

GRIZZLY ADAMS

by

J. Edwin Bishop

The scene opens with Grizzly Adams sitting at a table and Ben lying on the floor at his feet. The narrator stands off to the side, but still more front stage than Adams and Ben.

The scene opens with Grizzly Adams sitting at a table

reading the newspaper and Ben lying on the floor at his feet. The narrator stands off to the side, but still more front stage than Adams and Ben.

NARRATOR

When I was young, my mother and I would travel up to the house she was raised in and go to church with my grandfather, a small place off 40th and Franklin called Holy Communion. Afterwards we'd stop at the Perkins on Franklin and Riverside, right down the road here, and I'd have some pancakes. Then we'd go back to his place and while my mom talked with my grandmother, my grandfather and I would watch Grizzly Adams together. I never really got the show. I didn't understand why he was living in the woods all alone, or why he never really seemed to do much of anything, or, most importantly, why the hell that bear didn't just maul him. The show seemed almost unbearable as I sat there on the floor at the foot of my grandfather's recliner and just waited for it to be over so that we could watch Star Trek, which came on right after. I don't think my grandfather was much for Star Trek, seeing as he usually spent most of that second hour sighing and when he didn't realize I'd caught him, shaking his head. It was some kind of wicked deal we'd concocted between the two of us without ever speaking about it. I'd endure nothing for an hour if he'd endure nonsense for another. It wouldn't be until years later that I realized it was really just time we were spending together, and by then it'd be too late. My grandfather passed away back in 1990, before I really ever got old enough to appreciate the time I had with him, so I'd like to dedicate this, well, I guess it'd best be called an interpretation to him tonight. So this is for Edwin Hovey, Ed, an episode of Grizzly Adams told through the memory of a six-year old, some twenty-five years later.

The narrator moves off to the side and takes a seat, while Adams continues to read his paper for 20-30 seconds. He puts the paper down, looks around the house, contemplatively, then picks up the paper again and begins

reading. Another 20-30 seconds pass, then Ben stirs and begins waking up.

BEN

Rahr?

ADAMS

What's wrong Ben.

BEN

Rahr.

ADAMS

Are you hungry? Do you want some eggs?

BEN

Rahr.

ADAMS

I'll make some eggs.

Adams stands, moves to stage left (narrator sits at stage right) and begins making eggs. This lasts for about 30-40 seconds. The narrator begins speaking again.

NARRATOR

My grandfather grew up on a farm in South Dakota, a first generation Norwegian in the Midwest. His father had come to America ten years before he was born, in 1900, and settled down in the Dakotan countryside. My grandfather was the seventh of what would be eight children, and he spent much of his childhood working on the family farm. I guess that's why he liked Grizzly Adams so much, it was all about survival and living off the land, getting by with your own two hands. He understood that kind of life, while I spent most of my childhood daydreaming about the Fantastic Four and solving crimes like the Hardy Boys and going into outer-space on the starship enterprise. He had his feet firmly planted on the ground while I floated around with my head in the clouds. We didn't really get each other's worlds, but we found someplace in the middle where we could share them.

Adams finishes cooking his eggs, puts some down for Ben and returns to his seat at the table.

ADAMS

Are they cooked well enough for you?

BEN

Rahr.

Adams eats some of his eggs, then resumes reading the paper. This lasts another 20-30 seconds, when there is a knock at the door. Adams puts his paper down, looks quizzically at the door, stands and then opens the door. Mad Jack the Mountain Man enters.

ADAMS

Mad Jack!

MAD JACK

The Mountain Man!

The two shake hands.

ADAMS

Good to see you. What brings you down off the mountain?

MAD JACK

Well, to be honest, I was kind of hoping to borrow some sugar.

ADAMS

Sugar, you say. Well, let's see what I've got.

MAD JACK

Thanks.

Turning to Ben.

MAD JACK

Ben.

Ben get's excited.

BEN

(somewhat excitedly) Rahr.

ADAMS

(firmly) Ben.

BEN

(more excitedly) Rahr!

ADAMS

Ben!

MAD JACK

Oh, it's all right. He's just happy to see somebody other than you once in a while, aren't you Ben.

Mad Jack bends down to scratch Ben's ear while Adams looks for the sugar. He comes back and hands Mad Jack some sugar.

MAD JACK

Thanks, friend. I see you've got the paper there.

ADAMS

That I do.

MAD JACK

Mind if I take a gander at it?

ADAMS

I was just reading it myself. You're welcome to join me.

The two sit down and begin reading the paper. This goes on for another 20-30 seconds. The narrator begins speaking.

NARRATOR

Can you imagine how hard this is for a young child to sit through this? Seriously, this is how I remember Grizzly Adams. Nothing happened. Ever. I don't know what my grandfather ever saw in it. There was no action. No comedy. No laser guns. Hell, there wasn't even regular guns. In fact, Grizzly Adams had even taken a vow never to hurt another living being again. Wait, what? I mean, the federation didn't just kill wantonly or anything, but sometimes they had to bring the business to some deserving aliens, and that was all right, wasn't it? Kirk didn't want to kill, but sometimes he just had to. For the betterment of mankind and all that. Grizzly Adams just went around saving birds eggs and letting the wind blow through his grizzly, grizzly hair.

Mad Jack sets down the paper and rises.

MAD JACK

Your hair's looking a might grizzly today, friend.

Adams kind of checks his hair.

ADAMS

Yeah, I've been meaning to wash it down by the river, but it's been so cold and I'm like, eh, who am I trying to impress, anyway?

MAD JACK

You do have a point, friend, you do have

a point. Well, I best be getting back
up to the mountain with this here sugar.
Much obliged.

ADAMS

Any time, Jack. Thanks for stopping by.

MAD JACK

Ben.

Mad Jack waves a farewell to ben.

BEN

Rahr.

Mad Jack leaves and Adams returns to reading the paper. Ben
lays back down at his feet. The narrator steps back up from
his seat.

NARRATOR