew up in this town.*

Nick's face reddens, but he remains calm.

NICK

*I'm sorry you feel that way, Mr. Nolan.
My job is to put the best team on the*

*field, not delve into race relations.
Mike's improved a lot since last year and
will get playing time. But Gordon has
proved to be even better.*

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

*Mike is taking off his jersey and shoulder pads. Zeke and Spike are
nearby.*

MIKE

*I wish my old man would stay out of this.
I can fight my own battle.*

SPIKE

*That's the way parents are sometimes. I
wish we could control them, but we can't.*

MIKE

You can say that again.

ZEKE

*Nick has dealt with this situation before.
He's polite but immovable.*

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

The student body of Lofton High is gathered for a pep rally. On stage the pep band is finishing a rousing fight song. Also on stage are cheerleaders led by MARY LOU, the first team plus Basil, and Nick. The cheerleaders lead the students in a chant.

MARY LOU

Let's hear it for the gold and white!

CHEERLEADERS AND

STUDENTS

Come on, gold!

Come on, white!

Lofton Lions,

Fight, fight, fight!

Roar! [as a lion]

MARY LOU

And now let's hear a few words Coach Nickerson.

NICK

As usual, we start a new season full of hope and high expectation. Our team has worked hard these past three weeks to master football fundamentals: blocking, tackling, running, passing, and kicking. Equally important they have developed a strong team spirit and an appreciation of one another's talents.

As we look toward to the kickoff of the game with Kepler tonight, we are prepared both physically and mentally. We can't predict what the season's outcome will be, but we know that each and every player will do his best.

Students applaud.

MARY LOU

And now to speak for the team, I call upon our nifty tailback, Eddy Foster.

The students cheers as Eddy comes forward.

EDDY

I'm proud to be able to speak for our team. As Coach says, we're ready. We are ready for Kepler and for all the teams in our league. I've got a great group of teammates. We're committed to bringing victory after victory to Lofton High.

We will run and pass our way down the field to score. We will stop our opponents from scoring. We will win because we are winners!

STUDENTS

Roar!

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players are putting on uniforms with fresh, white game jerseys for the Kepler game. They are serious and focused but with some nervous jocularity.

SPIKE

Zeke and I saw the Kepler players unloading from their bus. There are some big ones.

RUSTY

Yeah, I remember the tackle who played opposite me last year. He was strong. And I think he's back.

ROBERTO

You'll be able to handle him, muscleman.

DUTCH

O.K., Stan, who do you block on 36?

STAN

Pull to the right and double team with Fred on the end.

DUTCH

Right. What about 433?

STAN

I pull to my left and mousetrap their right guard.

DUTCH

Good!

EDDY

Billy, it's all right to be nervous. I was in my first game with the varsity when I was a sophomore.

BILLY

I just hope I remember all the plays.

ZEKE

You will.

*"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
for he today that sheds his blood with me shall
be my brother."*

STAN

What's this about blood shedding?

PUDGE

Oh, don't let Basil upset you. Last year in English literature, Miss Shepherd had the class memorize a lot of stuff from Shakespeare.

BASIL

Henry the 5th, Act IV, Scene 3.

NICK

Gather around, fellows.

The players crowd into one section of the locker room.

NICK (Cont.)

*As you go out onto the field to warm up
and prepare for the opening kickoff,
remember that you belong to the proud
tradition of the Lofton Lions. Remem-
ber what you've learned the past three
weeks. Each of you play your best.
And play*

*well as a team. Enjoy the game. O.K.,
let's go.*

The players roar as they leave the locker room.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

*From a short distance in the center of the field we see Eddy
representing Lofton for the coin toss, and a big lineman representing
Kepler. The referee tosses the coin in the air, and the captains look at
it on the ground. Eddy speaks and makes a motion to receive. The
Kepler captain points to one of the goals.*

CUT TO the teams lined up for the kickoff. As the Kepler kicker starts

running toward the ball, a snare drum sounds and a bass drum booms as his foot hits the ball. Eddy receives the ball on the 10 yard line and returns it past the 25.

The Lions huddle.

ZEKE

Nice run, Eddy. O.K. Let's start in short punt. Number 36. On two.

Zeke claps his hands, and the players take their positions. On "two" Bulldog snaps the ball to Eddy, who runs off tackle to the right for a five yard gain.

Show a montage of several plays as Lofton runs from short punt but bogs down at midfield. Hank punts. Kepler runs plays from T-formation but has to kick from just past the 50. Eddy makes a good return up the sideline. Zeke calls a double reverse for a big gain. Skip ahead to Eddy scoring off left tackle from the Kepler 8.

As Basil runs out on the field to try the extra point, band members cheer loudly. They include Barbara, who waves her flute as she cheers. As his kick sails through the upright, clarinets shriek, trumpets and trombones blare, cymbals clang, and the bass drum booms.

Show a brief montage of Kepler receiving Hank's kickoff, Kepler running from the T, the teams changing fields at the quarter. Continue a montage of plays with Lofton's second team players getting some action. Kepler has to kick. Lofton runs some plays then kicks. Kepler penetrates into Lions territory and scores with a quick opener

through Pudge's side of the Lofton line. On the extra point the snap bounces before reaching the holder, and Dutch bursts through to block the kick. Show scoreboard: Lofton, 7; Visitor, 6.

The Lofton second team backfield comes in to receive the kickoff, and Billy makes a good return. After a few plays the half ends. Eddy walks with Billy to the locker room.

EDDY

Nice running, Wild Bill.

BILLY

Thanks, Fast Eddy.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players are gathered around Nick, who stands at a blackboard and draws some of Kepler's T-formation plays.

NICK

Zeke, you've got the offense moving nicely, but our defense could be tighter. I didn't expect them to use the T exclusively. Guards and tackles, you've got to be alert for quick openings. If you find you've penetrated without being blocked, look out for a trap from the opposite side. Linebackers, keep your

eye on the ball and don't be fooled by the quarterback's fakes. And backs, be alert for quick passes over the center or into the flat.

We've got the lead. So keep up your strong play.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Show montage of Kepler running plays, then punting; Lofton stopped cold and punting. On the next series as the Kepler quarterback starts to lateral to a halfback going wide, Roberto penetrates, hits him, and cause the lateral to go astray. Flash pounces on the loose ball. Fred makes a good gain with a double wing reverse. From T-formation Zeke hits Spike over the middle for a touchdown. Basil makes the extra point.

Show montage of Kepler moving down field after the kickoff, scoring, and making the extra point. The scoreboard shows Lofton 14, Visitor 13.

Show montage of plays run by both sides with subs mixed in with regulars. Show Kepler in a drive with all starters on the field. They get the ball to first and goal at the Lofton 9.

ROBERTO

O.K., fellows. There's not much time left

in the game. Let's hold them.

Mary Lou and the other cheerleaders lead the Lofton crowd in the chant: "Hold that line! Hold that line!" On first down Pudge stops the Kepler halfback after a two yard gain. On second down the Kepler fullback plunges up the middle to the Lofton 3. On third down the Kepler fakes to the halfback and throws to an end in the corner, but Fred reaches out and blocks it. On fourth and goal from the 3, the Kepler fullback tries to dive over the pile at the line, but Hank dives at the same time. The linesman comes in and places the ball six inches from the goal. The Lofton crowd cheers. The referee signals first down for Lofton. As the chains are being set, Zeke hurries over to the linesman.

ZEKE

How much time is left in the game?

LINESMAN

I'll tell you when the game is over, Sonny.

The Lions huddle in the end zone.

ZEKE

The game's almost over. We don't want to risk a safety by a fumbling in the end zone. Hank, you've been kicking well. So let's punt it out of here.

Hank lines up deep in the end zone. Bulldog's snap is good, but the kick goes off the side of Hank's foot and out of bounds at the 25. The

Kepler quarterback passes to a halfback in front of Zeke, who forces him out of bounds at the ten. Then the quarterback hits an end at the goal line as Fred dives but misses deflecting the ball. The kicker makes the extra point. The score: Lofton 14, Visitor 20.

The Lions prepare to receive the kickoff with Eddy and Fred as deep receivers. The kick goes to Fred, who hands it to Eddy on a reverse, fooling some of the Kepler defenders. Eddy speeds along the sideline. The Kepler kicker is the last defender between Eddy and the goal line. As Eddy tries to cut sharply around the defender, he slips and falls near the 50.

Quickly the Lions line up without a huddle. From a double wing Zeke receives the snap and drops back to pass. Spike and Flash go down deep and out, Eddy deep up the middle with Fred and Hank blocking to protect Zeke. Zeke hits Spike on the Kepler 30, where he is immediately tackled. The gun sounds, ending the game.

The Lofton players shake hands perfunctorily with the Kepler team and drag themselves off the field. There is mostly silence in the locker room. Zeke sits morosely in front of his locker, half undressed. The coaches circulate among the players, praising things done well. Nick addresses all of them.

NICK

I know it's tough to lose a close game in the last minute. But these things happen. It'll hurt for a while. Then we'll put it behind us so that we can get ready for the league opener next week.

DOC

Cheer up, Zeke. It's not the end of the world. Just a momentary setback. And what about this Basil kid? Wasn't he great with those extra points?

ZEKE

Oh, shut up, Doc.

CUT TO:

INT - LIVING ROOM OF PARKER HOUSE

Two sections of the Lofton Herald are on the coffee table. The front page carries a headline: "FOUR JAP SHIPS SUNK BY ALLIES". The sports section indicates: "LAST MINUTE LOSS FOR LIONS - Kepler Prevails 20-14". Zeke is slouched in a chair reading Life magazine. His mother enters.

MOM

You're not going out tonight, Paul?

ZEKE

No, Barbara went out of town for her grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary.

MOM

Wouldn't you like to go to the movies anyway, rather than mope around here?

ZEKE

Who wants to see Harry Bendix in "The Harry Ape"?

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The Lofton players are dressing for practice. Nick comes up to Zeke.

NICK

Zeke, can I chat with you for a few minutes in my office before practice?

ZEKE

Sure.

CUT TO:

INT - COACH'S OFFICE

Nick is seated at his desk and Zeke on a chair in front.

NICK

Zeke, basically you called a good game against Kepler in your first full game as quarterback. You ran a good mixture of plays, and you had a good sense of field

position most of the time. However, you made a couple of serious mistakes toward the end of the game.

ZEKE

What were they?

NICK

As soon as Spike caught that last pass -- an excellent throw by the way -- you should've called time out. Then you would have time for one more play.

ZEKE

That didn't occur to me.

NICK

And before that you shouldn't have punted on first down after we stopped the last Kepler drive.

ZEKE

I thought the game was about over, but the linesman wouldn't tell me the time left.

NICK

That old geezer. He's always hard to get

along with. But that's no excuse for punting.

ZEKE

With a one point lead I didn't want to risk a safety.

NICK

There were other ways to avoid that. Your best call would've been a quarterback sneak out of T-formation. It's almost impossible to lose yardage, and you probably could've gained two or three yards.

ZEKE

It never occurred to me.

NICK

Then with more room you could've run a quick opener out of a T, or off tackle from short punt. At best you'd have made a first down or run out the clock. Or at least you'd have the ball farther out by fourth down so that Hank wouldn't be pressed against the end line for his kick.

ZEKE

I suppose you're right. I'm sorry.

NICK

I should've prepared you better for this contingency.

ZEKE

It's my call. I'll take the blame for losing the game.

NICK

You've got it wrong, Zeke. I'm not blaming you for losing the Kepler game. I'm telling you these things to make you a better quarterback. Football's a team effort, and that includes the coaches. We made touchdowns as a team. We gave up touchdowns as a team. Other players also made mistakes during the game. But it was a team loss, not the fault of any one individual.

ZEKE

Thanks for saying that, Nick.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

Granddad, if your coach knew what to do, how come he didn't send in a play when you got the ball on the six inch line?

GRANDDAD

In our day the game was entirely on the field. Substitutes could come in only when the ball was dead, such as after an incomplete pass or running out of bounds. When the ball changed hands, it was still alive, so there couldn't be substitutes.

And according to the rules, the quarterback wasn't allowed to talk to coaches on the sidelines, even during a time out.

SCOTT

That's not the way it is now. In one close game our team played last year, the coach sent in every play.

GRANDDAD

I liked it better our way, even though it placed more pressure on the quarterback.

SCOTT

Yeah, I think I would, too.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

Spike is waiting outside coach's office as Zeke comes out.

SPIKE

What was that about?

ZEKE

I'll tell you later. Are you going to tell him about yourself?

SPIKE

I guess I'll have to.

Nick comes out of his office. Spike looks worried.

NICK

What's the matter, Spike?

SPIKE

I've been grounded, Nick?

NICK

Grounded?

SPIKE

By my dad. He found one lousy beer cap on the back floor of his car on Sunday after I used it Saturday night. He says I have to be in by seven o'clock for the rest of the week.

NICK

Including Friday night?

SPIKE

Friday and Saturday, too.

NICK

*You won't be able to make the trip to
play Ashmont?*

SPIKE

*No, and it's not even my fault. Because
Zeke's girl was out of town, I
double-dated with Buddy Norton.*

NICK

*I've had him in gym class. Sort of a
flashy dresser.*

SPIKE

*That's the one. He brought along a
couple of beers. I didn't have one, I
swear it, Nick, and neither did the girls.
But my dad insists that drinking and
driving don't mix, not even by passengers.
So he grounded me. Couldn't you talk
to him, Nick?*

NICK

No, Spike. Your father sets the rules for

you. Whatever he decides I respect and will go along with.

SPIKE

Darn.

NICK

So I guess you'll have to practice with the second team this week. We'll let Chuck and Mike divide time playing left end with the first team.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

If you think Spike's dad was strict, you ought to hear the rules my dad has.

GRANDDAD

You're lucky, Scott, that he cares.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

The pep band, cheerleaders, and a crowd of students are assembled as the team boards the school bus for the trip to Ashmont. Spike stands with the students. As the pep band plays and the cheerleaders lead chants, two teams of players, Basil, Doc, and the three coaches board the bus, leaving Spike behind.

CUT TO:

INSIDE SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Zeke and Bulldog are sitting together behind the driver with Zeke on the aisle. On the other side Nick and Hal are seated together. Dave is halfway back. So are Eddy and Pudge. Other pairs of friends are sitting together: Fred and Flash, Dutch and Stan, Billy and Lefty, Nate and Joe, Jiri and Mike. The bus moves along the highway. Doc comes through with a box of sack lunches. Zeke and Bulldog open theirs.

BULLDOG

Let's see if the school cafeteria has kept up it's tradition.

ZEKE

Yep. Ham and cheese on white bread, an apple, and a pint of milk.

BULLDOG

But what's that spicy aroma?

ZEKE

I suppose Pudge has brought his usual supplement.

BULLDOG

That's the advantage of coming from a

restaurant family.

ZEKE

I hope Greek food won't get Eddy off his game.

CUT briefly to Pudge and Eddy eating Greek food. CUT TO Nick and Hal, who are eating the same food as the players.

NICK

I'd love to see a streetcar series.

HAL

The Cards have already clinched, but I don't think the Browns can make it. They're one game behind the Tigers. They'd have to sweep their final four games with the Yankees, and Detroit would have to lose twice to the Senators, who are in last place.

NICK

You never know who'll choke this time of year.

CUT TO:

EXT - PARKING LOT NEXT TO ASHMONT STADIUM

The Lofton players get off the bus on the visitors' side of the Ashmont stadium. They are talkative and jocular. Eddy seeks out Billy.

EDDY

See those light poles, Billy? They're shorter than the ones at home. Sometimes a high punt goes above them.

BILLY

How do you know where the ball is then?

EDDY

It's like in baseball catching flies in the outfield. You know where the ball is coming down by watching it go up.

CUT TO:

EXT - ASHMONT FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Hank kicks off for Lofton. Flash gets down quickly and nails the Ashmont runner inside the 20 yard line. After a huddle Ashmont lines up on offense. The Ashmont team has no African Americans.

ASHMONT LEFT END

Hi, Rustface. I remember you from the beating we gave you last year.

The tailback makes five yards the other way. Ashmont huddles and sets up again.

ASHMONT LEFT END

See, we're as good as ever. Wait'll you see some of the new plays we have.

As the play comes his way, the Ashmont left end tries to block Rusty but fails, and Rusty stops the ball carrier at the line of scrimmage. The defense resets as Ashmont huddles.

RUSTY

Maybe that'll shut that kid's mouth.

On the next play the Ashmont left end cuts over the middle and catches a pass for the first down. He brushes Roberto on the way back to the huddle.

ASHMONT LEFT END

Tell that big fellow and his darky friend that they're in for a rough evening.

Flash hears this and bristles. Show a montage of several more plays until the Ashmont offense bogs down. Their punter kicks a high boot that goes above the lights. Eddy has a hard time seeing it and signals for a fair catch on the Lions' 25. The Lions huddle and come out on offense. Flash lines up opposite the Ashmont left end.

ASHMONT LEFT END

Colored boy, who said you could play a man's game?

As Eddy carries the ball off tackle to the right, Roberto and Fred team to block out the left end and Flash and Hank double team the tackle. Eddy gains six yards.

ASHMONT LEFT END

(To Fred)

I hope the shoe polish didn't come off on my uniform.

On the next play Fred goes left for five yards and a first down. Show a montage of two running plays with short gains, then a pass from Zeke over the middle to Mike, who drops it. With the ball dead, Zeke approaches referee.

ZEKE

Sir, their left end is baiting our players. That's suppose to be a five yard penalty.

REFEREE

He's just talkative. I haven't heard any baiting.

On fourth down Hank punts. Show a montage of Ashmont moving down field on offense with their left end continuing to jabber away. They score and make the extra point.

Eddy makes a decent return on the ensuing kickoff. Show the Lions running several plays with the Ashmont left end needling Flash. Flash returns to the huddle incensed.

FLASH

If he calls me one more nasty name, I'm gonna bust him in the face.

FRED

Yeah, and get thrown out of the game. Don't you see? That's what he wants you to do.

After a couple of more plays the quarter ends. As the teams exchange sides, the Ashmont end deliberately walks by Flash.

ASHMONT LEFT END

Darky, why don't you go back to the South where the livin' is easy?

Flash is seething as he joins the team for water that Doc has brought out in little paper cups.

RUSTY

Don't worry, Flash, I'll take care of him for you. Zeke, on the next play call 36 and let me trade places with Roberto. Fred, you don't need to help me double team that sucker.

The Lions run off tackle to the right with Rusty playing as pulling guard. He hits the Ashmont left end with a tremendous cross-body block. Fred leads interference through the hole and knocks down the linebacker. Eddy gets through the hole and cuts left for an 18 yard

gain, stopped finally by the safety. Back at the line of scrimmage Rusty is still on top of the Ashmont player, has a hold of an arm, and is talking to him. The linesman notices them.

LINESMAN

Get up, boys.

They get up. The Ashmont end massages his arm. Rusty joins the Lions huddle.

RUSTY

He won't be bothering you anymore,
Flash.

BULLDOG

What'd you do to him, Rusty?

RUSTY

Let's just say I twisted his arm.

The players laugh. The Lofton offense moves to the Ashmont 18 where Zeke throws too wide to Chuck, now playing left end. Basil comes in to try a field goal. His kick from the 25 is short.

Ashmont moves down field but has to punt. Play continues back and forth with subs getting playing time until the end of the first half. As the players leave the field show the score, Ashmont 7, Visitor 0.

CUT TO:

INT - DRESSING ROOM AT ASHMONT STADIUM

The players are resting at half time.

NICK

(To Roberto and Rusty)

What was going on when you two traded positions on 36? Why were you piled on that player so long, Rusty?

RUSTY

Well, the truth is, Nick, that fellow was saying some unkind things about Flash because of his skin coloration. I felt he needed instruction on how gentlemen should act, so I arranged to have a private conversation with him.

The players roar hilariously. Nick tries hard not to smile.

NICK

You and Bob should know better than anyone that I don't want you changing plays to your own liking. You didn't hurt him deliberately, did you, Rusty?

RUSTY

Nope. No more than in wrestling.

NICK

Sorry, Flash, that everyone in our league isn't totally civilized.

FLASH

That's all right, Nick. I'm proud to be a Lion.

Flash gives Rusty a friendly slap on his shoulder pads.

FLASH

Thanks, friend.

RUSTY

We're teammates. We support one another.

CUT TO:

EXT - ASHMONT FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

On the opening kickoff of the second half, Eddy makes a good return. As the Lions come out of the huddle on offense, the talkative Ashmont end is now playing at the other end of the line and is silent.

RUSTY

(To Ashmont left tackle)

Where's your talkative friend?

ASHMONT LEFT TACKLE

Our coach shifted him to the other end

and told him to keep his trap shut.

The Lions run three running plays and have to kick. Ashmont makes several first downs but has to kick. Lofton does a little better but has to kick again. The Ashmont receiver makes a good return. Their team moves down the field and scores on a field goal from the 15 as the quarter ends. As the teams change fields, the scoreboard shows Ashmont 10, Visitor 0.

Eddy and Fred are dual receivers for the kickoff. The ball goes to Fred, who fakes a reverse to Eddy and makes it to the Lofton 45. Three running plays get the ball to the Ashmont 48. On fourth down Zeke tries to hit Chuck in the flat but the defensive halfback deflects the ball. As Ashmont takes over on downs, Lefty comes in for Zeke. As Zeke goes to the sidelines, Nick comes over to him.

NICK

Zeke, you should've punted on fourth down.

ZEKE

I thought it was worth the risk. It's getting late in the game, and we need to score.

NICK

It's not that late. We still have almost a quarter left. You gave Ashmont an extra 30 to 35 yards -- three first downs.

ZEKE

*Last game I call a punt I shouldn't have.
This game I don't punt when I should. I
guess I just don't understand your kicking
philosophy, Nick.*

Zeke watches as Ashmont moves down and scores, but their kicker misses extra point. Zeke goes back in to run the offense, but neither Lofton nor Ashmont score again. The game ends with the scoreboard showing Ashmont 16, Visitor 0.

CUT TO:

INT - IN THE SHOWERS

Zeke, Bulldog, Basil, Roberto, and Rusty are near one another in the showers.

BASIL

Don't take it so hard, Zeke. "Sweet are the uses of adversity, which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head."

Roberto reaches over and turns off the hot water on Basil's shower.

BASIL

Yipes!

Basil and Bulldog leave the shower together.

BULLDOG

Basil, it's better to let the sting of defeat wear off before applying a poultice of philosophy.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT

Players are boarding and taking their seats. Bulldog is seated again behind the driver. Zeke comes on, goes on by, and takes a seat on the back row with Dutch and Stan.

DUTCH

You're not going to sit in the quarterback's spot across from the coaches?

ZEKE

Nope. I'm in the doghouse.

DUTCH

I'm glad you've joined us. You can help me reassure Stan. Nighttime bus rides make him nervous.

ZEKE

It's no different than riding in daytime, Stan. It may be dark outside, but it's the safe in here.

Bulldog joins them.

STAN

It's what it reminds me of.

DUTCH

Stan's family had two long nights on a bus when his family was escaping from Poland.

STAN

It was -- what's the English word -- scary.

By now the bus has started and driven out of town along the darkened highway.

ZEKE

I'm willing to listen if you want to talk about it.

Stan is silent for a while.

STAN

My father was a leader in the resistance, mostly hiding in the forest but coming to see us occasionally late at night. He got

word that the Nazis planned to execute our whole family as an example: my mother, two sisters, my brother, and me.

ZEKE

Yes, that must've been scary.

STAN

It was. We arranged to travel with some others in a rickety old bus to the Baltic coast 80 miles away and get a boat to Sweden. It took two nights, driving along back roads without lights and staying in a cave during the day.

CUT TO:

ON BOARD BUS IN POLAND - NIGHT

The small bus contains Stan's family except his father plus 20 others, crowded together. It is driving without lights. In the distance headlights from another vehicle are approaching.

STAN v.o.

The second night we were about ten miles from the coast when we saw headlights coming toward us.

The bus pulls off the road.

STAN (Cont.) v.o.

Quickly our driver pulled into a thicket.

The Polish bus pulls into a thicket about 25 feet off the road. As the other vehicle approaches, we hear German soldiers singing a drinking song. Several of them are riding in the back of an open truck. They get nearer to the thicket. The Poles are huddled together and quivering. The German truck goes on by and the singing of the drunken soldiers fades into the distance.

STAN (Cont.) v.o.

After the German truck went by, we waited fifteen minutes and then went on our way.

The Polish truck without lights pulls out of the thicket and drives back on the road. We see it arriving at the seacoast and the Poles hurriedly boarding a fishing boat.

STAN (Cont.) v.o.

We reached the coast just before dawn. We quickly boarded a fishing boat and headed for safety in Sweden.

CUT TO:

INSIDE LOFTON SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT

On the back row Stan completes telling his story to Zeke, Bulldog, and Dutch.

STAN (Cont.)

It was two nights I shall never forget.

ZEKE

I wouldn't either. It's no wonder a bus ride at night makes you nervous.

STAN

But now I'm not afraid. I'm in America among friends.

The bus pulls into the parking lot of a diner. The players get off. As Zeke makes his way along the aisle, he turns to Bulldog behind him.

ZEKE

Compared to what Stan's been through, what is "O" and "2"?

Nick is waiting for Zeke outside the bus.

NICK

Zeke, maybe I was too hard on you during the game. It's easier to call signals from the bench than on the field.

ZEKE

That's all right, Nick. I've learned a lot tonight.

NICK

*So come on in. I'll buy you a hamburger
steak.*

*Nick takes the meal voucher from his coat pocket as they head for the
diner.*

CUT TO:

INT - LIVING ROOM OF SPIKE'S HOUSE

Spike is letting Zeke, Barbara, and Joanne in.

SPIKE

*I'm glad you could come over since I can't
go out tonight.*

BARBARA

*Spike, you realize that you're making me
miss my favorite actor, Spencer Tracy.*

SPIKE

What's he playing in?

BARBARA

*"The Seventh Cross". It's about seven
Americans escaping from a German
prisoner-of-war camp.*

ZEKE

I can tell you a story of escaping the Nazis.

JOANNE

How about some refreshments first?

CUT TO the two couples seated in the living room with partly consumed cokes and a pile of potato chips on a coffee table.

ZEKE

And Stan said the sea was rough on the way to Sweden, but they got their safely.

SPIKE

What about his father?

ZEKE

They don't know whether he's dead of alive.

SPIKE

Wow! Stan's sure been through a lot.

BARBARA

That explains the look on his face.

JOANNE

What look?

BARBARA

Like he's seen things he doesn't want to remember but can't forget.

ZEKE

Yeah. Things more important than football.

SPIKE

That may be true, but we still have to figure out a way to win a game.

ZEKE

We'll beat Tanabe next week. I guarantee it.

JOANNE

You'd better win. Otherwise Barbara and I will look for other beaux.

Spike playfully throws a pillow at Joanne.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The Lofton team is scrimmaging. Roger punts for the second team, and Eddy returns it 20 yards before being run out of bounds. The first team prepares to go on offense.

NICK

Billy, I want you to run a series with the first team to see what you can do with good blocking.

Billy takes the place of Eddy, who watches with Nick. On the first play Billy gets the ball to go off tackle to right, gets through the line of scrimmage, cuts to the outside where Pat tackles him.

NICK

You cut the wrong way, Billy. All the defensive players are headed to your right, so when you get through the line of scrimmage you ought to cut back against the grain. Here, let me show you.

Same play, Zeke.

Nick, wearing a football pants, jersey, shoes with cleats, but no padding, takes his place as tailback. Eddy and Billy stand together watching. Nick receives the snap from center, runs right parallel with the line of scrimmage, cuts sharply through a big hole the blockers have made. Five yards beyond the line he cuts back to the left as the defensive backs overpursue to his right. Spike blocks the safety and Nick has clear sailing for the goal line. After 20 yards Pat and Lefty start catching up with him. In another five yards Nick sits down to avoid being tackled. Eddy and Billy come running up. Nick, gasping for air, tosses the ball to Billy.

NICK

That's how it's done.

Spike joins them and extends a helping hand to Nick.

SPIKE

Fantastic run, Nick.

NICK

If an old codger like me can make 25 yards by smart running, you young bucks ought to do better than that.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players have showered and are getting into their street clothes.

BASIL

I didn't know Nick was so good.

EDDY

He was all conference in college.

SPIKE

*Does anyone want to bet on the series?
I'll take the Cards.*

ROBERTO

Are you crazy? The Browns won their pennant by a miracle. They're no match

for the Cardinals.

DOC

I'll bet a dollar that I can tell you the score of tomorrow's opening game before it begins.

BASIL

I'll take your bet. What's the score going to be?

DOC

Nothing to nothing.

Everyone laughs.

BASIL

It can't be. Someone has to win.

DOC

I said the score before the game begins. It's nothing to nothing before it starts.

BASIL

You tricked me.

EDDY

It's an old trick. You're this year's victim, Basil.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

Hey, that's a good one! I'll have to try it at school for this year's world series.

GRANDDAD

You never heard it?

SCOTT

No, never.

GRANDDAD

I wonder when it died out.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

On Friday night as the teams line up for Tanabe to kick off, we notice that Tanabe has several African American players. Show a montage of Eddy receiving, several plays as Lofton marches downfield, including a pass to Spike, who is back. Eddy scores on a quick opener from T-formation. Basil makes the extra point.

Show a montage of Tanabe plays from short punt with their tailback calling signals, running and passing. Tanabe punts but after a few plays Lofton has to punt. Tanabe scores on its next possession but

misses the extra point. As the players leave the field at half time, the scoreboard shows Lofton 7, Visitor 6.

Tanabe receives the second half kickoff, marches to a touchdown, and makes the extra point. With Lofton in possession, Eddy comes up limping after an end sweep, and Billy takes his place. After an exchange of punts Lofton has the ball as the teams change ends after the third quarter. Fred scores on a double reverse. As Basil comes in for the extra point, he acknowledges the cheering from the band and misses the kick. Nick admonishes him on the sidelines. Scoreboard shows: Lofton 13, Visitor 13.

After the kickoff Tanabe mounts an offense but fumbles near the 50. Tanabe stops Lofton on three plays. The Tanabe tailback fields Hank's kick at the 10, steps between Flash and Spike and weaves his way 90 yards for a touchdown. On the try for extra point Spike lines up over center, gets through, leaps high, and blocks the kick. The score: Lofton 13, Visitor 19.

After receiving the kickoff Lofton mixes runs and passes to get to the Tanabe 25 with fourth and two. In a quick opener from a T Billy is inches short of making the first down. Zeke runs over to the linesman.

ZEKE

How much time is left?

LINESMAN

Two minutes and 48 seconds.

Zeke returns to his team as they line up for defense.

ZEKE

*Come on, gang. Let's hold them here.
There's still time enough for us to score.*

Tanabe makes a first down on three running plays. Zeke calls time out.

ZEKE

*We've got to make something happen.
Tackle the ball if you can.*

The Tanabe tailback gains two yards. Zeke calls another time out. Tanabe gains another three yards. Zeke calls a final time out, and the Lofton players huddle.

ROBERTO

*Rusty, on this play slant in front of me
and I'll go around you. Maybe we can
hit the ballcarrier before he expects it.*

Roberto and Rusty do as planned. The Tanabe tailback drops back to pass. Rusty rushes in free and hits his arm just as he throws. The ball flies into Roberto's hands, and he dashes for a touchdown.

Amidst a great roar Basil comes in for the extra point. He ignores the crowd and focuses on the goalpost. His kick splits the crossbars. Zeke hugs him. The scoreboard quickly registers: Lofton 20, Visitor 19. Roberto and Rusty hoist Basil on their shoulders as the team celebrates. The referee interrupts them.

REFEREE

*There's till ten seconds left in the game.
You have to kick off.*

On the kickoff Hank kicks a squibber, and the Lions smother the return man before he can make much headway. The gun sounds ending the game.

Students pour out of the stands to celebrate the victory. They congratulate Roberto for his touchdown but give most of their attention to Basil.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL GYM

A school dance is underway in the Lofton high school gym as team members filter in in their street clothes, some wearing letter sweaters. Zeke, Spike, and Eddy come out together, and their girl friends join them: Barbara in her band uniform, Joanne, and Mary Lou in her cheerleader outfit. In one corner of the gym African American students, including Fred, Flash, and their girl friends, are talking and dancing.

ZEKE

*I promised a victory, but I didn't expect it
to happen this way.*

JOANNE

But you won -- finally.

SPIKE

So you'll keep us?

BARBARA

At least for another week.

EDDY

We have Rusty, Roberto, and Basil to thank.

ZEKE

And the Tanabe tailback. A hero on the 90 yard runback, then a goat for passing when he shouldn't have.

EDDY

That's football for you.

SPIKE

I bet Basil has an appropriate quote.

EDDY

He's too busy for that.

CUT TO Basil surrounded by a covey of girls. Roberto and Rusty are standing with their girls and watching.

RUSTY

Look at all the attention that runt's getting. You're the one who scored the winning touchdown.

ROBERTO

They expect heroics from you and me. Basil's the unexpected hero. Just like they all would like to be.

The band is playing a slow piece, and the football players and their girl friends join the dancing.

ZEKE

Why are all the girls so ga-ga over Basil?

BARBARA

Because he's darling.

ZEKE

What about me?

BARBARA

You're Ezekiel, the preacher and prophet. You're attractive in a different way.

The band picks up its pace, and Zeke and Barbara start jitterbugging.

CUT TO:

INT - PARKER HARDWARE STORE

Zeke and his dad have the radio on, listening to the World Series. The announcer describes the game in the bottom of the second inning with the Browns batting. The Cardinals are leading the game two to nothing, thanks to a two-run homer by Stan Musial in the first inning. The Browns, though, lead the series two games to one. Mom enters the store with tears in her eyes, clutching a yellow telegram. Laura follows her. Mom hands the telegram to Dad. Dad reads out loud as Zeke peers over his shoulder.

DAD

"We regret to inform you that your son, Clyde Parker, has been wounded in combat in the European sector. He is now in satisfactory condition at a base hospital in England. Further information will follow."

MOM

It doesn't say what kind of wounds.

LAURA

Or how serious.

DAD

But he's alive. And it says he's in satisfactory condition. That must mean he's not going to die.

MOM

Let's pray to God that he won't

ZEKE

I'm sure he's all right.

MOM

*You're just like your dad, Paul. You
always look for the bright side of things.*

ZEKE

*I've learned from football to never give
up.*

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

*The Lofton players coming on the field for practice. Nick seeks out
Zeke.*

NICK

*Sorry about your brother, Zeke. I hope
he recuperates rapidly.*

ZEKE

*We don't know what kind of wound, but I
have to believe he'll be back on his feet in
no time.*

NICK

He's the 27th serviceman from Lofton high to be wounded in action. We've had six fatalities, three of them who played football.

ZEKE

Yes, I know.

CUT TO players, sweating from the completion of calisthenics, gathered around Nick,

NICK

Congratulations for our first victory of the season. Bob and Rusty, you showed great finesse on that final play. Basil, you did a good job of concentrating for your final kick. And all of you hung in there with great determination.

What I didn't like was letting the Tanabe player run a punt back 90 yards for a touchdown. That's the first time this has happened in my ten years at Lofton.

(Cont.)

NICK (Cont.)

You've got to get yourselves spaced better across the field and do a better job of

open field tackling. We're going to work on this today.

Show a brief montage of defending against punt returns and kickoffs.

CUT TO players gathered around Nick at the end of practice.

NICK

I'm sure you're all aware that you'll have your six weeks exams this week. I hope you're all prepared. We don't want to lose any players because of poor grades.

As the players disperse, Rusty and Roberto walk together.

RUSTY

Roberto, old buddy, I wish you hadn't got me into world history. I'm afraid I'm going flunk it.

ROBERTO

Me, too. It's not as interesting as I thought it would be. I'm way behind in my reading.

RUSTY

Maybe we can get somebody to help us.

ROBERTO

Like who?

RUSTY

Like Bulldog. You know, Richard the brain. He's in our class.

CUT TO:

EXT - PARKING LOT OUTSIDE LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

As the players leave the locker room in their street clothes, Rusty and Roberto approach Bulldog.

RUSTY

Bulldog, can I give a ride home?

BULLDOG

Sure. I've never ridden in a Model T before.

They walk to the Model T.

RUSTY

Would you like to drive it?

BULLDOG

Not today, but maybe some time.

With Rusty driving they leave the parking lot and enter the street.

ROBERTO

Bulldog, do you want to help us and the team?

BULLDOG

In what way, Roberto?

ROBERTO

By helping us pass the world history exam.

BULLDOG

You mean review the readings with you? I'd be glad to.

RUSTY

Well, what we had in mind is to help us with answers during the exam.

ROBERTO

Mr. Morris usually gives multiple choice questions, so we thought we could work out some kind of signal system.

BULLDOG

That would be cheating. I'd never do that.

RUSTY

But it's not for us alone. It's for the good of the team. If Roberto and I flunk, we'll be suspended from the team. Then

where would the team be?

BULLDOG

Stan and Jolly are coming along quite well.

ROBERTO

But they're not as experienced as us.

BULLDOG

No, I can't. I'll come over to your house and help you study, but I won't give you answers during the exam.

RUSTY

The trouble is, we're so behind on our reading that we'll never be caught up before Wednesday's test.

BULLDOG

That's your trouble, not mine. Sorry.

CUT TO:

INT - KITCHEN OF PARKER HOUSE

Zeke enters through the back door. A plate of food is ready for him at the table. Mom, Dad, and Laura are there. Dad is holding a letter.

ZEKE

Hi, Dad. I didn't expect to see you here. Is everybody having early supper with me tonight before the game?

DAD

We receive a letter today from the chaplain at the army hospital in England where they took Clyde. He writes that Clyde lost his right arm but otherwise is in good condition.

ZEKE

His trombone arm. What rotten luck.

MOM

I'm afraid he'll get infected, get gangrene or something.

ZEKE

I'm sure he'll get the best medical care possible.

DAD

Martha, why don't you go to the game with me tonight? It'll take your mind off Clyde for a while.

MOM

Henry, you know I never go to football

games.

ZEKE

*I'm dedicating my game tonight to Clyde.
I think you should watch me.*

LAURA

Yes, you ought to go, Mom

MOM

*Well, just this once I'll go -- for Clyde's
sake, and for you, too, Paul.*

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Hank kicks off for Lofton with a strong wind behind him for the opening kickoff. Zeke tackles the return man deep in Cranville territory. In the town-folks side of the field (opposite the students' stands) Mom rises and cheers. Cranville runs from a single wing and soon has to punt into the wind. Eddy signals a fair catch. Lofton quickly moves down field with mostly running plays. Cranville holds the Lions at the 15. Nick sends in Basil for a field goal with Zeke holding. With wind behind him, Basil hits from the 22. As the players walk back up field, Flash approaches Zeke.

FLASH

Zeke, I'm sure I can get behind that

halfback if you want to hit me along the sidelines.

ZEKE

I'll keep that in mind.

In their next possession Cranville does a little better but then fumbles near the 50. On first down Eddy gains eight yards off tackle. From a T Zeke fakes a handoff to Fred and throws to Flash streaking down the sideline. Flash catches the ball at the 20 and breezes in for the touchdown. The crowd roared. Mixed in we hear "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" of undetermined origin. Basil's extra point makes it Lofton 10, Visitor 0. Nick sends in the second team for the rest of the first quarter.

The Lofton first team re-enters the game at the beginning of the second quarter. With the wind behind him Cranville tailback throws a pass for a good gain. The second time he tries to pass Zeke steps in front of the receiver, intercepts, and runs 40 yards down the sidelines on the home-folks side of the field and scores. Quite clearly we hear a penetrating shriek. "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel! Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" Spike catches up with Zeke at the goal line and pats him on the shoulders in congratulations. Then Spike points to the stands.

SPIKE

It's your mom.

ZEKE

It can't be.

Zeke looks toward the stands. In the stands Mom is bouncing up and

down, furiously waving a gold pom-pom, still shrieking, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

Are you talking about my great grandmother? The one who lives with my Great Aunt Laura?

GRANDDAD

That's the one.

SCOTT

But she's so quiet and gentle.

GRANDDAD

You have to remember that this happened nearly 50 years ago. She was 42 then and a lively lady.

SCOTT

I'm going to ask her when I see her.

GRANDDAD

Go ahead. The funny thing is that she never called me "Zeke" before, or since.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT WITH FLOODLIGHTS

With Cranville in possession of the ball the gun goes off ending the half. The scoreboard shows: Lofton 17, Visitor 0.

Show a bit of the marching band playing at half-time with one close up of Barbara playing the flute. Show Mom and Dad having refreshments in the stands with people come up to talk with them: commiseration for Clyde and congratulation for Zeke's first half.

The wind is stronger as the second half begins, and the Cranville kicks into the end zone, where Eddy catches it and takes a touchback. Show a montage of Lofton running the ball, Hank kicking low into the wind, Cranville running from single wing, trying some passes not too successfully, Cranville kicking, Lofton getting an offense going until from the Cranville 8 Zeke runs a double wing play in which he fakes a handoff for a reverse, hides the ball, and scampers untouched into the end zone. Again Mom shrieks, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" Basil makes the extra point.

Nick gives the second team a long playing time and some third stringers, too. The Lofton has one more turn at offense, and Zeke hits Spike deep over the middle for a touchdown. On the try for extra point a Cranville tackle gets through and distracts Basil, who misses. The game ends with the scoreboard showing Lofton 30, Visitor 0.

Barbara rushes onto the field and gives Zeke a big hug. Other students

and some of the players congratulate Zeke for his stellar performance.

CUT TO;

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

When Zeke comes into the locker room, Eddy, garbed only in a towel around his waist, jumps on the bench, holding one of Mary Lou's gold pom-poms. Going through the motions of a cheerleader, he hollers in a high falsetto.

EDDY

Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!

Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!

Zeke is at first flustered. Then he grabs the towel from around Eddy's waist and playfully tries to flip him with it as Eddy runs for the showers.

CUT TO the showers where Eddy is covered with soap lather as Zeke enters for his shower.

EDDY

All kidding aside, Zeke, you played a great game. I know that Clyde will be proud of you when he hears about it.

ZEKE

Thanks, Eddy, that means a lot coming from you.

CUT TO:

INT - PARKER FAMILY KITCHEN

As Zeke enters for breakfast, Dad is on the far side of the table reading the inside of the front section of the Lofton Herald with a headline: "ALLIES CONTINUE PUSH INTO GERMANY". On the near side Mom has the sports page with its headline: "LIONS CRUSH CRANVILLE 30-0 - Parker Leads Powerful Offense". Laura is on one side.

MOM

Oh, I'm so proud of you, Paul. I'm going to send this article to Clyde.

DAD

You were outstanding, Zeke, if I may call you that.

ZEKE

Sure, almost everybody else does.

Zeke looks his mother in the eye, but she looks away.

As the family finishes breakfast, Dad gets up to leave.

DAD

I'll see you at the store in a little while, Paul. I need you today, hero or not.

ZEKE

Sure. I'll be there.

Mom follows Dad out of the kitchen to the front part of the house.

ZEKE

Laura, could you hear Mom on your side of the field?

LAURA

What do you mean?

ZEKE

Every time I did something good she shrieked, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

LAURA

No, I didn't notice. Are you sure?

ZEKE

Absolutely. Spike noticed her, too, and so did Eddy.

LAURA

I can't believe that she'd be so out of control.

ZEKE

Well, she was.

CUT TO:

EXT - IN FRONT OF THE MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Zeke, Barbara, Spike, and Joanne are part of a flow of students coming out of the theater. The marquee indicates: "I Love a Soldier with Paulette Goddard and Sonny Tufts".

They get into Spike's dad's car. Barbara sits very close to Zeke in the back seat and kisses him. Spike notices this in the rear view mirror and sings in an off-key voice.

SPIKE

(Singing)

"You gotta be a football hero,
To get along with the beautiful girls."

Zeke finds a magazine on the seat, rolls it up, and pops Spike on the head.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON SCHOOL HALLWAY

As students are changing classes, Zeke runs into Roberto and Rusty. They are angry.

RUSTY

He flunked us.

ZEKE

Who?

ROBERTO

Old man Morris. We both failed our world history exam.

RUSTY

That means we're off the team.

ROBERTO

At least for a while until we can get our grades up.

ZEKE

Darn, just when we were getting our act together. What're we going to do without you?

RUSTY

Our backups will have to fill in: Jolly and Stan.

ZEKE

They're coming along O.K., but they're not nearly as good as you two.

ROBERTO

You'll have to do the best you can.

CUT TO:

EXT - STEPS IN FRONT OF LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Zeke, Bulldog, and Dutch are standing together. Eddy and Pudge come up.

EDDY

(To Bulldog)

You must be proud of yourself.

BULLDOG

For what?

EDDY

For letting Roberto and Rusty flunk.

BULLDOG

How's it my fault?

EDDY

You wouldn't help them.

BULLDOG

I would've helped them study, but they wanted me to signal answers during the exam. That's cheating. I won't be a party to it.

EDDY

A fine team player you are, Bulldog.

ZEKE

*It's not a matter of team spirit, Eddy.
It's a matter of personal integrity.*

EDDY

*Oh, another one of those goody, goody
boys.*

DUTCH

*Eddy you know that Zeke and Bulldog
aren't responsible for Roberto and Rusty
passing a course. That's up to them.*

EDDY

*You're just defending them so that your
Polish buddy can take Roberto's place.*

PUDGE

*Oh, come on, Eddy. We're all
disappointed because we're losing Rusty
and Roberto. But that's no reason to
take it out on each other.*

EDDY

*If you say so, Pudge. It's just that I
wanted to have a winning season my
senior year. Now it's going to be harder.*

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The Lofton players are gathered around Nick following calisthenics. Roberto and Rusty have suited up and are working out, but in the gathering they stay on the outer edge.

NICK

You played great Friday night against Cranville.

(Looking at Zeke)

Some of you shone particularly bright, but it was a team victory, through and through. We're now two and one in the league. Only Ashmont and Hargrove are undefeated. That means we're tied for third place. So we still have a shot at the title.

SPIKE

We'll do it.

NICK

Of course, our chances are hurt because of the goof-off brothers.

Nick looks toward Roberto and Rusty, who shuffle behind other players to escape his glare.

NICK (Cont.)

Fortunately Stan and Jolly have been playing well. By the time they get several full games under their belt, it may be hard for the slackers to get their places -- even if they get their grades in order.

Now let's talk about Leabrook, who we play on Friday. For the last several years they've been using a seven-man line. So we'll have to have different blocking assignments, especially along the line.

DUTCH

I think I remember mine from last year's Leabrook game.

NICK

But with only four defensive backs, it will be easier for pass receivers to get open, Zeke.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

Your team had it easy, Granddad. The teams we play keep changing their

defense during the game. Sometimes we have to make adjustments after we get to the line of scrimmage.

GRANDDAD

Yes, I've noticed that. I don't know how you do it.

SCOTT

Somebody on the line calls out blocking assignments.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

DAVE

I want the linemen including ends to come with me to work on your new blocking assignments.

NICK

While he's doing that, I'll work with backs on ball handling, especially from the T and double wing.

As the players disperse, Dutch walks with Stan and Jolly.

STAN

I never expected to start a game. I hope

I don't disappoint Nick and the boys.

DUTCH

You'll do all right.

JOLLY

*What you need is a wristband to write
the plays in Polish numbers.*

STAN

*You're kidding me, aren't you? About
the numbers, I mean.*

JOLLY

*Just a little bit of quaint American
humor.*

Jolly gives Stan a friendly pat on his shoulder pads.

CUT TO:

EXT - PARKING LOT NEXT TO LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The Lofton team boards the school bus in a downpour.

CUT TO:

INSIDE SCHOOL BUS - DAY - HARD RAIN OUTSIDE

*Zeke and Spike are sitting behind the driver across from Nick and Dave.
Rain is pelting the bus.*

NICK

Zeke, it'll probably still be raining when we get to Leabrook and the field will be soaked. So no fancy stuff. Run mostly straight ahead and off tackle from short punt and the T.

ZEKE

What about passing?

NICK

Only if you have to pick up a first down. Then try Spike or Flash over the middle. Don't expect them to fake on outside routes.

CUT TO:

EXT - LEABROOK FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Rain continues. The field is a quagmire.

Show a montage of running plays with Leabrook using a seven man line on defense. Neither team makes much headway. They change ends after the first quarter. Then Lofton mounts a drive and scores as Hank bulls over through a hole opened by Dutch and Pudge. Basil comes in for the extra point. He wipes his glasses on his shirt tail just before the ball is snapped. Zeke receives the ball, places it for Basil, but pulls it back as Basil fakes a kick. Spike goes into the flat for a

pass, is clear, but the ball slips out of Zeke's hand as he throws.

As the team moves up the field for the kickoff, thunder rumbles overhead. Basil clenches his fist and looks skyward.

BASIL

*"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!
Rage! Blow you cataracts and hurricanes!
Spout till you have drench'd our steeples,
drown'd the cocks!"*

BULLDOG

Let me guess: King Lear on the heath.

BASIL

You've got it, Buddy-boy.

CUT TO:

INT - DRESSING ROOM OF LEABROOK STADIUM

The soaked players are drying their hands and faces with towels.

NICK

We've got to get our mud cleats on.

DOC

Nick, I'm sorry to say, I forgot them.

NICK

You forgot them? It's your job to remember these things.

DOC

I had a box of cleats laid out with my first aid stuff, but I forgot to load them on the bus.

NICK

Damn it.

Nick kicks a football laying on the floor across the room.

CUT TO:

EXT - LEABROOK FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

The rain continues in the second half. The Leabrook players have better traction and score twice, running especially against Stan and Jolly. For the extra points their kicker loses his footing both times and bumbles the attempt. As the game ends the scoreboard shows: Leabrook 12, Visitor 6.

CUT TO;

INT - DINER

As the Lofton team enters the diner, Doc quickly heads for a booth toward the back. Zeke and Spike notice this.

ZEKE

Looks like Doc is heading for exile. We better keep him company.

Zeke and Spike sit with Doc. Basil joins them.

SPIKE

Cheer up, Doc. We lost the game on the field.

DOC

But you might not have if you had your mud cleats.

ZEKE

That's one of those "what ifs" that has no answer.

The waitress serves each of them a hamburger steak, french fries, cole slaw, a roll with a pad of butter, and a cola. Zeke and Spike put A-1 steak sauce on their hamburger. Basil covers his with mustard and pours a pool of catsup for his french fries, which he dips one by one. Doc puts mustard, catsup, and A-1 sauce on his hamburger.

ZEKE

That must be an act of penance, Doc. I know it's not medically sound.

DOC

I guess so.

CUT TO:

INT - MOVIE THEATER

Zeke, Barbara, Joanne, and Spike are seated in the theater watching a tense moment in "Dragon Seed" with Katherine Hepburn and Walter Huston.

CUT TO:

INT - LIONS DEN RESTAURANT

Zeke, Barbara, Spike, and Joanne are seated in a booth at the Lions Den eating hamburgers and french fries and drinking milk shakes. Zeke looks grumpy.

JOANNE

What's the matter, Zeke? Did that movie depress you?

BARBARA

It did have a hopeful ending.

ZEKE

Naw. It was another loss last night. And the thought of another two games without Roberto and Rusty.

SPIKE

(Lightheartedly)

Remember the farm woman I told you about who is so picky about the patterns on chickenfeed sacks? She was back today.

JOANNE

What did she want this time?

SPIKE

She had a wallpaper sample and a pan of gravy, which she said was the color of her woodwork.

BARBARA

Gravy? You're kidding.

SPIKE

It's true. I had to carry seven different sacks into the light so she could match them for curtains.

JOANNE

Why so many?

SPIKE

She said, "I know your daddy wouldn't stock these different patterns unless he wanted us to make our choice."

ZEKE

Who cares about that?

BARBARA

Certainly not Mr. Grumpy.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

There are two tables, one piled with election material for Roosevelt and Truman, the other with Dewey-Bricker material. Pudge, Pat, and two other students are at the Democratic table. Bulldog, Rusty, and two other students are at the Republican table. Zeke and Spike approach them.

PUDGE

Hey, Zeke, Spike. Come get your Roosevelt button.

RUSTY

I've got Dewey buttons for you.

SPIKE

I'll take one of yours, Pudge. The farm people are for Roosevelt, and so's my dad.

PUDGE

What about you, Zeke?

ZEKE

I haven't made up my mind yet.

Spike and Zeke walk to the front door and look out at pouring rain. As they do, Stan goes to Pudge's table, gets a Roosevelt-Truman button, and pins it on his shirt.

SPIKE

Will the rain ever stop? I bet we practice in the gym today.

ZEKE

I hope so. I've had enough of this mess.

Stan comes up.

STAN

Hi, fellows. I saw you at the movies Saturday night. How'd you like "Dragon Seed"?

SPIKE

It was pretty exciting. How about you?

STAN

It reminded me of life in Poland under German occupation. The courage of the resisters, the risks and sacrifices. But always the hope for eventual freedom.

ZEKE

I know somebody else who thought it was hopeful.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players arrive, some wearing Roosevelt buttons while others have on Dewey buttons. They change into their practice uniforms but without pads. They have brought their gym shoes.

SPIKE

Come on, Zeke, Eddy. Let's get our basketball shoes.

The three of them go to the basketball storage locker and go through a stack of white Converse All-Stars looking for the right size. In walks DUKE, dressed in a white seaman's uniform.

DUKE

I'll take a ten and a half "C".

EDDY

Duke! What are you doing here?

DUKE

I completed basic training at the Great Lakes Training Center. I'm home on shore leave.

SPIKE

What do you mean, shore leave? You haven't been to sea yet.

DUKE

That's what we call it in the Navy.

ZEKE

Glad to see you, Duke. I guess you know we're not doing as well as last year.

DUKE

That's why I came back to help you. Eddy, how's my understudy's arm?

EDDY

Pretty good. You'd be surprised. Zeke's thrown three touchdown passes so far.

ZEKE

I've become pretty accurate.

DUKE

I bet I can make more baskets than you.

ZEKE

Baskets?

DUKE

Throwing from the center of the court.

ZEKE

You're on.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL GYM

Players are in various parts of the gym, practicing blocking and passing. Duke has found a basketball warmup. He and Zeke are in the center circle facing a basket. Eddy, Spike, Rusty, and Roberto are watching.

DUKE

Best out of five.

ZEKE

It's a deal.

Duke's first throw sails over the backboard.

ZEKE

Your arm's a little rusty.

Zeke's first throw hits the backboard a foot above the rim. Billy and Lefty join the circle of observers. On their next four throws Duke and Zeke are near and on the rim but don't make a basket. Lefty steps up with a ball.

LEFTY

Are you guys done torturing the backboard? Let me show you how it's done.

Lefty throws a swisher.

BILLY

That's showing these old men.

Everybody laughs. Nick, Dave, and Hal enter the gym with both Roosevelt and Dewey buttons pinned on their jerseys. Nick blows his whistle.

NICK

O.K. Let's line up for calisthenics.

The players start forming rows. Nick walks by Duke, who doesn't join in.

NICK

Stick around, Duke. We'll have some three-on-three basketball after our practice.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players are getting dressed after their workout. Duke is putting on his Navy uniform.

DUKE

Eddy, do you remember the game against Hargrove two years ago when Brad threw me the sucker pass?

EDDY

That was a beaut. We were trailing. You were wide open, but I was afraid you might miss it.

DUKE

So was I. If I had, I think I'd kept running and headed for home

ZEKE

But you caught it for the go-ahead touchdown. You preserved the undefeated season.

DUKE

Do you ever throw it, Eddy?

EDDY

Nick doesn't encourage me to pass.

DUKE

It's a good play. You ought to try it some time.

ZEKE

I'm willing to work on it, Eddy, if you are.

EDDY

Sure. As long as Nick doesn't see us.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

The first team is gathered around Nick with other players forming a wider circle. The Starfield team is on the other side of the field.

NICK

Remember what I told you. Expect Starfield to run a lot of sets from a T. Keep your eye on the ball. Be alert for a quick snap. Now let's go get 'em!

The players roar and take to the field for the kickoff. Show a montage of Starfield running from a T, then falling short on a field goal attempt. Lofton advances with a combination of short punt and T-formation plays. From the Starfield 30 Eddy scores on a double wing reverse. Basil makes the extra point.

The teams seesaw back and forth with no one scoring. Billy gets some playing time. When he makes a good run, some sophomores in the stands holler, "Billy, Billy, Billy!" Starfield has the ball 3rd and 7 from their own 45. The quarterback fakes a handoff to the fullback and

drops back to pass. Fred isn't fooled, steps in front of the receiver on the Lofton 45, snatches the ball, and has clear sailing down the sideline for a touchdown. Show players leaving the field at halftime with the scoreboard showing: Lofton 14, Visitor 0.

Eddy returns the second half kickoff, cuts sharply to avoid a tackler, is hit from both sides, and comes up limping. Billy replaces him. Billy does all right, but Zeke looks towards the stands with annoyance at Billy's personal cheering squad. On a third down pass Zeke throws an interception. After making several gains Starfield runs a pass pattern in which Zeke stayed with the end buttonhooking in front of him, leaving Billy to cover a halfback running down and out. Billy cuts in front of the halfback, trying for an interception, but the ball floats over his head and the receiver scores an easy touchdown. Trotting down field, Hank approaches Billy.

HANK

You're our safety, Billy. The defender of last resort. You shouldn't take chances like that. You're too much of a showoff. Now you've hurt the team.

With the score 14-7 Lofton Billy lines up deep to receive the kick off. Zeke notices that he is seething and starts to approach him, but Billy waves Zeke off. Billy receives the kick, runs up the middle to the 30, and then cuts to the side line. At the 50 a defender pushes Billy out of bands, and another clobbers him well beyond the side line. The umpire throws his flag. Billy comes up swinging in front of the

Starfield bench. He is quickly surrounded by Starfield players. The umpire plunges into the crowd to break up the fight. The referee confers with the umpire and throws Billy and the Starfield offender out of the game. Pat comes to play right halfback as Fred switches to tailback. On the Lofton side Dave escorts Billy to the locker room.

With this new backfield Lofton can't make a first down and has to punt. Lofton then holds Starfield to a pair of first downs, forcing them to punt. Fred fields a short kick with a fair catch as the quarter ends. The Lofton offense moves downfield effectively. From a T Zeke laterals to Fred for an end sweep. As Fred turns the corner and moves along the sideline, the Starfield safety hits him from the side. Fred scoots across the ground and slides across the yard chains. As he arises, he notices a big gash across his hand. Nick looks at it and takes him out of the game and sends in Lefty. On the sideline Dr. Sullivan bandages Fred's hand. By now Billy is in the stands in his street clothes, seated with his cheering squad.

LEFTY

Zeke, Nick wants me to play quarterback and you switch to tailback. He says you know all the plays.

ZEKE

I'll give it a shot.

Zeke calls the plays and manages all right as tailback as the Lions move toward the goal line. On third and goal from the six out of a T Lefty lofts a pass to Spike in the corner of the end zone, but the Starfield safety intercepts for a touchback. Starfield then moves the length of

the field for a touchdown. On the try for extra point Pudge lines up over the Starfield center and unnerves him so much that he bounces the ball to the holder, who sets it up crooked so that the kick goes wide. The scoreboard shows Lofton 14, Visitor 13. Zeke approaches the linesman.

ZEKE

How much time is left?

LINESMAN

Just under two minutes.

For the kickoff Zeke and Pat line up as twin receivers. The ball goes to Zeke, who bobbles it, picks up, and makes an eight yard return. Zeke gains six yards off tackle to the right. Pat goes left off tackle for a first down but is forced out of bounds. On the next play Lefty and Zeke collide on the handoff and fumble. Starfield recovers. The Starfield captain calls time out. The Lofton crowd pleads, "Hold that line!" Starfield complete a pass, calls another timeout, makes another completion to a receiver who steps out of bounds, overthrows a pass in the end zone, then lines up on the Lofton 12 to try a field goal. Pudge lines up over center again, but the snap is perfect, and the ball splits the uprights. With the scoreboard showing Lofton 14, Visitor 16, Pat fields a bounding kickoff and is smothered as the game ends.

Nick walks from the field with Zeke.

ZEKE

I blew another one, Nick.

NICK

No, you didn't, Zeke. You played a terrific game from a position you had never practiced.

ZEKE

But my interception and fumble were costly.

NICK

You and Lefty have never played together, so it's no wonder a handoff went astray. Other players made mistakes, too. Besides we lost our three best running backs, two to injuries and one to a temper tantrum. It was a team loss.

ZEKE

It still hurts.

NICK

I know.

CUT TO;

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

As the players are dressing after their showers, Doc notices a helmet

lying in the corner. He picks it up and examines it.

DOC

Look, here's Billy's helmet. He must have been so mad that he threw it away.

Basil walks over, takes the helmet from Doc, and scrutinizes it.

Basil

Alas! Poor Billy! I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy.

STAN

(Whispering to Dutch)

Who's Horatio?

DUTCH

Hamlet's friend.

BASIL

(To the players)

He hath borne me on his back a thousand times.

A few of the players laugh. Zeke smiles.

BASIL (Cont.)

(To the helmet)

*Where be your giles now? your
gambols? your songs? your flashes of
merriment?*

Laughter erupts and applause. Zeke joins them.

SPIKE

*If I were your English teacher, Basil, I'd
give you an "A" for recitation.*

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL GYM

The gym is decorated for Halloween. Students are dancing. Zeke is slumped on a bleacher with Barbara in her band uniform sitting beside him. Spike and Joanne are standing in front of them. Spike is holding an imaginary helmet.

SPIKE

*Then he says, "where are your giles? your
gambols now?"*

Joanne and Barbara laugh with Spike while Zeke merely smiles.

BARBARA

That Basil's a clever one.

SPIKE

Come on, Joannie. Let's dance.

JOANNE

Are you two going to join us?

ZEKE

I'm too tired.

Spike and Joanne start dancing. DRAW BACK to wider angle of dance floor. Basil goes over to where Zeke and Barbara are sitting and asks Barbara to dance. She turns to Zeke, who nods his approval. Basil and Barbara join the dancers on the floor. At the end of the number Basil returns Barbara to where Zeke is and leaves.

BARBARA

Basil invited me to go to the band party with him tomorrow night.

ZEKE

Go ahead. Go with him if you're tired of me.

Barbara walks off in a huff.

CUT TO:

INT - HARDWARE STORE

Zeke finishes helping a customer. Then he goes into the office to make a phone call.

ZEKE

Barbara? I'm sorry I was so grumpy last night. I was tired after playing most of the game....I know I shouldn't have been. ...Yes, I apologize. So will you go to the movies with me tonight? It's a comedy with Eddy Bracken....You can't back out?....Well, you and Basil have a good time....Bye.

Zeke puts the phone down and goes back into the store. Mom comes, full of smiles and holding a letter. She goes where Dad is standing, and Zeke goes over.

MOM

We just got a letter from Clyde. He's returning to the States. He may be home for a visit by Thanksgiving if not before.

ZEKE

That's really great news.

MOM

After that he'll be fitted with an artificial arm.

DAD

Hallelujah!

Dad and Mom hug. Zeke looks happy.

CUT TO:

EXT - IN FRONT OF MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The marquee shows "Hail Conquering Hero" with Eddy Bracken. Zeke is entering with Hank and Jolly.

JOLLY

So where's Barbara tonight, Zeke?

ZEKE

She went to the band party with Basil.

HANK

That little twerp.

As they enter, the newsreel is showing U.S. troops advancing into Germany. Zeke notices that Spike and Joanne are seated three rows in front of them. CUT TO a comical scene on the screen where Bracken is a draft rejectee mistaken for a war hero. Zeke roars hilariously.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY

Zeke comes up to Barbara at her locker.

ZEKE

So how was the band party?

BARBARA

Really great. I've got a lot of friends in the band.

ZEKE

But you'll go to the movies with me Saturday.

BARBARA

I guess so. What's playing?

ZEKE

Another war movie.

BARBARA

I wish the war was over.

ZEKE

So do I.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Some players are tossing balls around, some are practicing blocking, others are standing around as they wait for practice to begin. Eddy is watching, dressed in street clothes. Fred, whose hand is bandaged, retrieves a ball near Eddy.

FRED

How's your ankle, Eddy?

EDDY

Doc Sullivan says I should give it a couple days of rest.

FRED

We'll miss you. Where's your pal, Billy?

EDDY

Nick is talking with him.

Billy enters the field in his practice uniform. Nick is a few steps behind. Billy seeks out Eddy.

BILLY

I've been suspended from action for a week.

EDDY

I'm not surprised.

BILLY

Nick says I have to take part in drills on defense, but I can't play against Barnesdale on Friday. I can't even travel there with the team.

EDDY

Well, Billy Boy, it serves you right. You'll never be a good football player until you

learn to control your temper.

BILLY

That's what Nick told me.

CUT TO the players gathered around Nick at the end of calisthenics.

NICK

I realize that the loss to Starfield was a heartbreaker for all of us. But we've got to look beyond our loss and look ahead to this week's game against Barnesdale.

It's a non-league game, only the second time we've played Barnesdale. Last year they were weak on pass defense, so this week I want to emphasize our pass offense, particularly from double wing and the T. (Cont.)

NICK (Cont.)

Eddy is resting his ankle till Wednesday, and Billy won't be playing this week. So for a couple of days, Fred and Pat, I want you to alternate as left half with the first team.

The first team runs a series of light contact, pass plays. Billy is in the defensive backfield. Zeke is effective in hitting Spike and Flash, but he has trouble connecting with Fred and Pat running from left wing in double wing. After a while Nick blows his whistle.

NICK

That's enough for today. When we scrimmage on Tuesday and Wednesday, I want the quarterbacks to emphasize passing and reverses in the running game.

As the players head for the locker room, Zeke seeks out Billy.

ZEKE

Billy, would you stay out a few minutes and work with me? I need some more practice with pass patterns to the left wingback.

BILLY

Me? I thought I was poison.

ZEKE

You made a couple of dumb mistakes, but it isn't the end of the world.

At midfield Zeke stands three yards behind an imaginary center, and Billy lines up on the left wing. On "hike" Billy runs different patterns: quick slant in, out into the flat, buttonhook, crossing deep. After a while he is winded. Dusk is descending.

ZEKE

That's enough for today, Billy. Thanks for helping me.

They walk off the field together.

BILLY

Zeke, do you think I'll get out of Nick's doghouse.

ZEKE

Sure. He's just teaching you a lesson. And using you as an example for other guys on the team.

They sit down on the sideline bench to rest.

BILLY

But making me miss a game. Don't you think that's too severe?

ZEKE

Not at all. Your temper tantrum contributed to our loss.

BILLY

There were other mistakes.

ZEKE

Yeah, but they were matters of performance, like the interception I threw and my fumble. Yours was a loss of self-control. That's worse.

BILLY

I've always been a little hot-headed.

ZEKE

A little? I'd say a lot. But fighting is something you can control.

BILLY

That's easy for you to say, Zeke. You're so even tempered.

ZEKE

I wasn't always that way.

BILLY

You weren't?

ZEKE

No, in grade school I was a tough little kid, getting into fights all the time.

BILLY

How come?

ZEKE

Well, for one thing the kids made fun of my middle name, Ezekiel. They would tease me by singing, "Zeke, Zeke, Ezekiel."

BILLY

The same thing you mother hollered from the stands?

ZEKE

The same, except the kids sang through their nose in a sing-song manner.

BILLY

What'd you do?

ZEKE

I'd pile into them with my fists flying, at least at the boys. Then I would wind up in the principal's office, and she would call my mother.

BILLY

Then you caught hell at home?

ZEKE

Sort of. But then one day my dad had a little talk with me. He explained I was named Ezekiel after his grandfather, who was a fine gentleman. And besides there's book in the Bible called Ezekiel. "So, take pride in your name," Dad told me.

BILLY

Did you?

ZEKE

You bet. The next time someone sang the teasing song, I asked, "Did you know that Ezekiel was a famous hero in the Bible?" Later when I read the Bible myself I learned he was more of a prophet. But the idea of a hero worked for me in grade school.

BILLY

I think it changed you more than it did them, Zeke.

ZEKE

That's exactly the point, Billy. We control our reactions inside ourselves. People may provoke us, but how we respond is up to us.

BILLY

I'll have to think about that.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

That's interesting, Granddad. In third

grade I had to deal with teasing about my name, too.

GRANDDAD

You did? What did they call you.

SCOTT

This kid on our soccer team, who was sort of a bully, started calling me Scotty Potty.

GRANDDAD

And what did you do?

SCOTT

One day at the end of the practice he said, "Come here, Scotty Potty. I want to talk to you." Just then I saw his mom coming for him, so I said, "I can't hear you. What did you say?" He shouted at the top of his voice, "Come here, Scotty Potty. I want to talk to you." His mom heard him, of course, and he never called me that name again.

GRANDDAD

I'm glad you could handle it so well, Scott.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DUSK

Zeke and Billy are walking off the field.

BILLY

This season sure hasn't been what I expected. We've played six games, and I haven't even scored a touchdown.

ZEKE

Yeah, I expected us to be better than this in my senior year. At two and four we'll have to win our last three games to have a winning season.

BILLY

If you can beat Barnesdale without me, I'll be back for the last two.

ZEKE

You never change, Billy.

BILLY

That did sound conceited, didn't it? I really do want to be a team player.

CUT TO:

INT - IN THE SHOWERS

Zeke and Billy are the last players to shower. Zeke sings, not too well.

ZEKE

(Singing)

*"Dese bones, dese bones, dese bones gonna
rise again."*

Did you know that this is from Ezekiel?

BILLY

*From Paul Ezekiel Parker or Ezekiel the
prophet.*

ZEKE

The prophet.

BILLY

How about prophesying us a win, Ezekiel.

ZEKE

I will. We'll defeat Barnesdale on Friday.

CUT TO:

*EXT - BARNESDALE FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER
FLOODLIGHTS*

*The Lofton Lions are taking the field for their pre-game practice.
Their breath is frosty.*

SPIKE

Man, it's cold tonight.

BASIL

*"Blow, blow, thou wintry wind.
Freeze, freeze thou bitter sky."*

EDDY

I suppose Shakespeare again.

BASIL

"As You Like It"

EDDY

I don't like it.

STAN

Reminds me of Poland this time of year.

*From the stands Billy and his sophomore buddies cheer: "Yea, Lofton.
Yea, Lions."*

PUDGE

*Hey, look. There's Billy and his buddies.
I wonder how they got gas to drive the
90 miles to Barnesdale.*

EDDY

One of the kids is from a farm where they get extra rations.

As the game gets underway Billy and his buddies cheer lustily for each player who makes a good play.

With the wind behind him, the Barnesdale kicks the ball deep to Eddy, who makes a good return. Billy's group cheers. Barnesdale stymies Lofton's offense, gets the ball, scores with a wide open offense, and makes the extra point. The score at the end of the quarter is Barnesdale 7, Visitor 0. Soon thereafter Hank kicks a long high kick. The return man dodges Flash and cuts up the middle, where Stan hits him hard. He fumbles. Dutch picks up the ball and carries it for a touchdown. Billy and friends cheer Stan and Dutch. Basil misses the extra point. After holding Barnesdale, Zeke hits several passes out of a double wing. Using a T formation at the Barnesdale 30, Zeke fakes a handoff to Eddy going into the line, drops back to pass, then hands off to Flash on an end around. Flash outruns all pursuers to score. Basil makes the extra point. At the end of the half the score is Barnesdale 6, Visitor 13.

Dutch and Stan leave the field together. Pat and Jiri come up to them.

PAT

*Nice going, Dutch, for that touchdown.
And you, too, Stan the Man for causing
the fumble.*

DUTCH

Thanks, Pat.

JIRI

I'm glad we've got you guys on our team.

Jiri pats Dutch on the back.

CUT TO:

INT - DRESSING ROOM AT BARNESDALE STADIUM

The Lofton players are resting.

PUDGE

Two cheers for the linemen and their touchdowns.

EDDY

Sure Dutch scored first, but Flash made the second one. He's an end.

PUDGE

He's one of us.

NICK

The team scored twice. Period. And don't be overconfident. I've seen bigger leads than 13 to 7 slip away.

CUT TO:

EXT - BARNESDALE FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER
FLOODLIGHTS

Lofton has the ball first and ten just inside Barnesdale territory. On a pass play Jolly is flagged for holding. The referee marches off 15 yards. Eddy gains eight off tackle. Then Zeke throws an incomplete pass. It is third and 17 as the Lions huddle.

ZEKE

We've got the wind behind us, so I'm calling for a quick kick. Hank, trade places with Eddy in short punt. The snap will be on 4. At "hike" take a couple of steps backward to give yourself some room.

The quick kick catches Barnesdale by surprise. Hank's wind-aided kick sails beyond safety and rolls to the 15 where Flash downs it. Lofton holds Barnesdale, which has to kick into the wind. Eddy catches the short kick on the run, dodges the onrushing ends, and weaves his way to a touchdown. Billy's group cheers. Basil again makes the extra point.

In the fourth quarter, going the other way, Lefty leads the second team down field. Pat scores off tackle from the eight. At first Billy hesitates but cheers for Pat, too. The game ends Barnesdale 7, Visitor 27.

CUT TO:

INT - DRESSING ROOM AT BARNESDALE STADIUM

The players are taking off their uniforms and congratulating one another.

NICK

Zeke, where did you get the idea for a quick kick?

ZEKE

From a story in a magazine. We had the wind behind us, and our defense was holding. I figure we'd pick up yardage that way.

NICK

You fooled even me, but it worked. You called a nice game, Zeke.

ZEKE

Thanks, Nick.

PUDGE

Hey, Nick. I'm hungry. Are we going to eat before we leave Barnesdale?

NICK

We've made arrangements with a

restaurant at the edge of town.

CUT TO:

INT - RESTAURANT

The Lofton players are entering the restaurant and taking seats at tables and in booths. The manager stands at the cash register near the entrance.

MANAGER

Who's in charge of this group?

NICK

I am. We're from Lofton High. We called to alert you that we were coming and wanted 28 hamburger steaks with trimmings.

MANAGER

Yes, I know. But you didn't tell me you had colored boys on your team.

NICK

We have many shades of colors, including four Negroes.

MANAGER

Don't you see the notice?

He points to a sign: "We Reserve the Right to Refuse Service to Anyone".

MANAGER (Cont.)

We don't serve colored people here.

NICK

We're a team. We travel as a team and eat as a team.

MANAGER

I'm sorry but the colored boys will have to leave.

NICK

If they go, we all go.

Nick looks through an open door into the kitchen and notices 28 hamburger steaks cooking on a grill.

MANAGER

Well, uh. I can see there's been a misunderstanding. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll fix up four trays for the colored boys, and they can eat in the bus.

NICK

Are you talking about our Negro players?

MANAGER

Yes, I mean the -- uh - uh, the Negroes.

NICK

We eat together in the same place, or we don't eat. Come on fellows, let's go. We'll find some place where we're all welcome.

The players start to leave.

MANAGER

Wait a minute. Just this once I'm willing to compromise. If the colored boys, I mean the Negroes, will go out and return through the side door and then sit at the table next to the kitchen, I'll serve them.

NICK

Come on, team. This gentleman wants us to re-enter through the side door. All of us.

All the players exit.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Outside the restaurant Nick leads the team to the side entrance.

NICK

Zeke, Spike, Bulldog, Eddy. You go in first and take the table next to the

kitchen. The rest of you fill up the space in back first. Except Pudge, Hank, Jolly, and Jiri, you wait and go in last with Fred, Flash, Nate, Joe, and the coaches.

CUT TO:

INT - RESTAURANT

Zeke leads the team through the side door, and they sit as Nick has instructed. At the front tables are Nick, Fred, Flash, and Pudge; Nate, Hank, Jiri, and Hal; Joe, Jolly, Dave, and the bus driver.

MANAGER

That's not what I said.

NICK

That's the way it will be.

Nick takes out a check from his coat pocket and flashes it before the manager.

NICK (Cont.)

And I expect those of us up front to be served first.

The manager storms into the kitchen and doesn't come back out. Soon the waitresses bring out the food and serve the front tables first. Doc, Basil, Dutch, and Stan are at a table next to Zeke's. After their food is served, Doc watches Basil eating.

DOC

You have an interesting reflex, Basil.

BASIL

What's that?

DOC

I notice that every time you lift your arm with food on your fork, your mouth pops open.

Basil thinks about this for a moment. Then he forks a french fry, dips it in catsup, and lifts it near his closed mouth. But in a brief instance he opens his mouth and pops it in.

DOC

See, Basil. You can't fool the doctor.

Four Barnesdale football players wearing sweaters with a large "B" enter the restaurant. Two are big enough to be tackles. One is sleek and wiry. They come over to the table where Fred and Flash are sitting.

WIRY PLAYER

Which one of you scored on us tonight on the end around?

FLASH

I did.

WIRY PLAYER

You're pretty fast, aren't you?

FLASH

I guess so.

WIRY PLAYER

Are you on the track team?

FLASH

I was at my last school.

WIRY PLAYER

What's your best time in the 100 yard dash?

FLASH

10.6

WIRY PLAYER

I'm a 10.5 man myself. Maybe we'll meet again at the state track meet.

FLASH

I hope so.

BARNESDALE TACKLE

You guys played a good game tonight. We're looking forward to playing you

again next year.

FRED

Yeah, we'll see you then.

The Barnesdale players shake hands with Flash, Fred, and others at the front tables. They go to a booth on the other side of the restaurant.

Near the back Doc sucks the last bit of melted ice from his glass and leans toward Basil. Shielding his mouth with the back of his hand, he whispers suggestively.

DOC

Basil, do you know what this means in Texas?

BASIL

No, what?

DOC

Empty!

Dutch laughs. So do Zeke, Spike, Bulldog, and Eddy, who have overheard the conversation. Stan looks puzzled but joins the laughter.

As the players finish their meals, they saunter out the front door of the restaurant.

CUT TO:

INT - SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT

After the bus is back on the highway, Fred comes forward to where Nick is sitting.

FRED

Thanks a lot, Nick. That was courageous.

NICK

It wasn't courage. It was loyalty. I told all of you on the second day of practice that if you would be loyal to me, I would be loyal to you. That's what makes a good team.

CUT TO:

INT - PARKER HARDWARE STORE

Eddy and Billy come into the Parker hardware store and go to the counter where Zeke is working.

EDDY

We want some shotgun shells. We're after quail and rabbits.

ZEKE

Eddy, I thought you were teed-off with

Billy.

EDDY

*I was, but he's suffered long enough.
Besides I appreciate him going to
Barnesdale to cheer for me.*

BILLY

*You called a terrific game, Zeke. I'm
glad you won.*

ZEKE

*Thanks, Billy. I have a feeling that you'll
shine next week against Grunwald.*

CUT TO:

INT - MOVIE THEATER

On the screen is a scene from "Wing and a Prayer", showing Don Ameche and Dana Andrews flying off an aircraft carrier in the Pacific. Zeke, Barbara, Joanne, and Spike are seated together. Zeke hesitantly puts his arm around Barbara. At first she resists but then accepts it.

CUT TO:

INT - SPIKE'S CAR AT LIONS DEN DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

At the Lions Den Spike and Joanne are in the front seat. Zeke and

Barbara are in the back seat. A tray of food is propped on the open window by the driver. They are eating.

BARBARA

Weren't you nervous when the Barnesdale players walked into the restaurant?

ZEKE

Yes, I'll admit that I didn't know what to expect.

JOANNE

Nick may call it loyalty, but I say it took a lot of courage.

SPIKE

I think it would be hard for me to stand up like that. How about you, Zeke?

ZEKE

I suppose it would. But sometimes you have to take a stand for what you know is right.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY

Pudge, Pat, and several other students are holding "Roosevelt and Truman" signs. Bulldog, Rusty, and several other students are holding

up signs for "Dewey and Bricker". Students walk by and enter the library, which has sign "VOTE HERE". Spike comes up to Rusty.

SPIKE

Rusty, it was great having you and Roberto back at practice yesterday.

RUSTY

We were glad to be reinstated.

SPIKE

I hear Roberto aced the make-up exam.

RUSTY

He got an A-. I dropped the course since I don't need the credit to graduate, but I still had to sit out three weeks.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON SCHOOL LIBRARY

The students are holding a mock presidential election. They come in, mark ballots, and drop them in a ballot box. Zeke and Fred finish voting about the same time.

ZEKE

I know its a secret ballot, Fred, but I bet you're for Roosevelt.

FRED

I sure am. What about you?

ZEKE

Yeah, I voted for him, too. But I don't like to broadcast it. My dad's a fervent Republican, but my mom usually votes Democratic, like her father did. So at home I keep quiet on my preference.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

Did you really vote for Roosevelt, Granddad?

GRANDDAD

It was only a mock election at school. I was only 17, and in those days you couldn't vote until you were 21.

SCOTT

We've read about Roosevelt in our history class.

GRANDDAD

What's history to you, Scott, was contemporary events to me.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON SCHOOL LIBRARY

Zeke and Fred walk away from the ballot box toward an alcove of the library where they sit and talk.

ZEKE

Fred, I'm sorry about what happened at the restaurant in Barnesdale the other night. And also about the things that kid said in the Ashmont game.

FRED

I've heard worse.

ZEKE

These things seem to happen when we play out of town.

FRED

It's not all that much better in Lofton, you know.

ZEKE

What do you mean?

FRED

How many Negroes do you see in the two

best restaurants on Main Street? Or at Lions Den where you and Spike and the others go?

ZEKE

I just thought that you preferred that barbecue place on the other side of town.

FRED

We do. We like the food. We're more comfortable there. But sometimes I'd like to be part of the larger group beyond the football field.

ZEKE

Then you ought to come to the Lions Den. I'm sure it'd be all right. Mr. Taylor who owns it teaches Sunday School at our church.

FRED

Maybe it would be. Maybe not.

ZEKE

Anything else?

FRED

There are only two doctors in Lofton who will serve Negroes. But they allow us to come in only at certain times.

ZEKE

I didn't know that.

FRED

And the shoe stores won't let us try on shoes.

ZEKE

Really? I've lived in Lofton all my life and never noticed these things.

FRED

It's subtle around here. Not blatant like it is in the South.

ZEKE

I'm sorry I've been so blind.

FRED

That's all right. You and the other guys on the team accept us as equals. You've helped me with ball handling, and Dutch taught Gordon how to block. And Nick threatens us fairly. He's demanding, but he doesn't seem to notice what color you are.

ZEKE

But we should do something about the situation in town. I think I'll talk about it with our youth group at church.

The bell rings, calling students to their next class. Zeke and Fred get up to go.

FRED

Thanks for your concern, Zeke. This is the first time I've ever talked to a white person about these things.

ZEKE

Thanks for my enlightenment, Fred.

CUT TO:

INT - DRESSING ROOM AT GRUNWALD STADIUM

The Lofton team is gathered around Nick as he instructs them before the game with Grunwald.

NICK

We're fortunate to be back at full strength for our game here with Grunwald. As I told you at practice, they're a high flying team. They pass a lot and have some trick plays off the double wing. In league play they've lost only to Ashmont and Hargrove, both

undefeated.

ROBERTO

We're ready for 'em.

NICK

But Grunwald is vulnerable to the same kind of wide-open offense. So Eddy, Fred, Billy, Spike, Flash, and the rest of you, be ready to fly. Zeke, dare to be daring. Now let's go. Show me your best stuff.

The players roar and rush out of the dressing room.

CUT TO:

EXT - GRUNWALD FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

As the players line up for the opening kickoff, it is apparent that a sizable contingent from Lofton is in the visitors' stands, including Barbara and Joanne sitting with two African American young women, a small pep band, Mary Lou, and three other cheerleaders. They are vociferous when the Lions do well.

Grunwald receives the opening kickoff and moves down field with a run-and-gun offense, including laterals and reverses. From third and goal from the Lofton 7, the Grunwald passer can't find anyone open and runs wide to score. The kicker makes the extra point.

On their first possession the Lions are equally assertive and effective, culminating with Zeke hitting Spike in the corner of the end zone. Basil makes his kick to tie the score at 7 to 7.

Thereafter the teams slow down and exchange kicks. Then midway through the second quarter on the Grunwald 18 from T-formation, Zeke hands off to Eddy, who follows Hank off tackle to the right. As the defense end closes in, Eddy laterals to Fred, who has drifted wide. Fred cuts down the sideline then back toward center to elude the safety. Basil's kick makes it Grunwald 7, Visitor 14.

On the kickoff Grunwald posts two return men. Lofton has good coverage, but after running a couple of steps the receiver stops, turns, and throws an overhand pass as a backward lateral to the receiver across the field. He seems to be headed for a touchdown until Flash catches him at the Lofton 25 and rides him down at the 20. Grunwald scores on three pass plays to tie the game at 14 all.

At the beginning of the second half Grunwald stops Lofton's first offense drive and the scores on an end around from the Lofton 15.

On Lofton's next series the second string backfield and ends play with the first guards, tackles, and center. Billy and Pat make good gains, and Lefty hits a couple of crucial passes. They are at the Grunwald 25 when the third quarter ends. On the first play of the fourth quarter, Lefty rolls out to pass to Chuck in the flat, is hit hard as he starts to pass, and throws wide. Lefty is woozy. Doc comes in with some smelling salts, and Jiri and Jolly help Lefty off the field. Zeke takes Lefty's place as the Lions huddle.

ZEKE

Watching from the sidelines, I notice that the Grunwald is spread wide, so let's take it up the middle with 433.

From short punt Zeke hands off to Billy as Roberto opens a large hole with a trap block on the charging Grunwald right guard. Billy bursts through the middle of the line then cuts to the outside and across the goal line. Billy starts to celebrate his first touchdown but thinks better of it. But Zeke pats him on the back. Basil again hits the extra point to tie the game.

Both sides tighten their defenses and force another exchange of punts. At fourth and four from their own 44, Grunwald calls a time out. A Grunwald substitute comes in. The Lions huddle on their side of the ball.

ZEKE

I bet they go for it. Their coach won't be satisfied with a tie. If they line up in punt formation, look out for a short snap to one of the up backs.

Grunwald lines up in punt formation. The ball goes to the fullback, but Roberto nails him at the line of scrimmage. The Lions take over on downs. Zeke calls time out, goes to the linesman, and returns to the huddle.

ZEKE

We've got a minute and a half left. Time

enough to score. They'll expect a pass. Instead let's run 318 from double wing. Fred, when I get the snap, I'll cock my arm to fake a pass and then hand you the ball. If you can't go all the way, try to go out of bounds.

The play goes as Zeke calls it. Hank levels the Grunwald right end, Spike knocks down the linebacker, and Eddy blocks the defensive halfback. Fred heads down the sideline until the safety pushes him out of bounds at the Grunwald 30. The Lions huddle.

ZEKE

Eddy, this is what we've been practicing for. Sucker pass from short punt.

EDDY

I'm ready.

ZEKE

And remember guys, it's supposed to look like 36 off tackle to the right, except you can't cross the line of scrimmage to block.

Bulldog snaps the ball to Eddy. Guards pull to the right, and Fred heads for the Grunwald left end. Zeke stealthily eases off to the left. Eddy runs four steps to the right, stops suddenly, turns back, and lofts the ball to Zeke, who is all alone heading down the left sideline. The ball flutters, but Zeke catches it in stride at the 15 and sprints into

the end zone. In the stands the Lofton supporters go wild. So do Lofton subs along the sidelines. Jolly pats Basil so hard on the back that his glasses fall off. Basil is wiping off his glasses as he runs in to try for the extra point. He misses.

On the last play of the game Eddy intercepts a desperation pass. The final score is Grunwald 21, Visitor 27. Zeke and Eddy, clutching the game ball, leave the field together.

EDDY

I'm going to keep this and show it to Duke the next time he's home on leave.

Nick is waiting for them on the sidelines.

NICK

Zeke, I said to be daring, but I never expected the sucker pass. Another surprise for Coach Nickerson. But congratulations to you both. You won the game.

ZEKE

Thanks, Nick.

EDDY

I bet it reminds you of the pass Brad threw to Duke two years ago.

NICK

(Laughing)

In results, yes! In form, no!

CUT TO:

INT - LIONS DEN RESTAURANT

The players are entering the Lions Den in Lofton where eight tables have been set aside for the team. Students from Lofton High cheer as they come in. Mary Lou, dressed as a cheerleader, rushes to Eddy and kisses him. Barbara gives Zeke a hug but isn't as exuberant. With her are Joanne, who buzzes Spike, and two African American young women, who go up to Fred and Flash. Zeke and Spike push two tables together so that they, Fred, Flash, and the four young women can sit together. Dutch, Stan, Jiri, and Pat take a table together. The team and students create a festive mood in the Lions Den.

CUT TO;

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY

Zeke and Spike come up to Rusty and Roberto at Rusty's locker.

SPIKE

Did you guys hear that Ted Simmons was killed in action?

ROBERTO

Oh, no! How did it happen?

ZEKE

His unit was storming a Japanese-held island in the Pacific.

RUSTY

Gosh. Two years ago when I was a sub I got to play next to him.

SPIKE

He was a great guy. I learned to play end just watching him.

ROBERTO

I hope we don't lose any more.

ZEKE

Yeah, to death or injury.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are gathered around Nick after opening calisthenics.

NICK

Before we start brushing up on our plays and defense, let's pause for a moment of silence in honor of Ted Simmons. He's the fourth Lofton player killed in action.

The players remove their helmets and bow their heads. Rusty wipes tears from his eyes.

NICK (Cont.)

As you've heard, Hargrove remains undefeated after beating Ashmont on Friday. One of our Main Street merchants who saw the game tells me that Hargrove surprised Ashmont by putting a man in motion from the T. This will require some adjustments in our defense. I'll show you if the first team will line up on defense and the second team on offense. I'll play the man in motion.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

On our middle school team we use man-in-motion all the time, Granddad.

GRANDDAD

Yes, I know. In 1944 some college teams were doing so, but it was new for high schools.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Nick takes Pat's place in the second team backfield. As Lefty gives the signal count, Nick goes in motion to the left and then cuts down field as a receiver. A second time he goes in motion to the right beyond the defensive end, stops before the count is complete and comes back in to block Spike. He then stands between the two teams.

NICK

Different defensive players have to keep an eye on the man-in-motion. At first the tackle and linebacker. Then the end and halfback. When he goes on out, the halfback should move wider to cover him. Of course, it may be a fake, and the play will go the other way. That's what makes it so tricky.

Pat resumes his position and acts as man-in-motion in several plays off the T, and Nick directs the first team defenders what to do. After a while Nick calls the players together.

NICK

We are underdogs against Hargrove. Our only chance is a high risk offense, the kind we used during much of the Grunwald. So we'll working on pass plays for the next half hour.

The first team takes the ball on offense. From a T Zeke fakes to Eddy on a quick opener, and passes to Spike in the flat.

CUT TO:

INT - PARKER FAMILY KITCHEN

Zeke comes in for dinner where Mom, Dad, and Laura are getting seated at the dinette.

MOM

We've had the best news today, Paul. Clyde's back in the states. This afternoon he phoned from a rehabilitation center in Massachusetts. He hopes to be home soon for a short visit.

ZEKE

That's just great! I wish he could get here this week and watch me play our final game.

MOM

So do I. But more likely he won't get here until next week.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Eddy receives the Hargrove kickoff and makes a good return. The Lions open with an end around from a T, and Flash makes a first down. Zeke hits Spike over center for another first down. The Lions move

downfield with a combination of reverses from double wing, passes, a quarterback sneak by Zeke to pick up a first down, and Eddy scoring on a pass in the flat from Zeke. The hometown crowd roars. The band gives Basil his usual fanfare, and his kick splits the uprights. The Lofton bench is greatly excited.

Hargrove players form a tight wedge for the kickoff return, but Roberto breaks through for the tackle. Then Hargrove moves downfield with their man-in-motion offense off the T. Mostly running plays, featuring crisp ball handling, solid block, and hard running. They score a touchdown and make the extra point to tie the game at 7-7.

Thereafter, Hargrove tightens on defense and halts the Lions after two first downs. Hargrove makes two more touchdowns in the half but messes up the third try for extra point. The players leave the field at halftime with the scoreboard showing: Lofton 7, Visitor 20.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

Coach is at a blackboard drawing plays of Hargrove's man-in-motion offense and how to defend better. He looks at his wristwatch.

NICK

O.K., it's time to go back out.

Remember, we've come from behind before. We can do it again. Let's go.

The players roar and rush for the door.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Hargrove uses two receivers deep for the second half kickoff. The receiver fakes a reverse but doesn't fool the Lions. As Pudge closes in on the return man, he is blocked from behind, but Bulldog stops the ballcarrier. An official throws the flag for the clip. Pudge lays on the ground, grasping his knee in pain. Dr. Sullivan and Doc come out for a look. Dr. Sullivan motions for a couple of players to help him up. Rusty and Roberto help Pudge to his feet and support him as he limps to the sidelines. Mary Lou leads the students in a chant: "Pudge! Pudge! Pudge! Pudge!" Pudge takes off his helmet and waves. Jiri comes in to take Pudge's place.

The clipping penalty makes it first and 25 for Hargrove. They can't make a first down and have to punt. After Eddy receives the ball, he gets to the outside and heads down the sidelines until he is pushed out of bounds near the 50. With a wide open offense the Lions pick up two first downs in four plays. From the Hargrove 25 Zeke hits Spike over the middle. Spike holds the ball long enough to have possession before he is hit hard by the Hargrove safety. He fumbles, and Hargrove recovers. Spike is shaken up and has to leave the game, but on his own power.

This time the Hargrove offense won't be denied. They move downfield to score and make the extra point for a 27-7 lead. Spike returns for the kickoff, which goes to Fred. The Lions make a couple of first downs. From a T Zeke fakes a handoff to Hank into the line and drops back to throw to Flash going down and out. As he releases the ball, he

is hit from both sides. He lies on the ground, grasping his right leg. Dr. Sullivan and Doc come in. Dr. Sullivan feels Zeke's leg.

DR. SULLIVAN

I think the fibula is broken. Chris, go get a splint and a stretcher.

Dr. Sullivan tapes the splint around Zeke's leg. Spike and Fred lift Zeke onto the stretcher. Jolly and Wally come in from the sidelines and carry Zeke off the field. Lefty comes to take Zeke's place. Mary Lou leads the students in "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" over and over. Zeke waves in acknowledgement. Nick comforts Zeke as he is carried across the sideline. As play resumes on the field, Dr. Sullivan speaks to Nick.

DR. SULLIVAN

Nick, we need an ambulance to get him to the hospital.

ZEKE

No, sirens, please. I want to go quietly. But first I want to see us score.

Dave goes off to call for an ambulance. Several players put a couple of benches together and lift Zeke and his stretcher on them so that he can watch the game. On the field Eddy has made a first down as the third quarter ends. The Hargrove coach replaces his entire team. Nick notices this. He sends Chuck and Mike in for Spike and Flash. The students cheer loudly as they leave the field. Nick sends in Stan and Jolly for Roberto and Rusty. Again loud cheers. Nick sends in Billy for Eddy. As Eddy saunters off the field, Mary Lou leads the students

in "Eddy! Eddy! Eddy!" The seniors -- Spike, Flash, Pudge, Roberto, Rusty, and Eddy -- stand near Zeke and wave to the cheering crowd.

As play resumes in the fourth quarter, Lefty moves the Lions downfield, running exclusively from a T with Billy, Hank, and Fred in the backfield. Inside the 10 Billy scores off tackle. Zeke and the other seniors cheer. Basil's kick splits the uprights to make the score Lofton 14, Visitor 27. More cheers from the seniors.

As Nate kicks off, the ambulance arrives on the field and comes along the running track. Zeke's dad, Laura, and Barbara have come from the stands and approach Zeke as he is carried to the ambulance. Barbara is teary-eyed.

ZEKE

I'll be all right.

DR. SULLIVAN

Just a broken bone. It'll heal satisfactorily.

DAD

I'll see you at the hospital, son. Barbara, do you want to go with Laura and me?

BARBARA

Yes, I'd like to.

As the ambulance drives off, the Hargrove second team moves down field and scores. With the extra point the score is Lofton 14, Visitor

34. The subs play the rest of the game as the seniors cheer them on. When the game is over, Dutch, Stan, and Jiri leave the field together. So do Mike and Chuck. Flash goes up to them.

FLASH

Good game, guys. I can see that the Lions will have strength at end next year.

MIKE

Thanks, Flash. I've learned a lot this year watching you and Spike play.

CHUCK

Yeah, me too.

Flash puts his arms around their shoulders, and they walk off together. Bulldog comes out to congratulate Wally, and Eddy joins Billy.

BILLY

Is Zeke gonna be all right?

EDDY

I hope so. Doc Sullivan told Nick he expects no complications.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

SCOTT

And did Zeke's, I mean, your leg heal all

right, Granddad?

GRANDDAD

Oh, yes. There was some pain for a day. And I had to stay in the hospital for a week with my leg held up in a contraption. But all the guys came and visited me, and Nick, too. We talked about the ups and downs of our losing season. Then on Tuesday of that week I received the visitor I most wanted to see.

CUT TO:

INT - HOSPITAL ROOM

Zeke is lying in bed, his right leg in a cast, held up by a rope and pulleys. He is reading Life magazine. CLYDE enters, dressed as an army private with the right sleeve of his jacket pinned up because of his missing arm.

CLYDE

Is this the room of Lofton's star quarterback?

ZEKE

Clyde! How glad I am to see you!

Zeke holds out his arms to Clyde. Clyde extends his left hand, which Zeke grasps in both his hands.

ZEKE

Welcome home, soldier.

CLYDE

Glad to be here.

Their eyes moisten. Clyde looks at Zeke's cast and touches it gently.

CLYDE

What happened, Paul?

ZEKE

Oh, just a little football mishap. It was our last game anyway.

CLYDE

Not a good way to end your football career.

ZEKE

*I guess not. And what about you, Clyde?
How did it happen?*

Clyde looks away and is silent for a moment. He turns back to Zeke.

CLYDE

I'll tell you about it some time, but not now.

ZEKE

I'm really sorry for the pain you must have suffered.

CLYDE

Many suffered more.

ZEKE

And I suppose it's the end of your music career.

CLYDE

There are two answers. First, my loss may open a new career for me.

ZEKE

What do you mean?

CLYDE

When I was in the base hospital in England, another patient with an amputated leg wandered through the ward on crutches. He stopped by my bed and said, "I can see you'll have a great career as a lawyer."

