

BIG THINGS

(Episode 4)

"Jaded Jaleel"

By Byron Dunbar

Big Things Created by David Hill and Byron Dunbar

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

JALEEL, DORIS, MERYL and TYLER sit at their DESKS, alongside other SCHOOLCHILDREN. At the front of the classroom, a female SUBSTITUTE TEACHER is setting up a TELEVISION. A door opens, and ZACK ENTERS. The schoolchildren turn to look. Upon seeing Zack, they avert their gaze and WHISPER to one another:

SCHOOLCHILD 1

Look, it's Zack: that kid who's training a Cove Monster.

SCHOOLCHILD 2

Yeah, he's putting us in danger...

SCHOOLCHILD 3

He's so stubborn... I heard that even though the monster got Mr. Li hurt, Zack still insists on keeping it around...

Zack looks SAD, but forces himself to walk forward. As Zack approaches, the schoolchildren GET UP from their desks and move to desks that are further away. Instead, Zack takes a seat near Jaleel, Doris, Meryl, and Tyler. Jaleel SHAKES HIS HEAD at the schoolchildren, while Meryl looks at Zack with concern. Doris and Tyler don't notice anything amiss.

TYLER

(to Doris)

Yo, seems our boy Zack is a little on the late side today!

DORIS

Yeah!

(to Zack)

Guess ya figured you could drop in whenever, just 'cause we've got a substitute?

ZACK

(staring at his feet)

No, I, I... well, to be honest, since Mr. Li's got that debate with Ida today, she had to get prepared, had to get ready. So, I, uh, I lost track 'a time, got caught up in training Frank, and um...

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

Speaking of the debate, Mr. Li insisted the entire class view it.

(looks to Zack, cheerful)

...especially our resident celebrity!

The substitute teacher CLAPS for Zack, expecting the schoolchildren to join in. They just STARE FORWARD, stone-faced. Zack looks ASHAMED, but Doris doesn't notice. She WALLOPS Zack on the back.

DORIS

'Atta boy Zack, you're **stupendous!**

TYLER

(starts clapping)

Yeah, go Zack!

SCHOOLCHILD 1

(whispering)

I'd like him to go... for good.

SCHOOLCHILD 2

(whispering)

Yeah, along with his monster!

Zack hears that and looks HURT. He GETS UP and LEAVES.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

Hey, sit down!

ZACK

(exiting through door)

I'm, uh... I forgot; I'm still needed at H.O.T.C. Yeah! I am!

JALEEL

Pfft! As if.

With a loud SCREECH, Jaleel pushes his chair out from his desk. He gets up and follows Zack, just as Zack DISAPPEARS through the door.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER (CONT'D)

Hey, if you don't sit down, I'm writing you up!

JALEEL

(exiting through door)

Good, the attitude in here was getting me down.

EXT. NEW HAVENFIELD SQUARE - ESTABLISHING - A LITTLE LATER

Zack walks down the street, as Jaleel follows.

JALEEL

Don't ya think you're overreacting?

ZACK

You dunno what it's like! You-

JALEEL

So, now you're an authority on my life experience?

ZACK

I-I don't... I never said...

JALEEL

Oh, you'd said plenty. But what you don't do is listen.

Zack looks away as Jaleel notices a TELEVISION in a STORE WINDOW.

JALEEL

(walking toward store window)

Hmm. In other news, look who's on the news.

Zack looks and sees IDA ULRICH AND JIAN LI displayed on the TELEVISION SCREEN, which sits in the store window. Jian Li has his foot in a CAST, and is using CRUTCHES.

IDA ULRICH

...have to operate based on what we know, and we know that until the H.R.V. unit is repaired, Frank is-

JIAN LI

That thing isn't some dog you can train, this could be some scheme to-

The footage on the television screen turns to STATIC! Zack and Jaleel are puzzled, until a sign reading "INCOMING ATTACK - SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER" appears. Next, the WAIL OF THE AIR RAID SIREN is heard. Before the boys can react, a SHADOW SWOOSHES OVER THEM!

Zack and Jaleel look up, and see a TWO-HEADED TRICERATOPS soaring above! It's twenty-five feet tall, and has the WINGS OF AN EAGLE. It GLIDES from building-to-building, SMASHING them with its hind legs. Zack and Jaleel exchange a look.

JALEEL

Well, at least now we have a legit excuse for cutting class.

Zack nods, and with that, he and Jaleel RUN AWAY. The camera TRACKS OUT, revealing that they're headed to the MILITARY BASE.

INT. MILITARY BASE - DAY

Zack and Jaleel ENTER the base, and see CROWDS OF SOLDIERS dashing about haphazardly. BRAD is present, and so is SHELDON.

BRAD

Zack! Why aren't ya in a shelter?

ZACK

We need Frank, and I'm the only-

Suddenly, a TREMOR runs through the base. Everyone looks out a window, and sees the triceratops DESTROYING FIGHTER JETS. Brad GRIMACES, then nods for Zack and Jaleel to follow him.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - DAY

FRANK is outside, with Jaleel and Zack on his back. Brad is on the ground, staring into a pair of BINOCULARS.

ZACK

(calling to Brad)
...you'd have a better view from up
here! A much better-

Brad turns to Frank. Frank SMILES at him, but Brad SCOWLS.

BRAD

I'm cool down here, thanks.

Through the binoculars, Brad sees the last fighter jet CRASH into the pavement, while its pilot PARACHUTES DOWN. Brad GRUNTS.

BRAD

Well, so much for that plan...

ZACK

Uh, what plan?

BRAD

I wanted the jets to get that thing
low enough for Frank to take it out.

ZACK

Hmm. Instead 'a getting it lower,
what if we got Frank higher?

JALEEL

Pfft. So, how is our 'fearless
leader' gonna manage that one?

ZACK

We-e-e-ell, how about a trampoline?

JALEEL

(slapping forehead)
Oh, for the love of-

EXT. NEW HAVENFIELD SQUARE - DAY

The triceratops approaches a SKYSCRAPER, when FRANK APPEARS. He's leapt up into the air, and HEAD-BUTTS the triceratops. Frank FALLS DOWN, as the triceratops SHAKES ITS HEADS.

