

Showdown

By

Zach Garrigus

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zach.garrigus@gmail.com
240-543-8271 (c)

The cloudless sky, a deep, royal blue in the afternoon light, stretches bare overhead, hardly a cloud in sight. A single tree, reaching higher than its neighbors, grasps for the sun, its trunk traveling down, down, down to the soil below. At the base of the tree stands CHESTER, a thin, venomous looking man, his hair slicked back, his eyes darting from side to side. He chews gum smugly on one side of his mouth. A light CHITTER sounds from below Chester's eye line. Absentmindedly, he looks down to the ground.

A black beetle, its carapace shining in the sun, crawls along the surface of the soil next to Chester's booted foot.

The beetle scurries along determinedly, not a care in this world.

A smile breaks across Chester's thin lips.

In one simple motion, Chester raises the toe of his boot, spinning his foot over top of the beetle.

Slowly, Chester's foot comes down. The beetle CRUNCHES beneath his sole.

Chester looks up, moving his gum from one side of his mouth to the other with his tongue. He is still smiling.

Chester stands alone on the hill.

Beat.

He looks about, seemingly annoyed. Finally, he reaches into the pocket of his waistcoat, drawing forth an ornate pocket watch on a chain.

He flips the watch open in front of him. The time reads "3:13 PM" analogue.

Still looking down at the watch, Chester shakes his head disappointedly, closing the watch and tucking it away.

Chester adjusts his waistcoat, leaning heavily against the tree next to him, turning and looking off in a different direction. Maybe there is something more interesting to his...left?

Still alone on the hill.

Impatiently, Chester draws his pocket watch back out, holding

it out in front of his face to read the dial.

The time reads "3:15 PM" now. Chester lowers the watch, and there, now unobscured, is DAX, making his way up the hill toward him, still a small spot in the distance.

Chester breaks into a toothy yet somehow malignant smile.

Dax, a smaller man than Chester with weary features, steps up to plate, concern already in his eyes.

The two men stand across from each other at a distance, Chester higher on the hill than Dax.

Chester leans away from his tree, his grin still wide.

He throws aside one lapel of his jacket, revealing a holstered gun at his side.

Dax swallows nervously but subtly, keeping his emotions in check.

He slowly pulls his own jacket back to reveal a similar holster/gun arrangement on his hip.

Chester chews slower on his gum now, as if thinking between every motion of his jaw. His eyes locked on Dax, his tilts his head slightly, spitting out of the side of his mouth.

A splash of saliva and old gum at the base of Chester's tree, Dax watching in the distance.

Dax looks from the discarded gum up to Chester.

Chester tenses, his lip curling slightly.

His right foot twists out ever so slightly, creating an indentation in the dirt.

Dax blinks deliberately, still difficult to read.

He widens his stance, pushing his left foot out, a bank of dirt gathering beside his battered old sneaker as it moves.

Dax raises his right hand, readying it over his holster.

Chester's hand, already in place, twitches over his own gun.

Dax stands in the distance, eyes on Chester's gun.

Chester's eyes tense, as if he intends to stare Dax down.

Dax's eyes remain blank and watery, maybe only slightly fearful.

Dax stands framed by Chester's legs.

Chester stands, framed by Dax's legs despite his height.

The two men, now tense as wound springs, stand at a distance.

BEAT

The moment arises! The two men reach for their weapons.

Dax pulls his gun from its holster, whipping it out in front of him.

Chester arm flies up, gun in hand.

He prepares himself to fire when...

A burst of light and smoke from Dax's gun!

A bright blossom of red springs from Chester's back as he launches himself backward, propelled by sheer impact.

Chester falls back with a gesture only of surprise on his face.

He hits the ground with a dry THWACK light a bag of rocks. In the distance, Dax lowers his weapon.

Dax holsters his gun, still as wary and unthreatening as ever.

Dax's shadow falls across Chester's body.

He looks down at his challenger blankly.

With one foot, he reaches out, flipping Chester over as one would nudge a dead dog. Chester's body flops toward him, one arm splayed out.

Chester's pocket watch spills off of his vest, CLATTERING against hard ground.

Dax looks down at the watch, turning away from Chester's body.

Chester's watch, its delicately carved surface still gleaming, stands in strict contrast to the dirt around it.

FADE TO

2 EXT. FOREST HILLSIDE - SUNDOWN

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The setting sun sits fat and red on the horizon as Dax walks away down the hill, barely a silhouette in the blinding light.