"What do you mean," I asked. He

explained, "People get tired of lawyers telling them on the one hand this and on the other hand that. Lots of people are looking for one-armed lawyers."

Clyde explodes with laughter at his joke, and Zeke gets caught up in the merriment.

ZEKE

And what's the other answer.

CLYDE

Maybe I'm not through as a trombonist.

ZEKE

How can that be? It was your slide arm. I've never seen a left-handed trombonist.

CLYDE

Nor have I. But just the day before I was scheduled to fly back to the States, Glen Miller played a concert at the hospital. Afterwards he toured the wards, carrying his trombone.

ZEKE

And he came to your ward?

CLYDE

He sure did. "Are there any musicians

here?" he asked. I raised my left hand, and he came over. "What's your instrument, soldier?" he inquired. "Trombone," I answered. "Or used to be."

He noticed my missing arm and commented, "It still is. You can play a trombone with either arm. Let me show you." He flipped his instrument so that the slide was on the left and played a tune, using his left arm to move the slide.

ZEKE

How was the tone?

CLYDE

Mellow as usual. Then he said, "Here you try." I sat up, and he held his trombone to my mouth. I blew and tried a scale. I missed some notes, but it wasn't too bad.

ZEKE

You played Glen Miller's trombone?

CLYDE

Yes, I did. When he left, a therapist told me that when I get my artificial arm, I'll

be able to hold a trombone without any difficulty. So maybe my musical career isn't over.

Basil walks into the room.

ZEKE

Hi, Basil. It's about time. You're the last member of the team to visit me.

Basil notices Clyde.

BASIL

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know you had a visitor. I can come back later.

ZEKE

That's all right. It's my brother Clyde, the war hero. Clyde, this is Basil, extra point specialist, par excellence.

CLYDE

I remember you. You play bassoon, don't you.

BASIL

That's me. Zeke, I'd have come sooner, but I thought you were mad at me. Spike says you aren't.

ZEKE

No, not at all.

CLYDE

What's this about?

ZEKE

Barbara, the girl I've been dating, went out with Basil to make me jealous.

CLYDE

"Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy. It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on."

BASIL

"Othello, Act III". You know your Shakespeare, Clyde.

CLYDE

Of course, I took Miss Shepherd's course.

BASIL

Me, too. I bet we memorized the same lines.

CLYDE

I'm glad I did. It help me through some tough times the past six weeks.

ZEKE

How's that?

CLYDE

On my hospital bed to divert myself from my woes, I recited all the poems and quotations I could remember. I kept coming to the line that says, "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

BASIL

I used that one after our second loss, and they turned the cold shower on me.

CLYDE

That's fitting. The icy fang the Duke talked about.

BASIL

Yes, the Duke forced to live in exile in the Forest of Arden.

CLYDE

Knowing that his men miss court life, the Duke tells them, "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

Basil joins Clyde in the recitation.

CLYDE, BASIL

"Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.
And this our life exempt from public haunt
Finds tongues in trees,
 books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in everything.
I would not change it."

ZEKE

Hurrah!

Zeke applauds.

CLYDE

Adversity is a lost arm. A broken leg.

ZEKE

A losing season.

CLYDE

Whatever happens to us, we can look for
good in it. We may not know what it is
at first, but it's there if we search for it.
That's how I discovered that I'm going to
be the world's foremost left-handed
trombonist.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

Grandma enters.

GRANDMA

It's time for lunch. It's quit raining, so I've set up a table on the porch. You can finish your story there, Paul.

GRANDDAD

I'm almost done.

CUT TO:

EXT - PORCH AT GRANDDAD'S HOUSE - DAY

Grandma comes out onto porch followed by Scott and Granddad. They sit at the table where lunch awaits them and bow their heads.

GRANDDAD

Eternal God, for this food we are about to partake we give you our thanks. May it strengthen us to do your will. Amen.

They start eating.

SCOTT

Grandma, your name is Helen, isn't it?

GRANDMA

Yes, always has been.

SCOTT

Not Barbara?

GRANDMA

Of course not.

GRANDDAD

Barbara and Zeke broke up not long after he got out of the hospital. A couple of weeks before Christmas.

SCOTT

When did you meet Granddad?

GRANDMA

In college.

GRANDDAD

After I got out of the army.

SCOTT

Did you ever meet Granddad's high school teammates?

GRANDMA

Oh, yes. Eric Anderson, known as Spike in high school, was best man at our wedding. And I was a bridesmaid when Laura married Billy.

SCOTT

Granddad, your sister Laura married Billy?

GRANDDAD

Yes, she did?

SCOTT

My Great Uncle Bill is Billy, is Wild Bill?

GRANDDAD

That's right.

SCOTT

I can't believe it.

GRANDDAD

It's true.

SCOTT

Wow! And did you ever meet the other players, Grandma? Rusty, Roberto, Dutch, and all the rest?

GRANDMA

Yes, they were all together at your grandfather's tenth high school reunion. They were quite a nice group.

GRANDDAD

There's a picture taken on that occasion hanging on my wall. Let me get it.

Granddad gets up, goes into the house, and returns with the picture. He shows it to Scott.

GRANDDAD

Here they are: Eddy, Flash, Spike, Billy, and the others. We were happy to be back together again.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL GYM

Registration is underway for the tenth reunion of the Lofton High School Class of 1945. Zeke, Pudge, and Mary Lou are at the registration desk. Other class members are decorating the gym. Some are gathered in small conversational groups. Roberto enters.

ROBERTO

Pudge, old buddy! Zeke, the brains of our outfit! Long time no see.

PUDGE

Roberto, que tal?¹

ROBERTO

De nada.²

ZEKE

I'm glad you could get back to Lofton.

ROBERTO

It's good to be back. I know you're a lawyer now, Zeke. What are you doing these days, Pudge?

PUDGE

Spinning disks at KJBC.

ROBERTO

Where's Rusty?

ZEKE

He went to get helium for the balloons.
Here he is now.

Rusty wheels in a canister of helium.

¹ "What's up?"

² "Nothing."

ROBERTO

Rusty!

RUSTY

Roberto!

They rush together, give each other bear hugs, and then separate.

RUSTY

You can still call me "Rusty", but around town I'm known as Ralph now.

ROBERTO

How come?

RUSTY

My dad helped me get a used car business started. I couldn't call it "Rusty's Used Cars", could I? How about you? How's the rocket man?

ROBERTO

Just great. Space is the real frontier.

Zeke, you look in pretty good shape.

ZEKE

I play tennis with Spike. He keeps me running.

Spike and Joanne enter the gym.

PUDGE

Here he comes. The chicken feed merchant. And his wife.

SPIKE

Roberto, welcome home.

Roberto and Spike shake hands. Joanne hugs Roberto.

JOANNE

It's good to see you, Bob.

ROBERTO

You, too, Joanne. I hope this guy's treating you all right.

JOANNE

He's the greatest!

Joanne joins Mary Lou at the table.

SPIKE

Pudge, who else is coming from the football team?

PUDGE

Everyone from our class. Eddy, of course. Right now he's out running

errands for Mary Lou. Since they
married, she's got him under control.

I expect Doc and Basil pretty soon. And
Flash is supposed to get in town in the
morning.

ROBERTO

What about the other guys, the juniors
and sophomores who played with us?
Any of them around?

ZEKE

Quite a few. Eddy's invited some of
them to a get-together tomorrow
afternoon.

SPIKE

Here comes the short ones now.

Basil and Doc come in together. They shake hands all around.

ZEKE

I'm glad to see that you're friends at last.

DOC

We're a paradox, aren't we?

ROBERTO

In what way?

DOC

Basil Fox, Ph.D and Chris Wilson, M.D.

They all groan.

SPIKE

*At med school didn't they immunize you
for bad puns?*

BASIL

*Zeke, what about your brother Clyde?
Is he still around?*

ZEKE

*Sure, he runs the hardware store with
my dad, but his greatest love is still
music. His band is playing for our dance
tomorrow night.*

BASIL

*That's great. I want to see him and hear
him play trombone left-handed.*

ZEKE

He's terrific.

Mary Lou gets up from the registration and approaches the group.

MARY LOU

Hi, guys. Joanne and I need some strong men to help hang crepe paper and blow up the balloons.

DOC

Flattery will get you everywhere, Mary Lou.

They disperse to take on their assignments.

CUT TO:

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

Eddy opens the door and lets in Roberto, Rusty, Pudge, Zeke, Spike, Bulldog, and Hank.

EDDY

Welcome to this hallowed place.

ROBERTO

It looks about the same, except they've painted the lockers.

BULLDOG

It still reeks of sweat and Ben Gay. Brings back some happy memories.

EDDY

Bulldog, it looks like being a corporate

executive agrees with you.

BULLDOG

*I like New York, but sometimes I envy you
who have stayed in Lofton.*

HANK

Yeah, some of us have never left the farm.

ZEKE

*Dutch did. He's working in the Middle
East for the Mennonite Service
Committee. He's home on leave now.*

SPIKE

*Stan's in town, too, for a visit with his
family. He's now with the Voice of
America in Washington.*

EDDY

I expect both of them to join us soon.

*Fred, Flash, Billy, and Lefty enter. Flash wears an army captain
uniform, decorated with ribbons for service in Korea, including a purple
heart.*

RUSTY

*Here come the cousins: the reverend and
the captain.*

SPIKE

*And the fledgling real estate tycoon and
the oil speculator.*

*They shake hands all around. Dutch and Stan enter and exchange
greetings with the others. Dutch and Flash are especially effusive in
greeting one another.*

STAN

Eddy, you're the coach here now?

EDDY

*Just the assistant coach. Dave became
head coach when Nick took over at the
state college, his alma mater. I took
Dave's place at Lindbergh Junior High.*

ROBERTO

Nick was a great coach.

FRED

He sure was.

SPIKE

The greatest.

EDDY

We were lucky to have him.

ZEKE

I'm sorry we gave him his only losing

season at Lofton High.

PUDGE

Me, too.

RUSTY

I wish it'd been otherwise.

ZEKE

It was my fault more than anyone else.

ROBERTO

How do you figure that?

ZEKE

Because of that stupid call I made toward the end of the opening game against Kepler. When we stopped them near the end of the game six inches from the goal line, I called for a punt. I should've run a quarterback sneak, as Nick told me later. With more running room, we could've run out the clock and won the game.

HANK

But if I'd made a decent punt, Kepler would never have scored.

FRED

I thought we lost because I let the Kepler

end catch the winning pass in the end zone.

EDDY

Remember how I slipped when I tried to cut around the last defender on the kickoff return? If I hadn't fallen, I would've gone all the way with a 90-yard, game-winning return.

SPIKE

I didn't get the ball out of bounds on the last play of the game. If we had time for one more play, we might have scored.

ROBERTO

Stop it, you guys. You've just proved what Nick told us. It was a team loss.

DOC

Of course, it was. And as Nick taught us, you shouldn't agonize forever over your mistakes. All season long I watched him keep you guys focused on the next game and not get mired down in the previous defeat.

ZEKE

You're right, Doc. That perspective has helped me as a lawyer. If I lose a case, as

I sometimes do, I move on to the next one and don't get bogged down in what might have been.

PUDGE

You know what? A couple of years after we graduated, Nick told me that our losing season was what made Lofton the league champs the following year.

LEFTY

That's true. Up front we had battle-tested veterans who knew how to play together: Bulldog, Dutch, Stan, Jolly, and Jiri plus Mike and Chuck as ends. In the backfield Fred and Hank were a stabilizing influence for Billy and me as we installed a man-in-motion offense. The next year after all these guys graduated, we finished third in the league even though Billy and I had good seasons our senior year.

BILLY

I'm quite willing to admit that I never would've reached my full potential if, you, Eddy, hadn't first put me down and then
(Cont.)

BILLY (Cont.)

helped me up and if, you, Zeke hadn't taught me to get my temper under control and to become a team player.

EDDY

I appreciate that, Billy.

ZEKE

Me, too.

ROBERTO

Besides all that, we need to remember that in the midst of losing football games, a lot of good things happened to us. Like when I flunked world history and got suspended from football. This caused me to get serious with my school work and buckle down. I never would've got through engineering school if I hadn't learned scholastic discipline.

RUSTY

Somehow my dad found out that we tried to cheat on that test. He really ate me out. "Ralph," he said, "in the auto business it takes three things to be successful: good cars, good mechanics, and integrity. People are suspicious of car dealers, especially used car dealers. If you get a reputation for dishonesty,

you're doomed to fail."

BASIL

So do they call you Honest Ralph?

RUSTY

I've never heard that name, but my customers trust me.

STAN

What I remember most from the '44 season was how all you guys accepted a Polish refugee who didn't know a tackle from a guard and helped him learn your American sport. Only in America, I thought, were people so kind.

FLASH

Your acceptance meant a lot to me, too, coming as I did from an all-Negro school. I was a little scared when I came out for football here, though I tried not to show it. Then at the end of the first practice
(Cont.)

FLASH (Cont.)

Zeke welcomed me. Dutch taught me to block so that I could make the team. And in the Ashmont game Rusty took care of that loudmouth end who was

baiting me.

RUSTY

You were my teammate, so I had to protect you.

FRED

Looking back, I realize that this attitude of we're-all-in-this-together made racial differences disappear on our team. We were loyal to one another as Nick was loyal to us. He demonstrated that when he outfoxed that restaurant owner in Barnesdale.

PUDGE

Yeah, that was something.

ZEKE

We all liked Nick, and he had great respect for us, too. When he visited me at the hospital after I broke my leg in the last game, he said that our team showed more character development than any team he'd ever coached.

ROBERTO

That's a nice compliment for a bunch of losers.

ZEKE

No, we're not losers. Listening to you guys talk, I realize that we may have had a losing season, but it made winners of us all.

SPIKE

That's for sure.

FRED

Considering the effects on us then and since, I'd say it was a glorious season.

BULLDOG

Well spoken.

RUSTY

Yeah.

ROBERTO

I agree.

EDDY

Right you are, Fred. Now I'd like to get a picture of you bunch of winners. A photographer is supposed to meet us on the football field in a few minutes.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players gather on the football field full of good spirits. They line up at a bench for their photograph.

CUT TO:

EXT - PORCH AT GRANDDAD'S HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE UP of the photograph propped up on the table where Granddad, Grandma, and Scott are eating their last bites of cake.

SCOTT

Did your team ever get together again, Granddad?

GRANDDAD

Some of them were around for our 25th high school class reunion in 1970, but it wasn't the same. We were as much divided as the rest of the country over the Vietnam War. But I hope that all the survivors will get together next summer when our class has its 50th reunion.

SCOTT

You mean some of them have died?

GRANDDAD

Yes, we've lost three from our first team. Pudge, after serving as mayor of Lofton and three terms in Congress, died of a

heart attack. Gordon, known as Flash, retired from the army as a colonel, ran a boys club in Kansas City, then succumbed to sickle cell anemia. Dietrich, who was called Dutch, was on a peace mission in the occupied West Bank and got caught in crossfire between militant Jews and militant Palestinians.

SCOTT

That's terrible.

GRANDDAD

Over the years Dietrich, the pacifist, and Gordon, the soldier, kept in touch with one another and got together when they could. They were close friends.

SCOTT

What about your coach?

GRANDDAD

Nick died several years ago. He was 82. A huge throng of players from his 48 years of coaching came to a memorial service at the college.

GRANDMA

It was a very moving experience.

SCOTT

Granddad, do any of your old teammates still live in Lofton? I mean besides Uncle Bill.

As Granddad speaks, a Cadillac pulls into the driveway. Bill (aka Billy) is driving.

GRANDDAD

Yes, Eddy lives here. He quit coaching and opened a sports store on Main Street. Eric, once known as Spike, is out of the feed business but has a John Deere franchise. The four of us -- Eddy, Eric, Bill, and I -- play golf once a week at the country club. Here they are now.

SCOTT

It's Uncle Bill!

Bill, Eric (aka Spike), and Eddy get out and walk to the porch. Eddy is short, pudgy, and mostly bald. Eric and Bill, like Granddad, are heavy set with expanded waistlines.

GRANDDAD

With him are my teammates, Eddy and Eric.

SCOTT

That's Eddy and Spike? They don't look like football players.

GRANDDAD

That was in yesteryears. Ask them.

Bill, Eric, and Eddy come onto the porch.

EDDY

Hi, Helen, Paul.

GRANDMA

Hi, boys. Come and join us for some cake and coffee.

BILL

No, thanks. We've just eaten.

ERIC

You can say that for yourself, Bill, but I never turn down a piece of Helen's cake.

GRANDMA

What about you, Eddy?

EDDY

Sorry. I'm on a diet -- again.

Grandma serves Eric some cake and coffee.

GRANDDAD

*Fellows, I'd like you to meet my grandson,
Scott.*

ERIC

*Glad to meet you, Scott. I've heard a lot
about you. You're a flanker back.*

SCOTT

*That's right. And I've heard a lot about
you. My granddad's been telling me
about your football season in 1944.*

EDDY

*Does this old geezer remember that far
back?*

SCOTT

He says he does.

(Addressing Eric)

Are you Spike?

ERIC

I used to be called that.

SCOTT

You don't look like a spike.

They all laugh.

ERIC

Let's just say I filled out.

SCOTT

*And did you, Eddy, once have a foot race
with my Uncle Bill?*

EDDY

Yup, and I whipped him.

BILL

*He didn't outrun me. He outhustled me,
if you know what I mean.*

ERIC

That's why we used to call him Fast Eddy.

EDDY

*Did he tell you about the pass I threw to
win the Grunwald game?*

SCOTT

You mean the sucker pass?

EDDY

That's the one.

SCOTT

He said it was wobbly, but it let him score

the winning touchdown.

ERIC

What else did he say?

GRANDDAD

I said you were great receiver, Eric, and that Eddy was a great ballcarrier.

EDDY

An astute observer.

BILL

What did he say about me, Scott?

SCOTT

He said they used to call you Wild Bill.

BILL

Well, I guess I had a wild streak, but these guys tamed me. I deserved it. But out of it I gained some life-long friends.

ERIC

We really had a great bunch. Remember how Pudge used to bring a gourmet lunch on the bus when we went to out-of-town games?

GRANDDAD

Yea, I'm surprised Nick let him get away with it.

ERIC

He had a soft spot in his heart for Pudge.

EDDY

Everybody did.

ERIC

*Then there were Roberto and Rusty.
The goof-off brothers, as Nick called them after they flunked world history.*

EDDY

How I loved to run off tackle on their side of the line. Especially after Dutch taught Gordon to block.

GRANDDAD

Yes, Dutch was special.

ERIC

And Richard brought a bulldog's determination to the center of the line.

EDDY

It was a pleasure to play in the backfield with Fred and Hank.

GRANDDAD

Remember the restaurant in Barnesdale?

ERIC

How could we ever forget that experience. When those Barnesdale players walked in, I expected a brawl. But they just wanted to make friends with Fred and Flash.

EDDY

All this talk about racial integration in the years since, I guess we were pioneers and didn't even know it.

BILL

Don't forget the guys from the second squad, like Stan, Jolly, Jiri, and the others, especially my classmate Lefty.

EDDY

And Basil and Doc.

GRANDDAD

Do you recall all the jokes Doc played on Basil?

ERIC

Yes, Doc was irrepressible. And Basil was a good sport about it.

EDDY

Basil seemed to have a Shakespeare quote for every occasion.

GRANDDAD

I've never forgotten how before our opening game he proclaimed, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers." Then it was something about "he who sheds his blood with me shall be my brother."

Forget the blood shedding but look at the deeper sentiment. On the Lofton team even in a losing season we became bonded brothers.

ERIC

We were comrades, strongly committed to each other.

EDDY

Loyal and dedicated.

BILL

Never failing in our support for one another.

SCOTT

Granddad, I hope some day I'll get to play on a team like the Lofton Lions of 1944 and have a glorious season: win, lose, or draw.

GRANDDAD

I hope you do, Scott. It's an opportunity of a lifetime.

As credits begin, draw back to show Granddad, Grandma, Scott, Eddy, Eric, and Bill in inaudible, animated, happy conversation.

FADE OUT

A GLORIOUS SEASON

A Screenplay by

Howard W. Hallman

Writers Guild
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FADE IN:

INT - UPPER HALLWAY OF A HOUSE - DAY

SCOTT (14), tanned and athletic, reaches up for a cord attached to pulldown stairs that lead to the attic. He pulls to lower the stairway, unfolds it, secures it in place, and climbs up. Part way into the attic he flips a switch on a post near the top of the stairs. Lights go on in the attic. On screen appears "AUGUST 1994".

INT - ATTIC

Scott enters the attic. It is raining on the roof and against a window. He opens a box, picks out a couple of old books, glances at them, puts them back in the box, and closes it.

Scott notices a box labeled "HIGH SCHOOL DAYS". He opens it. He pulls out a baseball glove, the small size used in the 1940s, and a baseball with a broken seam. He puts on the glove and tosses the ball into it a few times. Dust flies out.

Scott puts the glove and ball aside and pulls out a golden, leather football helmet, '40s vintage without a face guard. He blows dust off it and tries it on. It's a little large. He looks inside and notices a piece of faded white adhesive tape with "Zeke" written on it.

INT - DEN - DAY

GRANDDAD (67), distinguished looking, robust but with expanded waist line, sits in a swivel chair at a desk, writing checks to pay bills. Rain pounds against a window. One wall of the den contains photographs of Granddad's life: sports teams of his high school days, a group of Army buddies, college groups, law school class, high school and college reunions, political leaders, and other photos manifesting his career as a lawyer and now a judge.

Scott comes in, carrying the football helmet. As Scott speaks, Granddad swivels around to reply.

SCOTT

What's this thing, Granddad?

GRANDDAD

Oh, you've been in the attic again, Scott.

SCOTT

Yes, I like exploring up there when I visit you.

GRANDDAD

It's a football helmet. It's the kind we used when I was in high school.

SCOTT

There's a name written in it. Who's Zeke?

GRANDDAD

Zeke was our school quarterback.

Granddad takes the helmet, puts it on, and fastens the chin strap.

GRANDDAD

What'd you know? It still fits.

SCOTT

*You're Zeke? You were a high school
quarterback?*

GRANDDAD

Yes, I was.

SCOTT

And they called you Zeke? That's funny.

GRANDDAD

*Of course. Zeke is short for my middle
name, Ezekiel.*

SCOTT

*So that's what the "E" stands for. I
never knew. Judge Paul Ezekiel Parker.*

GRANDDAD

*Lots of guys on our team had a
nicknames: Spike, who was my best
friend, Pudge, Rusty, Dutch, Bulldog,*

Flash, Jolly, Lefty, and others.

Granddad takes a picture of the team from the wall and shows it to Scott.

GRANDDAD (Cont.)

*Here's our team picture. The Lofton
Lions of 1944. Fifty years ago this
season.*

SCOTT

And did you win? Were you champions?

GRANDDAD

*Well, as one of my teammates expressed
it, we had a glorious season. But we
didn't realize it until ten years later.*

SCOTT

What do you mean?

GRANDDAD

It's a long story.

SCOTT

*Tell me about it. Since it's raining, we
can't go on the picnic Grandma has
planned.*

GRANDDAD

As I look back on it, the three weeks of

practice before our first game was as important to the team as the nine games we played. We started practice the Monday before Labor Day, a week before school started.

SCOTT

The same for my middle school team when I get back home next week.

GRANDDAD

Here in Lofton the weather was hot and dry, as it often is in the prairie in August, not rainy like today.

As Granddad continues, MONTAGE of Lofton in the 1940s, a prairie town with a population around 10,000: an aerial shot of the town, the high school and football field, the business district around the county courthouse square, a billboard on the courthouse grounds supporting the fighting men in World War II, a residential street, the house where Zeke lives with a silver star in the window (connoting that a member of the family is in the armed service).

GRANDDAD (V.O.)

Lofton had a population of about 10,000 then. We played in the South Central League. Some of the other schools were larger, some smaller. The smaller ones drew in a lot of farm boys, who were tough and highly competitive.

World War II was in its final year, though we didn't know it at the time. We were all interested in the progress of the war because our older brothers and guys we knew from previous teams were in the service, many of them in combat. And besides, as soon as we turned 18 we would be drafted.

But we were mostly concerned about getting ready for our opening game. We knew we had a challenging season ahead of us.

A sign in the lawn near the front steps says "The Parkers".

INT - LARGE KITCHEN - DAY

It's the Monday before Labor Day, 1944. Zeke's MOM (40) pours coffee for DAD (42) and cocoa for ZEKE (17), medium height and medium build. They sit at the kitchen table and eat bacon, scrambled eggs, and hot biscuits with butter and honey.

DAD

I'll miss you at the store, Paul. You've been a good help to me this summer.

ZEKE (aka Paul)

You can find another hardware clerk and storeroom helper, Dad. The Lions are calling, and I've got to go.

MOM

I'm so afraid you'll get hurt, Paul. I wish you would play in the band, like your brother Clyde did.

DAD

Let him be, Martha. I played football in my day and enjoyed it.

MOM

Yes, Henry, but your knee aches every time we have damp weather.

DAD

It was worth it.

LAURA (15), Zeke's sister, who will soon enter Lofton High School as a sophomore, comes in.

LAURA

What was worth it?

DAD

Football.

LAURA

I wish I could play.

MOM

Oh, Laura.

An auto horn honks outside.

ZEKE

That's Spike. I've gotta go.

Zeke places his remaining bacon and egg between two slices of biscuit, takes a final swig of cocoa, grabs a canvas bag, and rushes out the back door, eating his sandwich as he goes.

EXT - A TRUCK AT CURBSIDE - DAY

SPIKE (17) sits behind the wheel of a '43 Chevy pickup truck, which has "Anderson Seed and Feed Company" painted on the door. He is tall and slender and wears a long bill baseball cap. Zeke hops on the running board and climbs into the cab next to Spike.

INT - TRUCK CAB - DAY

Spike puts the truck in gear and drives off along the residential street.

ZEKE

This is it, Spike. I've been waiting all summer for football to start.

SPIKE

And even longer to start as quarterback.

ZEKE

That's for sure. Now it's my turn.

SPIKE

Zeke, your arm oughta be in great shape after throwing to me the last few weeks.

ZEKE

I'll be looking for you, Spike: left end, down and out; left end, buttonhook; left end, crossing.

SPIKE

Yeah! We're ready.

They drive into the parking lot between the high school gym and football field. They see a couple of sedans and a Model-T Ford.

ZEKE

I thought we'd be first. But there's Rusty's Model-T.

SPIKE

Yeah. Rusty and Bob got back in town from wheat harvest on Saturday night.

ZEKE

*You'd think with his dad as a dealer,
Rusty could get better car than that heap
of junk.*

SPIKE

I'd love to have one.

Spike parks next to the Model-T.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

RUSTY (17) and BOB (17) examine the schedule posted on the bulletin board. Rusty with reddish hair is fairly tall, big-boned, and powerfully built. Bob is shorter but muscular.

BOB

*Rusty, I see we start with Kepler as usual.
It's good to have a non-league game first.*

RUSTY

*And we get Ashmont second. I'm
looking forward to that game. Bob,
remember that talkative kid who played
left end. I hope he's back. I've got
something to settle with him.*

BOB

*We almost beat them, but they ended up
as league champs.*

RUSTY

Yeah, it was a come down finishing third in the league after been subs on the undefeated team the year before.

Zeke and Spike enter, carrying their canvas bags.

BOB

I'd sure like to get the title back this year.

RUSTY

With five starters returning, we oughta lead the league this year.

BOB

(Goodnaturedly)

Yeah, if these guys come through for us.

ZEKE

We will. I promise you.

SPIKE

But only you two guys and Eddy are back from last year's first team.

RUSTY

What do you mean? What about Ray and Tom?

SPIKE

Haven't you heard? Ray joined the Navy in July. And Tom's dad took a job at a California shipyard and moved his family out there.

BOB

That's going to be tough losing our center and fullback -- our linebackers on defense.

ZEKE

We've got good replacements.

RUSTY

They better do good. I intend to have a winning season my senior year.

ZEKE

So do I.

PUDGE (17), EDDY (17), and BASIL (16) enter, each carrying a small canvas bag. As his nickname implies, Pudge is quite large but a little soft. Eddy, somewhat shorter than Zeke, is trim, agile, and self-confident. Basil is small, thin, and wears horn-rimmed glasses. Their conversation reflects basic rapport but with an edge of friendly challenge.

RUSTY

Eddy! Pudge! I hope you're as ready
as we are.

PUDGE

We sure are.

EDDY

All set to win 'em all.

BOB

What are you doing here, Basil?

EDDY

I'm gonna kick extra points.

RUSTY

That'll be the day.

PUDGE

So how was harvest?

BOB

Just great. Made lots of moola.

EDDY

What'd you do?

RUSTY

Mostly drove trucks full of wheat from
the combine to the elevator.

SPIKE

In other words, you just sat on your fannies all day.

NICK (35), their coach, comes in from another part of the locker room. He is tanned, carries himself as an athlete, but has the beginning of a pot belly.

RUSTY

Yeah? I've got muscles to prove otherwise. Wanna arm wrestle?

Rusty peels off his shirt and flexes his muscles.

PUDGE

I'll call you on that, Rusty.

RUSTY

Pudge, you won't stand a chance. I bet you spent the summer feasting at your dad's restaurant.

NICK

(Goodnaturedly)

Okay. Save your energies for practice.

RUSTY

Ah, Nick. It's just a friendly little competition.

NICK

I know you're all eager for the new season. I hope you're all in great shape.

BOB

You bet we are!

EDDY

Can't wait to get started!

ZEKE

Ready and willing!

As conversation continues, RICHARD (16), CLIFF (16), and MIKE (16) drift in and listen.

EDDY

Nick, this is Basil Fox. He wants to be our place kicker.

NICK

Aren't you in the band?

BASIL

Yeah, I play bassoon. But this year I want to be on the football team. Eddy says you need someone to kick points after touchdowns.

NICK

You ever kick before?

BASIL

Sure. I've been practicing the last two months. Pudge's been centering and Eddy holding the ball.

EDDY

He's terrific, Nick.

NICK

Your parents will have to sign a permission slip, Basil.

BASIL

They already did.

Basil hands the form to Nick.

NICK

Looks okay. You can ask the coaches in the equipment room if they have a uniform small enough for you. And the rest of you can get your stuff, too.

The players move to the equipment room where assistant coaches DAVE (32) and HAL (30) give each player a helmet, shoulder pads, blocking pads for linemen, hip pads, practice jersey, pants with thigh pads, shoes, and a combination lock.

The players return to the locker room and choose lockers with friends together (Zeke and Spike; Bob and Rusty; Eddy, Pudge, and Basil). They pull white T-shirts, jockey straps, and sox from their bags and begin changing from their street clothes to their practice uniforms. Nick is with them.

FRED (16) and GORDON (17), a pair of African Americans, enter from the outside door. Mike, Cliff, and Richard emerge from the equipment room. Mike and Cliff take lockers at the end of Zeke's row, and Richard chooses one near Zeke's.

FRED

Coach, have you got a place on the team for my cousin?

NICK

Fred, he's welcome to try out if he lives in Lofton.

FRED

He does. He's come to live with us. This is Gordon. He'll be a senior. Last year he was on the varsity at his school in Kansas City. I think he can help us have a winning season.

NICK

Anyone who can help us can make the team. What position do you play, Gordon?

GORDON

Mostly end, but sometimes I filled in at running back and ran back punts and kickoffs.

NICK

Your best chance is at right end. Both last year's starter and backup graduated.

FRED

It'd better be right end, Gordie. I don't want you competing with me for a place in the backfield.

Fred and Gordon go to the equipment room. ROGER (16), WALLY (16), HANK (16), and several others enter the locker room and pass through to the equipment room. In a corner Mike and Cliff start putting on their uniforms. Zeke and Richard are nearby.

MIKE

You know, Cliff, I liked it better as it was before when the colored weren't allowed to play.

CLIFF

Yeah, before Fred's old man, the Rev. Montgomery and Zeke's minister at the Methodist Church forced the league to let niggers play with us.

ZEKE

They did the right thing.

MIKE

They shouldn't have meddled.

RICHARD

You're wrong, Mike. It's only fair that if Negroes¹ are drafted into the Army, they ought to be allowed to play football.

MIKE

I didn't know you like the colored people, Richard. Or can I call you Richie?

CLIFF

Don't let his mamma hear you. She insists on Richard for her sweet boy.

MIKE

There's going to be trouble if we get too many colored boys playing in the league.

ZEKE

There doesn't have to be.

DOC (17), the trainer, short and chubby, arrives, carrying a black satchel.

¹ "Negro" is the preferred, polite term of the 1940s.

Players continue to put on their equipment and practice uniforms.

RUSTY

*Hey, Doc, what you got in your bag?
Your lunch?*

DOC

*Naw. Just the usual stuff of my trade:
tape, gauze, monkey blood, Ben Gay, a
couple of splints.*

BASIL

(To Eddy)

What's monkey blood?

EDDY

Mercurochrome.

DUTCH (17) enters with STAN (16). JIRI (16), CHUCK (16), and PAT (16) follow behind.

DUTCH

*Coach, I want you to meet Stanislaw
Krasinski². He's from Poland. His
family escaped from the Nazis. They're
staying with us on our farm. Stan is
enrolling in the 11th grade and wants to
play American sports.*

² Pronounced "Stanislav Krashinski".

NICK

Everyone's welcome to try out for the team. Do you speak English, Stan?

STAN

Tak, I mean yes, I do.

DUTCH

I think he should try out for guard. I'll teach him the plays and the tricks of the position.

NICK

Dutch, aren't you afraid he'll beat you out? He's bigger than you.

DUTCH

He's welcome to try.

Dutch and Stan go to the equipment room. Nick follows them. Pat, Chuck, and Jiri remain behind to claim their lockers.

PAT

Gee, Chuck, I has hoping that the kraut wouldn't want to play this year.

CHUCK

Me, too, Pat. We don't need a Nazi sympathizer on our team.

JIRI

What do you mean, Nazi?

CHUCK

He's German, isn't he, Jiri³? Dietrich Lutz.

JIRI

That's right. I forgot that.

ZEKE

Oh, come on. Dutch is from a Mennonite family. His ancestors have been in this country for 200 years. Jiri, how long has your family, the Janaceks,⁴ been here?

JIRI

That's beside the point.

PAT

Yeah, but Dutch's brother is a draft dodger.

ZEKE

³ Pronounced "Yiri".

⁴ Pronounced "Yana-chek".

*He's a conscientious objector. The
Mennonites are pacifists.*

CHUCK

*Then Dietrich shouldn't be playing
football.*

*Chuck, Jiri, and Pat go into the equipment room. Nick returns to the
locker room. By now several of the players are fully dressed for practice.
BILLY (15), a sophomore who is big for his age and athletic looking, enters.*

BILLY

Here I am! Ready to get suited up.

NICK

*Billy, you know sophomores aren't
suppose to show up until the afternoon
practice.*

BILLY

*Since I'm going to be on the varsity this
year, I thought I should start practicing
with these guys from the very beginning.*

NICK

*You'll be on the varsity if you play well
and comply with my rules. See you this
afternoon, Billy.*

BILLY

Ah, Nick, let me suit up now.

NICK

You heard what I said.

Rusty and Pudge move behind Billy, pick him up, and carry him to the door as he unsuccessfully tries to get free.

RUSTY

See you this afternoon, Billy.

BILLY

*Isn't anyone going to help me? Eddy?
Zeke?*

EDDY

You ain't worth saving, kid.

ZEKE

You know the rules, Billy.

Rusty and Pudge deposit Billy outside the locker room as the players roar in laughter.

NICK

*I want to see everyone on the field in
fifteen minutes to start warm up
exercises.*

BOB

Let's go get 'em!

Amid cheers, players who are dressed for practice stream outside.

INT - GRANDDAD'S DEN

Granddad sits in a recliner and Scott on a small sofa.

SCOTT

*Granddad, how come your teammates
didn't work out first in the weight room?*

GRANDDAD

*We didn't have weight rooms in those
days, Scott. The guys got in shape
through their summer jobs. I lifted lots
of boxes at my dad's hardware store.
And beginning around August 1st, I ran
two miles every evening to build up my
wind.*

SCOTT

I'd rather do weights.

Granddad laughs.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are on the field. Spike runs around catching Zeke's passes. Cliff throws to Mike and Chuck as they go down for passes. Fred and Gordon toss a ball back and forth.

In pairs Bob and Rusty, Jiri and Roger bang one another with practice blocks. Dutch teaches Stan to block on a blocking dummy. Richard practices centering to Pat. Others are similarly engaged except that Eddy, Pudge, Basil, and Hank stand around, talking MOS and laughing.

EXT - THE STANDS -DAY

Billy and LEFTY (15), a sophomore of medium height and wiry, sit in the front row of the stands, and watch the players warm up.

BILLY

Lefty, look how lazy Eddy is. He'd better watch out 'cause I'm going to beat him out for the tailback spot.

On the field Eddy laughs as he talks with Pudge, Basil, and Hank.

LEFTY

He's pretty good.

BILLY

I'm even better. And Lefty you ought to be able to take the quarterback spot away from Zeke. You're a better passer.

On the field Zeke throws a pass to Spike.

LEFTY

Naw, I'm shooting to replace Cliff as backup quarterback.

On the field Cliff passes to Mike.

LEFTY

Then I can start next year after Zeke graduates.

BILLY

I'm going to be a starter this year.

Billy pounds fist to hand in determination.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The three coaches come out and assemble the team into rows in the end zone to prepare for calisthenics. Nick gets Bob and Zeke to help him lead. Nick starts the jumping jack then eases off as the players continue.

MONTAGE of jumping jack; knee-bend, jack-knife; legs spread touching opposite toes with hands; sit-ups; push-ups; running in place circling the arms; duck waddle. Sweat streams down their faces. Dave and Hal stroll among the players, offering encouragement and goading the slackers.

NICK

Now around the track.

Zeke and Bob lead the players to the straightaway of the cinder track around the football field. Soon the backs and ends are in the lead and linemen lag behind.

At the end of the straightaway, Gordon has a sizable lead. Eddy and Fred run together behind several other backs.

EDDY

Haven't you told your cousin that we don't overdo? Nick will expect all of us to run that fast.

FRED

Don't worry. Gordie's a sprinter. He won't last.

On the far side of the track where Gordon slows down and clutches his side. Hank, Zeke, Pat, and Cliff catch up with him.

The leaders round the final curve. Bob, Rusty, Richard, and Dutch are in the middle of the pack. Pudge, Stan, Jiri, and Roger are 30 yards behind the leaders. Basil is last of all.

The players assemble in the end zone, many of them panting heavily and sweating profusely. Nick is in front.

NICK

Now that you're warmed up, we'll do some sprints. Go to the end zone and divide into three groups: backs, ends, and linemen.

BASIL

What about me?

NICK

You can join the backs.

MONTAGE of the three groups players racing. Dave serves as starter at the goal line. Nick with a stopwatch and Hal are at the forty yard line judging the winners. Doc watches with them. Players from each group start in upright position at the goal line. Dave barks, "Ready, set, hike."

Among the backs Eddy goes all out and wins with Fred close at his heels. Zeke, Hank, and Pat contest for third until Hank falters in the last five yards, and Zeke and Pat tie. Cliff is sixth followed by other backfield candidates. Basil trips and falls at the 20 yard line and gives up.

Among the ends Gordon easily wins. Chuck edges out Mike for second, and Spike is fourth. Others bring up the rear.

When the linemen run, Dutch, Richard, and Bob are bunched together with Dutch winning with a last burst of speed. Roger, Jiri, Stan, and Wally are next. Pudge and a couple of other tackle candidates give out at the 30 yard line and coast the final ten yards.

NICK

Now I want the four fastest from each group to run together.

Eddy, Fred, Zeke, Pat, Gordon, Chuck, Mike, Spike, Dutch, Richard, Bob, and Roger race. Gordon is an easy winner over Eddy. Fred beats Chuck in the battle for third place. Zeke and Mike are in a virtual tie for fifth.

DOC

And the winner is Flash Gordon!

Nick gathers the players around him.

NICK

The rest of the morning we're going to work on fundamentals of blocking and tackling.

FLASH (aka Gordon)

(To Fred)

Freddy, when are we going to start playing football?

FRED

This is the beginning of football, Lofton style, Gordie.

MONTAGE of blocking practice: Dave and Hal demonstrate different offensive and defensive stands and various kinds of blocks. Players pair off by position and block one another: guards on guards, tackles on tackles,

and so forth. Among the ends Mike has the greatest knack, and Flash is most inept. Hank and other prospective fullbacks knock against one another zestfully. In contrast halfback and quarterbacks block each other halfheartedly until Nick comes over and glowers at them.

MONTAGE of tackling practice: Backs and ends run with the ball at half-speed through three lines of linemen. They are tackled by each lineman in turn. The backs and ends take their place at the end of the line and have a turn at tackling.

Nick looks at his wristwatch.

NICK

I can see most of you have lots more to learn, but that's enough for now. Once more around the track. Then I'll see you again at four this afternoon.

The players groan but dutifully start jogging around the track. Neither Flash nor any others have any ambition to show off their speed.

At the completion of their lap as the players walk slowly to the locker room. Fred and Flash walk together.

FLASH

This guy's a tough dude. We never worked this hard in K.C.

FRED

That's why he always has a winning team.

Zeke comes up to Fred and Flash.

ZEKE

Glad to have you with us, Flash. You've got good speed. I hope you can catch, block, and tackle as well.

FLASH

I've got good hands.

Zeke, Fred, and Flash walk on together.

EXT - OUTSIDE LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A bunch of sophomores mill around the entrance to the locker room with Billy and Lefty closest to the door. They include DON (15) and SAM (15); JOE (15) and NATE (15), who are African Americans; and some others.

BILLY

Why are they making us wait so long?

LEFTY

It's almost three. Then they'll let us in.

Dave opens the door, and the prospects push their way in.

INT - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Billy is first to reach the equipment room where Hal is stationed, then joined by Dave. Don and Sam are next in line. Joe, Nate, and other sophomores line up behind them.

BILLY

I want number 36, Hal. That was Brad Henderson's number.

DON

Billy, you think you're as good as Brad? He was all-state two years ago when Lofton was undefeated.

SAM

And now he's starring at the Naval Academy.

HAL

We're retired 36 in Brad's honor.

BILLY

Well then since I'm going to be twice as good as Brad, give me number 72.

HAL

If you're half as good, I'll be satisfied.

Hal gives Billy number 18.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

MONTAGE: Opening calisthenics with sophomores joining the juniors and seniors; the sophomores running a lap with Billy not exerting himself; Billy easily winning the sprint; Hal working with sophomores on blocking and tackling drills; Nick working with backs and ends on ball handling; Dave teaching linemen combination blocks.

Nick whistles the players to the center of the field.

NICK

That's enough for today. You've worked hard, so you can skip the final lap. It's going to be hot tomorrow so we'll start the morning practice at eight o'clock.

The exhausted players trudge from the field.

INT - KITCHEN OF PARKER HOUSE

Zeke enters, looking bushed. Laura helps Mom with the dishes, but they've saved a plate of food for Zeke. Dad listens to the evening news on the radio.

DAD

Hi, Son. How was practice?

ZEKE

Great!

MOM

You look exhausted.

ZEKE

I'm a little tired.

Zeke slumps into a chair at the kitchen table and starts eating.

RADIO NEWSCASTER

(O.S.)

Today U.S. and French troops have entered Marseille and are forcing out the Germans.

MOM

I wish we knew where Clyde is now.

DAD

From what the evening paper says, his unit helped liberate Paris last Friday.

RADIO NEWSCASTER

(O.S.)

Allied troops are now patrolling all the streets of Paris to be certain there are no Germans left.

MOM

I hope he's all right.

ZEKE

If I know Clyde, he borrowed a trombone somewhere and marched with a band along the Champs Elysees.

MOM

You're always such an optimist, Paul.

LAURA

I suppose you think your team is going to be league champ.

ZEKE

We have a good chance. You think we don't?

LAURA

You might if guys in my class get a chance to play.

ZEKE

Like who? Lefty and Joe? Don and Sam? Billy?

LAURA

Billy's good, but he's too stuck up.

Dad smiles in amusement, and Zeke digs into his food.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The players put on their pads and uniforms. Many are stiff and sore, groaning and complaining.

HANK

I can't understand why I ache all over this morning. All summer I've worked hard on the farm from dawn to dusk.

EDDY

I know what you mean. I've played baseball nearly every day since school was out. I oughta be in great shape for football.

DOC

Don't you guys know? Each activity, each sport has its own set of muscles.

BOB

Thank you, Doctor.

Bob throws a wet towel at Doc.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players, sweating profusely, are in rows at the end zone,

completing their calisthenics. Nick blows his whistle.

NICK

Gather in. We'll save our lap around the track till the end of practice. I have some things to say to you.

The players gather around Nick.

NICK

We have a long, tough schedule ahead of us, but I know we'll do well. We've had a winning season every year since I've been at Lofton High. We're going to have a winning season again this year.

EDDY

We'll be the champs.

NICK

You may ask, what makes a winning team? A winning team requires teamwork. Teamwork is founded on loyalty. Loyalty to one another. Loyalty to your coaches. The coaches loyalty to you.

ZEKE

We'll do our best.

NICK

You come from many different backgrounds. You are part of different social groups at school. You sophomores are just coming together from the two junior high schools. But on the field and in the locker room I expect you to be like one big, happy family.

RUSTY

Like me and my brother, Bob.

Rusty gives Bob a brotherly nudge.

NICK

So even as you go hard at one another in scrimmage and compete for the eleven positions on the team, never lose sight of the fact that we're all united in the quest to be a winning team.

The players cheer.

INT - GRANDDAD'S DEN - DAY

Granddad remains in the recliner. Scott sits on the floor.

SCOTT

How come only eleven positions? We have 22 on our team: eleven on offense,

eleven on defense.

GRANDDAD

In our day we all played both ways.

SCOTT

Gee, how could you do that?

GRANDDAD

We were tough!

Granddad flexes a bicep, feels it with the opposite hand, and smiles.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players remain standing around Nick.

NICK

Now this morning I want all prospective passers, backs, ends, and centers to stay with Hal and me at the this end of the field for passing drills. Guards and tackles go to the far end with Dave to work on blocking and tackling. This afternoon we'll divide up into teams. O.K., let's go.

As the players start assembling for passing drill, Zeke takes Spike aside.

ZEKE

Spike, with your experience you're a leadpipe cinch to be left end.

SPIKE

That's what I expect.

ZEKE

It'll be interesting to see who wins out as right end. I thought it was going to be a contest between Mike and Chuck, coming off good years as JV ends last year. But this Flash Gordon looks pretty sharp.

SPIKE

He's fast. But can he catch?

ZEKE

We'll soon find out.

As the passers and receivers gather, Mike approaches Cliff.

MIKE

Cliff, buddy, I hope you'll make me look good, and those colored boys look bad.

CLIFF

I'll do what I can.

MONTAGE of passing drill. Zeke and Cliff take snaps from Richard

and throw mostly to upperclassmen but Nick lets Billy join them. Lefty and a couple other sophomores take snaps from Wally and have mostly sophomores as receivers.

For each group the receivers form two lines, right and left, alternating between them. The passers stand three yards between the centers and call directions for each receiver: slant in, down and out, buttonhook, in the flat, deep and in. They call for the ball with "ready, set, hike."

Spike is sure-handed and reaches high for balls. Eddy has good moves, Billy not quite as good. Fred has a knack for catching balls thrown low or behind him.

The three main competitors for right end eye one another apprehensively. Flash shows his speed and has good hands, Mike displays fancy footwork, and Chuck makes difficult catches.

On one toss Cliff deliberately throws low to Fred, who grabs it at his shoe top. On another toss Cliff throws behind Flash.

NICK

Cliff, you've got to learn to adjust to a speedy receiver.

Billy approaches Nick.

BILLY

How about me throwing some, Nick?
When Brad was tailback, he was the chief

passer.

NICK

Not today, Billy, but I'll give you a chance later in the week.

Zeke throws another pass to Spike.

The players gathered in a semi-circle around Nick. He has a clipboard.

NICK

We're going to divide into teams this afternoon and start running some plays. We'll be assessing your performance during the next two weeks before we settle on the starting line up for the opening game. (Cont.)

NICK (Cont.)

Here are initial assignments for the first two teams. Take your place on the field as I call your name.

As their names are called, the first team players move into position on offense in a short punt formation.

NICK

The first team will consist of Spike at left end, Pudge left tackle, Dutch left guard, Richard center, Bob right guard, Rusty right tackle, Mike right end.

FLASH

Fred, I told you your coach wouldn't give me a chance. I know I'm better than Mike at right end.

FRED

You're new here, Gordie. You've got to prove your stuff in scrimmage. Hang in there. You can be a starter.

NICK

In the backfield Hank at fullback, Fred right halfback, Eddy tailback, and Zeke quarterback,

As Nick calls their names, the second team players moves into offensive position opposite the first team,

NICK

The second team will have Chuck at left end, Jiri left tackle, Joe left guard, Wally center, Roger at right tackle, and Flash at right end. I want Don and Sam to alternate at right guard. The backfield will be Nate at fullback, Pat right half, Billy tailback, and Cliff quarterback.

As Wally moves into position, he edges up to Richard.

WALLY

*Enjoy your day with the first squad,
Richard. I expect to displace you by the
end of the week.*

Richard growls at Wally, half in fun, half serious.

PUDGE

*That's what we need! A tough bulldog
in the center.*

RUSTY

Attaway to go, Bulldog.

NICK

*We'll assign the rest of you to third and
fourth teams this afternoon. On your
way out this morning, pick up your
playbooks from Dave. Look especially at
plays from
short punt formation. That's what we'll
start with today.*

*Tomorrow morning we'll try some double
wing plays and in the afternoon work
from T-formation. On Thursday
morning we'll have our first all out
scrimmage.*

The players start heading for the locker room.

DUTCH

Stan, I hope you're not upset at not being assigned yet.

STAN

No, not at all. I've got a lot to learn.

Dutch and Stan walk on together.

EXT - CURBSIDE AT ZEKE'S HOUSE - DAY

Zeke climbs into Spike's pickup.

INT - TRUCK CAB - DAY

Zeke sits beside Spike.

SPIKE

Finally it's Thursday and our first scrimmage.

ZEKE

We're ready for it.

SPIKE

Yeah, it'll be the first test of how good we're going to be.

ZEKE

Winners, that's for sure.

Zeke claps his hands.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The first team lines up on its own 20 on offense. The second team is on defense in a six man line with two linebackers and four defensive backs. Nick stands between them.⁵

NICK

Okay, fellows. This is a game-like scrimmage except no kick off, no extra points. Each team has four downs to make ten yards or punt. All right, let's go.

The first team huddles.

ZEKE

Let's start with short punt 36, on one.

The first team breaks huddle and lines up in short punt. Zeke counts, "Ready, set, hike, one, two." On "one" Bulldog centers the ball to Eddy,

⁵ The writer can supply football plays for the production.

who runs off right tackle for a six yard gain.

MONTAGE of the completion of plays: Fred off tackle to the left with a hand off from Zeke; Eddy in a quick opener between guard and tackle from T-formation; Zeke throwing to Spike down and out; Hank plunging up the middle.

From the second team's ten yard line, Eddy runs off tackle to the right, cut backs, eludes Billy, playing safety, at the goal line, and scores. In the end zone Eddy tosses the ball to Billy.

EDDY

It's your turn, Billy Boy. Let's see what you can do.

BILLY

You'll never stop me.

The second team gets the ball its own 20. Don and Sam alternate at right guard. MONTAGE of the completion of plays: Billy gains three yards off left tackle; Pat tries right tackle, but Flash can't block out Pudge; Cliff passes to Chuck on a slant in; Nate plunges over the middle.

Billy uses his speed to get around Mike on a sweep to the left and cuts down the sideline. Just as he seems to be free, Eddy as safety tackles him hard and low. Billy scowls at Eddy as they get up.

EDDY

It's a little different than JV, huh, kid?

BILLY

Lucky tackle. It'll never happen again.

On the next play Cliff tries to pass to Flash, but Fred intercepts and is run out of bounds.

MONTAGE of first team plays: Eddy on a quick opener; Fred on a reverse; Zeke throws an accurate pass to Mike, who drops it; Eddy makes a long run off tackle to the three yard line.

Wally moves from linebacker to center in a seven man line.

WALLY

(To Bulldog)

Okay, puppy dog, let's see if you can handle me.

On the play Bulldog drives Wally back as Hank plunges over center for a touchdown.

EDDY

Attaway to go, Hank the Tank.

Bob gives Wally a hand to help him up.

BOB

Never mess with a bulldog, Wally.

The second team starts on their own 20 again. Billy gains four yards on

a quick opener.

On the next play Cliff drops back to pass. Rusty comes crashing in and tackles him as he starts to throw. Cliff gets up holding his arm as Nick and Doc come running in.

CLIFF

I think it's broken.

Nick feels Cliff's arm gently.

NICK

I think you're right. Dave, will you drive Cliff to Doc Sullivan's office? Little Doc can go with you.

Cliff, Dave, and Doc leave the field.

NICK

That's enough scrimmage for now. Each team can now go off on its own to run plays. Lefty, you take Cliff's place. And the third and fourth squads can find a spot to run through some plays.

As the teams go their separate ways, Flash seeks out Fred.

FLASH

Cousin, what's the idea of intercepting me? Trying to make me look bad?

FRED

This is football, cousin. To me you're the same as any other opponent.

The teams run plays on their own. On the second team a scuffle breaks out between Don and Sam. They start throwing punches at one another.

ROGER

Fight! Fight!

Players come running from all over the field to watch the fight. Nick and Hal come up, push their way through the crowd, and each grab one of the combatants.

NICK

What's this all about?

SAM

This Pershing prissy pushed me.

DON

This Lindbergh lilypad shoved me.

NICK

(Laughing)

So it's junior high stuff. It's time for you to grow up. You're playing for Lofton High now. We're all one team. Look at Bob and Rusty. They're best friends

*even though Bob went to Lindbergh
Junior High and Rusty went to Pershing.*

RUSTY

It's the other way around.

NICK

*See what I mean. It's so unimportant
that I don't even remember where you
attended junior high.*

ZEKE

(To Spike)

*He knows. Nick knows everything about
everyone of us.*

NICK

*We're not having any fighting on this
team. Don and Sam, you can cool off by
sitting on benches on the opposite sides*
(Cont.)

NICK (Cont.)

*of the field for the rest of this morning's
practice. Stanislaw, do you think you
know the plays well enough to join the
second team?*

STAN

I think so.

WALLY

I'll help you. I played guard last year.

DUTCH

Nice going, Stan.

As the players leave to reassemble their teams, Basil approaches Nick.

BASIL

When are we going to have tryouts for kickers, Nick?

NICK

We'll get to that on Monday.

Basil goes off to watch the first team run plays.

EXT - IN FRONT OF MOVIE THEATER - TWILIGHT

The theater marquee indicates "IN SOCIETY with Abbott and Costello". Zeke arrives with BARBARA (17), Spike with JOANNE (17). They are chatting amiably. The boys buy tickets. They go into the theater.

INT - IN THE THEATER - NIGHT

On the screen is a newsreel of U.S. forces fighting the Germans in France near the German border. The foursome is seated with the girls in the

middle. Zeke and Spike are asleep. Barbara and Joanne look at one another and shrug.

INT - SPIKE'S CAR AT LIONS DEN DRIVE-IN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Spike is behind the wheel in front seat of his dad's car with Joanne next to him. Zeke and Barbara are in the back seat. A food tray is on the window next to Spike. They eat hamburgers and french fries and drink milk shakes. Zeke yawns.

BARBARA

Zeke, I hope you're not going to be tired like this all season.

ZEKE

No, we won't be, Barbara. We're a little pooped after a week of twice a day practice. Nick gave us Saturday off, but our dads insisted we work today,

SPIKE

The regular season will be easy by comparison. I promise you that, Joanne.

JOANNE

Spike, it better be.

Joanne pops a french fry into Spike's mouth.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Hank, Nate, and Roger prepare to compete for punter. Richard and Wally are there to center. Eddy, Fred, Zeke, Billy, and Pat are downfield to catch the kicks. Nick stands behind the punters to observe. Other players are elsewhere on the field in blocking and tackling drills.

HANK

What're you doing here, Roger? You're a lineman. Are you trying to pirate my job?

ROGER

(Laughing heartedly)

Naw. I just want to get out of blocking drills. But I'll beat you out if I can.

HANK

I won't let you, Jolly Roger.

NICK

Okay, boys, let's go.

MONTAGE of punting: Richard and Wally alternate at center. Hank starts with a booming kick. Roger does almost as well. Nate squibs one off the side of his foot. In the next round Hank and Roger repeat their performance. Nate does a little better. Hank, Roger, and Nate

each kick once more.

NICK

*Good work, Hank. You've got the job.
You did all right, too, Roger. You'll be
backup. Keep working at it, Nate. We
may need you before the season is over.*

MONTAGE of kickoff competition: Hank does best. Jolly (aka Roger) is less successful. Basil tries but can't get much distance. Wally gives it a try, but Nate proves to be second best to Hank on kickoffs.

MONTAGE of point-after-touchdown competition: Zeke holds for the kickers with Richard and Wally alternating at center. With Eddy cheering him on, Basil hits four out of five. Hank and Nate try but lack the touch. Wally takes a turn kicking and is better than the two backs but not as good as Basil.

NICK

*I wouldn't have thought it, Basil, but
you're pretty good.*

BASIL

Thanks, Nick.

NICK

Do you have to wear your glasses?

BASIL

I can't see without them.

NICK

Then we'll have to devise some kind of protective mask.

BASIL

Maybe I can borrow Pudge's catcher's mask.

NICK

No, that won't do. I'll ask Jim Dugan in industrial arts to make something for you.

Eddy pats Basil on the back as they walk off together.

INT - GRANDDAD'S DEN - DAY

Granddad sits in his swivel chair, Scott on a footstool.

SCOTT

Granddad, how come none of the Lofton players wore faceguards? We're required to wear them.

GRANDDAD

Nobody did in the '40s. Faceguards came in later.

SCOTT

Why didn't Basil wear contacts?

GRANDDAD

They hadn't been invented.

Granddad strokes his chin.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

In passing practice Zeke and Lefty take turns taking snaps from Bulldog and throw to first and second team backs and ends. Nick watches. After Billy takes one turn as a receiver, he approaches Nick.

BILLY

Nick, you promised me a chance to throw.

NICK

Go ahead. Let's see what you can do.

Billy throws several passes hard but wild, sometimes behind the receiver, sometimes too far ahead or too high. Zeke and Lefty watch with amusement. Eddy comes up.

EDDY

Kid, let me show you how a tailback should throw.

Eddy's throws are more accurate but without much zip. His longer throws wobble. Spike mimes a shotgun shooting at them. Nick laughs.

NICK

You guys better stick to the running game.

ZEKE

Lefty, I think we can sleep easy tonight.

LEFTY

We sure can.

Billy sulks off, but Eddy is nonchalant about it. Zeke completes the session with a tight spiral to Spike deep and in.

The players leaving the field at the end of practice. Dutch approaches Flash.

DUTCH

Flash, Stan is staying out a while to work on his blocking. Would you like to join us?

FLASH

I guess I better. Nick seems to expect ends to be blockers, too.

DUTCH

Why don't you get Joe to work with us?

FLASH

Okay. Hey, Joe. Come over here.

All the other players leave the field as Dutch instructs Stan and Flash how to block better with Joe serving as defender. Nick notices this as he leaves the field.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The players enter the locker room, dressed in school clothes and carrying books. They start changing into their practice uniforms.

PUDGE

Boy, I'm glad school has finally started.
No more twice a day practices.

EDDY

Who did you get for English?

PUDGE

Miss Simpson.

EDDY

You'll be sorry. I had her last year, and she's tough.

SPIKE

I hope no one's taking world history from Mr. Morris. He doesn't like football players.

RUSTY

Oh no! Why didn't somebody warn me? Bob and Bulldog are in the class, too.

FLASH

Aren't there any easy courses in this school?

RICHARD

Chemistry with Mr. Weaver is not bad. He used to play football,

FLASH

I wish I'd known that. I love science.

ZEKE

Bob, I heard you're taking Spanish.

BOB

No me llamo Bob. Me llamo Roberto.⁶

BASIL

⁶ "I'm not Bob. My name is Roberto."

*Mucho gusto, Roberto!*⁷

RUSTY

I didn't know you spoke Spanish, Basil.

EDDY

He knows everything. He's all A's.

SPIKE

Along with Zeke and Bulldog.

Zeke pulls his jersey over his pads and closes his locker.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players gather around Nick. They are sweaty and dirty from practice.

NICK

The last thing I want to do today is to practice fumble recovering. Bob, show 'em how it's done.

ROBERTO (aka Bob)

No me llamo Bob. Me llamo Roberto.

NICK

⁷ "Please to meet you."

*No me importa lo que te llamem en el
clasa español. Todavía eres Bob para
mí.⁸*

FLASH

(To Eddy)

Nick knows everything, too.

EDDY

You're catching on.

Nick rolls a ball out. Roberto pounces on it, grasps it to his chest with both arms, brings his legs up into a fetal position. MONTAGE of other players recovering fumbles, not all of them successfully.

The players gather around Nick, who holds a clipboard.

NICK

*I want to announce the teams for Friday
night's intrasquad game. We're mixing
players from the first and second teams
into units of equal strength and
experience. (Cont.)*

NICK (Cont.)

*Wearing gold jerseys the line will consist
of Spike, Jiri, Dutch, Wally, Stan, Rusty,
and Flash. In the backfield will be Nate,*

⁸"I don't care what they call you in Spanish class. You're still Bob to me."

Fred, Billy, and Zeke.

ZEKE

(Under his breath to Spike)

Oh no, I'm stuck with Billy.

NICK

The white team will have Chuck, Pudge, Joe, Bulldog, Bob, Jolly Roger, and Mike on the line, and Hank, Pat, Eddy, and Lefty in the backfield.

These two units can work together at Thursday's practice so that you can get used to one another.

As they break up, Nick seeks out Zeke.

NICK

Zeke, I'd like to see you in my office in a few minutes.

ZEKE

Whatever you say.

Jiri comes up to Nick and Zeke.

JIRI

Nick, do I have to play next to Dutch.

NICK

What's the problem?

JIRI

He's German, and I'm Czech.

NICK

He's American, just like you.

JIRI

But he won't fight in the war.

NICK

Mennonites don't believe in fighting.

JIRI

Then he shouldn't play football.

NICK

That's what his family and church elders told him, but he came out anyhow because he likes sports. Jiri, you couldn't have a better teammate.

JIRI

Couldn't I play on the other side of the line or on the white team?

NICK

I make team assignments. If you don't want to play, I've got several promising tackles to take your place.

ZEKE

Jiri, we want you on the gold team.

JIRI

I'll have to think about it.

Jiri walks off and catches up with Chuck and Pat.

INT - NICK'S OFFICE

Nick sits behind a desk. Zeke, still in uniform, sits in front.

NICK

Zeke, I know you're not happy having Billy on your team.

ZEKE

What makes you think so?

NICK

I could see it in your eyes when I announced the team. But whether you like him personally, he's your teammate.

Furthermore, you're the team leader on the field. It's your job to get your team working effectively as a unit.

ZEKE

I'll try.

NICK

I know Billy's brash, but you've got to remember that he just turned 15 this summer. He's inexperienced and has a lot to learn. You can help him.

ZEKE

I doubt that he'll listen to me.

NICK

He will if you approach him as a friend, not an adversary.

ZEKE

I'll do what I can.

NICK

This is important to me and to the whole team because Billy's our running back of the future.

ZEKE

Not this year?

NICK

No, he's not ready yet. If you're afraid that helping him will enable him to displace Eddy, you needn't worry.

ZEKE

I heard Billy ran a faster 40 than Eddy.

NICK

That's true, but Eddy knows many more tricks of the trade, both as tailback and safety.

ZEKE

I'll do whatever you say, Nick.

Zeke rises and heads for the door.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

The teams are ready to start the intrasquad game under field lights. There are three referees, two volunteers on the yardage chains, and another on the down sign. A small crowd is in the stands. Hal and Dave coach the two teams from the sidelines. Nick sits in the press box, watching and taking notes.

Nate prepares to kick off for the gold team. Jiri lines up next to Dutch. The white team spreads out to receive with Eddy standing on the 10 yard

line. The referee blows his whistle to start play. From the gold 40 Nate kicks a short kickoff that Eddy fields on the 20 and returns to the 35.

MONTAGE of play action, including friendly though competitive matchups of the guards and tackles: Roberto versus Dutch, Rusty versus Pudge, Stan versus Joe, and Roger versus Jiri. Eddy runs off tackle; Pat goes the other way; Hank plunges up the middle; Eddy tries an end sweep with little gain; with down marker showing 3rd and 8 Lefty overthrows a pass to Chuck; Hank punts; Billy fields the punt deep in gold territory and makes 15 yards on the runback.

The gold team huddles.

ZEKE

Short punt 36 on two.

(Clapping hands)

Let's go!

The team breaks huddle.

INT - GRANDDAD'S DEN

Granddad remains in the swivel chair. Scott seats backward in a straight chair.

SCOTT

Granddad, how come Zeke started with 36 every time.

GRANDMA (65) comes in with the mail and places it on Granddad's desk.

GRANDDAD

First of all, it was a familiar play they could execute well and settle their nerves. Second, sending the tailback off-tackle to the strong side, led by pulling linemen -- which 36 did -- has long been the most powerful running play in football. It was the foundation of the single wing. It carried over into short put. It became a basic play of the T-formation. It's been a staple of many Superbowl winners.

GRANDMA

Paul, I don't see how you can be so rhapsodic about a football play.

GRANDDAD

Darling, every sport features a distinctive play that players use decade after decade. In basketball it's the pick-and-roll. In baseball it's the double play.

SCOTT

Soccer has a pick-and-roll, too.

Grandma shakes her head in amazement.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

The gold team lines up in short punt. Zeke gives the count: "Ready, set, hike, one, two." Wally centers the ball to Billy, who runs to the left as his interference goes right. Billy runs into Mike, who tackles him for a five yard loss. The gold team forms a new huddle.

ZEKE

You ran the wrong way, Billy. 36 goes to the right.

BILLY

I got mixed up.

ZEKE

That's okay. We all make mistakes. We'll run the same play again, this time on one.

This time Billy does it right and gains five yards as Flash shows great improvement as a blocker. MONTAGE of several plays by gold: Fred makes a gain; Zeke hits Spike with a pass; Billy runs again; Nate plunges; Zeke underthrows Flash; Nate punts. Eddy makes a strong return.

MONTAGE of white team on offense: Eddy off tackle; Pat on quick opener; Hank plunging; Lefty hits Mike on pass; from the gold 15 Eddy scores on a reverse. Basil, wearing a white jersey and his helmet with a faceguard, kicks the extra point and celebrates his first success in a game.

Billy returns Hank's kickoff fifteen yards. MONTAGE of several plays:

Billy on a reverse; Flash catches a short pass and makes a long gain; Zeke going off tackle on a fake reverse from double wing. With second and goal from the white 5, Fred scores off tackle.

Basil comes out with a gold jersey. Wally's snap is high. By the time Zeke places the football on the ground for Basil to kick, Bulldog comes charging in, blocks the kick, and levels Basil. Zeke gives Basil a hand to help him up.

ZEKE

Welcome to tackle football, Basil.

Eddy runs off tackle for the white team. The linesman sounds his gun to end the half. As they players leave the field, the scoreboard with hand-placed numbers (and no clock) shows: White 7, Gold 6.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players rest benches. Nick stands in front of them.

NICK

From where I was sitting I saw some good playing and some bad. For the most part you know your plays, though I saw several lineman who tried to block the wrong man. Everyone must know his assignment on every play.

I saw some half-hearted blocking. If you

want to play for the Lions, you've got to
block hard. And I saw too many missed
(Cont.)

NICK (Cont.)
tackles. But you're off to a good start.
In the second half play hard, execute well,
and have fun.

The players rise and head for the door.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

To receive the second half kickoff the gold team has both Billy and Fred
back deep. Hank's kickoff goes to Fred, who makes a 20 yard return.

From the gold 40 Billy carries the ball off tackle to the right. Behind
good blocking he gets through the line of scrimmage and cuts to the
outside. Ahead is Eddy playing safety. As Billy fakes left and then right
to get around Eddy, Pat, playing defensive halfback on the other side,
comes across and clobbers Billy. As he goes down, Billy fumbles the ball,
which rolls out of bounds.

Billy lies breathless on the ground. Doc and Hal rush out, and determine
that Billy has the wind knocked out of him. Doc straddles Billy, grabs his
belt. and lifts him up and down to help get him breathing normally again.
Billy is helped to the sideline.

On the field Fred shifts to tailback, and a substitute comes in to play right

halfback. MONTAGE: Fred on quick opener; Nate on fullback plunge; Fred on a reverse. From the white 18, Zeke hits Spike over the middle on the goal line for a touchdown. Basil wearing a gold jersey makes the extra point.

The scoreboard shows white 7, gold 13, fourth quarter. The white team has the ball. Billy is playing again, now as safety on defense. Hank scores for the white team with a three yard plunge. Basil, wearing a white jersey, is wide with the extra point.

The gold team has possession at midfield. Zeke throws and misses Spike on a long pass down the sideline as the gun sounds, ending the game. The scoreboard shows the final score: White 13, Gold 13.

The players leave the field. Zeke and Spike are walking together and catch up with Billy and Lefty.

ZEKE

Good game, guys.

BILLY

You ain't see nothing left.

The pairs walk their separate ways.

SPIKE

That kid still has a lot to learn.

Zeke and Spike walk on together.

INT - SHOWER ROOM - NIGHT

Eddy showers near Pudge, Roberto, and Rusty. As Billy comes in, Eddy starts singing in a loud voice.

EDDY

(Singing)

I'll sing you a true song of Billy the Kid.

I'll sing of the terrible run that he did.

Cut down by Pat Kelly who once was his
friend.

The young tailback's run now reached its
sad end.

The players erupt in laughter. Billy flushes in anger, starts to go after Eddy, but thinks better of it. He storms out of the showers.

INT - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Billy hurries back to his locker, quickly dresses, and heads out of the locker room. As he passes the showers, he hears more singing amidst laughter.

SEVERAL VOICES (O.S.)

(Singing)

I'll sing you a true song of Billy the Kid.

I'll sing of the terrible run that he did.

Billy rushes out the door.

INT - MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Spike, Joanne, Barbara, and Zeke watch a newsreel about U.S. tanks smashing through the Siegfried line. This time the boys are wide awake. The feature comes on with Bing Crosby in "Going My Way."

INT - LIONS DEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Zeke, Barbara, Spike, and Joanne sit in a booth at the Lions Den, eating hamburgers and french fries and drinking shakes.

SPIKE

And then Billy left without even taking a shower. I bet he's still mad at Eddy.

JOANNE

You boys aren't very nice to poor Billy.

ZEKE

What's the matter, Joannie? Got a crush on Billy?

JOANNE

I think he's cute.

Spike looks at her in amazement.

EXT - STEPS IN FRONT OF LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Students are on the front steps of Lofton High during the lunch break. Zeke, Barbara, Spike, and Joane talk MOS. Eddy, Pudge, Basil, Rusty, and Roberto stand together, tell jokes MOS, and laugh hilariously. Billy, Lefty, and a couple of girls walk by. Laura and her friends are nearby. Eddy starts whistling the "Billy the Kid" tune. Billy approaches him closely.

BILLY

Eddy, I'd settle this with you right now, once and for all, if you didn't have your bodyguards to protect you.

EDDY

I don't need bodyguards for dealing with punks like you. But I'm not going to fight you and get suspended from the team and miss the opening game Friday night.

BILLY

Then I challenge you to a race. If I beat you, you'll have to apologize to me in front of the team and call me Fast Billy.

EDDY

A race it will be. In full football gear at the start of practice this afternoon.

BILLY

Agreed.

Billy strides off confidently with his group.

RUSTY

Eddy, you can't outrun him.

EDDY

I can beat him in a race. You'll see.

Eddy raises a clenched fist.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Eddy is one of the early arrivals on the field for practice. He performs a few warmup exercises, jogs a little, and runs at half speed. Billy comes on the field with Lefty and followed by several sophomores. Eddy comes up to him. Zeke and Bulldog are near by.

EDDY

I'm ready when you are.

BILLY

Any time. We'll start at the goal line and run to the 40.

EDDY

Only the 40? I thought you wanted a real race, kid. Let's go from goal line to goal line. Just like it is when I run back a kickoff for a touchdown.

BILLY

It's your funeral. I'll be out of sight in a hundred yards.

EDDY

We'll need a starter and a judge at the finish.

ZEKE

I'll volunteer as starter. And why don't you have Bulldog be the judge? You know he's fair.

EDDY

That's all right with me.

BILLY

Me, too.

Bulldog and several other players trot to the far goal line as Eddy, Billy, and Zeke go to the near goal line. Billy lays his helmet on the ground and kneels into a sprinter's crouch with his knuckles on the goal line.

EDDY

This ain't a track meet, kid. It's football. We're running backs. Stand up on two feet and put your helmet on.

Billy stands up, puts on his helmet, and tightens the chin strap.

BILLY

I can whip you any way we start. And that's the last time you'll call me "kid".

Eddy and Billy stand like milers getting ready to race, Eddy on the left and Billy on the right. Zeke stands beside them on the goal line. Bulldog waves from the far end of the field. Unnoticed by the competitors, Nick comes through the gate and onto the field alongside the running track.

ZEKE

Go on hike. O.K., get ready. Set. Hike.

Eddy and Billy take off. Billy gets a faster start and gains an early lead. By the 30 yard line he is about two yards ahead of Eddy and begins drifting left in front of him. At the 50 Billy looks around to his left to see how far ahead he is, but he doesn't see Eddy because Eddy has shifted to his right and is starting to close. At the far 40 Billy looks to his right and breaks his stride. Eddy uses this opportunity to catch up by the 25. At the 10 Billy runs out of steam, and Eddy pulls ahead with a final sprint to win by a yard.

Eddy and Billy gasp for air, hands clutching their sides, and walk off separately. Zeke trots down to the finishing line. As he arrives, the two runners come back together.

EDDY

From now on, you can call me Fast Eddy.

BILLY

O.K., Fast Eddy. You can call me Slow Billy if you want, but please not Billy the Kid.

EDDY

No, you're not slow, Billy. You just challenged the wrong person. You're Wild Bill.

At the other end of the field Nick blows his whistle to assemble the players. Eddy puts his arm around Billy's shoulders as they walk together down the field.

At the end of calisthenics, Nick gathers the sweating players around him.

NICK

As a result of the intrasquad game, I'm making one change in team assignment. Flash, I'm promoting you to first team. I always knew you could catch passes and run with the ball. In the game I saw you do some good, hard blocking. I know it's the result of extra practicing you did all week with Dutch, Stan, and Joe. You others can take a lesson from that.

Flash is exultant. Mike looks glumly at the ground.

NICK

I've already talked to Mike about this switch and told him that he'll get playing time. So will you, Chuck. The two of you will have your chance next year when Spike and Flash graduate.

Today I want teams to run through plays on their own. Then we'll have light

(Cont.)

NICK (Cont.)

contact work between team. Tuesday and Wednesday we'll have hard scrimmage, and a light workout on Thursday. By then we should be ready for our opening game against Kepler.

The players disperse to form teams. As the first team assembles, Zeke offers his hand to Flash.

ZEKE

Congratulations, Flash. I'm glad you're on our team. Your speed should help us.

FLASH

Thanks a lot. I'll do my best.

EDDY

You're a welcome addition, Flash -- as long as you knock down the opposing

players when I run the ball your way.

FLASH

*I'll clear the way for you, Fast Eddy, if
you do the same for me on end-arounds.*

The first team lines up in T-formation.

INT - PARKER FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

*The Parkers -- Mom, Dad, Zeke, and Laura -- eat dinner at the
dinette in the kitchen.*

LAURA

How did the race come out, Paul?

ZEKE

What race?

LAURA

*You know, the one between Billy and
Eddy. Everybody in school knows they
were going to race. And about the song
Eddy sang in the shower.*

ZEKE

Oh, that. Eddy won -- naturally.

LAURA

How come Eddy picks on Billy that way?

ZEKE

I thought you didn't like Billy?

LAURA

It's not that. I just don't think you seniors should pick on us sophomores.

ZEKE

Anyway they're friends now. Eddy invited Billy to go duck hunting with him and Pudge on Saturday.

Zeke takes a bite of food.

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

The student body of Lofton High gathers for a pep rally. On stage the pep band finishes a rousing fight song. Also on stage are cheerleaders led by MARY LOU (17), the first team plus Basil, and Nick. The cheerleaders lead the students in a chant.

MARY LOU

Let's hear it for the gold and white!

CHEERLEADERS AND

STUDENTS

Come on, gold!

Come on, white!

*Lofton Lions,
Fight, fight, fight!*

Roar! [as a lion]

MARY LOU

*And now let's hear a few words from
Coach Nickerson.*

NICK

*As usual, we start a new season full of
hope and high expectation. Our team
has worked hard these past three weeks
to master football fundamentals:
blocking, tackling, running, passing, and
kicking. Equally important they have
developed a strong team spirit and an
appreciation of one another's talents.*

*As we look toward to the kickoff of the
game with Kepler tonight, we are
prepared both physically and mentally.
We can't predict what the season's
outcome will be, but we know that each
and every player will do his best.*

Students applaud.

MARY LOU

And now to speak for the team, I call

*upon our nifty tailback, Eddy Foster.
The students cheer as Eddy comes forward.*

EDDY

*I'm proud to be able to speak for our
team today. As Coach says, we're ready.
We're ready for Kepler and for all the
teams in our league. I've got a great
group of teammates. We're committed
to bringing victory after victory to Lofton
High. We will run and pass our way
down the field to score. We will stop our
opponents from scoring. We will win
because we are winners!*

STUDENTS

Roar!

Mary Lou and other cheerleaders lead the cheering.

The students cheer as Eddy comes forward.

EDDY

I'm proud to be able to speak for our team today. As Coach says, we're ready. We're ready for Kepler and for all the teams in our league. I've got a great group of teammates. We're committed to bringing victory after victory to Lofton High. We will run and pass our way down the field to score. We will stop our opponents from scoring. We will win because we are winners!

STUDENTS

Roar!

Mary Lou and other cheerleaders lead the cheering.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The players are putting on uniforms with fresh, white game jerseys for the Kepler game. They are serious and focused but with some nervous jocularities.

SPIKE

Zeke and I saw the Kepler players unloading from their bus. There are some big ones.

RUSTY

Yeah, I remember the tackle who played opposite me last year. He was strong. And I think he's back.

ROBERTO

You'll be able to handle him, muscleman.

DUTCH

Okay, Stan, who do you block on 36?

STAN

Pull to the right and double team with the halfback on the end.

DUTCH

Right. What about 433?

STAN

I pull to my left and mousetrap their right guard.

DUTCH

Good!

EDDY

Billy, it's all right to be nervous. I was in my first game with the varsity when I was a sophomore.

BILLY

I just hope I remember all the plays.

ZEKE

You will.

BASIL

*"We few, we happy few, we band of
brothers; for he today that sheds his
blood with me shall be my brother."*

STAN

What's this about blood shedding?

PUDGE

*Oh, don't let Basil upset you. Last year
in English literature, Miss Shepherd had
the class memorize a lot of stuff from
Shakespeare.*

BASIL

Henry the 5th, Act IV, Scene 3.

NICK

Gather around, fellows.

The players crowd into one section of the locker room.

NICK

*As you go out onto the field to warm up
and prepare for the opening kickoff,
remember that you belong to the proud*

tradition of the Lofton Lions.
Remember what you've learned the past
three weeks. Each of you play your best.
And play
well as a team. Enjoy the game. Okay,
let's go.

The players roar as they leave the locker room.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

In the center of the field, as seen from a distance, Eddy represents Lofton for the coin toss, and a big lineman represents Kepler. The referee tosses the coin in the air, the Kepler captain calls it MOS, and the captains look at it on the ground. Eddy speaks MOS and makes a motion to receive. The Kepler captain points to one of the goals.

The teams lined up for the kickoff. As the Kepler kicker starts running toward the ball, a snare drum sounds and a bass drum booms as his foot hits the ball. Eddy receives the ball on the 10 yard line and returns it past the 25.

The Lions huddle.

ZEKE

Nice run, Eddy. Okay, let's start in
short punt. Number 36. On two.

Zeke claps his hands, and the players take their positions. On "two" Bulldog snaps the ball to Eddy, who runs off tackle to the right for a five yard gain.

MONTAGE: Fred makes first down going to the left; Eddy runs a quick opener; Hank plunges up the middle; Zeke misses Spike in the flat; Hank punts.

MONTAGE of Kepler plays from T-formation: Halfback in quick opener between and tackle; lateral to other halfback going wide; fullback up the middle; short pass to end over center; punt. Eddy makes a good return up the sideline.

MONTAGE: from double wing, a double reverse Zeke to Fred to Eddy for a big gain; Zeke passes to Flash over the middle; from the Kepler 8 Eddy scores off left tackle.

As Basil runs out on the field to try the extra point, band members cheer loudly. They include Barbara, who waves her flute as she cheers. As his kick sails through the upright, clarinets shriek, trumpets and trombones blare, cymbals clang, and the bass drum booms.

MONTAGE: Kepler returning kickoff; runs and passes from T-formation; with ball on Lofton 20 Kepler scores on a quick opener through Pudge's side of the Lofton line. On the extra point the snap bounces before reaching the holder, and Dutch bursts through to block the kick.

The Lofton second team backfield and end comes in to receive the kickoff, and Billy makes a good return. MONTAGE: Billy gains on a reverse; Lefty throws to Mike in the flat; Pat runs off tackle; Billy runs an end sweep. The

linesman signals end of the half. Scoreboard shows Lofton 7, Kepler 6.

Eddy walks with Billy to the locker room.

EDDY

Nice running, Wild Bill.

BILLY

Thanks, Fast Eddy.

Eddy and Billy walk on together.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The players gather around Nick, who stands at a blackboard and draws some of Kepler's T-formation plays.

NICK

Zeke, you've got the offense moving nicely, but our defense could be tighter. I didn't expect them to use the T exclusively. Guards and tackles, you've got to be alert for quick openings. If you find you've penetrated without being blocked, look out for a trap from the opposite side. Linebackers, keep your eye on the ball and don't be fooled by the

quarterback's fakes. And backs, be alert
for quick passes over the center or into
the flat.

We've got the lead. So keep up your
strong play.

Nick claps his hands. The players roar and head for the door.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

MONTAGE: Kepler running plays, then punting; Lofton stopped cold and punting.

On the next series as the Kepler quarterback starts to lateral to a halfback going wide, Roberto penetrates, hits him, and cause the lateral to go astray. Flash pounces on the loose ball.

Fred makes a good gain with a double wing reverse. From T-formation Zeke hits Spike over the middle for a touchdown. Basil makes the extra point.

MONTAGE: Kepler moving down field after the kickoff, scoring, and making the extra point. The scoreboard shows Lofton 14, Visitor 13.

MONTAGE: Lions running plays with subs mixed in with regulars. Hank punts.

MONTAGE: Kepler in a drive with all Lions starters on the field. Kepler gets the ball to first and goal at the Lofton 9.

ROBERTO

O.K., fellows. There's not much time left
in the game. Let's hold them.

Mary Lou and the other cheerleaders lead the Lofton crowd in the chant:
"Hold that line! Hold that line!"

On first down Pudge stops the Kepler halfback after a two yard gain. On
second down the Kepler fullback plunges up the middle to the Lofton 3.
On third down the Kepler fakes to the halfback and throws to an end in
the corner, but Fred reaches out and deflects the ball.

On fourth and goal from the 3, the Kepler fullback tries to dive over the
pile at the line, but Hank dives at the same time. The linesman comes in
and places the ball six inches from the goal. The Lofton crowd cheers.
The referee signals first down for Lofton. As the chains are being set,
Zeke hurries over to the linesman.

ZEKE

How much time is left in the game?

LINESMAN

I'll tell you when the game is over, Sonny.

The Lions huddle in the end zone.

ZEKE

The game's almost over. We don't want
to risk a safety by a fumble in the end

zone. Hank, you've been kicking well.
So let's punt it out of here.

Hank lines up deep in the end zone. Bulldog's snap is good, but the kick goes off the side of Hank's foot and out of bounds at the 25. The Kepler quarterback passes to a halfback in front of Zeke, who forces him out of bounds at the ten. Then the quarterback hits an end at the goal line as Fred dives but misses the ball. The kicker makes the extra point. The scoreboard shows: Lofton 14, Visitor 20.

The Lions prepare to receive the kickoff with Eddy and Fred as deep receivers. The kick goes to Fred, who hands it to Eddy on a reverse, fooling some of the Kepler defenders. Eddy speeds along the sideline. The Kepler kicker is the last defender between Eddy and the goal line. As Eddy tries to cut sharply around the defender, he slips and falls near the 50.

Quickly the Lions line up without a huddle. From a double wing Zeke receives the snap and drops back to pass. Spike and Flash go down deep and out, Eddy deep up the middle with Fred and Hank blocking to protect Zeke. Zeke hits Spike on the Kepler 30, where he is immediately tackled. As the Lofton players run downfield to set up for the next play, the gun sounds, ending the game.

The Lofton players shake hands perfunctorily with the Kepler team and drag themselves off the field.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

There is mostly silence in the locker room as the players take off their uniforms. Zeke sits morosely in front of his locker, half undressed. The coaches circulate among the players, pat some on the backing, and talke with individuals MOS.

NICK

(to all)

I know it's tough to lose a close game in the last minute. But these things happen. It'll hurt for a while. Then we'll put it behind us so that we can get ready for the league opener next week.

Doc walks over to Zeke.

DOC

Cheer up, Zeke. It's not the end of the world. Just a momentary setback. And what about this Basil kid? Wasn't he great with those extra points?

ZEKE

Oh, shut up, Doc.

Doc retreats hurriedly.

INT - LIVING ROOM OF PARKER HOUSE - DAY

Two sections of the Lofton Herald are on the coffee table. The front page

carries a headline: "FOUR JAP SHIPS SUNK BY ALLIES". The sports section indicates: "LAST MINUTE LOSS FOR LIONS - Kepler Prevails 20-14". Zeke is slouched in a chair reading Life magazine. His mother enters.

MOM

You're not going out this evening, Paul?

ZEKE

No, Barbara went out of town for her grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary.

MOM

Wouldn't you like to go to the movies anyway, rather than mope around here?

ZEKE

Who wants to see Harry Bendix in "The Harry Ape"?

Zeke returns to reading Life.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The Lofton players dress for practice. Most of them are ready as Spike comes in, carrying school books.

SPIKE

Where's Zeke?

ROBERTO

He's in talking with Nick?

Spike opens his locker.

INT - COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Nick sits at his desk and Zeke on a chair in front.

NICK

Zeke, basically you called a good game against Kepler in your first full game as quarterback. You ran a good mixture of plays, and you had a good sense of field position most of the time. However, after we stopped Kepler on the six inch line, you should've called a running play instead punting on first down.

ZEKE

I thought the game was about over. With a one point lead I didn't want to risk a safety.

NICK

Your best call would've been a quarterback sneak out of T-formation. It's almost impossible to lose yardage, and you probably could've gained two or three

yards.

ZEKE

It never occurred to me.

NICK

Two more running plays might've run out the clock or yielded a first down. Or at least Hank would've had more punting room.

ZEKE

I suppose you're right.

NICK

Then as soon as Spike caught that last pass -- an excellent throw by the way -- you should've called time out. That would've given us time for one more play.

ZEKE

I didn't think of that. I'm sorry. My mistakes cost us the game.

NICK

You've got it wrong, Zeke. I'm telling you these things to make you a better quarterback not to cast blame. After all

other players made mistakes during the game: missed tackles, bungled blocks.

Football's a team effort. Friday night we made touchdowns as a team. We gave up touchdowns as a team. It was a team loss, not the fault of any one individual.

ZEKE

Thanks for saying that, Nick.

Zeke gets up to leave.

INT - GRANDDAD'S DEN - DAY

Granddad sits on the sofa. Scott, on the recliner, leans forward.

SCOTT

Granddad, if your coach knew what to do, how come he didn't send in a play when you got the ball on the six inch line?

GRANDDAD

In our day, Scott, the game was entirely on the field. Substitutes could come in only when the ball was dead, such as after an incomplete pass or running out of bounds. When the ball changed

hands, it was still alive, so there couldn't be substitutes.

SCOTT

That's not the way it is now. In one close game our team played last year, the coach sent in every play.

GRANDDAD

I liked it better our way, even though it placed more pressure on the quarterback.

SCOTT

Yeah, I think I would, too.

Scott leans back in the recliner.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Spike, now in his practice uniform, waits outside the coach's office as Zeke comes out.

SPIKE

What was that about?

ZEKE

I'll tell you later. Are you going to tell him about yourself?

SPIKE

I guess I'll have to.

Nick comes out of his office. Spike looks worried.

NICK

What's the matter, Spike?

SPIKE

I've been grounded, Nick?

NICK

Grounded?

SPIKE

By my dad. He found one lousy beer cap on the back floor of his car on Sunday after I used it Saturday night. He says I have to be in by seven o'clock for the rest of the week.

NICK

Including Friday night?

SPIKE

Friday and Saturday, too.

NICK

You won't be able to make the trip to play Ashmont?

SPIKE

No, and it's not even my fault. Because Zeke's girl was out of town, I double-dated with Buddy Norton.

NICK

I've had him in gym class. Sort of a flashy dresser.

SPIKE

That's the one. He brought along a couple of beers. I didn't have one, I swear it, Nick, and neither did the girls. But my dad insists that drinking and driving don't mix, not even by passengers. So he grounded me. Couldn't you talk to him, Nick?

NICK

No, Spike. Your father sets the rules for you. Whatever he decides I respect and will go along with.

SPIKE

Darn.

NICK

So I guess you'll have to practice with the second team this week. We'll let Chuck and Mike divide time playing left end with the first team.

Nick leads Spike and Zeke out of the locker room.

INT - GRANDDAD'S DEN - DAY

Scott remains on the recliner, Granddad on the sofa.

SCOTT

If you think Spike's dad was strict, you ought to hear the rules my dad has.

GRANDDAD

You're lucky, Scott, that he cares.

Scott raises his eyebrows skeptically.

EXT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

The pep band, cheerleaders, and a crowd of students gather around as the team boards the school bus for the trip to Ashmont. Spike stands with the students. As the pep band plays and the cheerleaders lead chants, two teams of players, Basil, Doc, and the three coaches board the bus, leaving Spike behind.

INT - INSIDE SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Zeke and Bulldog sit together behind the driver with Zeke on the aisle. On the other side Nick and Hal sit together. Dave is halfway back. So are Eddy and Pudge. Other pairs of friends sit together: Fred and Flash, Dutch and Stan, Billy and Lefty, Nate and Joe, Jiri and Mike. The bus moves along the highway. Doc comes through with a box of sack lunches. Zeke and Bulldog open theirs.

BULLDOG

Let's see if the school cafeteria has kept up it's tradition.

ZEKE

Yep. Ham and cheese on white bread, an apple, and a pint of milk.

BULLDOG

But what's that spicy aroma?

ZEKE

I suppose Pudge has brought his usual supplement.

Pudge and Eddy eat Greek food.

BULLDOG

That's the advantage of coming from a

restaurant family.

ZEKE

I hope Greek food won't get Eddy off his game.

Nick and Hal eat the same food as the players.

NICK

I'd love to see a streetcar series.

HAL

The Cards have already clinched, but I don't think the Browns can make it. They're one game behind the Tigers. They'd have to sweep their final four games with the Yankees, and Detroit would have to lose twice to the Senators, who are in last place.

NICK

You never know who'll choke this time of year.

Nick takes a bite of his sandwich.

EXT - PARKING LOT NEXT TO ASHMONT STADIUM - DUSK

The Lofton players get off the bus on the visitors' side of the Ashmont

stadium. They are talkative and jocular. Eddy seeks out Billy.

EDDY

See those light poles, Billy? They're shorter than the ones at home. Sometimes a high punt goes above them.

BILLY

How do you know where the ball is then?

EDDY

It's like in baseball catching flies in the outfield. You know where the ball is coming down by watching it go up.

The players enter the dressing room under the stands.

EXT - ASHMONT FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Hank kicks off for Lofton. Flash gets down quickly and nails the Ashmont runner inside the 20 yard line. After a huddle Ashmont lines up on offense. The Ashmont team has no African Americans.

ASHMONT LEFT END

Hi, Rustface. I remember you from the beating we gave you last year.

The tailback makes five yards the other way. Ashmont huddles and sets

up again.

ASHMONT LEFT END

*See, we're as good as ever. Wait'll you
see some of the new plays we have.*

As the play comes his way, the Ashmont left end tries to block Rusty but fails, and Rusty stops the ball carrier at the line of scrimmage. The defense resets as Ashmont huddles.

RUSTY

Maybe that'll shut that kid's mouth.

On the next play the Ashmont left end cuts over the middle and catches a pass for the first down. He brushes Roberto on the way back to the huddle.

ASHMONT LEFT END

*Tell that big fellow and his darky friend
that they're in for a rough evening.*

Flash hears this and bristles.

MONTAGE: Three more running plays, then a high punt that goes above the lights. Eddy has a hard time seeing it and signals for a fair catch on the Lions' 25.

The Lions huddle and come out on offense. Flash lines up opposite the Ashmont left end.

ASHMONT LEFT END

*Colored boy, who said you could play a
man's game?*

As Eddy carries the ball off tackle to the right, Roberto and Fred team to block out the left end and Flash and Hank double team the tackle. Eddy gains six yards.

ASHMONT LEFT END

(To Fred)

*I hope the shoe polish on your face didn't
come off on my uniform.*

On the next play Fred goes left for five yards and a first down.

MONTAGE: two running plays with short gains, then a pass from Zeke over the middle to Mike, who drops it. With the ball dead, Zeke approaches referee.

ZEKE

*Sir, their left end is baiting our players.
That's suppose to be a five yard penalty.*

REFEREE

*He's just talkative. I haven't heard any
baiting.*

On fourth down Hank punts.

MONTAGE: Ashmont moving down field on offense with their left end continuing to jabber away. They score and make the extra point.

Eddy makes a decent return on the ensuing kickoff.

MONTAGE: Lions running several plays with the Ashmont left end needling Flash. Flash returns to the huddle incensed.

FLASH

If he calls me one more nasty name, I'm gonna bust him in the face.

FRED

Yeah, and get thrown out of the game. Don't you see? That's what he wants you to do.

After two more plays the quarter ends. As the teams exchange sides, the Ashmont end deliberately walks by Flash.

ASHMONT LEFT END

Darky, why don't you go back to the South where the livin' is easy?

Flash seethes as he joins the team to drink water from little paper cups that Doc has brought out.

RUSTY

Don't worry, Flash, I'll take care of him for you. Zeke, on the next play call 36

*and let me trade places with Roberto.
Fred, you don't need to help me double
team that sucker.*

*The Lions run off tackle to the right with Rusty playing as pulling guard.
He hits the Ashmont left end with a tremendous cross-body block. Fred
leads interference through the hole and knocks down the linebacker.
Eddy gets through the hole and cuts left for an 18 yard gain, stopped
finally by the safety.*

*Back at the line of scrimmage Rusty is still on top of the Ashmont player,
has a hold of an arm, and is talking to him. The linesman notices them.*

LINESMAN

Get up, boys.

*They get up. The Ashmont end massages his arm. Rusty joins the Lions
huddle.*

RUSTY

*He won't be bothering you anymore,
Flash.*

BULLDOG

What'd you do to him, Rusty?

RUSTY

Let's just say I twisted his arm.

The players laugh.

With downsmarker showing third down and eight from the Ashmont 18, Zeke throws too wide to Chuck, now playing left end. Basil comes in to try a field goal. His kick from the 25 is short.

MONTAGE: Several plays by Ashmont then a punt. Several plays by Lofton with subs getting playing time. The linesman fires gun, signaling end of the first half. As the players leave the field, the scoreboard shows Ashmont 7, Visitor 0.

INT - DRESSING ROOM AT ASHMONT STADIUM - NIGHT

The Lofton players rest on benches. Nick stands in front of them.

NICK

(To Roberto and Rusty)

What was going on when you two traded positions on 36? Why were you piled on that player so long, Rusty?

RUSTY

Well, the truth is, Nick, that fellow was saying some unkind things about Flash because of his skin coloration. I felt he needed instruction on how gentlemen should act, so I arranged to have a private conversation with him.

The players roar hilariously. Nick tries hard not to smile.

NICK

You and Bob should know better than anyone that I don't want you changing plays to your own liking. You didn't hurt him deliberately, did you, Rusty?

RUSTY

Nope. No more than in wrestling.

NICK

Sorry, Flash, that everyone in our league isn't totally civilized.

FLASH

That's all right, Nick. I'm proud to be a Lion.

Flash gives Rusty a friendly slap on his shoulder pads.

FLASH

Thanks, friend.

RUSTY

We're teammates. We support one another.

Rusty slaps Flash on the back.

EXT - ASHMONT FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

On the opening kickoff of the second half, Eddy makes a good return. As the Lions come out of the huddle on offense, the talkative Ashmont end is now playing at the other end of the line and is silent.

RUSTY

(To Ashmont left tackle)

Where's your talkative friend?

ASHMONT LEFT TACKLE

*Our coach shifted him to the other end
and told him to keep his trap shut.*

MONTAGE: Several plays back and forth. Ashmont has the ball on the Lofton 15 and scores on a field goal as the quarter ends. As the teams change ends of the field, the scoreboard shows Ashmont 10, Visitor 0.

Eddy and Fred are dual receivers for the kickoff. The ball goes to Fred, who fakes a reverse to Eddy and makes it to the Lofton 45. Three running plays get the ball to the Ashmont 48. On fourth down Zeke tries to hit Chuck in the flat but the defensive halfback deflects the ball.

As Ashmont takes over on downs, Lefty comes in for Zeke. As Zeke goes to the sidelines, Nick comes over to him.

NICK

*Zeke, you should've punted on fourth
down.*

ZEKE

I thought it was worth the risk. It's getting late in the game, and we need to score.

NICK

It's not that late. We still have almost a quarter left. You gave Ashmont an extra 30 to 35 yards -- three first downs.

ZEKE

Last game I call a punt I shouldn't have. This game I don't punt when I should. I guess I just don't understand your kicking philosophy, Nick.