Frank APPEARS IN THE AIR AGAIN! He PUNCHES the triceratops on its LEFT HEAD. Frank FALLS DOWN, then LEAPS UP again and PUNCHES the triceratops on its RIGHT HEAD. Both heads appear dizzy, as Frank FALLS BACK DOWN again. The camera TRACKS OUT to reveal that Frank

is jumping up and down on a GIANT TRAMPOLINE. Various SOLDIERS stand by, as well as Zack, Brad, and Jaleel.

ZACK

(to Jaleel)

Told you this was a good idea,
didn't I? I-

Jaleel GRUNTS, unconvinced. Meanwhile, Frank BOUNCES UP again when a SLEEPY EXPRESSION crosses his face. In midair, Frank DOZES OFF. The triceratops STRIKES FRANK with its hind legs. Frank SPINS down toward Zack and the others. Brad, Sheldon and the soldiers RUN AWAY, while Zack and Jaleel RUN IN ANOTHER DIRECTION.

When Frank arrives on the ground, he HITS the side of the trampoline. It FLIPS UP into the air, and LANDS DIAGONALLY ON THE GROUND. The trampoline ROLLS FORWARD like a coin, and passes by Zack and Jaleel. Zack looks back, and sees Frank sleeping on the pavement. Meanwhile, the triceratops FLIES TOWARD ZACK AND JALEEL!

Zack GRABS Jaleel, and PULLS HIM along as he runs even faster. They inadvertently pace themselves along with the trampoline, and are soon behind it. This confuses the triceratops, who FLIES into the trampoline. It would fall, except the triceratops gets its horns STUCK in it. The triceratops SHAKES ABOUT and frees itself, allowing the trampoline to BEGIN FALLING OVER.

The trampoline is about to crush Zack and Jaleel. Zack takes out his whistle and BLOWS into it. The noise WAKES FRANK UP, and he RUNS OVER to the trampoline and lifts it over his head. Zack is aghast and POINTS PAST FRANK.

ZACK

Behind you!

Frank lowers the trampoline to his chest, and turns to see the triceratops about to STRIKE HIM WITH ITS HIND LEGS! Frank has no time to dodge; the triceratops KICKS him in the chest. The trampoline causes the triceratops to BOUNCE INTO THE AIR and SMASH its heads on a building, knocking it out! Meanwhile, Frank falls backward. Zack and Jaleel YELP, and LEAP out of Frank's way as he SMASHES down onto the pavement.

On the ground, Jaleel SIGHS.

JALEEL

Hubris and folly, thy name is Zack.

EXT. NEW HAVENFIELD SQUARE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The now unconscious triceratops is bound with CHAINS, as MILITARY VEHICLES haul it off. Zack, Brad and Jaleel stand by Sheldon and Brad, near Frank. IDA ULRICH is there, pointing at the trampoline.

IDA ULRICH

Who came up with this idea?

SHELDON

Uh, Zack, Zack Campbell did, General.

IDA ULRICH

And you listened to him?

SHELDON

Hey, this kid's the only one this monster'll listen to, so, so, so-

JIAN LI (O.S.)

That thing acted with intent!

Ida turns and sees JIAN LI catching up to her.

IDA ULRICH

I thought we agreed to take a rain check on our debate, Li.

JIAN LI

But can't you see? It 'fell asleep,' on purpose!

IDA ULRICH

That's nonsen-

BRAD

Maybe Frank did throw the fight.

Everyone looks surprised, even Jian. Brad crosses his arms.

IDA ULRICH

That's not helping, Lieutenant.

BRAD

I'm just saying, it-

IDA ULRICH

Stop. We'll take Frank in for examination and see what your parents think.

INT. MAINTENANCE FACILITY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Frank sits next to HARVEY, as CHLOE crawls over his head and examines it with a MAGNIFYING GLASS. Meanwhile, Gibson studies a SAMPLE of Frank's DNA. Ida watches, as do Zack, Brad and Jaleel.

GIBSON

The substance from those thorns is **still** working its way through its system; could take weeks to finish!

IDA ULRICH

What about the H.R.V. unit?

GIBSON

I regret to inform you that we're missing one key component.

CHLOE

(calling down from Frank's head)
Love?

Gibson and Ida look at Chloe in disbelief, then continue talking.

GIBSON

The energy generator sustained too much damage.

IDA ULRICH

You know we can't replace that.

GIBSON

Then we can't fix the H.R.V. unit. And as for Zackery's purple playmate, he'll prove less than reliable.

BRAD

Hold up a sec.

(to Zack)

Didn't ya say one 'a your pals got nicked by those thorns too?

ZACK

(points to Jaleel)
Yeah, it was him!

JALEEL

Pfft. Thanks for remembering I'm here.

ZACK

Why haven't you been falling asleep?

JALEEL

Um... coffee?

Everyone looks unconvinced.

JALEEL (CONT'D)

No, seriously! Where I come from, there're these special coffee beans. They can keep you up for months! When I moved here I brought a few with me, and well, I started drinking like, forty-five cups a-

That makes Gibson uncomfortable. He grabs Jaleel by the shoulders, PUSHES him out of the room, then SLAMS the door shut.

GIBSON

(turns to Zack)
Why can't you have no friends, like I didn't have at your age?

Zack GROANS. He pushes past Gibson, and exits through the door.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Upon arriving outside, Zack RUNS UP TO JALEEL.

ZACK

Jaleel! You okay?

JALEEL

What do you care?

ZACK

You went after me when I left. I thought-

JALEEL

You **thought**? That's new.

ZACK

Look, maybe you had a point about how I don't listen. So, I'd... well, I'd kinda like to change that.

(Jaleel says nothing)

If you need an ear, I can-

JALEEL

I don't.

ZACK

Well, at least tell me about those coffee beans! I mean, were you for real? Was it real?

JALEEL

Sure, it was. Real as the tooth fairy, an' Batman, an'...

ZACK

C'mon, be serious!

JALEEL

Yeah, it's true. So what?

ZACK

So, why not give some to Frank?

JALEEL

Pfft. I don't have enough for someone over twenty feet tall. And even if I went back home I'd still never find enou-

ZACK

That's another thing! The whole world's all messed up, where could-

JALEEL

(sighs)

Let's take a walk, Zack.

EXT. STREET CORNER - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Jaleel leads Zack to the end of the street corner, and points toward an ORPHANAGE across the street.

