

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

Leo and Walden, 10 and 6 respectively. Leo is tossing stones up in the air. Walden sits on the dry leaves flipping through pages from a dense novel.

LEO  
You know that's a bunch of bullshit.

WALDEN  
About what?

LEO  
What Pa said about Ma.

WALDEN  
You saying he's a liar?

LEO  
I said what I said.

WALDEN  
Are you sure?

LEO  
It just is.

Leo takes a stone and whirls it in the air, watches it land in the distance.

LEO (cont'd)  
Besides, you're too young to have an opinion on the matter.

WALDEN  
Stop saying that.

LEO  
My friend Dale, you know him, he said that it's nothing but bullshit. Heard his father say the same thing. Something they just tell us when we're kids to make it easier.

WALDEN  
Well that's not true.

LEO  
Well she's dead either way. You're too young for these things.

WALDEN  
I don't want to fight --

LEO  
Who said this was a fight?

WALDEN  
Shut up.

LEO  
Make me.

Leo hurls a stone into a dense tree. A squeal is heard. A thud hits the ground.

Laying within a foot of Walden is a squirrel with a gash in its neck. Thick blood oozing out as it twitches to find ground.

WALDEN  
Leo.

LEO  
Yeah.

Leo takes a stick and pokes at it.

LEO (cont'd)  
Shit.

As the blood thins it squirts out onto Walden's pages.

Walden screams, runs away.

LEO (cont'd)  
Walden!

He's gone.

Leo drops the stick, picking up his brothers book, now sprayed in blood.

He stares down at the wounded animal for a few beats.

Walden returns with his father, Ed. A thick beard with dark eyes. Ed is holding a pellet gun. Walden, with tear filled eyes, has a shovel.

ED  
Well.

LEO  
I --

Ed slaps Leo across the face.

ED  
If you're old enough to start killing  
things, you're old enough to start  
burying them too.

LEO  
I'm sorry Pa, I was just tossing  
stones --

ED  
(to Walden)  
Start digging.

Walden digs a shallow grave.

Ed hands the pellet gun to Leo.

ED (cont'd)  
You're such a big man now, go ahead.

Leo is hot with frustration, he starts tearing up.

ED (cont'd)  
I don't have all day.

LEO  
I --

ED  
What? You didn't mean to. Didn't  
think anything would come of it. That  
doesn't matter. Now go on.

He looks away, shoots the gun.

Walden winces at the sound. He uses the shovel to place the  
squirrel in the hole, then covers it.

ED (cont'd)  
Place a stone on top so the animals  
don't get after it.

LEO  
Yes Pa.

ED  
Don't be throwing no more stones  
either.

LEO  
Yes Pa.

ED  
And don't cry in front of me again.

Ed walks away with the pellet gun and shovel.

The two boys surround the freshly made grave. Leo wipes away his tears.

Walden grabs Leo's hand, he shakes loose from his grip.

LEO  
Come on.

WALDEN  
But--

LEO  
Don't tell anyone about this.

Leo follows after his father.

Walden takes a stone places it on the disturbed patch of ground.

He chases after Leo.

INT. HOUSE - DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

Leo, Walden, and Ed are sitting at the table set for 3.

The area is dimly lit, a lamp way off in the distant room bleeds in.

Ed reaches for Walden's hand, which he willingly gives.

Walden reaches for Leo's hand, which Leo denies.

All three have their heads bowed in prayer.

WALDEN  
Amen.

ED  
Amen.

LEO  
(hesitating)  
Amen.

They dig into their microwave dinners.

The sound of them eating is like a dialogue in itself.

Walden gets up and walks over to a cupboard, removes an extra plate and utensils. He lays them at the empty side of the table.

Ed keeps his head down as he eats.

Walden returns to his seat and continues to eat. He holds a look at Leo. An understanding between them.

Underneath the table, Leo reaches for Walden's hand. He receives it.