Zeke watches as Ashmont moves down and scores, but their kicker misses extra point. Zeke goes back in to run the offense, but neither Lofton nor Ashmont scores again. The game ends with the scoreboard showing Ashmont 16, Visitor 0.

INT - IN THE SHOWERS - NIGHT

Zeke, Bulldog, Basil, Roberto, and Rusty are near one another in the showers. Zeke looks forlorn.

BASIL

Don't take it so hard, Zeke. "Sweet are the uses of adversity, which, like the toad,

*ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious
jewel in his head."*

Roberto reaches over and turns off the hot water on Basil's shower.

BASIL

Yipes!

BULLDOG

*Basil, it's better to let the sting of defeat
wear off before applying a poultice of
philosophy.*

Basil and Bulldog leave the shower together.

INT - INSIDE THE SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT

*The Lofton players come on board and take their seats. Bulldog sits again
behind the driver. Zeke boards, goes Bulldog, and takes a seat on the
back row with Dutch and Stan.*

DUTCH

*You're not going to sit in the
quarterback's spot across from the
coaches?*

ZEKE

Nope. I'm in the doghouse.

DUTCH

I'm glad you've joined us. You can help me reassure Stan. Nighttime bus rides make him nervous.

ZEKE

It's no different than riding in daytime, Stan. It may be dark outside, but it's the safe in here.

Bulldog joins them.

STAN

It's what it reminds me of.

DUTCH

Stan's family had two long nights on a bus when his family was escaping from Poland.

STAN

It was -- what's the English word -- scary.

By now the bus drives along the darkened highway out of town.

ZEKE

I'm willing to listen if you want to talk about it.

Stan is silent for a moment, then clears his throat.

STAN

My father was a leader in the resistance, mostly hiding in the forest but coming to see us occasionally late at night. He got word that the Nazis planned to execute our whole family as an example: my mother, two sisters, my brother, and me.

ZEKE

Yes, that must've been scary.

STAN

It was. We arranged to travel with some others in a rickety old bus to the Baltic coast 120 miles away and get a boat to Sweden. It took two nights, driving along back roads without lights and staying in a cave during the day.

Stan pauses in reflection.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - ON BOARD BUS IN POLAND - NIGHT

Stan's family except his father plus 20 others crowd together in the small bus, which drives without lights. In the distance headlights from another vehicle approach.

STAN (V.O.)

The second night we were about ten miles from the coast when we saw headlights coming toward us.

The bus pulls off the road.

STAN (V.O.)

Quickly our driver pulled into a thicket.

The Polish bus pulls into a thicket about 25 feet off the road.

EXT - ALONG ROAD - NIGHT

As the other vehicle approaches. German soldiers sing a drinking song. Several of them are riding in the back of an open truck. They get nearer to the thicket.

INT - ON BUS - NIGHT

The Poles are huddled together and quivering. The German truck goes on by and the singing of the drunken soldiers fades into the distance.

STAN (V.O.)

After the German truck went by, we waited fifteen minutes and then went on our way.

The Polish truck without lights pulls out of the thicket and drives back on the road.

EXT - AT THE SEACOAST - NIGHT

The bus arrives at the seacoast where a fishing boat awaits. The Poles hurriedly board the boat.

STAN (V.O.)

*We reached the coast just before dawn.
We quickly boarded a fishing boat and
headed for safety in Sweden.*

The boat sails off.

INT - LOFTON SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT

On the back row Stan sits with Zeke, Bulldog, and Dutch.

STAN

It was two nights I shall never forget.

ZEKE

*I wouldn't either. It's no wonder a bus
ride at night makes you nervous.*

STAN

But now I'm not afraid. I'm in America

among friends.

The bus pulls into the parking lot of a diner. The players get off. As Zeke makes his way along the aisle, he turns to Bulldog behind him.

ZEKE

*Compared to what Stan's been through,
what's "0" and "2"?*

Zeke and Richard get off.

EXT - DINER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Nick waits for Zeke outside the bus.

NICK

*Zeke, maybe I was too hard on you
during the game. It's easier to call
signals from the bench than on the field.*

ZEKE

*That's all right, Nick. I've learned a lot
tonight.*

NICK

*So come on in. I'll buy you a hamburger
steak.*

Nick takes the meal voucher from his coat pocket as they head for the

diner.

INT - LIVING ROOM OF SPIKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Spike lets in Zeke, Barbara, and Joanne.

SPIKE

I'm glad you could come over since I can't go out tonight.

BARBARA

Spike, you realize that you're making me miss my favorite actor, Spencer Tracy.

SPIKE

What's he playing in?

BARBARA

"The Seventh Cross". It's about seven Americans escaping from a German prisoner-of-war camp.

ZEKE

I can tell you a story of escaping the Nazis.

JOANNE

How about some refreshments first?

Spike heads for the kitchen.

The two couples sit in the living room with partly consumed cokes and a pile of potato chips on a coffee table.

ZEKE

And Stan said the sea was rough on the way to Sweden, but they got there safely.

SPIKE

What about his father?

ZEKE

They don't know whether he's dead of alive.

SPIKE

Wow! Stan's sure been through a lot.

BARBARA

That explains the look on his face.

JOANNE

What look?

BARBARA

Like he's seen things he doesn't want to remember but can't forget.

ZEKE

Yeah. Things more important than football.

SPIKE

That may be true, but we still have to figure out a way to win a game.

ZEKE

We'll beat Tanabe next week. I guarantee it.

JOANNE

You'd better win. Otherwise Barbara and I will look for other beaux.

Spike playfully throws a pillow at Joanne.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The Lofton team scrimmages. Roger punts for the second team, and Eddy returns it 20 yards before being run out of bounds. The first team prepares to go on offense.

NICK

Billy, I want you to run a series with the first team to see what you can do with good blocking.

Billy takes the place of Eddy, who watches with Nick. On the first play

Billy gets the ball to go off tackle to right, gets through the line of scrimmage, cuts to the outside where Pat tackles him.

NICK

You cut the wrong way, Billy. All the defensive players are headed to your right, so when you get through the line of scrimmage you ought to cut back against the grain. Here, let me show you.

Same play, Zeke.

Nick, wearing a jersey, football pants, shoes with cleats, but no padding, takes his place as tailback. Eddy and Billy stand together and watch.

Nick receives the snap from center, runs right parallel with the line of scrimmage, cuts sharply through a big hole the blockers have made. Five yards beyond the line he cuts back to the left as the defensive backs overpursue to his right. Spike blocks the safety and Nick has clear sailing for the goal line.

After 20 yards Pat and Lefty start catching up with him. In another five yards Nick sits down to avoid being tackled. Eddy and Billy come running up. Nick, gasping for air, tosses the ball to Billy.

NICK

That's how it's done.

Spike joins them and extends a helping hand to Nick.

SPIKE

Fantastic run, Nick.

NICK

If an old codger like me can make 25 yards by smart running, you young bucks ought to do better than that.

The two teams move back into position for scrimmage.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM

The players have showered and are getting into their street clothes.

BASIL

I didn't know Nick was so good.

EDDY

He was all conference in college.

SPIKE

*Does anyone want to bet on the series?
I'll take the Cards.*

ROBERTO

Are you crazy? The Browns won their pennant by a miracle. They're no match for the Cardinals.

DOC

I'll bet a dollar that I can tell you the score of tomorrow's opening game before it begins.

BASIL

I'll take your bet. What's the score going to be?

DOC

Nothing to nothing.

Everyone laughs.

BASIL

It can't be. Someone has to win.

DOC

I said the score before the game begins. It's nothing to nothing before it starts.

BASIL

You tricked me.

EDDY

It's an old trick. You're this year's victim, Basil.

Basil looks around for support, but gets none.

INT - DEN - DAY

Granddad is in the recliner. Scott jumps up from the sofa.

SCOTT

Hey, that's a good one! I'll have to try it at school for this year's world series.

GRANDDAD

You never heard it?

SCOTT

No, never.

GRANDDAD

I wonder when it died out.

Granddad shakes his head in amazement.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

The Tanabe team, which has several African American players, lines up to kick off to Lofton. Eddy runs back kickoff. MONTAGE: several plays as Lofton marches downfield, including a pass to Spike. Eddy scores on a quick opener from T-formation. Basil makes the extra point.

Tanabe runs plays from short punt with their tailback calling signals, running and passing. MONTAGE: Tanabe runs several plays then punts.

Lofton runs three plays and punts. Tanabe scores on its next possession but misses the extra point. When the players leave the field at half time, the scoreboard shows Lofton 7, Visitor 6.

MONTAGE: Tanabe receives the second half kickoff, marches to a touchdown, and makes the extra point. With Lofton in possession, Eddy comes up limping after an end sweep, and Billy takes his place. After an exchange of punts Lofton has the ball as the teams change ends after the third quarter.

Fred scores for Lofton on a double reverse. As Basil comes in for the extra point, he acknowledges the cheering from the band and misses the kick. Nick admonishes him on the sidelines. Scoreboard shows: Lofton 13, Visitor 13.

MONTAGE: Tanabe mounts an offense but fumbles near the 50. Tanabe stops Lofton on three plays.

The Tanabe tailback fields Hank's punt at the 10, steps between Flash and Spike, and weaves his way 90 yards for a touchdown. On the try for extra point Spike lines up over center, gets through, leaps high, and blocks the kick. The score: Lofton 13, Visitor 19.

MONTAGE: Lofton mixes runs and passes to get to the Tanabe 25 with fourth and two. In a plunge over center Hank is inches short of making the first down. Zeke runs over to the linesman.

ZEKE

How much time is left?

LINESMAN

Two minutes and 48 seconds.

Zeke returns to his team as they line up for defense.

ZEKE

Come on, gang. Let's hold them here.
There's still time enough for us to score.

Tanabe makes a first down on two running plays. Zeke calls time out.

ZEKE

We've got to make something happen.
Tackle the ball if you can.

The Tanabe tailback gains two yards. Zeke calls another time out.

Tanabe gains another three yards. Zeke calls a final time out, and the Lofton players huddle.

ROBERTO

Rusty, on this play slant in front of me
and I'll go around you. Maybe we can
hit the ballcarrier before he expects it.

Roberto and Rusty do as planned. The Tanabe tailback drops back to pass. Rusty rushes in free and hits his arm just as he throws. The ball flies into Roberto's hands, and he dashes for a touchdown.

Amidst a great roar Basil comes in for the extra point. He ignores the crowd and focuses on the goalpost. His kick splits the crossbars. Zeke

hugs him. The scoreboard quickly registers: Lofton 20, Visitor 19. Roberto and Rusty hoist Basil on their shoulders as the team celebrates. The referee interrupts them.

REFEREE

There's till ten seconds left in the game.
You have to kick off.

On the kickoff Hank kicks a squibber, and the Lions smother the return man before he can make much headway. The gun sounds ending the game.

Students pour out of the stands to celebrate the victory. They congratulate Roberto for his touchdown but give most of their attention to Basil.

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

A school dance is underway in the Lofton high school gym as team members filter in in their street clothes, some wearing letter sweaters. Zeke, Spike, and Eddy come out together, and their girl friends join them: Barbara in her band uniform, Joanne, and Mary Lou in her cheerleader outfit. In one corner of the gym African American students, including Fred, Flash, and their girl friends, are talking MOS and dancing.

ZEKE

I promised a victory, but I didn't expect it to happen this way.

BARBARA

But you won -- finally.

SPIKE

So you'll keep us?

JOANNE

At least for another week.

EDDY

We have Rusty, Roberto, and Basil to thank.

ZEKE

And the Tanabe tailback. A hero on the 90 yard runback, then a goat for passing when he shouldn't have.

EDDY

That's football for you.

SPIKE

I bet Basil has an appropriate quote.

EDDY

He's too busy for that.

Basil is surrounded by a covey of girls. Roberto and Rusty are stand with their girlfriends and watch.

RUSTY

Look at all the attention that runt's getting. You're the one who scored the winning touchdown, Roberto.

ROBERTO

*They expect heroics from you and me,
Rusty. Basil's the unexpected hero.
Just like they all would like to be.*

The band plays a slow piece. Zeke and Barbara, the football players and their girlfriends join the dancing.

ZEKE

Why are all the girls so ga-ga over Basil?

BARBARA

Because he's darling.

ZEKE

What about me?

BARBARA

*You're Ezekiel, the preacher and prophet.
You're attractive in a different way.*

The band picks up its pace, and Zeke and Barbara start jitterbugging.

INT - PARKER HARDWARE STORE

Zeke, his dad, and a couple of customers cluster around a radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

The Browns are coming to bat in the bottom of the second inning with the Cardinals leading the game two to nothing, thanks to a two-run homer by Stan Musial in the first inning. The Browns, though, lead the series two games to one.

Mom enters the store with tears in her eyes, clutching a yellow telegram. Laura follows her. Mom hands the telegram to Dad. Zeke peers over his shoulder.

DAD

"We regret to inform you that your son, Clyde Parker, has been wounded in combat in the European sector. He is now in satisfactory condition at a base hospital in England. Further information will follow."

MOM

It doesn't say what kind of wounds.

LAURA

Or how serious.

DAD

But he's alive. And it says he's in satisfactory condition. That must mean he's not going to die.

MOM

Let's pray to God that he won't

ZEKE

I'm sure he's all right.

MOM

You're just like your dad, Paul. You always look for the bright side of things.

ZEKE

I've learned from football to never give up.

Mom hugs Zeke.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The Lofton players come on the field for practice. Nick seeks out Zeke.

NICK

Sorry about your brother, Zeke. I hope he recuperates rapidly.

ZEKE

We don't know what kind of wound, but I have to believe he'll be back on his feet in no time.

NICK

He's the 63rd serviceman from Lofton high to be wounded in action. We've had 19 fatalities, nine of them who played football.

ZEKE

Yes, I know.

The players, sweating from calisthenics, gather around Nick,

NICK

Congratulations for our first victory of the season. Bob and Rusty, you showed great finesse on that final play. Basil, you did a good job of concentrating for your final kick. And all of you hung in there with great determination.

Roberto and Rusty pat one another on the back. Basil glows.

NICK

What I didn't like was letting the Tanabe player run a punt back 90 yards for a touchdown. That's the first time this

has happened in my ten years at Lofton. You've got to get yourselves spaced better across the field and do a better job of open field tackling. We're going to work on this today.

MONTAGE of defending against punt returns and kickoffs.

The players gathered around Nick.

NICK

As we end our practice today, I want to remind you that you'll have your six weeks exams this week.

SPIKE

Yes, we know, Nick.

NICK

I hope you're all prepared. We don't want to lose any players because of poor grades.

As the players leave the field, Rusty and Roberto walk together.

RUSTY

Roberto, old buddy, I wish you hadn't got me into world history. I'm afraid I'm going flunk it.

ROBERTO

Me, too. It's not as interesting as I thought it would be. I'm way behind in my reading.

RUSTY

Maybe we can get somebody to help us.

ROBERTO

Like who?

RUSTY

Like Bulldog. You know, Richard the brain. He's in our class.

They go out the gate.

EXT - PARKING LOT OUTSIDE LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Rusty and Roberto leave the locker room in their street clothes and approach Bulldog.

RUSTY

Bulldog, can I give a ride home?

BULLDOG

Sure. I've never ridden in a Model T
before.

They walk to the Model T.

RUSTY

Would you like to drive it?

BULLDOG

Not today, but maybe some time.

They get in the Model T.

INT - IN THE MODEL T - DAY

Rusty drives, Bulldog sits next to him in the front seat, and Roberto is in
back. They leave the parking lot and enter the street.

ROBERTO

Bulldog, do you want to help us and the
team?

BULLDOG

In what way, Roberto?

ROBERTO

By helping us pass the world history
exam.

BULLDOG

You mean review the readings with you?
I'd be glad to.

RUSTY

Well, what we had in mind is to help us
with answers during the exam.

ROBERTO

Mr. Morris usually gives multiple choice
questions, so we thought we could work
out some kind of signal system.

BULLDOG

That would be cheating. I'd never do
that.

RUSTY

But it's not for us alone. It's for the good
of the team. If Roberto and I flunk, we'll
be suspended from the team. Then
where would the team be?

BULLDOG

Stan and Jolly are coming along quite
well.

ROBERTO

But they're not as experienced as us.

BULLDOG

No, I can't. I'll come over to your house and help you study, but I won't give you answers during the exam.

RUSTY

The trouble is, we're so behind on our reading that we'll never be caught up before Wednesday's test.

BULLDOG

That's your trouble, not mine. Sorry.

Rusty drives on with a look of apprehension.

INT - KITCHEN OF PARKER HOUSE - DAY

Zeke enters through the back door. A plate of food is ready for him at the table. Mom, Dad, and Laura are there. Dad holds a letter.

ZEKE

Hi, Dad. I didn't expect to see you here. Is everybody having early supper with me before the game tonight?

DAD

We receive a letter today from the chaplain at the army hospital in England where they took Clyde. He writes that

Clyde lost his right arm but otherwise is in good condition.

ZEKE

His trombone arm. What rotten luck.

MOM

I'm afraid he'll get infected, get gangrene or something.

ZEKE

I'm sure he'll get the best medical care possible.

DAD

Martha, why don't you go with me tonight to the game against Cranville? It'll take your mind off Clyde for a while.

MOM

Henry, you know I never go to football games.

ZEKE

I'm dedicating my game tonight to Clyde. I think you should watch me.

LAURA

Yes, you ought to go, Mom

MOM

Well, just this once I'll go -- for Clyde's sake, and for you, too, Paul.

Zeke hugs Mom.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

To start the game against Cranville, Hank kicks off for Lofton with a strong wind behind him. Zeke tackles the return man deep in Cranville territory. In the town-folks side of the field (opposite the students' stands) Mom rises and cheers.

MONTAGE: Cranville runs several plays from a single wing and then punts into the wind. Eddy signals a fair catch.

MONTAGE: Lofton moves down field with mostly running plays. On third and five from Cranville 15 Fred runs out of bounds at the line of scrimmage. Nick sends in Basil for a field goal with Zeke holding. With wind behind him, Basil hits from the 22.

As the players walk back up field, Flash approaches Zeke.

FLASH

Zeke, I'm sure I can get behind that halfback if you want to hit me along the sidelines.

ZEKE

I'll keep that in mind.

MONTAGE: Cranville runs several plays but fumbles near their own 40.

On first down Eddy gains eight yards off tackle. From a T Zeke fakes a handoff to Fred and throws to Flash streaking down the sideline. Flash catches the ball at the 15 and breezes in for the touchdown.

The crowd roars. Mixed in is a woman's voice of undetermined origin shrieks "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

Basil's makes the extra point. Nick sends in the entire second team.

The Lofton first team re-enters the game at the beginning of the second quarter. With the wind behind him Cranville tailback throws a pass for a good gain. When he tries another pass, Zeke steps in front of the receiver, intercepts, and runs 40 yards down the sidelines on the home-folks side of the field and scores.

Quite clearly the penetrating shriek, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel! Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" comes from the stands.

Spike catches up with Zeke at the goal line and pats him on the shoulders in congratulations. Spike points to the stands.

SPIKE

It's your mom.

ZEKE

It can't be.

Zeke looks toward the stands. In the stands Mom is bouncing up and down, furiously waving a gold pom-pom, still shrieking, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

INT - DEN -DAY

Granddad is in the recliner. Scott stands by the window.

SCOTT

Are you talking about my great grandmother? The one who lives with my Great Aunt Laura?

GRANDDAD

That's the one.

SCOTT

But she's so quiet and gentle.

GRANDDAD

You have to remember that this happened nearly 50 years ago. She was 40 then and a lively lady.

SCOTT

I'm going to ask her when I see her.

GRANDDAD

Go ahead. The funny thing is that she never called me "Zeke" before, or since.

Granddad shakes his head.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT WITH FLOODLIGHTS

With Cranville in possession of the ball the gun goes off ending the half. The scoreboard shows: Lofton 17, Visitor 0.

MONTAGE: Lofton marching band performs at half-time with Barbara playing the flute. Mom and Dad have refreshments in the stands with people come up to talk with them MOS.

MONTAGE: Lofton runs several plays into the strong wind. Running a double wing from the Cranville 8, Zeke fakes a handoff to Eddy, hides the ball, and scampers untouched into the end zone. Again Mom shrieks, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" Basil makes the extra point.

MONTAGE: Cranville runs three plays and punts. Lofton runs several plays. From the Cranville 25, Zeke hits Spike deep over the middle for a touchdown. On the try for extra point a Cranville tackle gets through and distracts Basil, who misses. The Lofton second team takes over.

The game ends with the scoreboard showing Lofton 30, Visitor 0. Barbara rushes onto the field and gives Zeke a big hug. Other students and some of the players congratulate Zeke.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

As Zeke enters the locker room, Eddy, garbed only in a towel around his waist, jumps on the bench. Spike, Rusty, Roberto, and Pudge are nearby. Eddy holds one of Mary Lou's gold pom-poms and goes through the motions of a cheerleader.

EDDY

(falsetto)

Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!

Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!

Zeke is at first flustered. Then he grabs the towel from around Eddy's waist and playfully tries to flip him with it as Eddy runs for the showers.

INT - SHOWER ROOM - NIGHT

Eddy is covered with soap lather as Zeke enters for his shower.

EDDY

All kidding aside, Zeke, you played a great game. I know that Clyde will be proud of you when he hears about it.

ZEKE

Thanks, Eddy, that means a lot coming from you.

Zeke lathers up.

INT - PARKER FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

As Zeke enters for breakfast, Dad is at the far end of the table reading the inside of the front section of the Lofton Herald with a headline: "ALLIES CONTINUE PUSH INTO GERMANY". On the near end Mom has the sports page with its headline: "LIONS CRUSH CRANVILLE 30-0 - Parker Leads Powerful Offense". Laura is on one side.

MOM

Oh, I'm so proud of you, Paul. I'm going to send this article to Clyde.

DAD

You were outstanding, Zeke, if I may call you that.

ZEKE

Sure, almost everybody else does.

Zeke looks his mother in the eye, but she looks away.

As the family finishes breakfast, Dad gets up to leave.

DAD

I'll see you at the store in a little while, Paul. I need you today, hero or not.

ZEKE

Sure. I'll be there.

Mom follows Dad out of the kitchen to the front part of the house.

ZEKE

Laura, could you hear Mom on your side of the field?

LAURA

What do you mean?

ZEKE

Every time I did something good she shrieked, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

LAURA

No, I didn't notice. Are you sure?

ZEKE

Absolutely. Spike noticed her, too, and so did Eddy.

LAURA

I can't believe that she'd be so out of control.

ZEKE

Well, she was.

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Zeke laughs. Laura stares in disbelief.

EXT - IN FRONT OF THE MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Zeke, Barbara, Spike, and Joanne are part of a flow of students coming out of the theater. The marquee indicates: "I LOVE A SOLDIER with Paulette Goddard and Sonny Tufts".

INT - SPIKE'S DAD'S CAR - NIGHT

Barbara sits very close to Zeke in the back seat and kisses him. Spike notices this in the rear view mirror.

SPIKE

(Singing off key)

*"You gotta be a football hero,
To get along with the beautiful girls."*

Zeke finds a magazine on the seat, rolls it up, and pops Spike on the head.

INT - LOFTON SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

As students are changing classes, Zeke runs into Roberto and Rusty. They are angry.

RUSTY

He flunked us.

ZEKE

Who?

ROBERTO

Old man Morris. We both failed our world history exam.

RUSTY

That means we're off the team.

ROBERTO

At least for a while until we can get our grades up.

ZEKE

Darn, just when we were getting our act together. What're we going to do without you?

RUSTY

Our backups will have to fill in: Jolly and Stan.

ZEKE

They're coming along okay, but they're not nearly as good as you two.

ROBERTO

You'll have to do the best you can.

Roberto and Rusty proceed down the hallway.

EXT - STEPS IN FRONT OF LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Bulldog and Dutch stand together. Eddy and Pudge come up.

EDDY

(To Bulldog)

You must be proud of yourself.

BULLDOG

For what?

EDDY

For letting Roberto and Rusty flunk.

BULLDOG

How's it my fault?

EDDY

You wouldn't help them.

BULLDOG

I would've helped them study, but they wanted me to signal answers during the exam. That's cheating. I won't be a party to it.

EDDY

A fine team player you are, Bulldog.

DUTCH

Eddy you know that Bulldog isn't responsible for Roberto and Rusty passing a course. That's up to them.

EDDY

You're just defending them so that your Polish buddy can take Roberto's place.

PUDGE

Oh, come on, Eddy. We're all disappointed because we're losing Rusty and Roberto. But that's no reason to take it out on each other.

EDDY

If you say so, Pudge. It's just that I wanted to have a winning season my senior year. Now it's going to be harder.

Eddy sighs.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The Lofton players, heavily sweating, gather around Nick following

calisthenics. Roberto and Rusty have suited up and are working out, but in the gathering they stay on the outer edge.

NICK

You played great Friday night against Cranville.

(Looking at Zeke)

Some of you shone particularly bright, but it was a team victory, through and through. We're now two and one in the league. Only Ashmont and Hargrove are undefeated. That means we're tied for third place. So we still have a shot at the title.

SPIKE

We'll do it.

NICK

Of course, our chances are hurt because of the goof-off brothers.

Nick looks toward Roberto and Rusty, who shuffle behind other players to escape his glare.

NICK

Fortunately Stan and Jolly have been playing well. By the time they get several full games under their belt, it may be hard for the slackers to get their places

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back -- even if they get their grades in order.

Rusty and Roberto turn away.

NICK

Now let's talk about Leabrook, who we play on Friday. For the last several years they've been using a seven-man line. So we'll have to have different blocking assignments, especially along the line.

DUTCH

I think I remember mine from last year's Leabrook game.

NICK

But with only four defensive backs, it will be easier for pass receivers to get open, Zeke.

Zeke makes a passing motion.

INT - DEN - DAY

Scott is on the sofa, Grandad in the swivel chair.

SCOTT

Your team had it easy, Granddad. The teams we play keep changing their defense during the game. Sometimes we have to make adjustments after we get to the line of scrimmage.

GRANDDAD

Yes, I've noticed that. I don't know how you do it.

SCOTT

Somebody on the line calls out blocking assignments.

Scott mimes a lineman calling signals, right and left.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

As the players disperse from gathering around Nick, Dutch, Stan, and Jolly walk together.

STAN

I never expected to start a game. I hope I don't disappoint Nick and the boys.

DUTCH

You'll do all right.

JOLLY

What you need is a wristband to write the plays in Polish numbers.

STAN

You're kidding me, aren't you? About the numbers, I mean.

JOLLY

Just a little bit of quaint American humor.

Jolly gives Stan a friendly pat on his shoulder pads.

EXT - PARKING LOT NEXT TO LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The Lofton team boards the school bus in a downpour.

INT - INSIDE SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Zeke and Spike sit behind the driver across from Nick and Dave. Rain pelts the bus.

NICK

Zeke, it'll probably still be raining when we get to Leabrook and the field will be soaked. So no fancy stuff. Run mostly straight ahead and off tackle from short

punt and the T.

ZEKE

What about passing?

NICK

*Only if you have to pick up a first down.
Then try Spike or Flash over the middle.
Don't expect them to fake on outside
routes.*

Nick picks up a notebook of plays and opens it.

EXT - LEABROOK FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Rain continues. The field is a quagmire.

MONTAGE: Lofton runs plays against Leabrook's seven man line but makes little headway. Leabrook runs plays without much success. The teams change ends after the first quarter. Lofton mounts a drive and scores as Hank bulls over through a hole opened by Dutch and Pudge.

Basil comes in for the extra point. He wipes his glasses on his shirt tail just before the ball is snapped. Zeke receives the ball, places it for Basil, but pulls it back as Basil fakes a kick. Spike goes into the flat for a pass, is clear, but the ball slips out of Zeke's hand as he throws.

As the team moves up the field for the kickoff, thunder rumbles overhead. Basil clenches his fist and looks skyward.

BASIL

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!
Rage! Blow you cataracts and hurricanes!
Spout till you have drench'd our steeples,
drown'd the cocks!"

BULLDOG

Let me guess: King Lear on the heath.

BASIL

You've got it, Buddy-boy.

Basil steps in a deep puddle.

INT - DRESSING ROOM OF LEABROOK STADIUM

The soaked players dry their hands and faces with towels.

NICK

We've got to get our mud cleats on.

DOC

Nick, I'm sorry to say, I forgot them.

NICK

You forgot them? It's your job to
remember these things.

DOC

I had a box of cleats laid out with my first aid stuff, but I forgot to load them on the bus.

NICK

Damn it.

Nick kicks a football lying on the floor across the room.

EXT - LEABROOK FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Heavy rain continues. MONTAGE: The Leabrook players have better traction and move the ball better, especially running against Stan and Jolly. They score twice. For the extra points their kicker loses his footing both times and bumbles the attempt. As the game ends the scoreboard shows: Leabrook 12, Visitor 6.

INT - DINER - NIGHT

As the Lofton team enters, Doc quickly heads for a booth toward the back. Zeke and Spike notice this.

ZEKE

Looks like Doc is heading for exile. We better keep him company.

Zeke and Spike sit with Doc. Basil joins them.

SPIKE

Cheer up, Doc. We lost the game on the field.

DOC

But you might not have if you had your mud cleats.

ZEKE

That's one of those "what ifs" that has no answer.

The waitress serves each of them a hamburger steak, french fries, cole slaw, a roll with a pad of butter, and a cola. Zeke and Spike put A-1 steak sauce on their hamburger. Basil covers his with mustard and pours a pool of catsup for his french fries, which he dips one by one. Doc puts mustard, catsup, and A-1 sauce on his hamburger.

ZEKE

That must be an act of penance, Doc. I know it's not medically sound.

DOC

I guess so.

Basil laughs.

INT - MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Zeke, Barbara, Joanne, and Spike sit in the theater watching a tense moment in "Dragon Seed" with Katherine Hepburn and Walter Huston.

INT - LIONS DEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Zeke, Barbara, Spike, and Joanne sit in a booth eating hamburgers and french fries and drinking milk shakes. Zeke is sullen.

JOANNE

What's the matter, Zeke? Did that movie depress you?

BARBARA

It did have a hopeful ending.

ZEKE

Naw. It was another loss last night. And the thought of another two games without Roberto and Rusty.

SPIKE

(Lightheartedly)

Remember the farm woman I told you about who is so picky about the patterns on chickenfeed sacks? She was back

today.

JOANNE

What did she want this time?

SPIKE

She had a wallpaper sample and a pan of gravy, which she said was the color of her woodwork.

BARBARA

Gravy? You're kidding.

SPIKE

It's true. I had to carry seven different sacks into the light so she could match them for curtains.

JOANNE

Why so many?

SPIKE

She said, "I know your daddy wouldn't stock these different patterns unless he wanted us to make our choice."

ZEKE

Who cares about that?

BARBARA

Certainly not Mr. Grumpy.

Barbara turns away from Zeke.

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Spike and Zeke stand inside the front door, looking out at pouring rain.

SPIKE

*Will the rain ever stop? I bet we
practice in the gym today.*

ZEKE

I hope so. I've had enough of this mess.

Stan comes up.

STAN

*Hi, fellows. I saw you at the movies
Saturday night. How'd you like "Dragon
Seed"?*

SPIKE

It was pretty exciting. How about you?

STAN

*It reminded me of life in Poland under
German occupation. The courage of the
resisters, the risks and sacrifices. But*

always the hope for eventual freedom.

ZEKE

I know somebody else who thought it was hopeful.

The three walk away from the doorway.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The players arrive, some wearing Roosevelt buttons while others have on Dewey buttons. They change into their practice uniforms but without pads. They have brought their gym shoes.

SPIKE

Come on, Zeke, Eddy. Let's get our basketball shoes.

The three of them go to the basketball storage locker and go through a stack of white Converse All-Stars looking for the right size. In walks DUKE (18), dressed in a white seaman's uniform.

DUKE

I'll take a ten and a half "C".

EDDY

Duke! What are you doing here?

DUKE

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I completed basic training at the Great Lakes Training Center. I'm home on shore leave.

SPIKE

What do you mean, shore leave? You haven't been to sea yet.

DUKE

That's what we call it in the Navy.

ZEKE

Glad to see you, Duke. I guess you know we're not doing as well as last year.

DUKE

That's why I came back to help you. Eddy, how's my understudy's arm?

EDDY

Pretty good. You'd be surprised. Zeke's thrown three touchdown passes so far.

ZEKE

I've become pretty accurate.

DUKE

I bet I can make more baskets than you.

ZEKE

Baskets?

DUKE

Throwing from the center of the court.

ZEKE

You're on.

They move to their lockers and start changing clothes.

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL GYM - DAY

Players are in various parts of the gym, practicing blocking and passing. Duke wears a basketball warmup. He and Zeke stand in the center circle facing a basket, each holding a football. Eddy, Spike, Rusty, and Roberto watch.

DUKE

Best out of five.

ZEKE

It's a deal.

Duke's first throw sails over the backboard.

ZEKE

Your arm's a little rusty.

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Zeke's first throw hits the backboard a foot above the rim. Billy and Lefty join the circle of observers. On their next four throws Duke and Zeke are near and on the rim but don't make a basket. Lefty steps up with a ball.

LEFTY

Are you guys done torturing the backboard? Let me show you how it's done.

Lefty throws a swisher.

BILLY

That's showing these old men.

Everybody laughs. Nick, Dave, and Hal enter the gym. Nick blows his whistle.

NICK

O.K. Let's line up for calisthenics.

The players start forming rows. Nick walks by Duke, who doesn't join in.

NICK

Stick around, Duke. We'll have some three-on-three basketball after our practice.

The players start jumping jacks.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The players get dressed after their workout. Duke puts on his Navy uniform. Zeke, Spike, and Eddy are nearby.

DUKE

Eddy, do you remember the game against Hargrove two years ago when Brad threw me the sucker pass?

EDDY

That was a beaut. We were trailing. You were wide open, but I was afraid you might miss it.

DUKE

So was I. If I had, I think I'd kept running and headed for home

ZEKE

But you caught it for the go-ahead touchdown. You preserved the undefeated season.

DUKE

Do you ever throw it, Eddy?

EDDY

Nick doesn't encourage me to pass.

DUKE

*It's a good play. You ought to try it
some time.*

ZEKE

I'm willing to work on it, Eddy, if you are.

EDDY

Sure. As long as Nick doesn't see us.

Eddy looks around to be sure Nick hasn't overheard.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

*The first team gathers around Nick with other players forming a wider
circle. The Starfield team is on the other side of the field.*

NICK

*Remember what I told you. Expect
Starfield to run a lot of sets from a T.
Keep your eye on the ball. Be alert for a
quick snap. Now let's go get 'em!*

The players roar and take to the field for the kickoff.

*MONTAGE: Starfield runs plays from a T, then falling short on a field goal
attempt.*

MONTAGE: Lofton advances with a combination of short punt and

T-formation plays. From the Starfield 30 Eddy scores on a double wing reverse. Basil makes the extra point.

MONTAGE: Starfield runs some plays and punts.

For Lofton Billy gets playing time and makes a good run. Some sophomores in the stands holler, "Billy, Billy, Billy!"

Starfield has the ball 3rd and 7 from their own 45. The quarterback fakes a handoff to the fullback and drops back to pass. Fred isn't fooled, steps in front of the receiver on the Lofton 45, snatches the ball, and has clear sailing down the sideline for a touchdown.

The players leave the field at halftime with the scoreboard showing: Lofton 14, Visitor 0.

MONTAGE of Lofton band in half-time show.

Eddy returns the second half kickoff, cuts sharply to avoid a tackler, is hit from both sides, and comes up limping. Billy replaces him.

MONTAGE: Lofton runs plays with Billy doing well to the cheers of his group in the stands. Zeke looks towards them with annoyance. On a third down pass Zeke throws an interception.

MONTAGE: Starfield moves down the field on offense. On a pass pattern Zeke stays with the end buttonhooking in front of him, leaving Billy to cover a halfback running down and out. Billy cuts in front of the halfback, trying for an interception, but the ball floats over his head and the receiver scores an easy touchdown.

Trotting down field, Hank approaches Billy.

HANK

You're our safety, Billy. The defender of last resort. You shouldn't take chances like that. You're too much of a showoff. Now you've hurt the team.

As Billy lines up deep to receive the kick off, Zeke notices that he is seething with rage. Zeke approach him, but Billy waves Zeke off.

Billy receives the kick, runs up the middle to the 30, and then cuts to the side line. At the 50 a defender pushes Billy out of bands, and another clobbers him well beyond the side line. The umpire throws his flag.

Billy comes up swinging in front of the Starfield bench. He is quickly surrounded by Starfield players. The umpire plunges into the crowd to break up the fight. The referee confers with the umpire MOS and throws Billy and the Starfield offender out of the game.

Pat comes to play right halfback as Fred switches to tailback. On the Lofton side Dave escorts Billy to the locker room.

MONTAGE: Lofton runs several plays and punts. Starfield doew likewise.

Lofton has the ball in the fourth quarter. From a T Zeke laterals to Fred for an end sweep. As Fred turns the corner and moves along the sideline, the Starfield safety hits him from the side. Fred scoots across the ground and slides across the yard chains.

As Fred rises, he notices a big gash across his hand. Nick looks at it and takes him out of the game and sends in Lefty. On the sideline Dr. Sullivan bandages Fred's hand. By now Billy is in the stands in his street clothes, seated with his cheering squad.

LEFTY

Zeke, Nick wants me to play quarterback and you switch to tailback. He says you know all the plays.

ZEKE

I'll give it a shot.

MONTAGE: Zeke makes gains as tailback as the Lions move toward the goal line. On third and goal from the Starfield six, Lefty from T formation lofts a pass to Spike in the corner of the end zone, but the Starfield safety intercepts for a touchback.

MONTAGE: Starfield moves the length of the field for a touchdown. On the try for extra point Pudge lines up over the Starfield center and unnerves him so much that he bounces the ball to the holder, who sets it up crooked so that the kick goes wide.

The scoreboard shows Lofton 14, Visitor 13. Zeke approaches the linesman.

ZEKE

How much time is left?

LINESMAN

Just under two minutes.

For the kickoff Zeke and Pat line up as twin receivers. The ball goes to Zeke, who bobbles it, picks up, and makes an eight yard return. Zeke gains six yards off tackle to the right. Pat goes left off tackle for a first down but is forced out of bounds.

On the next play Lefty and Zeke collide on the handoff and fumble. Starfield recovers. The Starfield captain calls time out. The Lofton crowd pleads, "Hold that line!"

Starfield complete a pass, calls another time out, makes another completion to a receiver who steps out of bounds, overthrows a pass in the end zone, then lines up on the Lofton 12 to try a field goal. Pudge lines up over center again, but the snap is perfect, and the ball splits the uprights.

With the scoreboard showing Lofton 14, Visitor 16, Pat fields a bounding kickoff and is smothered as the game ends.

Zeke walks from the field with Nick.

ZEKE

I blew another one, Nick.

NICK

No, you didn't, Zeke. You played a terrific game from a position you had

never practiced.

ZEKE

But my interception and fumble were costly.

NICK

You and Lefty have never played together, so it's no wonder a handoff went astray. Other players made mistakes, too. Besides we lost our three best running backs, two to injuries and one to a temper tantrum. It was a team loss.

ZEKE

It still hurts.

NICK

I know.

Nick puts an arm around Zeke's shoulder.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Zeke, Spike, Bulldog, Dutch, Stan and Basil dress after their showers. Doc enters and notices a helmet lying in the corner. He picks it up and examines it.

DOC

Look, here's Billy's helmet. He must
have been so mad that he threw it away.

Basil walks over, takes the helmet from Doc, and scrutinizes it.

BASIL

Alas! Poor Billy! I knew him, Horatio,
a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent
fancy.

STAN

(Whispering to Dutch)

Who's Horatio?

DUTCH

Hamlet's friend.

BASIL

(To the players)

He hath borne me on his back a thousand
times.

A few of the players laugh. Zeke smiles.

BASIL

(To the helmet)

Where be your giles now? your
gambols? your songs? your flashes of
merriment?

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Laughter erupts and applause. Zeke joins them.

SPIKE

*If I were your English teacher, Basil, I'd
give you an "A" for recitation.*

Laughter continues.

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

The gym is decorated for Halloween. Students dance. Zeke slumps on a bleacher, and Barbara in her band uniform sits beside him. Spike and Joanne stand in front of them. Spike mimes holding a helmet.

SPIKE

*Then he says, "where are your giles? your
gambols now?"*

Joanne and Barbara laugh with Spike while Zeke merely smiles.

BARBARA

That Basil's a clever one.

SPIKE

Come on, Joannie. Let's dance.

JOANNE

Are you two going to join us?

ZEKE

I'm too tired.

Spike and Joanne mingle with dancers on the floor.

Basil goes over to where Zeke and Barbara sits and MOS asks Barbara to dance. She turns to Zeke, who nods his approval. Basil and Barbara join the dancers on the floor. At the end of the number Basil returns Barbara to where Zeke is and leaves.

BARBARA

Basil invited me to go to the band party with him tomorrow night.

ZEKE

Go ahead. Go with him if you're tired of me.

Barbara walks off in a huff.

INT - HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Zeke and his dad are waiting on customers. Zeke finishes a sale and goes into the office.

INT - OFFICE - DAY

Zeke sits at a desk and holds the phone.

ZEKE

Barbara? I'm sorry I was so grumpy last night. I was tired after playing most of the game....I know I shouldn't have been. ...Yes, I apologize. So will you go to the movies with me tonight? It's a comedy with Eddy Bracken....You can't back out?....Well, you and Basil have a good time....Bye.

Zeke puts the phone down and leaves the office.

INT - HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Zeke comes out of the office. Mom comes in, full of smiles and holding a letter. She goes where Dad stands. Zeke goes over.

MOM

We just got a letter from Clyde. He's returning to the States. He may be home for a visit by Thanksgiving if not before.

ZEKE

That's really great news.

MOM

After that he'll be fitted with an artificial arm.

DAD

Hallelujah!

Dad and Mom hug. Zeke looks happy.

Zeke puts the phone down and leaves the office.

INT - HARDWARE STORE - DAY

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Dad and Mom hug. Zeke looks happy.

EXT - IN FRONT OF MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The marquee shows "HAIL CONQUERING HERO with Eddy Bracken". Zeke stands in the ticket line with Hank and Jolly.

JOLLY

So where's Barbara tonight, Zeke?

ZEKE

She went to the band party with Basil.

HANK

That little twerp.

They enter the theater.

INT - THEATER - NIGHT

Zeke, Hank, and Jolly sit together. The newsreel shows U.S. troops advancing into Germany. Zeke notices that Spike and Joanne are seated three rows in front of them.

On the screen in a comical scene Bracken is a draft rejectee mistaken for a war hero. Zeke roars hilariously.

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Zeke comes up to Barbara at her locker. She's a little cool.

ZEKE

So how was the band party?

BARBARA

Really great. I've got a lot of friends in the band.

ZEKE

*But you'll go to the movies with me
Saturday?*

BARBARA

I guess so. What's playing?

ZEKE

Another war movie.

BARBARA

I wish the war was over.

ZEKE

So do I.

Barbara takes out a book and closes her locker.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Some players toss balls around, some practice blocking, others stand around waiting for practice to begin. Eddy watches, dressed in street clothes. Fred, whose hand is bandaged, retrieves a ball near Eddy.

FRED

How's your ankle, Eddy?

EDDY

Doc Sullivan says I should give it a couple days of rest.

FRED

We'll miss you. Where's your pal, Billy?

EDDY

Nick is talking with him.

Billy enters the field in his practice uniform. Nick is a few steps behind. Billy seeks out Eddy.

BILLY

I've been suspended from action for a week.

EDDY

I'm not surprised.

BILLY

Nick says I have to take part in drills on defense, but I can't play against Barnesdale on Friday. I can't even travel there with the team.

EDDY

Well, Billy Boy, it serves you right. You'll never be a good football player until you learn to control your temper.

BILLY

That's what Nick told me.

The sweating players gather around Nick at the end of calisthenics.

NICK

I realize that the loss to Starfield was a heartbreaker for all of us. But we've got to look beyond our loss and look ahead to this week's game against Barnesdale.

DUTCH

We'll be ready for 'em.

NICK

It's a non-league game, only the second time we've played Barnesdale. Last year they were weak on pass defense, so this week I want to emphasize our pass offense, particularly from double wing and the T.

Eddy is resting his ankle till Wednesday, and Billy won't be playing this week. So for a couple of days, Fred and Pat, I want you to alternate as left half with the first team.

MONTAGE: The first team runs a series of light contact, pass plays. Billy is in the defensive backfield. Zeke is effective in hitting Spike and

Flash, but he has trouble connecting with Fred and Pat running from left wing in double wing. After a while Nick blows his whistle.

NICK

That's enough for today. When we scrimmage on Tuesday and Wednesday, I want the quarterbacks to emphasize passing and reverses in the running game.

As the players head for the locker room, Zeke seeks out Billy.

ZEKE

Billy, would you stay out a few minutes and work with me? I need some more practice with pass patterns to the left wingback.

BILLY

Me? I thought I was poison.

ZEKE

You made a couple of dumb mistakes, but it isn't the end of the world.

MONTAGE: At midfield Zeke stands three yards behind an imaginary center, and Billy lines up on the left wing. On "hike" Billy runs different patterns: quick slant in, out into the flat, buttonhook, crossing deep. After a while Billy is winded. Dusk is descending.

ZEKE

That's enough for today, Billy. Thanks for helping me.

They walk off the field together.

BILLY

Zeke, do you think I'll get out of Nick's doghouse.

ZEKE

Sure. He's just teaching you a lesson. And using you as an example for other guys on the team.

They sit down on the sideline bench to rest.

BILLY

But making me miss a game. Don't you think that's too severe?

ZEKE

Not at all. Your temper tantrum contributed to our loss.

BILLY

There were other mistakes.

ZEKE

Yeah, but they were matters of performance, like the interception I threw and my fumble. Yours was a loss of self-control. That's worse.

BILLY

I've always been a little hot-headed.

ZEKE

A little? I'd say a lot. But fighting is something you can control.

BILLY

That's easy for you to say, Zeke. You're so even tempered.

ZEKE

I wasn't always that way.

BILLY

You weren't?

ZEKE

No, in grade school I was a tough little kid, getting into fights all the time.

BILLY

How come?

ZEKE

Well, for one thing the kids made fun of my middle name, Ezekiel. They would tease me by singing, "Zeke, Zeke, Ezekiel."

BILLY

The same thing you mother hollered from the stands?

ZEKE

The same, except the kids sang through their nose in a sing-song manner.

BILLY

What'd you do?

ZEKE

I'd pile into them with my fists flying, at least at the boys. Then I would wind up in the principal's office, and she would call my mother.

BILLY

Then you caught hell at home?

ZEKE

Sort of. But then one day my dad had a little talk with me. He explained I was named Ezekiel after his grandfather, who was a fine gentleman. And besides there's book in the Bible called Ezekiel.

"So, take pride in your name," Dad told me.

BILLY

Did you?

ZEKE

You bet. The next time someone sang the teasing song, I asked, "Did you know that Ezekiel was a famous hero in the Bible?" Later when I read the Bible myself I learned he was more of a prophet. But the idea of a hero worked for me in grade school.

BILLY

I think it changed you more than it did them, Zeke.

ZEKE

That's exactly the point, Billy. We control our reactions inside ourselves. People may provoke us, but how we respond is up to us.

BILLY

I'll have to think about that.

Zeke and Billy get up from the bench.

INT - DEN - DAY

Granddad is on the sofa. Scott, lying back on the recliner, raises up.

SCOTT

That's interesting, Granddad. In third grade I had to deal with teasing about my name, too.

GRANDDAD

You did? What did they call you.

SCOTT

This kid on our soccer team, who was sort of a bully, started calling me Scotty Potty.

GRANDDAD

And what did you do?

SCOTT

One day at the end of the practice he said, "Come here, Scotty Potty. I want to talk to you." Just then I saw his mom coming for him, so I said, "I can't hear
(Cont.)

SCOTT (Cont.)

you. What did you say?" He shouted

at the top of his voice, "Come here, Scotty Potty. I want to talk to you." His mom heard him, of course, and he never called me that name again.

GRANDDAD

I'm glad you could handle it so well, Scott.

Granddad leans forward with pride.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - TWILIGHT

Zeke and Billy walk off the field.

BILLY

This season sure hasn't been what I expected. We've played six games, and I haven't even scored a touchdown.

ZEKE

Yeah, I expected us to be better than this in my senior year. At two and four we'll have to win our last three games to have a winning season.

BILLY

If you can beat Barnesdale without me, I'll be back for the last two.

ZEKE

You never change, Billy.

BILLY

That did sound conceited, didn't it? I really do want to be a team player.

They continue walking toward the gate.

EXT - BARNESDALE FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

The Lofton Lions take the field for their pre-game practice. Their breath is frosty.

SPIKE

Man, it's cold tonight.

BASIL

*"Blow, blow, thou wintry wind.
Freeze, freeze thou bitter sky."*

EDDY

I suppose Shakespeare again.

BASIL

"As You Like It"

EDDY

1

I don't like it.

STAN

Reminds me of Poland this time of year.

From the stands Billy and his sophomore buddies cheer: "Yea, Lofton. Yea, Lions."

PUDGE

Hey, look. There's Billy and his buddies. I wonder how they got gas to drive the 90 miles to Barnesdale.

EDDY

One of the kids is from a farm where they get extra rations.

With a strong tailwind the Barnesdale kickoff goes deep to Eddy, who makes a good return. Billy's group cheers.

MONTAGE: Barnesdale thwarts Lofton's offense, gets the ball, scores with a wide open offense, and makes the extra point.

In the second quarter with the wind behind him Hank kicks a long high punt. The Barnesdale return man dodges Flash and cuts up the middle, where Stan hits him hard. He fumbles. Dutch picks up the ball and carries it for a touchdown. Billy and friends cheer Stan and Dutch. Basil misses the extra point.

MONTAGE: Barnesdale three plays and kicks into the wind.

MONTAGE: Zeke hits several passes out of a double wing.

Using a T formation at the Barnesdale 30, Zeke fakes a handoff to Eddy going into the line, drops back to pass, then hands off to Flash on an end around. Flash outruns all pursuers to score. Basil makes the extra point. The half ends with the scoreboard showing Barnesdale 6, Visitor 13. Dutch and Stan leave the field together. Pat and Jiri come up to them.

PAT

*Nice going, Dutch, for that touchdown.
And you, too, Stan the Man for causing
the fumble.*

DUTCH

Thanks, Pat.

JIRI

I'm glad we've got you guys on our team.

Jiri pats Dutch on the back.

INT - DRESSING ROOM AT BARNESDALE STADIUM - NIGHT

The Lofton players rest on benches.

PUDGE

*Two cheers for the linemen and their
touchdowns.*

EDDY

Sure Dutch scored first, but Flash made the second one. He's an end.

PUDGE

He's one of us.

NICK

The team scored twice. Period. And don't be overconfident. I've seen bigger leads than 13 to 7 slip away.

The players get up and head for the door.

EXT - BARNESDALE FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Lofton has the ball first and ten just inside Barnesdale territory. On a pass play Jolly is flagged for holding. The referee marches off 15 yards. Eddy gains eight off tackle. Then Zeke throws an incomplete pass. It is third and 17 as the Lions huddle.

ZEKE

We've got the wind behind us, so I'm calling for a quick kick. Hank, trade places with Eddy in short punt. The snap will be on 4. At "hike" take a couple of steps backward to give yourself

some room.

The quick kick catches Barnesdale by surprise. Hank's wind-aided kick sails beyond the safety and rolls to the 15 where Flash downs it.

MONTAGE: Lofton stops three Barnesdale running plays. Barnesdale punts into the wind. Eddy catches the short kick on the run, dodges the onrushing ends, and weaves his way to a touchdown. Billy's group cheers. Basil again makes the extra point.

MONTAGE: In the fourth quarter Lefty leads the Lofton second team down field. Pat scores off tackle from the eight. At first Billy hesitates but then cheers for Pat.

As the players leave the field at the end of the game, the scoreboard Barnesdale 7, Visitor 27.

INT - DRESSING ROOM AT BARNESDALE STADIUM - NIGHT

The players take off their uniforms and congratulate one another.

NICK

Zeke, where did you get the idea for a quick kick?

ZEKE

From a story in a magazine. We had the wind behind us, and our defense was holding. I figure we'd pick up yardage

that way.

NICK

You fooled even me, but it worked. You called a nice game, Zeke.

ZEKE

Thanks, Nick.

PUDGE

Hey, Nick. I'm hungry. Are we going to eat before we leave Barnesdale?

NICK

We've made arrangements with a restaurant at the edge of town.

The players head for the showers.

INT - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Lofton players enter the restaurant and take seats at tables and in booths. The MANAGER stands at the cash register near the entrance.

MANAGER

Who's in charge of this group?

NICK

I am. We're from Lofton High. We called to alert you that we were coming

and wanted 28 hamburger steaks with trimmings.

MANAGER

Yes, I know. But you didn't tell me you had colored boys on your team.

NICK

We have many shades of colors, including four Negroes.

MANAGER

Don't you see the notice?

He points to a sign: "We Reserve the Right to Refuse Service to Anyone".

MANAGER

We don't serve colored people here.

NICK

We're a team. We travel as a team and eat as a team.

MANAGER

I'm sorry but the colored boys will have to leave.

NICK

If they go, we all go.

Nick looks through an open door into the kitchen and notices 28 hamburger steaks cooking on a grill.

MANAGER

Well, uh. I can see there's been a misunderstanding. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll fix up four trays for the colored boys, and they can eat in the bus.

NICK

Are you talking about our Negro players?

MANAGER

Yes, I mean the -- uh - uh, the Negroes.

NICK

We eat together in the same place, or we don't eat. Come on fellows, let's go. We'll find some place where we're all welcome.

The players start to leave.

MANAGER

Wait a minute. Just this once I'm willing to compromise. If the colored boys, I mean the Negroes, will go out and return through the side door and then sit at the table next to the kitchen, I'll serve them.

NICK

Come on, team. This gentleman wants us to re-enter through the side door. All of us.

All the players exit.

EXT - OUTSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Outside the restaurant Nick leads the team to the side entrance.

NICK

Zeke, Spike, Bulldog, Eddy. You go in first and take the table next to the kitchen. The rest of you fill up the space in back first. Except Pudge, Hank, Jolly, and Jiri, you wait and go in last with Fred, Flash, Nate, Joe, and the coaches.

Zeke, Spike, Bulldog, and Edy enter the restaurant by the side door.

INT - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Zeke leads the team through the side door, and they sit as Nick has instructed. At the front tables are Nick, Fred, Flash, and Pudge; Nate, Hank, Jiri, and Hal; Joe, Jolly, Dave, and the bus driver.

MANAGER

That's not what I said.

NICK

That's the way it will be.

Nick takes out a check from his coat pocket and flashes it before the manager.

NICK (Cont.)

And I expect those of us up front to be served first.

The manager storms into the kitchen and doesn't come back out. Soon the waitresses bring out the food and serve the front tables first.

Doc, Basil, Dutch, and Stan are at a table next to Zeke's. After their food is served, Doc watches Basil eating.

DOC

You have an interesting reflex, Basil.

BASIL

What's that?

DOC

I notice that every time you lift your arm with food on your fork, your mouth pops open.

Basil thinks about this for a moment. Then he forks a french fry, dips it

in catsup, lifts it near his closed mouth, and holds it there. But in a brief instance he opens his mouth and pops it in.

DOC

See, Basil. You can't fool the doctor.

Dutch and Stan laugh.

Four Barnesdale football players wearing sweaters with a large "B" enter the restaurant. Two are big enough to be tackles. One is sleek and wiry. They come over to the table where Fred and Flash sit.

WIRY PLAYER

Which one of you scored on us tonight on the end around?

FLASH

I did.

WIRY PLAYER

You're pretty fast, aren't you?

FLASH

I guess so.

WIRY PLAYER

Are you on the track team?

FLASH

I was at my last school.

WIRY PLAYER

What's your best time in the 100 yard dash?

FLASH

10.6.

WIRY PLAYER

I'm a 10.5 man myself. Maybe we'll meet again at the state track meet.

FLASH

I hope so.

BARNESDALE TACKLE

You guys played a good game tonight. We're looking forward to playing you again next year.

FRED

Yeah, we'll see you then.

The Barnesdale players shake hands with Flash, Fred, and others at the front tables. They go to a booth on the other side of the restaurant.

Near the back Doc sucks the last bit of melted ice from his glass and leans toward Basil. Shielding his mouth with the back of his hand, he whispers suggestively.

DOC

Basil, do you know what this means in Texas?

BASIL

No, what?

DOC

Empty!

Dutch laughs. So do Zeke, Spike, Bulldog, and Eddy, who have overheard the conversation. Stan looks puzzled but joins the laughter.

As the players finish their meals, they saunter out the front door of the restaurant.

INT - SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT

After the bus is back on the highway, Fred comes forward to where Nick is sitting.

FRED

Thanks a lot, Nick. That was courageous.

NICK

It wasn't courage. It was loyalty. I told all of you on the second day of practice

that if you would be loyal to me, I would be loyal to you. That's what makes a good team.

Fred returns to his seat, looking pleased.

INT - PARKER HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Eddy and Billy come into the Parker hardware store and go to the counter where Zeke is working.

EDDY

We want some shotgun shells. We're after quail and rabbits.

ZEKE

Eddy, I thought you were teed-off with Billy.

EDDY

I was, but he's suffered long enough. Besides I appreciate him going to Barnesdale to cheer for me.

BILLY

You called a terrific game, Zeke. I'm glad you won.

ZEKE

Thanks, Billy. I have a feeling that you'll

shine next week against Grunwald.

Zeke gets out a box of shells.

INT - MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

On the screen is a scene from "Wing and a Prayer", showing Don Ameche and Dana Andrews flying off an aircraft carrier in the Pacific. Zeke, Barbara, Joanne, and Spike sit together. Zeke hesitantly puts his arm around Barbara. At first she resists but then accepts it.

INT - SPIKE'S CAR AT LIONS DEN DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

Spike and Joanne are in the front seat. Zeke and Barbara are in the back seat. A tray of food is propped on the open window by the driver. They are eating.

BARBARA

Weren't you nervous when the Barnesdale players walked into the restaurant?

ZEKE

Yes, I'll admit that I didn't know what to expect.

JOANNE

Nick may call it loyalty, but I say it took a lot of courage.

SPIKE

I think it would be hard for me to stand up like that. How about you, Zeke?

ZEKE

I suppose it would. But sometimes you have to take a stand for what you know is right.

Zeke gazes at Barbara with a look of determination.

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Pudge, Pat, and several other students hold "Roosevelt and Truman" signs. Bulldog, Rusty, and several other students hold up signs for "Dewey and Bricker". Students walk by and enter the library, which has sign "VOTE HERE". Spike comes up to Rusty.

SPIKE

Rusty, it was great having you and Roberto back at practice yesterday.

RUSTY

We were glad to be reinstated.

SPIKE

I hear Roberto aced the make-up exam.

RUSTY

He got an A-. I dropped the course since I don't need the credit to graduate, but I still had to sit out three weeks.

Spike walks toward the library entrance.

INT - LOFTON SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

For a mock presidential election students come in, mark ballots, and drop them in a ballot box. Zeke and Fred finish voting about the same time.

ZEKE

I know its a secret ballot, Fred, but I bet you're for Roosevelt.

FRED

I sure am. What about you?

ZEKE

Yeah, I voted for him, too. But I don't like to broadcast it. My dad's a fervent Republican, but my mom usually votes Democratic, like her father did. So at home I keep quiet on my preference.

Zeke and Fred walk away from the ballot box.

INT - DEN - DAY

Granddad stands and stretches. Scott sits in the swivel chair.

SCOTT

*Did you really vote for Roosevelt,
Granddad?*

GRANDDAD

*It was only a mock election at school. I
was only 17, and in those days you
couldn't vote until you were 21.*

SCOTT

*We've read about Roosevelt in our history
class.*

GRANDDAD

*What's history to you, Scott, was
contemporary events to me.*

Granddad laughs.

INT - LOFTON SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Zeke and Fred walk toward an alcove of the library and sit down.

ZEKE

Fred, I'm sorry about what happened at the restaurant in Barnesdale the other night. And also about the things that kid said in the Ashmont game.

FRED

I've heard worse.

ZEKE

These things seem to happen when we play out of town.

FRED

It's not all that much better in Lofton, you know.

ZEKE

What do you mean?

FRED

How many Negroes do you see in the two best restaurants on Main Street? Or at Lions Den where you and Spike and the others go?

ZEKE

I just thought that you preferred that barbecue place on the other side of town.

FRED

We do. We like the food. We're more comfortable there. But sometimes I'd like to be part of the larger group beyond the football field.

ZEKE

Then you ought to come to the Lions Den. I'm sure it'd be all right. Mr. Taylor who owns it teaches Sunday School at our church.

FRED

Maybe it would be. Maybe not.

ZEKE

Anything else?

FRED

There are only two doctors in Lofton who will serve Negroes. But they allow us to come in only at certain times.

ZEKE

I didn't know that.

FRED

And the shoe stores won't let us try on shoes.

ZEKE

Really? I've lived in Lofton all my life and never noticed these things.

FRED

It's subtle around here. Not blatant like it is in the South.

ZEKE

I'm sorry I've been so blind.

FRED

That's all right. You and the other guys on the team accept us as equals. And Nick, too.

ZEKE

But we should do something about the situation in town. I think I'll talk about it with our youth group at church.

The bell rings, calling students to their next class. Zeke and Fred get up to go.

FRED

Thanks for your concern, Zeke. This is the first time I've ever talked to a white person about these things.

ZEKE

Thanks for my enlightenment, Fred.

They walk toward the door.

INT - DRESSING ROOM AT GRUNWALD STADIUM - NIGHT

The Lofton team gathers around Nick.

NICK

We're fortunate to be back at full strength for our game here with Grunwald. As I told you at practice, they're a high flying team. They pass a lot and have some trick plays off the double wing. In league play they've lost only to Ashmont and Hargrove, both undefeated.

ROBERTO

We're ready for 'em.

NICK

But Grunwald is vulnerable to the same kind of wide-open offense. So Eddy, Fred, Billy, Spike, Flash, and the rest of you, be ready to fly. Zeke, dare to be daring. Now let's go. Show me your best stuff.

The players roar and rush out of the dressing room.

EXT - GRUNWALD FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

A sizable contingent from Lofton is in the visitors' stands, including Barbara and Joanne sitting with two African American young women, a small pep band, Mary Lou, and three other cheerleaders.

MONTAGE: Grunwald receives the opening kickoff and moves down field with a run-and-gun offense, including laterals and reverses. From third and goal from the Lofton 7, the Grunwald passer can't find anyone open and runs wide to score. The kicker makes the extra point.

MONTAGE: On their first possession the Lions are equally assertive and effective, culminating with Zeke hitting Spike in the corner of the end zone. Basil makes his kick to tie the score at 7 to 7.

MONTAGE: The teams slow down and exchange kicks.

In the second quarter Lofton has the ball on the Grunwald 18. From T-formation, Zeke hands off to Eddy, who follows Hank off tackle to the right. As the defense end closes in, Eddy laterals to Fred, who has drifted wide. Fred cuts down the sideline then back toward center to elude the safety. Basil's kick makes it Grunwald 7, Visitor 14.

On the kickoff Grunwald posts two return men. Lofton has good coverage, but after running a couple of steps the receiver stops, turns, and throws an overhand pass as a backward lateral to the receiver across the field. He seems to be headed for a touchdown until Flash catches him at

the Lofton 25 and rides him down at the 20.

Grunwald scores on three pass plays to tie the game at 14 all.

MONTAGE: At the beginning of the second half Grunwald stops Lofton's first offensive drive. Grunwald marches downfield and scores on an end around from the Lofton 15.

MONTAGE: Lofton second string backfield and ends are on offense with the first team guards, tackles, and center. Billy and Pat make good gains, and Lefty hits a couple of crucial passes. They are at the Grunwald 25 when the third quarter ends.

On the first play of the fourth quarter, Lefty rolls out to pass to Chuck in the flat, is hit hard as he starts to pass, and throws wide. Lefty is woozy. Doc comes in with some smelling salts, and Jiri and Jolly help Lefty off the field. Zeke takes Lefty's place as the Lions huddle.

ZEKE

Watching from the sidelines, I notice that the Grunwald is spread wide, so let's take it up the middle with 433.

From short punt Zeke hands off to Billy as Roberto opens a large hole with a trap block on the charging Grunwald right guard. Billy bursts through the middle of the line then cuts to the outside and across the goal line. Billy starts to celebrate his first touchdown but thinks better of it. But Zeke pats him on the back. Basil again hits the extra point to tie the game.

MONTAGE: Both sides tighten their defenses and force another exchange of punts.

At fourth and four from their own 44, Grunwald calls a time out. A Grunwald substitute comes in. The Lions huddle on their side of the ball.

ZEKE

I bet they go for it. Their coach won't be satisfied with a tie. If they line up in punt formation, look out for a short snap to one of the up backs.

Grunwald lines up in punt formation. The ball goes to the fullback, but Roberto nails him at the line of scrimmage.

The Lions take over on downs. Zeke calls time out, goes to the linesman, and returns to the huddle.

ZEKE

We've got a minute and a half left. Time enough to score. They'll expect a pass. Instead let's run 318 from double wing. Fred, when I get the snap, I'll cock my arm to fake a pass and then hand you the ball. If you can't go all the way, try to go out of bounds.

The play goes as Zeke calls it. Hank levels the Grunwald right end, Spike knocks down the linebacker, and Eddy blocks the defensive halfback. Fred heads down the sideline until the safety pushes him out of bounds at the Grunwald 30. The Lions huddle.

ZEKE

Eddy, this is what we've been practicing for. Sucker pass from short punt.

EDDY

I'm ready.

ZEKE

And remember guys, it's supposed to look like 36 off tackle to the right, except you can't cross the line of scrimmage to block.

Bulldog snaps the ball to Eddy. Guards pull to the right, and Fred heads for the Grunwald left end. Zeke stealthily eases off to the left. Eddy runs four steps to the right, stops suddenly, turns back, and lofts the ball to Zeke, who is all alone heading down the left sideline. The ball flutters, but Zeke catches it in stride at the 15 and sprints into the end zone.

In the stands the Lofton supporters go wild. So do Lofton subs along the sidelines. Jolly pats Basil so hard on the back that his glasses fall off. Basil is wiping off his glasses as he runs in to try for the extra point. He misses.

On the last play of the game Eddy intercepts a desperation pass. The final score is Grunwald 21, Visitor 27. Zeke and Eddy, clutching the

game ball, leave the field together.

EDDY

*I'm going to keep this and show it to Duke
the next time he's home on leave.*

Nick is waiting for them on the sideline.

NICK

*Zeke, I said to be daring, but I never
expected the sucker pass. Another
surprise for Coach Nickerson. But
congratulations to you both. You won
the game.*

ZEKE

Thanks, Nick.

EDDY

*I bet it reminds you of the pass Brad
threw to Duke two years ago.*

NICK

(Laughing)

In results, yes! In form, no!

The three walk off the field together.

INT - LIONS DEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The players enter the Lions Den in Lofton where eight tables have been set aside for the team. Students from Lofton High cheer as they come in. Mary Lou, dressed as a cheerleader, rushes to Eddy and kisses him. Barbara gives Zeke a hug but isn't as exuberant. With her are Joanne, who buzzes Spike, and two African American young women, who go up to Fred and Flash.

Zeke and Spike push two tables together so that they, Fred, Flash, and the four young women can sit together. Dutch, Stan, Jiri, and Pat take a table together. The team and students create a festive mood in the Lions Den.

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Zeke and Spike come up to Rusty and Roberto at Rusty's locker.

SPIKE

*Did you guys hear that Ted Simmons was
killed in action?*

ROBERTO

Oh, no! How did it happen?

ZEKE

*His unit was storming a Japanese-held
island in the Pacific.*

RUSTY

Gosh! Two years ago when I was a sub I got to play next to him.

SPIKE

He was a great guy. I learned to play end just watching him.

ROBERTO

I hope we don't lose any more.

ZEKE

Yeah, to death or injury.

Zeke shakes his head in remorse.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players gather around Nick after opening calisthenics.

NICK

Before we start brushing up on our plays and defense, let's pause for a moment of silence in honor of Ted Simmons. He's the tenth Lofton player killed in action.

The players remove their helmets and bow their heads. Rusty wipes tears from his eyes.

NICK

As you've heard, Hargrove remains undefeated after beating Ashmont on Friday. One of our Main Street merchants who saw the game tells me that Hargrove surprised Ashmont by putting a man in motion from the T. This will require some adjustments in our defense.

I'll show you if the first team will line up on defense and the second team on offense. I'll play the man in motion.

The players move into position.

INT - DEN - DAY

Granddad is on the recliner, Scott on the foot stool.

SCOTT

On our middle school team we use man-in-motion all the time, Granddad.

GRANDDAD

Yes, I know. In 1944 some college teams were doing so, but it was new for high schools.

Scott rises.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Nick takes Pat's place in the second team backfield. As Lefty gives the signal count, Nick goes in motion to the left and then cuts down field as a receiver.

A second time Nick goes in motion to the right beyond the defensive end, stops before the count is complete and comes back in to block Spike. He then stands between the two teams.

NICK

Different defensive players have to keep an eye on the man-in-motion. At first the tackle and linebacker. Then the end and halfback. When he goes on out, the halfback should move wider to cover him. Of course, it may be a fake, and the play will go the other way. That's what makes it so tricky.

Pat resumes his position and acts as man-in-motion in several plays off the T. Nick directs the first team defenders what to do. After a while Nick calls the players together.

NICK

We are underdogs against Hargrove. Our only chance is a high risk offense, the kind we used during much of the Grunwald game. So we'll working on

pass plays for the next half hour.

The first team takes the ball on offense. From a T Zeke fakes to Eddy on a quick opener, and passes to Spike in the flat.

INT - PARKER FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Zeke comes in for dinner where Mom, Dad, and Laura sit at the dinette.

MOM

We've had the best news today, Paul. Clyde's back in the states. This afternoon he phoned from a rehabilitation center in Massachusetts. He hopes to be home soon for a short visit.

ZEKE

That's just great! I wish he could get here this week and watch me play our final game.

MOM

So do I. But more likely he won't get here until next week.

Mom passes a plate of meat to Zeke.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

MONTAGE: Eddy receives the Hargrove kickoff and makes a good return. The Lions open with an end around from a T, and Flash makes a first down. Zeke hits Spike over center for another first down. The Lions move downfield with a combination of reverses from double wing, passes, a quarterback sneak by Zeke to pick up a first down. Eddy scores on a pass in the flat from Zeke.

The hometown crowd roars. The band gives Basil his usual fanfare, and his kick splits the uprights. The Lofton bench is greatly excited.

Hargrove players form a tight wedge for the kickoff return, but Roberto breaks through for the tackle.

MONTAGE: Hargrove moves downfield with their man-in-motion offense off the T. Mostly running plays, featuring crisp ball handling, solid block, and hard running. They score a touchdown and make the extra point to tie the game at 7-7.

MONTAGE: Hargrove tightens on defense and halts the Lions after two first downs. Hargrove makes two more touchdowns in the half but messes up the third try for extra point.

The players leave the field at halftime with the scoreboard showing: Lofton 7, Visitor 20.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The players sit on benches. Nick stands at a blackboard drawing plays of Hargrove's man-in-motion offense and how to defend better. He looks at his wristwatch.

NICK

O.K., it's time to go back out.
Remember, we've come from behind
before. We can do it again. Let's go.

The players roar and rush for the door.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT UNDER FLOODLIGHTS

Hargrove uses two receivers deep for the second half kickoff. The receiver fakes a reverse but doesn't fool the Lions. As Pudge closes in on the return man, he is blocked from behind, but Bulldog stops the ballcarrier. An official throws the flag for the clip.

Pudge lays on the ground, grasping his knee in pain. Dr. Sullivan and Doc come out for a look. Dr. Sullivan motions for a couple of players to help him up. Rusty and Roberto help Pudge to his feet and support him as he limps to the sidelines. Mary Lou leads the students in a chant: "Pudge! Pudge! Pudge!" Pudge takes off his helmet and waves. Jiri comes in to take Pudge's place.

MONTAGE: With first and 25 because of the clipping penalty, Hargrove runs twice, passes for a short gain, doesn't make first down, and punts.

After Eddy receives the ball, he gets to the outside and heads down the sidelines until he is pushed out of bounds near the 50.

MONTAGE: With a wide open offense the Lions pick up two first downs in four plays. From the Hargrove 25 Zeke hits Spike over the middle. Spike holds the ball long enough to have possession before he is hit hard by the Hargrove safety. He fumbles, and Hargrove recovers. Spike is shaken up and has to leave the game, but on his own power.

MONTAGE: Hargrove moves downfield with its man-in-motion offense, scores, and make the extra point for a 27-7 lead.

Spike returns for the kickoff, which goes to Fred. MONTAGE: The Lions run several plays to get the ball to midfield. From a T Zeke fakes a handoff to Hank and drops back to throw to Flash going down and out. As Zeke releases the ball, he is hit from both sides. He lies on the ground, grasping his right leg. Dr. Sullivan and Doc come in. Dr. Sullivan feels Zeke's leg.

DR. SULLIVAN

I think the fibula is broken. Chris, go get a splint and a stretcher.

Doc gets a splint. Jolly and Wally bring a stretcher. Dr. Sullivan tapes the splint around Zeke's leg. Jolly and Wally lift Zeke onto the stretcher and carry him off the field, followed by Dr. Sullivan and Doc.

Mary Lou leads the students in "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" over and over. Zeke waves in acknowledgement. Lefty comes to take Zeke's place.

Nick comforts Zeke as he is carried across the sideline. As play resumes on the field, Dr. Sullivan speaks to Nick.

DR. SULLIVAN

Nick, we need an ambulance to get him to the hospital.

ZEKE

No, sirens, please. I want to go quietly. But first I want to see us score.

Dave goes off to call for an ambulance. Several players put a couple of benches together and lift Zeke and his stretcher on them so that he can watch the game.

On the field Eddy makes a first down as the third quarter ends. The Hargrove coach replaces his entire team. Nick notices this. He sends Chuck and Mike in for Spike and Flash. The students cheer loudly as they leave the field.

Nick sends in Stan and Jolly for Roberto and Rusty. Again loud cheers. Nick sends in Billy for Eddy. As Eddy saunters off the field, Mary Lou leads the students in "Eddy! Eddy! Eddy!"

The seniors -- Spike, Flash, Pudge, Roberto, Rusty, Eddy, joined by Basil -- stand near Zeke and wave to the cheering crowd.

MONTAGE: As play resumes in the fourth quarter, Lefty moves the Lions downfield, running exclusively from a T with Billy, Hank, and Fred in the backfield. Inside the 10 Billy scores off tackle. Zeke and the other

seniors cheer. Wally kicks the extra point to make the score Lofton 14, Visitor 27. More cheers from the seniors.

As Hank kicks off, the ambulance arrives on the field and comes along the running track. Zeke's dad, Laura, and Barbara come from the stands and walk beside Zeke as he is carried to the ambulance. Barbara is teary-eyed.

ZEKE

I'll be all right.

DR. SULLIVAN

Just a broken bone. It'll heal satisfactorily.

DAD

I'll see you at the hospital, son. Barbara, do you want to go with Laura and me?

BARBARA

Yes, I'd like to.

The ambulance drives off.

MONTAGE: On the field the Hargrove second team moves down field and scores. With the extra point the score is Lofton 14, Visitor 34. The subs play the rest of the game as the seniors cheer them on.

When the game is over, Dutch, Stan, and Jiri leave the field together. Mike and Chuck, and Flash goes up to them.

FLASH

Good game, guys. I can see that the Lions will have strength at end next year.

MIKE

Thanks, Flash. I've learned a lot this year watching you and Spike play.

CHUCK

Yeah, me too.

Flash puts his arms around their shoulders, and they walk off together with Flash in the middle. Eddy finds Billy.

EDDY

That's good running, Wild Bill.

BILLY

Thanks, Eddy. Is Zeke gonna be all right?

EDDY

I hope so. Doc Sullivan told Nick he expects no complications.

Eddy and Billy walk together.

INT - DEN - DAY

Scott stands by the window. Granddad is on the sofa.

SCOTT

And that's how your season ended, Granddad? You broke your leg, lost the game, and wound up with a record of -- what was it? -- four wins and five losses.

GRANDDAD

That's right. In the league we were three and four and finished in fifth place.

SCOTT

How could you call that a glorious season?

GRANDDAD

I didn't at first. That first night in the hospital, awake with pain, I was full of disappointment and regret.

But the next two days the guys from the team stopped by in pairs and threesomes to see me: Eddy, Pudge, and Doc; Roberto and Rusty; Dutch, Stan, and Jiri; Fred and Flash; Wally, Hank, and Jolly.

On Saturday evening Spike brought in

Barbara and Joanne for our usual get together. Coach Nickerson came on Sunday. Their visits made me realize what a great spirit of camaraderie we had developed.

Then on Tuesday the person I most wanted to see arrived.

Granddad has a look of reflection in his eyes.

INT - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Zeke lies in bed, his right leg in a cast, held up by a rope and pulleys. He is reading Life magazine. CLYDE (19) enters, dressed as an army private with the right sleeve of his jacket pinned up because of his missing arm.

CLYDE

Is this the room of Lofton's star
quarterback?

ZEKE

Clyde! How glad I am to see you!

Zeke holds out his arms to Clyde. Clyde extends his left hand, which Zeke grasps in both his hands.

ZEKE

Welcome home, soldier.

CLYDE

Glad to be here.

Their eyes moisten. Clyde looks at Zeke's cast and touches it gently.

CLYDE

What happened, Paul?

ZEKE

Oh, just a little football mishap. It was our last game anyway.

CLYDE

Not a good way to end your football career.

ZEKE

I guess not. And what about you, Clyde? How did it happen?

Clyde looks away and is silent for a moment. He turns back to Zeke.

CLYDE

I'll tell you about it some time, but not now.

ZEKE

I'm really sorry for the pain you must have suffered.

CLYDE

Many have suffered more.

ZEKE

I suppose it's the end of your music career.

CLYDE

There are two answers. First, my loss may open a new career for me.

ZEKE

What do you mean?

CLYDE

When I was in the base hospital in England, another patient with an amputated leg wandered through the ward on crutches. He stopped by my bed and said, "I can see you'll have a great career as a lawyer."

"What do you mean," I asked. He explained, "People get tired of lawyers

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telling them on the one hand this and on the other hand that. Lots of people are looking for one-armed lawyers."

Clyde explodes with laughter at his joke, and Zeke gets caught up in the merriment.

ZEKE

And what's the other answer.

CLYDE

Maybe I'm not through as a trombonist.

ZEKE

How can that be? It was your slide arm. I've never seen a left-handed trombonist.

CLYDE

Nor have I. But just the day before I was scheduled to fly back to the States, Glen Miller played a concert at the hospital. Afterwards he toured the wards, carrying his trombone.

ZEKE

And he came to your ward?

CLYDE

He sure did.

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Clyde smiles broadly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - WARD IN ARMY HOSPITAL - DAY

Glen Miller, carrying his trombone, enters the ward contain a dozen beds on each side. Clyde is near the middle on one side.

GLEN MILLER

Are there any musicians here?

Clyde raises his left hand.

CLYDE

I am.

Miller goes over.

GLEN MILLER

What's your instrument, soldier?"

CLYDE

Trombone. Or used to be.

Miller notices Clyde's missing arm.

GLEN MILLER

It still is. You can play a trombone with

either arm. Let me show you.

Miller flips his trombone so that the slide is on the left and plays a tune, using his left arm to move the slide.

GLEN MILLER

(to Clyde)

Here you try it.

Clyde sits up. Miller holds the trombone to Clydes mouth. Using his left arm to move the slide, Clyde plays a scale. Hw misses some notes, but his tone is decent.

INT - ZEKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Zeke raises up. Clyde stands beside the bed.

ZEKE

You played Glen Miller's trombone?

CLYDE

Yes, I did. When he left, a therapist told me that when I get my artificial arm, I'll be able to hold a trombone without any difficulty. So maybe my musical career isn't over.

Basil walks into the room.

ZEKE

Hi, Basil. It's about time. You're the last member of the team to visit me.

Basil notices Clyde.

BASIL

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know you had a visitor. I can come back later.

ZEKE

That's all right. It's my brother Clyde, the war hero. Clyde, this is Basil, extra point specialist, par excellence.

CLYDE

I remember you. You play bassoon, don't you.

BASIL

That's me. Zeke, I'd have come sooner, but I thought you were mad at me. Spike says you aren't.

ZEKE

No, not at all.

CLYDE

What's this about?

ZEKE

Barbara, the girl I've been dating, went out with Basil to make me jealous.

CLYDE

"Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy. It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on."

BASIL

"Othello, Act III". You know your Shakespeare, Clyde.

CLYDE

Of course, I took Miss Shepherd's course.

BASIL

Me, too. I bet we memorized the same lines.

CLYDE

I'm glad I did. It help me through some tough times the past six weeks.

ZEKE

How's that?

CLYDE

On my hospital bed to divert myself from my woes, I recited all the poems and

quotations I could remember. I kept coming to the line that says, "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

BASIL

I used that one after our second loss, and they turned the cold shower on me.

CLYDE

That's fitting. The icy fang the Duke talked about.

BASIL

Yes, the Duke forced to live in exile in the Forest of Arden.

CLYDE

Knowing that his men miss court life, the Duke tells them, "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

CLYDE, BASIL

"Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.
And this our life exempt from public haunt
Finds tongues in trees,
 books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in everything.

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I would not change it."

ZEKE

Hurrah!

Zeke applauds.

CLYDE

Adversity is a lost arm. A broken leg.

ZEKE

A losing season.

CLYDE

Whatever happens to us, we can look for good in it. We may not know what it is at first, but it's there if we search for it.

(Cont.)

CLYDE *(Cont.)*

That's how I discovered that I'm going to be the world's foremost left-handed trombonist.

Zeke reaches out to Clyde, who comes over. They embrace.

INT - DEN - DAY

Granddad is on the recliner, leaning forward. Scott sits on the footstool. Grandma enters.

GRANDMA

It's time for lunch. It's quit raining, so I've set up a table on the porch. You can finish your story there, Paul.

GRANDDAD

I'm almost done.

Granddad and Scott rise and follow Grandma out the door.

EXT - PORCH AT GRANDDAD'S HOUSE - DAY

Grandma comes out onto porch followed by Scott and Granddad. They sit at the table where lunch awaits them. They bow their heads.

GRANDDAD

Eternal God, for this food we are about to partake we give you our thanks. May it strengthen us to do your will. Amen.

They start eating.

SCOTT

Grandma, your name is Helen, isn't it?

GRANDMA

Yes, always has been.

SCOTT

Not Barbara?

GRANDMA

Of course not.

GRANDDAD

Barbara and Zeke broke up not long after he got out of the hospital. A couple of weeks before Christmas.

SCOTT

When did you meet Granddad?

GRANDMA

In college.

GRANDDAD

After I got out of the army.

SCOTT

Did you ever meet Granddad's high school teammates?

GRANDMA

Oh, yes. Eric Anderson, known as Spike in high school, was best man at our wedding. And I was a bridesmaid when

Laura married Billy.

SCOTT

Granddad, your sister Laura married Billy?

GRANDDAD

Yes, she did?

SCOTT

My Great Uncle Bill is Billy, is Wild Bill?

GRANDDAD

That's right.

SCOTT

I can't believe it.

GRANDDAD

It's true.

SCOTT

Wow! And did you ever meet the other players, Grandma? Rusty, Roberto, Dutch, and all the rest?

GRANDMA

Yes, they were all together at your grandfather's tenth high school reunion.

They were quite a nice group.

GRANDDAD

*There's a picture taken on that occasion
hanging on my wall. Let me get it.*

Granddad gets up, goes into the house.

Granddad returns with the picture and shows it to Scott.

GRANDDAD

*Here they are: Eddy, Flash, Spike, Billy,
and the others. We were happy to be
back together again.*

Scott takes the picture and looks at it.

INT - LOFTON HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

*Registration is underway for the tenth reunion of the Lofton High School
Class of 1945. Zeke, Pudge, and Mary Lou sit at the registration desk.
Other class members decorate the gym. Some gather in small
conversational groups. Roberto enters.*

ROBERTO

*Pudge, old buddy! Zeke, the brains of
our outfit! Long time no see.*

PUDGE

Roberto, que tal?¹

ROBERTO

De nada.²

¹ "What's up?"

² "Nothing."

ZEKE

I'm glad you could get back to Lofton.

ROBERTO

It's good to be back. I know you're a lawyer now, Zeke. What are you doing these days, Pudge?

PUDGE

Spinning disks at KJBC. And I'm a member of city council.

ROBERTO

Where's Rusty?

ZEKE

He went to get helium for the balloons. Here he is now.

Rusty wheels in a canister of helium.

ROBERTO

Rusty!

RUSTY

Roberto!

They rush together, give each other bear hugs, and then separate.

RUSTY

You can still call me "Rusty", but around town I'm known as Ralph now.

ROBERTO

How come?

RUSTY

My dad helped me get a used car business started. I couldn't call it "Rusty's Used Cars", could I? How about you? How's the rocket man?

ROBERTO

Just great. Space is the real frontier.

(beat)

Zeke, you look in pretty good shape.

ZEKE

I play tennis with Spike. He keeps me running.

Spike and Joanne enter the gym.

PUDGE

Here he comes. The chicken feed merchant. And his wife.

SPIKE

Roberto, welcome home.

Roberto and Spike shake hands. Joanne hugs Roberto.

JOANNE

It's good to see you, Bob.

ROBERTO

You, too, Joanne. I hope this guy's treating you all right.

JOANNE

He's the greatest!

Joanne joins Mary Lou at the table.

SPIKE

Pudge, who else is coming from the football team?

PUDGE

Everyone from our class. Eddy, of course. Right now he's out running errands for Mary Lou. Since they married, she's got him under control.

I expect Doc and Basil pretty soon. And Flash is supposed to get in town in the morning.

ROBERTO

What about the other guys, the juniors
and sophomores who played with us?
Any of them around?

ZEKE

Quite a few. Eddy's invited some of the
others to a get-together tomorrow
afternoon.

SPIKE

Here comes the short ones now.

Basil and Doc come in together. They shake hands all around.

ZEKE

I'm glad to see that you're friends at last.

DOC

We're a paradox, aren't we?

ROBERTO

In what way?

DOC

Basil Fox, Ph.D and Chris Wilson, M.D.

They all groan.

SPIKE

*At med school didn't they immunize you
for bad puns?*

BASIL

*Zeke, what about your brother Clyde?
Is he still around?*

ZEKE

*Sure, he runs the hardware store with
my dad, but his greatest love is still
music. His band is playing for our dance
tomorrow night.*

BASIL

*That's great. I want to see him and hear
him play trombone left-handed.*

ZEKE

He's terrific.

Mary Lou gets up from the registration and approaches the group.

MARY LOU

*Hi, guys. Joanne and I need some
strong men to help hang crepe paper and
blow up the balloons.*

DOC

Flattery will get you everywhere, Mary

Lou.

They disperse to take on their assignments.

INT - LOFTON LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Eddy opens the door and lets in Roberto, Rusty, Pudge, Zeke, Spike, Bulldog, and Hank.

EDDY

Welcome to this hallowed place.

ROBERTO

It looks about the same, except they've painted the lockers.

BULLDOG

*It still reeks of sweat and Ben Gay.
Brings back some happy memories.*

EDDY

Bulldog, it looks like being a corporate executive agrees with you.

BULLDOG

I like New York, but sometimes I envy you who have stayed in Lofton.

HANK

Yeah, some of us have never left the farm.

ZEKE

Dutch did. He's working in the Middle East for the Mennonite Service Committee. He's home on leave now.

SPIKE

Stan's in town, too, for a visit with his family. He's now with the Voice of America in Washington.

EDDY

I expect both of them to join us soon.

Fred, Flash, Billy, and Lefty enter. Flash wears an army captain uniform, decorated with ribbons for service in Korea, including a purple heart.

RUSTY

Here come the cousins: the reverend and the Korean war hero.

SPIKE

And the fledgling real estate tycoon and the oil speculator.

They shake hands all around. Dutch and Stan enter and exchange greetings with the others. Dutch and Flash are especially effusive in

greeting one another.

STAN

Eddy, you're the coach here now?

EDDY

Just the assistant coach. Dave became head coach when Nick took over at the state college, his alma mater. I took Dave's place at Lindbergh Junior High.

ROBERTO

Nick was a great coach.

FRED

He sure was.

SPIKE

The greatest.

EDDY

We were lucky to have him.

ZEKE

I'm sorry we gave him his only losing season at Lofton High.

PUDGE

Me, too.

RUSTY

I wish it'd been otherwise.

ZEKE

It was my fault more than anyone else.

ROBERTO

How do you figure that?

ZEKE

Because of that stupid call I made toward the end of the opening game against Kepler. When we stopped them near the end of the game six inches from the goal line, I called for a punt. I should've run a quarterback sneak, as Nick told me later. With more running room, we could've run out the clock and won the game.

HANK

But if I'd made a decent punt, Kepler would never have scored.

FRED

I thought we lost because I let the Kepler end catch the winning pass in the end zone.

EDDY

Remember how I slipped when I tried to cut around the last defender on the kickoff return? If I hadn't fallen, I would've gone all the way with a 90-yard, game-winning return.

SPIKE

I didn't get the ball out of bounds on the last play of the game. If we had time for one more play, we might have scored.

ROBERTO

Stop it, you guys. You've just proved what Nick told us. It was a team loss.

DOC

Of course, it was. And as Nick taught us, you shouldn't agonize forever over your mistakes. All season long I watched him keep you guys focused on the next game and not get mired down in the previous defeat.

ZEKE

You're right, Doc. That perspective has helped me as a lawyer. If I lose a case, as I sometimes do, I move on to the next one and don't get bogged down in what might have been.

PUDGE

You know what? A couple of years after we graduated, Nick told me that our losing season was what made Lofton the league champs the following year.

LEFTY

That's true. Up front we had battle-tested veterans who knew how to play together: Bulldog, Dutch, Stan, Jolly, and Jiri plus Mike and Chuck as ends. In the backfield Fred and Hank were a stabilizing influence for Billy and me as we installed a man-in-motion offense.

The next year after all these guys graduated, we finished third in the league even though Billy and I had good seasons our senior year.

BILLY

I'm quite willing to admit that I never would've reached my full potential if, you, Eddy, hadn't first put me down and then helped me up and if, you Zeke, hadn't taught me to get my temper under control and to become a team player.

EDDY

I appreciate that, Billy.

ZEKE

Me, too.

ROBERTO

Besides all that, we need to remember that in the midst of losing football games, a lot of good things happened to us. Like when I flunked world history and got suspended from football. That caused me to get serious with my school work and buckle down. I never would've got through engineering school if I hadn't learned scholastic discipline.

RUSTY

Somehow my dad found out that we tried to cheat on that test. He really ate me out. "Ralph," he said, "in the auto business it takes three things to be successful: good cars, good mechanics, and integrity. People are suspicious of car dealers, especially used car dealers. If you get a reputation for dishonesty, you're doomed to fail."

BASIL

So do they call you Honest Ralph?

RUSTY

I've never heard that name, but my customers trust me.

STAN

What I remember most from the '44 season was how all you guys accepted a Polish refugee who didn't know a tackle from a guard and helped him learn your American sport. Only in America, I thought, were people so kind.

FLASH

Your acceptance meant a lot to me, too, coming as did from an all-Negro school. I was a little scared when I came out for football here, though I tried not to show it. Then at the end of the first practice Zeke welcomed me. Dutch taught me to block so that I could make the team. And in the Ashmont game Rusty took care of that loudmouth end who was baiting me.

RUSTY

You were my teammate, so I had to protect you.

FRED

Looking back, I realize that this attitude of we're-all-in-this-together made racial

differences disappear on our team. We were loyal to one another as Nick was loyal to us. He demonstrated that when he outfoxed that restaurant owner in Barnesdale.

PUDGE

Yeah, that was something.

ZEKE

We all liked Nick, and he had great respect for us, too. When he visited me at the hospital after I broke my leg in the last game, he said that our team showed more character development than any team he'd ever coached.

ROBERTO

That's a nice compliment for a bunch of losers.

ZEKE

No, we're not losers. Listening to you guys talk, I realize that we may have had a losing season, but it made winners of us all.

SPIKE

That's for sure.

FRED

Considering the effects on us then and since, I'd say it was a glorious season.

BULLDOG

Well spoken.

RUSTY

Yeah.

ROBERTO

I agree.

EDDY

Right you are, Fred. Now I'd like to get a picture of you bunch of winners. A photographer is supposed to meet us on the football field in a few minutes.

They head for the door.

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players gather on the football field full of good spirits. They line up at a bench for their photograph.

EXT - PORCH AT GRANDDAD'S HOUSE - DAY

The photograph is propped up on the table where Granddad, Grandma, and Scott eat their last bites of cake.

GRANDDAD

And so it took us ten years to realize
what we accomplished in the 1944
season.

SCOTT

Do you still see any of your teammates,
Granddad?

GRANDDAD

Not many of them. Except for Bill,
Eddy, and Eric, once known as Spike,
who still live in Lofton. We play golf
together once a week at the country club.

A Cadillac pulls into the driveway. Bill (aka Billy) drives.

GRANDMA

I believe that's them coming now.

BILL (66), ERIC (aka Spike) (67), and EDDY (67) get out of the Cadillac
and walk to the porch. Eddy is short, pudgy, and mostly bald. Eric and
Bill, like Granddad, are heavy set with expanded waistlines.

SCOTT

It's Uncle Bill!

GRANDDAD

1

With him are my teammates, Eddy and Eric.

SCOTT

That's Eddy and Spike? They don't look like football players.

GRANDDAD

That was in yesteryears. Ask them.

Bill, Eric, and Eddy come onto the porch.

GRANDDAD

Fellows, I'd like you to meet my grandson, Scott.

ERIC

Glad to meet you, Scott. I've heard a lot about you. You're a flanker back.

SCOTT

That's right. And I've heard a lot about you. My granddad's been telling me about your football season in 1944.

EDDY

Does this old geezer remember that far back?

SCOTT

He says he does.
(Addressing Eric)
Are you Spike?

ERIC
I used to be called that.

SCOTT
You don't look like a spike.

They all laugh.

ERIC
Let's just say I filled out.

SCOTT
And did you, Eddy, once have a foot race
with my Uncle Bill?

EDDY
Yup, and I whipped him.

BILL
He didn't outrun me. He outhustled me,
if you know what I mean.

ERIC
That's why we used to call him Fast Eddy.

EDDY

Did he tell you about the pass I threw to win the Grunwald game?

SCOTT

You mean the sucker pass?

EDDY

That's the one.

SCOTT

He said it was wobbly, but it let him score the winning touchdown.

ERIC

What else did he say?

GRANDDAD

I said you were great receiver, Eric, and that Eddy was a great ballcarrier.

EDDY

An astute observer.

BILL

What did he say about me, Scott?

SCOTT

He said they used to call you Wild Bill.

BILL

Well, I guess I had a wild streak, but these guys tamed me. I deserved it. But out of it I gained some life-long friends.

ERIC

We really had a great bunch. Remember how Pudge used to bring a gourmet lunch on the bus when we went to out-of-town games?

GRANDDAD

Yea, I'm surprised Nick let him get away with it.

ERIC

He had a soft spot in his heart for Pudge.

EDDY

Everybody did.

ERIC

Then there were Roberto and Rusty. The goof-off brothers, as Nick called them after they flunked world history.

EDDY

How I loved to run off tackle on their side of the line. Especially after Dutch taught Gordon to block.

GRANDDAD

Yes, Dutch was special.

ERIC

And Richard brought a bulldog's
determination to the center of the line.

EDDY

It was a pleasure to play in the backfield
with Fred and Hank.

GRANDDAD

Remember the restaurant in Barnesdale?

ERIC

How could we ever forget that experience.
When those Barnesdale players walked in,
I expected a brawl. But they just
wanted to make friends with Fred and
Flash.

EDDY

All this talk about racial integration in
the years since, I guess we were pioneers
and didn't even know it.

BILL

Don't forget the guys from the second
squad, like Stan, Jolly, Jiri, and the
others, especially my classmate Lefty.

EDDY

And Basil and Doc.

GRANDDAD

Do you recall all the jokes Doc played on Basil?

ERIC

Yes, Doc was irrepressible. And Basil was a good sport about it.

EDDY

Basil seemed to have a Shakespeare quote for every occasion.

GRANDDAD

I've never forgotten how before our opening game he proclaimed, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

Then

it was something about "he who sheds his blood with me shall be my brother."

Forget the blood shedding but look at the deeper sentiment. On the Lofton team even in a losing season we became bonded brothers.

ERIC

We were comrades, strongly committed

to each other.

EDDY

Loyal and dedicated.

BILL

Never failing in our support for one another.

SCOTT

Granddad, I hope some day I'll get to play on a team like the Lofton Lions of 1944 and have a glorious season like you did: win, lose, or draw.

GRANDDAD

I hope you do, Scott. It's an opportunity of a lifetime.

As credits roll, Granddad, Grandma, Scott, Eddy, Eric, and Bill continue MOS their animated, happy conversation.

FADE OUT

CLYDE (Cont.)

That's how I discovered that I'm going to be the world's foremost left-handed trombonist.

Zeke reaches out to Clyde, who comes over. They embrace.

INT - DEN - DAY

Granddad is on the recliner, leaning forward. Scott sits on the footstool.

SCOTT

Yeah, I've heard Uncle Clyde's band. He's pretty good.

Grandma enters.

GRANDMA

It's time for lunch. It's quit raining, so I've set up a table on the porch. You can finish your story there, Paul.

GRANDDAD

I'm almost done.

Granddad and Scott rise and follow Grandma out the door.

EXT - PORCH AT GRANDDAD'S HOUSE - DAY

Grandma comes onto porch followed by Scott and Granddad. They sit at the table where lunch was. They bow their heads.

GRANDDAD

*Eternal God, for this food we are about to partake we give you our thanks.
May it strengthen us to do your will. Amen.*

They start eating.

SCOTT

Grandma, your name is Helen, isn't it?

GRANDMA

Yes, always has been.

SCOTT

Not Barbara?