JALEEL

That's where I live. Nowadays, at least.

ZACK

I... I didn't know.

JALEEL

You didn't ask.

Zack looks guilty.

JALEEL (CONT'D)

I used to live in a colony a few islands down from Forbidden Cove.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. DESERT - ESTABLISHING - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A disheveled Jaleel stands near CARS while their MOTORISTS argue. The environment resembles the original 1979 *Mad Max*: society is on the brink of collapse, but is still recognizable as our own. As such, the motorists are disheveled, yet dress normally.

JALEEL (V.O., CONT'D)

I was born just as society started breaking down, thanks to all the wars an' pollution an' stuff. My parents left our colony looking for a way to fix things, but they never came back. By the time I turned ten, everyone was desperate for a savior.

The ROAR OF A MOTORCYCLE is heard. Jaleel and the motorists turn, and see the SILHOUETTE of a FIGURE covered with SPIKES and sitting on a MOTORCYCLE. The motorists stare in AWE. Jaleel rolls his eyes.

JALEEL (V.O., CONT'D)

That drew folks to my uncle, Steve. He didn't have much in the brains department, but he made up for it with the easy answers they craved. Me though, well, I was kinda scared. Steve wasn't too nice to me, plus he

knew how to mess with my head. But worse than that he... well, just as a leader, he wasn't the sort who'd make rational decisions.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. DESERT - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Now the environment resembles the desolate wasteland of *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior*. The motorists aren't just arguing now, they're FIGHTING EACH OTHER! Not only that, but their clothing has changed: they dress similarly to the PUNK ROCK BARBARIANS of the later *Mad Max* installments—minus the S&M gear, of course; this is a kid's show!

Jaleel HIDES from the motorists, looking fearful.

JALEEL (V.O., CONT'D)

After a year, the foolish choices Steve made led our colony into barbarism. Y'see, Steve wanted to live in some kinda... I dunno. It was like he wanted to live in a medieval movie, where he was king. But that's no way to run a society, and it led to infighting. I knew eventually, our colony would split up into different groups. Once that happened, it wouldn't be long before civil war followed. I didn't wanna stick around for that...

EXT. DESERT SHORE - DAY

Jaleel puts the final touches on a CANOE he's built. Then he pushes it into the OCEAN, hops in, grabs its OARS, and PADDLES AWAY.

JALEEL (V.O., CONT'D)

...so I left.

EXT. PROVIDENCE STREET - DAY

Jaleel walks solemnly across the street, with Zack at his side.

JALEEL (CONT'D)

I figured I could find someplace else to live, and I did. Even with

the monster attacks, New Havenfield is... well, it's better I guess.

ZACK

Maybe, but we don't have anything like those coffee beans ya mentioned.

JALEEL

Pfft. Those're just the tip of the ice berg. Steve hoarded a whole shrine of things from-

(mimics quotations with fingers)

'-The Old World.'

(thinks)

Y'know, I think he even had an energy generator.

ZACK

You mean like what Harvey needs?

JALEEL

Not **like** what Harvey needs. **Exactly** what Harvey needs.

ZACK

Wow! That's really-

JALEEL

Contrived?

ZACK

Uhhh... I was gonna say lucky. But um, but look. In either case, we've gotta go ask him for-

JALEEL

I... I dunno Zack. I ran away. And even if I didn't, I doubt my uncle'd be willing to do me any favors.

ZACK

We've gotta ask! I mean, what other choice is there?

Jaleel's eyebrows furrow indecisively. He turns away.

JALEEL

You trynna guilt trip me?

ZACK

If I needed to, you wouldn't have told me all that.

(silence)

I think ya wanna help, but honestly, you're scared 'a going home. I can't claim to understand, I can't, but-

JALEEL

(turns back to Zack)

Oh, you **definitely** understand.

(grows sincere)

You're scared to come to school every day. It's why...

(takes a deep breath)

It's why I, y'know, I guess it's why I... why I went after ya today.

ZACK

(smiles)

That meant something to me. It did.

JALEEL

Up 'till now, I just looked the other way when kids, y'know, treated you like that. And even afterwards, I went right part to playing the part 'a cynical ol' Jaleel. 'Cause it's scary to **not** act that way. It's... it's lowering my defenses. An' back home... I'll be completely defenseless. Completely afraid.

ZACK

(offers hand to Jaleel)

It'd be less scary with a friend there.

JALEEL

(studies hand)

If we go, we might not come back.

ZACK

I know, but I... I think it'll work out. I **feel** it will.

JALEEL

(shakes Zack's hand)
That reminds me of something Doris
said a while back.

ZACK

(chortles)
What, 'stupendous?'

Jaleel LAUGHS at that. Then he becomes serious again.

JALEEL

'Courage is just fear with a little
faith.'

Zack and Jaleel stare at each other for a moment. Then Zack smiles.
Jaleel smiles back and starts walking away. Zack follows.

JALEEL

I've still got my canoe hidden at
the beach. Let's get a move on.

ZACK

Yeah!

EXT. DESERT ISLAND SHORE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The same CANOE from the FLASHBACK approaches the SHORE. Zack and
Jaleel are riding in it, but only Jaleel handles the OARS.

When the water surrounding the canoe is waist deep, the boys HOP
OUT, and PULL the canoe onshore. They look around the island. It
resembles the desert wasteland from *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior*.
Nearby, Zack notices what seems to be a SHRINE near a campfire.

ZACK

Is that... is that where the tribe
lives?

JALEEL

Might be, but Steve moved a lot. We
could spend ages looking for-

Suddenly, the boys are SURROUNDED by an army of CYCLISTS, driving
MOTORBIKES. They wear PUNK ROCK OUTFITS, covered with hooks,
chains, spikes, and other menacing apparel.

NASAL VOICE (O.S.)

Th-top!

The cyclists cease circling the boys. A new MOTORCYCLE pulls up. It is MUCH LARGER than the others, and has a MENACING MAN riding on it. He wears a HOCKEY MASK, a NECK BRACE and a LEATHER JACKET, studded with HANDCUFFS AND SPIKES. Jaleel stares at him.

JALEEL

Uncle Steve!

The menacing man, now known as UNCLE STEVE, snuffles and turns to the cyclists. He SPEAKS, revealing the NASAL VOICE belongs to him.

UNCLE STEVE

Take them to the Blunderdome!

The cyclists GRAB Zack and Jaleel and drive off, led by Steve.

ZACK

Wait! This is your nephew, this is-

UNCLE STEVE

Of cour-th he i-th.

JALEEL

I'm so embarrassed...

ZACK

Why? 'Cause Steve doesn't rememb-

JALEEL

No, I'm embarrassed that he still wears that stupid mask all the time.

INT. GLADIATORIAL ARENA - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The cyclists toss Zack and Jaleel into a GLADIATORIAL ARENA, resembling the one in *Mad Max 3: Beyond Thunderdome*. There, they are strapped into two separate SAFETY HARNESSSES.

UNCLE STEVE

I know who you are. Thi-th i-th a just little te-th to th-ee if you and your f-w-end are fit to become members.

A CYCLIST enters the arena and straps himself into a THIRD HARNESS. Then he ATTACKS the boys with a MALLETT.

JALEEL

I think we're more likely to wind
up- AUGH!
(dodges mallet)
...dismembered!

The boys flee in separate directions, as Steve continues:

UNCLE STEVE

Much ha-th changed in your absence,
Jaleel. Our colony th-plit in two.

The cyclist GRABS Zack's harness and PULLS HIM forward.

JALEEL

They didn't like your stupid laws?

Jaleel STEPS on the cyclist's foot. He YELPS, releasing Zack.

UNCLE STEVE

I th-uppose not. They took refuge in
a th-hopping mall on another island,
and hoarded it-th resources.

Jaleel runs under the cyclist's legs. As Jaleel does so, his
harness TRIPS the cyclist. The cyclist gets up and LUNGES at the
boys. They dodge.

ZACK

Hoarding huh? Bet ya know an awful
lot about that. A, a whole lot!

The boys dodge mallet blows, as the cyclist herds them toward a
wall.

UNCLE STEVE

Jaleel told you about the th-rine?
That-th for preserving cultural
artifact-th. Hoarding i-th the
domain of the splinter group. They
withhold necessities. Like...
(sniffles)
-medicine for my cold.

JALEEL

(crawls up side of arena)
All this time, I thought that mask
was squashing your nose.

The cyclist lifts the mallet to TOSS it at Jaleel, but Zack uses his chain to STRIKE the cyclist. The cyclist DROPS his mallet and it HITS him on the head, KNOCKING HIM OUT.

Steve CLAPS.

UNCLE STEVE

Seem-th your f-w-end i-th the only one I w-equire.

JALEEL

What're you talking about?

UNCLE STEVE

I need medicine; Trey needs Band-Aid-th; Trevor need-th sleeping pill-th and Mike-

JALEEL

Wait, you want us to go on a grocery run for you?

UNCLE STEVE

Your f-w-end, ye-th. Perhap-th you can tag along and learn something.

JALEEL

What's stopping **you** from going?

UNCLE STEVE

We t-w-ied that once, but could only manage a f-w-ontal assault, so the splinter group had the advantage.

Uncle Steve thumbs to a man who is COVERED ENTIRELY IN BANDAGES, and sitting in a wheelchair. He looks like a mummy, and only his helpless, blinking eyes are visible.

UNCLE STEVE (CONT'D)

It didn't bode too well for Th-avini. But you... you're child-w-en, and th-mall enough to sneak in through the air vents.

JALEEL

No way, I'm not gonna-

ZACK

Wait! Steve, you got an energy generator in your shrine, right?

UNCLE STEVE

Perhap-th... what of it?

ZACK

If Jaleel and I run that errand, can we have it?

Steve strokes his hockey mask, and THINKS. Then he SNAPS his fingers, and the cyclists OPEN the door to the arena.

UNCLE STEVE

I accept.

EXT. SHRINE - DAY

Steve rests his motorbike with the others, then walks over to Zack and Jaleel as they stand among many 'Old World' items. Some are mundane, like kitchen sinks and cars. Others are exotic, like the ENERGY GENERATOR that Zack and Jaleel are staring at.

Soon, the cyclists arrive with TWO BURLAP SACKS and GRAPPLING HOOKS. They place them in front of the boys, as Steve hands Zack a MAP. Jaleel looks hurt that he wasn't the one to receive it.

UNCLE STEVE

(pointing at map)

You can take the canoe to thi-th island. Once you get there, use these sack-th to collect our th-supplies, and the hook-th to climb up the th-ide of the building.

ZACK

Got 'cha.

Zack and Jaleel put the grappling hooks into the sacks, hoist them over their backs, and start walking away.

UNCLE STEVE

Jaleel!

Jaleel turns back and Steve removes a pair of handcuffs from his jacket, and SNAPS one cuff around Jaleel's RIGHT WRIST.

UNCLE STEVE (CONT'D)

Thi-th is a w-eminder: if you fail,

you th-tay here.

Jaleel GULPS.

EXT. OCEAN - LATE AFTERNOON

Zack and Jaleel ride through the ocean in the CANOE, which also contains the sacks and grappling hooks that Uncle Steve gave them. Both FORBIDDEN COVE and NEW HAVENFIELD are visible in the distance, although on opposite sides of the screen. The canoe travels through the space between the two islands. Jaleel concentrates on paddling with the OARS, while Zack studies the map. All is silent, until-

JALEEL

Do you believe him?

ZACK

Hmm? Y'mean your uncle?

JALEEL

I'm not convinced he'll let us have the energy generator.

ZACK

Don't worry; I'm pretty good at talking people into stuff. He'll give it to-

There's a THUMP at the side of the canoe! Zack and Jaleel look over its side and see an EEL attempting to knock the boat over!

JALEEL

Oh, for the love of...
(swats at eel with oars)
Go on, get outta here, get!

The eel begins SQUEALING, and zips off. Jaleel turns to Zack, and shakes his head.

JALEEL

Geez, now I've seen everything out here. Who would've thought an eel-

ZACK

(looking over Jaleel's shoulder)
I think it's from the Cove...

JALEEL

Huh? But it was a normal-sized eel.

ZACK

(points over Jaleel's shoulder)
I, I think it was a baby... and it
went to get it's, uhhh...

Jaleel grimaces, and whips around... to see a TWENTY-FIVE FOOT TALL MAMA EEL coming after them! The normal-sized eel is riding on her head.