GRANDMA

Of course not.

GRANDDAD

*Barbara and Zeke broke up not long after
he got out of the hospital. A couple of
weeks before Christmas.*

SCOTT

When did you meet Granddad?

GRANDMA

In college.

GRANDDAD

After I got out of the army.

SCOTT

*Has he told you about the Lofton Lions of
1944?*

GRANDMA

*Oh, yes. Some of the episodes many
times.*

GRANDDAD

*The story sort of ends, Scott, when the
guys on the team came to see me at the
hospital on Friday night, the week after
our last game.*

Granddad looks up in reflection.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - PATIENTS LOUNGE IN HOSPITAL - NIGHT

*Zeke is in his bed with his right leg attached to the rope-and-pulley
apparatus. Gathered around are Spike, Roberto, Rusty, Eddy, Pudge,
Dutch, Stan, Bulldog, Hank, Fred, Flash, Doc, Basil, Billy, and Lefty.*

GRANDDAD (V.O.)

Doc got a nurse he was friendly with to move my bed into the lounge. It was like a team meeting without the coach.

Doc fools around with the rope and pulley.

DOC

So that's how these things work.

ZEKE

Take your hands off, Doc.

DOC

Okay, okay.

DUTCH

How you doing, Zeke?

ZEKE

They're going to release me from this contraption tomorrow.

EDDY

What do you say we give a cheer for "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

SEVERAL

Yeah!

ZEKE

You guys are in a rousing mood tonight.

ROBERTO

We're still a team!

SPIKE

Yeah, but a losing team.

BASIL

Four out of nine isn't bad.

EDDY

Not good enough. The worst of it is we gave Buck his only losing season at Lofton High.

ZEKE

It was my fault more than anyone else.

ROBERTO

How do you figure that?

ZEKE

Because of that stupid call I made toward the end of the opening game against Kepler. When we stopped them near the end of the game six inches from the goal line, I called for a punt.

DUTCH

You were trying to protect us from a safety.

ZEKE

I should've run a quarterback sneak, as Buck told me later. With more running room, we could've run out the clock and won the game.

HANK

But if I'd made a decent punt, Kepler would never have scored.

FRED

I thought we lost because I let the Kepler end catch the winning pass in the end zone.

EDDY

Remember how I slipped when I tried to cut around the last defender on the kickoff return? If I hadn't fallen, I would've gone all the way with a 90-yard, game-winning return.

SPIKE

I didn't get the ball out of bounds on the last play of the game. If we had time for

one more play, we might have scored.

ROBERTO

Stop it, you guys. You've just proved what Buck told us. It was a team loss.

DOC

Of course, it was. As Buck kept telling you, don't agonize over your mistakes forever.

ZEKE

Yeah, I've thought about that this past week lying here in bed. It's hard to let go. But I'm working on it.

STAN

At least for me it was a great season, win or lose. Here I was a Polish refugee who didn't know a tackle from a guard. You guys took me in and taught me your American sport.

FLASH

Your acceptance meant a lot to me, too, coming as I did from an all-Negro school. I was a little scared when I came out for football here, though I tried not to show it. Then at the end of the first practice you welcomed me, Zeke.

ZEKE

I thought you had something to contribute, and you did.

FLASH

Dutch taught me to block so that I could make the team. And in the Ashmont game Rusty took care of that loudmouth end who was baiting me.

RUSTY

You were my teammate, so I had to protect you.

FRED

Looking back, I realize that this attitude of we're-all-in-this-together made racial differences disappear on our team. We were loyal to one another as Buck was loyal to us.

SPIKE

Like he said in his opening speech.

FRED

He demonstrated that when he outfoxed that restaurant owner in Barnesdale.

PUDGE

Yeah, that was something.

BILLY

If a lowly sophomore can say something.

HANK

Lowly? That's new for you, Billy.

BILLY

No, seriously, that's my point. I've learned a lot the hard way. From you, Eddy, and from you, Zeke.

EDDY

I appreciate that, Billy.

ZEKE

Me, too.

ROBERTO

Besides all that, we need to remember that in the midst of losing football games, a lot of good things happened to us.

SPIKE

Like what?

ROBERTO

Like when Bulldog wouldn't help me on the world history exam, and I got suspended from the team. For the first time in my life I worked hard on classroom assignments. It was a good feeling when I passed the make-up exam.

BULLDOG

I'm glad to hear that.

ROBERTO

Now I'm determined to bring my grades up the rest of the year so that I can get into engineering school.

RUSTY

It taught me a good lesson, too.

BASIL

Such as?

RUSTY

Somehow my dad found out that we tried to cheat. He really ate me out.

LEFTY

I've worked for your dad. I know he can be tough.

RUSTY

"Ralph," he said, "in the auto business it takes three things to be successful: good cars, good mechanics, and integrity. If you expect to take over from me someday, you've got to have a reputation for honesty."

SPIKE

My dad talks that way, too.

PUDGE

Another thing. Think of all the Shakespeare we've learned from Basil.

BASIL

It was great being part of the team. The camaraderie.

EDDY

There's nothing like it.

ZEKE

Listening to you guys talk, I realize that we had a pretty darn good season.

STAN

If I can use a new English word I've learned, I'd say it was a glorious season.

BULLDOG

Well spoken!

ROBERTO

I agree!

FRED

Right you are, man!

SPIKE

That's for sure!

Eddy raises his fists in victory salutation.

EDDY

Yeah!

Zeke looks around happily.

EXT - PORCH - DAY

Granddad, Grandma, and Scott are mostly through eating.

GRANDDAD

Looking back fifty years at what my teammates accomplished in their careers, with their families, in civic life, I'd say it may have been a losing season, but it made winners of us all.

Grandma reaches over and fondly pats Granddad's hand.

A Cadillac pulls into the driveway. Bill (aka Billy) drives. Eric (aka Spike) and Eddy are with him.

GRANDDAD

Here come three of my teammates now.

SCOTT

It's Uncle Bill.

GRANDDAD

*Of course, he's married to my sister
Laura.*

SCOTT

My Great Uncle Bill is Billy, is Wild Bill?

GRANDDAD

That's right.

SCOTT

I can't believe it.

BILL (66), ERIC (aka Spike) (67), and EDDY (67) get out of the Cadillac and walk to the porch. Eddy is short, pudgy, and mostly bald. Eric and Bill, like Granddad, are heavy set with expanded waistlines.

GRANDDAD

With him are my teammates, Eddy and Eric.

SCOTT

That's Eddy and Spike? They don't look like football players.

GRANDDAD

That was in yesteryears. Ask them.

Bill, Eric, and Eddy come onto the porch.

GRANDDAD

Fellows, I'd like you to meet my grandson, Scott.

ERIC

Glad to meet you, Scott. I've heard a lot about you. You're a flanker back.

SCOTT

That's right. And I've heard a lot about you. My granddad's been telling me about your football season in 1944.

EDDY

Does this old geezer remember that far back?

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He says he does.

(Addressing Eric)

Are you Spike?

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You don't look like a spike.

They all laugh.

ERIC

Let's just say I filled out.

SCOTT

*And did you, Eddy, once have a foot race
with my Uncle Bill?*

EDDY

Yup, and I whipped him.

BILL

*He didn't outrun me. He outhustled me,
if you know what I mean.*

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An astute observer.

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We really had a great bunch. Remember how Pudge used to bring a gourmet lunch on the bus when we went to out-of-town games?

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Yea, I'm surprised Buck let him get away with it.

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Everybody did.

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of the line. Especially after Dutch taught Gordon to block.

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And Richard brought a bulldog's determination to the center of the line.

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GRANDDAD

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ERIC

How could we ever forget that experience. When those Barnesdale players walked in, I expected a brawl. But they just wanted to make friends with Fred and Flash.

EDDY

All this talk about racial integration in the years since, I guess we were pioneers and didn't even know it.

BILL

Don't forget the guys from the second squad, like Stan, Jolly, Jiri, and the others, especially my classmate Lefty.

EDDY

And Basil and Doc.

GRANDDAD

Do you recall all the jokes Doc played on Basil?

ERIC

Yes, Doc was irrepressible. And Basil was a good sport about it.

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deeper sentiment. On the Lofton team even in a losing season we became bonded brothers.

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Never failing in our support for one another.

SCOTT

Granddad, I hope some day I'll get to play on a team like the Lofton Lions of 1944 and have a glorious season like you did: win, lose, or draw.

GRANDDAD

I hope you do, Scott. It's an opportunity of a lifetime.

As credits roll, Granddad, Grandma, Scott, Eddy, Eric, and Bill continue MOS their animated, happy conversation.

FADE OUT

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Phone: 301 897-3668

Fax: 301 896-0013

September 7, 1996

Writers Guild of America, East
555 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019

Attn: Registrations

I am submitting herewith a screenplay entitled A GLORIOUS SEASON for registration. Enclosed is an authorization form so that you may charge the registration fee to my Visa account.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Phone: 301 897-3668

Fax: 301 896-0013

September 20, 1996

Ms. Rosalie G. Heacock, President
Heacock Literary Agency
1523 Sixth Street, Suite 14
Santa Monica, CA 90401-2514

Dear Ms. Heacock:

When I corresponded with you in January about a screenplay I had written, you indicated that it wasn't right for your agency at that time. But you added that your door would be open for another submission later.

Therefore, I am sending you a new script for a screenplay entitled *A GLORIOUS SEASON*. Would the Heacock Literary Agency be interested in representing me to market this screenplay?

A GLORIOUS SEASON depicts the 1944 football season of a midwestern high school with the final year of World War II in the background. Gridiron action serves as a backdrop for resolution of interpersonal conflict among team members and conflicts in the wider social scene: a hotshot sophomore trying to displace the senior tailback; competition for other positions on the team; a Czech-American resentful of a German-descent Mennonite on the team; the arrival of a Polish refugee who wants to play this American game;

the third year of racial integration in the league with flareups on and off the field; an attempt to cheat on an exam to stay eligible; discouragement after losses of close games with some blame casting; negative effect of losing on a player's romance; and throughout the wise guidance of the coach as he forges team spirit. Events of World War II appear briefly through newsreel clips, newspaper headlines, a flashback to the Polish refugee and his family fleeing the Nazis, reports of battle injury of a brother and death of a former player, return of the brother with a missing arm.

With four victories and five defeats, it is a losing season. But when the players meet at their tenth high school reunion, their conversation reveals how resolution of conflict and dealing with adversity in the course of the season strengthened them in the following years as they faced various challenges of life. Someone remarks, "It was a losing season, but it made winners of us all." Another indicates, "Considering the effects on us then and since, I'd say it was a glorious season."

Ms. Rosalie G. Heacock

September 20, 1996

Page two.

The story is mainly a flashback, told by a grandfather in the 1990s to his grandson. The grandfather was the team's quarterback. It ends with the appearance of three other principal players from the team, now in their late sixties, displaying the warm, lasting camaraderie developed 50 years ago.

These days I am working freelance. Therefore, I'm in a position to travel to confer with you and prospective producers. I can be on site to work with the director and other members of the production team to bring A GLORIOUS SEASON to fruition.

I hope that your agency will decide to serve as my agent. But if not, please return the script of A GLORIOUS SEASON in the enclosed SASE.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

SCOTT

Did your team ever get together again, Granddad?

GRANDDAD

Some of them were around for our 25th high school class reunion in 1970, but it wasn't the same. We were as much divided as the rest of the country over the Vietnam War. But I hope that all the survivors will get together next summer when our class has its 50th reunion.

SCOTT

You mean some of them have died?

GRANDDAD

Yes, we've lost three from our first team. Pudge, after serving as mayor of Lofton and three terms in Congress, died of a heart attack. Gordon, known as Flash, retired from the army as a colonel, ran a boys club in Kansas City, then succumbed to sickle cell anemia. Dietrich, who was called Dutch, was on a peace mission in the occupied West Bank and got caught in crossfire between militant Jews and militant Palestinians.

SCOTT

That's terrible.

GRANDDAD

Over the years Dietrich, the pacifist, and Gordon, the soldier, kept in touch with one another and got together when they could. They were close friends.

SCOTT

What about your coach?

GRANDDAD

Nick died several years ago. He was 82. A huge throng of players from his 48 years of coaching came to a memorial service at the college.

GRANDMA

It was a very moving experience.

SCOTT

Granddad, do any of your old teammates still live in Lofton? I mean besides Uncle Bill.

Granddad speaks, a Cadillac pulls into the driveway. Bill (aka Billy) is driving.

GRANDDAD

Yes, Eddy lives here. He quit coaching and opened a sports store on Main Street. Eric, once known as Spike, is out of the feed business but has a John Deere franchise. The four of us -- Eddy, Eric, Bill, and I -- play golf once a week at the country club. Here they are now.

EDDY

Hi, Helen, Paul.

GRANDMA

Hi, boys. Come and join us for some
cake and coffee.

BILL

No, thanks. We've just eaten.

ERIC

You can say that for yourself, Bill, but I
never turn down a piece of Helen's cake.

GRANDMA

What about you, Eddy?

EDDY

Sorry. I'm on a diet -- again.

Grandma serves Eric some cake and coffee.

1. From the Attic

"What's this thing, Granddad?" asked Timmy, bringing some kind of golden headgear into the living room where Granddad was reading the Saturday morning paper. Timmy was making his annual visit to his grandparents toward the end of August 1994. He was always finding curiosities.

"It's a football helmet," Granddad replied, putting down his paper.

"Where did you find it?"

"In a box in the attic."

Timmy loved to explore their attic. They had collectibles accumulated since the Parker family settled in Lofton four generations ago.

Blowing dust off it, Timmy observed, "It's not hard like our helmets. And there's no face guard."

Timmy knew about such things. As an eighth grader he was going to be first team flanker back on the football team at Rachel Carsen Middle School

in Maplehurst, his hometown.

"It's the kind we used when I was in high school," Granddad explained.

"It's made of leather, not plastic like yours. And back in those days we didn't have face guards, except for one fellow who played with glasses."

"You mean contacts?"

"No, real glasses with frames. We didn't have contact lens either."

Timmy tried on the helmet and found it was too large. He took it off and examined the inside.

"There's a name in it," he noticed. "'Zeke', it says. Who's Zeke?"

"Zeke was our high school quarterback," answered Granddad. "Here, let me try it on." Pulling it on and fastening the chin strap, he said, "What do you know? It still fits."

"You're Zeke?" Timmy asked in astonishment. "You were a high school quarterback."

"Yes, I was."

"And they called you Zeke? That's funny."

"Of course. Zeke is short for my middle name, Ezekiel."

"So that's what the "E" stands for. I never knew. Judge Paul Ezekiel Parker."

"Just about everybody had a nickname on our team."

"And did you win? Were you champions?"

"No, we weren't very good, I'm sorry to say. We had a losing season."

"But I bet you were good, Granddad."

"No, Timmy, just so-so. But I enjoyed playing." He fondled the helmet and continued, "Fifty years later, I can recall every detail of our 1944 season."

"Tell me about it," Timmy implored.

"It's a long story," Granddad replied.

"We've got time. It's raining out, so we can't go on the picnic Grandma has planned."

"O.K. I'll start where we did with our first practice, a week before school started. In Lofton the weather was hot and dry, as it often is here on the prairie in August.

"World War II was in its final year, though we didn't know it at the time. The Allies had landed in Normandy on June 6 and were driving the Germans back to their homeland. The Russians were doing likewise on the eastern front. The Japanese were steadily retreating from the Pacific islands they had captured 3½ years earlier.

"We were all interested in the progress of the war because as soon as we turned 18 we would be drafted. That would be the following spring and summer for the seniors on our team, like me. Also, our older brothers and the guys we knew from previous years' football teams were in the service, many of them in combat.

"But we were mostly concerned about getting ready for our opening game. Lofton had a population of about 20,000 then. We played in the

South Central League. Some of the schools were larger, some smaller. The smaller ones drew in a lot of farm boys, who were tough and highly competitive.

"We knew we had a challenging season ahead of us," Granddad reflected as he sank into reminiscence.

March 30, 1994

1. A Revelation¹

"What are you doing with your computer, Granddad?" Timmy inquired.

He was visiting his grandparents during his spring vacation in April 1995.

"I'm updating the mailing list for our 50th high school class reunion,"

Granddad replied. "The Lofton High School graduating class of 1945."

"What's this thing, Granddad?" asked Timmy, pulling some kind of golden headgear out of a box sitting on the floor next to Granddad's desk.

"It's a football helmet," Granddad answered. The box contained paraphernalia from Granddad's high school days.

"But it's not hard like our helmets," Timmy observed. "And there's no face guard."

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¹ Alternative beginning to start the action in spring of 1995.

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smaller ones drew in a lot of farm boys, who were tough and highly competitive.

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March 30, 1994

2. Gathering

Zeke awoke at six o'clock the Monday before Labor Day, 1944. He had slept restlessly that night out of excitement for the beginning of football practice. As he lay awake, he thought about the plays from last year -- 36, 433, 427, 38, 217, and all the rest. He tried to picture what every player did on each play. When Coach gave out the playbooks at practice, he would be able to check his memory.

At 6:30 Zeke's mom had breakfast ready for him and his dad: bacon, eggs over easy, homemade biscuits with fresh honey, coffee for dad, cocoa for Zeke.

"I'll miss you at the store," said Dad. Zeke had been working at his Dad's hardware store all summer: unloading and loading, delivering items to worksites, sometimes waiting on customers.

"It's time I got down to serious work, like football," Zeke replied. Dad didn't think that was funny.

"I'm so afraid you'll get hurt," Mom declared. "I wish you would just play in the band, like Clyde did." Clyde was Zeke's older brother, now in the U.S. Army somewhere in France. He had been the ace trombonist in the high school band.

"Let him be, Martha," Dad rebutted. "We need another football hero in family, like I was when you fell in love with me."

Mom blushed slightly but remarked, "Sure, Henry, but your knee aches every time we have cold, damp weather."

"It was worth it," Dad responded.

"What was worth it?" asked Laura, Zeke's sister, as she entered the kitchen. She was two years younger than Zeke and about to enter Lofton High School as a sophomore.

"Football," Dad explained.

"I wish I could play," Laura remarked.

"Oh, Laura," Mom sighed.

At 7:30 Spike honked in front of the house. He was driving his dad's pickup with "Anderson Seed and Feed Company" painted on the door. It was a '42 Chevy, the last model made before General Motors converted its truck plant to military production. [check this]

They were supposed to be on the practice field by nine o'clock. Juniors and seniors could check out equipment between 8 and 9. Sophomores would get theirs in the afternoon and join the rest of the team for the four o'clock workout. Ninth graders from the two junior high schools who wanted to try out for junior varsity could come out next week after school began.

Zeke hopped on the running board and into the cab beside Spike. As usual Spike was wearing a baseball cap with a long bill. Being tall and slender, he looked a little like a railroad spike. Hence his nickname, plus his being the best spiker when they played volleyball. Even the teachers called him Spike, not Eric, his real name.

"This is it, Spike," exclaimed Zeke. "I've been waiting all summer for football to start."

"And even longer to start as quarterback," Spike responded.

"That's for sure," Zeke acknowledged. "Now it's my turn."

Last year as juniors they were on the second team, Zeke at quarterback and Spike at left end. Players in these positions had graduated, leaving them open for Zeke and Spike to inherit.

"I remember in 7th grade," Spike reflected, "when we played football on that vacant lot next to the Baker mansion. You'd pretend that you were Davey O'Brien, All American fading back to pass."

"Yea, he was the best passer in college football the year before at TCU. As I recall he was 5'8" and weighed 152 pounds. That's my height now, but I weigh 165."

"If you only had his arm," Spike jested.

Zeke and Spike had been in school together since kindergarten, first at

Longfellow Elementary School and then at Lindbergh Junior High on the west side of Lofton. They liked all sports, played together on the Lindbergh basketball team, and as ninth graders went out for football junior varsity at the high school. Spike was first baseman on the Ban Johnson baseball team, but Zeke's dad wouldn't let him play because their games were on Sunday.

"Of course, you know what it's like to be a starter in basketball," said Zeke.

At 6'1" Spike was the tallest boy in school. Last year as a junior he was starting center in basketball and had an impressive hook shot.

"Yes, it's a lot of responsibility," Spike indicated in mock seriousness.

"But football's different," Zeke maintained. Football was his best sport. He was a substitute guard on last year's basketball team, not much of a shot, but a tenacious defender. "Football has strategy, not just running up and down the court."

"And body contact," Spike replied. "That's what you like, Zeke."

Within himself Zeke knew that was true. He was president of the Hi-Y, the high school version of the Young Men's Christian Association, but he enjoyed competitive sports. Nevertheless he rebutted with a smile, "A nice fellow like me?"

"But at any rate, we're ready," Spike commented.

That was certainly true. Spike had hoisted 100 pound feed bags all summer, and Zeke had been lifting a lot of heavy pipes. For the last three weeks Zeke had run three miles along rural roads every evening to build up his wind and endurance. And since the beginning of August he had been throwing passes to Spike several times a week.

"I thought we would be first," Spike remarked as they drove into the parking lot by the gym. "But there's Rusty's Model-T." Rusty was big on cars, which was natural because his dad was a car dealer.

"He and Bob got back in town Saturday night," Zeke explained.

In the locker room Bob Collins and Rusty Mulrooney were examining the

schedule posted on the bulletin board. They were two of the three returning starters from last year's team: Bob at right guard and Rusty, whose reddish hair gave him his nickname, at right tackle. Rusty was nearly six foot tall, big-boned, powerfully built. Bob was shorter but as strong as Rusty and faster.

"So we start with Kepler as usual," Bob noticed. "It's good to have a non-league game first."

"And we get Ashmont second," Rusty observed. "I'm looking forward to that game. Remember that talkative kid who played left end. I hope he's back. I've got something to settle with him."

"We almost beat them," Bob recalled, "but they ended up as league champs."

"This year we'll be the champs," Rusty bragged, "if these guys come through for us" -- pointing to Zeke and Spike who he had just noticed.

"We will," Spike insisted. "So how was harvest?"

"Just great," answered Bob. "We hooked up with this crew in the Texas panhandle and stuck with them through Oklahoma, Western Kansas, Nebraska, and ended up in Montana. Made lots of moola."

"So what did you do?" Zeke asked.

"Mostly drove trucks full of wheat from the combine to the elevator," Rusty replied. "But a couple of times me and Bob got to drive the combine. Now that's fun even though you breathe a lot of dust and grit."

"In other words, just sitting on your fannies all day in a truck cab or on a combine," Spike noted. "Do you call that work?"

"Sixteen hours a day is hard work, no matter what you do," Bob retorted.

"Wanna see my muscles," said Rusty, peeling off his shirt. "I'll arm wrestle anyone who thinks wheat harvest is soft."

"I'll call you on that" came a voice from the doorway. It was George Markopoulos, better known as Pudge, who entered with Eddy Foster and a

kid named Basil Fox. At 220 Pudge was the biggest player on the team and 30 pounds heavier than Rusty. He was second team left tackle last year and presumptive starter this year. His family ran the Athens Cafe, and they were all big eaters. Last year Coach teased Pudge that the most lifting he did was with his fork at the dinner table.

In contrast Eddy was about the lightest. At 5'5" he claimed to weigh 150, but when he stood on the scales stark naked the scale arm dropped at around 148. Yet he was the best all-around athlete in the senior class. When still in ninth grade, he got to work out with the high school basketball team. He was a whiz at shortstop on the Ban Johnson baseball team and an acrobatic diver. Last year as a junior he played right halfback on the varsity. This year he expected to shift to left half, the position with the most running plays.

Pudge and Eddy first met at Pershing Junior High on the east side of town. Being small for his age but aggressive, Eddy latched onto Pudge for

protection from ninth grade bullies. It wasn't so much that Pudge was a fierce fighter, for he was very good-natured, but his size scared off the older boys.

Pudge was catcher on the Ban Johnson team. He and Eddy went to all the practices and games together, and to football practice, too.

Rusty accepted Pudge's challenge to arm wrestle by getting on his knees beside a bench and placing his right arm in an upright position. Pudge knelt opposite him with his arm against Rusty's. One, two, three and then a lot of grunting and groaning. Finally Rusty forced Pudge's arm backward.

"Two out of three," Pudge exclaimed.

"No," shouted Bob, "let me have him."

So Bob and Rusty went at it. To everyone's amazement but his own, Bob won.

Just then Coach stepped out of the equipment room. "Save your energies for practice," he urged with a smile. This would be Coach Nick

Ackerman's sixteenth season at Lofton High, where he taught phys ed and also coached basketball. He had been an all-star, triple-threat tailback at the teacher's college and a pretty good basketball player. He had filled out around the waist but could hold his own in three-on-three games after basketball practice.

"Ah, Nick," Rusty spoke up, "it's just a friendly little competition." The seniors and juniors on the team called him "Nick". Ninth graders addressed him as "Mr. Ackerman", just as they did all their teachers. Most sophomores called him "Coach", not wanting to "Mr" him but too timid to use his first name.

"I guess you're all ready for the new season." Coach said. "I hope you're all in great shape."

"We sure are!" "Ready and willing!" "Can't wait to get started!" were the replies.

"And who's this skinny kid with glasses?" Coach continued.

"That's Basil Fox," Eddy answered. "He wants to be our place kicker."

"Aren't you in the band?" Coach queried.

"Yes, I play the bassoon," Basil responded. "But this year I want to be on the football team. Eddy says you need someone to kick points after touchdowns."

"You ever kick before," Coach wanted to know.

"Sure," replied Basil. "For the last two months Eddy and Pudge met me on the football field after their baseball practice. Pudge has centered to Eddy, who has held the ball for me to kick."

"He's terrific, Nick," Eddy assured.

"I think I can beat anyone else who might be trying out," Basil insisted.

"Well, every position is open to every challenger," Coach remarked.

"Even right guard and right tackle," he continued, eyeing Bob and Rusty mischievously. "But your parents will have to sign a permission slip, Basil."

"They already did," said Basil, handing Coach the signed form.

"Okay, you can ask the coaches in the equipment room to find you a slender uniform, Basil. And the rest of you can get your stuff, too."

By then other players were drifting in. They moved into the equipment room run by the assistant coaches, Dave Moore and Hal Taylor, the two junior high phys ed teachers. Dave was line coach, and Hal handled the junior varsity. Nick coached the backfield and ends.

Dave and Hal had ready what each player would need: helmet, shoulder pads, blocking pads for linemen, hip pads, practice jersey, pants, thigh pads to fit into the pants, shoes, and a combination lock. Each player had to furnish his own T-shirts, jockey strap, and sox. As Zeke was getting fitted, he could hear the conversation from the locker room.

"Will there be something for my friend, too, Coach?" asked Dutch as he entered the locker room. "This is Stanislaw Krasinski.¹ He and his family escaped from Poland a couple of years ago and came to the U.S. this spring.

¹ Pronounced "Stanislav Krashinski".

They're staying with us on the farm. Stan is enrolling in Lofton High in 11th grade and wants to play sports like any American would."

"Sure, everyone is welcome to try out for the team," Coach indicated.

"Do you speak English?"

"Tak, I mean, yes, I do." replied Stan with a heavy Polish accent.

"I'm willing to help him," Dutch broke in. "I think he should try out for guard. I can teach him the plays and the tricks of the position."

"Aren't you afraid he'll beat you?" asked Coach, noticing that Stan was larger than Dutch. Having been second team left guard last year as a junior, Dutch was likely to be the starter this season.

"No, not at all," answered Dutch. "But if he's better, he's entitled to play." Dutch, whose full name was Dietrich Lutz, was from a Mennonite family. He was the first ever the peace-loving Mennonite community to play football. While he was generous and sincere and really would help someone take his position, Dutch was also competitive enough and good

enough to be assured that he had the job sewn up.

"What about my cousin?" asked Fred Montgomery, who had come in during this conversation.

"Your cousin is welcome, too, if he lives in Lofton," Coach responded.

"Nick, this is Gordon Davis, who has come to live with us. He'll be a senior," said Fred, who himself was a junior. "Last year he was on the varsity at his school in Kansas City. I think he can help us."

"Anyone who can help us can earn a place on the team," Coach indicated. "What position did you play, Gordon?"

"Mostly end," Gordon explained, "but sometimes I filled in at running back and ran back punts and kickoffs."

"Your best chance is at right end," said Coach. "Both our starter and backup last year graduated."

"Of course, right end," Fred said. "You don't think I want him competing for my position?" Last year Fred played left halfback on the

second team but expected to shift to right halfback on the first team this year.

Three years ago Fred and Gordon wouldn't have been allowed on the team. They were Negroes and the league prohibited them from playing "contact" sports like football and basketball though they could be on the track team. This changed because of Fred's father, the Rev. Ebenezer Montgomery of Hope Baptist Church, who was a staunch but quiet advocate of Negro rights. That's why he named his son Frederick Douglass Montgomery.

When America got into the war after Pearl Harbor, Rev. Montgomery insisted that it was wrong to draft Negroes into the army but not let them play football in their home town. He got the ministerial alliance behind him. They gained support from ministers in other towns in the league and got the rules changed.

At that time Coach was neutral on the issue. But now he was glad to draw on the talents of youngsters from the 200 or so Negro families in

Lofton.

"Granddad," Timmy interrupted, "At our school they say we should refer to people like Fred and Gordon as blacks or African Americans, not Negroes."

"Yes, I know," Granddad responded. "But when I was in high school, the term 'Negro' was preferred rather than 'colored' or other words I refuse to say. 'Black' came into usage in the late '60s. 'African American' has been gaining currency in recent years."

By then the last stragglers were arriving for the opening football practice in Lofton. Among them was Richard McKinley, second string center last year, a little small for that position but a courageous player. He was Zeke's friend in Hi-Y and was interested in dramatics. His father was a banker and president of the school board. His mother insisted that everyone call him Richard, and even Coach complied. Pudge, though, called him Richie, but he was the only one who did. Pudge was so likable that even

Richard's mother didn't object.

Doc showed up carrying a bag of bandages, ankle wraps, liniment, Mercurochrome for scrapes -- which the guys called "monkey blood" -- and other medical supplies. A senior, Christopher Wilson was his real name but everyone called him Doc because he was the team trainer. He loved sports but was even shorter and lighter than Eddy and not really very athletic.

Hank Harrison was the last upperclassman to appear. He had to finish farm chores before he could come to town for football practice. He was likely to win a starting job as fullback, which was really blocking back on most plays. He was quick afoot, and his farm work gave him enormous strength.

In those days there was no weight room at school. The YMCA had some barbells and weights on pulleys, but the only ones who used them were aspirant boxers. Some junior high kids responded to ads in magazines showing a muscular Charles Atlas with the caption "I was a 97 pound weakling until..." and got a booklet on isometric exercises. In a few months

their biceps and chest muscles were bulging. But most of the guys on the football team gained muscle power from their summer jobs.

As Hank went into the equipment room, Bob, Rusty, Spike, and Zeke came out and started dressing for practice. Looking around Bob asked, "Where are Ray and Tom?" Ray was center on last year's first team, and Tom was fullback. They were juniors then and were expected to return.

"Haven't you heard?" asked Spike. "Ray joined the Navy in July. He was afraid he would miss the war if he didn't go. And Tom's dad took a job at a California shipyard and moved his family out there."

"How could Ray enlist?" Rusty wanted to know. "He's only 17. I thought you had to be 18 for the Navy."

"Not if you parents give permission," Zeke explained. "And Ray's folks did -- reluctantly. If they hadn't, he would've probably sneaked off anyway."

"That's going to be tough on us," Bob lamented. "They were our

linebackers on defense. We need their experience."

"We'll have to do without them," Spike commented.

During this conversation Billy entered the locker room. A ninth grader last year, he had been the leading tailback on the junior varsity. He was big for his age and a fast runner. Now a sophomore, he wasn't supposed to show up until the afternoon, and Coach told him so.

"Since I'm going to be on the varsity this year," Billy said assuredly, "I thought I should start practicing with these guys from the first day."

"You'll be on the varsity if you play well and comply with my rules," Coach stated firmly. "See you this afternoon, Billy."

"Ah, Nick, let me suit up now."

Suddenly Rusty and Pudge swooped behind Billy, picked him up, and carried him to the door, saying, "See you this afternoon, Billy." All the guys laughed.

March 30, 1994

3. Practice Begins

After the players put on their equipment and jerseys, they drifted out to the football field at Lofton High School. To warmup Zeke threw tight spirals to Spike. Last year's junior varsity quarterback, Cliff Marshall, threw to Mike Dolan and Chuck Jones, who had been the JV ends. Both had ambition to grab the varsity starting assignment at right end, so they tried to outdo one another with fancy cuts for Cliff's passes. Gordon, the newcomer who also wanted that position, tossed a football back and forth with Fred, who wasn't much of a passer. As they did, Gordon kept an eye on Mike and Chuck, and they on him.

Linemen in pairs -- Bob and Rusty, Roger Phillips and Jiri Janacek¹, who had played together on the junior varsity as right and left tackle, and some others -- banged against one another with practice blocks. Dutch took Stanislaw aside and demonstrated different stances for offense and

¹ Pronounced "Yiri Yana-chek".

defense. Richard looked for a back to practice centering to and found Sal Petrocelli, a candidate for fullback. Eddy, Hank, Pudge, Basil, and some other guys preferred to stand around talking about the girls they had dated during the summer and stuff like that.

Promptly at nine o'clock the coaches appeared. It was already hot. Blowing his whistle, Nick called out, "O.K. Line up in front of the near goalpost. Rusty and Bob, I want you to help me lead calisthenics."

About 45 aspirant football players formed four rows with Coach, Bob, and Rusty in front. Coach started doing jumping jacks, and everyone else joined in. After a few demonstration jumps, he quit and let Bob and Rusty continue to lead. It was the same through all the other exercises, Coach starting each one and then easing off as the players went through the drills: knee bend-jack knife; legs spread apart, bending and twisting to touch the left toe with the right hand, then right toe with left hand; on your knees with legs tucked under, laying your body back until your head touched the ground

and your thighs hurt (Zeke really hated that one); on your back lifting your legs over your head to touch the ground behind you with your toes; still on your back with legs pumping a bicycle; sit-ups; push-ups; on your feet running in place while circling your arms; duck waddle. Blinding sweat streamed down their faces. Through all of this the assistant coaches, Dave and Hal, strolled among the players, offering encouragement and goading the slackers.

After they had worked to near exhaustion, Coach hollered, "Now around the track."

Bob and Rusty led the way to the quarter-mile cinder track, but soon they were passed by backs and ends. After 100 yards Gordon had opened a sizable lead. Eddy, running alongside Fred, puffed, "Haven't you told your cousin that we don't overdo? Nick will expect all of us to run that fast."

"Don't worry," Fred huffed back. "He's a sprinter. He won't last." And sure enough, on the far side Gordon slowed down and Zeke, Hank, and

Fred caught up with him. Eddy was fast enough to be among the leaders, but he never overexerted himself in drills. Bob, Rusty, Richard, and Dutch trudged near the center of the pack. Pudge, Stan, Jiri, Roger, Basil, and some other kids who had come out for football for the first time lagged 30 to 40 yards behind the leaders.

The three coaches stood together, talking, taking notes. Watching from the edge of the field were Billy and Lefty Burkhart, another sophomore and a quarterback candidate. Lefty pitched for the Ban Johnson baseball team, and Billy was an outfielder.

"Now that you're warmed up," Coach announced, "we'll do some sprints. First backs, next ends, and then centers, guards, and tackles."

"What about me," asked Basil.

"I guess you can join the backs."

As the backs lined up on the goal line, Dave stood with a ball in the middle of the field on 40 yard line. Hal was on the sideline at the 40 yard

marker, stopwatch in hand. "Ready, set," shouted Dave and, placing the ball on the ground, "Go!"

This time Eddy went all out with Fred on his heels. Zeke, Hank, Sal, and Pat Kelly, a reserve halfback, contested for third, and Zeke and Hank tied as they crossed the 40 yard line together. Some others, who had come out for football for the first time and felt they were backfield material, struggled to finish. Basil tripped and fell at the 20 yard line and gave up.

Among the ends Gordon was so fast that it was no contest. Competing for second place, Chuck edged out Mike. Spike, who didn't care a lot for wind sprints, was content for fourth place, ahead of several new players.

When the linemen ran, Dutch, Richard, and Bob were bunched together in the lead, followed by Roger, Jiri, Stan, and Wally Danner, who played JV guard last year but wanted to switch to center and win the starting spot. Pudge and a couple of other tackle candidates gave out at the 30 yard line and coasted the final ten yards.

In the run-off for the fastest man, Flash Gordon, as he was soon dubbed, was the easy winner over Eddy. In the battle for third Fred outran Chuck.

It was time for fundamentals of blocking and tackling. In those days everyone played both offense and defense, so they had to master both skills.

The assistant coaches demonstrated different offensive and defensive stances and various kinds of blocks. Players paired off by position and blocked one another, guards on guards, tackles on tackles, and so forth. Among the ends Mike had the greatest knack, and Flash looked pretty inept. The prospective fullbacks knocked against one another zestfully. In contrast halfback and quarterback candidates blocked each other halfheartedly until Coach came over and glowered at them. He insisted that every player master blocking fundamentals.

For tackling practice Coach set up three lines of linemen. He had backs and ends run through carrying a ball at half-speed, being tackled by each linemen in turn. The backs and ends took their place at the end of the line

and had their turn at tackling.

This kept up until eleven o'clock. "Once more around the track," Coach commanded. "Then I'll see you again at four this afternoon."

This time Flash and none of the others had any ambition to show their speed as they circle the field in a dutiful jog. As they headed for the locker room, Flash told his cousin, "This guy's a tough dude. We never worked this hard in K.C."

"That's why he always has a winning team," Fred replied.

Billy, Lefty, and a couple dozen other sophomores got their equipment between three and four. "I want number 36," Billy insisted. "That was Brad Henderson's number." Two years ago Brad, as tailback, passer, and punter, had led Lofton to an undefeated season. He was named to the all-state team and was now at the Naval Academy.

"We've retired that number in Brad's honor," Coach Hal told him.

"Well then, since I'm going to be twice as good, give me number 72," Billy demanded confidently. Back in those days, numbers weren't assigned to positions, such as 80s to ends, 70s to tackles as they are nowadays.

"If you're half as good, I'll be satisfied," Hal responded, and gave him number 18.

After the sophomores were suited up, they joined the rest of the squad for the afternoon practice. Opening calisthenics were about the same, except that Coach let Bob and Rusty lead without exerting himself. Only the sophomores had to run the quarter-mile. Billy probably could have won easily, but he had noticed how Eddy held back that morning and did likewise. He did, however, finish first in the sprint drills.

Hal, who handled the junior varsity, led the sophomores through blocking and tackling drills in the middle of the field. Nick kept the junior and senior backs and ends at the near end to work on ball handling. Dave took the linemen to the other end to practice combination blocks and other

fine points of line play. Because temperature was still around 90° at six o'clock, Coach didn't insist on a final lap around the track. Even at that three newcomers had had enough and turned in their equipment.

It was seven before Zeke got home. Laura was helping Mom with the dishes, but they had saved a plate of food for Zeke. Dad was listening to the evening news on the radio. Zeke heard the newscaster report that U.S. and French troops had forced the Germans out of Marseille.

Mom said anxiously, "I wish we knew where Clyde is now."

"He probably was in on the liberation of Paris last Friday," Dad responded. "If I know Clyde, he borrowed a trombone somewhere and marched with a band along the Champs Elysees."

"You're always such an optimist, Henry," Mom murmured.

Zeke ached all over when he awoke on Tuesday morning. Spike had the same complaint when he picked him up. In the locker room Eddy

remarked, "I can't understand it. I've played baseball nearly every day this summer, so I must be in good shape. So why am I sore?"

"Each sport has its own set of muscles," Doc explained.

"Thank you, Doctor," Bob snorted and threw a wet towel at him.

As Hal checked the roster during opening calisthenics, he discovered four no-shows in addition to the three who had quit after the first day's practice. After the players were warmed up, Nick had them gather around him for his annual pep talk.

"We have a long, tough schedule ahead of us," he began, "but I know we're going to do well. Sure, the majority of last year's starters graduated, and Ray and Tom, who were supposed to return as our linebackers, have left town. But as I look around, I see many good replacements for these positions.

We've had a winning season every year since I've been at Lofton High, and we're going to have a winning season this year."

"That's for sure," Eddy exclaimed.

"You may ask, what makes a winning team?" Coach continued. "It requires each of you to develop your skills to the utmost. That means hard work. You may not like these twice a day practices while your classmates are enjoying their last week of summer vacation, but you'll be glad for the conditioning once regular games begin. Isn't that right, Zeke?"

Zeke replied, "I agree -- reluctantly."

"A winning team also requires teamwork." Coach insisted. "As a matter of fact, if I had the choice between mediocre players who played well together and a bunch of brilliant players each seeking his own glory, I would take the less talented ones.

"Teamwork is founded on loyalty. Loyalty to each another. Loyalty to your coaches. The coaches loyalty to you. You may come from different backgrounds and be part of different groups at school and town, but on the field and in the locker room I expect you to be like one big, happy family."

"Like me and my brother, Bob," Rusty broke in, then giving Bob a brotherly shove.

"So even as you go hard at one another in scrimmage and compete for the eleven positions on the team," Coach concluded, "never lose sight of the fact that we're all united in the quest to be a winning team."

With that Coach sent the guards and tackles off to work with Dave. He kept the centers with the backs and ends so that they could start passing drills. He divided them into two groups with Zeke and Cliff taking turns with snaps from Richard and with Lefty and a couple of other sophomores who wanted to be passers working with Wally.. Coach assigned the more experienced ends and backs to Zeke and Cliff, and the others to the second group.

Receivers formed two lines, left and right, and alternated between them. For one group Nick called out directions for each receiver, and Hal did the same for the other: across the middle, down and out, buttonhook, in the flat,

deep and in. The passers stood about four yards behind their center, calling for the ball with "ready, set, hike".

As the coaches knew, Spike was a sure-handed receiver with average speed, but with his height he could reach balls most of the others would miss. Eddy had a lot of good moves, Fred had a knack for catching balls thrown low or behind him, and Billy showed that he was a good receiver. Of the three competing for right end, Flash, of course, had the greatest speed, but Mike displayed the fanciest footwork and Chuck made some spectacular catches. Zeke put more zip on the ball than Cliff, and adjusting to their differences challenged the receivers.

After a while, Billy approached Coach and asked, "How about me throwing some, Nick? When Brad was tailback, he was the chief passer."

"Not today, Billy," Coach replied, "but I'll give you a chance later in the week."

When they finished passing drill, Coach sent the centers to join the

linemen for blocking drills, and he worked with the backs and ends on blocking and ball handling. Then he blew his whistle to assemble all the players.

"We're going to divide into teams this afternoon and start running some plays," he told them. "So after you are showered and dressed, pick up your play folders from Doc. Look especially at plays from short punt formation. That's what we'll start with today. Later in the week we'll try some double wing plays and then work from a T-formation."

"What's a short punt formation," Timmy wanted to know. "I never heard of it."

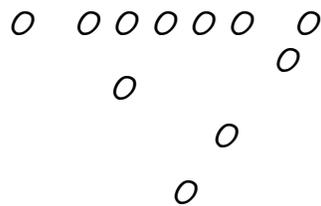
"It was very popular among high schools around here in the 1940s," Granddad explained, "but it was displaced by the T-formation by 1950."

"In the short punt the tailback stands about five yards behind the line of scrimmage, directly in line with the center. A blocking back is close to the line, splitting the space between the right tackle and right end. The

right halfback is a little deeper between the tackle and guard. The quarterback is on the left side, a yard or two behind the left guard."

"Let me draw it for you."

Granddad went to his desk, got paper and pen, and made a sketch.

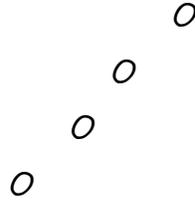


"The center put the ball in play by snapping it directly to the tailback. If he was running right, the center would aim for the back's right knee to lead him. If to the left, for the left knee. The center could also snap the ball to the quarterback or the right half."

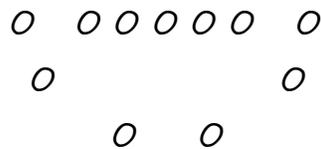
"Weren't there a lot of fumbles?"

"Yes, I suppose so. But it had the advantage of greater versatility than the single wing, which it displaced. In the single wing, all the backs were on the right side, like this."





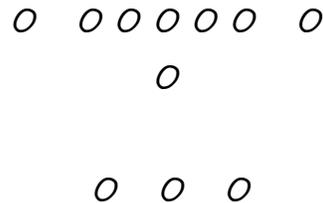
"It was a powerful running game to the strong side. It worked best where the tailback was a good passer and kicker as well as a strong runner, as our coach was in college. But for variety, many of single wing teams also used a double wing, which we did, too, at Lofton High School. It looked like this."



"You could run reverses, fake reverses, double reverses. Either back in the middle could plunge ahead. The wingbacks could get out easily for passes."

"Just like now as a flanker back or man-in-motion," Timmy remarked.

"Yes," Granddad responded. "That has evolved from the T-formation, which you would recognize."



"It's an old formation that fell out of disuse but was revived in pro football in the late 1930s. It entered college ranks after 1940 and was spreading among high schools when I was playing. Then came man-in-motion, the wishbone with the fullback a step or two closer to the line, the quarterback option, the I-formation with two backs stacked behind the center plus a flanker on wing, one back and two flankers, and many variations."

"Granddad," Timmy interrupted, "I'd rather hear more about your Lofton team."

March 30, 1994

4. Scrimmaging

The first full-speed, hard-tackle scrimmage would take place on Thursday morning. That's what all the guys were looking forward to: to run with the ball, slam into defenders, fake them out, cut back, make solo tackles, be part of gang tackles, block along the line and in open field, pass, catch and run with the ball, kick, run back punts and kickoffs, go all the way if you could. They loved the physical contact of football.

"But it's contact with a purpose," Coach reminded them as they gathered around him on the sidelines near midfield after the Tuesday afternoon warmup drills. "Actually two purposes. The first purpose is to score, to get the ball across the goal line or through the uprights. The second purpose is to keep our opponent from scoring."

"Here we go with lesson two from Coach Nickerson's football almanac," Bob whispered jokingly to Rusty.

"This has to be a team effort," Coach continued. "That's what sets

contact in football apart from boxing and wrestling. Sure, there's a lot of one-on-one combat in football, but it's part of team play. How well each of you performs affects your ten teammates. You can't win without them, and they can't win without you."

He's right, Zeke thought. We need each other. What's great about football is being part of a team, the camaraderie of winning together -- and we are going to win.

"So now," Coach went on, "we're going to divide into teams and start running plays as we prepare for the first scrimmage on Thursday."

The returning players knew pretty much what team they would be assigned to because Coach always picked up from last year: starters would be on the first team again and second team players would fill vacancies left by graduation or starters moving away. Newcomers to the school would have to demonstrate their ability. Even so, Coach liked to put some drama into announcing teams and challenging the players.

"First team players, line up on offense as I call your name," Coach instructed. "On the right side of the line returning from last year's winning team are Bob Collins at guard and Rusty Mulrooney at tackle."

Bob and Rusty charged out and lined up on the 50 yard line as Eddy called out, "Attaway to go!"

"On the left side," Coach announced, "we'll have the tallest man on the team -- Spike Anderson -- at end, the heaviest -- Pudge Markopoulos -- at tackle, and the most durable -- Dutch Lutz -- at guard."

They trotted out to join Bob and Rusty, who slapped their shoulder pads as they arrived.

"At center we've got a player who is as tough and tenacious as a Boston terrier, Richard McKinley."

To everyone's surprise, Richard growled as he grabbed a ball and ran out to his position. The guys all laughed except Wally, who remarked to his buddy, "We'll see who's the toughest center when we start scrimmaging."

"Welcome to the first team, Bulldog," Bob exclaimed. The nickname stuck, except for Pudge, who still called him Richie.

"For right end," Coach said, "we're going to go with Mike Nolan, who played this position on the junior varsity last year. But you should know, Mike, that we'll be looking at Chuck, your JV teammate, and Flash Gordon, who just moved to town. Who starts the opening game will depend on who plays best the next two weeks."

Mike clasped his hands over his head in a winning salutation as he trotted to join his teammates. Disappointment flowed over the faces of Chuck and Flash, then tight-lipped determination.

"In the backfield," Coach announced, "we have a returning veteran, Eddy Foster. He'll be our left halfback and play tailback in short punt."

Bulldog tossed Eddy the ball as he took his place, and Pudge shouted, "Yeah for Eddy!" But Billy boasted to the guys standing next to him, "Wait and see who starts the first game as tailback,"

"The rest of the backfield comes from last year's second team," Coach indicated, "Zeke Parker at quarterback, Fred Montgomery at right half, and Hank Harrison at fullback."

Eddy shook hands with them as they joined the team. Coach looked at his clipboard and read, "On the second squad the ends will be Chuck Jones and Flash Davis, Jiri Janacek and Roger Phillips as tackles, and Wally Danner at center. You can line up on defense."

They took their places opposite the first team line. Coach then explained, "For the second team guard spots, we've got several good candidates. For the time being Joe Robinson will be left guard. We're assigning Don Shays and Sam Nugent to alternate as right guard until one proves he's the better. Dutch's friend, Stanislaw Krasinski -- did I pronounce it right? -- wants to be a guard, but since he's never played football before, we're putting him on the third team. But, Stan, this is America, the land of opportunity. Show your stuff and you'll move ahead."

As Joe and Don, with Sam behind him, filled out the second team line, Stan asked the player next to him. "Does he mean it?" The reply was, "It's up to you." This made Stan hopeful.

"Billy, you'll play left halfback," Coach instructed. "Pat Kelly will play right half, Cliff Marshall quarterback, and Sal Petrocelli fullback."

As they took their places on defense Coach read names of the third team. Basil, who wasn't named, queried, "What about kickers, Coach?"

"We'll get to that tomorrow afternoon," Coach replied. "Get ready for your tryout and meanwhile observe how football is played."

Addressing the remaining players, mostly sophomores, Coach indicated, "Hal will assign you teams later this afternoon, but for the rest of the afternoon I want you to watch as we start going through our plays."

By then the first team was lined up in short punt formation. The second team was on defense with a six-man line, Wally and Sal as linebackers, Cliff and Pat as defensive halfbacks, Billy as safety.

"36 on one," Zeke called as they prepared to walk through the first play.

"Ready, set, hike, one, two, three."

On "one" Bulldog centered the ball to Eddy -- "3 back" in the play numbering system -- who trotted right parallel with the line and then cut sharply through the hole between right tackle and right end -- the "6 hole" as blockers cleared the way. In this practice it was merely light contact blocks on passive defenders.

"427 on two," Zeke shouted as they lined up again. This time the ball went to Zeke -- the "4 back" -- who handed it to Fred -- the "2 back" -- as he ran left between tackle and end -- the "7 hole".

And so they ran other basic plays: 433 -- Zeke faking a handoff to Fred running left and then giving the ball to Eddy, who ran straight ahead through the "3 hole" between center and left guard as blocking back Hank put a trap block on the charging guard. 38 -- Eddy sweeping around right end. 45 -- Zeke faking a handoff to Fred (to look like 427) and plunging between

left guard and tackle. 217 -- Fred giving the ball to Hank as he passed in front of him headed for the 7 hole. And a bunch of other plays.

"On our team," Timmy remarked, "we don't number our plays. They're called dive, slant, off-tackle, end around end to left and right. When we used numbers in the Pony league, the odd numbers were on the right."

"Yes," Granddad acknowledged, "there are different systems. I'm just telling you what we called our plays in the old days."

"Like ancient history, when they spoke Latin," Timmy teased.

"Not that ancient," Granddad chuckled.

Then the second team took the offense and walked through the plays while the first team played defense. As challengers, Billy and Pat strutted more than Eddy and Fred had done when they got the ball, and the linemen blocked more aggressively until Coach said, "Save the rough stuff for a real scrimmage."

After a while each team went on its own to run through plays. Dave took the third team for instruction. Sophomores not assigned to the first three squads went with Hal, who divided them into teams and introduced them to the short punt formation.

As Tuesday afternoon practice drew to a close, Coach announced, "Tomorrow morning we'll get into double-wing plays. In the afternoon we'll work from T-formation. So study your playbooks tonight. On Thursday we'll mix them together in our first scrimmage.

Then almost as an afterthought he added, "It's been such an easy workout this afternoon, two laps around the track and into the showers."

A chorus of groans arose, but dutifully the players jogged their laps. This time Flash was content to run with the pack. On the far side Zeke heard him tell his cousin, "I told you that your coach wouldn't give me a fair chance. And look at you. You should be tailback instead of Eddy. That's what you played last year. They let us on the team, but they won't let us

star."

"You'll get your chance," Fred responded. "But you've got to learn to block better."

"That's for linemen," Flash exclaimed.

"You are a lineman," Fred retorted. "And for myself, I expected Eddy to move to tailback. Sure, he's a favorite of the coach, but wait'll you see him run in scrimmage. He deserves it."

On Wednesday morning the teams took up the double wing formation. Like the afternoon before, the first team trotted through a series against the second team on defense with minimal contact. The backs had different numbers, but the system was similar. Fred on the right wing was number 1, Hank lined up behind right guard as the 2-back, Zeke behind left guard as 3-back, and Eddy on the left wing as 4. Zeke would be the main ballhandler and would pass from the double wing.

Double-wing 346 was a reverse to the right as Bulldog snapped the ball to Zeke, who ran left and handed it to Eddy running right, and Hank led the way through the 6-hole. On 317 Zeke ran right and gave the ball to Fred as he cut around to the 7-hole on the left. On double-wing 36 Zeke faked a handoff to Fred, hid the ball momentarily, and went through the 6-hole alone. On 24 Hank received the ball from center, faked to Zeke as he went behind him to the right, and plunged through 4-hole between right guard and center.

Double-wing pass plays were designed by the quarterback on the field: ends buttonhook, wingbacks to the flat; rollout pass to the right with right wingback to the flat, right end down deep and out, left wingback slanting over center, left end deep downfield; and so on. The fullback usually stayed in to block.

What the guys liked best were double reverses from the double wing. One way it started like 346 with Zeke handing the ball to Eddy, who then

gave it to Fred with Zeke leading interference to the left. Or the other way with the ball going from Zeke to Fred to Eddy, who then scooted around right end. They also had fake double reverses and end-around plays from the double wing. Often the guards pulled and made open field blocks, which they liked to do. The backs enjoyed the trickery, but Coach warned Zeke to use these complicated plays sparingly because of risk of fumbles.

This proved the case when the second team, off on their own, tried some of them at full speed. The guys weren't used to playing together, their timing was off, and the backs kept losing the handle on the ball. And the guards, who often pulled to lead interference in double wing plays, kept getting mixed up in their assignments, especially Don and Sam, a pair of sophomores.

Competing for the same position, they took to heckling one another. Soon they were pushing and shoving. Then they got into a fist fight -- a futile and stupid exercise for football players dressed in pads and helmets.

"Fight, fight!" someone shouted.

Everyone on the field came running and formed a circle around the angry pugilists. The coaches pushed their way into the middle. Hal grabbed Don, and Dave took hold of Sam as both struggled unsuccessfully to get free.

"What's this all about?" Nick demanded.

"This Pershing prissy pushed me!" Sam exclaimed.

"This Lindbergh lollipop shoved me!" Don retorted.

Coach laughed. "So it's junior high stuff. It's time for you to grow up. You're playing for Lofton High now. We're all one team. Look at Bob and Rusty. They're best friends even though Bob went to Lindbergh Junior High and Rusty went to Pershing."

"It's the other way around," Rusty corrected.

"See what I mean," Coach declared. "It's so unimportant that I don't even remember where you attended junior high."

Coach knew. He knew and remembered everything about all his players. Where they lived, how many brothers and sisters they had, where their dads' worked, what they were taking in school, and lots more.

"And look at Zeke and Eddy," Coach continued. "Eddy's from Pershing and Zeke's from Lindbergh. I've got it right this time?"

"Yeah, Nick," Eddy nodded.

"In junior high they went at one another on the basketball court, but see how well they work together now."

That's true. Each year the junior high teams played three games against one another: in each home gym and a third in the high school gym on January 30, President Roosevelt's birthday, as a March-of-Dimes benefit to raise money for polio research. Eddy was Pershing's best ballhandler, and Zeke was Lindbergh's best defensive guard. So naturally they had an intense rivalry on the court.

As sophomores they both ran for class president. Eddy, who was more

outgoing and more popular, won. But during the year Zeke garnered scholastic honors. He was one of five sophomores with all A's, the only one playing football.

As juniors Zeke and Eddy grew to appreciate the other's talent. On the playing field they weren't buddy-buddy like Bob and Rusty, but they got along all right.

"We're not having any fighting on this team," Coach insisted. "Don and Sam, you can cool off by sitting on benches on opposite sides of the field for the remainder of this morning's practice. Stanislaw, you take over the right guard spot on the second team."

"Nice going," Dutch told Stan.

"But I don't know the plays yet," Stan replied.

"I'll help you," Wally indicated. "I played guard last year."

"Thanks a lot," Stan responded.

Wednesday afternoon the teams turned to the T-formation. Since the quarterback handled the ball on every play, the play numbering consisted of the back to receive the ball him -- 1, 2, or 3 from right to left -- and the hole he would run through. At Lofton High the T-plays consisted of quick openers through the center of the line or between guard and tackle and laterals to backs running off-tackle and around end. Zeke also liked to use the T for quick passes to the ends slanting just behind the opposing linebackers.

After running through T-plays for an hour, Dave took the linemen for more blocking drills and Nick auditioned kickers.

Don and Sam were allowed to join the linemen, but they still kept sniping at one another. So Dutch quietly took them aside for a few minutes and encouraged them to make peace. He soothed them enough that they shook hands, returned to blocking practice, and didn't bicker any more that afternoon.

At the other end of the field Nick conducted tryouts first for punters, next place kickers for kickoffs, and finally for extra points and field goals.

Hank had punted for the second team last year and was the best prospect. Sal and Pat both wanted to try out because that might give them a chance to make the first team. Roger got excused from blocking drills to show what he could do. Bulldog and Wally took turns centering. Eddy, Billy, Fred, and Zeke positioned themselves downfield to catch the punts.

Hank was still the best. Neither Sal nor Pat could get a consistent spiral, so after a while Pat gave up and took Zeke's place as a punt returner. Roger did surprisingly well. Hank wanted to know, "Are you trying to pirate my job?"

"If I can," Roger laughed heartily.

"I won't let you, Jolly Roger," Hank asserted and then put his foot to a booming forty yard kick. But Jolly, as he became known, became second-team punter.

Hank did best on kickoffs, too. Jolly wasn't as good and re-joined the lineman. Basil couldn't get enough distance. Wally tried, but Sal beat him out as second-team kickoff place kicker.

Basil did much better in kicking field goals and extra points. With Zeke and Cliff taking turns holding and Eddy cheering for him, he hit seven out of ten extra points. Neither Hank nor Sal had the touch, but Wally hit five out of ten. Basil and Wally tried kicks from successively deeper yard markers. Basil's accuracy continued, but his strength gave out beyond the 25 yard line. Wally had greater distance but less accuracy.

"I wouldn't have thought it," Coach told Basil, "but you're pretty good."

"Thanks, Coach," Basil replied.

"Do you have to wear your glasses?"

"I can't see without them."

"Then we'll have to devise some kind of protective mask."

"Maybe I can borrow Pudge's baseball catcher mask."

"No, that won't do. I'll ask Jim Dugan in industrial arts to make something for you."

With these preliminaries accomplished, the teams were ready for scrimmage on Thursday morning. The first team wore gold jerseys and the second team white -- the school colors. Instead of kicking off the first team got the ball on its own 20 yard line. Dave and Hal served as referees. Nick watched from behind the offense. A trio of sophomores held the poles and chains to mark downs.

The guys were all eager in anticipation. The first stringers wanted to show their prowess. Among the second stringers Billy, Flash, Chuck, and Wally wanted to prove that they were good enough to displace their rivals on the first squad. Cliff, Sal, and Roger figured that they would have to wait until next year to become starters but wanted to gain lots of playing time as substitutes. Jiri, Joe, and Pat were just glad to be on the second team and

wanted to ward off challenges from third stringers. Stan was happy to be playing American football on any team and was beginning to pick up the competitive spirit which characterized scrimmaging.

Zeke started with their strongest play: 36 from short punt with Eddy running off tackle to the right. To create the hole Mike and Hank doubled-teamed Jiri, the opposing tackle, and Bob pulled out and ran shoulder-to-shoulder with Fred to double-team Chuck, the end. Dutch pulled from the opposite side and Zeke followed him through the hole as interference. Dutch nailed Sal, the linebacker, and Zeke sped downfield to block Cliff, playing defensive halfback. Eddy ran wide and then cut sharply through the wide hole. He made a dozen yards until Pat, coming from the other side, and Billy, as safety, hauled him down.

The squad returned enthusiastically to the huddle. Zeke gave Fred a chance with 427 off tackle going the other way. Spike pushed Jolly Roger, the tackle, inward, and Dutch forced Flash, the end, outward. Bob pulled, led

Fred through the hole, and leveled Wally, the linebacker. Fred gained six yards before Pat brought him down. Eddy then picked up the first down with 433 through the middle as Hank put a neat trap block on Stan, who got his first taste of solid contact.

As his team marched toward the goal line, Zeke mixed in a few passes with the running plays. At intervals he hit Spike over the middle, Mike down and out, and a rollout pass to Fred in the flat on the right, but Pat batted down another pass to Spike. From the second team's 15 yard line, Eddy scored on a double-wing reverse.

Basil, wearing his helmet with the specially-made face guard, got his first chance to kick an extra point. Unfortunately Bulldog's center to Zeke was high and by the time he got the ball in place Flash sped in to block the kick and knock Basil to the ground. "Welcome to tackle football," Eddy greeted Basil as he extended a hand to help him up. "Merci beaucoup,¹"

¹ "Thanks a lot."

Basil replied as he removed his headgear and wiped dirt from his glasses on his shirttail.

The second team got the ball on their 20 and had a chance at offense. Cliff copied Zeke's first call of 36, but the Sal and Flash couldn't budge Pudge and Spike slipped between Stan and Pat to help Bulldog tackle Billy after a three yard gain. Cliff tried 433, but Sal missed his trap block on Bob, who clobbered Billy behind the line of scrimmage. Cliff took to the air and hit Chuck in the flat for a first down. On the next series the second squad gained only eight yards on three downs and had to punt. Sal took Jolly's place at tackle so that Jolly could kick. It was a 30 yard boot to Eddy, who made a 15 yard return.

After the first squad made three first downs, the second team toughened its defense so that it became fourth and five on the 18 yard line. Since this was just at the edge of Basil's range for a field goal, Zeke called a pass play but overthrew Spike in the end zone.

When they got the ball again, the second team did a little better. Stan was getting comfortable at right guard, and Cliff's handoffs to the backs were crisper. However, Flash at right end couldn't handle Pudge on running plays so that Billy couldn't find a hole on the right side. They had to kick from the 50 yard line.

Eddy caught Sal's punt on the run and headed up the middle. Stan met him head on, causing Eddy to cough up the ball. After a couple of crazy bounces Rusty grabbed it and took off upfield. He might have gone all the way except that Cliff dove for him and brought him down with an arm tackle.

As Rusty headed back to the huddle, Cliff lay on the ground clutching his right arm in pain. Coach and Doc rushed over.

"I think it's broke," Cliff moaned

Coach felt his arm gently and said, "I'm afraid you're right, Cliff."

Looking up he called, "Dave, will you drive Cliff to Dr. Sullivan's office. Doc

can go with you."

Dr. Sullivan was the team physician. In the 1920s he was a football star at the state university

Doc the trainer, expert at first aid from his boy scout days, put Cliff's arm in a sling. Cliff took off his football shoes when they got to the parking lot but climbed into Dave's car still wearing the rest of his football gear.

"Lefty," Coach called out, "you take Cliff's place." As a ninth grader last year, Lefty was backup quarterback on the junior varsity.

When the scrimmage resumed the first team scored again. This time Bulldog's snap to Zeke was good, and Basil made his first extra point.

As the second team started on offense from their own 20, Lefty was tentative in his play calling and awkward in ball handling. Even so they managed to pick up three first downs with slashing runs by Billy and Pat and plunges by Sal. Then the first squad held tight and forced a punt.

Starting from his own 30, Zeke called a fullback plunge from

T-formation. Hank fumbled on the exchange, and Wally pounced on the ball, giving the second team possession in scoring territory. With determination the first team dug in and stopped the second squad on three straight running plays. Lefty then dropped back to pass to Flash. but Fred intercepted on the 5 yard line and ran it back to the 25 where Sal knocked him out of bounds.

"That's enough scrimmage for these two teams for now," Coach told them. "You can go off by yourselves to sharpen your ball handling and blocking routes." And on the side he remarked, "Lefty, just relax. You'll do all right."

Hal announced, "We'll now give the third team and junior varsity a chance to scrimmage. Don and Sam, you'll be the guards on the third team and I expect you to get along."

As the teams split up Flash cornered Fred and demanded, "What's the idea of intercepting me? Don't you want me to look good?"

"Listen, cousin," Fred shot back, "as far as I'm concerned, you're just an opposing player I'm intent on beating."

Thursday afternoon the teams had passing drills with backs and ends against live defenders while the guards and tackles worked on their blocking. The second team receivers discovered that Lefty's throws had a different spin than Cliff's right-handed passes. That required some adjustments.

After that all the players assembled for another run-through tackling drill. Billy tried some fancy stuff until Coach told him to save it for punt return practice.

That was next. Both Eddy and Billy showed their prowess in open field running, and Fred looked good, too. Coach had Zeke catch a couple so as to be ready if necessary. He bobbled the first one and had to fall on the ball, but the second time he made an acceptable return. Flash's speed helped him get down fast on punts, but Spike, Mike, and Chuck were more adept at open

field tackling.

After warmup on Friday morning, Coach kept his promise and let Billy try some passes. He threw hard but wild, sometimes behind the receiver, sometimes too far ahead or too high. Eddy wanted a turn, too. His throws were more accurate but wobbly and without much zip. Zeke and Lefty watched together mirthfully. They really hadn't feared losing their passing assignments to their running backs.

When the teams scrimmaged, the first squad continued to roll. On one series Wally moved from linebacker to center of a seven-man line for goal-line stand, and Bulldog pushed him back as Hank plunged for a touchdown. Lefty was fitting in better with the second unit and led them in a sustained drive. Billy scored on ten yard sweep around left end, made possible by decisive blocks thrown by Pat, Sal, and Stan, the pulling guard. Wally's extra point attempt went wide to the right.

In the afternoon it was so hot and the players' mouths were so dry that

they were spitting cotton. They were glad the weekend was coming. They were ready to rest their weary bones and nurse their aches and pains.

Except that Zeke's and Spike's dads expected them to work in their stores on Saturday as usual -- Zeke selling hardware and Spike loading chicken feed and other supplies for customers. At lunchtime Zeke glanced at the Lofton Herald and noticed that the temperature had reached 102° at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, a new record for September 1. The front page headline proclaimed: **"American Troops Near German Border"**

On Saturday evening Zeke and Spike drove around the countryside for a while in Spike's dad's car with their girl friends, Barbara and Joanne. There was gas rationing, but Mr. Anderson had extra coupons because of his business.

Barbara and Joanne were seniors who had been best friends since they met at Pershing Junior High School. Spike started dating Joanne during basketball season last winter. He persuaded Zeke to invite Barbara to the

junior prom in May after she broke up with her previous boyfriend. Barbara played flute in the band, and Joanne was lead soprano in the school chorus.

All summer the two couples had gone to the movies on Saturday night, but not tonight. The boys were afraid they would fall asleep from exhaustion. But they did go to the drive-in for hamburgers and malted milks as usual.

"Are you going to be like this all season?" Barbara wanted to know.

"No," Zeke assured her. "The rest of the season will seem easy after Nick's twice-a-day practices."

March 30, 1994

After the opening warmup drills Tuesday afternoon, Coach called the players together and announced, "We're ready to divide into teams now. There are enough of you for three teams for the varsity plus a couple of sophomore teams. You should understand that these are tentative assignments, based mostly on last year's performance. But every position is open, even where we have a returning starter. If you think you're better than someone ahead of you, don't tell me, show in on the field."

Billy smiled smugly and eyed Eddy in a challenging manner.

"Here is the first team," the coach continued, reading from his clipboard. "Line up in your position as I call your name. Spike at left end, Pudge left tackle, Dutch left guard."

They moved out to form a line. No surprises so far.

"Richard at center," Coach said, and looking him in the eye, "You're a little light for the position, Richard, so you'll have to make up for it with bulldoggedness."

Richard charged out furiously. Walt, who had designs on the job, remarked to a buddy, "We'll see who's the toughest when we start scrimmaging."

"Bob at right guard and Rusty at right tackle," Coach continued. "For right end we're going to go with you, Mike, because you played it on the junior varsity last year. But you should know that we're going to be looking at Charley, your JV teammate, and also at Flash Gordon, who just moved to town."

Disappointment flowed over the faces of Charley and Flash as Mike moved into position, then tight-lipped assertiveness.

"The backfield," Coach announced, "will consist of Zeke at quarterback, Fred at right half, Eddy at left half, and Hank at fullback."

Left half was tailback in the short punt formation, and thus the main ball carrier. Eddy had been first team right half last year, so this was a promotion. Fred had played left half on the second team and kind of hoped he would get the job on the first team, but he knew that Eddy had more game experience.

As the four backs lined up in short punt behind the first team line, Coach announced, "On the second squad, Charley will be left end and Jiri left tackle. Walt, we're going to give you a chance at center as you requested. Roger will be right tackle and Flash right end. You can take your places in a defensive alignment."

The ends and tackles took position facing the first team line, and Richard set up as right linebacker.

"We've got several good candidates for second team guards. At left guard we're assigning Joe Robinson and Sam Nugent to alternate until one proves he's the better. Don Shays will be right guard. Dutch's friend, Stanislaw Krasinski -- did I pronounce it right? -- wants to be a guard, but since he's never played football before, we're putting him on the third team. But, Stan, this is America, the land of opportunity. Show your stuff and you'll move ahead."

So Joe, with Sam behind him, and Don filled out the second team line.

"In the backfield," Coach went on, "it'll be Lefty at quarterback, Pat at right half, Billy at left half, and Sal at fullback. On defense Sal will be linebacker, Billy will be safety with Lefty and Pat as defensive halfbacks."

"You mean they had six men on the line," Timmy interrupted. "We have a five-man line with a nose guard in the center, two linebackers, and four defensive backs."

"Yes, I know," Granddad responded. "But in our day all the high school teams in our league had a six-man, except one which used seven. Maybe it was the rule. At least it was the custom."

After the four backs took their positions on defense, Coach Basil, who wasn't named, queried, "What about kickers, Coach?"

"We'll get to that later in the week," Coach replied. "Meanwhile, get yourself in condition and watch how football is played."

"Can I practice kicking?"

"Sure, if Zeke and Richard want to stay after practice."

"It's all right with me," Zeke and Richard answered in one voice.

Addressing the remaining players, mostly sophomores, Coach indicated, "Hal will assign you teams tomorrow morning, but for the rest of the afternoon I want you to watch as we start going through our plays."

"The first thing you have to know is our play numbering system. Each back has a number. In short punt blocking back, which is Hank, is one, right half -- Fred -- is two, tailback -- Eddy -- is three, and quarterback -- is four. On the line we number the space between the linemen. Even numbers are on the right, odd numbers on the left. Between center and right guard is the two hole, between right guard and right tackle is the four hole, then the six hold, and around end eight. Running straight over center is number one, between center and left guard the three hole, then on out to the five and seven holes, and nine around left end."

"On our team," Timmy remarked, "we don't number our plays. They're called dive, slant, off-tackle, end around to left and right. When we used numbers in the [Pony] league, the odd numbers were on the right."

"Yes," Granddad acknowledged, "there are different systems. I'm just telling you what we called our plays in the old days."

"Like ancient history, when they spoke Latin," Timmy teased.

"Not that ancient," Granddad chuckled.

That morning Coach put off so that he could explain the Lofton offense. Most of the players sprawled on the ground in a half-circle, but a few stood in the rear. Hal and Dave stood behind Nick with some large charts.

"Again this year," Coach began, "we'll run most of our plays from a short punt formation. Now and then we'll go into a double wing for passing and a little bit of razzle dazzle. We'll may use a T-formation more than last year as we get a better understanding of how it works."

"All three formations will use a balanced line. In all of them the center, guards, and tackles will line up close together. The ends will be out about a yard from the tackles. Like on this chart."

"Aw, Nick, we know all that," Bob piped up as Dave held up the first chart:

0 0 0 0 0 0

"You do, but we've got some new players," Coach replied. "And some of the old ones may have cobwebs in their brains from disuse this summer."

5. INTRASQUAD GAME

Labor Day was a holiday for nearly everybody in town except for the Lofton High football team. As a slight concession Coach Nickerson scheduled the morning practice from eight to ten so that those who wanted to could participate in the Labor Day parade, scheduled to start at 11:00 a.m.

Many of the guys who had worked during the summer as painters, plumbers' assistants, auto mechanics, in grocery stores, and on the assembly line at the war plant, and they wanted to march with their trades. Basil, bassoonist turned place kicker, was glad to march one more time with the city band, for he knew he would miss half-time band drills this season.

When Zeke and Spike took the field a few minutes before eight, they were saw Dutch and Stan over by the blocking sled as Dutch instructed the newcomer on the fine points of blocking. Nearby Flash, Fred, and Joe Robinson, sophomore assigned to left guard on the second team, were in full sweat as they practiced blocking.

Joe, a Negro youth like his two companions, took a defensive stance. Flash blocked him as Fred called signals and offered advice. Then Fred lined up as blocking back, and he and Flash double-teamed Joe as if he were a tackle defending against short punt 36. Finally Joe pulled back to a defensive halfback's position, and Flash went after him as Fred followed, carrying the ball. At that moment Coach came onto the field and made a mental note of this endeavor.

For once the team was grateful for opening calisthenics, for it helped them limber up after the weekend of recuperation. The morning scrimmage went well. Blocks were crisp, and tackles were hard. Ball handling by the backs was precise with scarcely a bobble. Zeke was sharp with his passes, and Lefty was getting better. Spike made a couple of spectacular catches, and the other ends displayed their proficiency.

Since the beginning of scrimmaging the previous Thursday, Zeke had been in on lots of tackles from his defensive left halfback position. Halfway

through the Monday morning practice, after Zeke had filled the hole and stopped Billy cold on an off-tackle play, Eddy asked, "How come you seem to always know where the ball carrier's going?"

"It's easy," Zeke replied. "I watch the guards as well as the running backs. When they stay put, I know it's a pass. When they charge ahead, I know it's a plunge into the center of the line. When they pull, they're usually headed in the direction of the ballcarrier."

But this wasn't always the case. The second team scored their second touchdown of the pre-season from eight yards out as Lefty kept the ball on a fake reverse from a double wing formation. He squeezed into the end zone as Zeke and the other defensive backs, not expecting Lefty to run, overpursued in the opposite direction.

This gave Coach an opportunity to lecture the defensive ends and halfbacks on the importance of "staying home."

Eddy remarked to Zeke, "I guess there are exceptions to your

follow-the-guards routine!"

"I guess so," Zeke acknowledged.

When the team reconvened at four o'clock for the last of their twice-a-day practices, they turned their attention to returning kickoffs and punts. That meant lots of running, open field blocking and tackling. On kickoffs Eddy and Billy were return men for their respective teams. Their teammates formed blocking wedges down the center and to the right and the left. With better blockers and more experience, Eddy made longer runs, but Billy showed flashes of brilliance as a broken-field runner.

On one punt return Billy might have gone all the way if Eddy hadn't thrown a crossbody block to knock him out of bounds. Billy almost came up swinging, but he remembered what happened to Don and Sam.

After a while the teams used pairs of return men -- Eddy and Fred, Billy and Pat -- and tried some reverses and fake reverses. Fred made one spectacular run, and Eddy, sure of his job, was the first to congratulate him.

To the coaches' delight, Billy and Pat worked well together, too, as they had in running plays in scrimmage. They had become good friends.

Coach decided that the ends needed some special practice in open field tackling since they were the first ones downfield on punts. Especially Flash seemed to be a sucker for Eddy's fakes, so Spike took him aside and advised him to keep his feet wider apart. "That way," Spike explained, "you can quickly shift your weight and stay with the ball carrier."

—

School started on Tuesday. As they dressed for practice after school, the football players talked about what courses they were taking, who their teachers were. "Oh, he's easy" -- "Not her, you'll be sorry" -- "That was a fun course" -- "I wish I'd never taken than one" -- were some of the remarks. They also discussed which girls were in their classes.

"I hear you're taking Spanish," Zeke said to Bob.

"No me llama Bob. Me llama Roberto,"¹ he answered.

"Tanto gusto,"² Eddy piped up.

"I didn't know you knew Spanish, Eddy," Rusty remarked.

"Yeah. We had a Mexican kid playing second base this summer. He was my double-play partner, so I picked up some of his lingo."

Again Dutch and Stan and Fred, Flash, and Joe got on the field early to practice blocking. They combined their efforts, and Dutch took over as chief instructor.

After warmup the several units ran through their plays on their own. Then they scrimmaged, complete with kickoffs and extra points. Coach had the quarterbacks run the first series with only short punt formation, the next with double wing, and the third with T-formation. He gave the second team extra downs so that they would have a longer time on offense without punting.

¹ "I'm not Bob. My name is Roberto."

² "Pleased to meet you."

The teams were doing well with short-punt plays, for this had been the bread-and-butter of the Lofton offense for many years. With the double wing the second team guards didn't seem to have the hang of pulling and getting ahead of their running back to block the end or linebacker. So coach stopped play and called out, "Bob and Dutch, take Stan and Joe's places, and show them how it's done."

"No me llama Bob. Me llama Roberto."

"[Spanish translation],"³ Coach insisted. The guys were amazed, but later in the showers Eddy explained that one summer when Coach was in college he had worked on a railroad road crew with a bunch of Mexicans.

Whether it was Bob or Roberto, Dietrich or Dutch, the first string guards knew reflexively to pull back their foot on the side they were going, charge quickly behind the line, and hit the defender with a full head of steam.

The first team backfield was still not comfortable with their timing and

³ "I don't care what they call you in Spanish class. You're still Bob to me."

ball exchange in the T-formation, and the second team was even more awkward. So after the scrimmage Nick took the first team backs and center aside and had them go through every T-play at half-speed, then three quarters, and finally full speed. Dave did the same with the second team backs and center.

On Wednesday as the players left the locker room for the field, a swarm of ninth graders arrived from the two junior high schools. It was their turn to check out equipment and make their entree into organized football.

The Wednesday scrimmage emphasized passing. Two years ago when Brad Henderson was tailback and Lofton won the league championship, he was chief passer as well as punter. Last year's tailback, Barry Jeffries, wasn't much of a passer, so he traded places with quarterback Duke Shelby on pass plays from short punt. The other teams, however, came to realize that when Duke was at tailback it would be a pass. Since neither Eddy nor Billy could pass worth a darn, Coach told Zeke and Lefty to run their pass plays

from double wing or T-formation in which they handled the ball on both running plays and passes.

This was what they did in the day's scrimmage. To make it more challenging the other team knew it would be a pass. For pass defense Lofton and other teams in the league used what today is called a zone with the two linebackers, the two defensive halfbacks, and the single safety covering specific territories rather than going man-for-man. That gave ends and backs a chance to get open by cutting over the middle, going into the flat, buttonhooking in front of a defensive halfback, or heading for him and then cutting sharply to the left or right. But it was difficult to get behind the safety playing deep in the middle.

To give them experience with different receivers, Coach had Zeke and Lefty trade places for a couple of series for each team. Zeke came to appreciate the better protection the first team linemen provided, but he was glad to have the challenge of passing against the defensive backfield of his first

team buddies: Eddy, Fred, Hank, and Bulldog. Eddy, though, annoyed him by his knack of anticipating where the pass would go and trying to cut in front of the receiver. He intercepted Zeke a couple of times.

"I watch your eyes," Eddy told Zeke after practice, "just like you watch the guards. You usually keep your eyes on your primary receiver."

This was a good warning to Zeke, who became determined to be less revealing.

As Wednesday's practice drew to a close, Coach called the players together to announce the teams for Friday night's intrasquad game. It would be under lights with regular officials and open to the public.

"As you are aware," Coach began, "our custom is to form two teams of equal strength by dividing up the first and second teams. This will make the game more competitive and will give you a chance to play beside different players, as you will during the season because of substitutions. Coach Dave flipped a coin to determine which team would wear gold jerseys and the

other white."

"You know," Granddad reflected, "I'm a little hazy in my recollection of who was on the Gold and White teams. Timmy, where did you find Zeke's football helmet in the attic?"

"In a dusty old box," Timmy replied.

"Was there a scrapbook in the box?"

"I think so. It had a picture of a lion on it."

"The Lofton Lion. It was a scrapbook my mother kept of our season. Would you go get it, please, while I get myself a cup of coffee."

"Sure, gladly."

When Timmy returned with the scrapbook, Granddad opened it to the first page with a hand-printed caption, "INTRA-SQUAD GAME." He glanced at a clipping and remarked, "Ah! Here's a listing of the starting lineups. And look, my mother pasted in the front page headline on the war news of the day."

As Nick's players gathered around him, he read from his clipboard, "The line on the Gold team from left to right will consist of Spike, Jiri, Dutch, Wally, Stan, Rusty, and Flash. The backfield will be Zeke, Fred, Billy, and Sal. The White team's line will be composed of Chuck, Pudge, Joe, Bulldog, Bob, Jolly Roger, and Mike. Lefty, Pat, Eddy, and Hank will be in the backfield. At tomorrow's practice each team will run plays as a unit so that you can get used to one another."

As they broke up, Coach told Zeke, "I'd like to talk to you in my office for a few minutes."

As he left the field Zeke noticed that Dutch stayed behind to offer further blocking instruction to Stan, Flash, and Joe, who happened to be Dutch's backup. This time Fred didn't join them.

In the locker room Zeke removed his shoulder pads and went into the coaches' office and sat next to Nick's desk.

"I know you're not happy having Billy on your team," Coach began.

"What makes you think so?" Zeke inquired.

"I could see it in your eyes when I announced the teams. But whether you like him personally, he's your teammate. Furthermore, you're the team leader. It's your job to get your team working effectively as a unit."

"I'll try."

"Billy is brash, but you've got to remember that he just turned 15 this summer. He's inexperienced and has a lot to learn. You can help him."

"I doubt that he'll listen to me."

"He will if you approach him as a friendly teacher, not an adversary."

"I'll do what I can."

"This is important to me and to the whole team because Billy's our running back of the future. I expect that our offense will be built around his skills the two following seasons."

"Not this year?"

"No, not this year. He's not ready yet. And if you're afraid that

helping Billy will enable him to displace Eddy, you needn't worry."

"I heard Billy ran a faster 40 than Eddy."

"That's true, but Billy could never beat Eddy in a race. And Eddy knows many more tricks of the trade, both as a tailback and a safety."

"Whatever you say, Nick."

Just then Jiri entered and asked, "May I talk to you, Nick?"

"Sure," Coach answered.

"Privately," Jiri pleaded.

"I doubt that you have anything to say that you can't say in front of Zeke."

"I'm not sure of that, but -- oh heck -- I might as well."

Jiri sprawled in a chair opposite Nick's desk. "The thing is, Nick," he stammered, "I don't want to play next to Dutch."

"What's the problem," Coach responded in amazement.

"He's a Nazi-sympathizer."

"A what?"

"He's German. His older brother refused to go into the army, and I bet that Dutch won't either. Germany has occupied my forbearer's land, Czechoslovakia. I don't trust him."

"He's a Mennonite and an American," Coach replied. "The Mennonites are pacifists. Dutch's brother is a conscientious objector to all wars. I don't agree with that position, but that's his right. And in his way, he's quite heroic. He's now at a hospital back east where he has allowed himself to be infected with a tropical disease to help doctors find a vaccine or a cure."

"I didn't know that," Zeke remarked.

"In his way, Dutch is heroic, too," Coach went on. "His family and the Mennonite church leaders opposed Dietrich playing football, but he had the courage to come out anyway. He's a tough kid. He blocks and tackles hard but clean. You couldn't have a better teammate."

Jiri scarcely knew what to say next. Finally he sputtered, "Couldn't I

play on the other side of the line or on the White team?"

"I make team assignments," Coach declared. "If you don't want to play for Lofton High, I've got several promising tackles eager to take your place."

"We want you on the Gold team," Zeke urged.

On Thursday afternoon Jiri slipped on a gold jersey and lined up next to Dutch. He had had his say, and now he was ready to play football with whoever was on the team.

The rest of the guys felt the same way. It took the second stringers on the Gold team a few plays to get used to Zeke's cadence, but they soon got the feel of it. The first time they ran 433, Billy started forward too soon and collided with Fred, who was cutting left to take Zeke's fake. Zeke suggested to Billy that he take one step backward, like Eddy does, to improve his timing. This worked. Zeke was glad to have Flash's speed at right end and felt that with Spike at the other end, the Gold team had the best pass

receivers.

After practice Eddy joked with Zeke on how the White team was going to clobber them. It wasn't the same as a league game, but Zeke slept restlessly that night. In school on Friday he kept running through what plays he would call and missed some of the things his teachers were saying.

Friday night was warm but not the stifling heat of the previous week. Quite a few students and towns people turned out for the intrasquad game. Dave coached the Gold team and Hal the White team. Nick sat in the press box taking notes. As co-captains Zeke and Rusty, Eddy and Roberto met with the officials in the center of the field. The White team won the toss and elected to receive.

Sal's kick for the Gold team sailed to the 15 yard line where Eddy gathered it in, cut right, and got to the 35 yard line before a swarm of Gold tacklers stopped him.

As the teams lined up with White on offense and Gold on defense, they

suddenly realized that Coach's team assignments pitted first team linemen from the left side against first stringers from the right side. It was Spike versus Mike, Pudge versus Rusty, Dutch versus Roberto. Likewise with second stringers: Chuck versus Flash, Jiri versus Jolly, Joe versus Stan. This enhanced the friendly competition between the two squads.

Lefty opened the White offensive series with 37 to run Eddy off tackle to left. Chuck at left end couldn't handle Rusty at defensive right tackle, and Eddy made only a couple of yards. The Whites went into T-formation, and Hank gained five yards through a hole that Roberto and Bulldog created in the center of the line. Eddy made first down with 36 off tackle to the right, the strong side with more double-teaming.

Next Lefty ran 427, and Pat got by Rusty who squeezed toward the center in expectation of Eddy diving off guard. With second and four, Lefty missed connections on a handoff to Eddy. Pat recovered for the Whites, but it was a five yard loss. Lefty's third down pass to Mike in the flat sailed over

his head, and the Whites had to punt. Hank got off a high kick, which Billy fielded on the 20, but Mike and Chuck were on him and floored him at the 25.

In the huddle Zeke sensed that Billy was quite fidgety and realized that this was first-game jitters. He called 36 to send Billy off tackle to the right. Billy, however, ran left, and Mike and Jolly clobbered him for a four yard loss. He was deeply chagrinned, but Zeke reassured him, "That's all right. We all make mistakes."

In the huddle Zeke called, "Same play: 36 on three." Billy made a five yard gain as Sal and Flash double-teamed Pudge and Stan and Fred knocked down Chuck. Zeke then gave Fred a chance, and he gained a half-dozen yards on a quick opener from T-formation but not enough for a first down. Since both punters were on the White team, the Golds borrowed Jolly to kick and let Sal play tackle for the Whites on that one play. Jolly's kick drifted to the right and bounced out of bounds on the White 38.

This time Lefty stuck with short punt formation, and the Whites advanced to the Gold 40 in five plays. With a fresh first down Lefty kept the ball himself on a fake reverse. As Rusty burst through the line, Pudge grabbed him. The referee threw his flag. The 15 yard holding penalty nullified Lefty's four yard gain.

"Fifteen yards for holding?" Timmy asked. "In our league holding is a 10 yard penalty."

"In 1944 there were only 5 and 15 yard penalties," Granddad explained. "Fifteen for things like offensive holding, clipping, and unnecessary roughness. Five for offside, defensive holding, and delay of game."

With first and 25, Lefty connected with passes to Chuck and Eddy to get back to the original line of scrimmage. On third and 10 he tried to hit Mike down and out, but Fred intercepted and returned the ball to the Gold 45.

Zeke set his team in a double wing, and Fred made six yards on a reverse

to the left. Thinking that the Whites might now expect Billy to run a reverse to the right, Zeke sent Sal up the middle for a seven yard gain.

From short punt Billy picked up five yards off right tackle. Back in double wing, Zeke faked a handoff to Sal and threw to Flash in the flat, but the ball sailed over his head out of bounds. On third down Zeke tossed a ten yarder to Spike over the middle.

Billy picked up four yards on a reverse to the right, and Sal made three yards off guard. On third down Zeke rolled out to the right to pass. He saw that all his receivers were covered and continued running around end. He and got as far as the 10 yard line where Lefty tackled him. As the Gold team returned to their huddle, the first quarter came to an end.

After the teams had changed ends of the field and had their two minute rest, the Golds geared up to complete their touchdown drive. For greater power Zeke went back to short punt. On the third play Fred crashed off-tackle on 427 to score. Basil, who was designated place kicker for both

teams, made his first point-after-touchdown in game competition. Gold led 7-0.

Sal's kickoff went off the side of his foot and skittered to the White 35 where Pat picked it up and ran to midfield. It was the White team's time to roll. Eddy made a couple of nifty runs. Lefty threaded a pass to Mike over the middle in front of Billy, but Zeke knocked down a pass to Chuck along the sidelines.

Hank showed his power in driving over center behind the solid blocking of Bulldog and Roberto. Pat proved effective on a reverse. After Mike lost five yards on a futile end around, Eddy darted off tackle to the right and cut back left in a fifteen yard scoring run. Basil hit again, and the score was 7-7.

Hank sent his kickoff to the 10 yard line where Billy grabbed it, ran straight up the field behind a slew of blockers, and made it to the 30 yard line before the wedge broke down. Zeke decided to work from a

T-formation for a while. In a quick opener Billy dove through the left side of the line as Jiri pushed Jolly aside and picked up seven yards. Sal got the first down in a four yard plunge over center as Dutch and Wally doubleteamed Roberto and Stan handled Joe.

Fred picked up six yards in a cross-buck to the left. Zeke tossed the ball to Spike in a buttonhook left, and this yielded eight more and another first down.

With the ball on the White 45 yard marker, Zeke called, "Short punt 36 on two. Let's give Billy some running room."

When Zeke barked "two", Bulldog snapped the ball to Billy. With the end and tackle contained, a big hole opened as Billy cut off tackle on the right. Dutch the pulling guard put his shoulder into Hank, the linebacker on that side, and Zeke knocked down Lefty, the defensive halfback. Eddy seemed to be the only defender in position to keep Billy from a touchdown run.

Billy faked left and then right to throw Eddy off balance. As he did, Pat came in from the other halfback position and leveled Billy with a severe tackle, causing him to fumble. As the ball bounced out of bounds near the 30 yard line, Billy lay breathless on the ground, the wind knocked out of him.

Doc rushed onto the field, grabbed Billy's belt, and lifted him by the waist to help him get breathing normally again. Billy was so shaken that he had to be helped off the field.

Fred moved over to tailback, and Johnny Mason, a sophomore, came into to play right half. But the Gold team was stunned so much that they could make only eight yards on the next three plays. Attempting a field goal was out of the question because this was out of Basil's range. Instead Zeke tried to hit Spike over the middle with a quick pass from T formation, but Bulldog, the White linebacker, stuck tenaciously on Spike and knocked the pass down.

As the Whites took over on downs, the coaches began substituting third

team and junior varsity players. This continued for the remainder of the half and neither offense made much progress.

In the locker room between halves Nick checked up on Billy, who still seemed a little shaky, and praised both teams for their efforts. He did, though, mention that he had seen some poor blocking and too many missed tackles. Hal and Dave met separately with their teams and offered pointers on specific plays.

Dave decided to rest Billy a little longer and leave Fred at tailback. Fred received the opening kickoff and ran along the sidelines until forced out of bounds on the Gold 30 yard line. On the first running play the Gold team opened a big hole up off guard for Fred. Eddy was waiting for him ten yards downfield. Fred tried to run over Eddy rather than cut around, and Eddy met him head on with a sure tackle.

On first down Johnny at right half tripped himself as he tried left tackle on 427. On second and twelve, Zeke hit Flash with a running pass in the

flat to the left, but he was a yard short of a first down. The White team stopped Sal without gain. The Golds borrowed Jolly again for another punt.

Eddy caught the kick on the White 20, headed up the middle, and cut left up the sideline. Wally, the Gold center, stopped him at midfield and prevented a touchdown. With good field position the White team scored in nine plays, including one incomplete pass. Eddy carried the ball four times and caught Lefty's touchdown pass as he looped over the middle from the left wing. Basil hit his third extra point to give the Whites a 14-7 lead.

On the sideline Billy convinced Dave that he was all right, and he returned to receive the kickoff. The Gold team, though, blocked poorly and the White defenders swarmed Billy at the 25 and forced a fumble. Lefty got greedy and tried to hit Chuck down the right sideline. Fred intercepted on the 10 yard line, cut back at the 25 and seemed to be in the clear when Roberto dove, caught his foot, and caused him to stumble to the ground.

Zeke imagined that the Whites would expect him to send Billy off-tackle

to the right, so he called 39 to send him on around end the other way.

Mike, the defensive end in that direction cut in, expecting to pursue Billy

going in the other direction, and he was easy prey for Zeke as he led

interference to the left. Billy picked up 20 yards. Fred made six with a

quick opener from T-formation, and Sal crashed through for a first down.

The White linebackers were keying on Billy and held him to a short gain in a dive between left guard and tackle. Zeke then rifled the ball to Spike up

the middle for a first down. After another running play, Zeke tried to hit

Fred in a buttonhook in front of the halfback, but a linebacker deflected the

ball. Zeke came back with a down-and-out pattern to Flash, who caught

the ball and ran out of bounds on the White 18. The White defenders dug in

and held the Golds to nine yards in the next three plays.

Working from T-formation on fourth and one from the eight, Zeke

faked a handoff to Sal up the middle, where the White linebackers were

focused, and lateraled to Billy, who cut off tackle to the right. Flash made a

terrific block on Pudge, the defensive tackle, and Stan pulled from his guard position to flatten Chuck, the defensive end. Billy sailed into the end zone untouched. Again Basil split the goalpost to tie the game at 14 apiece.

The White team received the kickoff and ran a couple of plays for a first down as the third quarter ended.

In the fourth quarter the coaches gave everyone a chance to play. It was a comedy of errors: fumbles, stumbles, dropped passes, missed blocks, sloppy tackles, several penalties. The intrasquad game ended in a 14-14 tie.

"Good game, kid," Zeke called to Billy as they left the field.

"You ain't seen nothing yet," Billy shouted back.

Spike, who was walking with Zeke, remarked, "That kid still has a lot to learn."

As Billy came into the showers, Eddy started singing in a loud voice,

"I'll sing you a true song of Billy the Kid.

I'll sing of the terrible run that he did.

Cut down by Pat Kelly who once was his friend,

The young halfback's run now reach its sad end."

Billy flushed with anger. He was so mad that his scalp turned red under his blond hair. He clenched his fist and wanted to go after Eddy on the spot. But he noticed Pudge under the shower on Eddy's right and Rusty on his left. He still had enough sense not to attempt the futile. So he quickly retreated, hurried to his locker, swiftly dressed, and fumed out of the locker room as peals of laughter rolled on in the showers.

The Saturday edition of the Lofton Herald reported the highlights of the intrasquad game. The reporter opinioned that Coach Nickerson had another winning team. The front page headline was "YANKS SMASH SIEGFRIED LINE".

At the movies on Saturday evening Zeke and Barbara, Spike and Shirley saw Bing Crosby in "Going My Way." As they sat in their car at the drive-in,

Spike told about Eddy's serenade in the showers. Barbara reacted, "You boys aren't very nice to poor Billy."

"It's a continuing story, Babs," Zeke remarked. "We'll tell you the next chapter next week."

March 30, 1994

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"You know," Granddad reflected, "I'm a little hazy in my recollection of who was on the Gold and White teams."

He reached in the box beside his desk and pulled out an old scrapbook with the picture of a lion pasted on the cover.

"Ah, here it is," he continued. "The scrapbook my mother kept of the 1944 Lofton Lions."

He opened it to the first page with a hand-printed caption, "INTRA-SQUAD GAME." He glanced at a clipping and remarked, "Just as I thought Here's a listing of the starting lineups. And look, my mother pasted in the front page headline on the war news of the day."

As Nick's players gathered around him, he read from his clipboard, "The line on the Gold team from left to right will consist of Spike, Jiri, Dutch, Wally, Stan, Rusty, and Flash. The backfield will be Zeke, Fred, Billy, and Sal. The White team's line will be composed of Chuck, Pudge, Joe, Bulldog, Bob, Jolly

6. SEASON OPENER

On Monday during the lunch break at school Eddy, Pudge, and some of the other guys from the team were standing on the front steps of the school, telling jokes and laughing hilariously. As Billy walked by with a couple of his buddies, Eddy started whistling the "Billy the Kid" tune.

Billy came close to him and snarled, "I'd settle this with you right now, once and for all if you didn't have your bodyguards to protect you."

"I don't need bodyguards for dealing with twerps like you," Eddy snapped. "But I'm not going to fight you. If I did, Nick would suspend both of us from the team. I don't want to miss the opening game against Kepler this Friday."

"Then I challenge you to a race," Billy shot back. "If I beat you, you will have to apologize to me in front of the team and call me Fast Billy."

"A race it will be," Eddy accepted. "In full football gear at the start of practice today."

"Agreed," Billy snapped as he strode away confidently.

"You can't outrun him," Rusty warned.

"I can beat him in a race," Eddy assured his friends. "You'll see."

Eddy was serious enough about the challenge that he was one of the first players on the field for practice after school. He did some warmup exercises and jogged half-speed the length of the field and back. When Billy appeared, followed by a bunch of sophomores, Eddy announced, "I'm ready when you are."

"Any time," Billy replied. "We'll start on the goal line and run to the 40."