Jaleel SCREAMS, and begins paddling manically... only to arrive in a heavily POLLUTED area of the ocean! All the garbage makes it difficult for Jaleel to maneuver his oars, and the canoe slows down. Then the canoe BUMPS into an abandoned BARGE!

JALEEL/ZACK

Oh, no! NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO N-!

Jaleel and Zack are interrupted by the sound of something GAGGING. They turn around, to see that the giant eel has entered the polluted area of the ocean... and that the pollution is making it SICK! The normal-sized eel SHRIEKS with concern, until the giant eel TURNS AROUND, and swims back toward Forbidden Cove.

Zack and Jaleel watch, until the eel disappears from view. Then their eyes follow the trail of pollution across the ocean. It's coming from NEW HAVENFIELD.

ZACK

(thinks,
starts panicking)
Wait... you mean we still haven't
quit it with the pollution? Even
after we hadda move to New
Havenfield 'cause of it? Y'mean we-

JALEEL

ZACK!

Zack stops panicking, and looks toward Jaleel.

JALEEL

This is not the time to freak out.
Help me maneuver the canoe outta
this gunk, so we can get Steve's
stuff.

ZACK

But you were just saying you don't trust-

JALEEL

I don't; but I also don't see any better options, so let's do this.

Zack thinks for a moment, then nods.

ZACK

Okay... but I'm definitely bringing up this pollution business to Ida...

Jaleel just shrugs.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. A NEW ISLAND - DUSK

Zack and Jaleel arrive onshore, and lift the grappling hooks and sacks out of the canoe. Then they make their way onto the island...

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. MALL - DUSK/LATER

The boys arrive outside, and use the grappling hooks to climb up side of the mall. Once they arrive at an AIR VENT, Jaleel takes a SCREWDRIVER from his pocket and uses it to open the vent.

INT. AIR VENT - DUSK

The boys crawl through the vent and arrive at a VENTILATION SHAFT. They look through it as the camera TRACKS THROUGH the shaft-

INT. MALL - DUSK - CONT'D

-and into the mall, which resembles the one in the original *Dawn of the Dead* from 1978. Below, the SPLINTER GROUP is visible. They are pale, move slowly and constantly GROAN.

INT. AIR VENT - DUSK

ZACK

Whoa. Are they like, zombies or something?

JALEEL

Nah. They probably just eat nothing but fast food here.

INT. MALL - DUSK

The splinter group hears Zack and Jaleel through the ventilation shaft. A THIN SPLINTER MEMBER lifts a VACUUM CLEANER while a MUSCULAR SPLINTER MEMBER RIPS OPEN the shaft. The thin splinter member uses the vacuum cleaner to SUCK Zack and Jaleel out. The boys BUMP their heads as they arrive at the INTAKE PORT.

THIN SPLINTER MEMBER

Ohmigosh... you're kids!

The thin splinter member TURNS OFF the vacuum.

JALEEL

Stunning observation.

THIN SPLINTER MEMBER

I'm so sorry! My name's Clinton.

The thin splinter member, now known as CLINTON, helps Zack and Jaleel get up. Zack notices the other members staring at them.

ZACK

Jaleel, ya **sure** they ain't zombies?

CLINTON

We're not! It's just... er, we just haven't seen children in years and... well, we split off from Steve's tribe because children are well... uh, we've um... Look, lemme show you around!

INT. BOOK STORE - DUSK

Clinton, Jaleel, and Zack enter through a door.

CLINTON

...and this is the library. I've read every last word!

JALEEL

Maybe next time, you can try reading **all** the words.

CLINTON

If that's you want, sure!

ZACK

Huh?

CLINTON

Listen... haven't you ever wondered what it's like to have people do whatever you want whenever you want?

ZACK

(tempted)

Actually...

JALEEL

Not really, no.

CLINTON

Um. Well see, that's interesting because... see, we uh, we'd like to do what you say, 'cause we're so thankful you're here because, uh...

JALEEL

(backing away)

This is getting kinda weird...

CLINTON

Wait! Just listen to me, please!

Jaleel looks uncomfortable, but notices Zack seems interested.

JALEEL

Okay, shoot.

CLINTON

The reason we broke off from Steve is because we felt his laws were based on an adult's self-interests.

(grins at Zack)

But according to tradition, only the unselfish heart of a child is fit to make those decisions!

Zack looks prideful. Jaleel looks dismissive.

JALEEL

Pfft. 'Unselfish heart.' Right. Look, has it ever occurred to you

guys that the reason Steve's no good at leading is probably because in many ways he's **still** a-

CLINTON

So, Zack! Is there anything you want us to do?

ZACK

Well, we actually just came here 'cause we needed stuff. Sleeping pills, Band-Aids...

CLINTON

We can get'cha you all that, A.S.A.P.! Anything else?

ZACK

(looks around)

We-e-e-e-ll, maybe you could clean this place up a bit too...?

Zack looks excited. Jaleel seems disappointed.

INT. MALL - NIGHT

Zack sits on a pile of SOFAS, watching the splinter group SCRUB THE MALL as he SHOUTS ORDERS.

ZACK

That looks great, now just-

JALEEL

(crawling up the sofas)

Zack, we need to talk.

ZACK

Oh, hey Jaleel. I forgot you-

JALEEL

You seem to be forgetting a lot. Like, for instance, **our mission?** We've got the loot, so let's go.

ZACK

C'mon Jaleel, you don't even **trust** your uncle.

JALEEL

This isn't about him. We're supposed to be getting the energy generator, and like I said before, there isn't-

ZACK

But, it's just that... well, here everyone is nice to me, y'know, pays attention to me. And back home...

JALEEL

Don't tell me ya wanna **stay** here!

Zack goes silent, and Jaleel stares at him in contempt.

JALEEL (CONT'D)

Just when I thought you were starting to change.

ZACK

There you go with the cynicism again! I'm finally somewhere I feel good about myself, where I'm happy, and you're-

JALEEL

Do you **really** think feeling happy's what's important?

ZACK

If that's not important, what is?

JALEEL

Okay Sherlock, let's play multiple choice. Option one: New Havenfield. Option two: a bunch 'a zombi-

ZACK

You said they weren't zombies!