"Only the 40?" Eddy responded. "I thought you wanted a real race. Let's go from goal line to goal line. Just like it is when I run back a kickoff for a touchdown."

"It's your funeral," Billy retorted. "I'll be out of sight in a hundred yards."

"We'll need a starter and a judge at the end," Eddy indicated.

"I'll volunteer as starter," said Zeke, who was standing nearby. "And why don't you have Bulldog be the judge at the finish? You know he'll be fair."

"That's all right with me," Eddy answered.

"Me, too," Billy agreed.

As Bulldog and some others trotted to the far goal line, Eddy, Billy, and Zeke took their places on the near goal line. Billy laid his helmet on the ground and knelt into a sprinter's crouch with his knuckles on the goal line.

"This isn't a track meet," Eddy asserted. "It's football. We're running backs. Stand up on two feet and put your helmet on."

So Billy stood up, popped on his helmet, and tightened the chin strap. They were ready, Eddy on the left and Billy on the right. At the far end Bulldog waved them to start.

"Go on hike," Zeke instructed. "Get ready. Set. Hike."

And off they ran. Billy got the faster start and quickly sprang into the lead. By the 30 yard line he was a couple of yards ahead of Eddy and began to drift left in front of him. At the fifty yard line Billy looked around to his left to see how far he was ahead, but he didn't see Eddy. By then Eddy had gone right and was starting to close. Billy looked that way, breaking stride as he did. This was the opening Eddy needed. He pulled even with Billy at the far 25 yard line and began to edge into the lead. At the 10 yard line Billy ran out of steam, and Eddy pulled ahead with a final sprint to win by two yards.

Eddy and Billy, gasping for air and hands clutching their sides, separated to walk off their run. Zeke trotted down to join the others at the finishing line. As he arrived, the two runners were coming back together.

"From now on," Eddy huffed, "you can call me Fast Eddy."

"Okay, Fast Eddy," Billy puffed, "You can call me Slow Billy if you want, but please not Billy the Kid."

"No, you're not slow, Billy," Eddy answered. "You just challenged the wrong person. You're Wild Bill."

With that settled, Fast Eddy put his arm around Wild Bill. They walked together to the other end of the field where Coach was blowing his whistle to assemble the team for calisthenics. He had observed the contest from the entrance to the field and gave Zeke a I-told-you-so look as Zeke took his place for warmup exercises.

When they were through with calisthenics, Coach called the team together to discuss their performance in the intrasquad game.

"I'm proud of you," he began. "Most of you on the first two teams know your blocking assignments well. The quarterbacks called a good mixture of plays. Running backs ran hard. Pass receivers ran good routes, and defenders did a pretty good job keeping up with them.

"Tackling, though, was sometimes sloppy. Ball exchanges between backs were occasionally careless. Some backs and ends didn't tuck the ball in

tightly. You were lucky there weren't more fumbles.

"We've found our point-after-touchdown kicker in Basil...."

Basil bowed immodestly.

"...but Basil, you've got to get more leg strength if you want to kick field goals."

Basil retreated.

"We're going to stick with Hank on kickoffs and punts. Bulldog and Wally both need more practice in snapping the ball to the punter and placekick holder."

They both nodded in acknowledgement.

"As a result of the intrasquad game, I'm making one change in team assignment. Flash, I'm promoting you to the first team. I always knew you could catch passes and run with the ball. In the game I saw a lot of good, hard blocking. I know it's a result of the extra practicing you did all week with Fred and Joe, Dutch and Stan. You others can take a lesson from

that."

Flash beamed, and Fred slapped him on the back.

"I've already talked to Mike about this switch and told him he'll get plenty of playing time. He's a junior, so he'll likely be the starter next year after Flash graduates."

With this accomplished Coach sent the several teams off to run through plays on their own.

Zeke offered his hand to Flash and said, "I'm glad you're going to be part of our group. Your speed should help us."

"Thanks a lot," Flash responded. "I'll do my best."

"You're a welcome addition," Eddy chimed in, "as long as you knock down the opposing tackles, ends, and linebackers when I run the ball your way."

"I'll clear the way for you, Fast Eddy," Flash replied with a smile, "if you do the same for me on end-arounds."

After a while the players had a light contact scrimmage between the first and second teams at one end of the field and between the third team and junior varsity at the other end. Then they divided into small groups to practice fumble recoveries.

"Fall on the ball. Surround it with your body," Coach advised. "Don't try to pick it up and run with it. Footballs bounce crazy. If you try to be a hero, you're more likely to be a goat."

During supper at the Parker house, Laura asked eagerly, "How did the race come out, Zeke?"

"What race?"

"You know. The one between Billy and Eddy. Everybody in school knows they were going to race. And they know about the song Eddy sang in the shower."

"Oh, that," Zeke chuckled. "Eddy won -- naturally."

"How come Eddy picks on Billy that way?" Laura queried.

"I didn't know you were sweet on Billy," Zeke teased.

"I'm not."

"I remember when his family moved to town, and Billy enter the sixth grade with you at Longfellow School. All you girls had a crush on him."

Laura blushed but insisted, "That was then. He's too conceited now. But I don't think you seniors should pick on us sophomores."

"Now that it's settled," Zeke explained, "they're friends. Eddy invited Billy to go duck hunting with him and Pudge on Saturday."

Mom changed the subject to talk about the troop train that came through town that afternoon and how the U.S.O. had served 480 sandwiches and 30 gallons of coffee.

Tuesday's practice featured hard scrimmage between the teams. Rather than having the teams go the length of the field in a succession of

plays, Coach started them from several spots -- their own 10, own 40. opponents 35, opponents 15 -- and had them run several series from each spot. He was emphasizing to the quarterbacks that field position should influence play selection.

Once when Lefty called a double reverse from his team's own 20, Coach blew his whistle in the middle of execution and told Lefty that this was too dangerous to run near his own goal line. At another time he told Zeke that it was all right to pass on first or second down from midfield and beyond instead of waiting for third and long yardage. "Be enough unpredictable to keep the other team off balance," was his advice.

Part way through practice Zeke noticed that Mike Nolan's dad, a lawyer, was sitting in the stands, attired in a business suit. As the players left the field, Mr. Nolan approached Coach and started an animated conversation. When Zeke walked nearby, he picked up phrases like "you're favoring the colored boys" and "it's not fair to those who grew up in this

town." Coach's face reddened. So Zeke guessed that Mr. Nolan was protesting Flash's promotion at Mike's expense.

In the locker room Mike spoke in embarrassment, "I wish my old man would stay out of this. I can fight my own battles."

"That's the way parents are sometimes," Spike indicated. "I remember last year during basketball tryouts the father of a pretty mediocre player cornered Coach after practice and offered him a cushy summer job if his son made the team."

"What happened?" Mike inquired.

"Coach was polite and told him that each player has to make the team on his own merits. But I could tell he was seething inside. At the end of the week he cut the kid."

"And worked on the assembly line last summer," Zeke added.

Wednesday the teams had another hard scrimmage. Coach had the

second squad run especially the kind of plays he expected Kepler to run. On Thursday they had a lighter workout as they put finishing touches on their plans for their opening game at home.

Thursday night Zeke had a hard time getting to sleep. He was tired of running through plays in his mind, so he tried a relaxation technique he had read about in Readers' Digest. Think of the top of your head. Relax the scalp muscles. Let your forehead go limp. Your eyelids are so heavy you can't lift them. The tension eases out of your nose. Your jaw drops because it is so relaxed. Feel the muscles in the back of your neck loosening. Your shoulders are becoming relaxed. So are your biceps, your lower arms, each finger. And on down the body. The next morning Zeke recalled that he must have got to his calves before he fell asleep.

On Friday morning at school the principal called a special assembly to introduce the football team and build enthusiasm among the students. The pep band on stage was playing a rousing march as the students entered the

auditorium. Eddy's girl friend, Mary Lou, was head cheerleader and introduced the starting lineup one-by-one, plus Basil. As the snare drum rolled, they ran down the side aisle from the back of the auditorium and mounted the stairs to the stage. The students emitted a tremendous lion roar for each of them. Then the second team came in as a group. Another lion roar. And finally Coach Nickerson. The principal made a flowery speech about the honor and glory of Lofton High. Coach was more low key, saying that his team would do its best. But Eddy, speaking for the team, was more flamboyant in promising victory over Kepler and a winning season for Lofton High. After these speeches Mary Lou and the other cheerleaders led the student body through an assortment of yells, interspersed with rally tunes from the pep band.

Stanislaw Krasinski was astounded by his first exposure to this American custom. Flash was amazed that the level of excitement far exceeded that produced by his classmates at the high school in Kansas City last year. And

he was pleasantly surprised that the roar for Fred was as loud as for Eddy, and that he, a newcomer, received a roar just as fierce.

After all this stimulation, it was little wonder that Zeke and other team members had a hard time concentrating on their classes the remainder of the day.

As Zeke and Spike drove by the far side of the stadium a little after six on Friday evening, they noticed the Kepler bus parked near the entrance to the visitors' dressing room. Kepler was a larger high school from the North Central League. This would be the sixth in a series of home-and-home opening games between Lofton and Kepler. Kepler had the series lead, 3 to 2.

Tension was thick in the Lofton locker room as the players put on their equipment and slipped on their home white jerseys. Roberto and Rusty were jocular but focused. Pudge was unusually restrained. Fast Eddy

made a special point of offering encouragement to Wild Bill. Dutch quietly quizzed Stan on his blocks on different plays.

In one corner of room Basil, getting ready for his first football game, exclaimed,

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;

For he today that sheds his blood with me

Shall be my brother."

"What's this blood-shedding?" Stan inquired nervously.

"Oh, don't let Basil upset you," Pudge remarked. "He took English literature last year, and Miss Shepherd had the class memorize a lot of stuff from Shakespeare."

"Henry V, Act IV, Scene 3," Basil declared.

The Lofton team took the field exactly at 6:45. The school band was just assembling in the stands, but the snare drummer provided a rousing drumroll and a couple of trumpet players improvised a fanfare. The Kepler

team was already at their end of the field doing calisthenics. Roberto and Rusty led the Lofton Lions through their drills. Then the team split up into passers and receivers, punters, and linemen. After a while Zeke and Bulldog went over in front of the goalpost to help Basil try a few placekicks. Then the four backs and centers of each team ran through some plays.

At 7:20 Coach blew his whistle and assembled his team in front of the sideline benches. They looked across at the Kepler team on the other side.

At 7:25 an honor guard from the local army base marched to the center of the field. The band played the "Star Spangled Banner" as the crowd and the teams sang enthusiastically. Lofton students filled the stands behind the home team. Towns folks and a handful of Kepler supporters were on the other side.

As the honor guard marched off, the three officials in their black and white striped shirts and white knickers went to the center of the field. They beckoned the captains from each side to join them. Coach had appointed

Eddy and Zeke co-captains for the game -- Eddy to make the choice of receiving or taking one end of the field, Zeke to make decisions during the game whether to take or reject penalties. Kepler sent out a single player as captain, a big fellow, six foot tall and weighing around 200 pounds, probably a tackle. Zeke wondered if the Kepler coach was trying to send a message.

The referee let the visiting captain call the coin toss. "Heads," said the Kepler captain. It was tails. "We'll receive," Eddy announced. "We'll defend the south goal," the Kepler captain indicated. There was a slight breeze from the south. The referee mimed the results to the crowd. The teams took the field.

The snare drum rolled as the Kepler kicker started running, and the bass drum boomed as his foot hit the football. Eddy gathered in the end-over-end kick on the eight yard line, slanted right, cut back at the 25, and was finally brought down at the 32.

As the Lofton players headed for their huddle, the Kepler team assumed

their defensive positions. Zeke noticed that the Kepler captain played right tackle, so he would be facing the left side of Lofton's offensive line. In the huddle he said, "Nice running, Fast Eddy. Now take a deep breath because we're starting with short punt 36 on one." That would be away from the big tackle.

"Granddad," Timmy wanted to know, "why did Zeke always start a game with short punt 36?"

"Two reasons," Granddad replied. "First, he read in a book on football that it was always good for the quarterback to call a familiar, uncomplicated play to begin the game. This would help settle the players' nerves.

"Second, sending the tailback off-tackle to the strong side, led by pulling linemen -- which 36 did -- has long been the most powerful play in football. This was the foundation of the single wing. It carried over into short punt and became a basic play of the T-formation with a

lateral from the quarterback to a halfback. It's the second option in the option-T.

"Going off tackle was a staple with the Green Bay Packers, who won the first two Superbowls, featuring guard Jerry Kramer and tackle _____ leading the way for halfback Paul Hornung. In the '80s the Washington Redskins featured a version called "counter Trey" to free John Riggins and other running backs and won the Superbowl twice. Emmitt Smith of the Dallas Cowboys, who led the National Football League in rushing the last three years, got much of his yardage off tackle. It's the greatest play in football!"

Grandma was passing through the room at the moment and remarked, "Paul, I don't see how you can be so rhapsodic about a football play."

"Helen, every sport features a distinctive play that players use decade after decade," Granddad responded. "In basketball it's the

pick-and-roll, which was many years old when I was in high school and is still used today in the slamdunk era.

"In baseball it's the double play, immortalized in a poem about Tinker to Evers to Chance, who turned numerous double plays for the Chicago Cubs during the first decade of this century. From Little League to the majors double plays are still used today as rally-enders.

"I don't know much about soccer, but I imagine that it, too, has a featured play."

"Yeah, its when _____," replied Timmy who played soccer in spring and summer.

As Bulldog snapped the ball to Eddy, Hank and Flash doubled-teamed the Kepler tackle, and Fred and Roberto joined together to force the end outward. Dutch went through the hole to block the linebacker, Zeke pushed the defensive halfback out of the way, and Eddy gained eight yards before the safety rushed in to nail him.

Zeke then called 427, handed the ball to Fred who went off tackle to the left. Spike and Pudge managed to contain the big tackle and Dutch blocked the end so that Fred picked up the first down with several yards to spare.

In the huddle Zeke asked Dutch, "Is your guard charging."

"And how!" Dutch answered.

"Okay, we'll fix him," Zeke exclaimed. "433 on two."

Dutch let the guard slip by and Hank trapped him to open up a wide hole for Eddy through the middle for another big gain. Zeke hit Spike with a pass over the middle between the two linebackers, yielding a first down in Kepler territory.

"These guys are a lot easier than last year," Roberto remarked as they reassembled in the huddle. But he bragged too soon. The Kepler defense dug in, stopped Fred in a quick opener from T-formation, and stymied Eddy off tackle to the left. Zeke tried to pass to Spike in the flat, but the Kepler tackle tipped the ball and it sailed incomplete. So Hank had to punt.

The Kepler receiver caught the ball on the five, scooted to the right, got by Spike, but Dutch drilled him on the 25. Last year Kepler had an offense similar to Lofton's, but this year they unexpectedly opened from T-formation. Lofton didn't have a lot of experience defending against the T, so Kepler made good yardage with plunges over center, dives between guard and tackle, the T-version of off-tackle, and quick passes over center and into the flat. They seemed headed for a touchdown when Fred stepped in front of an end running down-and-out, intercepted the ball, and ran it back to midfield.

Zeke stayed mostly with short punt, and Lofton combined eight running plays into three first downs. Inside the 20 Zeke switched to a double wing, and Eddy gained six yards in a reverse to the right. Hank made five more plunging off guard. With first and goal from the Kepler seven, the determined Lions cleared the path for Eddy to run off tackle to the right for the first Lofton touchdown of the season. In the stands the students roared.

The touchdown run ended the first quarter, but Lofton got to attempt

an extra point before changing ends of the field. As Basil came running on the field, a tremendous cheer went up from the band. When his kick sailed over the uprights, clarinets shrieked, trumpets and trombones blared, cymbals clanged, and the bass drum boomed.

As the Lions jogged to the near 40 yard line, Doc came out with a tray of paper cups filled with water. "You're looking great!" he enthused. Zeke and his teammates felt confident that they were off to a good start and told one another so as they rested.

In those days the game was entirely on the field. The players had to stay in the middle during timeouts and change of quarters and couldn't confer with their coaches on the sidelines. Only one person like Doc could come on the field with water during timeouts, and he couldn't talk with the players except within hearing of the officials.

The coach could send in instructions with a substitute, but Coach Nickerson did this sparingly. He expected the signal caller, usually the

quarterback but Brad Henderson the all-star tailback two years ago, to be the field general. This was Zeke's first experience with this role, and he felt that since they were off to a good start, his teammates could just rest between quarters.

On the other side of the ball the Kepler captain thought the opposite. He gathered his team around him and gave them an intense pep talk.

When play resumed, the Kepler receiver returned Hank's kickoff to the 28. On the first two plays the Lofton defense clogged the middle and limited the Kepler backs to small gains. On third down the Kepler quarterback, still in T-formation, lateraled to a halfback going around end, and he reached the 42 for a first down. Another lateral to the fullback going off tackle the other way produced six more yards. On the next play Rusty was overeager and jumped offside, giving Kepler a first down with the penalty.

With the ball now in Lofton territory, Roberto called the linemen and

linebackers together in a quick huddle and pleaded with them to tighten their defense. Mary Lou and the other cheerleaders got the crowd chanting, "Hold that line! Hold that line!" They did on the next three plays, and Kepler had to punt from the 40. The Kepler kicker aimed for the coffin corner and got a lucky bounce to put the ball out of bounds inside the five.

The Kepler captain's pep talk paid off because they were now much more aggressive defenders. They held Lofton to short yardage on the first two plays. Zeke, not wanting to risk an interception inside the 20, sent Eddy around end to the left, but he failed to pick up a first down. Kepler mounted an all-out rush to block Hank's kick, but he got it away safely. The Kepler receiver signaled for a fair catch near the Lofton 40.

By now Kepler had found Rusty a tougher defender than Pudge, so they aimed more plays to their right. Displaying some fancy ballhandling from T-formation and a couple judicious passes, they scored in seven plays.

As Kepler lined up to attempt the extra point, the Lofton students in the

stands pleaded, "Block that kick! Block that kick!" The snap from center bounced before reaching the quarterback, who struggled to set it upright. The kicker hesitated. Dutch burst up the middle and dove to block the low, late kick. So Lofton retained the lead, 7 to 6.

Nick decided that this was a good opportunity to give his second team running backs some game experience, so he sent in Billy, Pat, and Sal but retained Zeke at quarterback. He replaced the tackles, too, giving Jiri and Jolly a chance to play.

Billy received the Kepler kickoff and brought it out to the 25. The subs performed well and picked up a couple of first downs before the half ended. As Billy left the field, Eddy walked up to him and said, "Nice running, Wild Bill." He replied, "Thanks, Fast Eddy."

In the locker room between halves Nick praised his team. He spent most of the time at a blackboard offering instruction on defending against Kepler's T-formation. He advised linebackers to quickly fill the holes but for

halfbacks not to commit themselves prematurely.

When the teams took the field to begin the second half, Kepler positioned two players deep to receive the Lofton kickoff. Roberto shouted to his teammates, "Look out for a reverse or fake reverse." But Kepler played it straight, and their receiver return Hank's kick up the middle to the 27. Coach's advice on how to stop the T was effective. Kepler struggled hard to make a first down but couldn't make a second one and had to punt.

The Kepler coach, though, must have offered his players good advice on how to stymie Lofton's offense. They contained Eddy and Fred as they attempted to run off tackle, but Zeke hit Spike on a buttonhook for a first down. For the first time in the game, Zeke called short punt 217 with Hank as ballcarrier. This surprised the Kepler defenders, who didn't look for the blocking back to run with the ball. Hank gained seven yards. But Kepler stopped Eddy for no gain, and Zeke threw too low to Fred in a running pass.

Hank got off a booming punt. The Kepler return man misjudged the

ball. It soared over his head and rolled to the Kepler 10 where Flash touch it down.

After making five yards on a running play, the Kepler quarterback surprised Lofton's defensive backs by passing on second, and their left end made a 15 yard gain. He attempted another pass on first down but threw behind the receiver cutting in front of Eddy. On the next play Roberto penetrated quickly, whopped the running back just as he caught a lateral, and popped the ball out of his hand. Flash dove on the ball, and Lofton took over on the Kepler 26.

Zeke realized that Kepler had figured out how to stop short punt plays, so he went to the double wing. He awarded Flash for the fumble recovery and let him run an end around. Flash managed to turn the corner before a linebacker shoved him out of bounds after a five yard gain. Eddy went the other way on a reverse and scampered inside the defensive end for a first down on the 14. Zeke faked a handoff to Fred going the other way and

rifled the ball to Flash slanting in. With second and four from the eight, Zeke set up his backs in a T. He faked a handoff to Hank crashing into the middle and lobbed a pass to Spike, who made a leaping catch in the corner of the end zone.

The crowd roared. This time the brass section was ready with a fanfare for Basil's entrance. He didn't disappoint them as he kicked the ball through the uprights. Lofton led 14-6.

Coach decided to rest some of his starters on the kick off. He sent in Stan, Wally, and Joe in the middle of the line and Chuck and Mike on the ends. Whether it was the subs inexperience or Kepler's determination, the receiver made it to the 40 before Hank, the kicker and defender of last resort, brought him down.

The Kepler quarterback called some T-formation plays not previously used and performed some dazzling ballhandling to keep the Lofton defense off balance. Coach would have liked to get the starters back in, but the rules in

those days allowed substitution only when the clock was stopped. This occurred only on incomplete passes, running out of bounds, fair catches, scoring, and when the referee called a time out to measure a first down or for an injury. None of these happened on this series until the quarter ended with Kepler in possession on the Lofton 18.

As the teams changed ends, Coach returned all the starters to the lineup. But Kepler was on a roll, and they scored on the fourth play of the fourth quarter. This time the snap was good, and the Kepler placekicker hit the point-after-touchdown. The score was Lofton 14, Kepler 13.

By then fatigue was showing among the starters on both teams, so their coaches substituted liberally. Nick always kept a mixture of first and second team players. Lefty gave Zeke a rest and had Spike and Flash as his ends. When Zeke came back in, Chuck and Mike played end for a while. Stan and Wally came in together for an offensive series so that Wally, who had played right guard on the junior varsity, could help Stan remember his blocks. Not

taking any chances, Stan had his blocking assignments written on a piece of tape wrapped around his wrist.

For the next six minutes neither offense got beyond midfield, and the teams exchanged punts. After Billy was pushed out of bounds running back the Lofton kick, Coach returned all the first team to the field. The Lions made a first down in two plays. Then Zeke called for a lateral from a T-set to Eddy sweeping around end. Unexpectedly the Kepler center moved from linebacker into the line. Bulldog handled him, but the guard, who he usually would have blocked, slipped through and tapped the ball as Zeke pulled his arm back to lateral. Kepler recovered on the Lofton 35.

Kepler now geared up for its final charge. They ran a combination of quick openers, end sweeps, and short passes to gain first down on the Lofton nine yard line.

Roberto and Rusty pleaded with their teammates to dig in. The first down play went in Pudge's direction, and he held the Kepler halfback to a

two yard gain. The fullback plunging up the middle got the ball to the three. On third down the Kepler quarterback faked to a halfback and lofted the ball to the corner, but Fred leapt high and deflected it.

With fourth and goal at the three the fullback took the handoff, made a running dive over the pile, but Hank dove at the same time and stopped him just short of the goal line. The linesman place the ball six inches from the goal. Lofton gained possession.

In those days there was no game clock on the scoreboard, so Zeke hurried over to the linesman, who was timekeeper, and asked, "How much time is left in the game?"

"I'll tell you when the game is over, Sonny," he replied gruffly.

Zeke guessed that there was less than a minute left, but he wasn't sure. He didn't want to risk a safety and give Kepler two points. Because Hank had been kicking well, he decided to punt away. Unfortunately the ball went off the side of Hank's foot and skittered out of bounds near the 20.

The Kepler quarterback took advantage of this unexpected opportunity by throwing to a halfback, who went out of bounds at the 10 yard marker. Then he hit an end in the end zone as Fred dove for the ball and missed. Kepler now had a 19-14 lead. The kicker made the point-after-touchdown kick to make it 20-14.

Coach sent in instructions for Eddy and Fred to be the deep receivers, Eddy on the left Fred on the right. If Fred got the ball, he would give it to Eddy on a reverse. If Eddy got the ball, he would fake a reverse and keep it. Either way blockers would try to open a path along the right sideline.

The kick went to Fred, who handed it to Eddy, as instructed but faked possession and continued full speed to the left. This fooled some of the Kepler defenders, and Eddy sped along the right sideline. The Lofton kicker, the last tackler between him and the goal line, was waiting at the Lofton 45. Eddy cut back sharply toward the middle -- too sharply, for his feet got

tangled and he fell.

Before the kickoff Zeke had called the first play. He sent Spike deep on the left, Flash deep on the right, and Eddy straight down the middle. He had Fred and Hank to stay and block so that he would have enough time to deliver the ball. Miraculously Spike got open and caught the ball on the Kepler 35 where he was tackled in bounds near the sideline. Before the Lofton team reached the new line of scrimmage, the gun sounded ending the game. Kepler won.

The Lofton players shook hands perfunctorily with their opponents and dragged themselves off the field. In the locker room Coach came around and complemented various players on aspects of their play and told them that they would rebound. He offered no criticism to anyone. Zeke sat morosely in front of his locker, half-undressed, then finally headed for the showers. As the players put on their street clothes, Doc tried a few cheerful words, but nobody wanted to be cheered up.

The Saturday sports page reported:

"LAST MINUTE LOSS FOR LIONS"

"Kepler Prevails 20-14"

The front page news stories were headed:

"Four Jap Ships Sunk by Allies"

"Naval Base of Tallin Falls to Red Troops"

Saturday Barbara went out of town with her folks to attend her grandparents 50th wedding anniversary. The movie that week was William Bendix in "The Harry Ape." But rather than go alone or with some guys, Zeke stayed home and read the condensed version of ___ in the Readers' Digest. He also perused at a *Life* magazine story on the 1944 presidential election with President Franklin D. Roosevelt seeking a fourth term versus New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey on the Republican ticket.

March 30, 1994

7. League Play Commences

As Zeke was dressing for practice Monday afternoon, Coach asked him to drop into his office before going out on the field. When Zeke appeared, Coach beckoned him to sit down.

"Zeke," Coach began, "basically you called a good game against Kepler in your first full game as quarterback. You ran a good mixture of plays, and you had a good sense of field position most of the time. However, you made a couple of mistakes toward the end of the game."

Zeke shifted his body but didn't reply.

"You should not have punted on first down after we stopped the Kepler drive," Coach continued.

"I thought the game was about over," Zeke explained, "but the linesman wouldn't tell me the time left."

"That old geezer. He's an aging athlete who teaches science at the teacher's college. Always was hard to get along with. But that's no excuse

for punting."

"With a one point lead I didn't want to risk a safety,"

"There are other ways to avoid that. The best call would've been a quarterback sneak out of T-formation. It's almost impossible to lose yardage and you probably could have gained two or three."

"It never occurred to me."

"Then you should've run a quick opener from a T or 36 from short punt. You might not have made first down in three plays, but you might've run out the clock. At least you'd have got the ball out farther so that Hank wouldn't be pressed against the end of the end zone for his kick."

"I suppose you're right."

"It's my fault for not preparing you for this contingency."

„ "It was my call. I'll take the blame for it."

"Another reason you didn't call a quarterback sneak, Zeke, is your reluctance to run with the ball yourself."

"We've got enough good ballcarriers without me, Nick."

"I know you're not afraid of the contact. You're a hard tackler and a determined blocker. I've seen you run back several interceptions, and you're a pretty decent runner."

"I don't want to be a ballhog."

"I think the problem is that story in a boys' magazine a couple of years ago, about the quarterback who was so humble that he never called his own signal."

"Yeah, I remember it."

"In Hi-Y they teach you Christian humility. That's a nice virtue. I like players who aren't braggarts. But you should understand that our running offense, especially in short punt, is designed so that in every ten plays the tailback carries the ball five times, the right halfback three times, the blocking back once, and the quarterback once. When you don't run with the ball, you diminish the offense ten percent because the other team keys on the other

backs."

"I never thought of it that way."

"So, Zeke, this week in scrimmage, I want to you to run with the ball about a fourth of the time to get used to the idea."

"If you say so, Nick. And what was my other mistake."

"When Spike caught the last pass of the game -- a super throw from you, by the way -- you should've called time out. This would've given us one more play and one last shot for a touchdown."

"That never occurred to me either."

"No, I've been negligent by not teaching you tactics for the closing minutes of close games. I assumed that you had picked up what to do by watching games in previous seasons."

"I guess I haven't. But if the situation arises again, I'll know what to do."

"You're a quick learner, Zeke. I'm telling you these things to make you a better quarterback. I'm not scolding you or blaming you for losing the

Kepler game. It was a team effort, and that includes the coaches. We made touchdowns together. We made other mistakes along the way. And we lost together. It was a team loss, not the fault of any individual."

As Zeke left Coach's office, Spike was waiting outside.

"What was that about?" Spiked asked him.

"I'll tell you later. Are you going to tell him about yourself?"

"I guess I have to."

As Coach came out of his office, he noticed that Spike had a worried look on his face and asked, "What's the matter, Spike?"

"I've been grounded, Nick," Spike stammered.

"Grounded?"

"By my old man. He found one lousy beer cap on the back floor of his car on Sunday after I used it Saturday night, and he says that I have to be in by seven o'clock for the rest of the week."

"Including Friday night?"

"Friday and Saturday, too."

"You won't be able to make the trip to play Ashmont?"

"No, and it's not even my fault. Because Zeke's girl was out of town, I double-dated with Buddy Norton."

"Yeah, I've had him in gym. Sort of a flasher dresser."

"That's the one. He had a couple of bottle of beers in the car. I didn't have one, I swear it, Nick, and neither did the girls. But my old man insists that drinking and driving don't mix, not even drinking by passengers. So he grounded me. Couldn't you talk to him, Nick?"

"No, Spike. Your father sets the rules for you. Whatever he determines I respect and will go along with."

"Darn."

"So I guess you'll have to practice with the second team this week. We'll let Chuck and Mike divide the time playing left end with the first team."

"If you think Spike's dad was strict," Timmy inserted, "You ought to

hear the rules my dad has."

"You're lucky, Timmy, that he cares," Granddad assured him.

On the field Dave already had the team engaged in calisthenics when Zeke, Spike, and Nick arrived. After the players finished warming up, Coach gathered them around to assess their performance in the Kepler game. He combined praise with suggestions to different players for improvements in blocking, tackling, and ballhandling. He didn't mention before the team what he had told Zeke privately about play selection during the closing minute. Nor did he criticize any other player for failure to pull off a heroic play to save the game.

Monday's practice was a light workout. Among other things it gave Zeke an opportunity to work with Chuck and Mike on pass patterns.

On Tuesday the team got back to hard scrimmaging. They had a strong sense of determination to get on a winning track. Ashmont, this week's opponent, was league champion last year, but some of their best

players had graduated. So the Lofton team felt they had an excellent chance to win their league opener.

Zeke took Coach's advice and called short punt 45 as the first play. He received the snap, turned around, faked the ball to Fred as he ran left, kept it and plunged through a sizable hole created by Pudge and Dutch. The linebacker had moved out to follow Fred, so Zeke made a seven yard gain. Thereafter, Zeke carried the ball every fourth play: taking a handoff from Fred on 246 and going off-tackle to the right, a quarterback sneak from T-formation, a fake reverse from double wing going through the six hole.

"You trying to be a ballhog?" Eddy jested.

"Nick wants me to help relieve the load on his star running backs," Zeke responded with a twinkle in his eye.

Zeke made good gains because his line blocked tenaciously. The other backs made good yardage, too, and so did Flash on an end around. The first team's passing game, though, was ragged in the Tuesday scrimmage.

Although Spike was slower than Chuck and Mike, he had a knack for getting open. Zeke knew he would miss him in Friday's game.

Coach observed what was happening and had Zeke throw more passes than usual in the Wednesday scrimmage. This helped so much that after practice Spike half seriously, half jokingly accused Zeke of setting up one of the juniors to keep Spike from returning to the starting lineup after his curfew was over.

"You know I wouldn't do that to my grade school buddy," Zeke reassured him.

During the light workout on Thursday, the Lofton team was performing with great confidence. They were indeed ready for the league opener against Ashmont.

On Friday instead of a morning pep rally in the school auditorium, the pep band, cheerleaders, and lots of students assembled in the school parking lot where the team boarded the bus for the trip to Ashmont. The

government had requisitioned all the school buses except one to provide transportation to war plants. The remaining one had 37 seats -- eight rows with two on each side of the aisle and five across the back, except that Coach had them squeeze six on the rear seat. That way they could have three full teams plus Basil the kicker, Doc the trainer, and the three coaches.

Nick and one of the assistant coaches always sat together on the first row on the right. The other coach sat halfway back to keep order if necessary. Traditionally the signal caller sat in the first row on the left just in case Nick wanted to talk strategy on the way to the game. Two years ago it was Brad, and last year Duke. Now it was Zeke's turn.

Since his usual seatmate, Spike, was not going on this first trip, Zeke boarded the bus alone and flopped in the seat behind the driver. As Eddy got on, Zeke asked, "Want to sit up front with me?"

"No," Eddy answered. "I promised Pudge I'd sit with him."

A few players later Bulldog climbed aboard. "Here's a place for you,

Richard," Zeke indicated.

"Good," Bulldog replied as he climbed over Zeke to take the window seat.

"We can talk about snap count and things like that."

After the bus headed out of town, Doc passed out snack sacks prepared by the school cafeteria.

"Let's see if they've kept up their tradition," Bulldog remarked as he opened his. "Yep. Ham and cheese on white bread, an apple, and a pint carton of milk."

"I suppose it would be bad luck to change," Zeke commented.

As they ate, they detected an aroma of spicier food.

"It smells like Pudge brought his usual supplement," said Bulldog.

"That's an advantage of coming from a restaurant family," Zeke added.

And he thought, that's why Eddy wanted to sit with Pudge -- as well as being good friends.

As it turned out, Zeke and Bulldog didn't discuss football at all. They

talked about their girl friends, Hi-Y, the war, what Bulldog was learning in his world history course, and the second hand roadster Bulldog's dad had bought him.

Across the aisle Nick and Hal talked about the tight pennant race in the American League. Detroit was one game ahead of St. Louis. To win the pennant the Browns would have to sweep their final four game series with the third-place New York Yankees, who were three games off the pace, and the Tigers would have to lose twice to the last-place Washington Senators. The St. Louis Cardinals had clinched the National League pennant a week ago and were hoping for an intra-city World Series against the Browns.

Only after they entered Ashmont did Nick mention football, and then to assure Zeke that he expected him to call a good game.

What the Lofton players noticed most during the pre-game warmup was that the light poles on the Ashmont field were shorter than Lofton's.

That meant a high punt would almost disappear from sight before descending.

"Don't let this bother you," Eddy told Billy. "It's just like in baseball catching flies in the outfield. You know where the ball is coming down by watching it go up."

Roberto was co-captain with Zeke. He called "tails" and lost the coin toss. Ashmont chose to receive. Roberto selected the end of the field with the wind behind them.

Hank got off a good kick. Flash got down fast and nailed the Ashmont runner inside the 20 yard line. On the first play the Ashmont tailback made a three yard gain on the left side of Lofton's line.

"They've got some of their best linemen back from last year," Roberto told his teammates as they awaited the next play. "Their backfield's new except for the fullback. They'll be tough to run against, but I think we can stop their backs."

It was a good assessment. Ashmont made only short yardage on their initial running plays but did manage to pick up a couple of first downs. By then the Lofton players fully realized that Ashmont's talkative left end had returned. He had a comment on every play.

After two more short gains, the Ashmont quarterback missed his receiver on third and five from their own 47. On the ensuing punt Eddy had more trouble fielding the ball than he expected because of the low lights, so he signaled a fair catch.

Starting from the 25, Lofton quickly discovered that the Ashmont line was indeed solid and their linebackers were hard, aggressive tacklers. It took three running plays for the Lions to eke out a first down.

By then the Ashmont left end had started heckling Flash, who faced him, with blatantly racist comments. Flash got some revenge with some solid blocks, but the heckler continued.

"If he calls me one more nasty name," Flash raged in the huddle, "I'm

going to bust him in the face."

"Yeah, and get thrown out of the game," Fred admonished him. "Don't you see? That's what he wants you to do."

After two more running plays yielded only seven yards, Zeke went to a double wing for a pass play. Chuck, substituting for Spike, was wide open, but he dropped the ball.

With the clock stopped Zeke, as field captain, had chance to complain to the referee about the heckling. He knew that baiting was a five yard penalty.

"He's just talkative," the referee responded. "I haven't heard anything I would call baiting."

The Ashmont end was clever enough to talk quietly with his most provocative comments.

Quickly Zeke returned to the huddle and had Hank kick away.

After a short runback Ashmont started its next series from their own

30. This time they did better. With four running plays and a completed pass, they moved into Lofton territory.

By then Zeke had noticed that the Ashmont quarterback licked his fingers both times he had passed. When he did it again on the next play, Zeke kept a sharp eye on the Ashmont end on his side of the field, the quiet one. Sure enough the quarterback dropped backed to pass. Zeke held back just enough to make the end look as if he was open and then stepped in front of him for an interception. He crossed midfield before being forced out of bounds.

Eddy gained five yards on trap play through the center of the line. Flash buttonhooked and caught Zeke's pass for the first down. With this play the quarter ended.

As the teams passed one another exchanging ends of the field, the Ashmont end had one more dig for Flash. He was really seething as he joined his teammates Doc's refreshments -- some cups of water.

"I'll take care of him for you," Rusty told him. "Zeke, on the next play, call 36 and let me trade places with Roberto so I can clobber their left end."

Zeke did as Rusty requested.

"You don't need to help me double team that sucker," Rusty told Fred as they broke out of the huddle."

Rusty lined up as guard and Roberto moved out to tackle. At the snap of the ball, Rusty quickly pulled to his right, headed for the charging end, and hit him with a tremendous cross-body block. Fred, freed from his blocking assignment, led interference through the hole, and knocked down the linebacker. Eddy breezed through the huge hole, cut back to the left, and picked up 15 yards before the Ashmont safety brought him down.

Back at the line of scrimmage Rusty was still on top of the Ashmont end. He was doing the talking. The linesman noticed them and said, "Get up boys."

They did. The Ashmont player massaged his right arm.

"I don't think he'll be bothering you anymore, Flash" Rusty remarked in the huddle.

"What'd you do to him?" Bulldog inquired.

"Let's just say that I twisted his arm," Rusty laughed.

Zeke decided to take Coach's advice and run the ball himself. On a fake reverse from double wing he slipped off tackle for six yards. But on the next play the Ashmont defense stopped Fred at the line of scrimmage.

On third down Zeke told Flash to cut over the middle for a pass. He instructed Mike, who had taken Chuck's place at left end at the beginning of the quarter, to go down and out. As Mike headed downfield, he noticed that the halfback was defending the sideline, so he cut in and almost collided with Flash as they crisscrossed. All Zeke could do was throw the ball away, deep into the end zone.

Basil came in on fourth down to try a field goal. Zeke set the snap down on the 24. Basil gave it all he had. His kick was right down the

middle but fell short of the goalpost.

Ashmont's offense finally got in sync and displayed the zest of last year's championship team. With a judicious mixture of dives, slants, sweeps, reverses, and passes, they marched the length of the field and scored the first touchdown of the game. Their kicker hit to give Ashmont a 7-0 lead.

Lofton's first team running backs had worked hard on defense during the Ashton drive, so Coach sent in Billy, Pat, and Sal but left Zeke in the game. Billy headed up the sideline with the Ashmont kickoff and reached the 33. The fresh backs did well and advanced the ball to the Ashmont 30 before time ran out in the half.

In the locker room Coach asked Rusty and Roberto, "What was going on when you two traded positions on 36? Why were you piled on their end so long, Rusty?"

"Well, the truth is, Coach," Rusty confessed, "that fellow was saying some unkind things about Flash because of his skin coloration. I felt he needed

instruction on how gentlemen should act, so I arranged to have a private conversation with him."

Rusty's teammates roared hilariously. Even Coach almost broke into laughter.

"You and Bob should know better than anyone that I don't like you to change plays to your own liking," Coach stated firmly. "You didn't hurt him deliberately, did you, Rusty?"

"Nope," Rusty replied. "No more than in wrestling."

Turning to Flash, Coach said, "Sorry, Flash, that everyone in our league isn't totally civilized."

"That's all right, Nick," Flash responded. "I'm proud to be a Lion." He walked over and put his arm around Rusty, saying "Thanks, friend."

"We're teammates," Rusty declared. "We support one another."

On the opening kickoff of the second half, Eddy made a decent return. As they lined up for the first play, Zeke noticed that the Ashmont ends had

switched sides, and the talkative one was quiet. The Ashmont coach must have wanted to diffuse the situation. But he also must have raised their spirits, for they mounted a tenacious defense.

Zeke tried some double wing plays, but the Ashmont defenders stayed home and held reverses to minimal gain. He threw a couple of times from T-formation but only for short gains. So the Lions had to punt from the 50 on their first possession.

The defensive battle continued as each team failed to pick up a first down and had to punt. Hank's second kick of the half was a long one. But this meant that the Ashmont received had some running room. He used it to good advantage with a 30 yard return. With good field position Ashmont moved the ball to the Lofton 15 and scored on a field goal to take a 10-0 lead.

Coach replaced the interior of the line to provide fresh blockers. The Ashmont coach countered by replacing his linemen. These changes proved to

be to Lofton's advantage, for Jiri, Joe, Wally, Stan, and Jolly opened some good holes for Eddy, Fred, and Hank. And Flash played "I'll show you", both as a blocker and a receiver. The Lions were almost to midfield when the quarter ended.

The regular linemen of both teams returned to the field. As play resumed, Fred struggled for three yards off tackle. On the next play Dutch started to pull out too soon, so Lofton was socked with a five yard penalty. On a reverse Eddy regained four of the lost yardage. Then Zeke hit Flash in the flat for another five, making it fourth and three from the Ashmont 47.

Zeke felt it was now or never, so he called a pass play to Chuck over the middle. The Ashmont linebacker brushed Chuck as he ran by, and Zeke's pass grazed his fingertips and fell incomplete.

As Ashmont took over on downs, Lefty came in for Zeke. Mike took Flash's place.

"You should have punted on fourth down," Coach admonished Zeke on

the sidelines.

"I thought it was worth the risk," Zeke replied. "It's getting late in the game."

"It's not that late. We still have almost a quarter left. What you did was give Ashmont an extra 30 to 35 yards -- three first downs. The way Hank has been kicking and Flash and others have been getting downfield, we could've pinned them inside their 20, held them, and forced a punt. Then we would have the ball back in good field position."

"One game I call a punt when I shouldn't have. The next game I don't punt when I should. I guess I just don't understand your kicking philosophy, Nick."

As Zeke watched helplessly from the sideline, Ashmont cross the 50 and moved relentlessly for another score. On the extra point the center made a faulty snap, the quarterback got the ball down crooked, and the kicker missed. Even so Ashmont led 16-0.

Coach sent Zeke back in for the offensive series along with Billy, Pat, and Flash. But no matter how hard the Lofton players blocked and how strong the backs ran, the Ashmont linemen and linebackers were even tougher and stronger. Without Spike the passing game was too weak to compensate.

When Ashmont got the ball back, the Lofton defenders kept them in check and prevented them from scoring again. But the Lions remained scoreless and lost their first league game. They were 0-2 for the young season.

In the shower after the game Basil felt called upon to give his teammates some perspective on their second loss in a row.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity," he recited, "which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head."

Someone reached behind him and turned off the hot water in his shower.

"Yipes," he shouted as the icy chill hit him.

Later as they headed for the bus, Bulldog took Basil aside and told him, "It's better to let the sting of defeat wear off before applying a poultice of philosophy."

Zeke, feeling that he was in Coach's doghouse for not punting on fourth down, bypassed the front seat and headed for the rear. Dutch and Stan were already there.

"I'm glad you're going to sit with us, Zeke," Dutch declared. "Nighttime bus rides make Stan nervous. You can help me reassure him."

"It's no different than riding in the daytime, Stan," Zeke noted. "It may be dark outside, but it's the same in here."

"It's what it reminds me of," Stan indicated.

"Stan had two long nights on a bus when his family was escaping from Poland," Dutch explained.

"It was -- what's the English word -- scary," Stan reflected. Then he

fell silent as the bus started up and headed out of town. By then Bulldog had joined them.

Finally Zeke said, "I'm willing to listen if you want to talk about it."

"Well, you see," Stan began haltingly, "my father was a leader in the Polish resistance against the German occupation. He lived mostly deep in the forest where even the Nazis were afraid to go. Every once in a while he would appear at two in the morning for a brief visit and to get some food.

"My mother told the Germans that my father was killed in battle during the first months of the war. But then a Polish informer told the local Nazi commander that this wasn't true, that father was hiding with the resistance.

"So they dragged mother into their headquarters and questioned her for six hours. She wouldn't say anything but that he was dead. But they didn't believe her. Our source inside the Nazi operation told us that they were going to execute our whole family as an example: mother, my two sisters, my brother, and me. We took this seriously because there had been a

lot of executions in our town."

"That must've been terribly frightening," Zeke commented.

"Yes, very. We sent word to father to get his advice. He came in the middle of the night and told us we ought to get out of the country."

"How could you?" asked Bulldog.

"The best way was to make our way to the Baltic coast and get a boat to Sweden," Stan explained. "But the coast was 80 miles to the north. The only way to get there safely was to go along back roads at night."

"You had to walk?" Zeke inquired.

"No, the resistance had an old bus, smaller than this one. It would hold about 20 people comfortably. They had a couple of men who knew the roads so well that they could drive them in the dark without headlights on. Otherwise the Nazis would catch us."

By then the school bus was cruising along the countryside. It was pitch black outside.

"Imagine us driving without lights," Dutch remarked.

"So our family boarded the bus just after midnight, except my father, who's still in Poland. There were about 25 others who were fleeing, too, so it was quite crowded. We could make only 10 to 15 miles an hour, so it would take two nights to reach the coast."

"What did you do during the day?," Zeke wanted to know.

"We stayed in a cave in a forest with camouflage over the bus. The second night we were about ten miles from the coast when we saw headlights coming toward us. Quickly our driver pulled into a thicket. As we waited silently, we heard loud singing in the approaching vehicle. As it got closer, we realized it was a bunch of German soldiers riding in an open truck. They were drunk. But they were still dangerous."

"Gosh," Bulldog gasped. "What happened?"

"They went right by us. We waited fifteen minutes and went on our way. We reached the coast just before dawn, quickly boarded a fishing boat,

and headed for safety in Sweden. It was two nights I shall never forget."

"I wouldn't either," Zeke exclaimed. "It's no wonder a bus ride at night makes you nervous."

"But now I'm not afraid," Stan said with a sigh of relief. "I'm in America among friends."

Just then the school bus pulled into a diner halfway home to Lofton. As the team piled out, Coach located Zeke, took him aside, and indicated, "Maybe I was too hard on you, Zeke, for taking a chance by not punting. It's easier to call signals from the bench than in the game."

"That's all right, Nick," Zeke replied. "I'm still learning."

"I want to win every game," Coach declared, "even though I know we won't. But then I realize that it's just a game."

"Thanks, Nick. I've learned a lot tonight."

"So come on. I'll buy you a hamburger steak."

Sure he would! Coach had the meal voucher for the team.

The Saturday paper reported:

"Lions Shut Out by Ashmont in League Opener"

The front page banner read:

"Approaches to Rhine Bridges Destroyed"

Spike was under curfew for one more night, but he could have visitors at home. Zeke borrowed his dad's car, picked up Barbara and Joanne, and took them to Spike's house. That meant missing a movie with Barbara's favorite actor, Spencer Tracy in "The Seventh Cross", a film about seven Americans escaping from a German prisoner-of-war camp.

When they got there, Spike wanted to know all about the game. But Zeke was more interested in telling about Stanislaw's escape from Poland.

"That explains the look on his face," Barbara remarked.

"What look?" Joanne wanted to know.

"Like he's seen things he doesn't want to remember but can't forget,"

responded Barbara.

"Yeah. Things more important than football," Zeke sighed.

"That may be true," Spike noted, "but we still have to figure out a way to win a game."

"We'll beat Tanabe next week," Zeke affirmed. "I guarantee it."

"You better win," Joanne needled them. "Or Barbara and I will look for other beaux."

March 31, 1994

8. A Narrow Escape

On Monday during lunch hour the guys on the front steps of the school talked about how the miraculous Browns won the American League pennant by sweeping the Yankees while the Tigers lost two to the Senators, including Sunday's final game."

Spike, who knew a lot of baseball lore, said, "It's the first time since 1908 that the American League race was decided on the last day of the regular season."

After school as Eddy walked with Coach to the field, he asked him, "Nick, when was the last time one of your teams lost its first two games?" Eddy asked Coach as they walked to the field for Monday's practice.

"1939," he replied. "But then we won four straight and finished 6 and 3."

"How would it be if we went 7 and 2," Eddy wanted to know.

"Great, if you can do it."

"We will."

Coach carried that upbeat feeling into his discussion with the team about the Ashmont game. "They were league champions last season," he reminded them, "and averaged 24 points a game. Sure, they lost some running backs, but our defense was pretty solid most of the game. What bothers me is that our offense was sour. We're not creating holes for the backs. Ends aren't getting open for passes. Our plays are too predictable."

Zeke figured Nick meant his play-calling. After all, Coach had benched him for passing on fourth down. That still hurt a little.

"To provide an element of surprise in our offense," Coach continued, "we're going to use the option of shifting from T-formation to short punt or double wing."

"Like Notre Dame?" Eddy asked. The movie "Knut Rockne -- All American" was shown at a theatre in Lofton every fall since it came out in 1940.

"Something like that," Coach indicated.

"With music?" Sal inquired. In the movie Rockne taught his backfield the rhythm of the shift by playing a music hall tune.

"How about Benny Goodman?" Eddy piped up.

"Or Louis Armstrong?" asked Fred.

"Or Xavier Cugat?" Pudge blurted. "You know, the rhumba or the conga." Which he demonstrated: "One, two, three, kick!"

This broke up the team, including the coaches, for Pudge was far from a lithesome dancer.

"No music," Coach replied, "but you've got the right idea. The shift is very rhythmic. Bulldog, grab a ball, and I'll demonstrate."

Bulldog took a stance as center, and Coach stood behind him with hands underneath like a T quarterback.

"We start in T formation," Coach explained. "As quarterback, I say 'Ready, set, hike -- one, two, three.'"

As he counted he stepped back two steps and one to his left into quarterback position for short punt.

"In the same manner the other backs shift from T to short punt, or you can go to double wing. Then the quarterback continues the count: 'Ready, set, hike -- one, two, three.' Zeke, you call the play by saying, for example, 'Short punt 36 on the second one.' That tells everybody that a shift is intended. So Eddy, Fred, Hank, and Zeke you try it."

They took their positions and followed Coach's instructions with 36 on the second one. Then short punt 427 on the second two. And double wing 346. On double wing Eddy and Fred had to move quickly to get out to their wing positions.

"You've got to come to a complete halt after the shift," Coach warned. "And linemen have to keep track of the count and not move until the second 'one' or 'two' or whatever the count is. And, of course, Zeke, Lefty, and you other quarterbacks, you can run T-formation plays without the shift. The

linemen have to pay attention to whether the snap is on the first or second 'one'.

"That's a lot of thinking for linemen, Nick," Eddy chided.

"Thanks for the compliment, Buddy," Rusty intoned.

"You can still go directly into short punt without shifting," Coach continued. "Just shift enough to keep the defense off balance. That's where the surprise element comes in."

With this orientation completed, Coach instructed all the backfields and their centers to practice shifting while linemen worked on blocking. So five sets of backs went up and down the field working out their shift routine.

"This will be fun when we get the hang of it," Zeke remarked.

"This should take Tanabe by surprise," Fred exclaimed. Tanabe was this week's opponent and another strong team.

As the backs and linemen came back together after a while, Pudge asked, "Nick, how come these guys get all the fun?"

"Because they have nimble feet," Coach replied.

"Oh, anyone can do that," Pudge insisted. "We'll show you."

With that he got Bulldog in position as center, crouched behind him, got Dutch, Rusty, and Roberto to be the other backs, and started the routine:

"Ready, set, hike -- one, two, three." As he moved back, he got his feet tangled and tumbled to the ground. As laughter roared, Eddy and Zeke rushed out to help him up.

"Stick to what you do best, Pudge," Eddy admonished him joyfully.

"Like creating holes for me to run through."

Zeke noticed that Coach was enjoying the spectacle. He seem relieved that his players could loosen up with a little horse play. He didn't want them sulking all week.

In the locker room the guys talked some more about the all-St. Louis World Series that would begin on Wednesday.

Coach regaled the players by telling how he sat in the bleachers in St.

Louis for the middle three games of the '34 series. It was Detroit versus the Cards' famous Gas House Gang of Pepper Martin, Leo Durocher, Ducky Medwick, Frankie Frisch, Dizzy and Paul Dean, and others. The seniors and juniors had previously heard about the antics of Pepper Martin and the tale of Dizzy Dean, the star pitcher serving as a pinch base-runner, being knocked out by an errant throw but pitching the next day. But they listened as intently as the sophomores and ninth graders.

On Tuesday the teams tried the shift routine in a hard scrimmage. There were some missteps, but they got better as practice proceeded. Zeke liked it because he could run a quick opener from T formation on an early count, even the first "set" or "hike". He could also take the ball, raise up, take a step or two backward, and hit Spike with a quick pass over the middle. He sure was glad to have Spike back with him.

During lunch hour on Wednesday with the World Series about to begin, Doc was chatting with Pudge, Eddy, Basil, Zeke, and Spike on the school

steps. "I'll bet anyone a dollar that I can tell you the score of today's series game before it begins."

For a moment Basil seemed to be making a quick calculation in his head.

Then he said, "I'll take your bet. What's the score going to be?"

"It's nothing to nothing," Doc answered, and all of the guys laughed.

"It can't be," Basil rebutted. "Somebody has to win."

"I said I knew the score before the game begins," Doc shot back. "Before the first pitch is thrown out and the game begins the score is nothing to nothing."

"You tricked me, you cur," Basil objected, annoyed but also jocular.

"It's an old trick," Eddy explained. "Happens every year in the locker room with somebody new on the team."

"You're this year's victim," Spike indicated.

"Pay up," Doc demanded.

"I guess I have to," Basil acknowledged as he pulled a dollar from his

billfold. "But I'll get even with you, Doc, one of these days."

"Thanks for the contribution to my education," said Doc as he pocketed the dollar.

"And to mine," concluded Basil.

"Hey, that's a good one," Timmy exclaimed. "I'll have to try it this year."

"You never heard it?" asked Granddad.

"No, never."

"I wonder when it died out?"

Wednesday afternoon Coach had the principal pipe the series broadcast into the gym on the P.A. system. Miss Quinn, school librarian who was an enthusiastic baseball fan, did likewise for students in study hall. The principal couldn't object because he was listening in his office.

St. Louis was the closest big league city to Lofton, so there were lots of Cardinal fans in town. The Browns were never much of a team, so they

didn't have a lot of support in Lofton. However, Coach Dave knew a utility outfielder for the Browns, a near-sighted fellow who wore thick lens and had a 4-F draft classification as physically unfit for military service. So Dave rooted for the Browns, along with Basil who favored all players wearing glasses.

In Wednesday's scrimmage the teams continued to perfect the shift. Coach also had them give special attention to double wing plays. He remember that Tanabe defenders were always vigorous in their pursuit, so he wanted Zeke to make ample use of reverses and an occasion a double reverse. Coach also taught them a new version of end around from short punt.

In the scrimmage Stan played half-heartedly. He was distracted by the news that in Warsaw the Germans had crushed the revolt of the Polish Underground Army that had been going on since the first of August. He didn't know the whereabouts of his father and was deeply worried. "If only the Russians had come to their rescue," he moaned, for the Red Army had

been moving steadily through what was once Poland.

Since it was a home game, the Friday pep rally was held at the end of the school day in the auditorium. The students roared for the Lions, but there was a feeling of apprehension in the air. It was time for them to start winning, but some of the students were beginning to have their doubts about this year's team. Zeke was confident, though, and made a short speech promising a victory over Tanabe.

It was a cool, crisp October night. Perfect football weather. During warmup Zeke notice that the Tanabe team at the other end of the field had several Negro players. So a repeat of last week's race-baiting was very unlikely. That was a relief.

As game co-captain, Rusty won the coin toss and chose to receive. Eddy fielded the opening kickoff on the ten and made it to the 28.

Zeke opened in T formation and handed the ball to Hank for a plunge

over right guard for a six yard gain. Then he called short punt 36 on the second two. When the backs started their shift, one of the Tanabe guards burst across the line and made contact. The offside penalty gave Lofton a first down.

"Coach was right," Zeke remarked in the huddle. "Shifting has its advantages. Same play -- 36 on the second two."

Eddy made five yards. Fred picked up three more with a quick opener from the T. Hank got the first down in a slant over left tackle.

Steadily Lofton moved down the field with a mixture of T plays and shifts to short punt. On one third down play Zeke popped the ball to Spike over the middle. He was sure glad to have him back.

When the Lions reached the Tanabe 20 Zeke put his backs into a double wing without shifting. The Tanabe defenders held Eddy to four yards in a reverse to the right. On second down Zeke ran right, faked a handoff to Fred going left, kept the ball himself and scampered off right tackle for an

eight yard gain.

Zeke returned to the T, gave the ball to Eddy who scooted quickly between Dutch and Pudge, dodged the linebacker, darted untouched into the end zone. The crowd roared with approval -- and relief that the Lions were finally showing their prowess.

Basil got his customary fanfare from the band as he trotted onto the field for the extra point. His kick was flawless. Lofton had an early lead, 7-0.

"That was easy," Roberto remarked to Zeke as they walked upfield to get into kickoff position. "Now all we have to do is stop Tanabe."

That they did on Tanabe's first possession. Tanabe worked from short punt, and their coach must have used the same manual that Nick used. It was like watching your own offense in a mirror. Zeke watched the guards and ran to the point of attack. He had taught Fred and Eddy the same technique. But the halfbacks and safety didn't make many tackles because

the linemen and linebackers were stopping the Tanabe runners. So after making a couple of first downs Tanabe had to punt. The tailback was their punter.

It was a short, low kick, and Eddy caught it in full stride. With his eye on the ball he didn't see the Tanabe end coming at full tilt. He hit Eddy low and hard, and another Tanabe player piled on. Eddy got up limping. Doc rushed out to help him off the field as Billy came in to take his place.

Zeke felt he should let Tanabe know that it didn't matter who Lofton's tailback was. They could make gains with anyone. So he sent Billy off tackle to the left from T formation on the first play. However, the Tanabe tackle slipped off Spike's block and stopped Billy at the line of scrimmage.

"I'm sorry he got away from me," Spike apologized in the huddle.

"That's all right," Zeke commented. "We'll go right back at him with short punt 37 on the second one."

So Lofton lined up in T formation, shifted to short punt. This time

Spike's block was secure, Zeke drove the end to the outside, and Dutch pulled through the hole to block the linebacker. Billy followed Dutch and then cut outside, where the halfback was waiting for him. But he picked up seven yards. Zeke got the first down with a quick pass to Flash over the middle. Two running plays netted another first down to end the first quarter.

After the teams changed the Lofton offense continued to roll. At third and seven Spike leapt high near the sidelines to catch the ball just beyond the first down marker. But on another pass play a Tanabe linebacker batted the ball away from Billy as he curled over the middle.

As they closed in on the Tanabe goal line, Zeke called a quick opener for Billy over the left side. Billy, though, apparently didn't line up deep enough and got to the exchange point before Zeke had fully turned around for the handoff. The ball flew loose, and the Tanabe tackle smothered it.

Starting from their own 15, Tanabe did better this time and made steady gains. A couple of times the tailback tossed the ball, but mostly it

was a running game because he was a better runner than a passer. In a play from the Lofton 22 the Tanabe tailback bolted off right tackle, then cut back and sprinted across the goal line. The try for extra point sailed wide right. So Lofton retained the lead, 7-6.

For the kickoff return Eddy came back in with his ankle tightly wrapped, joined by Pat and Sal. Coach had instructed Eddy and Pat to pair up as return men. The kick went to Pat, who made a 24 yard return. To test Eddy's ankle, Zeke had him run off tackle from short punt. He gained a half-dozen yards, but he wasn't quite as fast and couldn't cut as sharply.

With very little time left in the half, Zeke turned to a passing game. He got his team to the Tanabe 38 before the gun sounded to end the half.

At halftime Doc retaped Eddy's ankle, but clearly it was tender. Coach decided to start the second half with Fred at tailback and let Pat take Fred's place at right halfback. But Billy would get another turn at tailback.

After Tanabe received the second half kickoff, the Lions defenders were

tough and forced them to kick on the fourth down. The Tanabe defenders reciprocated, and Lofton had to punt without gaining a first down.

Hank's kick was short, so Tanabe started their second series in good field position. Led by inspired running from their tailback, they reached the Lofton 10 in eight plays. Roberto asked Zeke to call a time out in order to rally their defense. It was to no avail. On the next play the Tanabe tailback dipped his shoulder to fake an off tackle run inside Spike and then scooted around him on an end sweep for a touchdown. This time their kicker hit to give Tanabe a 13-7 lead.

Billy came in for Pat to play tailback, and Fred moved back to right half. A short kickoff sailed in Zeke's direction, much to his surprise. He pulled it in and made a ten yard return.

This time the Lions offense fell into place. Zeke passed more frequently. This caused the defensive backs to play looser, which in turn made runs more productive. The line opened good holes for Billy, but he tried to run over

linebackers and defensive backs rather than cut around them like Eddy did.

So he never made any long run.

Lofton was on the Tanabe 35 when the third quarter ended. The Lions continued to roll as play resumed. At the Tanabe 15, Zeke called a double reverse, first handing the ball to Billy, who gave it to Fred who dashed into the end zone as Zeke knocked down the last defender.

Coming onto the field, Basil waved his hand to the band to acknowledge their fanfare. And then he missed the extra point. So the game was tied at 13-13. When Basil went off the field, Coach had a few words to say to him about concentrating on the business at hand and ignoring the crowd.

As Lofton prepared to kick, Roberto called his teammates together and challenged them to stop Tanabe immediately. After a short kickoff return, the Lions defense held Tanabe to six yards on two running plays. A third down pass was incomplete, so Tanabe had to punt. As the kick drifted right, Billy grabbed it but his momentum carried him out of bounds on the Lofton

35.

Lefty came in as quarterback to give Zeke a rest and brought with him the second team line. A nifty run by Billy and a pass from Lefty to Mike put the ball into Tanabe territory. But then the Tanabe linemen toughened on two running plays, and Lefty overthrew Chuck going down and out.

With fourth and five from the Tanabe 43, Lefty called on Hank to punt. He had learned from Zeke's experience in the Ashmont game. Hank lofted a high kick, which gave Chuck and Mike time to get down under it. They sort of expected the Tanabe returner -- their shifty tailback -- to signal a fair catch. Instead he caught the ball, darted between their pincer, and headed for the sideline. He sidestepped Stan, cut back as Wally tried to force him out of bounds. Only Hank stood in his way. Hank got an arm on him, but he spun free and headed for the goal line to complete a 90 yard run.

Coach sent in the first team, except for Eddy, to try to block the extra point. He instructed Spike to rush up the middle between Bulldog and

Roberto and Zeke to take Spike's place as end. It was an inspired decision because Spike slipped between the guard and center, leapt high as the kick soared, and tipped it just enough to deflect it to the left. But Tanabe led 19-13.

Determined to keep his promise of a victory, Zeke used his best ingenuity in mixing the plays. Shifts out of T-formation to short punt continued to confuse the Tanabe defense. Although Zeke threw a couple of incompletions, he found Spike and Flash when he needed them most. Fred ran strong, and Hank did his part when he got the ball. Billy was all right, but Zeke had a feeling that Eddy would have made more yardage with the holes the line was creating. Billy tried to rely more on power than finesse.

Tanabe resistance stiffened inside their 20 yard line. With fourth and two from the 15, Zeke ran old reliable short punt 36 after shifting out of the T. The Tanabe halfback and safety teamed to stop Billy inches short of the first down.

Zeke quickly ran over to the linesman and asked, "How much time is left in the game?"

"Three minutes and ten seconds," was the reply.

Zeke returned to his teammates. "We've got three minutes left. If we stop them without a first down, we'll still have time to score."

The Lions were determined but too weak to stop the Tanabe running game. After making two first downs in four plays, Tanabe was out to their 35 yard line. Zeke called a time out to stop the clock and gird up the defense. On the next play they held the Tanabe tailback to three yards off tackle.

Zeke called another time out. As they huddled, Roberto told Rusty, "On the next play you cut behind me and see if you can stop their back behind the line of scrimmage."

Unexpectedly the Tanabe tailback dropped back to pass. As Roberto charged to the outside, Rusty slipped around to the inside, breezed passed the

guard, who was chasing Roberto, and rushed headlong for the tailback. As the Tanabe back released the ball, Rusty batted it into the air, right into Roberto's hands. Roberto chugged the 30 yards to the end zone as Tanabe players fruitlessly pursued. The game was tied at 19-19.

The crowd was roaring so loud when Basil rushed onto the field that the band's fanfare was covered up. Basil ignored them. Then an eery silence descended as Zeke knelt to receive the ball for the extra point attempt. Bulldog's snap was perfect. Zeke placed the ball perfectly upright with the laces away from the kicker. Basil's kick was perfect. Pudge and Rusty hoisted Basil on their shoulders as cymbals clanged, drums beat savagely, and the students roared and roared.

But quickly the referee broke up the celebration. "There's ten seconds of playing time left," he told the teams.

Coach sent in instructions to Hank to kick a squibber. As the ball spun downfield, Dutch, Bulldog, Flash, and Zeke broke through to smother the

receiver before he could make any headway. Tanabe tried one long, desperation pass, which Fred intercepted to end the game. The Lions had their first victory, 20-19.

Students poured out of the stand to congratulate Roberto, who modestly said, "The credit belongs to Rusty. All I had to do was run after he knocked the ball to me."

Zeke thought, "And part of the credit should go to the Tanabe tailback who was dumb enough to try a pass in that situation. What a strange twist of fate. He was hero with his 90 yard punt return and then goat with a blocked pass. I bet Basil knows an appropriate quotation for this."

But Basil was too busy receiving congratulations from teammates, band members, and other students.

Students were still abuzz over the last minute victory as they gathered in the gym for the first school dance of the year. It seemed like all the girls wanted to dance with Basil. Even Barbara, still wearing her band uniform.

"Look at all the attention that runt's getting," Rusty remarked to Roberto. "And you're the one who scored the winning touchdown."

"They expect heroics from me and you," Roberto replied. "He's an unexpected hero. Just like they all would like to be."

As Zeke danced with Barbara to "In the Mood", the trademark of the Glen Miller band, he asked her, "Why are all the girls so ga-ga over Basil?"

"Because he's so cute," she replied impishly.

"What about me?"

"You're Ezekiel, the preacher and the prophet. You're attractive in a different way."

Just then the band picked up its pace, and Zeke and Barbara switched to jitterbugging.

"Lions Eke Out Last Minute Victory" was the headline on the sports page of the Saturday paper. The story featured Roberto's and Rusty's last minute

feat and discussed the shifty new offense. It mentioned briefly that Basil made two out of three extra points.

The front page banner was: **"FIRST ARMY APPROACHES COLOGNE"**.

In afternoon Zeke and his dad had the radio on at the hardware store listening to the Series. During the third innning Mom entered the store with tears in her eyes. Laura was with her. Mom was clutching a yellow telegram and handed it to Dad.

Zeke read over his shoulder, "We regret to inform you that your son, Clyde Parker, has been wounded in combat in the European sector. He is now in satisfactory condition at a base hospital in England. Further information will follow."

"It doesn't say what kind of wounds," Mom pointed out.

"Or how serious," Laura added.

"But he's alive," Dad reassured them. "And it says he's in satisfactory condition. That must mean he's not going to die."

"Let's pray to God that he won't," Mom said somberly.

"I think he'll be all right," Zeke added hopefully. He didn't know for sure, but he felt he had to say something encouraging.

"You're just like your dad, Paul," said Mom. "You always look for the bright side of things." She gave Zeke a hug.

"Already I've learned from football that you should never give up," Zeke responded.

March 31, 1994

9. Dedication

Supper on Saturday evening at the Parker house was somber with long spells of silence. Even Laura, the family chatterbox, didn't have much to say. Clyde was on everyone's mind, but they had said all they could. Every other topic, including Lofton's first win, seemed inconsequential.

"Mom, if you want me to stay home tonight, I will," said Zeke during dessert.

"No," she replied, "life goes on. Have a good time while you can. You'll be the next one to go."

"But not until next summer, Martha," Dad declared.

"Whenever it is, it'll be too soon," Mom sighed.

At the movies with Barbara, Spike, and Joanne, Zeke excused himself during the newsreel to get some popcorn. They realized he didn't want to see any battle scenes. Fortunately the film was "In Society", featuring the slapstick comedy of Abbott and Costello, favorites of Zeke.

At the drive-in, Zeke's friends tried to maintain their hilarity. But Zeke wanted to talk mostly about Clyde -- how great a trombone player he was, his desire to play with one of the big bands, the trips they had made to their grandfather's farm, and other memories.

Spike tried to divert the conversation to football, talking about their squeaker win over Tanabe, how they ought to clobber Cranville next week. But even then Zeke got back to his chief concern, saying, "I'm going to dedicate my performance in the Cranville game to Clyde."

"Then you'll be a star," said Barbara reassuringly.

At church on Sunday the minister included Clyde in his pastoral prayer. Friends were particularly solicitous of Mom and Dad. "At least he's alive," Mom told them. She knew that three families from the church had gold stars in their windows, denoting a son's death in combat, and that there were 25 to 30 gold stars hanging in houses around Lofton, including one family that lost three when a destroyer went down in the Pacific. So it could have

been worse.

Monday the Parkers were glad to get back to their routine: Zeke and Laura at school, Dad at the hardware store, Mom at the USO.

At school the kids with gym in the afternoon and study hall in the library got to listen to the World Series. The Cards beat the Browns and took the Series, four games to two.

Coach started football practice by congratulating the team on their first victory of the season but pleaded, "Let's not wait until the last minute any more. It's too hard on my nervous system." The guys were surprised because Coach always seemed so calm on the sidelines.

During the light workout Coach gave particular attention to coverage of punts and kickoffs. "That's the first time in the last seven years that an opposing player ran a punt back for a touchdown against Lofton," he admonished. "You've got to get yourselves spaced better across the field and do a better job of open field tackling."

At the end of practice Coach said, "I know that you'll have your six weeks exams in the next several days. I hope you'll all well prepared. We don't want to lose any players because of poor grades."

Players had to have at least a "C" in all their courses to be on a sports team. The first marking period was at the end of six weeks, and most of the teachers gave a special exam to determine grades.

"I wish you hadn't got me into world history," Rusty told Roberto as they were walking from the field. "I'm afraid I'm going to flunk it."

"Me, too," replied Roberto. "It's not nearly as interesting as I thought it would be. I'm way behind in my reading."

"Maybe we can get somebody to help us," Rusty reflected.

"Like who?"

"Like Bulldog. You know, Richard the brain. He's in our class."

So after they were showered and dressed, they offered Bulldog a ride home in Rusty's Model T.

"This is a neat car," said Bulldog as he climbed aboard.

"Want to drive it?" Rusty asked.

"Not today but maybe sometime."

As they drove out of the school parking lot, Roberto broached the subject. "Bulldog, do you want to help us and the team?"

"In what way?"

"By helping us pass the world history exam."

"You mean review the readings with you? I'll be glad to."

"Well, what we had in mind," Rusty explained, "is to help us with the answers during the exam."

"Mr. Morris usually gives multiple choice exams," Roberto noted, "so we thought that we could work out some kind of signal system."

"That would be cheating," Bulldog objected. "I would never do that."

"But it's not for us alone," Rusty insisted. "It's for the good of the team.

If Roberto and I flunk, we'll be suspended from the team. Then where would

the team be."

"Stan and Jolly are pretty good players," Roberto continued, "but not nearly as experienced as we are."

"No, I can't," Bulldog maintained. "I'll come over to your house and help you study, but I won't give you answers during the exam."

"The trouble is," Rusty sighed, "is that we are so far behind with our reading, that we'll never get caught up before Wednesday's test."

"That's your trouble, not mine," Bulldog concluded. "Sorry."

Next day at school Bulldog told Zeke about the conversation. "What would you have done?" Bulldog inquired.

"I suppose the same as you," Zeke answered. "But I hope they pass. We sure need them."

At Tuesday's practice Zeke could tell that Roberto and Rusty were teed off with Bulldog, but he couldn't intervene because Bulldog had spoken to him confidentially. However, it didn't affect the performance of the offensive

line during the scrimmage. They blocked hard and supported one another.

Eddy's ankle was much better, and he could run full speed. So that was a relief.

The third time the first team had the ball in the scrimmage, Coach called Billy from the defensive backfield and told him, "Stand next to me as they run their plays. I want you to watch Eddy. You're a strong runner so you try to run over defenders. In contrast Eddy tries to avoid them. He has a knack for picking his holes, and he's skillful at cutting back against the grain after he gets beyond the line."

Billy and Coach watched for a while, but the second team line wasn't allowing much yardage on runs. Suddenly Coach stepped into the huddle and commanded, "Eddy, you sit this one out. I'm taking your place. Zeke, run 36."

Without wearing any pads or a helmet, Coach lined up at tailback. On Zeke's call, Bulldog snapped Coach the ball and he headed right, parallel to

the line and then cut off tackle. The team blocked as never before. A huge hole opened, and Coach rumbled through. Five yards down field, he cut to his left as the defensive halfbacks overran to Coach's right. Spike blocked the safety, and Coach had clear sailing. After 20 yards Pat and Lefty started to catch up with him. In another five yards Coach sat down to avoid being tackled.

As Eddy and Billy came running up, Coach tossed the ball to Billy and gasped, "That's how it's done."

"That was a fantastic run, Nick," Pudge exclaimed. "Now let me help you up." He extended his hand to pull Coach to his feet.

Still panting, Coach told them all, "If an old codger like me can make 25 yards by smart running, you young bucks ought to do better than that."

Coach's example had its effect. He let Billy play with the first team for a couple of series, and he began to follow his interference better and cut back when he had the chance.

By Wednesday the team was ready for Cranville. In fact, Coach had to warn the players not to be overconfident. Cranville was the doormat of the league and hadn't won more than two games a season for the last five years. Last year they were 0-7 in league play, but last week they had eked out a narrow victory over Leabrook. Coach had been around long enough to know that cockiness is a set up for unexpected defeat.

Since it was a home game, Zeke went home after school for an early supper. To his surprise his dad was there. They had received a letter from the chaplain at the army hospital in England. He wrote that Clyde had lost his right arm from just above the elbow, but otherwise he was in good condition.

"His trombone arm," was Zeke's first comment. But all of them were relieved it wasn't worse.

"Martha, why don't you go to the game with me tonight?" Dad asked.
"It'll take your mind off Clyde for a while."

"Henry, you know I never go to football games," she replied. That's true. She had never seen Zeke play football or basketball. But that was the case with most of the mothers in town. Sports were for men.

"I'm dedicating my game tonight to Clyde," Zeke revealed. "I think you should watch me."

"Yes, you ought to go, Mom," Laura joined in.

"Well," Mom hesitated. "Just this once I'll go -- for Clyde's sake, and for yours, too, Paul."

It was Spike's turn to be co-captain. Since it was a windy night with a northwesterly breeze, Coach told him to defend the north goal if he got first choice. Let them receive if they want to. Cranville won the toss and chose to receive. So it turned out like Coach wanted.

With the wind behind him, Hank got the ball into the end zone. The Cranville return man downed it for a touchback to give his team the ball on

the 20. As Cranville came out of the huddle, they lined up in single wing formation -- the first one the Lofton players had seen this season. The strong side tackle was huge, the end muscular, and the guard strongly built. So naturally they ran off tackle in that direction. They doubled teamed Pudge, knocked Spike down like a toothpick, and the pulling guard took care of Hank the linebacker on that side. Zeke, though, sidestepped the halfback trying to block him, and stopped the ballcarrier. But it was an eight yard gain. It appeared clearly that Cranville wasn't going to be a pushover.

This early warning was good for the Lofton defense. They gave up the first down in a plunge over the middle. On the next play Rusty and Flash teamed to limit the Cranville back to three yards off tackle on the weak side. On second down Roberto slipped by his blocker and caught the ballcarrier behind the line of scrimmage. The tailback tried a pass over the middle on third down, but Bulldog knocked it down. On fourth down the Cranville tailback, now revealed as a triple threat man -- sort of, got off a wobbly kick

into the wind. It was so short that Eddy had to signal for a fair catch.

Starting from their own 45, the Lofton offense took charge. Zeke tested the Cranville linemen with an off-tackle play each way and made more than enough for a first down. Next he called a reverse from double wing, and Eddy gained 12 yards. Zeke could see that although the Cranville linemen were big, they were slow. From T-formation Zeke faked to Hank crashing into the center of the line and lateraled to Fred, who swept left end for an eight yard gain. Shifting from T into short punt, Zeke faked a handoff to Fred while Hank sprang a trap block, and Zeke bolted through a hole off guard for seven yards.

Now with first down deep in Cranville territory, the big Cranville tackle got by Pudge, who grabbed him and drew the umpire's flag for holding. A 15 yard penalty. With first and 25, Zeke hit Spike on a quick buttonhook. Spike spun away from the linebacker and picked up 12 yards. Zeke zapped one over the middle to Flash for another eight yards. But then he overthrew

Eddy on a down and in pattern.

Coach sent in Basil to attempt a field goal. With the ball to be placed on the 22, it was just at the edge of his range, but maybe the wind would help. It did, and Basil hit his first three-pointer of the season.

Hank's kickoff was just short of the goal line, but Dutch tackled the returner on the 15 -- a better result than the kick into the end zone.

Cranville picked up a first down on a pair of running plays. After gaining another five yards off tackle, Cranville pulled an old chestnut out of the bag of football tricks: the statue of liberty play. As the tailback cocked his arm to pass, the left end ran behind him and took the ball. The only problem from a Cranville perspective was that Flash was on his heels and nailed him for an eight yard loss as soon as he got the ball.

A conventional pass to the wingback gained back the loss. But it was fourth and five, so they had to punt. It was a lower kick than before. Eddy fielded it on the run, cut to the sidelines, and was forced out of bounds on the

Cranville 45.

In the huddle Flash told Zeke, "I think I can get by their halfback down the sideline if you want to throw me a long one."

"Not yet," Zeke replied, "but I'll keep in mind."

Instead he sent Eddy up the middle with 433, and he gained eight yards. Second and two was a down to waste, so Zeke instructed, "T formation. Flash down and out deep. Spike cut over the middle in front of the safety. Eddy I'll fake a handoff to you going over left guard. Hank and Fred, you stay in to block. On three."

Zeke's fake to Eddy froze the linebackers. The safety closed in on Spike. Flash jukeed the halfback and sped down the sidelines. Zeke led him perfectly. Flash caught the ball in stride at the Cranville 20 and dashed into the end zone five yards ahead of the defender.

The crowd roared. On both sides of the field. Zeke thought he heard a woman's voice on the towns-folks side hollering, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" But

maybe it was his imagination.

It was an easy extra point for Basil. Lofton led 10-0, and the first quarter wasn't over.

Coach decided this was an opportunity to give the second team a chance to play as a unit, so he sent them in. Sal's kickoff wasn't quite as good as Hank's but downfield coverage was effective, and they stopped the runner at the 25. Cranville ran two plays to end the quarter, and the teams changed ends.

The Lions' second team allowed Cranville to get into Lofton territory, but then halted the drive and forced a punt. This time the Cranville punter had the wind behind him, and the ball nearly sailed over Billy's head.

Running backwards, Billy snagged it on the 10 and made a 12 yard return.

Lefty called an effective mixture of plays and got the Lions to the 50 yard line. Then the second unit bogged down, and they had to punt. The wind blew Jolly's kick away from the return man and out of bounds near the

Cranville 20.

Coach sent the starters back onto the field. They were rested and quickly shut down Cranville's running game. On third and six the Cranville tailback-passer tried to hit his wingback in the flat. Zeke saw it coming, stepped in front, and had an easy jaunt down the sideline with a 30 yard touchdown run. It was on the town-folks side of the field, and he heard the loud shrieking even clearer, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel! Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

"It's your mom," Spike told him.

"I can't be."

"Look for yourself."

Surveying the stands, he saw his mother, bouncing up and down, furiously waving a gold pom-pom.

"Are you talking about my great grandmother?" Timmy asked. "The one who lives with my Great Aunt Laura?"

"That's the one," Granddad acknowledged.

"But she's so quiet and gentle."

"You have to remember that this happened 50 years ago. She was 42 then and a lively lady."

"I'm going to ask her when I see her."

"Go ahead. The funny thing is that she never called me 'Zeke' before, or since."

When Basil came in to kick the extra point, Zeke reminded him that he was kicking into the wind and would have to give extra zap to the ball. He did and cleared the bar with a couple of feet to spare.

In the remaining minutes of the half Cranville moved steadily up the field but were barely into Lofton territory when time ran out. The Lions went into the locker room with their 17-0 halftime lead.

The guys knew that Zeke was dedicating the game to his wounded brother. So one by one they strolled by and praised him for his first half effort. Eddy, of course, had to keep him a little humble so commented, "I

didn't think you could throw it that far." Then added, "Nice going."

When the teams returned to the field for the second half, the wind was even stronger. This enabled the Cranville kicker to boot the kickoff into the end zone where Eddy took the touchback. As the Lions started their offense from the 20, it was evident that Cranville wasn't going to give up easily. Their defense toughened and held Lofton's ballcarriers to short gains. Zeke tried a couple of passes from T-formation, but the wind played havoc with his throws. Bugged down at their own 38, Lofton had to punt. Hank kept his kick low but got only 30 yards.

Cranville, though, couldn't get their offense on track. They changed their offense from single wing to double wing, but their linemen were too slow to pull and create holes for their ballcarriers. So they had to give up the ball after a seven plays.

This time Zeke for a change of pace ran mostly from a double wing, featuring Eddy and Fred in reverses and Hank through the center of the line.

They gained six to eight yards at a shot. Then on a double reverse Eddy took off on an 18 yard jaunt and got the ball to the Cranville 15. On the next play Zeke called his own number. After faking to Fred running left, he hid the ball on his hip and scooted off right tackle. He was five yards beyond the line of scrimmage before any Cranville player knew he had kept the ball. He breezed into the end zone untouched.

From the home folks stands again came penetrating cry, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" Now he realized why his dad never took his mother to games.

Basil kept his streak going and made the point after touchdown into the wind. Lofton led 24-0.

Coach sent in the second team again and the Cranville coach did likewise. Sal sent a short kickoff into the wind so that Cranville started in their best field position of the game. Running from a single wing, the Cranville squad picked up a first down in two plays.

Arising to this challenge, Jiri, Joe, Stan, and Jolly, with solid support

from Wally and Sal as linebackers and decent performances with Chuck and Mike at ends, closed down their opponents running game on the next three plays. Cranville's wind-aided punt was the last play of the third quarter.

Now on offense to begin the final quarter, Lofton's second squad wasn't very sharp. Billy forgot Coach's lesson about cutting back and couldn't run over the Cranville linebackers and halfbacks. Sal make the best gains with plunges to the right off the T. At midfield Lefty had Pat loop over the middle for a pass out of a double wing, but the linebacker stuck with him and intercepted Lefty's throw and ran out of bounds.

The Cranville coach sent his first team back out to the field. Nick countered with his. Rusty, Roberto, and company stopped Cranville in three plays. A weak punt into the wind blew away from Eddy and bounced out of bounds on the Lofton 30.

Now with the wind behind them, Zeke alternated passes with end sweeps and reverses. With third and five from the 22, Spike started on a

slant over the center then cut back to the outside. He was wide open as Zeke hit him on the five and scored Lofton's fourth touchdown. The students roared so loud and the band played so noisily that Zeke couldn't hear his mother's shriek, but he figured she was still screaming "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" On the try for extra point, the Cranville tackle burst through and distracted Basil, who kicked wide to the right. The score was 30-0.

Coach decided to give his third team an opportunity to play. As Zeke came off the field, Nick shook his hand and said, "Great game, Zeke." Hal and Dave also sought out Zeke and congratulated him.

Cranville's second team was again on the field with a mixture of third stringers. For both sides it was game experience for juniors and sophomores. They played vigorously, but neither side scored.

When the gun sounded to end the game, Barbara rushed onto the field and gave Zeke a big hug. Other students surrounded him and praised his performance.

As they were dispersing, Dr. Sullivan came up to him and said, "You played a great game, Zeke."

"Thanks, Doc," Zeke replied.

"Have you thought about where you're going to college?"

"No, not yet. I expect to be drafted first."

"Well, I hope you'll give some thought to the state university, my alma mater. They're always on the lookout for good football players."

Zeke knew that Dr. Sullivan was an unofficial scout for the university. He was surprised but pleased to draw his attention.

When Zeke came into the locker room, Eddy was standing on a bench, garbed only in a towel around his waist and holding one of Mary Lou's gold pom-poms. In a high falsetto he shrieked, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

Zeke blushed. Then he grabbed Eddy's towel and playfully tried to flip him with it as Eddy ran for the showers. He was still there when Zeke arrived a few minutes later. Eddy said, "All kidding aside, Zeke, you played

a great game. I know Clyde will be proud of you when he hears about it."

"Thanks, Eddy," Zeke responded. "That means a lot coming from you."

Tonight was the first time ever that Eddy had praise for Zeke's playing.

Zeke celebrated with Barbara, Spike, and Joanne and got home after midnight. The rest of his family was in bed. Hero or not, he had to work for his dad on Saturday, so he was up early for breakfast.

"Oh I'm so proud of you, Paul," Mom greeted him. "I know Clyde would be, too."

"You were outstanding," Dad glowed. Dad wasn't one for gushy praise, so this was quite a compliment.

Zeke grabbed the morning paper, turned to the sports section, and read:

"LIONS CRUSH CRANVILLE 30-0"

"Parker Leads Powerful Offense"

The front page reported, **"396 Jap Planes Bagged at Formosa"**.

As they ate their breakfast, neither Dad nor Zeke mentioned Mom's

behavior at the game. Nor did she.

In the afternoon Laura was in the store for a few minutes and said some nice things to Zeke about his playing.

"Could you hear Mom from your side of the field?" Zeke asked her.

"No, what do you mean?"

He told her about Mom's hollering.

"No, there was too much noise from the students to hear the other stands. I can't believe she would be so out of control."

"She was. You're lucky you didn't see her," Zeke sighed.

Saturday evening at the movies Zeke and Barbara, Spike and Joanne saw Paulette Goddard and Sonny Tufts in "I Love a Soldier", a film about wartime marriage. Barbara was in a very romantic mood. As they headed for the drive-in, Spike sang in his out-of-tune tenor:

"You've got to be a football hero,

To get along with the beautiful girls."

Sitting in the backseat, Zeke popped him on the head with a magazine. But within himself he was enjoying the adulation.

March 31, 1994

10. Time Out

At this moment Grandma came into the living room and observed, "It's still raining cats and dogs, so we'll have to have our picnic inside. I have it spread out in the kitchen."

After Granddad said grace, Timmy remarked, "You know, I've always wondered how Uncle Clyde lost his arm, but I was afraid to ask."

"He wouldn't mind you asking, Timmy," Granddad responded, "but he wouldn't say much more than that he lost it in the war."

"How did it happened?" Timmy persisted.

"Clyde was in the field artillery," Granddad explained. "AS his unit advanced into German territory. the Germans mounted a counterattack. During the night an artillery shell exploded near Clyde, and a piece of shapernal shattered his right arm. His buddies quickly tied a tourniquet around his upper arm and rushed him to a medical field unit. The doctor had to amputate his right arm above the elbow in order to save his life."

"Ugh! That's gory," Timmy exclaimed. "No wonder he doesn't want to discuss it."

"Only once did he talk with me about being in combat," said Granddad. It was late one night about a week after he came home for the first time. But never since."

"Why's that?" Timmy wanted to know.

"Nearly every World War II veteran I ever knew is like that," Granddad indicated. "Like Clyde many of them were kids of 18 when they were drafted. Most of them served willingly, but it wasn't something they wanted to do. They went. They got the job done. Then they returned to their normal life. Except it could never be wholly the same for them."

"Your Granddad's right, Timmy," Grandma remarked. "By brother, who served with the marines in the South Pacific, was that way. And all the fellows I knew at college."

The threesome fell silent for a while as they ate their sandwiches and

potato salad. Then Timmy started along another line.

"Granddad, in your story about the Lofton team," Timmy inquired, "did Eddy and Billy really become friends after Fast Eddy beat Wild Bill in the race?"

"Yes, very good friends. And they still are."

"But Billy still wanted Eddy's job, didn't he?"

"Yes, but he realized he wasn't going to get it. Besides they were too much alike to be enemies."

"They were alike?"

"Sure," Granddad explained. "Although it's not absolute, each position on a football team features certain personality types. Tailbacks like Eddy and Billy are usually daring, outgoing, and sometimes quite flamboyant. Quarterbacks tend to be more restrained physically but, if I may be a little immodest, are smarter. Tackles are easygoing behind a tough veneer while guards are testier and more aggressive. Centers are a special breed: rugged

but very straightforward."

"Now that you mention it," Timmy reflected, "the guys on our team are sort of that way."

"Because they were temperamentally similar, Eddy and Billy got along well together even though they continued to be competitive."

"You're quite a psychologist," Grandma jested.

"You have to be if you're a quarterback," Granddad acknowledged with a smile.

"And so, Mr. Quarterback," said Timmy, "when we left your football season, Lofton was two and two after four games. What happened next?"

"The Leabrook game. It was unforgettable," Granddad recalled as they got up from the table and returned to the living room where they had left the scrapbook.

March 31, 1994

11. Mud Bowl

On Monday morning Zeke ran into Roberto and Rusty in the hallway between second and third period. They were hopping mad.

"He flunked us," Rusty snapped.

"Who?" Zeke asked.

"Old man Morris," Roberto growled. We both failed our world history exam,"

"That means we're off the team," Rusty exclaimed.

"At least for a while, until we can get our grades up," Roberto added.

"Darn," Zeke broke in. "Just when we were getting our act together. What're we going to do without you?"

"Our backups will have to fill in," Rusty indicated, "Jolly and Stan."

"They're coming along okay," Zeke commented, "but they're not nearly as good as you."

"You'll have to do the best you can," Roberto concluded.

The word spread to all the players during lunch hour. On the front steps Eddy confronted Bulldog and told him, "It's all your fault."

"How's it my fault?" Bulldog wanted to know.

"Because you wouldn't help them."

"I would've helped them study, but they wanted me to signal them the answers during the exam. That's cheating. I won't be a party to it."

"A fine team player you are."

"It's not matter of team spirit," Zeke chimed in. "It's a matter of personal integrity."

"Oh, another one of those goody, goody boys," Eddy told Zeke angrily.

"Zeke and Bulldog aren't responsible for Roberto and Rusty passing a course," Dutch asserted. "That's up to them."

"You're just defending them so that your Polish buddy can take Roberto's place," Eddy insisted.

"Oh, come on Eddy," Pudge scolded. "We're all disappointed because

we're losing Rusty and Roberto. But that's no reason to take it out on each other."

Eddy looked at Pudge, and his scowl faded. He sighed, "If you say so, Pudge. It's just that I want to have a winning season my senior year. Now it's going to be harder."

At practice after school Coach congratulated the team on their victory over Cranville. "We're now 2 and 1 in the league," he reported. "Only Ashmont and Hargrove are undefeated. That means we are tied for third place. So we still have a shot at the title."

"We'll do it," Spike spoke up with enthusiasm.

"Of course," Coach stated, "our chances are hurt because of the goof-off brothers. They provided us experience we need on the right side of the line. But they were too lazy to read their history books."

Roberto and Rusty, who had come out for practice even though they couldn't play in a game, shuffled behind some other players to escape Coach's

glare. It was rare for Coach to jump on his players in front of the team, so they knew he was really mad.

"Fortunately," Coach continued, "Stan and Jolly have been playing well. By the time they get several full games under their belt, it may be hard for the goof-off brothers to get their places back -- if they get their grades in order."

Conference rules enabled players with poor grades at the end of the first six weeks to take a make-up exam after three weeks. So Roberto and Rusty had a chance to rejoin the team before the season was over.

"Now let's talk about Leabrook, who we play on Friday," said Coach. "For the last several years they have been using a seven-man line. That's what Kepler sneaked in on us toward the end of the game, but Leabrook works that way all the time. So we'll have to have different blocking assignments, especially along the line."

"I think I remember most of my assignments from when we played

Leabrook last year," Dutch declared.

"In their defensive backfield," Coach continued, "they play with two linebackers, two halfbacks on the wing, but no safety in the middle. This will make it easier for our pass receivers to get open."

"Your team had it easy, Granddad," Timmy commented. "The teams we play against keep changing their defense. Sometimes we have to make adjustments after we get to the line of scrimmage."

"Yes, I've noticed that," Granddad acknowledged. "I don't know how you do it."

"Somebody on the line calls out blocking assignments," Timmy explained.

"I want the linemen to come with me," Coach Dave spoke up. "We'll walk through your new blocking assignments. At the end of practice we'll have some new pages for your playbook so that you can study them at home."

"While Dave's working with the linemen," Coach indicated, "I'll work with

the backs on ball handling, especially on T plays."

After a while the players got back together and broke into teams for a touch scrimmage using a seven-man line on defense. As they took their turn on offense, both the first and second teams were getting a grasp of their new blocking assignments.

As they left the field after practice Stan told Dutch, "I never thought I would start a game. I hope I don't disappoint Nick and the boys."

"You'll do all right," Dutch assured him.

"Once you get a new wristband and write the plays in Polish numbers on it," Jolly jested.

"You're kidding me, aren't you?" asked Stan. "About the numbers, I mean."

"Just a little bit of our subtle American humor," Jolly chuckled.

As students entered Lofton High on Tuesday morning, Pudge and Sal were out in front handing out "Re-elect Roosevelt" buttons. Pudge's father

was Democratic city chairman, and Sal's dad was a labor union leader. It was two weeks before the presidential election. Even though none of the students could vote (you had to be 21 in those days), the two campaigners hoped they might influence their classmates' parents.

At noontime Bulldog and some of his friends gave out "Dewey" buttons, supporting the Republican nominee.

Many of the guys were wearing one or the other button when they appeared for practice, more for Roosevelt than for Dewey. On the field the coaches had both kinds pinned on their sweatshirts. Zeke expected Coach to give a unity speech, but he had already made his point.

Hard scrimmage went well that day. The players retained the enthusiasm from their last victory. They show a mastery of blocking against a seven-man line.

Although Roberto and Rusty weren't involved in the scrimmage, they were suited up and acted as on-the-team cheerleaders. They were coming

out of their huff over flunking world history. Rusty dropped the course because he had enough credits to graduate without it. But he would still have to sit out three weeks. Roberto was studying with new resolve, and Bulldog agreed to help him catch up.

During lunch hour on Wednesday Zeke finally got a chance to talk with Flash and Fred about what happened in the Ashmont game. At the time he had told Flash he was sorry about what the Ashmont player had said. Flash had replied, "That's all right." Zeke thought there ought to be more to say, but he didn't go how best to go about it.

Usually the Negro students all clustered together on the right side of the front steps, but today Zeke found Fred and Flash standing apart. He approached them, exchanged greetings, and then opened the subject.

"Flash, I'm still bothered about what you had to go through in the Ashmont game," said Zeke. "I'm just glad it hasn't happened again."

"I've heard worse," Flash replied guardedly.

"In Kansas City?"

"Yes."

"And right here in Lofton," Fred added.

"Here at school?" Zeke inquired.

"Sometimes," Fred acknowledged, "but it's more subtle."

"That shouldn't be," Zeke declared. "This is the North."

"Southern customs are widespread," Fred shrugged. "The difference is that they're more open about it in the South."

"It's like in Kansas City, Missouri where I used to live," Flash picked up.

"The schools are segregated. The football teams are segregated. We never had the situation like in the Ashmont game because whites and Negroes never played together. Uncle Ebenezer may have forced your league to let Negroes play football and basketball, but that hasn't changed everyone's attitude."

"And it hasn't opened other places of exclusion to Negroes in Lofton,"

Fred asserted.

"Like where?" asked Zeke.

"Like barber shops and beauty parlors," Fred indicated. "We have our own, so it's not a great hardship. But when our barber is sick or on vacation, we have to go to another town to find a Negro barber shop for a haircut."

"The white barbers claim they don't know how to cut our kinky hair," Flash chimed in. "But it's a lot more than that."

"And like doctors," Fred declared. "The Negro population in Lofton isn't large enough to support our own doctor, so we have to go to the two or three white doctors who will serve us. But they allow us to come in only at certain times."

"And the restaurants," Flash added. "We're not welcome in the so-called better restaurants in Lofton."

"We don't have a municipal pool here," said Fred. "But did you know

that in Grunwald where they have one, they won't let Negroes swim in it except the last day before they are going to drain it."

"They're afraid our skin color will wash off," remarked Flash bitterly.

"This is a real eye-opener for me," Zeke disclosed. "I've lived in Lofton all my life and haven't notice these things. At church they teach us that all people are equal. And I believe they are. But they don't help us to see the inequality that exists all around us. I'm sorry I'm so blind."

"That's all right," Fred reassured him. "You and the other guys on the team treat us fairly. You've helped me with ball handling. Dutch taught Flash how to block, and Spike helped him with open field tackling."

"And Rusty, Roberto, Pudge, and all the others knock us down just as hard as they do anyone else," Flash added with a glint in his eye. "And Coach, too. He cares about performance. He demands a lot from everyone, but he doesn't seem to notice what color you are. That's why I like about playing football for Lofton High."

The bell rang and students headed in for class. As the trio divided, Fred remarked, "Thanks, Zeke. This is the first time I ever talked to a white person about these things."

"Thanks for my enlightenment," Zeke replied.

Friday morning it was raining as students came to school. The rain continued all day, so the principal moved the send-off pep rally from the parking lot into the school auditorium. As the team drove to Leabrook through steady rain, Zeke noticed that the creeks were rising.