JALEEL

(points down to splinter group)
But they sure look the part, don't they? I bet eating all that mall food tasted good, but look what it did to their bodies. Imagine what only doing what feels good does to your soul.

ZACK

What if... uh, what if we told 'em to eat healthy?

JALEEL

You're missing the point. Even if ya wanna leave later, they'll probably force ya to stay.

(crawls down sofas)

But it doesn't matter. If you're gonna be that selfish, I'll take this stuff back to Steve myself.

ZACK

Huh? But you're scared 'a-

JALEEL

(arrives on ground)

I **am** scared. But y'know what?

(swings sack over back)

You told me I should do this anyway. So, I will... even without you.

ZACK

Wait, listen Jaleel, I-

JALEEL

(walking away)

Save it Zack. Living a message is more important than preaching one.

EXT. DESERT - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Jaleel carries his sack over his shoulder as he makes his way toward a distant CAMPFIRE. As he gets closer, he hears VOICES.

CYCLIST

Think they'll be back?

UNCLE STEVE

Of cour-th. Those fool-th will beg for the chance to pander to child-w-en. Jaleel and his f-w-end will return with our spoil-th and the splinter group's loyalty. Through thos-th kids, I'll regain control.

UNKNOWN CYCLIST

And if the children leave?

UNCLE STEVE

I doubt my nephew ha-th the courage
to flee a second time. Even if he
doe-th... I won't allow them to.

Jaleel makes an "I told you so" face to himself, and stops to
THINK. Something occurs to him, and he retreats into the darkness.

EXT. DESERT - ESTABLISHING - EARLY MORNING

A cyclist sits by a CAMPFIRE, where he boils a POT OF PORRIDGE.
The cyclist leaves, and Jaleel appears. He POURS the bottle of
SLEEPING PILLS into the pot, then RUNS OFF. The cyclist returns
with a SERVING SPOON and several BOWLS. He uses the spoon to fill
the bowls with porridge.

EXT. SHRINE - EARLY MORNING

Jaleel hides near the energy generator, and stares into the
distance, where the cyclists take seats around the campfire and
begin eating their porridge. Time passes, and soon they are all
FAST ASLEEP.

Jaleel notices that Steve is absent and looks nervous. He waits a
moment, then turns to the ENERGY GENERATOR. He tries to lift it,
but it's too heavy to carry alone. Then Jaleel hears someone
SNIFFLE. Jaleel closes his eyes TIGHT and GRITS HIS TEETH. Uncle
Steve appears behind him.

JALEEL

Had a big dinner?

UNCLE STEVE

(sniffles again)

Felt a bit ill.

A moment passes. Then Jaleel BREAKS INTO A RUN, but Steve GRABS
him easily. Steve lifts Jaleel, who thrashes about.

UNCLE STEVE

Give me your hand!

Jaleel does not comply, but Steve manages to grab Jaleel's RIGHT
WRIST anyway, as well as the handcuffs that dangle from it. Steve

SNAPS the free cuff to his own wrist. Then he lets go of Jaleel, and extends his arm. Jaleel DANGLES in the air.

UNCLE STEVE

Where-th the th-upplies?

JALEEL

Probably in your gang's stomach-

(Steve SHAKES Jaleel)

AUGH!

UNCLE STEVE

Tell me the tru-!

ZACK (O.S.)

(over microphone)

Just walk away!

Steve TURNS to see Zack in the distance. He's sitting in a Go-Kart version of the SIX-WHEELED VEHICLE Lord Humungus drove in *Mad Max 2*. Zack speaks into a MICROPHONE and is surrounded by the SPLINTER GROUP, who now carry WEAPONS and ride MOTORBIKES.

CLINTON

Greetings from Lord ZACK, the warrior of the wasteland! The Ayatollah of Rock and-

ZACK

(lowers microphone)

Okay Clinton, stop it. It was funny at first, but now you're just being awkward.

Jaleel observes that Steve is distracted:

UNCLE STEVE

(staring at Zack)

He's th-tealing my lines, he's...

With his free hand, Jaleel takes a TOOL out of his shirt pocket, and begins picking the lock on the handcuffs...

ZACK

(lifts microphone)

I'm offering a compromise! You can have the loot and keep the energy generator. But release Jaleel, give

**us the energy generator and just
walk awa-**

(notices something)

Oh wait, never mind.

Steve is confused. Then he sees that Jaleel is gone! Steve turns around to see Jaleel running away and holding the handcuffs.

UNCLE STEVE

Hey!

Steve chases Jaleel. Zack signals to the splinter group who then DRIVE AFTER STEVE and surround him. Zack drives up to Jaleel.

ZACK

Hop in!

JALEEL

I didn't think you were comin'!

ZACK

(laughs)

I told ya not to be so cynical!

Jaleel stuffs the handcuffs into his pocket, and climbs into Zack's vehicle. As Zack drives toward the splinter group, he smiles. The splinter group have left their motorbikes, and are detaining Steve. Suddenly, Jaleel hears engines roaring. He looks back at the road behind them and YELPS! Zack turns to see the cyclists DRIVING after them on their motorbikes!

ZACK

No, all the noise must 'a woke 'em
up!

Zack starts driving, and a CHASE ensues. One of cyclists lifts a BAZOOKA and FIRES a projectile that passes over Zack's vehicle, and creates an OIL SLICK in their path. The vehicle SLIPS in it and begins to SPIN OUT OF CONTROL! Jaleel GRABS Zack by the arm, and the two TUMBLE out of the vehicle. They get up, and watch the vehicle SMASH onto the ground, upside down.

ZACK

Wow, that was a close one.

The vehicle EXPLODES!

JALEEL

(no emotion)

Yeah.

The splinter group GASPS. Steve takes advantage of their surprise and KNOCKS two splinter members' heads together, and PUNCHES another one. Then Steve RUNS FORWARD. The splinter members attempt to follow, but the cyclists arrive and FIRE oil slicks at them!

Zack and Jaleel get up, and see the splinter group FIGHTING the cyclists... and STEVE RUNNING STRAIGHT AT ZACK AND JALEEL! Zack and Jaleel GULP, and run away from Steve.

As Zack and Jaleel run toward the ocean, STEVE'S MOTORBIKE becomes visible. Jaleel stops and kneels down by Steve's motorbike. After a moment, Zack notices that Jaleel is missing. He turns around and sees Jaleel SABOTAGING the motorbike with his tools.