But it was football. You played football rain or shine, sleet or snow. Even so both teams shortened their pre-game warmup on the rain soaked field.

"If you win the toss," Coach instructed Pudge, who was game co-captain, "ask to receive. Maybe we can score before the field gets too torn up and too slippery."

Dutch called tails and won the toss. Eddy figured that the Leabrook kicker couldn't get a good run at the ball, so he lined up on the 20 to receive the kick. He judged correctly. No trick running today, Coach had warned him, so he ran up the middle and made it to the 30 yard line.

Coach had advised Zeke to call plays that went straight ahead, mostly from T-formation, some short punt, but forget about the double wing. Following this advice, he ran Eddy and Fred between guard and end on either side of the line, and Hank up the middle. In five plays they crossed the 50 yard line as they applied their blocks against Leabrook's seven-man line. On third and two from the Leabrook 48 Zeke ran a quarterback sneak for another first down as Bulldog drove the defensive center backward.

On the next play Zeke had his backs shift into a short punt formation. Eddy attempted to go off tackle to the right, but as he cut into the hole he slipped for a four yard loss. Hank got that yardage back up the middle. Eddy made another four running between Pudge and Dutch, but not enough

for a first down.

So Hank had to punt. By then linesman was shuffling in a wiped off ball for each play. Bulldog insisted that they keep a towel around it until they were almost ready. He gripped it carefully and made a good snap. Hank aimed for the right coffin corner. The ball eluded the Leabrook return man and flopped dead in a puddle on the five.

In spite of their poor field position Leabrook mounted an effective drive. Like Lofton they ran mainly between the two ends. They discovered that they could do better running left, that is, at Stan and Jolly, so about two-thirds of their plays went in that direction.

As Leabrook approached midfield, the Lions defense held them to six yards on the first two downs of a fresh series. The Leabrook quarterback attempted a pass over the middle, but the ball slipped out of his hands and fell at the feet of the receiver. So they had to punt. It was a short, soggy-looking kick. Eddy signaled for a fair catch and fielded the ball at the

Lofton 25.

By now the field was getting chewed up, particularly in the middle, and footing was getting worse. So the two teams sloshed back and forth, neither making much yardage and then punting. Both coaches made regular substitutions to give players moments under hooded raincoats, but there was no escaping the constant rain.

As the half was winding down, Zeke concluded that he had to try something different. He put his backs into a double wing and had Eddy, Fred, Spike, and Flash run short patterns with the ends decoying the linebackers into the flat and the wingbacks buttonhooking in front of the halfbacks. It worked the first time, and he managed to get a fluttery pass to Fred for an eight yard gain. Staying in double wing, Hank made first down in crossbuck over Dutch. Zeke returned to the T for a couple of plays and then went back to double wing for another short pass pattern. And so Lofton sloshed down the field. Zeke threw an incomplection on third and five

from the Leabrook 20, but Eddy picked up the first down by sliding through a hole created by Dutch and Pudge as Spike took care of the linebacker.

After another first down, Hank took Zeke's handoff, lowered his head, and bulled his way to a touchdown through the center of the line. Yes indeed, Lofton had mastered the seven-man line.

Basil came in for the extra point. He wiped his glasses on his shirt tail, but it was a futile gesture. Realizing that Basil wouldn't be able to see the ball, Zeke called for a fake kick and instructed Spike to go into the flat for a pass. Bulldog's snap was on target. Zeke pretended to put the ball on the ground but pulled it back just as Basil went through his kicking motion. Spike was wide open, but the ball slipped from Zeke's hand and fell short. Even so, Lofton led 6-0. That might be enough to win the mud bowl game.

As Basil was leaving the field, thundered rumbled overhead, an unusual occurrence for October. Clenching his fist, he looked skyward and proclaimed,

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!

You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout

Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!"

Bulldog, who was walking alongside, said, "Let me guess: King Lear on the heath."

"You've got it, Buddy-boy," Basil replied.

After Hank's soggy kick-off, Leabrook ran a couple of plays, and the half ended.

In the locker room at half time, Coach called out, "We've got to get our mud cleats on."

In those days football shoes had screw-on cleats. Ordinarily they were about a half inch long and fairly blunt. But they could be removed and replaced with slenderer cleats an inch in length for muddy fields.

"Coach, I'm sorry to say," Doc spoke up sheepishly, "I forgot them."

"You forgot them," Coach roared. "It's your job to remember these

things."

"I had laid out the box of cleats with my first aid stuff," Doc rejoined, "but I forgot load them on the bus."

"Damn it," Coach thundered and kicked a football lying on the floor. Unlike most coaches in those days, Nick had a strict rule against swearing. So the players knew he was really angry.

When they returned to the field, it was apparent that the Leabrook players had put on their mud cleats. They weren't exactly speedsters, but they had better footing than Lofton.

With this advantage, Leabrook slogged out short yardage, still running about two-thirds of their plays against Stan and Jolly. In this manner they scored two touchdowns in the second half but couldn't add the extra points. Lofton was unable to mount a sustained drive and were shut out for the remainder of the game. Leabrook was the victor, 12-6.

Doc was the first person on the bus and retreated quickly to the back.

At the diner at the edge of town where the team stopped to eat, he slunk into a booth as far as possible from Coach. Zeke and Spike took pity on him and sat with him.

"We lost the game on the field," Spike consoled him.

"But you might not have if you had your mud cleats," Doc lamented.

"That's one of those 'what ifs' that has no answer," Zeke observed.

As usual the team ate hamburger steak (a quarter pounder on the plate), french fries, cole slaw, a roll with a pad of butter, and either coke or pepsi. Some of the guys smothered their hamburgers with A-1 steak sauce, while others poured on catsup. Basil spread mustard on his and dipped his fries one-by-one in a pool of catsup. Tonight Doc combined mustard and catsup on his steak.

"That must be an act of penance," Zeke remarked. "I know it's not medically sound."

"I guess so," Doc responded gloomily.

On the return trip to Lofton water was over the road on a couple of bridges over flooded creeks, but the school bus managed to creep through.

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Saturday morning the rain had stopped. The sports page of the Lofton Herald reported:

"Lofton Sloshes to 12-6 Loss."

The banner headline on the front page read:

"LEYETE BEACHHEADS CONSOLIDATED"

There was a large photo of General Douglas MacArthur wading ashore in the Phillipines two days earlier with the caption, "I have returned."

The movie that night was "Dragon Seed", starring Katherine Hepburn and Walter Huston as part of the Chinese civilian resistance to Japanese occupation in the 1930s. Even though the film ended on a note of hope, it didn't lift Zeke out of feeling in the dumps because of the loss to Leabrook.

At the drive-in Barbara tried to cheer him up but couldn't. Spike,

though, made him laugh by telling about a farm woman who made Spike move a dozen or more 100 pound bags of chicken feed so that she could get three alike. Anderson Seed and Feed Company sold chicken feed in cloth bags with different patterns, and the farm women made aprons, curtains, and sometimes dresses out of them.

"She had a wallpaper sample and a swatch of paint to match them to," Spike reported, "She had me carry bags to better light and then kept changing her mind. I told her that the chickens won't know the difference. She replied, 'I know your Daddy wouldn't stock these different patterns unless he wanted us to make our choices.' And that is unfortunately true."

It wasn't all that funny, but the way Spike told it helped Zeke mostly escape from his gloom. But he still couldn't forget that they would have to play without Roberto and Rusty for at least two more games.

April 2, 1994

12. Disappointment

Rain returned on Monday. As they stood around the crowded school hallway during lunch hour, Stan mentioned to Zeke that he and Dutch had seen "Dragon Seed" on Saturday. It reminded him of the Polish underground resistance, the tremendous courage of the resisters, the risks, the sacrifices, but always with hope for eventual freedom from occupation.

Because the field was already so wet Coach decided to have practice in the gym. Everyone was supposed to bring his own gym shoes, but Spike decided to borrow a pair of Converse All Stars from the basketball team's storage locker. He persuaded Zeke and Eddy to do likewise.

While they were searching for the right size, Duke Shelby, last year's quarterback, walked in, dressed in a seaman's uniform. "I'll take a 10½ C," he said.

"Duke!" Eddy exclaimed enthusiastically. "What are you doing here?"

"I completed basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center," replied Duke, "and I'm home on a week's shore leave."

"What do you mean shore leave?" asked Spike. "You haven't been to sea yet."

"That's what we call it in the Navy," he answered.

"Glad to see you, Duke," Zeke remarked. "I guess you know we're not doing as well as last year. We're two and three now overall, and two and two in the league."

"That's why I came back to help you," Duke joked. "Eddy, how's his arm?" He pointed to Zeke.

"Pretty good," responded Eddy. "You'd be surprised. He's thrown three touchdown passes so far." Eddy kept track of who scored throughout the season."

"How about you, Duke?" Zeke wanted to know. "How's your arm? Been playing any football?"

"No, but I can still outthrow you," he replied with smile. Zeke had been Duke's understudy last year. He accepted the role then, but this year he was the starter and wanted to show that he deserved it.

"Come on out in the gym and prove it," Zeke challenged.

So Duke borrowed a sweat suit from the basketball storage closet and joined the team on the gym floor. Zeke and Duke played catch for a few minutes, and it was clear that Duke still had his touch.

Then Duke called out, "I bet I can make more baskets than you throwing from the far free throw line."

"It's a deal," Zeke accepted. "We'll take turns and throw five apiece. You go first: age before beauty."

As Eddy, Spike, Rusty, and Roberto stood watching, Duke threw first and sailed one over the backboard.

"I guess you're a little rusty," Zeke commented. His first throw hit the backboard a foot above the rim, a little off center. Billy, Lefty, and some

others joined the circle.

Duke got the backboard on his second throw, and Zeke hit the front of the rim. The third time Duke was to the left just above the rim, and Zeke hit the back of the rim and the football bounced over the backboard. On the fourth throw Duke was slightly to the right above the rim, and Zeke hit the net below the rim. On the fifth and final toss Duke was high again, and so was Zeke.

As they finished, Lefty stepped in and asked, "Are you guys done torturing the backboard? Let me show you how it's done." He grabbed and threw a perfect swisher.

Billy cheered, "That's showing those old men!" Everybody laughed.

At that point Coach appeared, sent Duke to the sidelines, and started practice. As he passed Duke, Coach said, "Hang around, and we'll have a little three-on-three after practice."

Coach didn't have much to say about the Leabrook game. Mainly he

had his sight set on Starfield, which would be coming to Lofton Friday night.

They played the usual six-man line on defense and had a good passer who liked to work from a T. So their inside drills emphasized pass defense.

Cliff, who started the pre-season as second team quarterback, was back for the first time since he broke his arm in the first scrimmage of the season. But Lefty had been passing so well that Coach didn't want to displace him. He told Cliff to work out as right halfback on the third team, but he promised him some playing time in the remaining games.

As the players were leaving the floor, Coach asked Flash, "Do you play basketball?"

"Sure do," he responded.

"Want a little game?"

"Anytime."

"Okay, you can play with Spike and Zeke against Duke, Eddy, and me."

So at it they went. Eddy and Zeke guarded one another, as they had

first done in ninth grade. Coach guarded Spike and vice versa, and Duke and Flash paired off. When Spike had the ball, Coach couldn't keep up with him. But whenever Coach got the ball near the basket, he was a bull no one could stop. Duke thought he was in good shape because of basic training, but Flash had some nifty moves and kept getting around him.

As they were leaving the court, Coach asked Flash, "Are you coming out for basketball?"

"If you want me to," he answered.

"The team is open to anyone who wants to compete for a position. We start practice the Monday after the last football game."

"I'll be there."

In the showers Duke and Eddy were reminiscing about some of the baseball and football games they had played together.

"Do you remember the game against Hargrove two years ago when Brad threw me the sucker pass?" Duke asked.

The sucker pass was a play out of a short punt. The tailback received the snap from center and ran to the right as the guards pulled, just as they did in 36 off-tackle. Instead of joining the interference the quarterback casually drifted around left end and headed down field. Suddenly the tailback stopped and threw a pass to the quarterback.

"That was a beaut," Eddy replied. "We were trailing, and I was afraid you might miss it."

"So was I," said Duke. "If I had, I think I'd kept running and headed for home."

"But you caught it," Zeke recalled, "and ran forty yards for the go-ahead touchdown. You preserved the undefeated season."

"Do you ever throw it, Eddy?" Duke inquired.

"Coach doesn't encourage me to pass," Eddy responded.

"It's a good play," Duke concluded. "You ought to try it some time."

During lunch hour on Tuesday Eddy sought out Zeke and told him that

they ought to work on the sucker pass. They agreed to get on the field early before calisthenics and practice it before Coach came out. They wanted to be sure of their timing and Eddy's passing accuracy before attempting it in a scrimmage.

All fall Zeke's social studies class had been following the Dumbarton Oaks conference taking place in Washington, D.C. to develop plans for a United Nations organization. Zeke was very interested in this idea. At the Forum Club, which met once a week during activity period to discuss current events, he suggested that they should organize a model United Nations at school with delegates representing different countries. His classmates and teacher-sponsor thought it was a good idea and decided to have an after school meeting to plan it.

After the Wednesday practice Zeke approached Coach and requested permission to be late for practice next Monday to attend a model United Nations planning meeting. "Monday's workouts are usually light," Zeke

suggested.

"What do you want another United Nations for?" Coach rejoined.

"There's one right here on the team. We've got a Greek, a couple of Swedes, a Czech, a Pole, a German, two Italians, several Africans, some Irish, a Scott, an Armenian, and a bunch of mongrel Americans."

Zeke let it drop. He would have to let them have the planning meeting without him.

It was now the last week of October. The trees were bare. The first frost of the season appeared Thursday morning. The weather prediction for Friday evening was clear and cool. That it was. Just right for the players but a little chilly for older folks in the stands.

Flash was co-captain. He and Zeke met the Starfield co-captains in the center of the field for the coin toss. Starfield won and chose to receive. With a slight wind behind him Hank got off a good kick, and but the Starfield receiver made an equally good return and got the ball out to the 35.

Starfield opened their offensive series from a T formation. Their tendency was to run to their right. This was fine for Lofton because their defense was strong on the left with Dutch, Pudge, and Hank at linebacker. As predicted, their passer was sharp -- mostly on short passes. He didn't seem to have an arm to go deep.

In this manner Starfield advanced steadily until they got inside the Lofton 30. Then the Lofton defensive line tightened, and Eddy batted down a third down pass over the middle. With the ball resting on the 22 Starfield attempted 39 yard field goal which fell short by five yards. Lofton took over on downs.

As Coach had instructed during the week, Zeke had his backs line up in T formation and shift to short punt. He tested the Starfield defense by sending Eddy off tackle to the right from short punt, Hank up the middle from the T, and Fred off tackle to the left in another short punt play. With a first down under his belt Zeke surprised the Starfield defense by passing on

first down and hit Spike over the middle for a twelve yard gain. On they rolled.

As Lofton reached the Starfield 30, Zeke decided it was time to shift out of the T into a double wing. He took the snap, followed Hank to the right, handed the ball to Fred, who ran left and slipped the ball to Eddy. By this time Hank had flattened the Starfield end, Flash had taken care of the linebacker, and Zeke was headed downfield for the halfback. The safety came over for Eddy at the 20, but he cut back sharply and ran for the goal line. Basil trotted in and nailed the extra point. Lofton was on a winning tack with a 7-0 lead.

Coach began to send in substitutes a few at a time to give the starters a rest. At this point in the season -- the sixth game -- the juniors and sophomores on the second team demonstrated their capability on defense. The former third stringers who had become Stan's and Jolly's backups did a credible job, too. Cliff got some playing time on defense. Lofton continued

to keep Starfield away from the Lions goal line.

On offense, though, the subs didn't do so well. A penalty for offside, another for holding, a botched handoff from Lefty to Fred as Coach mixed the backfield. Billy was running well, though. He followed his interference and cut back when he had a chance. A bunch of sophomores sitting together in the stands hollered, "Billy! Billy! Billy!" every time he made a good run.

When Zeke returned to the field after a breather, he tried to mount another scoring drive, but the pieces didn't fit together.

As the half was winding down, the Starfield quarterback took to the air and got his team moving. As he approached the 50 yard line, he faked a handoff to the fullback and faded back to pass. Fred didn't buy this deception and stepped in front of the Starfield receiver on the Lofton 45. He had clear sailing down the sideline for a touchdown. Basil hit again. Lofton went into the locker room at half time with a 14-0 lead.

Coach was very relaxed. He praised his players for good, tough football

and encouraged them to do more of the same in the second half.

Eddy received the second half kickoff on the 10 and headed straight up field. Just beyond the 20 he cut right to avoid a tackler, made another seven yards and was then hit from both sides. He got up limping and hobbled off the field as Billy came in to replace him. Dr. Sullivan came down from the stands, looked at Eddy's ankle, told him to pack ice around it, and not play any more tonight.

Zeke was comfortable with Billy and gave him his share of carries. But Zeke felt Billy's cheering squad in the stands was unnecessary.

After a couple of first downs, Zeke went into the double wing again. Flash made a dozen yards on an end around. Billy made five on a reverse, but Fred could get only three up the middle from a quick opener off the T.

With third and two Zeke sent Spike over the middle, but the linebacker stuck with him. The second option was Billy buttonhooking in front of the defensive halfback. He seemed open, but the safety came up quickly and

snatched the ball just before it reached the receiver. Billy quickly tackled him, but Lofton's drive was ended.

The Starfield coach must have observed that Lofton's defensive strength was on the Lions' left side because Starfield started concentrating on runs directed at Stan and Jolly on the right. After making a couple of first downs on the ground the Starfield quarterback connected on a short pass in the flat. As he dropped back to pass on the next play, his right end ran ten yards deep and cut over the middle. Zeke stayed with him. By then the right halfback had gone down and out. Billy saw what was happening and ran over to cover him. Hoping for an interception, Billy cut in front of the Starfield back, but the ball floated over Billy into the arms of the receiver who scooted 30 yards into the end zone.

Hank had a good view of this episode and fumed at Billy as they trotted downfield. "You're our safety," Hank raged. "The defender of last resort. It's all right for linebackers and halfbacks to take a chance and try for

interceptions became the safety is behind them. You're too much of a showoff, and now you've hurt the team."

Hank wasn't usually that way, but he must have had a lot of pent up feelings to unload.

The Starfield placekicker made the extra point. The score was 14-7.

As Billy dropped back to receive the kickoff, Zeke could see that he was seething over the dressing down that Hank had given him. It must have got his adrenalin really flowing because he took the kickoff and headed full tilt up the field. He had clear sailing up the middle until the 30 and then cut to his left. He was running along the sideline at the 50 when a couple of defenders, dashing across field, caught him. The first one pushed him out of bounds, and the second one clobbered him well beyond the sideline.

Immediately the umpire threw his flag for unnecessary roughness. Billy wasn't going to take it, though, and came up swinging right in front of the Starfield bench. He was quickly surrounded by Starfield players. The

umpire plunged into the crowd and stopped the fight. The referee came over, received the report of what happened, and threw both Billy and the Starfield defender out of the game. The penalties nullified each other.

As Billy headed for the Lofton side, Coach sent Pat into to play right halfback with instructions for Fred to be tailback. When Billy reached the sideline, Dave escorted him to the locker room for some counseling and a shower. He wouldn't let Billy return to the playing field, so after he was dressed Billy watched the rest of the game from the stands.

Lofton retained possession. But because Fred hadn't practiced at tailback for several weeks, the running game was a little disjointed. They failed to pick up a first down and had to punt.

The Lions had good punt coverage and pinned Starfield deep in their own territory. Then they stopped the Starfield offense and forced a punt. Fred dropped back to receive the punt. It was fairly short, so he made a fair catch as the quarter ended.

With good field position Lofton was moving quickly downfield from T formation. With a first and ten from the Starfield 30, Zeke lateraled the ball to Fred on an end sweep from the T. As Fred turned the corner, the Starfield halfback hit him from the side. Fred scooted across the ground and slide out of bounds across the ten yard chains. As he arose, he noticed a big gash across his hand. He had to leave the game.

Dr. Sullivan looked at Fred's laceration and decided that it needed stitches. The doctor took Fred into the locker room to wash the wound and do his needlework. On returning to the field the doctor advised Coach to keep Fred out of the remainder of the game.

When Fred came out injured, Coach was reluctant to use the third string tailback. Therefore, he sent Lefty into the game as quarterback and told him to have Zeke play left halfback. Coach was aware that the Zeke knew what every position did on every play, so he figured that he could handle the assignment.

Zeke continued to call plays but had Lefty call out the snap count at the line of scrimmage. To get comfortable at left half, Zeke called Hank's number first, and Hank picked up the first down. Then he had Pat run a quick opener from the T, resulting in a four yard gain.

Zeke decided that he had to be a real live tailback, so he called short punt 36 on the second one. As they shifted from T into short punt, Zeke envisioned his route and the blockers that would be ahead of him. He caught Bulldogs snap as he headed to his right, cut sharply toward the hole between tackle and end as Dutch and Lefty lead interference. He remembered Coach's demonstration for Billy on how to cut back to the left beyond the line of scrimmage. He didn't have that opportunity, but he made enough for a first down. It's sort of fun being tailback, he thought.

With first down on the 8, Zeke send Hank over the middle, but the Starfield stopped him for no gain. On second down Zeke took Lefty's handoff and tried to find a hole between Dutch and Pudge, but the linebacker

closed fast and he made only three yards.

On third down from the five Zeke told Lefty to loft a pass to Spike in the corner of the end zone. Spike's fake toward the middle turned the defensive halfback around, but the Starfield safety rushed over to cover Spike. Lefty hurried his throw, and it drifted into the safety's hands for a touchback in the end zone. As the referee brought the ball out to the 20, Coach sent Cliff in to take Lefty's place on defense.

Starfield took advantage of this unexpected turn of events and marched 80 yards for their second touchdown. Two-thirds of the plays were passes against Lofton's tiring secondary. From the Lofton 18 the Starfield passer threw to a halfback on a short buttonhook in front of Cliff. The receiver quickly twirled to the outside and scooted down the sideline. Playing safety, Zeke was occupied with a deep receiver and couldn't get over in time to prevent the touchdown.

As Starfield came out of the huddle to try for the extra point, Pudge was

lined up in front of ball, crouched to run over the center. This unnerved the Starfield center so much that he bounced the ball to the quarterback, who set it up crooked, and the kicker booted it wide to the right. So Lofton retained the lead, 14-13. Zeke asked the linesman how much time was left, and he told him two minutes.

Coach sent Lefty back in for Cliff with instructions for Pat and Zeke to set up deep as double receivers. The kick went to Zeke at the ten. Not having practiced kickoff returns since the first week of practice, Zeke bobbled the ball but picked it up and carried it to the 18.

Now all they had to do was make two or three first downs and the game would be over. With new found confidence Zeke ran off right tackle again and picked up six yards. Next Pat went the other way on short punt 427. He made the first down but was driven out of bounds, stopping the clock.

Zeke then thought that he should try the middle with short punt 433. He remembered to take one step backward as the ball went to Lefty, who

faked to Pat heading left. Hank put a beautiful trap block on the charging guard as Zeke dashed forward. But Lefty and Zeke had never practiced this handoff before, and they failed to make connections. The ball went flying loose into the hands of a Starfield linebacker. Pudge downed him immediately, but Starfield now had the ball on the Lofton 35.

The Starfield captain immediately called time-out. On the first play their quarterback hit an end on a crossing pattern for a 12 yard gain. Quickly the captain called another time-out. When play resumed a back caught a zinger in the flat and stepped out of bounds at the 15. The quarterback tried a pass into the end zone, but Zeke knocked it down. The linesman told Zeke that there were twelve seconds left in the game.

As Starfield set up for a field goal, Pudge again lined up over center. But the Starfield center wasn't going to be intimidated again. His snap was accurate, and so was the kick. Starfield had grabbed the lead, 16-14.

The crushed Lions lined up for the kickoff knowing that only four seconds

remained. Pat fielded the bouncing kickoff on the 20 but couldn't make it past the 30. Another defeat for Lofton.

As Zeke dragged his tired body from the field, Dr. Sullivan brushed by him without a word and grabbed one of the Starfield guards. Zeke heard him give his little speech about how state university was always looking for good football players and always needed linemen who could play well both on offense and defense.

Coach made it a point to console Zeke and assure him that he played a terrific game, taking over a position he had never played before. Coach told him that it was a team loss, that a number of players made costly mistakes. Moreover, they had lost their three best running backs, two to injuries and one to a temper tantrum. But Zeke knew that the interception he threw and the last minute fumble were particularly costly.

When the players were dressing after their showers, Doc noticed a helmet lying in the corner. He picked it up, examined it, and called out,

"Look, here's Billy's helmet. He must have been so mad that he threw it away."

Basil walked over, took it from Doc, and scrutinized it. "Alas! Poor Billy! I knew him, Horatio," he said to Doc, "a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy."

"Who's Horatio?" Stan whispered to Dutch.

"Hamlet's friend," Dutch explained.

"He hath borne me on his back a thousand times," Basil continued.

Then addressing the helmet, he added, "Where be your giles now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment?"

It took most of the guys a while to grasp Basil's spoofing, but when they did, they cackled and applauded.

"If I were your English teacher," Spike exclaimed, "I'd give you an A for recitation."

Most of the fellows went to the gym for a school dance, this one with a Halloween theme. Zeke was exhausted and grouchy. He didn't feel like dancing, or talking either. He didn't even laugh when Spike told Joanne and Barbara about Basil's "poor Yorick" takeoff.

Barbara had little sympathy for Zeke. They were quarreling by the time the dance was half over.

To annoy him Barbara said, "Basil is sure clever, isn't he? You know he asked me to go to a band party with him tomorrow night."

"Go ahead," Zeke snarled. "Go with him if you're tired of me."

"I will," she replied and went off in a huff.

Saturday morning Zeke was still tired, but he had to go to work anyway.

He didn't want to read the sports page but felt drawn to it. The headline read:

"Starfield Prevails Over Lions, 16-14."

They're now putting our name second, Zeke thought. The front page reported:

"German Defenses Collapsing in Southwest Holland"

"U.S. Wipes Out Jap Singapore Fleet"

During the day Zeke called Barbara, apologized for the way he was last night, and asked her to go to the movies with him in the evening. It was too late. She had already promised Basil and seemed a little too eager to keep her word.

When Zeke got home for supper, Mom was holding a letter from Clyde. He was returning to the States in a few days, and he expected to be home for a visit by Thanksgiving if not before. After that he would be fitted with an artificial arm. Clyde was really upbeat, and Mom was buoyed by his letter.

During the meal Zeke's grumpiness began to fade. He decided to go down to the drugstore and find some guys to go to the movies with. The film was "Hail Conquering Hero", a comedy with Eddy Bracken as a frail draft

rejectee mistaken in his home town for a war hero. Zeke laughed for the first time in 24 hours.

April 2, 1994

13. Dining Out

When Zeke got to the locker room after school on Monday, Billy was in Coach's office. He knew what they were talking about, and he suspected the outcome.

Zeke was right. Billy emerged looking crestfallen. He sought out Eddy and confided, "I've been suspended from action for a week. I have to take part in drills, but I can't scrimmage or play in the game against Barnesdale. I can't even travel there with the team."

"Well, Billy Boy," Eddy blustered, "it serves you right. You'll never be a good football player until you learn to control your temper."

"That's what Nick told me."

To take up the slack, Coach switched Pat to left halfback on the second team and assigned Cliff to right halfback. Checking the injuries to his starting backfield, Coach found that Fred's hand was healing nicely but he would have to keep it heavily bandaged. Eddy's ankle was still sore.

To give Eddy a couple more days rest, Coach told Pat to play with the first unit on Monday and Tuesday. He and Fred would trade back and forth between right and left half. That way they would be prepared for any contingency.

Johnny Mason, a third team sophomore, would play left half for the second squad for those two days of practice. This made Billy nervous because they were rivals from junior high days.

After calisthenics and a review of the Starfield game, Coach had the several units run through play series on their own so that new backfield combinations would get used to playing together. Then they took turns against one another with light contact.

At Tuesday's practice Coach focused on the next opponent, Barnesdale. This was only the second year Lofton was playing against this team from another league. With gas rationing none of Lofton's unofficial scouts had been able to travel the 90 miles to Barnesdale to observe them in advance.

But Coach remembered them from last year as being weak on pass defense.

So the first and second squads emphasized passing in Tuesday's scrimmage. Eddy and Billy, standing apart, observed from the sidelines.

They both wished they could take their usual places. Without Eddy, Zeke had to make adjustments in throws to the left wingback from double wing formation.

As practice ended and the players headed for the showers, Zeke sought out Billy and said, "Billy, would you stay out for a few minutes and work with me?"

I need some more practice with pass patterns to the left wingback."

"Me?" Billy answered in surprise. "I thought I was poison."

"You made a couple of dumb mistakes, but it isn't the end of the world."

So they went out on the field. Zeke stood three yards behind an imaginary line of scrimmage, and Billy stood one yard back on the left wing. On "hike" Billy ran various patterns: into the flat, curling over center, down

eight yards and out, deep over the middle. He was doing all the running and after a while was winded. By then dusk was descending.

As Zeke and Billy strolled off the field together, Billy inquired, "Zeke, do you think I'll get out of Nick's doghouse."

"Sure. He's just teaching you a lesson. And using you as an example for other guys on the team."

They sat down on the sideline bench to rest.

"But making me miss a game," Billy continued. "Don't you think that's too severe?"

"Not at all. Your temper tantrum contributed to our loss."

"There were other mistakes."

"Yeah, but they were matters of performance, like the interception I threw and my fumble. Yours was a loss of self-control. That's worse."

"I've always been a little hot-headed."

"A little?" Zeke laughed. "I'd say a lot. But fighting is something you

can control."

"That's easy for you to say, Zeke. You're so even tempered."

"I wasn't always that way."

"You weren't?"

"No, in grade school I was a tough little kid, getting into fights all the time."

"How come?"

"Well, for one thing the kids made fun of my middle name, Ezekiel. They would tease me by singing, `Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!'"

"The same thing your mother hollered from the stands?"

"The same, except the kids sang through their nose in a sing-song manner."

"What'd you do?"

"I'd pile into them with my fists flying, at least at the boys. Then I would wind up in the principal's office, and she would call my mother."

"Then you caught hell at home?"

"Sort of. But then one day my dad had a little talk with me. He explained that I was named Ezekiel after his grandfather, who was a fine gentleman. And besides Ezekiel was an important figure in biblical history. There's a book in the Old Testament that bears his name. 'So take pride in your name,' Dad told me."

"Did you?"

"You bet. The next time someone sang the teasing song, I asked, 'Did you know that Ezekiel was a famous hero in the Bible?' Later when I read the Bible myself I learned he was more of a prophet. But the idea of a hero worked for me in grade school."

"I think it changed you more than it did them, Zeke."

"That's exactly the point, Billy. We control our reactions inside ourselves. People may provoke us, but how we respond is up to us."

"I'll have to think about that," Billy responded.

"That's interesting, Granddad," Timmy broke in. "You had to deal with teasing about your name, just like I did."

"You did?" Granddad exclaimed in surprise. "What'd they call you?"

"Timid Timmy."

"When was that?"

"In the fourth grade."

"And what did you do?"

"I did things that took courage. Some of them were pretty dumb, like ringing the doorbell of a grouchy old man and running off. Some not so stupid, but hard to do, like volunteering to sing a solo in the school assembly."

"Yes, no timid soul could do that."

"And then do you know what one of the girls called me?"

"No, what?"

"Tremendous Timmy!" he said, blushing a little.

"I'm glad you managed so well, Timmy," complimented Granddad.

"If not a teasing name, then it is often some other provocation we have to deal with at that age."

Zeke and Billy rose and headed for the locker room.

As they walked along, Billy remarked, "This season sure hasn't been what I expected. We've played six games, and I haven't even scored a touchdown."

"Yeah, I expected us to do better than this in my senior year," Zeke replied. "We're two and four. We'll have to win our last three games to have a winning season."

"If you can beat Barnesdale without me, I'll be back for the last two."

Zeke chuckled, "You never change, Billy."

"That did sound conceited, didn't it? I really want to be a team player."

"You better be, Billy. A running back is only as good as his blockers allow. Any one of them -- Pudge, Roberto, Hank, Rusty and Roberto when

they return -- can easily let a defender slip by and let him clobber you.

Only the coaches would know. The folks in the stands would think, Billy isn't running very well tonight."

"They wouldn't do that, would they?"

"I hope not, but you never know," Zeke responded.

They paused for a moment by the gate out of the field.

"Billy, you remember Brad Henderson?"

"Of course, he's my ideal."

"Did you know that after he was named all-state, he took his lineman out for a steak dinner? His center, two guards, and two tackles. Real T-bones, not those ground-meat patties we eat after our road games."

"No, Zeke, I never knew that."

"It's something to think about."

Most of the players had showered, dressed, and gone home by the time Zeke and Billy reached the locker room. In the showers Zeke sang (not too

well), "Dese bones, dese bones gonna rise again", which the school chorus had sung in their fall concert.

"Did you know," he asked Billy, "that this is from Ezekiel?"

"From Paul Ezekiel Parker or Ezekiel the prophet?"

"The prophet."

"How about you prophesying us a win, Ezekiel?"

"I will. We'll beat Barnesdale on Friday."

The Lofton Lions left a little earlier than usual on Friday because of the distance to Barnesdale. Eddy, whose ankle was much better, was in a jovial mood. He led some singing and brought some Greek delicacies from Pudge's food supplement to Zeke and Spike at the front of the bus.

It was the first Friday in November and a cold, windy night in Barnesdale. As Lofton's co-captain, Bulldog won the toss and chose to receive. The Barnesdale captain selected the windward end of the field.

The game opened with a wind-assisted kick to Eddy on the five yard line. He showed that his ankle was all right by cutting back and forth to bring the ball to the 25. But Lofton's offense was sluggish. Three running plays barely eked out a first down. Two more runs netted six yards, and Zeke threw wide to Spike on a third down pass. Hank got off a decent kick into the wind, but Barnesdale surprised the Lions by running a reverse on the return and bringing the ball almost to the 50 yard marker.

The Barnesdale offense was steady though not spectacular. They shifted out of the T into a box formation, the kind Notre Dame used in the Rockne film. Their running game featured double-team blocks to open holes off tackle and passes from the T. They made three first downs to put the ball on the Lofton nine and scored on a third down, fullback plunge from the three. Their kicker made the extra point to give Barnesdale a 7-0 lead.

Zeke thought it would be useful to have a pair of return men deep to receive the Barnesdale kickoff, so he sent Fred back with Eddy. The ball

went to Fred on the right, and he took it up the sidelines to the 30.

Remembering that Barnesdale might be weak on pass defense but not being able to throw long into the wind, Zeke started with a short pass over the middle to Spike. He came back with the same play from the opposite side and hit Flash for a first down. This loosened the Barnesdale defense so that Eddy could gain a half dozen yards off left tackle. Hank picked up the first down with a crossbuck between the right guard and tackle. By now Stan and Jolly were playing with great confidence and blocking very effectively.

With the ball now in their own territory the Barnesdale defenders showed more determination. They closed the hole as Fred tried to run off tackle to the left. Zeke's timing was faulty in throwing to Eddy on a curl pattern from double wing. On a reverse from double wing Eddy got almost enough for a first down, but not enough, as the first quarter came to an end.

On the first play of the second quarter Hank with the wind now behind him booted a high kick. The Barnesdale receiver fielded the ball on the five

yard line and headed up the middle. As Stan hit him head on at the 15, the ball flew loose, and Dutch picked it up on the second bounce. As a Barnesdale player grabbed him, he quickly lateraled to Bulldog who bolted into the end zone for a touchdown. Basil had kicked well in pre-game practice, but he hooked his kick to the left. So Lofton trailed 6-7.

The Barnesdale return man brought Hank's kickoff back to the 24. The Lions were determined to stop the Barnesdale offense without a first down and almost succeeded. The third down run was so close that the officials brought in the chains and found that nose of the ball was an inch beyond the first down pole. But the Lions were even tougher on the next series and forced a punt.

Eddy's return brought the ball to the Lofton 35. Now for the first time Zeke had the wind behind him. He threw as many times as he called a running play. Soon the Lions were inside the Barnesdale 20. Zeke decided this was the moment to try a play they had been practicing for three

weeks: an end around from T-formation. A fake handoff to Fred into the line pulled in the linebackers. As lead blockers Eddy and Dutch took care of the remaining backfield defenders, and Flash breezed easily into paydirt. This time Basil was accurate. Lofton took the lead, 13-7.

The Barnesdale players were determined to catch up. They made three successive first downs and were working on their fourth when time ran out in the half.

In the locker room Lofton's linemen had a mini-celebration for Bulldog's touchdown, the second of the season for the defense. But Coach immediately put a damper on it. He had seen too many games lost in the second half from over-confidence.

Hank opened the second half with a booming kick, so deep that the Barnesdale receiver had some running room and got out to the 24. Then they showed some new wrinkles in their box formation and picked up a first down on a pair of runs. On the next play a faulty handoff caused a fumbled,

which they recovered for a four yard loss. They couldn't make first down in the next two plays and had to punt. The kick into the wind blew out of bounds near the Lofton 20.

A run by Eddy and a pass from Zeke to Spike yielded a first down. Fred made eight yards on a quick opener. With a free down Zeke tried a long pass to Flash down the sideline, but the safety deflected it at the last moment. On a quarterback sneak Zeke gained the necessary yards plus a couple extra for the first down. On the next play the umpire flagged Rusty for holding. The 15 yard penalty made it first and 25.

In two plays Zeke got his team back to the original line of scrimmage. On third down he made an unexpected call: a quick kick. In the huddle he instructed the backs to line up in T-formation then shift to short punt, except that Hank would line up on the left and shift to the tailback spot.

The maneuver caught Barnesdale completely by surprise. Hank got off a beautiful spiral which carried in the air to the Barnesdale 20 and rolled on

to the eight where Flash touched it dead.

Stuck deep in their own territory, Barnesdale couldn't get their running game going, and their quarterback wasn't willing to risk a pass into the wind. So on the fourth play they punted.

On the short kick Eddy signaled a fair catch just inside Barnesdale territory. The Lions moved the ball easily against their demoralized opponents. Eddy scored on a 20-yard run on an off tackle play out of T-formation. Basil hit again to give Lofton a 20-7 lead.

Coach decided to give Sal a chance to kickoff with the wind. His kick wasn't quite as far as Hank's but was quite acceptable. Barnesdale ran a couple of plays, and then the third quarter ended.

In the fourth quarter Coach mixed his units so that every second stringer could have seven or eight minutes of playing time. Pat scored Lofton's fourth touchdown on good old reliable 36 from short punt, called by Lefty who was subbing for Zeke. The Lions shut out Barnesdale for the rest of the

game. Final score was 27-7.

In the locker room Coach inquired, "Zeke, where did you get the idea for a quick kick?"

"I read about it in a story in a boy's magazine," Zeke answered. "Our defense was holding, so I figured we'd pick up yardage that way."

"You fooled even me," Coach commented with a wry smile, "but it worked. You called a nice game, Zeke."

"Thanks, Nick."

After the long trip to Barnesdale and a lot of running with their productive offense, the Lofton players were especially hungry after the game. They were glad that Coach had made arrangements for a meal at a diner on the outskirts of Barnesdale.

As the players were entering the diner and taking seats at tables and in booths, the manager at the cash register asked pugnaciously, "Who's in charge

of this group?"

"I am," Coach replied. "We're from Lofton High. We called to alert you that we were coming and wanted 38 hamburger steaks with trimmings."

"Yes, I know," he said, "but you didn't tell me you had colored boys on your team."

"We have many shades of color," Coach responded with feigned innocence, "including four Negroes."

"Don't you see the notice?" he indicated, pointing to a sign that said: *We Reserve the Right to Refuse Service to Anyone.* "We don't served colored people here."

"We're a team," Coach insisted. "We travel as a group, and we eat as a group."

"I'm sorry but the colored boys will have to leave."

"If they go, we all go." As he spoke, Coach looked through an open door into the kitchen where more than three dozen hamburger steaks were

cooking on a large griddle.

"Well, uh," the manager stammered. "I can see there has been a misunderstanding. I'll tell you what I'll do. How many colored boys do you have? Let me see: one, two, three, four. I'll fix up four trays for them, and they can eat on the bus."

"Are you talking about our Negro players?"

"Yes, I mean the -- uh -- uh, the Negroes."

"We eat together in the same place, or we don't eat," Coach said firmly.

"Come on boys, let's go. We'll find some place else where we're all welcome."

With that the guys started out the door.

"Wait a minute," exclaimed the manager. "Just this once I'm willing to compromise. If the colored boys, I mean the Negroes, will go out and return through the side door and then sit at the table next to the kitchen, I'll serve them."

"Come on, fellows," Coach hollered. "This gentleman wants us to

re-enter through the side door. All of us."

With that the whole team exited. Outside Coach grabbed Zeke, Spike, Eddy, and Bulldog and told them, "You go in first and take the seats by the kitchen. Pudge, Jolly, Hank, and Jiri, you wait and go in last with Fred, Flash, Joe, Will, and the coaches." Will was the fourth Negro on the team, a third string running back.

Zeke led the team through the side door. They filled the tables and booths, starting from the kitchen door and working forward. Last to enter were the coaches, the four Negro players, and the three tackles and blocking back. They divided into mixed groups and occupied three tables in front .

"That's not what I said," fumed the manager.

"That's the way it will be," Coach replied resolutely. He pulled out a check from his coat pocket and flashed it before the manager. "And I expect those of us up front to be served first."

The manager stormed into the kitchen, and they never saw him again.

But soon the help brought out plates of food. They served the table with Coach, Fred, Flash, and Pudge first and then the others nearby.

Zeke, Spike, and the others watched from the back with great satisfaction. For once they didn't mind being served last.

At the table next to Zeke, Doc sat with Eddy, Basil, and Bulldog. As they started to eat, Doc watched Basil for a moment and then remarked, "You have an interesting reflex, Basil."

"What's that?" Basil inquired.

"I notice that every time you lift your arm with food on your fork, your mouth pops open."

Basil thought about this for a moment. Then he forked a french fry and put it near his closed mouth. But within a brief instant his mouth opened and the fry went in.

"See, Basil," Eddy exclaimed, "you can't fool the doctor."

A few minutes later a foursome wearing sweaters with a large "B" came

in the front door. Two of them were big enough to be Barnesdale tackles.

When they noticed Flash and Fred sitting together, they went over. A wiry one asked, "Which one of you scored on us tonight on the end around?"

"I did," answered Flash.

"You're pretty fast, aren't you?" the Barnesdale player remarked.

"I guess so."

"Are you on the track team?"

"I was at my last school."

"What do you do the 100 in?" -- referring to the 100 yard dash.

"10.x."

"I'm a 10.x man myself. Maybe we'll meet again at the state track meet."

"I hope so," Flash concluded.

One of the Barnesdale tackles remarked, "You guys played a good game tonight. We're looking forward to playing you again next year in Lofton."

Which ones of you will be returning?"

"I will," Fred announced, "and Jiri, Hank, Joe, Jolly, and Will." He pointed to the players at nearby tables, who waved.

"See you then."

The Barnesdale players shook hands all around and headed for a booth on the other side of the diner.

In the back Doc sucked the last bit of melted ice in his glass and leaned toward Basil. Shielding his mouth with the back of his hand, Doc whispered suggestively, "Do you know what this means in Texas?"

"No, what?" replied Basil in eager anticipation.

"Empty!" explained Doc.

Everyone around roared. Nothing like an old gag perpetrated on a new victim.

As the players finished their meals, they sauntered out the front door and got back on the bus. After they were underway, Fred came up front

and told Coach, "Thanks a lot, Nick. That was courageous."

"It wasn't courage," Coach answered. "It was loyalty. I told all of you on the first day of practice if you would be loyal to me, I would be loyal to you. That's what makes a good team."

The next morning in the Lofton paper reported:

"Lions Smash Barnesdale, 27-7"

The front page proclaimed: **"Nazi Troops Cleared from All of Greece"**

A little before noon Eddy came into the hardware store with Billy to buy shotgun shells.

"We're after quail and rabbits," Eddy told Zeke.

"I thought you were teed-off with Billy," Zeke commented.

"I was, but he's suffered long enough."

Billy remarked, "I hear you called a terrific game at Barnesdale last night, Zeke. I wish I'd been there, but I'm glad you won anyway."

"I have a feeling that you'll shine next week against Grunwald, Billy,"

Zeke declared.

Saturday evening Zeke and Barbara were back together again for the movies. They thrilled at the daring of Don Ameche and Dana Andrews as pilots in "Wing and A Prayer", flying off an aircraft carrier in the Pacific. As they sat at the drive-in, Barbara and Joanne were intrigued as Zeke and Spike related their encounter at the Barnesdale diner the night before.

"Nick may call it loyalty," Joanne remarked, "but I think it also took a lot of courage."

"I think it would be hard for me to stand up like that," Spike confessed.

"How about you, Zeke?"

"I suppose it would," Zeke reflected. "But sometimes you have to take a stand for what you know is right."

April 2, 1994

14. Surprise Ending

Sunday evening at the Methodist Youth Fellowship some of the kids had heard about the incident at the diner in Barnesdale and wanted to know more about it. Zeke told them what happened. Then for the first time he talked about his conversation with Fred and Flash at school several weeks earlier. Hearing about subtle and not so subtle racial discrimination in Lofton was a mind-opener for the MYFers. Most of them had grown up in Lofton and had fallen into the existing social patterns. They neither analyzed nor questioned the way things were.

The minister, who had been on the committee that got the league to open the football and basketball teams to Negroes, guided the discussion to what they might do. As a beginning, they decided to set up a joint meeting with the youth group at Hope Baptist Church where Fred's father was minister. Zeke said he would discuss it with Fred, and the minister would talk to Rev. Montgomery.

On Monday the school was abuzz with the diner story. Most of the students agreed that Coach Nickerson had to stick up for his players, but some expressed the view that you shouldn't mix sports with social activism.

The best news for the team was that Roberto had passed a special world history exam on Friday, in fact had received an A-. That meant that he could rejoin the team. So could Rusty, who had gone through the three-week probationary period after dropping the course. They had been drilling with the team but had not participated in contact scrimmage.

"Rusty is a little rusty," Basil quipped.

"He looks more like big Rusty," Doc responded, referring to the pounds Rusty had added during his three week layoff.

Billy was also back on the team. Eddy got through the Barnesdale game without hurting his ankle again. Fred's hand was healing nicely, but Dr. Sullivan advised him to keep it bandaged while playing. Team morale was high after the convincing victory over Barnesdale.

At the Monday practice Coach built upon this upbeat feeling. He congratulated the team on their play at Barnesdale, joked about the quick kick that surprised him as much as it had the Barnesdale safety, and praised the performance of juniors and sophomores from the second team in the fourth quarter.

"We're going to need the best from all of you," he preached "if we want to beat Grunwald this week. They're a high flying team. They pass a lot and have some trick plays off the double wing. In league play they've lost only to Ashmont and Hargrove, both undefeated in the league. Those two will play one another this week."

"We'll be ready for them," Roberto piped up.

"Yeah, I've been resting up for this game," Rusty joined in. All the guys laughed.

"On the other hand," Coach continued, ignoring the returnees, "Grunwald is vulnerable to the same kind of wide-open offense that they

themselves run. So this week, Eddy, Fred, Spike, Flash, and the rest of you, be ready to fly. Zeke, dare to be daring. Now let's go. Show me your stuff."

With that the squads divided and ran through their plays, featuring reverses, fake reserves, unusual pass patterns, but also their bread-and-butter running game. Zeke worked especially on play-action passes out of the T. Twice he let Eddy throw the sucker pass. "Just for fun," he told Coach, who was watching.

After a while the squads reassembled for light contact scrimmage. It was a good re-introduction for Rusty and Roberto, prior to heavy scrimmage on Tuesday. Billy was quick afoot but tight-lipped. Maybe he had learned from his forced vacation.

As players streamed from the field at the end of practice, Eddy and Zeke stayed out for a few minutes to practice the sucker pass some more. They waylaid Bulldog to snap the ball to Eddy as Zeke called signals and

circled downfield for Eddy's throw.

When they entered the locker room, they found a heated political discussion underway. The presidential election was the next day. Pudge and Sal were continuing their strong advocacy for President Roosevelt. Bulldog was making the case for Governor Dewey, and he was glad to have Roberto join him. Zeke liked Roosevelt but he didn't say a lot because his dad favored Dewey while his mom preferred Roosevelt. No need to get between them.

During the lunch hour on Tuesday Zeke talked to Fred about their church youth groups getting together. Fred knew about the idea because the Methodist minister had already talked to his dad. Fred was favorable, but he thought they ought to finish football season first. The last game was a week from Friday.

On Tuesday the student body had a mock election. Roosevelt won 56 percent of the vote. This turned out to be slightly better than Roosevelt did

in the state, which he narrowly carried.

"Granddad, do you really remember President Roosevelt?" Timmy inquired in amazement. "We read about him in American history."

"One of my most vivid memories was the day Roosevelt died in April 1945," Granddad responded. "I came home from playing baseball after school. The radio was on but nobody was home. The announcer was talking about the president's death. My mother had gone across town to console her father, who was a great admirer of Roosevelt."

"My teacher talks that way about when President Kennedy was killed," Timmy remarked.

"Even more vivid is my memory of Pearl Harbor," Granddad continued. We were sitting around after Sunday dinner on December 7, 1941. My father had the radio tuned to the New York Philharmonic when an announcer interrupted to report the attack. The next day in school the teachers brought in radios so that we could

listen to President Roosevelt address Congress about `the day that shall live in infamy.'"

"Some time when you are visiting us, Granddad, I should get you to come to my school and talk about history."

"Timmy, what is history to you was contemporary events for me."

Tuesday's scrimmage was actually fun, as well as challenging. Pudge and Dutch discovered that Jolly and Stan, opposite them again on the second squad, had become much tougher during their three weeks with the first team. More than once when Stan blocked hard or mounted a vigorous pass rush, Dutch wondered half seriously, half humorously, "what kind of a monster have I created?" But Stan and his family were still staying with Dutch's folks on their farm, and the two guards remained fast friends.

At the other end of the line Jiri and Joe quickly realized that Rusty and Roberto were more powerful and more versatile than Jolly and Stan, who they had been scrimmaging against the past three weeks.

On Wednesday Pudge was sleepy all day in school because he had stayed up late listening to election returns on the radio, first at Democratic city headquarters and then at an election night party at his family's restaurant. It was Stan's first major election since coming to America, and he, too, stayed up late, listening to returns and analysis from radio commentators.

But Pudge and Stan came to life after school when a blast of frigid air hit them as they stepped out of the locker room and headed for the football field. Since the lunch hour one of those cold fronts that sweep across the Plains had moved in. The temperature was 40° and still dropping.

As Basil joined them, he took a deep breath and proclaimed,

"Blow, blow, thou wintry wind.

Freeze, freeze, though bitter sky."

"Shakespeare, again, I suppose," remarked Eddy.

"As You Like It," answered Basil.

"I don't like it," Eddy snapped.

"Reminds me of Poland at this time of year," Stan observed.

Cold or not, the team conducted its final scrimmage before the Grunwald game. There were well tuned by the end of practice.

It was another out of town game. This meant another parking lot pep rally after school. Another sack lunch with a ham and cheese sandwich and an apple. Another Greek supplement for Pudge. This time Stan brought some homemade Polish sausage, which he shared with Dutch, Zeke, and Spike. Coach glanced across the aisle at Zeke and Spike with a look that maybe too much extra food was getting on the bus. He preferred his players a little hungry.

It was Dutch's turn to be co-captain, and he joined Zeke for the coin toss. Grunwald won and chose to receive. Dutch selected the end of the field with the breeze behind them. It had warmed up some since Wednesday and was comfortable for playing football.

Hank continued his string of long kickoffs. The Grunwald return man

displayed no trickery, just hard running up the middle to the 33.

Immediately they went into their run-and-gun offense. An end sweep followed by a pass down and out yielded a first down almost to the 50. A crossbuck, a pass that Fred knocked down, and a completed pass over the middle just behind the linebackers got another.

Then Grunwald put some twists on the double-wing that the Lions hadn't seen all season: spinning maneuvers by the fullback, a shovel pass to a wingback cutting off guard, a rollout pass to the left by the right-handed passer. Soon they were inside the Lofton 20. On first and ten the Grunwald quarterback gambled with a pass into the end zone, but Eddy leapt and batted it down. But a double reverse picked up seven and a quick-out pass to a wingback in the flat put Grunwald on the Lofton seven.

Digging in, the Lions limited two running plays to short gains. On third down the Lofton defenders had all the Grunwald receivers covered on a rollout pass to the right, but the passer eluded Spike and Hank and

scampered into the end zone. The extra point gave Grunwald a 7-0 lead.

Half of the first quarter was gone, and Lofton hadn't had yet had possession.

The Grunwald kickoff into the wind carried only to the 15. Eddy went a few steps up the middle and then scooted along the sidelines for a 20 yard return. Zeke wanted to give Rusty and Roberto a feel for game blocking, so he started with short punt 36. They still had their touch and helped open a big hole for Eddy off right tackle. On second and three Zeke set up in a double wing, kept the ball himself on a fake reverse, and made another eight yards through the same spot in the line.

Thereafter Zeke mixed runs half passes as Lofton rolled down the field. Fred was a nimble as Eddy. Both Spike and Flash displayed sure hands, though once the safety came over to deflect a pass to Flash in the deep flat. With the ball on the Grunwald 12, Spike faked into the middle and cut back outside. Zeke zapped the ball to him just as he crossed the goal line in the corner. Basil converted to tie the score at 7-7.

The quarter was almost over, but Hank got to kick once more with the wind behind him. This time the Lions contained the Grunwald return man and stopped him at the 18. After one more play the quarter ended.

Both coaches realized that their players had done a lot of running, so they began substituting liberally. Pat, Cliff, and Billy took the places of Fred, Zeke, and Eddy in the defensive backfield, and Stan and Jolly gave Roberto and Rusty a rest. It was a smart move because the fresh troops kept Grunwald from making a first down.

Billy's punt return was the first time he had handled the ball in competition since he was thrown out of the Starfield game. He juked the first defender, ran straight ahead for ten yards, then made a sharp cutback. As he did, a pursuing defender changed directions just as Pat was blocking him. Finally a couple of Grunwald linemen brought Billy down after an 27 yard return. But back upfield the umpire's flag was on the ground, charging Pat with a clip.

Lefty took Cliff's place and Sal came in for Hank. The penalty had put the Lions back to their own 30 and seemed to have demoralized them. On the first play with second stringers in, blocking broke down, and Billy managed only three yards. Pat worked hard to get four on the next play. Lefty's third down pass to Mike was wide and almost intercepted.

Jolly's punt into the wind was wobbly and fairly short. The Grunwald receiver caught it in traffic and ran three steps forward into Stan's headlong charge. Stan's helmet struck the football and jolted it loose. Players from both sides dove in for the recovery. The referee called time to pull the players apart. At the bottom of the pile Wally, substituting for Bulldog, was lying in fetus position wrapped around the ball.

Coach sent his first team back in and praised the second squad for heads-up play as they left the field. With the ball on the Grunwald 40, Zeke noticed the opponents still had some subs in the defensive backfield, so he hit Flash and Spike on two successive passes.

Now on the 23 he called for a shift from T-formation into double wing. As a variation, Bulldog snapped the ball to Hank, who ran left and gave it to Eddy, who quickly handed it to Fred on a double reverse. Hank was now leading the interference and knocked down the defensive halfback. The safety came over, but Fred cut back and sailed past him and over the goal line. Again Basil split the uprights and gave Lofton a 14-7 lead.

There were about three minutes left in the half, so the Lofton players hoped to maintain their lead until intermission. Grunwald lined up with twin receivers, so the Lions suspected a reverse or fake reverse. Instead Grunwald pulled an even more surprising maneuver. Hank's kickoff went to the receiver on the right. He ran ahead several yards, stopped suddenly and heaved an overhand pass as a backward lateral to the receiver on the other side of the field.

Flash was the contain man on that side but had already started across the field for the first receiver. This gave the Grunwald runner an open shot

up the sideline. Hank had held back as safety and ran over to stop him.

But he missed as the Grunwald ballcarrier cut back. By then, though, Flash had recovered and was in hot pursuit. He finally caught him at the 30 yard line and rode him another five yards before bringing him down.

Grunwald took advantage of this opportunity and scored in four plays.

The successful conversion tied the game at 14-14.

Eddy took the kickoff deep in Lofton territory and brought it out to the 25. With less than a minute left Zeke followed instructions that Coach had sent in and ran out the clock with a couple of running plays.

The players were glad for a rest. In the locker room Coach praised his players offensive prowess and warned them to be alert to more Grunwald trickery.

The Grunwald wind-assisted kickoff to open the second half floated into the end zone where Eddy downed it for a touchback. Starting from their own 20, Zeke concentrated on plays from T-formation and shifts from the T

into short punt. The Lions managed two first downs but then had to punt.

Grunwald put its offense in high gear. Mixing short passes and razzle-dazzle running plays, they matched their game-opening drive and scored their third touchdown of the game. The successful kick for extra point awarded Grunwald a 21-14 lead.

Coach could see that it was going to be a hectic game clear to the finish, so he put in his second team backfield and ends with his first team line for the next series. Billy handled the kickoff well and made it out to the 28. Lefty ran mostly from the T with quick openers, crossbucks, an occasional lateral for an off tackle run or end sweep, and short slant-in passes to Chuck and Mike. They were at the Grunwald 25 when the third quarter ended.

On the first play of the final quarter Lefty dropped back to pass. A Grunwald tackle crashed through and leveled him just as he threw. His pass to Chuck went high and out of bounds. Lefty lay dazed on the ground. Doc came running in with smelling salts and after a while helped him to his feet.

Rusty and Pudge assisted Lefty to the sidelines.

Zeke came back in but the other second string backs and ends remained. On the sidelines Zeke had noticed that the Grunwald linemen were spreading out to stop the reverses, off tackle plays, and end sweeps. So his first call was 433 from short punt after shifting from the T. Zeke's fake to Pat going left drew the linebacker and defensive half in that direction. Sal got a tremendous trap block on the rushing guard. Billy's timing was perfect. As he received Zeke's handoff, he saw a big hole ahead of him up the middle. When the defensive backs from the right side came over to close the hole, Billy astutely cut back and dashed across the goal line. It was his first touchdown, the one he had longed for all season. Zeke was one of the first to reach him and offer congratulations.

But they didn't want their celebration to take away their concentration for point after touchdown. Bulldog made a clean snap to Zeke, who placed the ball flawlessly for Basil's kick. He hit to tie the score at 21 apiece.

Coach returned the starting backfield and ends to the field and sent in the second team line for a while. Hank's kickoff was a high slice to the right. An upback grabbed it and made it to the 35. Lofton's fresh linemen and rested backfield did their job. They yielded one first down and then forced a punt.

Eddy's return put the ball on the Grunwald 35. Three plays later the Lions were near midfield. Then the Grunwald defense stiffened and Lofton had to punt. The Grunwald receiver ran out of bounds at their 25.

Coach sent his starting linemen back into the game and kept the first team backfield in. Grunwald likewise had all of their starters on the field.

The Grunwald quarterback took to the air and picked up a first down at their own 38 with two completions. He tried a reverse but the Lofton players stayed home and threw the ballcarrier for a two yard loss. A completed pass was good for eight yards, but Zeke knocked down a third down attempt.

With fourth and four from their own 44, Grunwald called time out to talk it over. A substitute came in, apparently with instructions from their coach.

In the Lofton huddle Zeke told his teammates, "I bet they go for it. Their coach won't be satisfied with a tie. If they line up in punt formation, look out for a short snap to one of the up backs."

Sure enough Grunwald lined up to punt. Sure enough the ball went to a halfback who tried to cut through the center of the line. But Roberto nailed him at the line of scrimmage. Lofton took over on downs. The ball was on the right side of the field as they faced downfield.

Zeke immediately called time out and ran over to the linesman to find out how much time was left. He trotted back to his team's huddled and announced, "We have a minute forty seconds left. Our first play will be from a double wing. They'll expect a pass. Instead we'll run 318 to send Fred on a reverse to the left. Fred, I'll cock my arm to fake a pass and then twirl to

hand you the ball. Hold up one count to give me time. If you can't go all the way, try to go out of bounds."

"Let's make those blocks for Fred," Pudge urged.

The play went like clockwork. Spike made it appear he was in a pass pattern and then leveled the linebacker. Eddy went downfield and got the halfback. Hank led Fred's interference and took care of the end. Fred turned the corner and race down the left sideline until the halfback from the other side rushed over and knocked him out of bounds at the 30.

Back in the huddle Zeke exclaimed, "Here's what we've been practicing for, Eddy. Sucker pass from short punt, on three."

"I'm ready," Eddy sang out confidently.

"Remember," Zeke instructed. "It's supposed to look like 36 off tackle, except linemen can't cross the line of scrimmage to block."

As they broke the huddle, Zeke noticed the Grunwald defenders shading toward the wide side of the field. That was fine with him.

After the Lions were lined up, Zeke barked, "Ready. Set. Hike. One, two, three."

When Bulldog snapped the ball to Eddy, the guards pulled and ran right. Fred headed out to block the end. As this was going on, Zeke stealthily eased off to the left. Eddy took four steps to the right and suddenly stopped. He turned and lofted the ball to Zeke who was all alone heading down the left sideline. The ball fluttered like a wounded quail but reached Zeke so that he could catch it in stride at the 15. He sprinted to the end zone far ahead of the Grunwald safety.

The Lofton fans in the visitors' stands whistled, stomped, and hollered. The players on the sidelines went crazy with excitement. And one of the reserved tackles pounded Basil so hard on the back that knocked his glasses off. Maybe that's why Basil missed the try for extra point. But Lofton had a 27-21 lead with less than a minute left.

Hank kicked a squibber and the Lions smothered the return man on the

Grunwald 30. There was no miracle left in Grunwald's bag of tricks. The Lofton backs played deep to prevent a long pass completion. Their quarterback threw underneath a couple of times with a time out in between and produced a first down. Then he tried one desperation heave. Eddy intercepted it and made a short runback as the gun sounded to end the game.

Zeke and Eddy left the field with their arms around each other. Eddy still clutched the game ball. "I'm going to keep this and show it to Duke the next time his home on leave," he boasted. He had never wanted a souvenir ball for any of his touchdown run, but this one was different.

Coach was waiting for them on the sidelines. "Another surprise for Coach Nickerson," he exclaimed. "How can I complain when you won the game? But you sure fooled me on that one."

Zeke was sure that he would never be in Nick's doghouse for that trick because Eddy was his favorite player. After all it was Eddy's idea.

Because Grunwald was only 20 miles from Lofton, the team returned to their hometown for their hamburger steak. They were jubilant on the bus because they had turned their season around in the last two games. They were four and four now, so they still had a chance for a winning season.

Quite a few Lofton students had managed to get to Grunwald for the game, and a bunch of them were at the drive-in when the team arrived. They cheered as the team enter. Mary Lou ran up to Eddy and gave him a big hug and kiss. Zeke and Spike looked for Barbara and Joanne and found them with Fred's girl and a girl who Flash had started dating. Usually the Negro youth hung out at a chicken barbecue stand at the other end of town, but they wanted to be at the drive-in to be part of the victory celebration. That was all right with the proprietor.

The Saturday sports page reported:

"LIONS SURPASS GRUNWALD, 27-21"

"Foster Tosses Winning Pass to Parker"

Looking for scores of other league games, Zeke noted that Hargrove had beat Ashmont to remain undefeated. Hargrove would be Lofton's opponent next Friday in the last game of the season.

The front page headlined the war news:

"Wedge Near Metz Deepened"

"Superforts Bomb Jap Islands"

The movie Saturday night was "The Conspirators" with Hedy Lamarr, Paul Henreid, Sidney Greenstreet, and Peter Lorre. It revealed chilling, wartime intrigue in Lisbon. Afterwards Zeke and Barbara got into a dispute whether Hedy Lamarr was more beautiful than Paul Henreid was handsome.

Trying to be a peacemaker, Spike insisted, "It's like comparing apples and oranges."

"Apples are better, naturally," Zeke asserted.

"No, oranges," Barbara rebutted.

They seemed to be arguing more frequently in recent days. Even Zeke's

winning touchdown was insufficient to draw Barbara back to how things were before she went to the band party with Basil.

April 3, 1994

15. A Tough Break

The thrill of the last minute victory over Grunwald stayed with the players on the Lofton football team throughout the weekend. But the broader reality of their world hit them during school on Monday as word circulated that Ted Simmons had been killed in action, storming a Japanese-held island in the Pacific. He was right end on the championship team two years ago, and all the senior players knew him. Rusty was particularly touched because as a sophomore he had played beside Ted as a substitute tackle.

Coach sensed their sorrow. So after opening calisthenics he had the players observe a minute of silence in memory of Ted.

Briefly Coach praised his players for their performance against Grunwald. Eddy couldn't resist asking, "Nick, didn't the sucker pass I threw to Zeke remind you of the one Brad threw to Duke two years ago?"

"Like a chicken trying to fly reminds me of a hawk soaring through the

air," Coach laughingly replied. "But it got the job done."

Coach then turned his attention to the final game of the season against Hargrove. "As you all know," he began, "Hargrove is the only undefeated team in the league. Larry Ferguson, who played for me 15 years ago, went to the Hargrove-Ashmont game on Friday. He said they were terrific."

Larry was the pharmacist in his father's drug store.

"Hargrove took Ashmont by surprise," Coach continued, "by putting a man in motion from the T. Some colleges have been doing that, but this is the first team in our league to try it. This will require some adjustments in our defense. I'll show you if the first team will line up on defense and the second team on offense."

"We use man-in-motion sometimes on our team in middle school,"

Timmy indicated. "Everybody does."

"Yes, I know," Granddad replied, "but it was new for high schools in 1944."

The two teams took their places. On offense Lefty stood behind center and Billy, Sal, and Pat lined up to complete the T.

"The rules allow one man in motion at the time the ball is snapped," Coach explained, "if he is going clearly backward. Billy, let me take your place, and I'll demonstrate."

Coach took the left halfback position and told Lefty to call out a snap count. As Lefty barked out, "hike, one, two, three, four", Coach took a step forward and then trotted to his right at a slight angle away from the line of scrimmage. He stopped between tackle and guard and said, "If the ball is snapped when the man-in-motion is here, he can become a blocker on an off-tackle play."

Coach trotted three more steps. "If the ball is snapped when he gets beyond the end, he can come back and block the end for an end sweep or go down for a pass."

Next Coach trotted on out. "Or he can continue going out on a long

count and then head down field as a receiver."

Coming back to the team, Coach instructed, "This means that different defensive players have to keep an eye on the man-in-motion. At first the linebacker, tackle and end. Then the end and the halfback. When he goes on out, the halfback should move wider to cover him. But, of course, it may all be a fake, and the play will go the other way. That's what makes it so tricky. But since you can't predict what they'll do, you have to provide coverage."

With orientation complete, the teams worked on adjustments to the man-in-motion. First Billy jogged in motion to the right, and the first team defenders shifted slightly as he went on out. Then Pat jogged in motion to the left, and the defenders on that side changed their alignment. After several trials, the first squad took the offense with Eddy and Fred in motion, and the second team made defensive adjustments.

"We are underdogs against Hargrove," Coach emphasized after they had

completed the drill. "Our only chance is a high risk offense, the kind we used during much of the Grunwald game. We'll want to pass more than usual, so we'll spend the next three-quarters of an hour on passing drills."

For 15 minutes Zeke and Lefty took turns throwing to the backs and ends while Dave directed the linemen in pass blocking drills. Then the teams reassembled. For quarter of an hour the first team ran passing patterns against the second team. Then the second squad ran pass plays against the first team.

The final phase of Monday's practice concentrated on punt and kickoff returns.

When Zeke got home that evening, he learned that Clyde had called home during the afternoon to report that he was now back in the States. He was at a rehabilitation center in Massachusetts where he would get an artificial arm. He told Mom that he hoped to be home soon for a short visit.

"I wish it could be this week," said Zeke. "Then he could watch me play in

our final game."

"That would be great," Mom responded, "but more likely he won't get here until next week."

On Tuesday the Lofton football players engaged in an intrasquad scrimmage. Coach had the second team experiment with man-in-motion to give the first team some game-type experience, but it proved to be too complicated for ready application by the second squad. "You'll just have to play heads up," Coach declared.

For their part Zeke, Eddy, Fred, and Hank ran in high gear on offense. With eight games under their belt, they were smooth and confident.

During the activity period in school on Wednesday, Stan brought a guest speaker to the Forum Club. He represented the Polish government-in-exile in London. He had just come from Chicago with its large Polish population and had made a special trip to Lofton to visit the Krasinskis. He had no word on Stan's father, whom his family hadn't heard from since they slipped

out of

Poland two years ago.

What impressed Zeke the most was the Polish speaker's animosity toward the Russians. Zeke had perceived the Russians as liberators of Poland from Nazi rule, but the Pole had another view. He was bitter that the Soviet Army had not moved into Warsaw in August when they were within ten miles of the city. They had encouraged the Polish underground army to revolt but then didn't come in with reinforcements. By early October the Germans had crushed the revolt with great loss of life. Now the Soviets were trying to install a puppet government loyal to Moscow and not recognizing the London-based government, the legitimate successor to the one the Germans had displaced.

Miss Nelson, social studies teacher and sponsor of the Forum Club, offered some history of repeated partition of Poland by Prussia, Russia, and Austria and in 1939 by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

Ann Williams, an idealistic sophomore, piped up, "The problem with Europe is its division into so many small countries. Nationalism ought to give way to internationalism."

This inspired Basil to recite,

"Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,

Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land;

Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,

As home his footsteps he hath turn'd

From wandering on a foreign strand."

It brought tears to the eyes of the Polish visitor.

"That's beautiful," Stan sighed. "It's exactly how I feel. Who wrote it?"

"It's by Sir Walter Scott," replied Basil. "But I came across it in the story about 'The Man Without a Country.'"

Zeke thought but didn't say, "These feelings for native land are strong. I'm sort of that way myself. I wonder how the United Nations will every cope with it."

At Wednesday practice the miniature United Nations that composed the Lofton football team had a more immediate challenge: how to cope with high-powered Hargrove on Friday evening. They were glad it was a home game, so they would have their fans behind them.

On Friday the weather was warmer than the previous week, which wasn't surprising in the unpredictable Plains. Coach designated Fred and Hank as co-captains so that all starters had an opportunity to participate in the coin toss during the season. Zeke went out as a third co-captain so that he could serve as field general in decisions on penalties and time outs.

Before they went out, Fred and Hank played jon-ken-pon to determine who would make the call. Hank's rock smashed Fred's scissor, so he got to choose. He called tails and won. Lofton would receive.

Eddy eagerly awaited the kickoff. This was his last game for the Lions, his eighteenth consecutive start, and he wanted to go out in glory. The kick was low and bounced a couple of times before reaching him. He followed a wedge to the right and made it to the 36.

Coach and Zeke had talked over what the first play would be. They figured that the Hargrove linemen would charge hard and their linebackers and halfbacks would pursue vigorously. With that in mind Lofton lined up in a T. Zeke faked a handoff to Eddy crossing over toward right tackle and then lateraled to Flash on an end around. With Hank and Pat leading the way, he made a dozen yards. Obviously they had caught Hargrove by surprise.

The Lions lined up in T-formation. On "set" Bulldog handed Zeke the ball, who raised up and passed to Spike slanting between the two linebackers. It was an eight yard gain. In two plays they were in Hargrove territory.

Again the Lofton backs started in a T but then shifted into double wing,

drawing an overeager guard offside. After the penalty was marked off, Zeke repeated the call and gave the ball to Eddy on a reverse. He slipped between the tackle and end and gained five yards. A rollout pass to Fred yielded six more.

Zeke tried a quarterback keeper out of short punt but made only a couple. He came back with 217 in short punt, and Hank in a rare run from that formation gained seven. A quarterback sneak to the right behind Roberto's hard blocking produced the first down with two yards to spare.

Again shifting from T into double wing, Zeke gave the ball to Fred who handed it to Eddy on a double reverse. The defensive end alertly stayed home and alluded Zeke's block. But Eddy outmaneuvered him and turned the corner. Zeke kept going and drove the halfback to the outside as Eddy cut back. The safety had the last shot at the one, but Eddy's momentum carried him into the end zone.

Eddy's touchdown electrified the home crowd. The band gave Basil his

accustomed fanfare. By now he had learned not to be distracted from his assignment. With great confidence he kicked the extra point. Lofton had a 7-0 lead over the best team in the league.

Hargrove, though, was not a team to be overwhelmed by falling behind early in the game. They set up a strong wedge for the kickoff return and might have mustered a long runback if Dutch hadn't slipped through and tackled the return man at the 23.

Immediately the Hargrove offense went into T-formation with a man-in-motion. The first two plays went the opposite way, but the distraction diverted Hank and Bulldog's attention as linebackers. In this manner Hargrove picked up a first down.

On the third play the man-in-motion became the lead blocker in an off-tackle run and helped free the halfback for a 12 yard scamper. Then just for variety the Hargrove quarterback ran a quick opener for the fullback on a short count without a man-in-motion.

In this manner Hargrove marched relentlessly toward the goal line. Not a lot of trickery, no razzle-dazzle like Grunwald the week before. Just crisp ball handling, solid blocking, and hard running. Only twice did the quarterback pass. The touchdown came on a halfback slant from the five. The extra point tied the game at 7-7.

On the ensuing kickoff Hargrove charged downfield more aggressively than on the opening kickoff and stopped Eddy at the 24. Zeke figured that the element of surprise was over, so he selected the best of Lofton's standard plays for the next series. The Lions found the Hargrove linemen and linebackers much tougher this time. Probably they had taken Lofton too lightly in the first series. Besides they were coming off a hard-fought game with Ashmont the previous week.

The Lions made enough on three short runs for a first down as the quarter came to an end. After two more running plays yielded even less yardage, Zeke attempted a pass on third and six. Hard charging linemen

caused him to rush his throw, and he bounced the ball in front of Spike.

Hargrove's aggressiveness continued on Hank's punt, and they almost blocked it.

On offense Hargrove continued to run exclusively from T-formation, using a man-in-motion about half the time. On this series the quarterback passed more often, and this loosened the defense for runs. In Hargrove's second touchdown drive, the Lions could find no way to stop them. They made first down in two plays most of the time, only twice working from a third down. They took a 14-7 lead.

To receive the next kickoff Coach sent in his second string backfield along with Wally at center. The Hargrove coach sent in several substitutes also.

After catching a high kick, Billy eluded several Hargrove tacklers and made it past the 30. Upon Coach's instructions Lefty ran exclusively from the T.

Between them Billy and Pat picked up the first down. Lefty was glad for a chance to work with Spike and Flash and hit each of them in short patterns

for another first down.

After Sal gained four yards plunging over center, Lefty tried to hit Flash down and out. The defensive back stepped in front of Flash, intercepted, and headed down the sidelines. Lefty ran over to stopped him, but the Hargrove player cut back. This maneuver gave Flash an opportunity to catch up with him and ride him down.

Not wanting to allow Hargrove to attain an uncatchable lead, Coach sent the first team backfield and Bulldog back on to the field. The Hargrove coach had the opposite motivation and wanted to put the game out of reach, so he sent all of his starters back into the game.

Hargrove prevailed again and scored their third touchdown. This time, though, the snap to the holder was high, and he didn't set the ball straight. The kick missed the uprights. Even so, Hargrove was ahead 20-7.

By then the Lofton linemen were bushed. Coach sent in Chuck, Jiri, Joe, Stan, Jolly, and Mike to block for the first team backfield. With double

receivers on the kickoff, Eddy caught the ball and handed it to Fred on a reverse. This worked well enough to allow Fred to get out beyond the 40. The Lions made a couple of first downs, but time ran out in the half before they could become a scoring threat.

In the locker room Coach drew diagrams of Hargrove's principal running plays and offered tips on how to deal better with the man-in-motion. He said, "We've come from behind before, and we can do it again."

Hank got off a good kick to start the second half. With two receivers deep Hargrove executed a fake reverse but the Lions weren't fooled. To escape the defenders the runner cutback toward the center of the field. As he changed directions, so did Pudge. At this moment a blocker hit Pudge low from behind, drawing a flag from the linesman. Bulldog stopped the runner at the 35.

Pudge lay on the ground, grasping his knee in pain. Dr. Sullivan and little Doc came out for a look. After a while they helped Pudge to his feet.

Rusty and Dutch supported him as he limped off the field. His season was over. A senior, it was the end of his career for the Lofton Lions. In the stands the students hollered, "Pudge! Pudge! Pudge!" in appreciation. Pudge took off his helmet and waved.

As Jiri took his place next to Dutch, his concern for playing next to a "German" was long gone. They were teammates. They had even become friends.

The clipping penalty took Hargrove back to their own 20. By now the Lions were more comfortable in dealing with the man-in-motion. They gave up a couple of first downs but forced Hargrove to kick from midfield. Eddy drew in the high punt and scooted along the sidelines until a tackler knocked him out of bounds at the Lofton 35.

Zeke tried a more daring style of plays on this series, but the Lions made little headway against the tenacious Hargrove defense. On third down from the 50, Zeke hit Spike ten yards deep over the middle. Spike held the ball

just long enough to have possession, and then the safety hit him head-on. The ball fell loose and Hargrove recovered on their own 40. Spike was shaken up and had to leave the game.

This time the Hargrove offense was not to be denied. They showed a new twist by having the man-in-motion stop and take a stance as a wingback beyond the defensive end. Once he blocked out the end on an end sweep. Another time he became a pass receiver. From the Lofton 12 the wide wingback dashed the other way, took the ball from the quarterback on a reverse, and sped into the end zone. The conversion was good, and Hargrove led 27-7.

Spike came back in for the kickoff as the third quarter was winding down. Eddy brought the ball out to the 28. On a shift from the T into short punt, Eddy gained seven yards off right tackle. On the next play Zeke dropped back to pass from the T. As he released the pass to Flash cutting ten yards deep over center, he was hit from two directions. He felt a sharp

pain in his right leg and fell to the ground. He couldn't see that Flash had caught the ball and made an additional five yards.

As Zeke lay in agonizing pain, Dr. Sullivan and Doc came out on the field again. Dr. Sullivan felt Zeke's leg tenderly and indicated, "I think the fibula is broken. Chris, go get a splint and a stretcher."

Through his pain Zeke thought, I haven't heard Doc called Chris for a long time. But I guess the doctor doesn't want to call our trainer Doc.

Dr. Sullivan carefully taped the splint around Zeke's leg to immobilize it. Several players helped him on the stretcher. Jiri started to pick up one end, but Roberto intervened. "Let me and Rusty have the honor," he insisted.

As Roberto and Rusty carried Zeke from the field, Mary Lou led the students in the chant, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel! Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" Zeke weakly waved his hand in grateful acknowledgement.

On the sideline, Dr. Sullivan told Coach, "We need an ambulance to get him to the hospital."

"No sirens, please," Zeke spoke up. "I want to go quietly. But first I want to see Lofton score." Some players put a couple of benches together so that Zeke could watch the playing field.

As play resumed, Lefty ran Eddy up the middle on 433 for a four yard gain. It was the last play in the third quarter.

As the teams rested, the Hargrove coach replaced virtually all of his players. Coach decided that this would be a good time to honor his seniors. First, he sent in Chuck and Mike for Spike and Flash. The two senior ends received a standing ovation as they walked off the field, arm in arm. Then Coach sent in Stan and Jolly to take the places of Roberto and Rusty.

Another standing ovation. Finally he sent in Billy for Eddy. As Eddy sauntered off the field, Mary Lou led the cheer, "Eddy! Eddy! Eddy!" On the sideline the seniors, including Pudge, stood together and waved to the crowd.

On the field it was now juniors and sophomores from both teams playing one another. It was a look at the future.

In this contest the Lions did quite well. Under instructions to work only from a T, Lefty engineered a vigorous touchdown drive. He gave Billy and Fred an equal number of plays and worked in Hank now and then. As a change of pace, he threw short passes to Chuck and Mike. Billy scored the touchdown going off tackle with a lateral from Lefty, his second touchdown of the season. Looking ahead to next year, Coach gave Wally a chance to kick the extra point. He split the uprights. This brought the score to 27-14 in Hargrove's favor.

By now the ambulance had arrived and had driven along the running track for Zeke. As they placed Zeke aboard, Barbara came down from the stands teary eyed. Laura was with her, looking apprehensive but calm. Zeke's dad had come around from the stands on the other side of the field.

"I'll be all right," Zeke declared.

"Just a broken bone," Dr. Sullivan assured them. "It'll heal satisfactorily."

"I'll see you at the hospital, Zeke," Dad called out. "Barbara, do you want to go with Laura and me?"

"Yes, I'd like to," she replied.

The ambulance left as Sal boomed his kickoff. After stopping the return man, the Lofton juniors and sophomores displayed defensive weaknesses here and there as Hargrove moved downfield. They couldn't stop their counterparts, who matched the Lofton touchdown. With the extra point the score was 34-14 in Hargrove's favor.

With only a couple of minutes left, both coaches let their third teams finish the game. The Lofton Lions ended their season with four wins and five losses. They were three and four in the league.

Dad picked up Mom on the way to the hospital. Zeke's parents, sister, and girl friend sat together in the waiting room not saying much while Dr. Sullivan set Zeke's leg, put it in a cast, and attached it to a set of cords and pullies to provide traction. They got to see Zeke briefly in his hospital room,

but the doctor had prescribed quiet rest for the remainder of the night.

In the morning a nurse brought Zeke the Lofton paper along with his breakfast. Turning to the sports page, he read:

"Lions Close Season With 14-34 Loss."

The writer reported Zeke's injury and went beyond the bounds of normal reporting by praising the Lofton seniors for doing their best. He was nice enough not to say that their best wasn't enough to achieve a winning season.

The front page announced:

"Third Army Drives Toward Saar Basin"

That was Clyde's unit, but now he's back in the States, Zeke reflected. All he lost was an arm. Not his life.

As he lay on his hospital bed, Zeke wondered when the war would be over, would he be drafted, would his broken leg keep him out of the army. He even thought for a while about Lofton's losing season. But he wasn't yet ready to fully review what went right and what went wrong.

April 3, 1994

16. In the Hospital

After a hospital aide had taken away Zeke's breakfast tray, his parents and sister came into the room.

"How are you this morning, Paul?" Dad inquired.

"I'm okay."

"Does it hurt? Did you sleep well?" Mom wanted to know.

"Yes, it hurts a little because the painkiller has worn off. No, I didn't sleep very well. I usually don't sleep on my back. Now I'm immobilized by this contraption."

"Oh, Paul," Mom lamented, "I was afraid something like this might happen."

"It's okay, Mom. I knew that these things occur in football. I'm sorry that it happened to me, but that's the way it goes."

"You called a great opening series," Dad interjected, playing his role as the family optimist.

"Yes, we caught them by surprise with our wide open offense. But then their superiority exerted itself. They were certainly the best team we played all season."

"All in all you had a good season," Dad reassured him.

"Thanks, Dad. It was a losing season, but we never gave up."

"That's what counts," Dad responded.

"Zeke," said Laura with moist eyes, "I want you to know when you went down, I could feel the pain myself. I wanted to rush out on the field to see if you were all right."

"You seemed so calm when they were loading me in the ambulance. Not like Barbara, who was almost hysterical."

"Only on the outside. I didn't want you to know how upset I was."

"I appreciate all of your concern," said Zeke.

"Can we do anything for you, Paul?" Mom inquired. "Can we get you anything?"

"Well, I guess I'd like the day off, Dad."

"I'll take it under consideration," Dad replied drolly. "But I may have to dock you pay."

"No sick leave for family members?"

"Maybe I can arrange it."

"And, Mom, I could use some books to read. Not school books. Some adventure stories."

"I'll see what I can find."

"But if you want me to," Laura added, "I can ask you teachers on Monday for your class assignments."

"I suppose there is no escape for an injured warrior."

"I wish you wouldn't say it that way," Mom remarked, wiping her eyes.

"Now we have two injured warriors in the family."

"In a few days we'll have the other one home, Martha," Dad reminded her.

"I'll be so glad to see Clyde," Mom indicated.

"So will I," said Zeke. "He and I have lots to talk about."

A nurse entered and stuck a thermometer in Zeke's mouth and looked at the family in a way suggesting she thought it was time for them to go. So they departed.

After a while Coach Nickerson appeared.

"Dr. Sullivan tells me, Zeke, that the break wasn't too severe," Coach reassured him. "He thinks your fibula will be as good as new when it heals."

"That's what he told me. But I have to leave this cast on for six weeks. So, Nick, I guess I'll miss the opening of basketball practice on Monday."

"I'll hold a place for you on the team."

"It'll be after the first of the year."

"That's all right."

"Nick, I'm sorry we gave you your first losing season at Lofton High."

"The world won't end. You strive to win because that's what you do in

football. But how you win is as important as winning. If you lose, you lose.

What's important is doing the best you can."

"I made a bunch of mistakes this season," Zeke acknowledged, "but I tried to do my best."

"The team made mistakes," Coach replied. "So did the coaches. So did the other teams. Football is a game of mistakes as well as correct performance. When two teams are equally matched, the team making the fewest mistakes usually wins."

"I guess that's how we beat Tanabe when their tailback attempted a pass in the last minute that Rusty batted to Roberto."

"That's a good case in point."

"Or like my dumb call against Kepler that cost us the game," Zeke agonized.

"Don't fret about that game forever, Zeke," Coach reassured him.

"You had a good season."

"Thanks, Nick."

"You should know that every player I've ever coached made mistakes some time or other. I've never had a perfect player."

"Not even Brad Henderson?"

"Nor even him. He's the best player I ever coached, but he made errors in play calling now and then and occasionally threw some passes he shouldn't have. But he was so good that it was hardly noticeable. What was most remarkable about Brad, he never chastised any teammate for making a mistake. He only offered encouragement. I learned a lot from him."

"You did?"

"Sure. I learn something from my players every season."

"From us losers, too."

"Yes, I learned from Dutch and you more about accepting other people for what they are and helping them. Like Dutch teaching Stan how to play guard, his own position. And he took Flash under his wing and taught him

to block, while a bunch of the other guys were still uneasy about playing football with Negroes."

"Certainly Dutch has the best spirit on the team."

"And you, Zeke, the way you helped Billy even though he was a great pain in your you-know-what."

"You asked me to, Nick"

"Asking wasn't enough. You had to be willing inside yourself. And you were."

"Yeah, Billy has come along real well. In the process, Nick, I learned from you that you don't have to like someone to help them. But then when you help them, you may end up liking them."

"Zeke, it may have been a losing season in league standings, but this year's team displayed more character development than any team I've ever coached."

"That's nice to know, Nick."

"What's nice to know?" asked Doc as he entered the room.

"That we had more characters on our team," Zeke answered, "than any other team in the history of Lofton football. And that includes the trainer."

"Characters? Me a character?" Doc rebutted. "I'm just Coach's helper. That's why I'm here now. I wanted to be certain that Doc Sullivan did his job properly."

Doc examined the cords and pulleys holding Zeke's leg aloft. "So that's how these things work," he remarked. He pulled on a cord, causing Zeke's leg to rise slightly.

"Are you going to mess things up," Zeke jibed. "Or do I have to call a nurse." He reached for the call button.

"Call that cute little redhead, will you?" Doc exclaimed.

Coach was enjoying Doc's antics. "I'm going to miss you next year, Chris."

"Don't say farewell too soon," Doc responded. "You still have my service

for the basketball season. But at least this year the backboards won't suffer so much."

"What do you mean?" Coach asked.

"They won't be pounded by the bricks that this fellow throws at them,"

Doc answered, pointing to Zeke.

"That's what I like about you, Doc," Zeke remarked. "You know how to keep a fellow humble."

"We each have our roles to play," Doc affirmed.

A nurse and nurse's aide came in wheeling a cart containing a basin of water. "It's time for us to bathe you," the nurse told Zeke.

"What personal service!" Doc exclaimed. "I want to see how it's done."

"I'm afraid you'll have to leave," she told Doc and Coach.

"But I'm a doctor," Doc insisted.

"You're only the team trainer, Chris," the nurse replied with a smile.

"I see you've been talking to Dr. Sullivan," said Doc. "See you later,

Zeke."

"I'll come back again," Coach said to Zeke as he left. "Take good care of this fellow," he told the nurse.

Zeke was a little embarrassed to be bathed by the nurse and her aide. He had never been hospitalized before. At least it was someone he had never met previously.

Pudge and Eddy showed up as Zeke was eating his lunch. Pudge looked at Zeke's tray and remarked, "I can do better than that. What would you like for supper, shish kabob and stuffed grape leaves?"

"You'll have to talk with the hospital staff," Zeke answered. "They seem to have strict rules and regulations here."

"It was a tough break, Zeke," declared Eddy. "What a way to end the season."

"How about you, Pudge?" Zeke asked. "How's your knee?"

"Just a strain the doctor says. I have it taped. It'll heal in a couple of

weeks."

"That's good."

"What I object to was that they made me walk off the field while you got carried off in glory, Zeke."

"Yeah, if you call glory a bunch of people yelling `Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!' I suppose somebody -- no names of present company mentioned -- taught this yell to Mary Lou."

"I suppose so," Eddy replied noncommittally. "After all, it's been your trademark since grade school."

"From ridicule to praise," Zeke reflected. "That's quite a transformation."

"That's us, too, Zeke," Eddy noted. "Transformed. I suppose that in grade school I was aware that a kid named Zeke lived on the other side of town and he helped in his dad's hardware store. I used to see you when I came in with my Dad to buy fishing tackle and shotgun shells. Then in junior high

I encountered you as a straight-laced fellow who tried to guard me tenaciously in basketball."

"And not much of a shot," Zeke commented.

"I wasn't going to say that," Eddy offered.

"Then you clobbered me in the election for sophomore class president," Zeke recalled. "Among other things it taught me that I'm not the elective type."

"But you have other leadership qualities," Pudge inserted. "I've noticed that on the team this year."

"That was a bitter defeat for me, the sophomore election," Zeke confessed. "But I'm glad we're friends now, Eddy."

"Me, too," Eddy acknowledged.

"Not only friends," Pudge observed, "but also co-conspirators in the reshaping Billy Benton project."

"You noticed," said Zeke.

"That twerp needed reshaping," Eddy insisted.

"But what a combination," Pudge noted. "Eddy using challenge and response, Zeke applying friendly persuasion."

"Pudge," Zeke remarked, "I didn't realize that you were such a keen analyst of human relationships. I'll help your political career."

"My political career?" Pudge asked rhetorically. "That's my old man. All I want to be is a disk jockey or something else in radio."

"I predict that you'll be mayor of Lofton some day," Zeke asserted.

"And what about me?" Eddy asked. "What do you foresee for me?"

"First, I see a winning season in basketball. Spike's going to have to have a terrific year. You, too, Eddy. And do you remember Flash in three-on-three with Duke and Nick? He's going to be a marvelous addition. I predict you'll be in the state basketball tournament."

"But without you to defend against the good shooters."

"Basketball's not really my sport. Football is."

"And what beyond the basketball season?" Eddy inquired.

"You'll always be doing something connected with sports, Eddy.

Playing, coaching, officiating. You're the best natural athlete in our class."

"What about you, Zeke?" asked Pudge. "What do you want to be?"

"I don't know. I haven't decided. Not sports, but I don't know what.

I guess I'll be drafted next spring after I turn 18. I hope the war will be over by then. I imagine I'll go to college when I get out of the service. I'll figure out my career then."

"You'll do all right in whatever you choose, Zeke," Eddy indicated.

"Whew! This is getting too sentimental for me," Pudge asserted. "I liked it better when you guys were rivals."

"Really?" asked Zeke.

"No, not really. Friendship is better."

A nurse's aide entered to clear away Zeke's lunch tray. Eddy and Pudge decided it was time for them to leave, so they said their farewells.

Zeke didn't have any more visitors until his mother stopped by for a while late in the afternoon. She had a supply of adventure novels for Zeke and the latest editions of *Life* and *Reader's Digest*. When she left, Zeke leafed through *Life* and read a feature story on the V-2 rockets that Germany was attacking England with. He was both fascinated and horrified by this new means of delivering explosives. The V-1 robot planes the Germans had used before were bad enough. Who knows where this new method of warfare might lead, Zeke thought.

In the evening Spike arrived with Barbara and Joanne.

"We're usually together on Saturday night," Spike explained. "Since you can't go to the movies with us, we thought we should come here."

"Glad to see all of you?" Zeke enthused, looking especially at Barbara.

"What are you missing?"

"Gary Cooper and Teresa Wright in *'Casanova Brown'*," Joanne replied.

"I can't imagine that they would be as good in this film as they were in

'Pride of the Yankees'," Zeke speculated.

Barbara moved over to bedside, took Zeke's hand, and asked, "How are you, Zeke? Does it hurt?"

"A little, but I'm used to it. The worst is not being able to move around."

"I've been thinking about you all day."

"Happy thoughts?"

"Of course. I'm sorry we quarreled."

"Me, too. Let's just say it was the strain of the football season. Now it's over."

"Nothing like two lovers making up," Spike remarked. "Notice, Joanne, we don't have to go to the movies to see romance."

"Oh, you're awful, Spike," Barbara reacted.

"Joanne, if I were injured on the playing field," Spike continued, "would you be gushy like Barbara."

"No, I'd say, 'you got what you deserved'," Joanne answered as she poked Spike good naturedly.

With these sentiments out of the way, the foursome discussed the movies they had seen that fall. And the girls allowed the fellows to review the football season, the highlights and the lowlights. Spike and Zeke had each scored three touchdowns. Eddy led the way with five. The other touchdowns were spread around seven other players, including two linemen. They all agreed that the Cranville game was Zeke's best. Spike felt that his best reception was the touchdown pass against Grunwald in the next to last game of the season.

When it was time for them to leave, Barbara lingered a moment, kissed Zeke, and said, "I miss you. Get well soon."

Sunday afternoon Zeke had a parade of visitors: Rusty and Roberto, Bulldog, Hank, Dutch and Stan, Billy and Lefty, even the principal.

Stan had never been in an American hospital before. He was impressed

with the spaciousness and the equipment.

"It's been a great experience for me," Stan reported, "playing American football. We had nothing like this in Poland, even before the war."

"I'm glad you played with us, Stan," said Zeke.

"What surprised me most," Stan explained, "was how players went at one another hard during the game, but when it was all over, they shook hands and congratulated each other for a good game."

"That's what I've tried to explain to my family," Dutch indicated. "They think football is like war, but it isn't."

When Billy was there, he hemmed and hawed and finally uttered what must have been hard for him to say. "Zeke, I appreciate your sticking with me this season."

"What do you mean?"

"I think you know. I started as a cocky, little know-it-all. Everyone wanted to put me down, especially Eddy. I thought I could show him by

beating him in a race. I know I'm faster. But he out-smarted me. Then Coach assigned me to your team for the intrasquad game. I goofed the first play, but you called my number again on the next play."

"I wanted you to maintain your self-confidence. That's an essential for a football player -- unless it gets excessive."

"Later when I was suspended you talked with me. I knew it was a lame excuse to have me run pass patterns, but I'm glad you did it that way. If you'd had said, let's talk, I never would've."

"It's hard to get a conversation going on important matters."

"So, do you think I did all right after that?"

"You're coming along very well, Billy. I know you'll have a winning season next year. Fred and Hank will be back in the backfield along with you guys. The middle of the line will be strong with Dutch, Bulldog, and Stan. Jolly and Jiri both showed they can play tackle. And Chuck and Mike have come a long ways as ends."

"Yeah, we've got a great bunch," Billy agreed.

"Your last quarter against Hargrove was quite impressive," Zeke indicated. "Especially the way you called plays, Lefty."

"I've learned a lot from you, Zeke," Lefty acknowledged.

"From my mistakes, I dare say, as well as my good calls."

"From both."

"When I read about your games next year, I'll feel I have something invested."

"You do," said Billy.

At that moment, Zeke's sister walked into the room.

"It's Laura Lee," Billy announced.

"How do you know my middle name?" Laura asked.

"That's what the sixth grade teacher called you the year I moved to town."

"And you remember?"

"Of course."

"Laura, as a sophomore," Zeke asked, "weren't you proud of your classmates, Billy and Lefty, after I went out?"

"It's a little hazy," Laura answered, "because I was worrying about you, Zeke. But, yes, I think they did real well."

"Your class may help win the league championship next year or the year after, just as Clyde's class did two years ago."

"I hope so," Billy replied.

"Me, too," Lefty added.

After the sophomore players left, Zeke said to his sister, "I thought you didn't like Billy."

"Who says I do?"

"I noticed the way you lowered your eyes when he said `Laura Lee.'"

"He seems nicer than before. What have you done to him?"

"Sometimes football is a mellowing process."

On Monday evening Spike dropped by after the opening basketball practice and brought Fred and Flash with him.

"I wondered if you guys were going to visit me," Zeke said to Fred and Flash.

"This hospital isn't the friendliest place in town for us," Fred explained.

"I'm glad you came," Zeke responded. "Spike, how'd practice go?"

"The usual. Nick made us do passing drills a half hour before he let us shoot."

"And how about this new fellow?"

"Flash is pretty flashy."

"And what about his cousin? I didn't know you were interested in basketball, Fred."

"Flash persuaded me to give it a try."

"But when you return, Zeke," Spike joked. "I'm afraid that you're going to lose the worst shooter contest to Fred. He's a terrific football

player, but this ain't football."

"You mean it's not a contact sport?" Fred asked with a laugh.

"Fred, what about our project with our church groups," Zeke inquired.

"I missed MYF last night, but I know the kids are still interested in doing something with Hope Baptist.

"Does your group go caroling before Christmas?"

"Yes, for shut-ins."

"So does ours. Maybe that's something we could do together."

"Great idea," Zeke picked up. "We could meet once to practice and then have a party together afterwards."

"I'll see some of them at the Thanksgiving service on Thursday, Fred indicated. I'll ask them about it."

Their conversation drifted back to sports, especially the football season.

Zeke noted that everyone on the team had been in for a visit except Basil.

"He thinks you're mad at him," Spike explained, "because he took

Barbara to the band party."

"That was Barbara's doing as much as Basil's," Zeke commented. "Tell him I expect him to come by."

As the threesome were departing, Flash declared, "Zeke, it was a great season. It has given me hope."

"Hope?" asked Spike.

"Hope that people in this country can really learn to live together."

"We can, and we will," Zeke assured him.

On Tuesday Zeke felt depressed. He was tired of lying in bed with his leg suspended. He wanted to get up and about. All the fellows were in school, so he had no visitors.

But in the afternoon the person he most wanted to see came in: Clyde. It was an emotional moment for the two brothers. They tried to mask their feelings by joking about their injuries: Clyde about his missing arm, Zeke about his broken leg.

Clyde wanted to hear the details of Zeke's injury, which Zeke provided, blow by blow. But Clyde wasn't yet ready to reveal anything about what happened to him.

"I guess it's the end of your musical career, Clyde," Zeke sympathized.

"There are two answers," Clyde explained. "First, my loss may open a new career for me."

"What do you mean?"

"When I was in the base hospital in England, another patient with an amputated leg was wandering through the ward on crutches. He stopped at my bed and said, 'I can see you'll have a great career as a lawyer.' 'What do you mean?' I asked. He explained, 'People get tired of lawyers telling them on the one hand this but on the other hand that. Lot's of people are looking for one-armed lawyers.'"

Clyde laughed so much at his own joke that Zeke got caught up in the merriment.

After their mirth receded, Zeke asked, "And what's the other answer?"

"Maybe I'm not through as a trombonist."

"How can that be? It was your slide arm. I've never seen a left-handed trombonist."

"Nor have I. But just the day before I was scheduled to fly back to the States, Glen Miller played a concert at the hospital. Afterwards he toured the wards, carrying his trombone."

"And he came to your ward?"

"He sure did. 'Are there any musicians here?' he asked. I raised my left hand, and he came over. 'What's your instrument, soldier?' he inquired. 'Trombone,' I answered. 'Or used to be.' He noticed my missing arm and commented, 'It still is. You can play a trombone with either arm. Let me show you.' He flipped his instrument so that the slide was on his left and played a scale, using his left arm to move the slide."

"How was his tone?"

"Mellow as usual. Then he said, 'Here you try.' I sat up, and he held his instrument to my mouth. I blew and tried a scale. I missed some notes, but it wasn't too bad."

"You played Glen Miller's trombone?" Zeke asked in astonishment.

"Yes, I did. When he left a therapist told me that when I get my artificial arm, I'll be able to hold a trombone without any difficulty. So maybe my musical career isn't over."

As he spoke, another musician strolled into the room: Basil.

"Hi, Basil," said Zeke. "Glad to see you."

"Oh, I'm sorry," Basil apologized, "I didn't know you had a visitor."

"That's all right," Zeke insisted. "It's my brother, Clyde, the war hero. Clyde, this is Basil, extra point specialist, par excellence."

"I remember you," Clyde indicated. "You play the bassoon, don't you?"

"That's me. Zeke, I'd have come sooner, but I thought you were mad at me. Spike says you aren't."

"No, not at all."

"What's this about?" Clyde wanted to know.

"Barbara, the girl I've been dating," Zeke explained, "went out with Basil to make me jealous."

"*Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy,*" Clyde exclaimed, "*It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on.*"

"*Othello, Act III,*" Basil responded excitedly. "You know your Shakespeare, Clyde."

"Of course, I took Miss Shepherd's course."

"Me, too," said Basil. "I bet we memorized the same lines."

"I'm glad I did," Clyde explained. "It help me through some tough times the past six weeks."

"How's that?" asked Zeke.

"Well, at first I felt sorry for myself, losing an arm, and my trombone arm at that. To divert myself from my woes as I lay on the hospital bed, I

recited all the poems and quotations I could remember. I kept coming back to the line from 'As You Like It' that says, 'Sweet are the uses of adversity.'"

"I used that one after our second loss," Basil recalled, "and they turned the cold shower on me."

"That's fitting," Clyde remarked. "The icy fang the Duke talked about."

"Yes, the good Duke who was forced by his brother, the bad Duke, to live in exile in the Forest of Arden," Basil explained to Zeke.

"Knowing that some of his men miss court life," Clyde continued. "the Duke tells them, 'Sweet are the uses of adversity.'"

As Clyde continued his recitation, Basil joined in.

"Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,

Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;

And this our life exempt from public haunt

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,

Sermons in stones and good in every thing.

I would not change it."

"Hurrah!" Zeke exclaimed and applauded.

"Adversity is a lost arm," Clyde commented. "A broken leg."

"A losing season," Zeke added.

"Whatever happens to us," Clyde observed, "we can look for the good in it. We may not know what it is at first, but it's there if we search for it. That's how I discovered that I'm going to be the world's foremost left-handed trombonist."

The Parker household had a marvelous Thanksgiving even though Zeke had to remain in the hospital. When his family visited Zeke in the evening, they found him in the lounge surrounded by his teammates. Doc had arranged for him to be moved there. Eddy had rounded up the gang.

It had been six days since they had been together as a group, and they were glad to be reunited. From their jubilation an observer would have

thought they were league champions.

April 5, 1994

17. Another Time Out

"Is that the end of the story, Granddad?" Timmy asked.

"It was the end of the season," answered Granddad, "but the lives of the players continued in some interesting ways."

Grandma came in with a tray of lemonade and cookies. "It's quit raining," she said, "so I thought you two might like to have some refreshments on the porch."

When they were seated outside, Timmy asked, "Grandma, your name is Helen, isn't it?"

"Yes, always has been," she replied.

"Not Barbara?"

"Of course not."

"Barbara and Zeke broke up not long after he got out of the hospital," Granddad revealed. "A couple of weeks before Christmas."

"Boys always did that," Grandma explained. "It's not that they were

cheap. It's that they just didn't know what to buy their girl friends for Christmas."

"When did you meet Granddad?" asked Timmy.

"In college," Grandma replied.

"After I got out of the army," Granddad added.

"Was it because Zeke was a football star?" Timmy inquired.

"I never knew Zeke," answered Grandma. "Just Paul."

"At college no one knew my high school nickname," explained Granddad.

"And I didn't reveal it."

"I didn't know that he played football at first," Grandma indicated.

"I first saw her in freshman English," Granddad reported. "A pretty girl with a nice smile. I said 'hello' after class, but she wasn't responsive."

"I came to the university from a small town," said Grandma, "and I was shy."

"In October the professor had us read and act out passages from great

English drama."

"I was beginning to overcome my shyness, so I volunteered to be Titania, queen of the fairies, in Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'"

"At first nobody wanted to take the part of Bottom, a humble weaver."

"That's because the professor had borrowed an ass's head from the drama department for him to wear."

"Then I thought," Granddad disclosed, "here's my chance to be with this lovely girl."

"Have you ever read or seen 'Midsummer Night's Dream, Timmy?" asked Grandma.

"Nobody reads Shakespeare any more," replied Timmy. "We read modern things."

"So much the loss," Granddad observed.

"In the scene we read," Grandma continued, "Puck, the mischief maker of the fairy band, sprinkles a magic potion on the eyes of Titania as she sleeps

to make her fall in love with the first creature she sees on awakening."

"Meanwhile Puck has slipped an ass's head on Bottom, who sings a song like an ass braying."

"As Titania I awoke," Grandma chuckled, "and saw this man with the head of the ass. I could hardly read my lines for laughing. I said something like, 'On first view I swear I love you.'"

"So it was sort of love at first sight," Timmy observed.

"Not exactly," Grandma remarked. "But I'll admit that I was impressed by this fellow who had enough self-confidence and poise to be willing to make an ass of himself."

"A gift from my football days," Granddad explained. "No one is more exposed to making a fool of himself in public than a quarterback. You learn to live with it."

"After class I accepted his invitation to have a coke at the student union."

"Then to a dance."

"Slowly our love developed," Grandma glowed, affectionately patting Granddad's hand.

Timmy observed the sparkle in Granddad's eyes, but he had another question, "Did you ever see Granddad play football, Grandma?"

"In my sophomore year I watched him play intramurals a couple of times, but I wasn't much interested in football."

"Intramurals? You weren't on your college varsity, Granddad?"

"No, I wasn't good enough for that, but I was good enough to be quarterback in eight-man touch football for my dormitory. We had a lot of fun."

"Did you win?"

"You know, I don't even remember. I think we won more than we lost, but it's not etched on my memory like the '44 season at Lofton High."

Timmy had other questions. "Grandma, did you ever meet Granddad's high school teammates?"

"Oh, yes," she replied. "Eric Anderson, known as Spike in high school, was best man at our wedding. And I was a bridesmaid when Laura married Billy."

"Granddad, your sister, Laura, married Billy?" Timmy asked in astonishment.

"Yes, she did."

"Uncle Bill is Billy, is Wild Bill?"

"That's right."

"I can't believe it."

"It's true."

"Uncle Bill ran that race against Eddy, and all the other things you told me?"

"That he did."

"I'm going to ask him about it next time I see him."

"He'll tell you. He's still good friends with Eddy."

"Wow!" Timmy exclaimed. "And did you meet the other players, Grandma? Rusty, Roberto, Dutch, and all the rest?"

"Yes, they were all together at the time of your grandfather's tenth high school reunion. They were quite a nice group."

"I think there may be picture in that box you brought down from the attic," Granddad indicated. "Let me go in and look."

He went inside and returned in a few minutes with a photograph.

"Here they are," he said, handing the photo to Timmy.

"Tell me about them," said Timmy.

"With pleasure," Granddad responded.

April 5, 1994

"That's right."

"I can't believe it."

"It's true."

"Uncle Bill ran that race against Eddy, and all the other things you told me?"

"That he did."

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"Wow!" Timmy exclaimed. "And did you meet the other players, Grandma? Rusty, Roberto, Dutch, and all the rest?"

"Yes, they were all together at the time of your grandfather's tenth high school reunion. They were quite a nice group."

"I think there may be picture in that box with my high school records," Granddad indicated. "Let me go in and look."

He went inside and returned in a few minutes with a photograph.

"Here they are," he said, handing the photo to Timmy.

"Tell me about them," said Timmy.

"With pleasure," Granddad responded.

April 5, 1994

18. Tenth Reunion

George "Pudge" Markopoulos was co-chairman of the 10th Reunion of the Lofton High School Class of 1945. It was a good choice. He was associated with his family's popular Athens Cafe on Main Street and a disk jockey on the local radio station. He had used his show to find the whereabouts of all 197 members of the Class of '45.

Mary Lou Foster, formerly head cheerleader and now Eddy's wife and mother of two children, was co-chairman. She was in charge of the major events: decorating the gym on Friday evening, informal get together Saturday morning, and dinner and dance on Saturday night.

Obtaining use of the gym was easy because Eddy was now phys ed teacher at Lindbergh Junior High -- not the one he and Pudge attended but the one on the other side of town where Zeke and Spike went to school. He was assistant coach at the high school for football and basketball and head coach for baseball.

"Pudge, old buddy. Zeke, the brains of our outfit," Bob Collins shouted as he entered the gym on the hot Friday evening in the middle of July 1955.

"Long time no see."

Zeke was at a table helping with registration.

"Roberto," Pudge answered enthusiastically. "Como esta usted?"¹

"Muy bien,"² Roberto replied.

"I'm glad you could get back to Lofton," Paul "Zeke" Parker exclaimed.

"It's good to be back. Where's Rusty?"

"He went to get helium for the balloons. Here he is now."

"Rusty," Roberto bellowed as Ralph "Rusty" Mulrooney wheeled in a canister of helium. The two former linemen rushed together and gave each other a bear hug.

"You can still call me, Rusty," the former tackle indicated, "but around

¹ "How are you?"

² "Very well."

town I'm know as Ralph now."

"How come?"

"My dad helped me get a used car business started. I couldn't call it Rusty's Used Cars, could I?"

"How's the rocket man?" Zeke inquired.

"Super," Roberto replied. He was working at the Flight Space Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

"Have you met Dr. Wernher Von Braun?" asked Zeke.

"I see him all the time."

"I'm glad he's on our side now," Zeke added. Von Braun had helped design the German V-2 rockets that rained on England during the closing days of World War II. Now he was working for the American space program.

"And you're a lawyer now, Zeke?" Roberto asked.

"Yep. Just a country lawyer, as they say."

"You look in pretty good shape."

"I play tennis with Spike. He keeps me running."

At that moment Eric "Spike" Anderson walked in.

"Here he comes now," Pudge announced, "the chicken feed merchant."

"Somebody has to work for a living," Spike retorted. "Not everyone can live by their mouth behind a mike or in front of a judge's bench."

"Same old, Spike," Roberto noted. "Always brutally honest."

"Pudge, who else is coming from the football team?" asked Spike.

"Everyone from our class. Flash is supposed to get in town in the morning. I expect Doc and Basil this evening."

"What about the other guys, the juniors and sophomores who played with us?" Roberto inquired. "Any of them around?"

"Quite a few," Zeke answered. "Eddy's been in touch with some of them and invited them to a get-together tomorrow afternoon."

"Here come the short ones now," Spike announced. They all looked up

as Basil and Doc came into together.

"I'm glad to see that you're friends at last," Zeke commented.

"We're a paradox, aren't we?" Doc quipped.

"In what way?" asked Roberto.

"Basil Fox, Ph.D. and Chris Wilson, M.D."

They all groaned.

"Didn't they immunize you for bad puns when you went to medical school," Spike wanted to know.

"Don't you know that the Fourth Amendment prohibits cruel and unusual pun-ishment?" Zeke inquired.

"Et tu, Brute?"³ Basil rejoined. As a faculty member of a private school in the East, he was still heavily into Shakespeare.

Fortunately Mary Lou came over before it got any worse and drafted the ex-jocks to drape crepe paper and blow up balloons.

³ You too, Brutus.

Saturday morning was family day for the Class of '45. The guys brought their wives and the gals their husbands. A lot of them brought their kids along, ranging from babies to some eight- and nine-year olds belonging to those who got married as soon as they graduated from high school. Not many had married their classmates, so it was amusing to watch the guys introduce their wives to their old girl friends and the gals present their old boy friends to their husbands. One couldn't help but wonder how much they had told about their former romances.

Gordon "Flash" Johnson appeared with his wife, a son, and a daughter. He was wearing shiny captain bars on his Army uniform. Most of the guys had been drafted, but Flash was the only one from the team who remained in the service. He had advanced to the rank of staff sergeant by time the Korean War broke out in 1950. For heroic actions and leadership in Korea he received a battlefield commission. Recently he had been promoted to captain.

Dietrich "Dutch" Lutz, who was from the Class of 1946, dropped in also. As expected, he had become a conscientious objector and worked at a state mental hospital for two years in alternative service. After college he went to work for the Mennonite Central Committee. He arrived Saturday morning directly from Jordan where he was assisting Palestinian refugees on the West Bank.

Because Pudge knew Dutch was coming, he got in touch with Stanislaw Krasinski, also from the Class of '46, and invited him to join his former teammates. Stan's family had moved into Lofton from the Lutz farm in the summer of '45. After graduation from college Stan had taken a job with Voice of America in Washington, D.C. He and Dutch came in together.

Zeke asked Stan if his father ever got to America. Stan replied that as far as they could determine, his father was sent to a prison camp in the Soviet Union where he died. To the great sorrow of the Polish the liberators from the East had become their captors.

At the Saturday morning reception Zeke was pleased to introduce his wife Helen to his classmates and to show off his two children.

"Only two?" Timmy asked.

"Yes, your Aunt Caroline and your Uncle Jeff," Granddad answered.

"Not my mother?"

"She wasn't born until the following year."

In mid-morning while Eddy, Roberto, Rusty, and Zeke were chatting, Roberto asked, "Zeke, you didn't play college football, did you?"

"No," Zeke replied. "I went out for one week when I was a freshman. There were a lot of returning veterans plus a fresh crop of last year's high school stars. There were too many better than me, so I dropped out.

Besides I didn't like the approach."

"What do you mean?" asked Rusty.

"One of the coaches was teaching us to tackle. He said hit as hard as you can within the rules. If you can put a player out of commission, all the

better. Nick, would have never said that."

"He sure wouldn't have," Eddy remarked. "When I was a sophomore, he suspended one of our ends for a game because he crashed into the passer well after he threw the ball and hurt him."

"With one exception," Zeke recalled. "I was surprised that he let you get away with twisting that talkative end's arm in the Ashmont game, Rusty."

"I didn't exactly get away with it," Rusty responded. "The following Monday before practice, Nick called Roberto and me into his office. He told us, first, that he didn't like us trading positions on the field, and second, that, I was wrong to go after that fellow in such a manner. He didn't want to reprimand us in front of the team to make a point because then Flash and Fred might feel he was condoning race-baiting. But if I ever did something like that again, he would bench me."

Toward the end of the morning Zeke found himself in a three-way conversation with Flash and Dutch. He was amazed that they got along so

well. They were at opposite poles on the matter of military service, but each of them saw himself as serving mankind in his own way. Each respected the other and his right to make a different choice. They even traded addresses so that they could write to one another.

In the afternoon the former teammates left their wives and children at home, with the grandparents, or at a motel and convened in the old locker room, which Eddy opened for them. Other juniors who had been on the first team in the fall of 1944 joined them: Richard "Bulldog" McKinley, who had obtained a Master of Business Administration and now worked for a big corporation in New York; Fred Montgomery, now a Baptist minister like his father; Henry "Hank" Harrison, still helping to run the family farm; and Dutch, who had been around that morning.

Also Roger "Jolly" Phillips, who had filled in on the left side of the line with Stan for three games when Roberto and Rusty were suspended. Jolly had moved to California to work in an airplane factory.

Eddy also invited Billy and Lefty from the sophomore class. Billy was in real estate in Lofton, and Lefty moved to West Texas to work for a wildcat oil company.

"What's Nick doing now?" Dutch inquired.

"He's head football coach at the teacher's college, his alma mater," Eddy replied. "Except they call it a state college now. When he left, Dave Moore moved up to the high school, became head coach, and I took Dave's place at Lindbergh."

"Nick was a great coach," Roberto remarked.

Everyone agreed.

"I'm sorry we gave him his only losing season at Lofton High," Zeke lamented.

"Me, too," several of them said.

"It was my fault more than anyone else," Zeke confessed.

"How do you figure that?" asked Roberto.

"Because of that stupid call I made toward the end of the opening game against Kepler," Zeke answered, "when we stopped them six inches from the goal and I called for a punt."

"That was only one play of a whole season in which you called a lot of good games," Bulldog observed.

"But a crucial call," Zeke insisted. "I used to lay awake at night in the Army and at college thinking about it. If I had run a quarterback sneak, as Nick told me later that I should have, we would've had some running room. We might've made a first down and run out the clock and won the game. That would've given us momentum to do better in the next game. We might've won the league championship. At least we would've had a winning season."

"That's interesting," Hank responded. "For many years I have remembered that awful kick I made that went out of bounds on the 20. It was my worst punt of the season. It cost us the game."

"I thought it was because I let the Kepler end catch the winning pass in the end zone," Fred indicated.

"I remember how I didn't get the ball out of bounds on the last play of the game," Spike recalled. "If we had had time for one more play, we might have scored."

"Stop it, you guys," Eddy declared. "I'll admit that for several years I regretted that I slipped and fell when I tried to cut around the last defender on the kickoff return. If I hadn't, I would've gone all the way and been a great hero with a 90-yard, game-winning return."

"It shouldn't have depended on heroics," Zeke responded, "if I had made the right call earlier."

"I gave up losing sleep over might-have-beens when I was playing minor league baseball," Eddy continued. "As most of you know, I made it as far as Class A but then quit because I couldn't hit a triple-A curve ball, much less a major league curve. I played 120 games one summer, most of them on

consecutive days. If I made an error in the first inning, I couldn't think about it because there were eight more innings to play. One game I came to bat four times with two outs and men in scoring position and made the final out each time. Another time I was picked off first base for the last out of the game when I was the potential tying run. But I couldn't dwell on my mistakes because there was another game to play the next day."

"That's interesting," said Zeke. "When Nick visited me in the hospital after the Hargrove game, he told me that football is a game of mistakes. All you can do is try to make fewer mistakes than your opponents."

"So you shouldn't agonize forever over your mistakes," Eddy asserted.

"Everybody makes mistakes, but you can't allow them to get you down."

"I never thought of it that way," Fred commented.

"It goes beyond not lamenting mistakes," Doc observed. "It applies to not getting mired in self-pity over negative outcomes when you've done your best. When you guys lost on Friday night, I watched Nick the next Monday

get you ready for the next game without getting over-absorbed in the previous defeat."

"Yes, that's the way he was," Hank observed.

"This lesson was reinforced for me," Doc continued, "during my hospital internship after graduating from medical school. When the first patient I had primary responsibility for died, my supervising physician comforted me by assuring me that I had done my best. 'Every patient you ever treat,' he noted, 'will die some day. Death is a fact of life. You do your best and go from one disappointment to the next challenge.'"

"I guess that describes our losing season," Zeke reflected. "But I still wish I had called a quarterback sneak."

"Sure, Zeke," Eddy argued, "if you had run a quarterback sneak and we had run out the clock, we might've been five and four for the season. But we never would've won the championship. Let's face it, we weren't that good."

"I suppose not," Zeke admitted.

"You know what?" Pudge asked. "A couple years after we graduated, Nick told me that our losing season is what made Lofton league champs the following year. He said that the experience the returning players gained in 1944 made it possible for them to win in 1945. Zeke, Nick said that you were the best teaching quarterback he ever coached."

"That's true," Lefty spoke up. "I had a great apprenticeship working with you."

"While I don't usually say nice things publicly about my brother-in-law," Billy remarked, "I would've never reached my full potential if Zeke hadn't taught me to get my temper under control and to become a team player, and if Eddy hadn't first put me down and then helped me up."

"The linemen who got their experience in 1944 made us shine in 1945," Lefty explained. "Then the next year without Dutch, Stan, Bulldog, Jolly, Jiri in we finished third in the league even though Billy and I had good seasons our senior year."

"We need to remember that in the midst of losing football games, a lot of good things occurred for us," Roberto pointed out. "You remember, Bulldog, how you wouldn't help Rusty and me cheat on the world history exam? And how we were suspended for three weeks?"

"Yeah, I recall that you were really teed-off at me," Bulldog replied.

"Well, it was one of the best thing that ever happened to me. Until then I had been lackadaisical in my studies. Being suspended from football caused me to get serious and buckle down. I would've never got through engineering school if I hadn't learn scholastic discipline."

"That same incident," Rusty recalled, "also made a big difference in my life. My old man found out about it and really ate me out. 'Ralph,' he said, 'In the auto business it takes three things to be successful: good cars, good mechanics, and integrity. People are suspicious of car dealers, especially used car dealers. If you get a reputation for dishonesty, you're doomed to fail.'"

"So they call you Honest Ralph?" Basil asked.

"I've never heard that name," Rusty responded, "But my customers trust me."

"What I remember most from the '44 season," said Stan, "was how all you guys all accepted a Polish refugee who didn't know a tackle from a guard and helped him learn your American sport. Dutch, of course, because his family took in our family, and he was my friend. But Wally, who isn't here today, taught me the plays. And Zeke, on the ride back from the Ashmont game when you were lamenting the second loss in a row, you listened to my story of our escape from Poland. You quieted my fears. Only in America, I thought, were people so kind."

"My memories are similar," Fred commented. "There was a natural racial equality on the team because we were committed to winning together. It was different than in town. I remember especially how Nick outfoxed that diner manager in Barnesdale."

"Yeah, that was something," Pudge chuckled.

"He did it," Fred continued, "not because he was a crusader for Negro rights but rather because we were part of his team. He was loyal to us as persons. That's true acceptance."

"I agree," Flash indicated. "Often I've copied Nick's opening speech on teamwork and loyalty in speaking to my troops, first as a sergeant and later as an officer. When they started integrating the Army, I discovered that a commitment to mutual loyalty and teamwork was the best way to overcome racial barriers. When my unit was in combat, we were comrades who looked out for one another."

"I've never told you this, Dutch," Zeke stated, "but I was in Nick's office the day he divided us for the intrasquad game. He was talking to me about being nice to Billy and helping him. Jiri came in and protested to Nick about having to play next to a German who didn't want to fight in the war. It was you he was talking about. Nick was nice to him but defended your

right to be a pacifist, even though he didn't agree with that position. He told Jiri that he had other players who would be glad to take his place."

"Jiri and I became close friends the next season," Dutch recalled, "when we played next to one another on the championship team."

"I'm trying to emulate Nick in my coaching," said Eddy. "I want my teams to win, and the players want to win, too. That's part of sports. But as a coach I can see that character development is as important as winning. Maybe more so."

"Nick told me the same thing when I was in the hospital," Zeke remembered, "He indicted that our team showed more character development than any team he'd ever coached."

"That's a nice compliment for a bunch of losers," Roberto remarked.

"No, we're not losers," Zeke responded. "Listening to you guys talk, I realize that we may have had a losing season, but it made winners of us all."

At the reunion dinner that evening the Rev. Frederick Douglass

Montgomery gave the invocation. Dr. Christopher Wilson entertained his former classmates with his repartee of jokes. Attorney Paul Parker made a few remarks, which were probably too serious for the occasion, but that's the way he was.

Clyde Parker's band played for the dance. He may not have become the world's greatest left-handed trombone player, but he was the best one in these parts. Clyde earned his living at the hardware store, which was now called Parker & Son, but music was his true love. That night his band offered the big band sound and played the tunes of the '40s.

"Just that old stuff?" asked Timmy. "No rock and roll?"

"Rock and roll hadn't blossomed yet," replied Granddad. "Elvis Presley didn't emerge until the following year. Chubby Checkers and the twist didn't come forth until around 1960."

"When my mother was a little girl," Timmy calculated. "That was a long time ago."

"From your perspective," Granddad chuckled.

Barbara, Zeke's high school girl friend, had arrived in Lofton from Denver during the afternoon with her husband, Larry. During the dance Paul, Helen, Barbara, and Larry sat around a table for a while with Eric and Joanne, now man and wife. Among other things they discussed the movies they had seen in their high school days during World War II. All agreed that Hollywood wasn't making them that good any more.

April 5, 1994

19. Time Marches On

"Granddad," Timmy queried, "did your football team ever get together again?"

"Some of us did," replied Granddad, "at the time of our 25th Class Reunion in the summer of 1970. But it wasn't the same. It was in the midst of the Vietnam War. Like the rest of the country my classmates and teammates were divided in their opinion about that war. The unity our class knew during World War II was gone.

"Even so, among some of my former teammates the old bonds were still strong enough to surpass current differences. This was most notable in the case of Gordon 'Flash' Johnson and Dietrich "Dutch" Lutz.

"Dietrich was in the graduating class of '46, but he was on leave from his work in the Middle East and dropped in on the class of '45. As a pacifist, he opposed the Vietnam War. In contrast, Gordon, an Army colonel with a son fighting in Vietnam, believed the war was necessary. Yet, they set aside

their political differences and talked about their families, their work, and how Dietrich used to lead interference for Gordon on end-around plays.

Ralph "Rusty" Mulroony, who had a son in the Army, opposed the war, while Eric "Spike" Anderson, who had only daughters, supported it. But that didn't keep them from co-hosting a reception for team members and their families on Ralph's angus farm west of town. Ralph was prospering since he took over his father's car dealership.

"At the reception Eddy, by then phys ed teacher at Lofton High and head coach, produced a special plaque for courage. George Markopoulos, mayor of Lofton and and seldom called Pudge any ore, presented the award to Hank, whose legs had been paralyzed in a farm accident. After leaving the hospital, Hank had his automobile, pickup truck, and tractor fitted so that he could accelerate, shift, and brake with his hands. In that manner he maintained a full load of farm work."

"He must have been a tough person," Timmy remarked.

"He was," Granddad responded.

"What about the other guys from your team?"

"Most of them were doing quite well in their careers. Richard was a corporate vice president. Bob, who called himself Roberto on the team, had moved to Houston where his engineering talents contributed to the moon landing. He was friends with Neil Armstrong and other astronauts. Fred had become minister of a large Baptist Church in Kansas City and was prominent in the civil rights movement. He had been closely associated with Martin Luther King, Jr. Stan remained with the Voice of America. Basil had a book of poems published. Doc was team physician at the state university."

"It sounds like Doc got to do just what he wanted: be a doctor and be around football players."

"Yes, he did. And most of the other guys were happy with their work, their wives, and their families. At the 25th reunion dinner our class

historian remarked how so many players from a losing team had become so successful."

"Yeah, they were doing all right," Timmy remarked.

"But what she didn't say, and maybe didn't even know," Granddad commented, "was that most of them had sailed through rough waters at one time or other. For instance, Eric had to deal with the decline of his family's chicken feed business, which he was managing, because the farmers around here quit growing fryers due to the competition from mass production in Arkansas. So Eric obtained a franchise to sell John Deere lawn tractors and started a lawn service.

George lost the first time he ran for mayor. Eddy had to live through teams that didn't perform up to their expectation. Richard lost a promotion he should've had because of favoritism for the board chairman's nephew. Hank's accident I've already mentioned. Ralph lost a lot of money to an embezzling employee. I've lost cases in court I should've won. Bill and

Laura had a baby born with a birth defect, which required corrective surgery when he was a year old. He'll never be the athlete his father was, though in elementary school he displayed considerable musical talent, like his Uncle Clyde."

"Who's that?"

"Your mother's cousin, Allen."

"I never knew that."

"And others from the team lived through difficulties they overcame."

"I suppose you would say, 'sweet are the uses of adversity,'" Timmy remarked with a coy smile.

"You're learning," Granddad chuckled.

"During our 25th Reunion when we got to the Saturday night dance, we were finally able to put aside all our differences, forget personal distresses, and simply enjoy being with one another."

"I suppose you danced to the '40s music again."

"Yes and no. Clyde's band played half the sets, but a rock band played the other half. My classmates didn't want their own teenagers to get too far ahead of them."

"Could you and Grandma dance the new steps, Granddad?" Timmy asked slyly.

"Your grandmother was better than I," Granddad admitted.

"Why couldn't Uncle Clyde's band play rock and roll?"

"I suppose it could, but he didn't want to. But he did have a small German band which could also play for Polka parties. By then Clyde was into music full time, as he always wanted to be."

"What happened to the hardware store?"

"Being located in the old downtown, Parker & Son Hardware couldn't compete successfully with the new Walmart at the edge of town. So Clyde closed the business at the end of 1968 when my dad retired. Then his wife opened an antique shop on the property. Clyde claimed disabled veteran's

preference, got a temporary teacher's certificate from the state, and became band director at Lofton High."

"I've been in Aunt Shirley's antique store, but I never knew that was where the hardware store used to be there."

"Financially Clyde came out all right because ten years earlier our brother-in-law, Bill, had convinced him to invest in a couple of parcels of land on the outskirts. Walmart bought one them, and a new shopping mall bought the other one. So both Clyde and Bill made a lot of money on the deal."

"Did you, too, Granddad?"

"No, Timmy, I've always been a conservative investor. And I didn't want to harm downtown where my law office was."

"Were you a judge then?"

"No, my appointment came the following year."

"Granddad, do you still see any of your old teammates?"

"Some of them, Timmy, but not as many as before. Hank turn over his farm to his son. He and his wife now live in Dallas near one of their daughters. Ralph sold his dealership and moved to Florida. Doc retired from the university and is doctor at a health spa in Arizona. Richard got caught up in a corporate merger about ten years ago, but he had a 'golden parachute' severance payoff that enabled him to buy a house in Palm Springs, California.

"Bob retired from NASA and now runs a consulting business in Houston. Stanislaw has become as a translator for firms doing business in Poland. A couple of years ago he went with his brothers and sisters to visit their old homestead but found nothing standing."

"How long had they been gone?"

"About 50 years.

"That's a long time."

"We've lost three from the team. George died from a heart attack after

...serving three terms in Congress. Gordon, who ran a boys' club in Kansas City for 15 years after retiring from the Army, succumbed to sickle cell anemia. Dietrich was killed in crossfire between Jewish settlers and Palestinian militants in the Israeli-occupied West Bank as he was trying to achieve reconciliation."

"That's sad to hear."

"Yes, it is. It's ironic, too. In high school some of the kids called Dietrich a coward because he refused to go into the Army, but 45 years later he died a heroic death. Gordon was a hero, too, first in military combat and secondly in his final months when he took an experimental drug."

"What about your coach," asked Timmy. "I suppose he's gone, too?"

"Yes, Nick died about ten years ago in his 84th year," replied Granddad.

"He had coached 48 years. At his memorial service at the state college approximately 250 former players showed up, representing the total span of his career."

"Do any of your old teammates still live in Lofton? I mean besides Uncle Bill?"

"Yes, Eddy is here. He quit coaching and opened a sports store on Main Street. Eric still operates his John Deere franchise but is out of the feed business. Most of his income comes from an industrial park that your Uncle Bill got him to invest in. The four of us -- Eddy, Eric, Bill, and I --play golf once a week at the country club."

As Granddad spoke, a Cadillac pulled into the driveway.

"It's Uncle Bill," Timmy shouted. "I'm going to ask him about your football team."

Bill got out along with two older men. One was short, pudgy, and mostly bald. The other was tall and heavy set, sort of like Uncle Bill and Granddad. Not what you would call fat but with an expanded waistline.

"It's my teammates," Granddad told Timmy. "Eddy and Eric."

"That's Eddy and Spike!" Timmy exclaimed in astonishment.

"They don't look like football players."

"That was in yesteryears," Granddad replied. "Ask them."

After Granddad introduced his grandson to his old friends, Timmy informed them, "My granddad has been telling me about your football season in 1944."

"Does this old geezer remember that far back?" Eddy asked.

"He says he does," Timmy answered. Addressing Eric, he asked "Are you Spike?"

"I used to be called that," Eric responded.

"You don't look like a spike," commented Timmy with all the brashness of a fourteen year old.

They all laughed.

"Let's just say I filled out," Eric replied.

"And did you, Eddy, once have a foot race with my Uncle Bill?" inquired Timmy.

"Yeah, and I whipped him," Eddy boasted.

"He didn't outrun me," Bill rebutted with twinkling eyes. "He outhustled me, if you know what I mean."

"That's why we used to call him Fast Eddy," Eric added.

"Did he tell you about the pass I threw to win the Grunwald game?" asked Eddy.

"You mean the sucker pass?" Timmy responded.

"That's the one."

"He said it was wobbly, but it let him score the winning touchdown."

"What else did he say?" inquired Eric.

"I said you were great receiver, Eric," Granddad interjected, "and that Eddy was a great ballcarrier."

"An astute observer," Eddy noted.

"What did he say about me, Timmy?" Bill queried.

"He said they used to call you Wild Bill."

"Well, I guess I had a wild streak, but these guys tamed me. I deserved it. But out of it I gained some life-long friends."

"We really had a great bunch," Eric recalled. "Remember how Pudge used to bring a gourmet lunch on the bus when we went to out of town games?"

"Yeah. I'm surprised Nick let him get away with it," Granddad remarked.

"He had a soft spot in his heart for Pudge," Eric observed.

"Everybody did," said Eddy.

"Then there were Roberto and Rusty," Eric noted, "the goof-off brothers, as Nick called them after they flunked world history."

"How I loved to run off tackle on their side of the line," Eddy stated.

"Don't forget Hank," Granddad reminded. "He didn't have a lot to say, but how he could block and tackle."

"And Richard was tough in the middle," Eddy recalled.

"What a pair of linebackers we had," Eric commented.

"Remember the diner in Barnesdale?" asked Bill.

"Yeah, when those Barnesdale players walked in," said Eric, "I expected a brawl. But they just wanted to make friends with Fred and Flash."

"All this talk about racial integration in the years since," Eddy noted. "I guess we were pioneers and didn't even know it."

"Once Nick told me that we were a miniature United Nations," Granddad reported.

"You couldn't ask for a better group of guys," Eric observed. "The three who have passed on -- Pudge, Flash, Dutch -- were among the nicest on the team."

"It makes you wonder why the best go first," Eddy reflected, "and the ornery ones like Bill, Eric, and me -- and you, too, Paul -- survive."

"When I was at Gordon's funeral in Kansas City," Granddad reported, "Fred addressed that question in his eulogy. He said it was not the quantity of days that mattered most but rather the quality of living. The formal Orthodox service for George offered a similar message. And so did the

simple Mennonite memorial service for Dietrich. Certainly the three of them represented the highest quality."

"We also have some wonderful survivors," Eric pointed out. "Fred, Hank and Richard, Roberto and Rusty, and Stan and Jolly who filled in for them, and other guys on the second squad, like Jiri, Pat, and Sal."

"And don't forget my classmate, Lefty," Bill reminded them.

"Or Basil and Doc," Eddy added.

"Remember all those jokes Doc played on Basil?" Granddad inquired.

"Yeah, Doc was irrepressible," Eric recalled. "And Basil was a good sport about it."

"And those Shakespeare quotes Basil offered on every occasion," Eddy noted.

"I've never forgotten," said Granddad, "how before our opening game he proclaimed, 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.' Then it was something about 'he who sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.'"

Forget the blood shedding but look at the deeper sentiment. On the Lofton team, even in a losing season, we became bonded brothers."

"We were comrades," Eric concurred, "strongly committed to one another."

"I'm looking forward to seeing them again next summer," Eddy indicated, "when we have our 50th Class Reunion."

Timmy watched these old gentlemen as they reminisced. The style of football they played was as out-of-date as Granddad's maskless leather helmet. But the spirit they conveyed seemed to be timeless. He wondered if he would ever play on a team like the Lofton Lions of 1944. He hoped so.

April 5, 1994

"I said we ran a prep school for you, Bill. We helped unlock your potential."

"Yeah, that's what he said, Uncle Bill," Timmy remarked.

"I'll admit it," Bill confessed. "I'd never had as good years in '45 and '46 if these fellows taken me apart and put me back together in '44. That's why they're the best life-long friends a man could have."

"Enough eulogizing," Eddy asserted. "Let's get down to business."

"Paul," said Eric, "we've come by to enlist you in our project to help the current Lions football team."

"In what way?" Granddad asked.

"If you remember them from last year," Eric continued, "they were wearing pretty shabby uniforms. They used to buy new uniforms from revenue from football games, but now that money is spread around all the sports, both boys and girls. The Board of Education won't put up any other funds for uniforms."

"So," Bill picked up, "we decided that us old jocks should help the young ones. Eddy can get us a complete set of uniforms -- helmets, two sets of jerseys and pants, stockings, and shoes -- for \$____. Throw in another \$____ to replace worn out pads. So we want to raise \$____."

"We're putting you down for \$____," Eric notified Granddad. "I have pledged \$____ and so has Eddy. Bill has promised \$____."

"We think we can raise another \$____ from the 1944 team," Eddy indicated, "and the same amount from the '45 and '46 teams that Bill played on."

"I'll do it," Granddad agreed. "And I'll help contact the others. Recently I've been updating my computer list so that we can invite them to our 50th Class Reunion next summer."

"Why don't we all four sign the letter?" Eric suggested.

"That's fine with me, said Granddad. "And I think we should contact the widows, too. Not for big donations, but so they can be part of something that meant so much to their husbands."

"Yes, I think they would," Eric agreed.

"Pudge's wife is deceased," Eddy reminded them, "but I'm sure his children would like to make a contribution in their father's memory."

March 28, 1994

Hank's widow remarried and moved into town, but Dutch's widow is living on the Lutz family farm. Helen is in touch with Richard's widow because they were in the same sorority at the university. Fred keeps track of his cousin's widow. "As you think about it," Eric noted, "Gordon and Dietrich were the only members of our team who were ever under enemy fire. Gordon was a genuine hero in the Korean War. Dietrich, who a lot of people at school thought was a coward when he wouldn't go into the Army during World War II, faced armed men protected only by his own loving kindness."

Addressing his friends, he asked, "What are you doing here?"

"Helen called me," Billy answered. "She says you've been talking all day with Timmy about the 1944 Lions. She thought he ought to see some real live specimens."

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 14, 1994

Ms. Norma Liebert, Mr. Lewis R. Chambers
The Norma-Lewis Agency
521 Fifth Avenue, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10175

Dear Ms. Liebert and Mr. Chambers:

I am working on three books in three different modes and am seeking assistance in marketing them. I want to inquire whether you would be interested in serving as my agent particularly for a sports story for young adolescents and perhaps for a book on political action.

The sports story is entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. In it Granddad tells his grandson, Timmy, about the Lofton high school football season of 1944 in which he, as Zeke, was quarterback. The story relates how the team developed and worked out relationships among the different players as the season progressed and what the coach taught them. Their battles on the gridiron are regularly contrasted with events of World War II, then in its final year. When the players meet at their tenth high school reunion, they reflect on the positive effects of playing on a losing team (4-5 for the season). The book ends as Granddad and three former teammates prepare for their fiftieth reunion and briefly summarize for Timmy the life-long lessons retained from the '44 season.

Enclosed is a "Sampler" of *A Losing Season*, offering highlights from the book's

19 chapters and providing examples of various kinds of dialogue and narration. I'll send you the complete manuscript if you are interested in reviewing the entire book.

A second book I'm working on, which you might be conceivably be interested in, is entitled *Democracy All Year Round: Better than Term Limits and Other Elixirs*. It is written to counter the over-simplified, patent-medicine nostrums now being offered as solutions to public problems. They include term limits for Congress and state legislatures, a desire to vote for "none of the above", talk-show activated calls to the Capitol, and the balanced budget amendment. I argue that these are lazy-bones solutions. In contrast year-round democracy requires continuous citizen involvement from beginning to end of elections, enactment of legislation, and executive decision-making. I offer some practical steps on how this can be achieved. Enclosed are the table of contents and the preface, which sets the tone. I have completed 10 of the 15 chapters and can send you copies of some or all of them if you want to read more.

My third work is *Destiny*, a reading drama that deals with the question: if God is good, why do people suffer? My answer is that rather than being All-Powerful and All-Knowing, God is All-Loving and therefore suffers with us. I am currently trying to market it myself to religious publishers. If an agent wanted to try trade publishers in my behalf, I would be willing to go that route, too.

Previously I have had nine books published by social science and university presses, as listed in the enclosed vita. *A Losing Season* is fictional but draws upon my days as a high school quarterback. My own losing season was 1945, but I set the action in my story a year earlier in order to bring in events of World War II. *Year-Round Democracy* is derived from my career

experience in

Ms. Norma Liebert, Mr. Lewis R. Chambers

April 14, 1994

Page two.

government and civic action. *Destiny* reflects my exploration of religious ideas over the years.

If you would like to discuss my request, please give me a call. But if you decide that none of these works interests you, please return the samples in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 14, 1994

Ms. Kendra Marcus
BookStop Literary Agency
67 Meadow View Road
Orinda, CA 94563

Dear Ms. Marcus:

I am seeking an agent to help me market a sports story for young adolescents entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. Would you be interested in serving in this capacity?

In the book Granddad tells his grandson, Timmy, about the Lofton High School football season of 1944 in which he, as Zeke, was quarterback. The story relates how the team developed and worked out relationships among the different players as the season progressed and what the coach taught them. Their battles on the gridiron are regularly contrasted with events of World War II, then in its final year. When the players meet at their 10th high school reunion, they reflect on the positive effects of playing on a losing team (4-5 for the season). The book ends as Granddad and three former teammates prepare for their 50th class reunion and reminisce about the '44 season. They offer Timmy insights on the life-long lessons they have retained.

Enclosed is a "Sampler" of *A Losing Season*, offering highlights from the book's 19 chapters and providing examples of various kinds of dialogue and

narration. I'll send you the complete manuscript if you are interested in reviewing the entire book.

Previously I have had nine books published by social science and university presses, as listed in the enclosed vita. This is my first effort to write a book for youth. I have written a couple of plays, one of which was produced on stage, and this has helped me gain a feel for dialogue.

A Losing Season is fictional but draws upon my days as a high school quarterback in Pittsburg, Kansas. My own losing season was 1945, but I set the action of my story a year earlier in order to bring in events of World War II.

If you would like to discuss my request, please give me a call. But if you decide that *A Losing Season* doesn't fall within your interest, please return the Sampler in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

April 14, 1994

Ms. Andrea Brown
P.O. Box 429
El Granada, CA 94018

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am seeking an agent to help me market a sports story for young adolescents entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. Would you be interested in serving in this capacity?

In the book Granddad tells his grandson, Timmy, about the Lofton High School football season of 1944 in which he, as Zeke, was quarterback. The story relates how the team developed and worked out relationships among the different players as the season progressed and what the coach taught them. Their battles on the gridiron are regularly contrasted with events of World War II, then in its final year. When the players meet at their 10th high school reunion, they reflect on the positive effects of playing on a losing team (4-5 for the season). The book ends as Granddad and three former teammates prepare for their 50th class reunion and reminisce about the '44 season. They offer Timmy insights on the life-long lessons they have retained.

Enclosed is a "Sampler" of *A Losing Season*, offering highlights from the book's 19 chapters and providing examples of various kinds of dialogue and narration. I'll send you the complete manuscript if you are interested in

reviewing the entire book.

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If you would like to discuss my request, please give me a call. But if you decide that *A Losing Season* doesn't fall within your interest, please return the Sampler in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Ms. Ellen Krieger, Editorial Director
Avon Books
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Krieger:

I am submitting for your consideration a Sampler that offers highlights from a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. If you would like to review the entire book, I would be pleased to send you a copy of the completed manuscript.

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If you would like to receive the full manuscript of *A Losing Season*, please let me know. But if you decide that this book doesn't interest you, please return the Sampler in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Ms. Lucia Monfried, Editor-in-Chief
Dutton Children's Books
375 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014

Dear Ms. Monfried:

I am submitting for your consideration a Sampler that offers highlights from a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. If you would like to review the entire book, I would be pleased to send you a copy of the completed manuscript.

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Ms. Leona Nevler, Editor-in-Chief
Fawcett Juniper
201 W. 50th Street
New York, NY 10022

Dear Ms. Nevler:

I am submitting for your consideration a Sampler that offers highlights from a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. If you would like to review the entire book, I would be pleased to send you a copy of the completed manuscript.

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Ms. Susan Hirschman, Editor-in-Chief
Greenwillow Books
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Hirschman:

I am submitting for your consideration a Sampler that offers highlights from a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. If you would like to review the entire book, I would be pleased to send you a copy of the completed manuscript.

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Submissions Editor, Children's Books
Harcourt Brace & Co.
525 B Street, Suite 1900
San Diego, CA 92101-4495

Dear Editor:

I am submitting for your consideration a Sampler that offers highlights from a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. If you would like to review the entire book, I would be pleased to send you a copy of the completed manuscript.

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Submissions Editor
HarperCollins Children's Books
10 E. 53rd Street
New York, NY 10022

Dear Editor:

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Mr. Walter Lorraine, Director
Children's Trade Books
Houghton Mifflin Co.
222 Berkeley Street
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Mr. Lorraine:

I am submitting for your consideration a Sampler that offers highlights from a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. If you would like to review the entire book, I would be pleased to send you a copy of the completed manuscript.

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Ms. Andrea Casradi, Editorial Director
Hyperion Books for Children
114 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10011

Dear Ms. Casradi:

I am submitting for your consideration a Sampler that offers highlights from a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. If you would like to review the entire book, I would be pleased to send you a copy of the completed manuscript.

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Submissions Editor
Macmillan Children's Books
866 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Editor:

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

May 17, 1994

Editor-in-Chief
Simon Schuster Children's Books
15 Columbus Circle
New York, NY 10023

Dear Editor:

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Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

July 19, 1994

Ms. Phyllis J. Fogelman
Dial Books for Young Readers
375 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014

Dear Ms. Fogelman:

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

July 19, 1994

Ms. Maria Modugno
Children's Book Division
Little, Brown & Company
34 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Ms. Modugno:

I am submitting for your consideration a Sampler that offers highlights from a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. If you would like to review the entire book, I would be pleased to send you a copy of the completed manuscript.

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Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

July 19, 1994

Mr. David L. Reuther, Editor-in-chief
Morrow Junior Books
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019

Dear Mr. Reuther:

I want to inquire whether you would be interested in considering a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. I have available a 32-page sampler offering highlights and also the complete manuscript. I would be pleased to send you either or both.

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Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

July 19, 1994

Editor-in-chief
Random House Juvenile Books
201 E. 50th Street
New York, NY 10020

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Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

July 19, 1994

Mr. Craig Virden, Publisher
Dell Books for Young Readers
1540 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

Dear Mr. Virden:

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

July 28, 1994

Ms. Susan Hirschman, Editor-in-Chief
Greenwillow Books
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Hirschman:

On May 17, 1994 I submitted a proposal for a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. I sent a Sampler providing highlights and offered to send the completed manuscript if you want to review it.

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866 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

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HOWARD W. HALLMAN
6508 Wilmett Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

August 11, 1994

Ms. Margaret Ferguson
Editor-in-chief, Children's Books
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
19 Union Square, West
New York, NY 10003

Dear Ms. Ferguson:

I am submitting for your consideration a Sampler that offers highlights from a book entitled *A Losing Season: How It Made Winners of Us All*. It is a sports story, written particularly for boys in their early teens. If you would like to review the entire book, I would be pleased to send you a copy of the completed manuscript.

In *A Losing Season* Granddad tells his grandson, Timmy, about the Lofton high school football season of 1944 in which he, as Zeke, was quarterback. The story relates how the team developed, how they players resolved interpersonal conflict as the season progressed, and what the coach taught them. Their battles on the gridiron are regularly contrasted with events of World War II, then in its final year. When the players meet at their tenth high school reunion, they reflect on the positive effects of playing on a losing team (4-5 for the season). The book ends as Granddad and three former teammates prepare for their 50th reunion and briefly summarize for Timmy the life-long lessons retained from the '44 season.

A Losing Season is fictional but draws upon my days as a high school quarterback. My own losing season was 1945, but I set the action in my story a year earlier in order to bring in events of World War II.

Previously I have had nine books published by social science and university presses, as listed in the enclosed vita. This is my first venture into fiction for a young adult audience. But I have had one play staged by an amateur theatre group and have written a couple others. That has given me considerable experience in dialogue writing.

If you would like to receive the full manuscript of *A Losing Season*, please let me know. But if you decide that this book doesn't interest Farrar, Straus & Giroux, please return the Sampler in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely yours,

Howard W. Hallman

Telephone -- Mon-Thurs: (301) 694-2859; Fri-Sat: (301) 897-3668

A LOSING SEASON

How It Made Winners of Us All

by Howard W. Hallman

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April 1994

This novel is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the writer's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

A LOSING SEASON
How It Made Winners of Us All

by Howard W. Hallman

66,850 words

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April 14, 1994

A LOSING SEASON
How It Made Winners of Us All

by Howard W. Hallman

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April 5, 1994

A LOSING SEASON
How It Made Winners of Us All

by Howard W. Hallman

A Sports Story for Young Teenagers

SAMPLER

1. From the Attic

Excerpt from chapter opening:

"What's this thing, Granddad?" asked Timmy, bringing some kind of golden headgear into the living room where Granddad was reading the Saturday morning paper. Timmy was visiting his grandparents toward the end of August. He was always finding curiosities.

"It's a football helmet," Granddad replied, putting down his paper. "Where did you find it?"

"In a box in the attic."

End of excerpt.

Granddad -- Judge Paul Parker -- admits that it belonged to him when he was a high school quarterback named Zeke at Lofton High in the fall of 1944 -- during what turned out to be the last year of World War II. Timmy wants to hear about it. So Granddad reminisces.

2. Gathering

Excerpt from chapter opening:

Zeke awoke at six o'clock the Monday before Labor Day, 1944. He had slept restlessly that night out of excitement for the beginning of football practice. As he lay awake, he thought about the plays from last year -- 36, 433, 427, 38, 217, and all the rest. He tried to picture what every player did on each play. When Coach gave out the playbooks at practice, he would be able to check his memory.

End of excerpt.

Zeke's friend, Spike, comes by for him, and they head for the locker room to check out equipment. Teammates arrive in twos and threes and get reacquainted: Bob and Rusty, Eddy and Pudge, Basil, Richard, Hank. Dutch arrives with Stansilaw from a Polish refugee family who wants to try out for American football. Fred introduces his cousin, Gordon, who has come to live with him. Fred was among the first Negroes [terminology of the 1940s] to play for Lofton High after his father, a Baptist minister, "insisted that it was wrong to draft Negroes into the army but not let them play football in their home town." Billy, a sophomore hot shot comes in, but Coach Nick won't give him his equipment until afternoon with the other sophomores.

3. Practice Begins

They have opening calisthenics and take a lap around the track where

"Flash" Gordon shows his speed. They practice blocking, tackling, passing, ball carrying, and finish with another lap. In the afternoon the sophomores join them.

On Tuesday morning Coach gives his annual pep talk.

Excerpt:

"...We've had a winning season every year since I've been at Lofton High, and we're going to have a winning season this year."

"That's for sure," Eddy exclaimed.

"You may ask, what makes a winning team?" Coach continued. "It requires each of you to develop your skills to the utmost. That means hard work...."

"A winning team also requires teamwork." Coach insisted. "As a matter of fact, if I had the choice between mediocre players who played well together and a bunch of brilliant players each seeking his own glory, I would take the less talented ones."

"Teamwork is founded on loyalty. Loyalty to each another. Loyalty to your coaches. The coaches loyalty to you. You may come from different backgrounds and be part of different groups at school and in the community, but on the field and in the locker room I expect you to be like one big, happy family."

"Like me and my brother, Bob," Rusty broke in, then giving Bob a brotherly shove. [They were good friends, not blood brothers.]

"So even as you go hard at one another in scrimmage and compete for the eleven positions on the team," Coach concluded, "never lose sight of the fact that we're all united in the quest to be a winning team."

End of excerpt.

Even so, rivalries appear as players compete for positions.

4. Scrimmaging

Excerpt from chapter opening:

The first full-speed, hard-tackle scrimmage would take place on Thursday morning. That's what all the guys were looking forward to: to run with the ball, slam into defenders, fake them out, cut back, make solo tackles, be part of gang tackles, block along the line and in open field, pass, catch and run with the ball, kick, run back punts and kickoffs, go all the way if you could. They loved the physical contact of football.

"But its contact with a purpose," Coach reminded them as they gathered around him on the sidelines near midfield after the Tuesday afternoon warmup drills. "Actually two purposes. The first purpose is to score, to get the ball across the goal line or through the uprights. The second purpose is to keep our opponent from scoring."

"Here we go with lesson two from Coach Nickerson's football almanac," Bob whispered jokingly to Rusty.

"This has to be a team effort," Coach continued. "That's what sets contact in football apart from boxing and wrestling. Sure, there's a lot of one-on-one combat in football, but it's part of team play. How well each of you performs affects your ten teammates. You can't win without them, and they can't win without you."

He's right, Zeke thought. We need each other. What's great about football is being part of a team, the camaraderie of winning together -- and we are going to win.

End of excerpt.

They divided into teams and starting running plays. Thursday morning they had their first scrimmage, repeated Thursday afternoon, Friday morning and afternoon. Then "it was so hot and the players' mouths were so dry that they were spitting cotton. They were glad the weekend was coming. They were ready to rest their weary bones and nurse their aches and pains."

On Saturday Zeke and Spike had to work in their dad's store. "At lunchtime Zeke glanced at the Lofton Herald and noticed that the temperature had reached 102° at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, a new record for September 1. The front page headline proclaimed: '[war news to be added]'."

Note: For every Saturday during the season the sports page headline of the game score and the front page headline of war news will be given.

5. Intrasquad Game

Coach divided the players into two units, mixing first and second team players, for an intrasquad scrimmage under lights on the second Friday night. Coach assigned Billy, the sophomore tailback, to Zeke's team.

Excerpt:

As they headed off the field, Coach told Zeke, "I'd like to talk to you in my office for a few minutes."

In the locker room Zeke removed his shoulder pads and went into the coaches' office and sat next to Nick's desk.

"I know you're not happy having Billy on your team," Coach began.

"What makes you think so?" Zeke inquired.

"I could see it in your eyes when I announced the teams. But whether you like him personally, he's your teammate. Furthermore, you're the team leader. It's your job to get your team working effectively as a unit."

"I'll try."

"Billy is brash, but you've got to remember that he just turned 15 this summer. He's inexperienced and has a lot to learn. You can help him."

"I doubt that he'll listen to me."

"He will if you approach him as a friendly teacher, not an adversary."

"I'll do what I can."

End of excerpt.

Coach went on to assure Zeke that his friend, Eddy (but a one time friendly competitor from the other junior high school), was assured of being the first team tailback.

In the intrasquad game Zeke's Gold team kicked off to the White team. They made several first downs and then had to punt. The Golds got the ball.

Excerpt:

In the huddle Zeke sensed that Billy was quite fidgety but realized that this was first-game jitters. He called 36 to send Billy off tackle to the right. Billy, however, ran left, and Mike and Jolly clobbered him for a four yard loss. He was deeply chagrined, but Zeke reassured him, "That's all right. We all make mistakes."

In the huddle Zeke called, "Same play: 36 on three." Billy made an eight yard gain as Sal and Flash double-teamed Pudge and Stan and Fred knocked down Chuck.

To build Billy's confidence, Zeke called 433 to send him through the middle, and he picked up just enough for a first down. Zeke then gave Fred a chance, and he gained a half-dozen yards on a quick opener from T-formation.

Thereafter Zeke mixed running plays with a few short passes until they reached the White 30 yard line. He decided to try a double reverse, but Billy and Fred messed up their exchange and Roberto recovered the ball for

the Whites.

End of excerpt.

Later in the game Billy broke through the line of scrimmage and ran down the sideline where Pat tackled him hard and knocked the wind out of him.

Excerpt:

...The intrasquad game ended in a 14-14 tie.

"Good game, kid," Zeke called to Billy as they left the field.

"You ain't seen nothing yet," Billy shouted back.

Spike, who was walking with Zeke, remarked, "That kid still has a lot to learn."

As Billy came into the showers, Eddy started singing in a loud voice,

"I'll sing you a true song of Billy the Kid.
I'll sing of the terrible run that he did.
Cut down by Pat Kelly who once was his friend,
The young halfback's run now reach its sad end."

Billy flushed with anger. He was so mad that his scalp turned red under his blond hair. He clenched his fist and wanted to go after Eddy on the spot. But he noticed Pudge under the shower on Eddy's right and Rusty

on his left. He still had enough sense not to attempt the futile. So he quickly retreated, hurried to his locker, swiftly dressed, and fumed out of the locker room as peals of laughter rolled on in the showers.

End of excerpt.

6. Season Opener

Excerpt from chapter opening:

On Monday during the lunch break at school Eddy, Pudge, and some of the other guys from the team were standing on the front steps of the school, telling jokes and laughing hilariously. As Billy walked by with a couple of his buddies, Eddy started whistling the "Billy the Kid" tune.

Billy came close to him and snarled, "I'd settle this with you right now, once and for all if you didn't have your bodyguards to protect you."

"I don't need bodyguards for dealing with twerps like you," Eddy snapped. "But I'm not going to fight you. If I did, Nick would suspend both of us from the team. I don't want to miss the opening game against Kepler this Friday."

"Then I challenge you to a race," Billy shot back. "If I beat you, you will have to apologize to me in front of the team and call me Fast Billy."

"A race it will be," Eddy accepted. "In full football gear at the start of practice today."

"Agreed," Billy snapped as he strode away confidently.

"You can't outrun him," Rusty warned.

"I can beat him in a race," Eddy assured his friends. "You'll see."

Eddy was serious enough about the challenge that he was one of the first players on the field for practice after school. He did some warmup exercises and jogged half-speed the length of the field and back. When Billy appeared, followed by a bunch of sophomores, Eddy announced, "I'm ready when you are."

"Any time," Billy replied. "We'll start on the goal line and run to the 40."

"Only the 40?" Eddy responded. "I thought you wanted a real race. Let's go from goal line to goal line. Just like it is when I run back a kickoff for a touchdown."

"It's your funeral," Billy retorted. "I'll be out of sight in a hundred yards."

"We'll need a starter and a judge at the end," Eddy indicated.

"I'll volunteer as starter," said Zeke, who was standing nearby. "And why don't you have Bulldog be the judge at the finish? You know he'll be fair."

"That's all right with me," Eddy answered.

"Me, too," Billy agreed.

As Bulldog and some others trotted to the far goal line, Eddy, Billy, and Zeke took their places on the near goal line. Billy laid his helmet on the ground and knelt into a sprinter's crouch with his knuckles on the goal line.

"This isn't a track meet," Eddy asserted. "It's football. We're running backs. Stand up on two feet and put your helmet on."

So Billy stood up, popped on his helmet, and tightened the chin strap. They were ready, Eddy on the left and Billy on the right. At the far end Bulldog waved them to start.

"Go on hike," Zeke instructed. "Get ready. Set. Hike."

And off they ran. Billy got the faster start and quickly sprang into the lead. By the 30 yard line he was a couple of yards ahead of Eddy and began to drift left in front of him. At the fifty yard line Billy looked around to his left to see how far he was ahead, but he didn't see Eddy. By then Eddy had gone right and was starting to close. Billy looked that way, breaking stride as he did. This was the opening Eddy needed. He pulled even with Billy at the far 25 yard line and began to edge into the lead. At the 10 yard line Billy ran out of steam, and Eddy pulled ahead with a final sprint to win by three yards.

Eddy and Billy, gasping for air and hands clutching their sides, separated to walk off their run. Zeke trotted to join the others at the finishing line. As he arrived, the two runners were coming back together.

"From now on," Eddy huffed, "you can call me Fast Eddy."

"Okay, Fast Eddy," Billy puffed, "You can call me Slow Billy if you want, but please not Billy the Kid."

"No, you're not slow, Billy," Eddy answered. "You just challenged the wrong person. You're Wild Bill."

With that settled, Fast Eddy put his arm around Wild Bill. They walked together to the other end of the field where Coach was blowing his whistle to assemble the team for calisthenics. He had observed the contest from the entrance to the field and gave Zeke a I-told-you-so look as Zeke took his place for warmup exercises. [Coach earlier told Zeke that although individually Billy had a faster time in a 40 yard run he couldn't beat Eddy in a race one-on-one.]

End of excerpt.

In the opening game against Kepler, Lofton led 14-6 when Kepler scored just after the fourth quarter began, making it 14-13.

Excerpt:

By then fatigue was showing among the starters on both teams, so their coaches substituted liberally. For the next eight minutes neither offense got beyond midfield, and the teams exchanged punts twice. Then Kepler geared up for a final charge. A combination of quick openers, end sweeps, and short passes got them to first down on the Lofton nine yard line.

Roberto and Rusty pleaded with their teammates to dig in. The first down play went in Pudge's direction, and he held the Kepler halfback to a two yard gain. The fullback up the middle got the ball to the three. On third down the Kepler quarterback faked to a halfback and lofted the ball to

the corner, but Fred leapt high and deflected it.

With fourth and goal at the three the fullback took the handoff, made a running dive over the pile, but Hank dove at the same time and stopped him just short of the goal line. The linesman place the ball six inches from the goal. Lofton gained possession.

In those days there was no game clock on the scoreboard, so Zeke hurried over to the linesman, who was timekeeper, and asked, "How much time is left in the game?"

"I'll tell you when the game is over, Sonny," he replied gruffly.

Zeke guessed that there was less than a minute left, but he wasn't sure. He didn't want to risk a safety and give Kepler two points. Because Hank had been kicking well, he decided to punt away. Unfortunately the ball went off the side of Hank's foot and skittered out of bounds near the 20.

The Kepler quarterback took advantage of this unexpected opportunity by throwing to a halfback, who went out of bounds at the 10 yard marker. Then he hit an end in the end zone as Fred dove for the ball and missed. Kepler now had a 19-14 lead. The kicker made the point-after-touchdown to make it 20-14.

Coach sent in instructions for Eddy and Fred to be the deep receivers, Eddy on the left Fred on the right. If Fred got the ball, he would give it to Eddy on a reverse. If Eddy got the ball, he would fake a reverse and keep it. Either way blockers would try to open a path along the right sideline.

The kick went to Fred, who handed it to Eddy, as instructed but faked possession and continued full speed to the left. This fooled some of the Kepler defenders, and Eddy sped along the right sideline. The Lofton kicker, the last tackler between him and the goal line, was waiting at the Lofton 45. Eddy cut back sharply toward the middle -- too sharply, for his feet got tangled and he fell.

Before the kickoff Zeke had called the first play. He sent Spike deep on the left, Flash deep on the right, and Eddy straight down the middle. He had Fred and Hank to stay and block so that he would have enough time to deliver the ball. Miraculously Spike got open and caught the ball on the Kepler 35 where he was tackled in bounds near the sideline. Before the Lofton team reached the new line of scrimmage, the gun sounded ending the game. Kepler won.

The Lofton players shook hands perfunctorily with their opponents and dragged themselves off the field. In the locker room Coach came around and complemented various players on aspects of their play and told them that they would rebound. He offered no criticism to anyone. Zeke sat morosely in front of his locker, half-undressed, then finally headed for the showers. As the players put on their street clothes, Doc [the student trainer] tried a few cheerful words, but nobody wanted to be cheered up.

End of excerpt and chapter.

7. League Play Begins

Monday afternoon Coach talked privately with Zeke and told him that he should have called a quarterback sneak instead of punting from the end

zone and that he should have called a time out when Spike caught that last pass.

Spike was grounded after his dad found a beer cap in the car, left by a friend of Spike's. Spike has a 7:00 p.m. curfew for the week and will have to miss the Ashmont game.

During the first quarter of Friday night's game the Ashmont talkative left end heckled Flash with blatantly racist remarks, out of the hearing of the referee. On the first play of the second quarter Rusty took him down with a cross-body block.

Excerpt:

Eddy breezed through the huge hole, cut back to the left, and picked up 15 yards before the Ashmont safety brought him down.

Back at the line of scrimmage Rusty was still on top of the Ashmont end. He was doing the talking. The linesman notice them and said, "Get up boys." They did. The Ashmont player massaged his right arm.

"I don't think he'll be bothering you anymore, Flash" Rusty remarked in the huddle.

"What'd you do to him?" Bulldog inquired.

"Let's just say that I twisted his arm," Rusty laughed.

End of excerpt.

Ashmont were league champs last year. By the end of the third quarter Ashmont was ahead 10-0. Zeke threw an incomplete pass on fourth down from the Ashmont 47. Coach took him out and told him he should have punted. Ashmont went on to score but missed the extra point. Ashmont defeated Lofton 16-0.

Excerpt:

When they boarded the bus, Zeke, feeling he was in Coach's doghouse for not punting on fourth down, bypassed the front seat and headed for the rear. Dutch and Stan were already there.

"I'm glad you're going to sit with us, Zeke," Dutch declared. "Nighttime bus rides make Stan nervous. You can help me reassure him."

"It's no different than riding in the daytime, Stan," Zeke noted. "It may be dark outside, but it's the same in here."

"It's what it reminds me of," Stan indicated.

"Stan had two long nights on a bus when his family was escaping from Poland," Dutch explained.

"It was -- what's the English word -- scary," Stan reflected. Then he fell silent as the bus started up and headed out of town. By then Bulldog had joined them.

Finally Zeke said, "I'm willing to listen if you want to talk about it."

"Well, you see," Stan began haltingly, "my father was a leader in the Polish resistance against the German occupation. He lived mostly deep in

the forest where even the Nazis were afraid to go. Every once in a while he would appear at two in the morning for a brief visit and to get some food.

"My mother told the Germans that my father was killed in battle during the first months of the war. But then a Polish informer told the local Nazi commander that this wasn't true, that father was hiding with the resistance.

"So they dragged mother into their headquarters and questioned her for six hours. She wouldn't say anything but that he was dead. But they didn't believe her. Our source inside the Nazi operation told us that they were going to execute our whole family as an example: mother, my two sisters, my brother, and me. We took this seriously because there had been a lot of executions in our town."

"That must've been terribly frightening," Zeke commented.

"Yes, very. We sent word to father to get his advice. He came in the middle of the night and told us we ought to get out of the country."

"How could you?" asked Bulldog.

"The best way was to make our way to the Baltic coast and get a boat to Sweden," Stan explained. "But the coast was 80 miles to the north. The only way to get there safely was to go along back roads at night."

"You had to walk?" Zeke inquired.

"No, the resistance had an old bus, smaller than this one. It would hold about 20 people comfortably. They had a couple of men who knew the roads so well that they could drive them in the dark without headlights on.

Otherwise the Nazis would catch us."

By then the school bus was cruising along the countryside. It was pitch black outside.

"Imagine us driving without lights," Dutch remarked.

"So our family boarded the bus just after midnight, except my father, who's still in Poland. There were about 25 others who were fleeing, too, so it was quite crowded. We could make only 10 to 15 miles an hour, so it would take two nights to reach the coast."

"What did you do during the day?," Zeke wanted to know.

"We stayed in a cave in a forest with camouflage over the bus. The second night we were about ten miles from the coast when we saw headlights coming toward us. Quickly our driver pulled into a thicket. As we waited silently, we heard loud singing in the approaching vehicle. As it got closer, we realized it was a bunch of German soldiers riding in an open truck. They were drunk. But they were still dangerous."

"Gosh," Bulldog gasped. "What happened?"

"They went right by us. We waited fifteen minutes and went on our way. We reached the coast just before dawn, quickly boarded a fishing boat, and headed for safety in Sweden. It was two nights I shall never forget."

"I wouldn't either," Zeke exclaimed. "It's no wonder a bus ride at night makes you nervous."

"But now I'm not afraid," Stan said with a sigh of relief. "I'm in

America among friends."

Just then the school bus pulled into a diner halfway home to Lofton. As the team piled out, Coach located Zeke, took him aside, and indicated, "Maybe I was too hard on you, Zeke, for taking a chance by not punting. It's easier to call signals from the bench than in the game."

"That's all right, Nick," Zeke replied. "I'm still learning."

"I want to win every game," Coach declared, "even though I know we won't. But then I realize that it's just a game."

"Thanks, Nick. I've learned a lot tonight."

"So come on. I'll buy you a hamburger steak."

Sure he would! Coach had the meal voucher for the team.

End of excerpt.

8. Last Minute Reprieve

To give the Lofton offense an element of surprise, Coach taught the backfield to shift from T-formation into short punt and double wing.

In the Friday night game at home against Tanabe the teams were tied 13-13 at the end of the fourth quarter. Lofton punted and the Tanabe returner ran 90 yards for a touchdown. Spike blocked the try for point after touchdown.

Lofton mounted a charge but was stopped inside the Tanabe ten yard line.

Excerpt:

Zeke quickly ran over to the linesman and asked, "How much time is left in the game?"

"Three minutes and ten seconds," was the reply.

Zeke returned to his teammates. "We've got three minutes left. If we stop them without a first down, we'll still have time to score."

The Lions were determined but too weak to stop the Tanabe running game. After making two first downs, Tanabe was out to their 35 yard line. On the next play their tailback made four yards off tackle.

Roberto told Rusty, "On this next play you cut behind me and see if you can stop their back behind the line of scrimmage."

Unexpectedly their tailback dropped back to pass. As Roberto charged to the outside, Rusty slipped around to the inside, breezed passed the guard, who was chasing Roberto, and rushed headlong for the tailback. As he released the ball, Rusty batted it into the air, right into Roberto's hands. Roberto chugged the 30 yards to the end zone as Tanabe players fruitlessly pursued. The game was tied at 19-19.

The crowd was roaring so loud when Basil rushed onto the field that the band's fanfare was covered up. Then an eery silence descended as Zeke knelt to receive the ball for the extra point attempt. Bulldog's snap was perfect.

Zeke placed the ball perfectly upright with the laces away from the kicker. Basil's kick was perfect. Pudge and Rusty hoisted Basil on their shoulders as cymbals clank, drums beat savagely, and the students roared and roared.

End of excerpt.

On Saturday Zeke worked as usual at his dad's store.

Excerpt:

In the middle of the afternoon, Zeke's mom came into the hardware store with tears in her eyes. Laura [Zeke's sister] was with her. Mom was carrying a yellow telegram and handed it to Dad.

Zeke read over his shoulder, "We regret to inform you that your son, Clyde Parker, has been wounded in combat in the European sector. He is now in satisfactory condition at a base hospital in England. Further information will follow."

"It doesn't say what kind of wounds," Mom pointed out.

"Or how serious," Laura added.

"But he's alive," Dad reassured them. "And it says he's in satisfactory condition. That must mean he's not going to die."

"Let's pray to God that he won't," Mom said somberly.

"I think he'll be all right," Zeke added hopefully. He didn't know for sure, but he felt he had to say something encouraging.

"You always look for the bright side of things, Paul," Mom said and gave Zeke a hug.

"Already I've learned from football that you should never give up," said Zeke.

End of excerpt and chapter.

9. Dedication

As usual the team scrimmaged on Tuesday.

Excerpt:

The third time the first team had the ball in the scrimmage, Coach called Billy from the defensive backfield and told him, "Stand next to me as they run their plays. I want you to watch Eddy. You're a strong runner so you try to run over defenders. In contrast Eddy tries to avoid them. He has a knack for picking his holes, and he's skillful at cutting back against the grain after he gets beyond the line."

Billy and Coach watched for a while, but the second team line wasn't allowing much yardage on runs. Suddenly Coach stepped into the huddle and commanded, "Eddy, you sit this one out. I'm taking your place. Zeke, run 36."

Without wearing any pads or a helmet, Coach lined up at tailback. On Zeke's call, Bulldog snapped Coach the ball and he headed right, parallel to

the line and then cut off tackle. The team blocked as never before. A huge hole opened, and Coach rumbled through. Five yards down field, he cut to his left as the defensive halfbacks overran to Coach's right. Spike blocked the safety, and Coach had clear sailing. After 20 yards Pat and Lefty started to catch up with him. In another five yards Coach sat down to avoid being tackled.

As Eddy and Billy came running up, Coach tossed the ball to Billy and gasped, "That's how it's done."

"That was a fantastic run, Nick," Pudge exclaimed. "Now let me help you up." He extended his hand to pull Coach to his feet.

Still panting, Coach told them all, "If an old codger like me can make 25 yards by smart running, you young bucks ought to do better than that."

Coach's example had its effect. He let Billy play with the first team for a couple of series, and he began to follow his interference better and cut back when he had the chance.

End of excerpt.

Lofton played Cranville at home, and Zeke dedicated his game to his wounded brother, Clyde. Lofton scored with a field goal, and then Zeke threw a touchdown pass to Flash.

The second team played a while and then the first team came back in.

Excerpt:

They were rested and quickly shut down Cranville's running game. On third and six the Cranville tailback-passer tried to hit his wingback in the flat. Zeke saw it coming, stepped in front, and had an easy jaunt down the sideline with a 40 yard touchdown run. It was on the town-folks side of the field, and he heard the loud shriek even clearer, "Zeke! Zeke! Zeke!"

"It's your mother," Spike told him.

"I can't be."

"Look for yourself."

Surveying the stands, he saw his mother, bouncing up and down and furiously waving a gold pom-pom.

"Are you talking about my great grandmother," Timmy asked. "The one who lives with my great aunt Laura?"

"That's the one," Granddad acknowledged.

"But she's so quiet and gentle."

"You have to remember that this happened 50 years ago. She was 42 then and a lively lady."

"I'm going to ask her when I see her."

"Go ahead. The funny thing is that she never called me 'Zeke' before, or since."

End of excerpt.

[Note: In each chapter there is a short segment where Timmy asks Granddad about some aspect of the story. It is set in italics.]

In the second half Zeke scored on a running play and threw a touchdown pass to Spike. Lofton won 30-0.

Excerpt:

When Zeke came into the locker room, Eddy was standing on a bench, garbed only in a towel around his waist and holding one of Mary Lou's gold pom-poms. In a high falsetto he shrieked, "Zeke! Zeke! Zeke!"

Zeke blushed. Then he grabbed Eddy's towel and playfully tried to flip him with it as Eddy ran for the showers. He was still there when Zeke arrived a few minutes later. Eddy said, "All kidding aside, Zeke, you played a great game. I know Clyde will be proud of you when he hears about it."

"Thanks, Eddy," Zeke responded. "That means a lot coming from you." Tonight was the first time ever that Eddy had praise for Zeke's playing.

End of excerpt.

10. Time Out

A short chapter in which Grandma serves lunch to Timmy and Granddad, and Timmy asks some further questions of clarification.

11. Mud Bowl

On Monday Roberto and Rusty, right guard and right tackle, were suspended from the team because they failed World History in the six-weeks exam. They had asked Bulldog, the center, to help them by sending signals, but he refused.

On Wednesday Zeke had a conversation with Fred and Flash about the race-baiting incident in the Ashmont game. They told him about practices of exclusion in Lofton that he was unaware of.

Excerpt:

"This is a real eye-opener for me," Zeke disclosed. "I've lived in Lofton all my life and haven't notice these things. At church they teach us that all people are equal. And I believe they are. But they don't help us to see the inequality that exists all around us. I'm sorry I'm so blind."

"That's all right," Fred reassured him. "You and the other guys on the team treat us fairly. You've helped me with ball handling, and Dutch taught Flash how to block."

"And Rusty, Roberto, Pudge, and all the others knock us down just as hard as they do anyone else," Flash added with a glint in his eye. "And Coach, too. He cares about performance. He demands a lot from everyone, but he doesn't seem to notice what color you are. That's why I like about playing football for Lofton High."

The bell rang and students headed in for class. As they threesome divided, Fred remarked, "Thanks, Zeke. This is the first time I ever talked to

a white person about these things."

"Thanks for my enlightenment," Zeke replied.

End of excerpt.

On Friday evening Lofton played at Leabrook in a pouring rain. Lofton scored a touchdown in the first half and led 6-0. At halftime Coach wanted them to put on mud cleats, but Doc, the trainer, had forgot them. Leabrook put on their mud cleats and scored two touchdowns in the second half to win, 12-0.

12. Disappointment

Duke, last year's quarterback, returned for a visit after finishing basic training in the Navy. He talked with Zeke and Eddy about the "sucker pass" in which the tailback runs right, stops and throws the ball to the quarterback who has sneaked downfield to the left. Since Eddy is not a good thrower, Coach had not encouraged them to use it. But Eddy and Zeke decided to work on it anyway.

In the Friday game against Starfield, Lofton led 14-0 at the half. On the opening kickoff of the second half, Eddy injured his ankle. Billy played well as his replacement until he got into a fight and was thrown out of the game. Fred moved over to tailback. He was tackled near the sideline and suffered a deep cut on his hand from the ten-yard chain. Coach had Zeke play tailback because he knew all the plays. He did all right until he fumbled an exchange from the quarterback. As Lofton went through these mishaps, Starfield started scoring and won the game 16-14.

Excerpt:

After the game was another school dance, this one with a Halloween theme. Zeke was exhausted and grouchy. He didn't feel like dancing, or talking either. Barbara [his girl friend] had little sympathy for him. They were quarreling by the time the dance was half over.

To annoy him Barbara said, "You know Basil asked me to go to a band party with him tomorrow night."

"Go ahead," Zeke snarled. "Go with him if you're tired of me."

"I will," she replied and went off in a huff.

Saturday morning Zeke was still tired, but he had to go to work anyway.

He didn't want to read the sports page but felt drawn to it. The headline read:

"Starfield Prevails Over Lions, 16-14."

They're now putting our name second, Zeke thought. The front page reported:

"WAR NEWS [to be added]"

During the day Zeke called Barbara, apologized for the way he was last night, and asked her to go to the movies with him tonight. It was too late. She had already promised Basil and seemed a little too eager to keep her

word.

When Zeke got home for supper, Mom was holding a letter from Clyde. He was returning to the States in a few days, and he expected to be home for a visit by Thanksgiving if not before. After that he would be fitted with an artificial arm. Clyde was really upbeat, and Mom was buoyed by his letter.

During the meal Zeke's grumpiness began to fade away. He decided to go down to the drugstore and find some guys to go to the movies with.

End of excerpt and chapter.

Note: This is as far as the story is written so far. The main aspects of the remaining chapters are as follows.

13. Dining Out

On Monday Coach suspended Billy from scrimmage and game play for one week for fighting but allowed him to participate in other phases of practice. On Tuesday at the end of scrimmage Zeke asked Billy to stay on the field for a while and run some pass patterns because Eddy was still limping and couldn't go full speed. Then they sat on a bench, and Zeke talked to Billy about ways to control one's temper and how important it was to think of the team and not just of personal glory.

On Friday the team traveled 90 miles to Barnesville for a non-league game. At the first the Lofton offense was sluggish, and they fell behind 0-7. Then they got clicking, shut down the Barnesville offense, and won 27-7.

They went to a diner in Barnesville to eat. When the proprietor saw the three Negroes on the team, he told Coach they were not allowed inside. As a concession he offered to make up plates for them to eat in the bus. Coach, noticing the hamburger steaks already cooking and fingering the voucher, declared that his entire team always ate together. The proprietor relented but insisted that the Negro players enter the side door and sit at the table next to the kitchen. Coach took the entire team outside and told them all to enter through the side door. He told Zeke, Spike, Eddy, and some of the others to go in first and fill the tables near the kitchen. The coaches entered last with the three Negroes and a couple of tackles and occupied the remaining tables up front.

As they were eating several Barnesville players arrived and went to the tables where the Negroes were seated. They wanted to know which of them made the great end-around, touchdown run. It was Flash. They congratulated him on his speed. The one who had chased him wanted to know his time in the 100 yard dash and said that they would probably meet again at the state track meet. They shook hands and left.

14. Surprise Ending

On Monday the school was abuzz with the restaurant incident. Roberto and Rusty were back on the team. Roberto had passed a special exam in World History, and Rusty had dropped the course but had to wait three weeks before he could play. Billy's suspension was also over. Eddy's ankle was much better, so they were in full strength to play Grunwald, another out-of-town game.

[Some mid-week happening to be worked out.]

It was an offensive battle. Grunwald scored first, Lofton scored twice, and Grunwald made another touchdown before the half to tie the game at 14-14. Grunwald went ahead in the second half. Then Billy scored his first touchdown of the season to tie the game. In the waning moments of the game, Eddy threw the sucker pass (a real floater) to Zeke for the winning touchdown. Coach was amazed because he wasn't aware that they had been practicing it.

15. Tough Break

The final game of the season was at home against Hargrove, the only undefeated team in the league. Coach decided to work out a daring offense for Lofton's first series.

[Some mid-week happening to be worked out.]

Lofton received the opening kickoff, and Eddy made a good return. The new offense surprised Hargrove, and Lofton quickly scored a touchdown. After that the powerful Hargrove team dominated and were leading 28-7 by late in the third quarter. Zeke dropped back to pass, was hit high and low, and broke his leg. He was carried off on a stretcher to the sound of loud cheers.

The Hargrove coach put in his second team to start the fourth quarter. Coach Nick removed his seniors in pairs and Eddy last so that the hometown crowd could give them rousing cheers. With only juniors and sophomores playing Billy scored a touchdown. Hargrove scored again, an augur that maybe next year Lofton could hold its own with the best teams in the league.

Lofton finished the season with a 4-5 record and were 3-4 in the league.

16. In the Hospital

The various players visited Zeke in the hospital and resolved loose ends in their relationships. Coach came and praised Zeke for his leadership. Barbara visited him, but their romance was now on rocky ground. This left Zeke down in the dumps, plus the knowledge that he would miss at least half of the basketball season.

Then his brother Clyde appeared for a surprise visit. Clyde made light of his severed arm. He told Zeke that he was advised he would make a good lawyer because many clients were tired of lawyers who said "one the one hand" but "on the other hand". Clyde, a trombonist, related how Glen Miller had visited the Army hospital in England and played for them. Miller told Clyde personally that with his right arm gone he could operate the slide with his left arm and let him try it on Miller's own trombone.

This helped Zeke get a better perspective on the football season and his own life.

17. Another Time Out

Grandma served Timmy and Granddad an afternoon snack. Timmy knew that his grandmother's name was Helen, not Barbara, and wanted to know where they met. It was in college. Did she know of Zeke's

football teammates? Yes, Eric, who was Spike in high school, was best man at Granddad's and Grandma's wedding. And she was a bride's maid when Zeke's sister, Laura, married Bill. Timmy was astonished that his Great Uncle Bill, a successful, dignified realtor, was Billy or Wild Bill from his grandfather's football team.

Grandma said that she had met all of the others. In fact they were all together at the time of Paul's (Zeke's) tenth high school reunion.

18. Tenth Reunion

The tenth reunion of the Lofton High School class of 1945 occurred in July 1955. Former students trickled into the high school gym on Saturday morning for registration and to decorate the gym for the dance that night. As they did the former teammates got caught up with what they had been doing the last ten years. Most of them were drafted in the spring and summer of 1945. Some went to college on the GI bill but not all. In the afternoon Eddy, who was now football coach at Lofton High, opened the locker room for the ex-players and arranged to have first team members who had been juniors come, too.

Zeke was a lawyer and lived in Lofton. Fred was a Baptist minister and had recently visited Montgomery, Alabama where Martin Luther King, Jr. was leading the bus boycott. Hank was running the family farm. Spike was helping his dad manage the feed store. Pudge was a disc jockey. Dutch was with the Mennonite Service Committee in the Middle East [his pacifism figures in the story but not this sampler]. Bulldog (Richard) got an MBA and worked for a corporation in the East. Bob (Roberto) had become an engineer and was working for the fledgling space program. Rusty had a

used car business in Lofton. Flash had stayed in the army, received a battlefield commission during the Korean War, and was now a captain. Basil, the field goal kicker, was an English teacher. Doc, the trainer, was now an M.D.

In discussing the 1944 season, Zeke talked about lying in bed on many nights in the Army and in college and thinking about the first game of the season against Kepler. If he had called a quarterback sneak instead of punting, they would have won the game. This would have inspired them, and they would have won other games and maybe been champs. Others talked about mistakes they had made that kept them from winning particular games. Eddy brought this discussion to an end by telling Zeke that if he had run the quarterback sneak they would have been 5-4 instead of 4-5. They would never have won the championship because "Let's face it," he said. "We weren't that good."

But Eddy related to Zeke that Coach Nick had told him one time that Zeke's work with Billy and Lefty, the sophomore quarterback, had help make Lofton 6-3 the following year and win the league championship in 1946.

Other players told how different aspects of the season had helped them. Bob said that flunking the World History exam and being put off the team caused him to buckle down in his studies, which he did from then on. Rusty said that his dad, a car dealer, had found out about their unsuccessful effort to cheat on the exam and had really eaten him out. His dad stated forcefully that a reputation honesty is indispensable in the car business, especially in selling used cars.

Fred reported how he had appreciated the easy-going racial equality of the football team. He recalled how Rusty took care of the race-baiting

opponent and how Coach outfoxed the diner proprietor. He knew that Coach did it, not as a civil rights crusader, but as one who stood up for all of his players. Fred speculated whether that might be a good technique to break down exclusion in diners and restaurants.

Flash said that he had give Coach's speech about teamwork to many different groups in the Army. When he received his commission as lieutenant in Korea, he was not afraid to lead his racially integrated unit into combat where sometimes officers were "accidentally" shot in the back. They were a team, and they all respected one another.

Dutch, who was a conscientious objector, appreciated that Coach had defended him before the other players even though Coach did not favor that position. It had helped Dutch better to accept other persons with different views, even advocates of military action.

Others related effects on them. Finally Zeke remarked, "We had a losing season, but it made winners of us all."

19. Time Marches On

Timmy asked Granddad if they had ever met again. Yes, they got together at the 25th class reunion in July 1970. It was not so happy an event. It occurred in the midst of the Vietnam War and was more divisive, reflecting division in the country at the time. Those who hadn't gone to college had married earlier and several had sons fighting in Vietnam. One had lost a son in the war and had concluded that Dutch was right in his opposition to war. But another who had only daughters thought the United States should intensify its bombing campaign.

Meanwhile, Dutch had been killed in the Middle East, trying to halt a skirmish between Israelis and Palestinians. Richard (Bulldog) was killed in a plane crash.

[Review of other careers to be added, briefly.]

Now, Granddad continued, they are getting ready for their 50th class reunion. Among his former teammates, Eddy is running a sports store. Doc has retired as a college team physician and is the doctor at a health spa in Arizona.

Bob retired from NASA and is now a consultant based in Houston. Spike closed the feed store, and his wife has an antiques store on the property. Hank was crippled in a farm accident but has a tractor he can run without using his legs. Rusty sold his car dealership ten years ago and is residing in Florida. Basil is a poet and novelist living in Vermont. Fred is senior minister of a large Baptist Church in a big city. Flash died of sickle cell anemia, and Pudge succumbed to a heart attack. Zeke is a judge.

Eddy, Eric (Spike), and Uncle Bill dropped by to enlist Granddad in a campaign to raise money for new uniforms for the Lofton Lions because the school budget is too tight to afford them.

Timmy listened with fascination as they reminisced on what playing on a losing team meant for them. Such as:

Uncle Bill (Billy): "If I had played three years without losing a game, I would have been misled. Since then I have learned that life has many ups and downs, many victories and defeats. Winning is a great experience. And losing isn't exactly fun. But if you've done your best, you can live with

it."

Granddad: "You can't win them all -- on the playing field, as a lawyer, running for public office, or in anything else. In many respects the relationships involved in trying are as important as the final outcome."

Eric: "Yes, it's the camaraderie of football that makes it so great. Do you remember how Basil, bassoon player turned field goal kicker and team philosopher, recited King Henry the Fifth before the opening game:

'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers,
For he who sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother.'

Forget the blood shedding but look at the deeper sentiment. On the Lofton team, even in a losing season, we became bonded brothers."

Eddy: "Even to the extent of disciplining and shaping our little brother, Billy."

Uncle Bill: "It's true. Timmy, your granddad, Eddy, and Coach Nickerson transformed me from a brash, know-it-all into a decent team player. Maybe that's why I have just as good memories of the 1944 season on a losing team as of the 1946 season when we were league champs."

Et cetera, worked into a natural dialogue with an appropriate ending.

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A LOSING SEASON
How It Made Winners of Us All

by Howard W. Hallman

A Sports Story for Young Teenagers

SAMPLER

1. From the Attic

Excerpt from chapter opening:

"What's this thing, Granddad?" asked Timmy, bringing some kind of golden headgear into the living room where Granddad was reading the Saturday morning paper. Timmy was making his annual visit to his grandparents toward the end of August 1994. He was always finding curiosities.

"It's a football helmet," Granddad replied, putting down his paper. "Where did you find it?"

"In a box in the attic."

End of excerpt.

Granddad -- Judge Paul Parker -- admits that it belonged to him when he was a high school quarterback named Zeke at Lofton High in the fall of 1944 -- during what turned out to be the last year of World War II.

Timmy, soon to be an eighth grader, wants to hear about it. So Granddad reminisces about the 1944 football season in the South Central League in a prairie state.

2. Gathering

Excerpt from chapter opening:

Zeke awoke at six o'clock the Monday before Labor Day, 1944. He had slept restlessly that night out of excitement for the beginning of football practice. As he lay awake, he thought about the plays from last year -- 36, 433, 427, 38, 217, and all the rest. He tried to picture what every player did on each play. When Coach gave out the playbooks at practice, he would be able to check his memory.

End of excerpt.

Zeke's friend, Spike, comes by for him, and they head for the locker room to check out equipment. Teammates arrive in twos and threes and get reacquainted: Bob and Rusty, Eddy and Pudge, Basil, Richard, Hank. Dutch arrives with Stansilaw from a Polish refugee family who wants to try out for American football. Fred introduces his cousin, Gordon, who has come to live with him. Fred was among the first Negroes [terminology of the 1940s] to play for Lofton High after his father, a Baptist minister, "insisted that it was wrong to draft Negroes into the army but not let them play football in their home town." As they players get their equipment, they find out that two of last year's starters who were expected to return won't be back because one enlisted in the Navy and the other moved to California.

Excerpt:

During this conversation Billy entered the locker room. A ninth grader last year, he had been the leading tailback on the junior varsity. He was big for his age and a fast runner. Now a sophomore, he wasn't supposed to show up until the afternoon, and Coach told him so.

"Since I'm going to be on the varsity this year," Billy said assuredly, "I thought I should start practicing with these guys from the first day."

"You'll be on the varsity if you play well and comply with my rules," Coach stated firmly. "See you this afternoon, Billy."

"Ah, Nick, let me suit up now."

Suddenly Rusty and Pudge swooped behind Billy, picked him up, and carried him to the door, saying, "See you this afternoon, Billy." All the guys laughed.

End of chapter.

3. Practice Begins

They have opening calisthenics and take a lap around the track where "Flash" Gordon shows his speed. They practice blocking, tackling, passing, ball carrying, and finish with another lap. In the afternoon the sophomores join them.

On Tuesday morning Coach gives his annual pep talk.

Excerpt:

"...We've had a winning season every year since I've been at Lofton High, and we're going to have a winning season this year."

"That's for sure," Eddy exclaimed.

"You may ask, what makes a winning team?" Coach continued. "It requires each of you to develop your skills to the utmost. That means hard work...."

"A winning team also requires teamwork." Coach insisted. "As a matter of fact, if I had the choice between mediocre players who played well together and a bunch of brilliant players each seeking his own glory, I would take the less talented ones."

"Teamwork is founded on loyalty. Loyalty to each another. Loyalty to your coaches. The coaches loyalty to you. You may come from different backgrounds and be part of different groups at school and in the community, but on the field and in the locker room I expect you to be like one big, happy family."

"Like me and my brother, Bob," Rusty broke in, then giving Bob a brotherly shove. [They were good friends, not blood brothers.]

"So even as you go hard at one another in scrimmage and compete for the eleven positions on the team," Coach concluded, "never lose sight of the fact that we're all united in the quest to be a winning team."

End of excerpt.

Even so, rivalries appeared as players competed for positions, such as Billy trying to displace Eddy, a senior, as tailback; between Richard and Wally for starting center; Flash, Chuck, and Mike trying to become first team right end.

At the end of Tuesday morning practice Coach told the players to study plays for short punt formation.

Excerpt [illustrating an occasional interruption by Timmy for clarification or comment]:

"What's a short punt formation," Timmy wanted to know. "I never heard of it."

"It was very popular among high schools around here in the 1940s," Granddad explained, "but it was displaced by the T-formation by 1950. "In

[Granddad describes the short punt formation, gets paper and draws, and then proceeds to describe the single wing, double wing, and T-formation with several variations.]

"Granddad," Timmy interrupted, "I'd rather hear more about your Lofton team."

End of excerpt and chapter.

4. Scrimmaging

Excerpt from chapter opening:

The first full-speed, hard-tackle scrimmage would take place on Thursday morning. That's what all the guys were looking forward to: to run with the ball, slam into defenders, fake them out, cut back, make solo tackles, be part of gang tackles, block along the line and in open field, pass, catch and run with the ball, kick, run back punts and kickoffs, go all the way if you could. They loved the physical contact of football.

"But its contact with a purpose," Coach reminded them as they gathered around him on the sidelines near midfield after the Tuesday afternoon warmup drills. "Actually two purposes. The first purpose is to score, to get the ball across the goal line or through the uprights. The second purpose is to keep our opponent from scoring."

"Here we go with lesson two from Coach Nickerson's football almanac," Bob whispered jokingly to Rusty.

"This has to be a team effort," Coach continued. "That's what sets contact in football apart from boxing and wrestling. Sure, there's a lot of one-on-one combat in football, but it's part of team play. How well each of you performs affects your ten teammates. You can't win without them, and they can't win without you."

He's right, Zeke thought. We need each other. What's great about football is being part of a team, the camaraderie of winning together -- and we are going to win.

End of excerpt.

They divided into teams and starting running plays. They had tryouts for kickers. Basil, a bassoonist of slight build and wearing glasses, showed his skill in kick short field goals for extra points and won a place on the team.

Thursday morning they had their first scrimmage, repeated Thursday afternoon, Friday morning and afternoon. Then "it was so hot and the players' mouths were so dry that they were spitting cotton. They were glad the weekend was coming. They were ready to rest their weary bones and nurse their aches and pains."

On Saturday Zeke and Spike had to work in their dad's store. "At lunchtime Zeke glanced at the Lofton Herald and noticed that the temperature had reached 102° at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, a new record for September 1. The front page headline proclaimed: **`American Troops Near German Border'**" [Note: For every Saturday during the season the sports page headline of the game score and the front page headline of war news will be given.]

In the evening Zeke and Spike went out with their girl friends, Barbara and Joanne. The boys were very tired.

"Are you going to be like this all season?" Barbara wanted to know.

"No," Zeke assured her. "The rest of the season will seem easy after Nick's twice-a-day practices."

5. Intrasquad Game

Coach divided the players into two units, mixing first and second team

players, for an intrasquad scrimmage under lights on the second Friday night. Coach assigned Billy, the sophomore tailback, to Zeke's team.

Excerpt:

As they headed off the field, Coach told Zeke, "I'd like to talk to you in my office for a few minutes."

In the locker room Zeke removed his shoulder pads and went into the coaches' office and sat next to Nick's desk.

"I know you're not happy having Billy on your team," Coach began.

"What makes you think so?" Zeke inquired.

"I could see it in your eyes when I announced the teams. But whether you like him personally, he's your teammate. Furthermore, you're the team leader. It's your job to get your team working effectively as a unit."

"I'll try."

"Billy is brash, but you've got to remember that he just turned 15 this summer. He's inexperienced and has a lot to learn. You can help him."

"I doubt that he'll listen to me."

"He will if you approach him as a friendly teacher, not an adversary."

"I'll do what I can."

End of excerpt.

Coach went on to assure Zeke that his friend, Eddy (but a one time friendly competitor from the other junior high school), was assured of being the first team tailback.

In the intrasquad game Zeke's Gold team kicked off to the White team. They made several first downs and then had to punt. The Golds got the ball.

Excerpt:

In the huddle Zeke sensed that Billy was quite fidgety but realized that this was first-game jitters. He called 36 to send Billy off tackle to the right. Billy, however, ran left, and Mike and Jolly clobbered him for a four yard loss. He was deeply chagrinned, but Zeke reassured him, "That's all right. We all make mistakes."

In the huddle Zeke called, "Same play: 36 on three." Billy made a five yard gain as Sal and Flash double-teamed Pudge and Stan and Fred knocked down Chuck....

End of excerpt.

Later in the game Billy broke through the line of scrimmage and ran down the sideline where Pat tackled him hard and knocked the wind out of him. He had to leave the game for a while.

Excerpt:

....The intrasquad game ended in a 14-14 tie.

"Good game, kid," Zeke called to Billy as they left the field.

"You ain't seen nothing yet," Billy shouted back.

Spike, who was walking with Zeke, remarked, "That kid still has a lot to learn."