ZACK

(running back to Jaleel)

Jaleel! What're you doing? We've gotta-

JALEEL

Once he gets on this, he'll catch us in no time! I'm gonna rig it to-

STEVE CATCHES UP TO JALEEL! The camera follows Zack as he runs away, and Jaleel ends up OFF-SCREEN.

ZACK

(not looking back)

C'mon Jaleel!

JALEEL (O.S.)

Give me a secon-

Zack hears the motorbike EXPLODE. Zack looks back, to see that the blast has knocked Steve unconscious. Jaleel is nowhere to be seen. Zack PANICS, and runs back looking for Jaleel.

ZACK

Jaleel! Where are ya? Jaleel!

(stops to catch his breath)

He's gone...

JALEEL (O.S.)

No such luck!

Jaleel appears from behind a large BOULDER. Then he turns to the unconscious Steve, who is surrounded by the motorbike's wreckage.

JALEEL (CONT'D)

And as for you, unc...

Jaleel takes Steve's HANDCUFFS out of his pocket, and uses them to bind Steve's left ANKLE to the wreckage. Then he smiles at Zack.

ZACK

Cutting it kind of close there,
don't ya think?

JALEEL

(pats Zack's shoulder)
Don't be so cynical, I just had a
little faith!

That makes Zack SMILE. Then he looks into the distance. The splinter group and the cyclists are still fighting.

JALEEL

I wonder how long they'll be at it.

ZACK

I dunno. But we'd better grab the
energy generator and leave while we
can. I don't... well, I don't think
the splinter group wants me to go.

JALEEL

(scoffs)

Figure that one out all by yourself?

Zack starts walking back toward the energy generator.

ZACK

Naw, I had a little help...
(gives Jaleel a sidelong glance,
smiles)
...from a friend.

Jaleel SMILES.

EXT. DESERT SHORE - ESTABLISHING - LATE MORNING

Zack and Jaleel load the component onto the canoe, then push it into the ocean. It floats for a moment, then begins TIPPING OVER.

Zack climbs into the canoe, and his weight just barely balances it. Jaleel is about to get into the canoe as well, when-

UNCLE STEVE (O.S.)

Wait!

Jaleel turns to see that Steve is still handcuffed to the remains of his motorbike, but has woken up.

UNCLE STEVE (CONT'D)

Where're you going?

JALEEL

(turns back to Steve)

Like I'm gonna tell you that! You don't control me.

Jaleel resumes walking toward the canoe.

UNCLE STEVE

I've always been in control, you ju-
th don't know it.

JALEEL

(arriving at canoe)

Yeah, whatev-

UNCLE STEVE

For instance, I could've told you
where your paren-th are anytime. But
I never did, so you'll never know.

JALEEL

(turns around)

Wait, what?

ZACK

Jaleel! Don't listen to him, he's-

JALEEL

(to Zack)

Shh!

(to Steve)

No one knows where they are! They've
been travelling the whole world, so
they could be any-

UNCLE STEVE

You th-till don't get it, do you, Jaleel? You were an infant when your parent-th left, I could've told you they were off doing anything. But only I know the truth.

JALEEL

Okay, where are they then?

ZACK (O.S.)

Jaleel!

Jaleel turns back to the canoe, and sees that it's TIPPING OVER AGAIN! Zack FRANTICALLY tries to keep it balanced.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Get in! I don't weigh enough alone!

Jaleel enters the water, and begins walking toward the canoe, when-

UNCLE STEVE

Jaleel, if you leave now, I'll **never** tell you where they are.

Jaleel PAUSES mid-step. He closes his eyes and RUMINATES.

UNCLE STEVE (CONT'D)

Then I'll own you. Forever.

Jaleel turns around, and walks back to Steve. Zack is HORRIFIED. He opens his mouth to say something but no words come out.

UNCLE STEVE (CONT'D)

But relea-th me, and I'll tell you everything.

Jaleel sticks his hand in his pocket. Steve is expecting him to remove his tools, but instead he pulls out a soggy, rolled-up MAGAZINE, and plops it down in front of a very surprised Steve.

UNCLE STEVE

What-th thi-th?

JALEEL

I grabbed it from the mall. Thought I needed reading material for the ride home. But I figure you might want something to occupy yourself while you're waiting for your

cronies to set ya free.

UNCLE STEVE

Haven't you heard a word I've th-aid? If you don't free me I'll tell you nothing, and then I'll always-

JALEEL

You're dangling my parents in front 'a me like scraps before a hungry dog, just so I'll sit when ya tell me and stay when ya tell me. But that ain't happening. You don't own me Steve. You never did.

Steve looks defeated. Then he unrolls the magazine, and looks at the cover.

UNCLE STEVE

Well... at least give me a better magazine. Thi-th one-th for women. I-th gonna be boring.

Jaleel says nothing. He turns around, and coldly walks toward the camera. His emotionless face is seen in a CLOSE-UP, just like the ending of the original 1979 *Mad Max*.

UNCLE STEVE

You can't expect me to read thi-th! I-th boring! **I-th boring! You're jaded Jaleel! Jaded! JADED! JADED!**

Jaleel climbs into the canoe, and sits next to Zack. Together, they balance the canoe, and begin paddling away.

UNCLE STEVE (CONT'D)

You're JADED! And you'd better not come back in thirty-four years, played by another actor!

ZACK

(whispering to Jaleel)
What's he talking about?

JALEEL

I dunno. Just... just ignore him.

Jaleel and Zack continue paddling, as Steve continues yelling.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - ESTABLISHING - EVENING

Gibson and Chloe stand outside the military base taking notes, as a GIANT SILHOUETTE passes over them. The camera TRACKS OUT to reveal that it's HARVEY! Harvey WAVES to GIBSON AND CHLOE as his HEAD POPS OPEN. BRAD sits in the COCKPIT. Chloe GIGGLES at something OFF-SCREEN, while Gibson looks AFRAID!

ZACK (O.S.)

Hey Brad, think fast!

Brad looks around, then PANICS and PULLS A LEVER. Harvey's head CLAMPS OVER THE COCKPIT, as FRANK LEAPS ON-SCREEN and TACKLES Harvey to the ground. Frank lays on top of Harvey, panting merrily and LICKING him. Jaleel and Zack are riding on Frank's back.

BRAD (O.S.)

Get off 'a me!

IDA ULRICH WALKS ON-SCREEN, and makes a TSK noise with her teeth.

IDA ULRICH

Zack, your parents just installed the energy generator! We don't want the H.R.V. unit busted up again.

With one swift PUSH, Harvey thrusts Frank off and gets up.

BRAD (O.S.)

Well... I'm not big on Frank tacklin' me and all, b-u-u-t... I don't think we'll hafta worry 'bout that. This generator's aces!

Zack manages to remain balanced on Frank's back despite the push, but he's had to grab Jaleel's shirt collar to stop him from falling.

JALEEL

Yeah, we can see that...

GIBSON

Yes, mm-hm, well, why don't you go see it from a distance? It's hard enough to assess the H.R.V. unit's functionality without children running-

Gibson looks up at Zack/Jaleel, as they sit on Frank's back.

GIBSON (CONT'D)

-er, overfoot.

ZACK

I don't mind leaving dad...

(looks down at Ida)

'Cause actually, now that Ida's here, I kinda, well, I kinda wanted to talk to her about something.

Ida looks somewhat confused, but nods.

IDA ULRICH

Very well then; come to my office.

Zack and Jaleel slide off Frank's back. On the ground, Jaleel begins speaking to Zack:

JALEEL

Cool, guess I'll catch up with ya later on then, Za-

Jaleel stops speaking when he sees that Zack is already walking away with Ida. Jaleel looks disappointed.

INT. IDA'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

Ida takes a seat at her desk, and motions for Zack to sit down.

IDA ULRICH

Alright kiddo, what's on your mind?

ZACK

Well, when me an' Jaleel went off to get the generator, um... we noticed something. Like, pollution was comin' from New Havenfield, an' y'know, it looked like it was makin' the Cove monsters sick.

IDA ULRICH

Look, we need to dispose of our waste somewhere. And if you ask me, anything that impedes the Cove monsters is a bonus.

ZACK

But, like... what if that's why they're attacking?

IDA ULRICH

Zack, Cove monsters aren't capable of understanding concepts like pollution, and then retaliating.

ZACK

Well, even so, like, in school, we learned that pollution messed up our old colonies. And yet here you are, still dumping junk into the-

IDA ULRICH

First, pollution was just one small factor in society's collapse. Second, disposing of waste elsewhere would distract from more important matters, like our defense. I'm doing what's best for New Havenfield.

Ida notes that Zack seems unconvinced, and changes tactics:

IDA ULRICH (CONT'D)

Besides, who's teaching you? Jian Li? He's wrong about Frank, isn't he? Perhaps he's wrong about a lot of things.

ZACK

I-

IDA ULRICH (CONT'D)

If we took all this talk of pollution seriously, we'd probably have to take a lot more of what Jian Li has to say seriously, don't you agree? Like what he says about Frank for instance; that he's dangerous.

ZACK

But I, uh... like, I uh-

IDA ULRICH (CONT'D)

And you do like playing with Frank,

don't you? It'd be a shame if that had to stop.

ZACK

Wait... d'ya mean you'd...? No!

IDA ULRICH (CONT'D)

All I'm saying is, why don't you forget we had this conversation? Go play with Frank.

ZACK

(stammering)

I, I, I...

Zack stops to think, then reluctantly makes his way to the door.

ZACK

I gotta go...

IDA ULRICH

Good boy.

The door slams shut. Ida looks victorious at first... then guilty.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - ESTABLISHING - TWILIGHT

Zack arrives outside, and sees Jaleel approaching.

JALEEL

(smiles)

How'd things go with Ida?

ZACK

I don't wanna... uh, uh... I got someplace I gotta be...

With that, Zack takes out his WHISTLE and BLOWS INTO IT. In moments, Frank comes BOUNDING ON SCREEN. He hoists Zack onto his back, then motions to do the same for Jaleel, but...

ZACK

(to Frank)

Uh, uh, uh... um, Frank? No. Like, I kinda just wanna, like, just be with you right now. Okay? Yeah. Just be with you.

(to Jaleel)

Jaleel, uh, uh, it's nothing personal, um, I just, uh-

JALEEL

(sighs,
looks away, disappointed)
It's cool Zack.

Without another word, Zack BLOWS into his whistle again. Upon hearing it, Frank bounds off, carrying Zack on his back. Jaleel watches them depart, wearing a knowing yet despondent expression.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILITARY BASE ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

Ida Ulrich stands at the edge of the building, watching as Frank bounds off with Zack. She notes that Jaleel has been left behind. Ida looks even guiltier. Then Chloe appears behind her.

CHLOE

Hey Ida... something wrong?

IDA ULRICH

(turns to look at Chloe)
Oh hi, I... uh. I wanted to check on...

(thinks)

No, I just wanted to, um...

(motions upward)

I like to watch the stars...

(awkward pause)

...sometimes.

CHLOE

Hah, same here! Guess we've got something in common after all, huh?

(strokes chin)

Although, if that's the case, it's a smidge weird how this is the first time I've seen ya up here, huh?

IDA ULRICH

(looks away)

Ummm...

(changes subject)

Something occurred to me when I finished talking to your son.

CHLOE

(walks up to Ida)
What's that?

IDA ULRICH

He doesn't have a lot of friends, does he?

CHLOE

I dunno; he's got Frank! And-

IDA ULRICH

Yeah, I know but... well. I didn't have a lot of friends at his age either. And now I wonder... Well, maybe I encourage him to... I mean, I know it's in our colony's best interests, but maybe I'm contributing to him... isolating him... himse... him-
(voice trails off, sputtering)

Chloe BLINKS, confused. Ida stops to collect her herself, then:

IDA ULRICH

What I mean is, I still don't have a lot of friends even now, and...

CHLOE

(pats Ida's arm)
Whaddaya mean? Y'got me, don'cha?

That surprises Ida. She smiles at Chloe. Together they watch as twilight gives way to a starry night sky.

FADE TO:

EXT. FRANK'S CLIFF - TWILIGHT

Frank SLEEPS next to the TREEHOUSE, while Zack lies on his back. Zack stares up at the stars, looking worried.

FADE TO BLACK.