As Billy came into the showers, Eddy started singing in a loud voice,

*"I'll sing you a true song of Billy the Kid.
I'll sing of the terrible run that he did.
Cut down by Pat Kelly who once was his friend,
The young halfback's run now reach its sad end."*

Billy flushed with anger. He was so mad that his scalp turned red under his blond hair. He clenched his fist and wanted to go after Eddy on the spot. But he noticed Pudge under the shower on Eddy's right and Rusty on his left. He still had enough sense not to attempt the futile. So he quickly retreated, hurried to his locker, swiftly dressed, and fumed out of the locker room as peals of laughter rolled on in the showers.

End of excerpt.

6. Season Opener

Excerpt from chapter opening:

On Monday during the lunch break at school Eddy, Pudge, and some of the other guys from the team were standing on the front steps of the school,

telling jokes and laughing hilariously. As Billy walked by with a couple of his buddies, Eddy started whistling the "Billy the Kid" tune.

Billy came close to him and snarled, "I'd settle this with you right now, once and for all if you didn't have your bodyguards to protect you."

"I don't need bodyguards for dealing with twerps like you," Eddy snapped. "But I'm not going to fight you. If I did, Nick would suspend both of us from the team. I don't want to miss the opening game against Kepler this Friday."

"Then I challenge you to a race," Billy shot back. "If I beat you, you will have to apologize to me in front of the team and call me Fast Billy."

"A race it will be," Eddy accepted. "In full football gear at the start of practice today."

"Agreed," Billy snapped as he strode away confidently.

"You can't outrun him," Rusty warned.

"I can beat him in a race," Eddy assured his friends. "You'll see."

Eddy was serious enough about the challenge that he was one of the first players on the field for practice after school. He did some warmup exercises and jogged half-speed the length of the field and back. When Billy appeared, followed by a bunch of sophomores, Eddy announced, "I'm ready when you are."

"Any time," Billy replied. "We'll start on the goal line and run to the

40."

"Only the 40?" Eddy responded. "I thought you wanted a real race. Let's go from goal line to goal line. Just like it is when I run back a kickoff for a touchdown."

"It's your funeral," Billy retorted. "I'll be out of sight in a hundred yards."

"We'll need a starter and a judge at the end," Eddy indicated.

"I'll volunteer as starter," said Zeke, who was standing nearby. "And why don't you have Bulldog be the judge at the finish? You know he'll be fair."

"That's all right with me," Eddy answered.

"Me, too," Billy agreed.

As Bulldog and some others trotted to the far goal line, Eddy, Billy, and Zeke took their places on the near goal line. Billy laid his helmet on the ground and knelt into a sprinter's crouch with his knuckles on the goal line.

"This isn't a track meet," Eddy asserted. "It's football. We're running backs. Stand up on two feet and put your helmet on."

So Billy stood up, popped on his helmet, and tightened the chin strap. They were ready, Eddy on the left and Billy on the right. At the far end Bulldog waved them to start.

"Go on hike," Zeke instructed. "Get ready. Set. Hike."

And off they ran. Billy got the faster start and quickly sprang into the lead. By the 30 yard line he was a couple of yards ahead of Eddy and began to drift left in front of him. At the fifty yard line Billy looked around to his left to see how far he was ahead, but he didn't see Eddy. By then Eddy had gone right and was starting to close. Billy looked that way, breaking stride as he did. This was the opening Eddy needed. He pulled even with Billy at the far 25 yard line and began to edge into the lead. At the 10 yard line Billy ran out of steam, and Eddy pulled ahead with a final sprint to win by three yards.

Eddy and Billy, gasping for air and hands clutching their sides, separated to walk off their run. Zeke trotted to join the others at the finishing line. As he arrived, the two runners were coming back together.

"From now on," Eddy huffed, "you can call me Fast Eddy."

"Okay, Fast Eddy," Billy puffed, "You can call me Slow Billy if you want, but please not Billy the Kid."

"No, you're not slow, Billy," Eddy answered. "You just challenged the wrong person. You're Wild Bill."

With that settled, Fast Eddy put his arm around Wild Bill. They walked together to the other end of the field where Coach was blowing his whistle to assemble the team for calisthenics. He had observed the contest from the entrance to the field and gave Zeke a I-told-you-so look as Zeke took his place for warmup exercises. [Coach earlier told Zeke that although individually Billy had a faster time in a 40 yard run he couldn't beat Eddy in a race one-on-one.]

End of excerpt.

Friday night Lofton's first game of the season was at home against Kepler, a non-league rival.

Excerpt:

Tension was thick in the Lofton locker room as the players put on their equipment and slipped on their home white jerseys. Roberto and Rusty were jocular but focused. Pudge was unusually restrained. Fast Eddy made a special point of offering encouragement to Wild Bill. Dutch quietly quizzed Stan on his blocks on different plays.

In one corner of room Basil, getting ready for his first football game, exclaimed,

*"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother."*

"What's this blood-shedding?" Stan [the Polish refugee] inquired nervously.

"Oh, don't let Basil upset you," Pudge remarked. "He took English literature last year, and Miss Shepherd had the class memorize a lot of stuff from Shakespeare."

"Henry V, Act IV, Scene 3," Basil declared.

End of excerpt. [Thereafter, Basil quoted Shakespeare on a number of occasions.]

In game Lofton led 14-6 when Kepler scored just after the fourth quarter began, making it 14-13.

Excerpt:

By then fatigue was showing among the starters on both teams, so their coaches substituted liberally. For the next eight minutes neither offense got beyond midfield, and the teams exchanged punts twice. Then Kepler geared up for a final charge. A combination of quick openers, end sweeps, and short passes got them to first down on the Lofton nine yard line.

Roberto and Rusty pleaded with their teammates to dig in. The first down play went in Pudge's direction, and he held the Kepler halfback to a two yard gain. The fullback up the middle got the ball to the three. On third down the Kepler quarterback faked to a halfback and lofted the ball to the corner, but Fred leapt high and deflected it.

With fourth and goal at the three the fullback took the handoff, made a running dive over the pile, but Hank dove at the same time and stopped him just short of the goal line. The linesman place the ball six inches from the goal. Lofton gained possession.

In those days there was no game clock on the scoreboard, so Zeke hurried over to the linesman, who was timekeeper, and asked, "How much time is left in the game?"

"I'll tell you when the game is over, Sonny," he replied gruffly.

Zeke guessed that there was less than a minute left, but he wasn't sure. He didn't want to risk a safety and give Kepler two points. Because Hank had been kicking well, he decided to punt away. Unfortunately the ball went off the side of Hank's foot and skittered out of bounds near the 20.

The Kepler quarterback took advantage of this unexpected opportunity by throwing to a halfback, who went out of bounds at the 10 yard marker. Then he hit an end in the end zone as Fred dove for the ball and missed. Kepler now had a 19-14 lead. The kicker made the point-after-touchdown to make it 20-14.

Coach sent in instructions for Eddy and Fred to be the deep receivers, Eddy on the left Fred on the right. If Fred got the ball, he would give it to Eddy on a reverse. If Eddy got the ball, he would fake a reverse and keep it. Either way blockers would try to open a path along the right sideline.

The kick went to Fred, who handed it to Eddy, as instructed but faked possession and continued full speed to the left. This fooled some of the Kepler defenders, and Eddy sped along the right sideline. The Lofton kicker, the last tackler between him and the goal line, was waiting at the Lofton 45. Eddy cut back sharply toward the middle -- too sharply, for his feet got tangled and he fell.

Before the kickoff Zeke had called the first play. He sent Spike deep on the left, Flash deep on the right, and Eddy straight down the middle. He had Fred and Hank to stay and block so that he would have enough time to deliver the ball. Miraculously Spike got open and caught the ball on the Kepler 35 where he was tackled in bounds near the sideline. Before the

Lofton team reached the new line of scrimmage, the gun sounded ending the game. Kepler won.

The Lofton players shook hands perfunctorily with their opponents and dragged themselves off the field. In the locker room Coach came around and complemented various players on aspects of their play and told them that they would rebound. He offered no criticism to anyone. Zeke sat morosely in front of his locker, half-undressed, then finally headed for the showers. As the players put on their street clothes, Doc [the student trainer] tried a few cheerful words, but nobody wanted to be cheered up.

End of excerpt.

7. League Play Begins

Monday afternoon Coach talked privately with Zeke and told him that he should have called a quarterback sneak instead of punting from the end zone and that he should have called a time out when Spike caught that last pass.

Spike was grounded after his dad found a beer cap in the car, left by a friend of Spike's. Spike has a 7:00 p.m. curfew for the week and will have to miss the Ashmont game.

During the first quarter of Friday night's game the Ashmont left end heckled Flash with blatantly racist remarks, out of the hearing of the referee.

Excerpt:

As the teams passed one another exchanging ends of the field, the Ashmont end had one more dig for Flash. He was really seething as he

joined his teammates Doc's refreshments -- some cups of water.

"I'll take care of him for you," Rusty told him. "Zeke, on the next play, call 36 and let me trade places with Roberto so I can clobber their left end."

Zeke did as Rusty requested.

"You don't need to help me double team that sucker," Rusty told Fred as they broke out of the huddle."

Rusty lined up as guard and Roberto moved out to tackle. At the snap of the ball, Rusty quickly pulled to his right, headed for the charging end, and hit him with a tremendous cross-body block. Fred, freed from his blocking assignment, led interference through the hole, and knocked down the linebacker. Eddy breezed through the huge hole, cut back to the left, and picked up 15 yards before the Ashmont safety brought him down.

Back at the line of scrimmage Rusty was still on top of the Ashmont end. He was doing the talking. The linesman noticed them and said, "Get up boys."

They did. The Ashmont player massaged his right arm.

"I don't think he'll be bothering you anymore, Flash" Rusty remarked in the huddle.

"What'd you do to him?" Bulldog inquired.

"Let's just say that I twisted his arm," Rusty laughed.

End of excerpt.

Ashmont were league champs last year. By the end of the third quarter Ashmont was ahead 10-0. Zeke threw an incomplete pass on fourth down from the Ashmont 47. Coach took him out and told him he should have punted. Ashmont went on to score but missed the extra point. Ashmont defeated Lofton 16-0.

Excerpt:

When they boarded the bus, Zeke, feeling he was in Coach's doghouse for not punting on fourth down, bypassed the front seat and headed for the rear. Dutch and Stan were already there.

"I'm glad you're going to sit with us, Zeke," Dutch declared. "Nighttime bus rides make Stan nervous. You can help me reassure him."

"It's no different than riding in the daytime, Stan," Zeke noted. "It may be dark outside, but it's the same in here."

"It's what it reminds me of," Stan indicated.

"Stan had two long nights on a bus when his family was escaping from Poland," Dutch explained.

"It was -- what's the English word -- scary," Stan reflected. Then he fell silent as the bus started up and headed out of town. By then Bulldog had joined them.

Finally Zeke said, "I'm willing to listen if you want to talk about it."

"Well, you see," Stan began haltingly, "my father was a leader in the Polish resistance against the German occupation. He lived mostly deep in the forest where even the Nazis were afraid to go. Every once in a while he would appear at two in the morning for a brief visit and to get some food.

"My mother told the Germans that my father was killed in battle during the first months of the war. But then a Polish informer told the local Nazi commander that this wasn't true, that father was hiding with the resistance.

"So they dragged mother into their headquarters and questioned her for six hours. She wouldn't say anything but that he was dead. But they didn't believe her. Our source inside the Nazi operation told us that they were going to execute our whole family as an example: mother, my two sisters, my brother, and me. We took this seriously because there had been a lot of executions in our town."

"That must've been terribly frightening," Zeke commented.

"Yes, very. We sent word to father to get his advice. He came in the middle of the night and told us we ought to get out of the country."

"How could you?" asked Bulldog.

"The best way was to make our way to the Baltic coast and get a boat to Sweden," Stan explained. "But the coast was 80 miles to the north. The only way to get there safely was to go along back roads at night."

"You had to walk?" Zeke inquired.

"No, the resistance had an old bus, smaller than this one. It would hold

about 20 people comfortably. They had a couple of men who knew the roads so well that they could drive them in the dark without headlights on. Otherwise the Nazis would catch us."

By then the school bus was cruising along the countryside. It was pitch black outside.

"Imagine us driving without lights," Dutch remarked.

"So our family boarded the bus just after midnight, except my father, who's still in Poland. There were about 25 others who were fleeing, too, so it was quite crowded. We could make only 10 to 15 miles an hour, so it would take two nights to reach the coast."

"What did you do during the day?," Zeke wanted to know.

"We stayed in a cave in a forest with camouflage over the bus. The second night we were about ten miles from the coast when we saw headlights coming toward us. Quickly our driver pulled into a thicket. As we waited silently, we heard loud singing in the approaching vehicle. As it got closer, we realized it was a bunch of German soldiers riding in an open truck. They were drunk. But they were still dangerous."

"Gosh," Bulldog gasped. "What happened?"

"They went right by us. We waited fifteen minutes and went on our way. We reached the coast just before dawn, quickly boarded a fishing boat, and headed for safety in Sweden. It was two nights I shall never forget."

"I wouldn't either," Zeke exclaimed. "It's no wonder a bus ride at night

makes you nervous."

"But now I'm not afraid," Stan said with a sigh of relief. "I'm in America among friends."

Just then the school bus pulled into a diner halfway home to Lofton. As the team piled out, Coach located Zeke, took him aside, and indicated, "Maybe I was too hard on you, Zeke, for taking a chance by not punting. It's easier to call signals from the bench than in the game."

"That's all right, Nick," Zeke replied. "I'm still learning."

"I want to win every game," Coach declared, "even though I know we won't. But then I realize that it's just a game."

"Thanks, Nick. I've learned a lot tonight."

"So come on. I'll buy you a hamburger steak."

Sure he would! Coach had the meal voucher for the team.

End of excerpt.

8. A Narrow Escape

To give the Lofton offense an element of surprise, Coach taught the backfield to shift from T-formation into short punt and double wing.

Excerpt:

In the locker room the guys talked some more about the all-St. Louis World Series that would begin on Wednesday.

Coach regaled the players by telling how he sat in the bleachers in St. Louis for the middle three games of the '34 series. It was Detroit versus the Cards' famous Gas House Gang of Pepper Martin, Leo Durocher, Ducky Medwick, Frankie Frisch, Dizzy and Paul Dean, and others. The seniors and juniors had previously heard about the antics of Pepper Martin and the tale of Dizzy Dean, the star pitcher serving as a pinch base-runner, being knocked out by an errant throw but pitching the next day. But they listened as intently as the sophomores and ninth graders.

.....

During lunch hour on Wednesday with the World Series about to begin, Doc was chatting with Pudge, Eddy, Basil, Zeke, and Spike on the school steps. "I'll bet anyone a dollar that I can tell you the score of today's series game before it begins."

For a moment Basil seemed to be making a quick calculation in his head. Then he said, "I'll take your bet. What's the score going to be?"

"It's nothing to nothing," Doc answered, and all of the guys laughed.

"It can't be," Basil rebutted. "Somebody has to win."

"I said I knew the score before the game begins," Doc shot back. "Before the first pitch is thrown out and the game begins the score is nothing to nothing."

"You tricked me, you cur," Basil objected, annoyed but also jocular.

"It's an old trick," Eddy explained. "Happens every year in the locker room with somebody new on the team."

"You're this year's victim," Spike indicated.

.....

"Hey, that's a good one," Timmy exclaimed. "I'll have to try it this year."

"You never heard it?" asked Granddad.

"No, never."

"I wonder when it died out?"

End of excerpt.

In the Friday night game at home against Tanabe the teams were tied 13-13 at the end of the fourth quarter. Lofton punted and the Tanabe returner ran 90 yards for a touchdown. Spike blocked the try for point after touchdown.

Lofton mounted a charge but was stopped inside the Tanabe ten yard line.

Excerpt:

Zeke quickly ran over to the linesman and asked, "How much time is left

in the game?"

"Three minutes and ten seconds," was the reply.

Zeke returned to his teammates. "We've got three minutes left. If we stop them without a first down, we'll still have time to score."

The Lions were determined but too weak to stop the Tanabe running game. After making two first downs, Tanabe was out to their 35 yard line. On the next play their tailback made four yards off tackle.

Roberto told Rusty, "On this next play you cut behind me and see if you can stop their back behind the line of scrimmage."

Unexpectedly their tailback dropped back to pass. As Roberto charged to the outside, Rusty slipped around to the inside, breezed passed the guard, who was chasing Roberto, and rushed headlong for the tailback. As he released the ball, Rusty batted it into the air, right into Roberto's hands. Roberto chugged the 30 yards to the end zone as Tanabe players fruitlessly pursued. The game was tied at 19-19.

The crowd was roaring so loud when Basil rushed onto the field that the band's fanfare was covered up. Then an eery silence descended as Zeke knelt to receive the ball for the extra point attempt. Bulldog's snap was perfect. Zeke placed the ball perfectly upright with the laces away from the kicker. Basil's kick was perfect. Pudge and Rusty hoisted Basil on their shoulders as cymbals clank, drums beat savagely, and the students roared and roared.

End of excerpt.

On Saturday Zeke worked as usual at his dad's store.

Excerpt:

In afternoon Zeke and his dad had the radio on at the hardware store listening to the Series. During the third inning Mom entered the store with tears in her eyes. Laura [Zeke's sister] was with her. Mom was clutching a yellow telegram and handed it to Dad.

Zeke read over his shoulder, "We regret to inform you that your son, Clyde Parker, has been wounded in combat in the European sector. He is now in satisfactory condition at a base hospital in England. Further information will follow."

"It doesn't say what kind of wounds," Mom pointed out.

"Or how serious," Laura added.

"But he's alive," Dad reassured them. "And it says he's in satisfactory condition. That must mean he's not going to die."

"Let's pray to God that he won't," Mom said somberly.

"I think he'll be all right," Zeke added hopefully. He didn't know for sure, but he felt he had to say something encouraging.

"You always look for the bright side of things, Paul," Mom said and gave Zeke a hug.

"Already I've learned from football that you should never give up," said

Zeke.

End of excerpt and chapter.

9. Dedication

As usual the team scrimmaged on Tuesday.

Excerpt:

The third time the first team had the ball in the scrimmage, Coach called Billy from the defensive backfield and told him, "Stand next to me as they run their plays. I want you to watch Eddy. You're a strong runner so you try to run over defenders. In contrast Eddy tries to avoid them. He has a knack for picking his holes, and he's skillful at cutting back against the grain after he gets beyond the line."

Billy and Coach watched for a while, but the second team line wasn't allowing much yardage on runs. Suddenly Coach stepped into the huddle and commanded, "Eddy, you sit this one out. I'm taking your place. Zeke, run 36."

Without wearing any pads or a helmet, Coach lined up at tailback. On Zeke's call, Bulldog snapped Coach the ball and he headed right, parallel to the line and then cut off tackle. The team blocked as never before. A huge hole opened, and Coach rumbled through. Five yards down field, he cut to his left as the defensive halfbacks overran to Coach's right. Spike blocked the safety, and Coach had clear sailing. After 20 yards Pat and Lefty started to catch up with him. In another five yards Coach sat down to avoid being

tackled.

As Eddy and Billy came running up, Coach tossed the ball to Billy and gasped, "That's how it's done."

"That was a fantastic run, Nick," Pudge exclaimed. "Now let me help you up." He extended his hand to pull Coach to his feet.

Still panting, Coach told them all, "If an old codger like me can make 25 yards by smart running, you young bucks ought to do better than that."

Coach's example had its effect. He let Billy play with the first team for a couple of series, and he began to follow his interference better and cut back when he had the chance.

End of excerpt.

Lofton played Cranville at home, and Zeke dedicated his game to his wounded brother, Clyde. Lofton scored with a field goal, and then Zeke threw a touchdown pass to Flash.

Excerpt:

The crowd roared. On both sides of the field. Zeke thought he heard a woman's voice on the towns-folks side hollering, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" But maybe it was his imagination.

End of excerpt.

The second team played a while and then the first team came back in.

Excerpt:

They were rested and quickly shut down Cranville's running game. On third and six the Cranville tailback-passer tried to hit his wingback in the flat. Zeke saw it coming, stepped in front, and had an easy jaunt down the sideline with a 30 yard touchdown run. It was on the town-folks side of the field, and he heard the loud shrieking even clearer, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel! Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

"It's your mom," Spike told him.

"I can't be."

"Look for yourself."

Surveying the stands, he saw his mother, bouncing up and down and furiously waving a gold pom-pom.

"Are you talking about my great grandmother," Timmy asked. "The one who lives with my great aunt Laura?"

"That's the one," Granddad acknowledged.

"But she's so quiet and gentle."

"You have to remember that this happened 50 years ago. She was 42 then and a lively lady."

"I'm going to ask her when I see her."

"Go ahead. The funny thing is that she never called me 'Zeke' before, or since."

End of excerpt.

In the second half Zeke scored on a running play and threw a touchdown pass to Spike. Lofton won 30-0.

Excerpt:

When Zeke came into the locker room, Eddy was standing on a bench, garbed only in a towel around his waist and holding one of Mary Lou's gold pom-poms [Mary Lou was head cheerleader and Eddy's girl friend]. In a high falsetto he shrieked, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!"

Zeke blushed. Then he grabbed Eddy's towel and playfully tried to flip him with it as Eddy ran for the showers. He was still there when Zeke arrived a few minutes later. Eddy said, "All kidding aside, Zeke, you played a great game. I know Clyde will be proud of you when he hears about it."

"Thanks, Eddy," Zeke responded. "That means a lot coming from you." Tonight was the first time ever that Eddy had praise for Zeke's playing.

End of excerpt.

Another excerpt.

Saturday evening at the movies Zeke and Barbara, Spike and Joanne saw Paulette Goddard and Sonny Tufts in "I Love a Soldier", a film about wartime marriage. Barbara was in a very romantic mood. As they headed for the drive-in, Spike sang in his out-of-tune tenor:

*"You've got to be a football hero,
To get along with the beautiful girls."*

Sitting in the backseat, Zeke popped him on the head with a magazine. But within himself he was enjoying the adulation.

[Note: Each chapter describes briefly their Saturday night activities and mentions what was on at the movies.]

10. Time Out

A short chapter in which Grandma serves lunch to Timmy and Granddad, and Timmy asks some further questions of clarification.

11. Mud Bowl

On Monday Roberto and Rusty, right guard and right tackle, were suspended from the team because they failed World History in the six-weeks exam. They had asked Bulldog (nickname of Richard, the first team center) to help them by sending signals, but he refused.

On Wednesday Zeke had a conversation with Fred and Flash about the race-baiting incident in the Ashmont game. They told him about practices of exclusion in Lofton that he was unaware of.

Excerpt:

"This is a real eye-opener for me," Zeke disclosed. "I've lived in Lofton

all my life and haven't notice these things. At church they teach us that all people are equal. And I believe they are. But they don't help us to see the inequality that exists all around us. I'm sorry I'm so blind."

"That's all right," Fred reassured him. "You and the other guys on the team treat us fairly. You've helped me with ball handling. Dutch taught Flash how to block, and Spike helped him with open field tackling."

"And Rusty, Roberto, Pudge, and all the others knock us down just as hard as they do anyone else," Flash added with a glint in his eye. "And Coach, too. He cares about performance. He demands a lot from everyone, but he doesn't seem to notice what color you are. That's why I like about playing football for Lofton High."

The bell rang and students headed in for class. As they threesome divided, Fred remarked, "Thanks, Zeke. This is the first time I ever talked to a white person about these things."

"Thanks for my enlightenment," Zeke replied.

End of excerpt.

On Friday evening Lofton played at Leabrook in a pouring rain. Lofton scored a touchdown in the first half and led 6-0. At halftime Coach wanted them to put on mud cleats, but Doc, the trainer, had forgot them. Leabrook put on their mud cleats and scored two touchdowns in the second half to win, 12-0.

12. Disappointment

Duke, last year's quarterback, returned for a visit after finishing basic training in the Navy. He talked with Zeke and Eddy about the "sucker pass" in which the tailback runs right, stops and throws the ball to the quarterback who has sneaked downfield to the left. Since Eddy wasn't a good thrower, Coach had not encouraged them to use it. But Eddy and Zeke decided to work on it anyway.

In the Friday game against Starfield, Lofton led 14-0 at the half. On the opening kickoff of the second half, Eddy injured his ankle. Billy played well as his replacement until he got into a fight and was thrown out of the game. Coach sent him to the locker room and into the stands. Fred moved over to tailback. He was tackled near the sideline and suffered a deep cut on his hand from the ten-yard chain. Coach had Zeke play tailback because he knew all the plays. He did all right until he fumbled an exchange from the quarterback. As Lofton went through these mishaps, Starfield started scoring and won the game 16-14.

Excerpt:

When the players were dressing after their showers, Doc noticed a helmet lying in the corner. He picked it up, examined it, and called out, "Look, here's Billy's helmet. He must have been so mad that he threw it away."

Basil walked over, took it from Doc, and scrutinized it. "Alas! Poor Billy! I knew him, Horatio," he said to Doc, "a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy."

"Who's Horatio?" Stan whispered to Dutch.

"Hamlet's friend," Dutch explained.

"He hath borne me on his back a thousand times," Basil continued. Then addressing the helmet, he added, "Where be your giles now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment?"

It took most of the guys a while to grasp Basil's spoofing, but when they did, they cackled and applauded.

End of excerpt.

Excerpt:

Most of the fellows went to the gym for a school dance, this one with a Halloween theme. Zeke was exhausted and grouchy. He didn't feel like dancing, or talking either. He didn't even laugh when Spike told Joanne and Barbara about Basil's "poor Yorick" takeoff.

Barbara had little sympathy for Zeke. They were quarreling by the time the dance was half over.

To annoy him Barbara said, "Basil is sure clever, isn't he? You know he asked me to go to a band party with him tomorrow night."

"Go ahead," Zeke snarled. "Go with him if you're tired of me."

"I will," she replied and went off in a huff.

End of excerpt.

Another excerpt.

When Zeke got home [from work on Saturday] for supper, Mom was holding a letter from Clyde. He was returning to the States in a few days, and he expected to be home for a visit by Thanksgiving if not before. After that he would be fitted with an artificial arm. Clyde was really upbeat, and Mom was buoyed by his letter.

During the meal Zeke's grumpiness began to fade. He decided to go down to the drugstore and find some guys to go to the movies with. The film was "Hail Conquering Hero", a comedy with Eddy Bracken as a frail draft rejectee mistaken in his home town for a war hero. Zeke laughed for the first time in 24 hours.

End of excerpt and chapter.

13. Dining Out

On Monday Coach suspended Billy from scrimmage and game play for one week for fighting but allowed him to participate in other phases of practice. On Tuesday at the end of scrimmage Zeke asked Billy to stay on the field for a while and run some pass patterns because Eddy was still limping and couldn't go full speed.

Excerpt:

As Zeke and Billy strolled off the field together, Billy inquired, "Zeke, do you think I'll get out of Nick's doghouse."

"Sure. He's just teaching you a lesson. And using you as an example

for other guys on the team."

They sat down on the sideline bench to rest.

"But making me miss a game," Billy continued. "Don't you think that's too severe?"

"Not at all. Your temper tantrum contributed to our loss."

"There were other mistakes."

"Yeah, but they were matters of performance, like the interception I threw and my fumble. Yours was a loss of self-control. That's worse."

"I've always been a little hot-headed."

"A little?" Zeke laughed. "I'd say a lot. But fighting is something you can control."

"That's easy for you to say, Zeke. You're so even tempered."

"I wasn't always that way."

"You weren't?"

"No, in grade school I was a tough little kid, getting into fights all the time."

"How come?"

"Well, for one thing the kids made fun of my middle name, Ezekiel. They would tease me by singing, `Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!'"

"The same thing your mother hollered from the stands?"

"The same, except the kids sang through their nose in a sing-song manner."

"What'd you do?"

"I'd pile into them with my fists flying, at least at the boys. Then I would wind up in the principal's office, and she would call my mother."

"Then you caught hell at home?"

"Sort of. But then one day my dad had a little talk with me. He explained that I was named Ezekiel after his grandfather, who was a fine gentlemen. And besides Ezekiel was an important figure in biblical history. There's a book in the Old Testament that bears his name. `So take pride in your name,' Dad told me."

"Did you?"

"You bet. The next time someone sang the teasing song, I asked, `Did you know that Ezekiel was a famous hero in the Bible?' Later when I read the Bible myself I learned he was more of a prophet. But the idea of a hero worked for me in grade school."

"I think it changed you more than it did them, Zeke."

"That's exactly the point, Billy. We control our reactions inside ourselves. People may provoke us, but how we respond is up to us."

"I'll have to think about that," Billy responded.

End of excerpt.

On Friday the team traveled 90 miles to Barnesdale for a non-league game. At the first the Lofton offense was sluggish, and they fell behind 0-7. Then they got clicking, shut down the Barnesville offense, and won 27-7.

After the game they went to a diner in Barnesdale to eat. When the proprietor saw the four Negroes on the team, he told Coach they were not allowed inside. As a concession he offered to make up plates for them to eat in the bus. Coach, noticing the hamburger steaks already cooking and fingering the voucher, declared that his entire team always ate together. The proprietor relented but insisted that the Negro players enter the side door and sit at the table next to the kitchen. Coach took the entire team outside and told them all to enter through the side door. He told Zeke, Spike, Eddy, and some of the others to go in first and fill the tables near the kitchen. The coaches entered last with the four Negroes, three tackles, and a linebacker and occupied the remaining tables up front.

As they were eating several Barnesdale players arrived and went to the tables where the Negroes were seated. They wanted to know which of them made the great end-around, touchdown run. It was Flash. One of them wanted to know his time in the 100 yard dash and said that they would probably meet again at the state track meet. They shook hands and left.

Excerpt:

As the players finished their meals, they sauntered out the front door and got back on the bus. After they were underway, Fred [Negro halfback] came up front and told Coach, "Thanks a lot, Nick. That was courageous."

"It wasn't courage," Coach answered. "It was loyalty. I told all of you on the first day of practice if you would be loyal to me, I would be loyal to you. That's what makes a good team."

End of excerpt.

Another excerpt:

A little before noon [on Saturday] Eddy came into the hardware store with Billy to buy shotgun shells.

"We're after quail and rabbits," Eddy told Zeke.

"I thought you were teed-off with Billy," Zeke commented.

"I was, but he's suffered long enough."

Billy remarked, "I hear you called a terrific game at Barnesdale last night, Zeke. I wish I'd been there, but I'm glad you won anyway."

"I have a feeling that you'll shine next week against Grunwald, Billy," Zeke declared.

End of excerpt.

14. Surprise Ending

On Monday the school was abuzz with the restaurant incident. Roberto and Rusty were back on the team. Roberto had passed a special exam in World History, and Rusty had dropped the course but had to wait three weeks before he could play. Billy's suspension was also over. Eddy's ankle was much better, so they were in full strength to play Grunwald, another out-of-town game.

Tuesday was presidential election day. [Previously some Roosevelt versus Dewey campaigning has occurred at Lofton High.]

Friday's game against Grunwald was an offensive battle. Grunwald scored first, Lofton scored twice, and Grunwald made another touchdown before the half to tie the game at 14-14. Grunwald went ahead in the second half. Then Billy scored his first touchdown of the season to tie the game.

With a minute and forty seconds remaining in the game, Lofton took over on downs on the Grunwald 44. On a reverse Fred carried the ball to the 30, where he was knocked out of bounds.

Excerpt:

Back in the huddle Zeke exclaimed, "Here's what we've been practicing for, Eddy. Sucker pass from short punt, on three."

"I'm ready," Eddy sang out confidently.

"Remember," Zeke instructed. "It's supposed to look like 36 off tackle, except linemen can't cross the line of scrimmage to block."

As they broke the huddle, Zeke noticed the Grunwald defenders shading toward the wide side of the field. That was fine with him.

After the Lions were lined up, Zeke barked, "Ready. Set. Hike. One, two, three."

When Bulldog snapped the ball to Eddy, the guards pulled and ran right. Fred headed out to block the end. As this was going on, Zeke stealthily eased off to the left. Eddy took four steps to the right and suddenly stopped. He turned and lofted the ball to Zeke who was all alone heading down the left sideline. The ball fluttered like a wounded quail but reached Zeke so that he could catch it in stride at the 15. He sprinted to the end zone far ahead of the Grunwald safety.

The Lofton fans in the visitors' stands whistled, stomped, and hollered. The players on the sidelines went crazy with excitement. And one of the reserved tackles pounded Basil so hard on the back that knocked his glasses off. Maybe that's why Basil missed the try for extra point. But Lofton had a 27-21 lead with less than a minute left.

Hank kicked a squibber and the Lions smothered the return man on the Grunwald 30. There was no miracle left in Grunwald's bag of tricks. The Lofton backs played deep to prevent a long pass completion. Their quarterback threw underneath a couple of times with a time out in between and produced a first down. Then he tried one desperation heave. Eddy intercepted it and made a short runback as the gun sounded to end the game.

Zeke and Eddy left the field with their arms around each other. Eddy still clutched the game ball. "I'm going to keep this and show it to Duke the next time his home on leave," he boasted. He had never wanted a souvenir ball for any of his touchdown run, but this one was different.

Coach was waiting for them on the sidelines. "Another surprise for Coach Nickerson," he exclaimed. "How can I complain when you won the game? But you sure fooled me on that one."

Zeke was sure that he would never be in Nick's doghouse for that trick because Eddy was his favorite player. After all it was Eddy's idea.
End of excerpt.

Another excerpt:

The movie Saturday night was "The Conspirators" with Hedy Lamarr, Paul Henreid, Sidney Greenstreet, and Peter Lorre. It revealed chilling, wartime intrigue in Lisbon. Afterwards Zeke and Barbara got into a dispute whether Hedy Lamarr was more beautiful than Paul Henreid was handsome.

Trying to be a peacemaker, Spike insisted, "It's like comparing apples and oranges."

"Apples are better, naturally," Zeke asserted.

"No, oranges," Barbara rebutted.

They seemed to be arguing more frequently in recent days. Even Zeke's winning touchdown was insufficient to draw Barbara back to how things were before she went to the band party with Basil.

End of excerpt and chapter.

15. Tough Break

The final game of the season was at home against Hargrove, the only undefeated team in the league. A volunteer scout had watched Hargrove on Friday night and noted that they were using a man-in-motion from T-formation, an innovation for the league in 1944. In practice Coach instructed the players how to deal with this new wrinkle. Coach also had them work on a daring offense for Lofton's first series in the game.

During the week the Parker family got word that Clyde was back in the states and would be coming to Lofton within a week for a visit. A representative of the Polish government-in-exile was in town to visit Stanislaw's family, and he met with the Forum Club at school.

In Friday night's game Lofton received the opening kickoff, and Eddy made a good return. The new offense surprised Hargrove, and Lofton quickly scored a touchdown. After that the powerful Hargrove team dominated and were leading 28-7 by late in the third quarter.

Excerpt:

Spike came back in for the kickoff as the third quarter was winding down. Eddy brought the ball out to the 28. On a shift from the T into short punt, Eddy gained seven yards off right tackle. On the next play Zeke dropped back to pass from the T. As he released the pass to Flash cutting ten yards deep over center, he was hit from two directions. He felt a sharp

pain in his right leg and fell to the ground. He couldn't see that Flash had caught the ball and made an additional five yards.

As Zeke lay in agonizing pain, Dr. Sullivan and Doc came out on the field again. Dr. Sullivan felt Zeke's leg tenderly and indicated, "I think the fibula is broken. Chris, go get a splint and a stretcher."

Through his pain Zeke thought, I haven't heard Doc called Chris for a long time. But I guess the doctor doesn't want to call our trainer Doc.

Dr. Sullivan carefully taped the splint around Zeke's leg to immobilize it. Several players helped him on the stretcher. Jiri started to pick up one end, but Roberto intervened. "Let me and Rusty have the honor," he insisted.

As Roberto and Rusty carried Zeke from the field, Mary Lou led the students in the chant, "Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel! Zeke! Zeke! Ezekiel!" Zeke weakly waved his hand in grateful acknowledgement.

End of excerpt.

The Hargrove coach put in his second team to start the fourth quarter. Coach Nick removed his seniors in pairs and Eddy last so that the hometown crowd could give them rousing cheers. With only juniors and sophomores playing Billy scored a touchdown. By then an ambulance had arrived and took Zeke to the hospital. Hargrove scored again, an augur that maybe next year Lofton could hold its own with the best teams in the league.

Lofton finished the season with a 4-5 record and were 3-4 in the league.

16. In the Hospital

On Saturday Zeke received a series of visitors at the hospital. First his parents and sister Laura. Then Coach Nickerson, who discussed the season and pointed out, "Football is a game of mistakes as well as correct performance."

Excerpt:

"I learn something from my players every season," Coach indicated.

"From us losers, too," Zeke inquired.

"Yes, I learned from Dutch and you more about accepting other people for what they are and helping them....From you, Zeke, the way you helped Billy even though he was a great pain in your you-know-what."

"You asked me to, Nick"

"Asking wasn't enough. You had to be willing inside yourself. And you were."

"Yeah, Billy has come along real well. In the process, Nick, I learned from you that you don't have to like someone to help them. But then when you help them, you may end up liking them."

"Zeke, it may have been a losing season in league standings, but this year's team displayed more character development than any team I've ever coached."

End of excerpt.

Doc the trainer stopped by. So did Eddy and Pudge. Eddy and Zeke, former junior high rivals, cemented their friendship. In the evening Spike, Barbara, and Joanne arrived.

Excerpt:

Barbara moved over to bedside, took Zeke's hand, and asked, "How are you, Zeke? Does it hurt?"

"A little, but I'm used to it. The worst is not being able to move around."

"I've been thinking about you all day."

"Happy thoughts?"

"Of course. I'm sorry we quarreled."

"Me, too. Let's just say it was the strain of the football season. Now it's over."

"Nothing like two lovers making up," Spike remarked. "Notice, Joanne, we don't have to go to the movies to see romance."

"Oh, you're awful, Spike," Barbara reacted.

"Joanne, if I were injured on the playing field," Spike continued, "would you be gushy like Barbara."

"No, I'd say, `you got what you deserved'," Joanne answered as she poked Spike good naturedly.

With these sentiments out of the way, the foursome discussed the movies they had seen that fall. And the girls allowed the fellows to review the football season, the highlights and the lowlights....

When it was time for them to leave, Barbara lingered a moment, kissed Zeke, and said, "I miss you. Get well soon."

End of excerpt.

Sunday afternoon Zeke had a parade of visitors: Rusty and Roberto, Bulldog, Hank, Dutch and Stan, Billy and Lefty, even the principal.

Excerpt:

When Billy was there, he hemmed and hawed and finally uttered what must have been hard for him to say. "Zeke, I appreciate your sticking with me this season."

"What do you mean?"

"I think you know. I started as a cocky, little know-it-all. Everyone wanted to put me down, especially Eddy. I thought I could show him by beating him in a race. I know I'm faster. But he out-smarted me. Then Coach assigned me to your team for the intrasquad game. I goofed the first play, but you called my number again on the next play."

"I wanted you to maintain your self-confidence. That's an essential for a football player -- unless it gets excessive."

"Later when I was suspended you talked with me. I knew it was a lame excuse to have me run pass patterns, but I'm glad you did it that way. If you'd had said, let's talk, I never would've."

"It's hard to get a conversation going on important matters."

"So, do you think I did all right after that?"

"You're coming along very well, Billy. I know you'll have a winning season next year. Fred and Hank will be back in the backfield along with you guys. The middle of the line will be strong with Dutch, Bulldog, and Stan. Jolly and Jiri both showed they can play tackle. And Chuck and Mike have come a long ways as ends."

"Yeah, we've got a great bunch," Billy agreed.

End of excerpt.

Then Zeke's brother Clyde appeared for a surprise visit. Clyde made light of his severed arm. He told Zeke that he was advised he would make a good lawyer because many clients were tired of lawyers who said "one the one hand" but "on the other hand". Clyde, a trombonist, related how Glen Miller had visited the Army hospital in England and played for them. Miller told Clyde personally that with his right arm gone he could operate the slide with his left arm and let him try it on Miller's own trombone. This helped Zeke get a better perspective on the football season and his own life.

Excerpt:

The Parker household had a marvelous Thanksgiving even though Zeke had to remain in the hospital. When his family visited Zeke in the evening, they found him in the lounge surrounded by his teammates. Doc had arranged for him to be moved there. Eddy had rounded up the gang.

It had been six days since they had been together as a group, and they were glad to be reunited. From their jubilation an observer would have thought they were league champions.

End of excerpt and chapter.

17. Another Time Out

Grandma served Timmy and Granddad an afternoon snack. Timmy knew that his grandmother's name was Helen, not Barbara, and wanted to know where they met. It was in college. (Zeke and Barbara had broken up a couple of weeks before Christmas after Zeke got out of the hospital.)

Excerpt:

Timmy had other questions. "Grandma, did you ever meet Granddad's high school teammates?"

"Oh, yes," she replied. "Eric Anderson, known as Spike in high school, was best man at our wedding. And I was a bridesmaid when Laura married Billy."

"Granddad, your sister, Laura, married Billy?" Timmy asked in astonishment.

"Yes, she did."

"Uncle Bill is Billy, is Wild Bill?"

"That's right."

"I can't believe it."

"It's true."

"Uncle Bill ran that race against Eddy, and all the other things you told me?"

"That he did."

"I'm going to ask him about it next time I see him."

"He'll tell you. He's still good friends with Eddy."

"Wow!" Timmy exclaimed. "And did you meet the other players, Grandma? Rusty, Roberto, Dutch, and all the rest?"

"Yes, they were all together at the time of your grandfather's tenth high school reunion. They were quite a nice group."

"I think there may be picture in that box you brought down from the attic," Granddad indicated. "Let me go in and look."

He went inside and returned in a few minutes with a photograph. "Here they are," he said, handing the photo to Timmy.

"Tell me about them," said Timmy.

"With pleasure," Granddad responded.

End of excerpt and chapter.

18. Tenth Reunion

The tenth reunion of the Lofton High School class of 1945 occurred in July 1955. Former students trickled into the high school gym on Saturday morning for registration and to decorate the gym for the dance that night. As they did the former teammates got caught up with what they had been doing the last ten years. Most of them were drafted in the spring and summer of 1945. Some went to college on the GI bill but not all. In the afternoon Eddy, who was now assistant football coach at Lofton High, opened the locker room for the ex-players and arranged to have first team members who had been juniors come. Billy and Lefty were there, too.

Zeke was a lawyer and lived in Lofton. Fred was a Baptist minister. Hank was running the family farm. Spike was helping his dad manage the feed store. Pudge was a disc jockey. Dutch was with the Mennonite Central Committee serving in the Middle East [his pacifism figures in the story but not this sampler]. Bulldog (Richard) got an MBA and worked for a corporation in the East. Bob (Roberto) had become an engineer and was working for the fledgling space program. Rusty had a used car business in Lofton. Flash had stayed in the army, received a

battlefield commission during the Korean War, and was now a captain. Basil, the field goal kicker, was an English teacher. Doc, the trainer, was now an M.D.

In discussing the 1944 season, Zeke talked about lying in bed on many nights in the Army and in college and thinking about the first game of the season against Kepler. If he had called a quarterback sneak instead of punting, they would have won the game. This would have inspired them, and they would have won other games and maybe been champs. Others talked about mistakes they had made that kept them from winning particular games.

Excerpt:

"Sure, Zeke," Eddy argued, "if you had run a quarterback sneak and we had run out the clock, we might've been five and four for the season. But we never would've won the championship. Let's face it, we weren't that good."

"I suppose not," Zeke admitted.

"You know what?" Pudge asked. "A couple years after we graduated, Nick told me that our losing season is what made Lofton league champs the following year. He said that the experience the returning players gained in 1944 made it possible for them to win in 1945. Zeke, Nick said that you were the best teaching quarterback he ever coached."

"That's true," Lefty spoke up. "I had a great apprenticeship working with you."

"While I don't usually say nice things publicly about my brother-in-law,"

Billy remarked, "I would've never reached my full potential if Zeke hadn't taught me to get my temper under control and to become a team player, and if Eddy hadn't first put me down and then helped me up."

End of excerpt.

Other players told how different aspects of the season had helped them. Bob said that flunking the World History exam and being put off the team caused him to buckle down in his studies, which he did from then on. Rusty said that his dad, a car dealer, had found out about their unsuccessful effort to cheat on the exam and had really eaten him out. His dad stated forcefully that a reputation honesty is indispensable in the car business, especially in selling used cars.

Fred reported how he had appreciated the easy-going racial equality of the football team. He recalled how Rusty took care of the race-baiting opponent and how Coach outfoxed the diner proprietor. He knew that Coach did it, not as a civil rights crusader, but as one who stood up for all of his players.

Excerpt:

"I'm trying to emulate Nick in my coaching," said Eddy. "I want my teams to win, and the players want to win, too. That's part of sports. But as a coach I can see that character development is as important as winning. Maybe more so."

"Nick told me the same thing when I was in the hospital," Zeke remembered, "He indicted that our team showed more character development than any team he'd ever coached."

"That's a nice compliment for a bunch of losers," Roberto remarked.

"No, we're not losers," Zeke responded. "Listening to you guys talk, I realize that we may have had a losing season, but it made winners of us all."

End of excerpt.

19. Time Marches On

Timmy asked Granddad if they had ever met again. Yes, they got together at the 25th class reunion in July 1970. It was not so happy an event. It occurred in the midst of the Vietnam War and was more divisive, reflecting division in the country at the time.

But his teammates were doing quite well in their careers. Pudge, for example, was mayor of Lofton. "At the 25th reunion dinner our class historian remarked how so many players from a losing team had become so successful.... But what she didn't say, and maybe didn't even know, was that most of them had sailed through rough waters at one time or other." He offered illustrations, pointing out how the adversity of the losing season had prepared them for life's ups and downs.

Timmy asked Granddad if he still saw any of his teammates. Granddad indicated not all of them, but he traced what had happened to them, including three who had died. Only four of them still live in Lofton: Eric (Spike), Eddy, Bill, and himself.

Except.

As Granddad spoke, a Cadillac pulled into the driveway.

"It's Uncle Bill," Timmy shouted. "I'm going to ask him about your football team."

Bill got out along with two older men. One was short, pudgy, and mostly bald. The other was tall and heavy set, sort of like Uncle Bill and Granddad. Not what you would call fat but with an expanded waistline.

"It's my teammates," Granddad told Timmy. "Eddy and Eric."

"That's Eddy and Spike!" Timmy exclaimed in astonishment. "They don't look like football players."

"That was in yesteryears," Granddad replied. "Ask them."

After Granddad introduced his grandson to his old friends, Timmy informed them, "My granddad has been telling me about your football season in 1944."

"Does this old geezer remember that far back?" Eddy asked.

"He says he does," Timmy answered. Addressing Eric, he asked "Are you Spike?"

"I used to be called that," Eric responded.

"You don't look like a spike," commented Timmy with all the brashness of a fourteen year old.

They all laughed.

"Let's just say I filled out," Eric replied.

"And did you, Eddy, once have a foot race with my Uncle Bill?" inquired Timmy.

"Yeah, and I whipped him," Eddy boasted.

"He didn't outrun me," Bill rebutted with twinkling eyes. "He outthustled me, if you know what I mean."

"That's why we used to call him Fast Eddy," Eric added.

"Did he tell you about the pass I threw to win the Grunwald game?" asked Eddy.

"You mean the sucker pass?" Timmy responded.

"That's the one."

"He said it was wobbly, but it let him score the winning touchdown."

"What else did he say?" inquired Eric.

"I said you were great receiver, Eric," Granddad interjected, "and that Eddy was a great ballcarrier."

"An astute observer," Eddy noted.

"What did he say about me, Timmy?" Bill queried.

"He said they used to call you Wild Bill."

"Well, I guess I had a wild streak, but these guys tamed me. I deserved it. But out of it I gained some life-long friends."

End of excerpt.

This started a flow of reminiscence about various players and incidents.

Excerpt:

"Remember those Shakespeare quotes Basil offered on every occasion," Eddy noted.

"I've never forgotten," said Granddad, "how before our opening game he proclaimed, 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.' Then it was something about 'he who sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.' Forget the blood shedding but look at the deeper sentiment. On the Lofton team, even in a losing season, we became bonded brothers."

"We were comrades," Eric concurred, "strongly committed to one another."

"I'm looking forward to seeing them again next summer," Eddy indicated, "when we have our 50th Class Reunion."

Timmy watched these old gentlemen as they reminisced. The style of

football they played was as out-of-date as Granddad's maskless leather helmet. But the spirit they conveyed seemed to be timeless. He wondered if he would ever play on a team like the Lofton Lions of 1944. He hoped so.

End of excerpt and book.

April 14, 1994

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A LOSING SEASON

How It Made Winners of Us All

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FADE IN:

INT - UPPER HALLWAY OF A HOUSE

TIMMY (age 14) reaches up for a cord attached to the pulldown stairs that lead to the attic. He pulls to lower the stairway, unfolds it, secures in place, and climbs up. Part way into the attic he flips a switch on a post near the top of the stairs. Lights go on in the attic.

CUT TO:

INT - ATTIC

Timmy enters the attic. He opens a box, finds some old books, and closes it. He sees an old wicker chair and sits in it. He notices a box labeled "HIGH SCHOOL DAYS". He opens it. He pulls out a baseball glove, the small size used in the 1940s and a baseball with a broken seam. He puts on the glove and tosses the ball into it a few times. Dust flies out. He puts the glove and ball aside and pulls out a golden, leather football helmet, '40s vintage without a face guard. He blows dust off it and tries it on. It's a little large. He looks inside and notices a piece of faded white adhesive tape with "Zeke" written on it.

CUT TO:

INT - DEN

GRANDDAD is seated in a swivel chair at a desk, writing checks to pay bills. The walls of the den contain many photographs of Granddads career as a lawyer and now a judge. They include photos of sports

teams of his high school days and class reunions. Timmy comes in, carrying the football helmet. As Timmy speaks, Granddad swivels around to reply.

TIMMY

What's this thing, Granddad?

GRANDDAD

Where'd you find that, Timmy?

TIMMY

In a box in the attic.

GRANDDAD

It's a football helmet.

TIMMY

But it's not hard like the ones we use.

And there's no face guard.

Granddad takes the helmet. He takes a piece of facial tissue from a box on the desk and wipes dust from the helmet, stroking it fondly.

GRANDDAD

It's the kind we used when I was in high school. It's made of leather, not plastic like yours. And back in those days we didn't have face guards, except for one fellow who played with glasses.

TIMMY

You mean contacts?

GRANDDAD

No, real glasses with frames. We didn't have contact lens either.

TIMMY

There's a name in it. "Zeke" it says. Who's Zeke?

GRANDDAD

Zeke was our high school quarterback.

Granddad puts on the helmet and fastens the chin strap.

GRANDDAD

What'd you know? It still fits.

TIMMY

You're Zeke? You were a high school quarterback?

GRANDDAD

Yes, I was.

TIMMY

And they called you Zeke? That's funny.

GRANDDAD

Of course. Zeke is short for my middle name, Exekiel.

TIMMY

So that's what the "E" stands for. I never knew. Judge Paul Ezekiel Parker.

GRANDDAD

Just about everybody on our team had a nickname.

TIMMY

And did you win? Were you champions?

GRANDDAD

No, we weren't very good, I'm sorry to say. We had a losing season.

TIMMY

But I bet you were a star, Granddad.

GRANDDAD

No, Timmy, just so-so. But I enjoyed playing.

Granddad fondles his helmet.

GRANDDAD (Cont.)

*Fifty years later I can recall every detail
of our 1944 season.*

TIMMY

Tell me about it.

GRANDDAD

It's a long story.

TIMMY

*It's raining out, so we can't go on the
picnic Grandma has planned.*

GRANDDAD

*O.K. I'll begin with our first practice, a
week before school started. Here in
Lofton the weather was hot and dry, as it
often is in the prairie in August.*

*As Granddad continues talking, show establishing shots of Lofton in the
1940s, a prairie town with a population around 10,000: an aerial shot
of the town, the high school and football field, the business district
around the county courthouse square, a billboard on the courthouse
grounds supporting the fighting men in World War II, churches, a park,
concluding with a residential street, the house where Zeke lives with a
silver star in the window, connoting that a member of the family was
in the armed service, and a sign by the entrance saying "The Parkers".*

GRANDDAD (Cont.) v.o.

Lofton had a population of about 10,000

then. We played in the South Central League. Some of the other schools were larger, some smaller. The smaller ones drew in a lot of farm boys, who were tough and highly competitive.

World War II was in its final year, though we didn't know it at the time. The Allies
(Cont.)

GRANDDAD (Cont.) v.o.
had landed in Normandy on June 6 and were driving the Germans back to their homeland. The Russians were doing likewise on the eastern front. The Japanese were steadily retreating from the Pacific Islands they had captured earlier.

We were all interested in the progress of the war because our older brothers and guys we knew from previous teams were in the service, many of them in combat. And besides, as soon as we turned 18 we would be drafted. That would be the following spring and summer for me and other seniors on our team.

But we were mostly concerned about getting ready for our opening game. We

knew we had a challenging season ahead
of us.

CUT TO:

INT - LARGE KITCHEN

It's the Monday before Labor Day, 1944. Zeke's MOM is pouring coffee for DAD and cocoa for ZEKE, who are seated at the kitchen table. They are eating bacon and eggs over easy and hot bisquits with butter and honey.

DAD

I'll miss you at the store, Paul. You've
been a good help to me this summer.

ZEKE (aka Paul)

You can find another hardware clerk and
storeroom helper. The Lions are calling,
and I've got to go.

MOM

I'm so afraid you'll get hurt, Paul. I wish
you would play in the band, like your
brother Clyde did.

DAD

Let him be, Martha. I played football in
my day and enjoyed it.

MOM

Yes, Henry, but your knee aches every time we have damp weather.

DAD

It was worth it.

LAURA, Zeke's sister, who will soon enter Lofton High School as a sophomore, comes in.

LAURA

What was worth it?

DAD

Football.

LAURA

I wish I could play.

MOM

Oh, Laura.

An auto horn honks outside.

ZEKE

That's Spike. I've gotta go.

Zeke places his remaining bacon and egg between two slices of bisquit, takes a final swig of cocoa, grabs a canvas bag (containing T-shirts, sox, and a jockey strap), and rushes out the back door, eating his sandwich

as he goes.

CUT TO:

EXT - A TRUCK AT CURBSIDE - DAY

SPIKE is sitting behind the wheel of a '43 Chevy pickup truck, which has "Anderson Seed and Feed Company" painted on the door. He is tall and slender and wears a long bill baseball cap. Zeke hops on the running board and climbs into the cab next to Spike. Spikes put the truck in gear and drives off.

ZEKE

This is it, Spike. I've been waiting all summer for football to start.

SPIKE

And even longer to start as quarterback.

ZEKE

That's for sure. Now it's my turn.

SPIKE

I remember in 7th grade when we played football on the lot next to the Baker mansion. You'd pretend that you were Davey O'Brien, All American, fading back to pass.

ZEKE

He wasn't very big, but how he could throw. I hope I do half as well.

SPIKE

Your arm oughta be in shape after throwing to me the last few weeks.

ZEKE

I'll be looking for you: left end, down and out; left end, buttonhook; left end, crossing

SPIKE

Yow. We're ready.

They drive into the parking lot between the high school gym and football field.

ZEKE

I thought we'd be first. But there's Rusty's Model-T.

SPIKE

Yeah. Rusty and Bob got back in town Saturday night.

ZEKE

You'd think with his dad as a dealer, Rusty could get better car than that heap of junk.

SPIKE

I'd love to have one.

CUT TO:

INT - LOCKER ROOM

RUSTY and BOB are examining the schedule posted on the bulletin board. Rusty with reddish hair is fairly tall, big-boned, and powerfully built. Bob is shorter but muscular.

BOB

So we start with Kepler as usual. It's good to have a non-league game first.

RUSTY

And we get Ashmont second. I'm looking forward to that game. Bob, remember that talkative kid who played left end. I hope he's back. I've got something to settle with him.

BOB

We almost beat them, but they ended up as league champs.

Zeke and Spike enter, carrying canvas bags with their stuff.

RUSTY

This year we'll be champs. If these guys

come through for us.

SPIKE

We will. I promise you.

ZEKE

So how was harvest?

BOB

Just great. We hitchhiked to Amarilla where we hooked up with a crew and moved north with them through Oklahoma, Western Kansas, and ended up in Montana. Made lots of moola.

ZEKE

I've always wanted to work harvest. What'd you do?

RUSTY

Mostly drove trucks full of wheat from the combine to the elevator.

BOB

But a couple of times me and Rusty got to drive the combine.

RUSTY

That's a powerful feeling.

SPIKE

In other words, you just sat on your fannies all day. It's nothing like lifting 100 pound sacks of chicken feed all summer, like I did.

RUSTY

Yeah? I've got muscles to prove otherwise. Wanna arm wrestle?

Rusty peels off his shirt and flexes his muscles. As he was making his challenge, PUDGE, EDDY, and BASIL have entered, each carrying small canvas bags. As his nickname implies, Pudge is quite large but a little soft. Eddy is shorter than Zeke, sleek and agile. Basil is small, thin, and wears horn-rimmed glasses.

PUDGE

I'll call you on that, Rusty.

RUSTY

Pudge, you won't stand a chance.

Rusty gets on his knees on one side of a bench and places his right arm in an upright position. Pudge does likewise on the other side of the bench.

ZEKE

I'll give the count. One, two, three.

As the others watch, Rusty and Pudge grunt and groan until finally Rusty forces Pudge's arm backward.

PUDGE

Two out of three.

BOB

No, let me have him.

Bob takes Pudge's place opposite Rusty. Without a count they start with much huffing and puffing. It looks as if Rusty is winning, but Bob overcomes him. In the middle of their struggle COACH (aka NICK) steps out of the equipment room.

COACH

(Goodnaturedly)

Okay. Save your energies for practice.

RUSTY

Ah, Nick. It's just a friendly little competition.

COACH

I know you're all eager for the new season. I hope you're all in great shape.

BOB

You bet we are!

ZEKE

Ready and willing!

EDDY

Can't wait to get started!

As conversation continues, RICHARD, CLIFF, and MIKE drift in and listen.

COACH

Eddy, who's this skinny kid with glasses you brought in?

EDDY

This is Basil Fox. He wants to be our place kicker.

COACH

Aren't you in the band?

BASIL

Yes, I play bassoon. But this year I want to be on the football team. Eddy says you need someone to kick points after touchdowns.

COACH

You ever kick before?

BASIL

Sure. For the last two months I've been practicing with Pudge centering and Eddy holding the ball.

EDDY

He's terrific, Nick.

COACH

You'll have to compete for it. Every position is open to all challengers...(Eyeing Bob and Rusty mischievously)...Even returning starters will have to prove their worth.

BOB

(Nudging Rusty)

He means us, good buddy.

COACH

Your parents will have to sign a permission slip, Basil.

BASIL

They already did.

Basil hands the form to Coach.

COACH

Looks O.K. You can ask the coaches in the equipment room if they have a uniform small enough for you. And the rest of you can get your stuff, too.

The players move into the equipment room where assistant coaches

DAVE and HAL give each player a helmet, shoulder pads, blocking pads for linemen, hip pads, practice jersey, pants with thigh pads, shoes, and a combination lock. They return to the locker room, choose lockers, and begin changing from their street clothes to their practice uniforms. The players pull T-shirts, jockey strap, and sox from their bags. Coach chats with different players. As Zeke returns to the locker room, DUTCH enters with STAN. JIRI¹ CHUCK, and PAT follow behind.

DUTCH

Coach, I want you to meet Stanislaw Krasinski². He's from Poland. His family escaped from the Nazis. They're staying with us on our farm. Stan is enrolling in the 11th grade and wants to play American sports.

COACH

Everyone's welcome to try out for the team. Do you speak English, Stan?

STAN

Tak, I mean yes, I do.

DUTCH

I think he should try out for guard. I'll teach him the plays and the tricks of the

¹ Pronounced "Yiri".

² Pronounced "Stanislav Krashinski".

position.

COACH

Dutch, aren't you afraid he'll beat you out? He's bigger than you.

DUTCH

No, not at all. If he's better, he's entitled to play.

Dutch and Stan go to the equipment room. While Pat, Chuck, and Jiri claim their lockers, they converse out of Coach's hearing. Zeke overhears them.

PAT

Gee, Jiri,³ I has hoping that the kraut wouldn't want to play this year.

JIRI

Me, too, Pat. We don't need a little Nazi on our team.

CHUCK

I agree. And besides that he brings another foreigner with him.

³ Pronounced "Yiri".

ZEKE

Dutch isn't a Nazi-sympathizer.

JIRI

He's German, isn't he? Dietrich Lutz.

ZEKE

Jiri, you know he's from a Mennonite family. His ancestors have been in this country for 200 years. How long has your family, the Janaceks,⁴ been here?

JIRI

That's beside the point.

PAT

Yeah, but Dutch's brother is a draft dodger.

ZEKE

He's a conscientious objector. The Mennonites are pacifists.

CHUCK

Then Dietrich shouldn't be playing football.

⁴3 Pronounced "Yana-chek".

As they are talking, FRED, GORDON, and NATE, a trio of African Americans, come in. CHUCK, JIRI, and PAT go into the equipment room and MIKE, CLIFF, and RICHARD come out carrying their things.

FRED

Coach, have you got a place on the team for my cousin?

COACH

Fred, he's welcome to try out if he lives in Lofton.

FRED

He does. He's come to live with us. This is Gordon. He'll be a senior. Last year he was on the varsity at his school in Kansas City. I think he can help us have a winning season.

COACH

Anyone who can help us can make the team. What position do you play, Gordon?

GORDON

Mostly end, but sometimes I filled in at running back and ran back punts and kickoffs.

COACH

Your best chance is at right end. Both

last year's starter and backup graduated.

FRED

It'd better be right end, Gordie. I don't want you competing with me for a place in the backfield.

NATE

Or with me either.

GORDON

Don't worry, Nate. You're a blocking back. That's not for me.

Fred, Gordon, and Nate go to the equipment room. ROGER, WALLY, HANK, and several others enter and move on to the equipment room. Over in a corner Mike, Cliff, and Richard start putting on their uniforms and converse.

MIKE

I liked it better as it was before when the colored weren't allowed to play.

CLIFF

Yeah, before Fred's old man, the Rev. Montgomery, and those other ministers forced the league to let Negroes play with us.

RICHARD

Oh, come on. They were right. It's only fair that if Negroes are drafted into the Army, they ought to be allowed to play football.

MIKE

I didn't know you like the colored people, Richard. Or can I call you Richie?

CLIFF

Don't let his momma hear you. She insists on Richard for her sweet boy.

MIKE

There's going to be trouble if we get too many colored boys playing in the league.

DOC, the trainer, small of size, arrives, carrying a black bag (full of first aid items). Players continue to put on their equipment and practice uniform.

RUSTY

*Hey, Doc, what you got in your bag?
Your lunch?*

DOC

*Naw. Just the usual stuff of my trade:
tape, gauze, monkey blood, Ben Gay, a
couple of splints.*

BASIL

(To Eddy)

What's monkey blood?

EDDY

Mercurochrome.

BOB

Where are Ray and Tom?

SPIKE

Haven't you heard? Ray joined the Navy in July. And Tom's dad took a job at a California shipyard and moved his family out there.

BOB

That's going to be tough on us. They were starters at center and fullback last year and our linebackers on defense. We need their experience.

ZEKE

We'll have to do without them. But we've got other talent to take their place. Richard was a good center on the JV last year, and Wally wants to switch from guard to compete for the position. Hank's a great blocking back, and Nate looks promising.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE LOCKER ROOM ENTRANCE - DAY

BILLY and LEFTY, a pair of sophomores, approach the locker room entrance. Billy is big for his age and athletic looking. Lefty is smaller and wiry.

LEFTY

This is a waste of time, Billy. You know Coach told sophomores to wait until this afternoon to report.

BILLY

I think he'll make an exception for us, Lefty, since we did so well as ninth graders on the junior varsity last year.

LEFTY

I don't want to start the season on Coach's bad side. I'm not going in.

BILLY

He'll be glad to see me.

Billy opens the door and walks in.

CUT TO:

INT - LOCKER ROOM

Billy enters.

BILLY

Here I am! Ready to get suited up.

COACH

Billy, I thought you knew that sophomores aren't suppose to show up until the afternoon practice.

BILLY

Since I'm going to be on the varsity this year, I thought I should start practicing with these guys from the very beginning.

COACH

You'll be on the varsity if you play well and comply with my rules. See you this afternoon, Billy.

BILLY

Ah, Nick, let me suit up now.

COACH

You heard what I said.

Rusty and Pudge move behind Billy, pick him up, and carry him to the door as he unsuccessfully tries to get free.

RUSTY

See you this afternoon, Billy.

BILLY

*Isn't anyone going to help me? Eddy?
Zeke?*

EDDY

You ain't worth saving, kid.

ZEKE

You know the rules, Billy.

*Rusty and Pudge deposit Billy outside the locker room as the players
roar in laughter.*

COACH

*I want to see everyone on the field in
fifteen minutes to start warm up
exercises.*

BOB

Let's go get 'em!

Amid cheers, players who are dressed for practice stream outside.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

TIMMY

*Granddad, how come your teammates
didn't work out first in the weight room?*

GRANDDAD

*We didn't have weight rooms in those
days. The guys got in shape through
their summer jobs. I lifted lots of boxes
at my dad's hardware store. And
beginning around August 1st, I ran two
miles every evening to build up my wind.*

CUT TO:

EXT - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are on the field, loosening up before the coaches emerge. Spike is running around catching Zeke's passes. Cliff is throwing to Mike and Chuck as they go down for passes. Fred, Gordon, and Nate are tossing a ball to one another. In pairs Bob and Rusty, Jiri and Roger are banging one another with practice blocks. Dutch is teaching Stan to block. Richard is practicing centering to Pat. Others are similarly engaged except that Eddy, Pudge, Basil, and Hank are standing around, talking and laughing.

CUT TO:

EXT - THE STANDS

Billy and Lefty are in the stands looking on.

BILLY

Look how lazy Eddy is. He'd better watch out 'coz I'm going to beat him out for the tailback spot.

LEFTY

He's pretty good.

BILLY

I'm even better. And Lefty you ought to be able to take the quarterback spot away from Zeke. You're a better passer.

CUT TO Zeke throwing as Billy speaks, then back to Lefty.

LEFTY

Naw, I'm shooting to replace Cliff as backup quarterback. Then I can start next year.

CUT TO Cliff throwing as Lefty speaks, then back to Billy.

BILLY

I'm going to be a starter this year.

CUT TO;

EXT - FOOTBALL FIELD

The three coaches come out and assemble the team into rows to prepare for calisthenics. Coach gets Bob and Zeke to help him lead.

In a montage Coach starts each each exercise then eases off as the players go through the drills: jumping jack; knee-bend, jack-knife; legs spread touching opposite toes with hands; sit-ups; push-ups; running in place circling the arms; duck waddle. Sweat streams down their places. Dave and Hal, the assistant coaches, stroll among the players, offering encouragement and goading the slackers.

COACH

Now around the track.

Zeke and Bob lead the players to the cinder track around the football field. Soon the backs and ends are in the lead and linemen are lagging behind. After 100 yards Gordon has opened a sizable lead. Eddy and Fred are running together behind several other backs.

EDDY

Haven't you told your cousin that we don't overdo? Nick will expect all of us to fun that fast.

FRED

Don't worry. Gordie's a sprinter. He won't last.

At the far side of the track Gordon slows down, clutching his side, and Hank, Zeke, Pat, and Cliff catch up with him. As they round the final curve, Bob, Rusty, Richard, and Dutch are in the middle of the pack. Pudge, Stan, Jiri, and Roger are 30 yards behind the leaders. Basil is last of all.

COACH

Now that you're warmed up, we'll do some sprints. Go to the end zone and divide into three groups: backs, ends, and linemen.

BASIL

What about me?

COACH

You can join the backs.

The players divide into the three groups. Coach with a stopwatch and Hal go to the forty yard line to judge the winners, and Dave serves as starter at the goal lines. Doc watches with the coaches at the finish line. Players from each group stand in upright position at the goal line. Dave barks, "Ready, set, go."

Among the backs Eddy goes all out and wins with Fred close at his heels. Zeke, Hank, and Pat contest for third until Hank falters in the last five yards, and Zeke and Pat tie. Cliff is sixth followed by Nate, and other backfield candidates struggle to finish. Basil trips and falls at the 20 yard line and gives up.

Among the ends Gordon easily wins. Chuck edges out Mike for second, and Spike is fourth. Others bring up the rear.

When the linemen run, Dutch, Richard, and Bob are bunched together with Dutch winning with a last burst of speed. Roger, Jiri, Stan, and Wally are next. Pudge and a couple of other tackle candidates give out

at the 30 yard line and coast the final ten yards.

When the top four finishers in each group run to see who is the fastest man, Gordon is an easy winner over Eddy. Fred beats Chuck in the battle for third place. Zeke and Mike are in a virtual tie for fifth.

DOC

And the winner is Flash Gordon!

Coach gathers the players around him.

COACH

The rest of the morning we're going to work on fundamentals of blocking and tackling.

FLASH (aka Gordon)

(To Fred)

When are we going to start playing football?

FRED

This is the beginning of football, Lofton style, Flash.

In a montage of action, Dave and Hal demonstrate different offensive and defensive stands and various kinds of blocks. Players pair off by position and block one another: guards on guards, tackles on tackles, and so forth. Among the ends Mike has the greatest knack, and Flash is most inept. Hank and Nate and other prospective fullbacks knock

against one another zestfully. In contrast halfback and quarterbacks block each other halfheartedly until Coach comes over and glowers at them.

For tackling practice Coach sets up three lines of linemen. Backs and ends run through carrying a ball at half-speed and are tackled by each lineman in turn. The backs and ends take their place at the end of the line and have a turn at tackling.

Coach looks at his wristwatch.

COACH

I can see most of you have lots more to learn, but that's enough for now. Once more around the track. Then I'll see you again at four this afternoon.

The players groan but dutifully jog around the track. Neither Flash nor any others have any ambition to show off their speed. After their lap they walk slowly to the locker room.

FLASH

This guy's a tough dude. We never worked this hard in K.C.

FRED

That's why he always has a winning team.

Zeke comes up to Fred and Flash.

ZEKE

Glad to have you with us, Flash. You've got good speed. I hope you can catch, block, and tackle as well.

FLASSH

I've got good hands.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE LOCKER ROOM ENTRANCE - DAY

A bunch of sophomores are milling around the entrance to the locker room with Billy and Lefty closest to the door. They include DON, SAM, JOE (an African American), a couple other African Americans, and some others.

BILLY

Why are they making us wait so long?

LEFTY

It's almost three. Then they'll let us in.

Dave opens the door, and the prospects push there way in.

CUT TO:

INT - LOCKER ROOM

Billy is first to reach the equipment room where Hal is stationed, then

joined by Dave. Don and Sam are next in line.

BILLY

I want number 36, Hal. That was Brad Henderson's number.

DON

Billy, you think you're as good as Brad? He was all-state two years ago when Lofton was undefeated.

SAM

And now he's starring at the Naval Academy.

HAL

We're retired that number in Brad's honor.

BILLY

Well then since I'm going to be twice as good as Brad, give me number 72.

HAL

If you're half as good, I'll be satisfied.

Hal gives Billy number 18.

CUT TO:

EXT - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

A montage of: opening calisthenics with sophomores joining the juniors and seniors; the sophomores running a lap with Billy not exerting himself; Billy easily winning the sprint; Hal working with sophomores on blocking and tackling drills; Nick working with backs and ends on ball handling; Dave teaching linemen combination blocks and other fine points of line play. Finally Coach whistles them to the center of the field.

COACH

That's enough for today. You've worked hard, so you can skip the final lap. It's going to be hot tomorrow so we'll start the morning practice at eight o'clock.

CUT TO:

INT - KITCHEN OF PARKER HOUSE

Zeke enters, looking bushed. Laura is helping Mom with the dishes, but they've save a plate of food for Zeke. Dad is listening to the evening news on the radio.

DAD

Hi, Son. How was practice?

ZEKE

Great!

MOM

You look exhausted.

ZEKE

I'm a little tired.

Zeke flops into a chair at the kitchen table and starts eating. The newscaster reports that U.S. and French troops have forced the Germans out of Marseille and troops are patrolling all the streets of Paris to be certain there are no Germans left.

MOM

I wish we knew where Clyde is now.

DAD

From what the evening paper says, his unit helped liberate Paris last Friday.

MOM

I hope he's all right.

ZEKE

If I know Clyde, he borrowed a trombone somewhere and marched with a band along the Champs Elysees.

MOM

You're always such an optimist, Paul.

LAURA

I suppose you think your team is going to be league champ.

ZEKE

We have a good chance. You think we don't?

LAURA

You might if guys in my class get a chance to play.

ZEKE

Like who? Lefty and Joe? Don and Sam? Billy?

LAURA

Billy's good, but he's too stuck up.

Dad smiles in amusement, and Zeke digs into his food.

CUT TO:

INT - LOCKER ROOM

The players are getting into their pads and uniforms. Many are stiff and sore, groaning and complaining.

HANK

I can't understand why I ache all over this morning. All summer I've worked hard on the farm from dawn to dusk.

EDDY

I know what you mean. I've played baseball nearly every day since school was out. I oughta be in great shape for football.

DOC

Don't you guys know, each activity, each sport has its own set of muscles.

BOB

Thank you, Doctor.

Bob throws a wet towel at Doc.

CUT TO:

EXT - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are in rows at one end of the field completing their calisthenics. Coach blows his whistle.

COACH

Gather in. We'll save our lap around the track till the end of practice. I have some things to say to you.

The players gathering around Coach.

COACH

We have a long, tough schedule ahead of us, but I know we'll do well. Sure, the majority of last year's starters graduated, and Ray and Tom, who we expected to return as linebackers, have left town. But as I look around, I see lots of talent. You'll all have a fair chance.

FRED

(To Flash)

See, Gordie. I told you.

FLASH

We'll see about that.

COACH

We've had a winning season every year since I've been at Lofton High. We're going to have a winning season this year.

EDDY

We'll be the champs.

COACH

You may ask, what makes a winning team? It requires each of you to develop

your skills to the utmost. That means hard work. You may not like these twice a day workouts while your classmates are enjoying their last week of summer vacation...

PUDGE

(To someone nearby)

That's for sure.

COACH

...But you'll be glad for the conditioning once regular games begin. Isn't that right, Zeke.

ZEKE

I agree -- reluctantly.

COACH

A winning team requires teamwork.

As he continues, Coach looks directly first at Eddy, then Billy.

COACH (Cont.)

As a matter of fact, if I had a choice between mediocre players who played well together and a bunch of brilliant players each seeking his own glory, I would take the less talented ones.

Teamwork is founded on loyalty.
Loyalty to each other. Loyalty to your
coaches. The coaches loyalty to you.
You come from many different
backgrounds. You are part of different
social groups at school. You sophomores
are just coming together from the two
junior high schools. But on the field and
in the locker room I expect you to be like
one big, happy family.

RUSTY

Like me and my brother, Bob.

Rusty gives Bob a brotherly nudge.

COACH

So even as you go hard at one another in
scrimmage and compete for the eleven
positions on the team, never lose sight of
the fact that we're all united in the quest
to be a winning team.

Now this morning I want all prospective
passers, backs, ends, and centers to stay
with go with Hal and me at the this end
of the field for passing drills. Guards
and tackles go to the far end with Dave
to continue working on blocking and

tackling. This afternoon we'll divide up into teams. Okay, let's go.

As they start assembling for passing drill, Zeke takes Spike aside.

ZEKE

Spike, with your experience you're a leadpipe cinch to be left end.

SPIKE

That's what I expect.

It'll be interesting to see who wins out as right end. I thought it was going to be a contest between Mike and Chuck, coming off good years as JV ends last year. But this Flash Gordon looks pretty sharp.

SPIKE

He's fast. But can he catch?

ZEKE

We'll soon find out.

Show montage of the practice, especially the passing. Zeke and Cliff take snaps from Richard and throw mostly to upper classmen but Coach lets Billy join them. Lefty and a couple other sophomores take snaps from Wally and have mostly sophomores as receivers. For each group the receivers form two lines, right and left, alternating between

them. The passers stand three yards between the centers and call directions for each receiver: slant across the middle, down and out, buttonhook, in the flat, deep and in. They call for the ball with "ready, set, hike."

Spike is sure-handed and reaches high for balls. Eddy has good moves, Billy not quite as good. Fred has a knack for catching balls thrown low or behind him. The three main competitors for right end eye one another apprehensively. Flash shows his speed and has good hands, Mike displays fancy footwork, and Chuck makes difficult catches. After a while Billy approaches Coach.

BILLY

How about me throwing some, Nick?
When Brad was tailback, he was the chief
passer.

COACH

Not today, Billy, but I'll give you a chance
later in the week.

After a few more passes, Coach calls the players together for another round of tackling practice. Show brief montage of tackling. Then Coach assembles the players again in a circle.

COACH

We're going to divide into teams this
afternoon and start running some plays.
During the midday break Dave, Hal, and I
will figure out team assignments. They'll

be posted with you return at four o'clock. On your way out this morning, pick up your playbooks from Dave. Look especially at plays from short punt formation. That's what we'll start with today. Later in this week we'll try some double wing plays and then work from T-formation.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

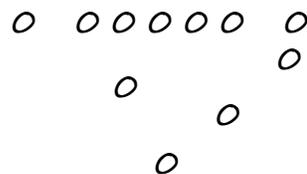
TIMMY

What's a short punt formation? I never heard of it.

GRANDDAD

It was very popular among high schools around here in the 1940s, but it was displaced by the T-formation by 1950. Let me draw it for you.

Granddad takes a sheet of paper and pen and draw a sketch:



GRANDDAD (Cont.)

In the short punt the tailback stands about five yards directly behind the center. A blocking back is close to the line, splitting the space between right tackle and right end. The right halfback is a little deeper between tackle and guard. The quarterback is on the left side, a yard or two behind the left guard. The center puts the ball in play by it snapping directly to the tailback, or to the quarterback or right halfback.

TIMMY

Weren't there a lot of fumbles?

GRANDDAD

Some, but it was a powerful running game, especially to the strong side. For variation we also had the double wing formation. Let me draw it for you, Timmy.

TIMMY

Granddad, I'd rather find out who your coach put on the first team.

CUT TO:

EXT - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are entering the field for afternoon practice. Fred and Flash walk together.

FLASH

I told you your coach wouldn't give me a chance. I know I'm better than Mike at right end.

FRED

You're new here, Gordie. You've got to prove your stuff in scrimmage. Hang in there. You can be a starter.

Wally is walking with Bob and Rusty.

WALLY

I expected to be playing next to you, Bob. I'm better than Richard.

BOB

Wally, you've got to remember that you have no experience at center. You were a guard last year.

WALLY

I've been practicing snaps all summer.

RUSTY

Show what you've got to the coaches.
They're fair. But Richard's tougher than
you think.

CUT TO the players gathered on the sidelines near the 50 yard line.
The coaches are on the field.

COACH

I want the first team to line up on offense
short punt in midfield.

EDDY

Yeah. Let's go.

RUSTY

Charge!

The first team players charge onto the field and take their positions:
Spike at left end, Pudge left tackle, Dutch left guard, Richard center,
Bob right guard, Rusty right tackle, Mike right end, Hank fullback
(blocking back in short punt), Fred right halfback, Eddy tailback, and
Zeke quarterback.

COACH

Now I want the second team opposite of
them in defensive position. The rest of
you can watch the persons playing your
position to get an idea of what you're

supposed to do.

The second team players charge out to their positions with a six man line of Chuck left end, Jiri left tackle, Joe left guard, Don and Sam standing together at right guard, Roger at right tackle, and Flash at right end. Linebackers are Wally (center on offense) and Nate (fullback). Pat and Cliff are defensive halfbacks (cornerbacks) and Billy is deeper as safety.

ROGER

(To Don and Sam)

Are we going to have two right guards?

DON

Nick wants us to alternate.

Wally edges up to Richard.

WALLY

Enjoy your day with the first squade. I expect to displace you by the end of the week.

To everyone's amazement Richard growls at Wally, half in fun, half serious.

PUDGE

That's what we need! A tough bulldog in the center.

COACH

Okay, I want the first squad to run through some plays at half speed with touch blocking. Defenders yield some with the blocks and no tackling.

ZEKE

Let's start with 36 on two.

Linemen crouch in position. Backs stand with hands on their knees.

ZEKE (Cont.)

Ready. Set. Hike. One, two, three.

On "two" Bulldog centers the ball to Eddy. Others make phantom blocks to clear the way for an off tackle run to the right.⁵

⁵ The author can supply a playbook for this and other plays.

Show a montage of the first team going through other running plays from short punt, with a few mix ups and an occasional fumble. After a while the second team goes on offense with Nate as blocking back, Fred right halfback, Billy tailback, and Cliff quarterback. They making more mistakes than the first team. As challengers Billy and Pat strut more than Eddy and Fred, and some of the second team linemen block aggressively until Coach admonishes them.

COACH

Save the rough stuff for a real scrimmage.

After a while Coach brings all the players together.

COACH

You're off to a good start, fellows.
Tomorrow morning we'll get into double wing plays. In the afternoon we'll work from T-formation. So study your playbooks tonight. On Thursday we'll mix them together in our first scrimmage.

It's been such an easy workout this afternoon, two laps around the track and into the showers.

The players groan but dutifully head for the cinder track.

CUT TO:

EXT - CURBSIDE AT ZEKE'S HOUSE - DAY

Zeke climbs into Spikes pickup.

SPIKE

*Zeke, it's the day we've been waiting for.
Our first scrimmage.*

ZEKE

We're ready for it.

SPIKE

*Yeah, it'll be the first test of how good
we're going to be.*

ZEKE

Winners, that's for sure.

CUT TO:

EXT - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Show montage of the scrimmage. The first team running plays from the three sets: short punt, double wing, T-formation. Eddy is a proficient runner, cuts back well. Fred does well, too. Zeke hits Spike and Mike on a couple of passes. Eddy makes a touchdown off tackle to the right. The second team runs a series of plays with Don and Sam alternating at right guard. Billy is a good runner but doesn't get

as good lead blocks as Eddy did. Flash especially is a poor blocker. After making a couple of first downs the second team loses the ball on downs. The first team gets the ball and scores again. The next time the second team has the ball Cliff drops back to pass. Rusty comes crashing in and tackles him as he starts to throw. Cliff gets up holding his arm as Coach and Doc come running in.

CLIFF

I think it's broken.

Coach feels his arm gently.

COACH

I think you're right. Dave, will you drive Cliff to Doc Sullivan's office. Doc can go with you.

Cliff, Dave, and Doc leave the field.

COACH

That's enough scrimmage for now. Each team can now go off on its own to run plays. Lefty, you take Cliff's place. And the third and fourth squads can find a spot to run through some plays.

The teams go there separate ways. After a while a scuffle breaks out between Don and Sam on the second team.

ROGER

Fight! Fight!

Players come running from all over the field to watch the fight. Coach and Hal come up, push their way through the crowd, and each grab one of the combatants.

COACH

What's this all about.

SAM

This Pershing prissy pushed me.

DON

This Lindbergh lollipop shoved me.

COACH

(Laughing)

So it's junior high stuff. It's time for you to grow up. You're playing for Lofton High now. We're all one team. Look at Bob and Bob and Rusty. They're best friends even though Bob went to Linbergh Junior High and Rusty went to Pershing.

RUSTY

It's the other way around.

COACH

See what I mean. It's so unimportant that I don't even remember where you

attended junior high.

ZEKE

(To Spike)

He knows. Nick knows everything about everyone of us.

COACH

We're not having any fighting on this team. Don and Sam, you can cool off by sitting on benches on the opposite sides of the field for the rest of this morning's practice. Stanislaw, do you think you know the plays well enough to join the second team.

STAN

I think so.

WALLY

I'll help you. I played guard last year.

DUTCH

Nice going, Stan.

As the players leave to reassemble their teams, Basil approaches Coach.

BASIL

When are we going to have tryouts for kickers, Nick?

COACH

We'll get to that on Monday.

FRED

You've got to be patient and prove your stuff. You'll get your chance, but you've got to learn to block better.

FLASN

That's for linemen.

FRED

You are a lineman.

CUT TO:

Then Coach brings the players together.

EXT - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players are bunched along the sidelines at midfield. The three coaches are on the field standing in front of them.

COACH

We're going to divide into teams and start running plays as we prepare for the first scrimmage on Thursday. First team players, line up on offense as I call your name.

On the right side of the line returning from last year's winning team are Bob Collins at guard and Rusty Mulrooney at tackle.

Bob and Rusty charge out and line up on the 50 yard line.

EDDY

Attaway to go!

COACH

On the left side we'll have the tallest man on the team -- Spike Anderson -- at end, the heaviest -- Pudge Markopoulos -- at tackle, and the most durable -- Dutch Lutz -- at right guard.

Spike, Pudge, and Dutch trot out to join Bob and Rusty, who slap their

shoulder pads as they arrive.

COACH

At center we've got a player who is as tough and tenacious as a Boston terrier, Richard McKinley.

Richard grabs a ball and growls like a dog as he runs to his positions. Everyone laughs except Wally.

BOB

Welcome to the first team, Bulldog!

WALLY

(To a buddy)

We'll see who's the toughest center when we start scrimmaging.

COACH

For right end, we're going to go with Mike Nolan, who played this position on the junior varsity last year. But you should know, Mike, that we'll be looking at Church, your JV teammate, and Flash Gordon, who just moved to town. Who starts the opening game will depend on who plays best the next two weeks.

Mike clasps his hands over his head in a winning salutation as he trots to join his teammates. Disappointment flows over the faces of Chuck

and Flash, then tight-lipped determination.

COACH

In the backfield we have a returning veteran, Eddy Foster as left halfback and tailback in short punt.

PUDGE

Yeah, for Eddy.

Bulldog (aka Richard) tasses Eddy the ball as he takes his place in the backfield.

BILLY

(To those around him)

Wait and see who starts the first game as tailback.

COACH

The rest of the backfield comes from last year's second team: Zeke Parker at quarterback, Fred Montgomery at right half, and Hank Harrison at fullback.

Eddy shakes hands with Zeke, Fred, and Hank as they join him in the backfield.

COACH

On the second squad the ends will be

Chuck Jones and Flash Davis, Jiri Janacek and Roger Phillips as tackles, and Wally Danner at center. You can line up on defense.

Chuck, Jiri, Wally, Roger, and Flash take their places opposite the first team line.

COACH

For second team guard spots, we've got several good candidates. For the time being Joe Robinson will be left guard. We're assigning Don Shays and Sam Nugent to alternate as right guard until one proves he's better. Dutch's friend, Stanislav Krasinski -- did I pronounce it right? -- wants to be a guard, but since he's never played football before, we're putting him on the third team. But, Stan, this is America, the land of opportunity. Show your stuff and you'll move ahead.

Joe and Don, with Sam behind him, fill out the second team line.

STAN

(To Lefty_

Does he mean it?

LEFTY

It's up to you.

COACH

Billy, you'll play left halfback. Pat Kelly will play right half, Cliff Marshall quarterback, and Nate Jackson guard.

Billy, Pat, Cliff, and Nate join the second team on the field.

COACH

You two teams can now go off and run through some places as we form other teams.

CUT TO:

INT - GRANDDAD'S STUDY

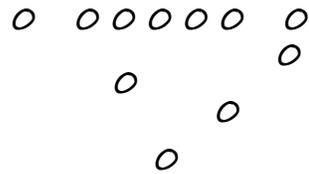
TIMMY

What's a short punt formation? I never heard of it.

GRANDDAD

It was very popular among high schools around here in the 1940s, but it was displaced by the T-formation by 1950. Let me draw it for you.

Granddad takes a sheet of paper and pen and draws a sketch:



GRANDDAD (Cont.)

In the short punt the tailback stands about five yards directly behind the center. A blocking back is close to the line, splitting the space between right tackle and right end. The right halfback is a little deeper between tackle and guard. The quarterback is on the left side, a yard or two behind the left guard. The center puts the ball in play by it snapping directly to the tailback, or to the quarterback or right halfback.

TIMMY

Weren't there a lot of fumbles?

GRANDDAD

Some, but it was a powerful running game, especially to the strong side. For variation we also had the double wing formation. Let me draw it for you, Timmy.

TIMMY

Granddad, I'd rather find out who your coach put on the first team.

PRINCIPAL

We are poised ready to start another season for our esteemed football team. It will be a great and glorious season, not only for the team but for all of us.

(Turning to the team)

You fellows must remember at all times that you are fighting for the honor and glory of our beloved school. You will carry into battle the hopes and dreams of us all. All of us will fervently support you. We wish you the highest level of success.

Students applaud.

SPIKE

Zeke, remember in 7th grade when we played football on the lot next to the Baker mansion? You'd pretend that you were Davey O'Brien, All American, fading back to pass.

ZEKE

He wasn't very big, but how he could
throw. I hope I do half as well.

Wally is walking with Bob and Rusty.

WALLY

Even though Nick assigned me to the
second team, I expect to be playing
center next to you by the opening game,
Bob. I'm better than Richard.

BOB

Wally, you've got to remember that you
have no experience at center. You were
a guard last year.

WALLY

I've been practicing snaps all summer.

RUSTY

Show what you've got to the coaches.
They're fair. But Richard's tougher than
you think.

Eddy opens the door and lets in Roberto, Rusty, Pudge, Zeke, Spike,

Bulldog, and Hank.

EDDY

Welcome to this hallowed place.

ROBERTO

*It looks about the same, except they've
painted the lockers.*

BULLDOG

*It still reeks of sweat and Ben Gay.
Brings back some happy memories.*

EDDY

*Bulldog, it looks like being a corporate
executive agrees with you.*

BULLDOG

*I like New York, but sometimes I envy you
who have stayed in Lofton.*

HANK

Yeah, some of us have never left the farm.

ZEKE

*Dutch did. He's working in the Middle
East for the Mennonite Service
Committee. He's home on leave now.
Stan's here, too, for a visit with his
family.*

SPIKE

They'll be here, but first Dutch wanted to take Stan out to see his folks place, where Stan's family lived when they first came to America.

ZEKE

Stan now works for the Voice of America in Washington.

Fred, Flash, Billy, and Lefty enter. Flash wears an army captain uniform, decorated with ribbons for service in Korea, including a purple heart.

RUSTY

Here come the cousins: the reverend and the captain.

SPIKE

And the fledgling real estate tycoon and the oil speculator.

They shake hands all around. Dutch and Stan enter and exchange greetings with the others. Dutch and Flash are especially effusive in greeting one another.

STAN

Eddy, you're the coach here now?

EDDY

Just the assistant coach. Dave became head coach when Nick took over at the state college, his alma mater. I took Dave's place at Lindbergh Junior High.

ROBERTO

Nick was a great coach.

FRED

He sure was.

SPIKE

The greatest.

EDDY

We were lucky to have him.

ZEKE

I'm sorry we gave him his only losing season at Lofton High.

PUDGE

Me, too.

RUSTY

I wish it'd been otherwise.

ZEKE

It was my fault more than anyone else.

ROBERTO

How do you figure that?

ZEKE

Because of that stupid call I made toward the end of the opening game against Kepler. When we stopped them near the end of the game six inches from the goal line, I called for a punt.

BULLDOG

Zeke, that was only one play of a whole season in which you called a lot of good games.

ZEKE

But a crucial call. I used to lay awake at night in the Army and at college thinking about it. If I had run a quarterback sneak, as Nick told me later I should have, we would've had some running room. We might have run out the clock and won the game. That would've given us momentum to win the next game. We might even have won the championship.

HANK

That's interesting. For many years I have remembered that awful kick I made

that went out of bounds on the 25. It was my worst punt of the season. It cost us the game.

FRED

I thought it was because I let the Kepler end catch the winning pass in the end zone.

SPIKE

I remember how I didn't get the ball out of bounds on the last play of the game. If we had time for one more play, we might have scored.

EDDY

Stop it, you guys. I'll admit that for several years I regretted slipping when I tried to cut around the last defender on the kickoff return. If I hadn't, I would've gone all the way and been a great hero with a 90-yard, game-winning return.

ZEKE

It wouldn't have depended on heroics if I had made the right call earlier.

EDDY

I gave up losing sleep over might-have-beens when I was playing

minor league baseball. I played 120 games one summer, most of them on consecutive days. If I made an error in the first inning, I couldn't think about it because there were eight more innings to play. If I made the final out of the game, I couldn't let it get me down because there was another game to play the next day.

So you shouldn't agonize forever over your mistakes.

ZEKE

Nick told me something like that when he visited me in the hospital. He said that football is a game of mistakes. All you can do is try to make fewer mistakes than your opponent. And not let the mistakes you make get you down.

FRED

I never thought of it that way.

DOC

It goes beyond lamenting mistakes. You shouldn't get mired in self-pity over negative outcomes when you've done your best. All season long I watched Nick

keep you guys focused on the next game and not mired down in the previous defeat.

HANK

Yes, that's the way he was.

DOC

The lesson was reinforced for me during my hospital internship. When the first patient I had primary responsibility for died, my supervising physician comforted me by assuring me that I had done my best. "Every patient you ever treat," he noted, "will die some day."

Death is a fact of life. You do your best and go from one disappointment to the next challenge.

ZEKE

I suppose you're right. But I still wish I had called a quarterback sneak.

EDDY

Sure, Zeke, if you had run a quarterback sneak and we'd run out the clock, we might've been five and four for the season. But we never would've won the championship. Let's face it, we weren't

that good.

ZEKE

I suppose not.

PUDGE

You know what? A couple of years after we graduated, Nick told me that our losing season was what made Lofton the league champs the following year. Zeke, Nick said that you were the best teaching quarterback he ever coached. Not the greatest play caller but the best teacher.

LEFTY

That's true. I had a great apprenticeship working with you.

BILLY

While I don't usually say nice things publicly about my brother-in-law, I would've never reached my full potential if Zeke hadn't taught me to get my temper under control and to become a team player, and if Eddy hadn't first put me down and then helped me up.

LEFTY

The linemen who got their experience in 1944 -- Bulldog, Dutch, Stan, Jolly, and

Jiri -- made us shine in 1945. Fred and Hank returned as starters in the backfield. And as ends we had Mike and Chuck, who learned so much from Spike and Flash. The following year after they all graduated, we finished third in the league even though Billy and I had good seasons our senior year.

ROBERTO

And we need to remember that in the midst of losing football games, a lot of good things occurred to us. You remember, Bulldog, how you wouldn't help Rusty and me cheat on the world history exam? And how we were suspended for three weeks?

BULLDOG

Yeah, I recall that you were really teed off at me.

ROBERTO

Well, it was one of the best things that ever happened to me. Until then I had been lackadaisical in my studies. Being suspended from football caused me to get serious and buckle down. I would've never got through engineering school if I hadn't learned scholastic discipline.

RUSTY

That same incident made a big difference in my life, too. My dad found out about it and really ate me out. "Ralph," he said, "in the auto business it takes three things to be successful: good cars, good mechanics, and integrity. People are suspicious of car dealers, especially used car dealers. If you get a reputation for dishonesty, you're doomed to fail."

BASIL

So they call you Honest Ralph?

RUSTY

I've never heard that name, but my customers trust me.

STAN

What I remember most from the '44 season was how all you guys all accepted a Polish refugee who didn't know a tackle from a guard and helped him learn your American sport. Only in America, I thought, were people so kind.

ZEKE

Stan, you helped me in return.

STAN

How's that?

ZEKE

When I was discouraged after opening the season with two straight loses, you helped me keep my perspective when you described your escape from Poland. Then my brother was wounded in combat, and we got word that Ted Simmons was killed in action. These things made me realize that more important events were going on in the world than our football games.

SPIKE

That may be true, Zeke, but you're still worrying about some of your calls you made.

ZEKE

I guess that's the perfectionist in me. But at a deeper level I realize that my mistakes and our defeats are insignificant compared to the lives we live off the field of play.

FLASH

True, but being part of the team, whether we won or lost, had real value at the time. For me, like Stan, it was the

acceptance I gained.

Before I came to Lofton I had gone only to all-Negro schools. I was a bit scared when I came out for football here, though I tried not to show it. But at the end of the first practice Zeke welcomed me. Then Dutch taught me to block so that I could make the team. And in the Ashmont game Rusty took care of that loudmouth end who was baiting me.

RUSTY

You were my teammate, so I had to protect you.

FRED

Looking back, I realize that this attitude of we're-all-in-this-together made racial differences disappear on our team. This experience has kept me hopeful these past ten years as I've become involved in the civil rights movement.

SPIKE

Remember how Nick outfoxed that restaurant owner in Barnesdale?

PUDGE

Yeah, that was something.

FRED

Nick did what he did not because he was a crusader for Negro rights but rather because we were part of his team. He was loyal to us as persons. That's true acceptance.

ZEKE

I've never told you this, Dutch, but I was in Nick's office the day he divided us for the intrasquad game. Jiri came in and protested having to play next to a German who didn't want to fight in the war. Nick was nice to him but defended your right to be a pacifist, even though he didn't agree with that position.

DUTCH

Jiri and I became close friends the following season when we played next to one another on the championship team.

FLASH

Do you remember Nick's opening speech about teamwork and loyalty? Several times I've copied it in speaking to my troops. When they started integrating

the Army, I discovered that a commitment to mutual loyalty and teamwork was the best way to overcome racial barriers. When my unit was in combat in Korea, we were comrades who looked out for one another.

EDDY

I'm trying to emulate Nick in my coaching. I want my teams to win, and the players want to win, too. That's part of sports. But as a coach I can see that character development is as important as winning. Maybe more so.

ZEKE

That's another thing Nick told me when I was in the hospital. He said that our team showed more character development than any team he'd ever coached.

ROBERTO

That's a nice compliment for a bunch of losers.

ZEKE

No, we're not losers. Listening to you guys talk, I realize that we may have had a losing season, but it made winners of us

all.

SPIKE

That's for sure.

BULLDOG

Well spoken, Zeke.

EDDY

I agree. And I'd like to get a picture of you bunch of winners. A photographer is supposed to meet us on the football field in a few minutes.

CUT TO:

EXT - LOFTON FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The players gather on the football field full of good spirits. They line up at a bench for their photograph.

CUT TO:
