

The Fount of Freedom

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Written for "Red Dead Redemption 2" by Rockstar Games

EXT. VAN DER LINDE CAMP - MAY 1899

An outlaw camp southeast of Manzanita Post, at the edge of alpine Tall Trees and the barren landscape of Great Plains. Canvas tents dot a forest clearing, sandwiched between a riverbed and a shallow cave.

Pre-dawn, first light purpling the black sky. Low fire crackles in a pit at camp center.

TITLE: "Prologue-- Blackwater"

INT. ARTHUR MORGAN'S TENT

A half-empty whiskey bottle rests on a barrel beside a cot; pristine bandolier and worn boots are strewn across a roughshod fur rug. This is ARTHUR -- built and bearded, rugged 30s, an All-American man. His face is pinched even in sleep.

Lantern light and approaching footsteps wake him. He snatches a revolver from beneath his pillow, reflexively cocking it as he aims at the intruder.

CLOSE UP:

Barrel toward the intruder, steely glare on Arthur's face. Hold as it changes to recognition. Arthur lowers the gun.

REVEAL:

Standing in the open tent flap, HOSEA. He's a wily old outlaw (mid 50s) with snow-white hair and a once-fine shearling coat. He carries a lantern, purpose lining his sage face.

HOSEA
(sotto voce)
Wake up.

ARTHUR
What the hell you doing? I nearly
shot you.

HOSEA
Saving our skins. Now get
dressed--I want to get this done
before the whole world's awake.

ARTHUR
Alright, where we goin'?

(CONTINUED)

HOSEA
Blackwater.

ARTHUR
(groggy)
Blackwater...ain't that the town
Mac and Davey shot up?

Hosea gestures for quiet with one hand, lantern aloft to check for eavesdroppers. All is still.

HOSEA
One in the same, and you'll do good
to keep your voice down. Now come
on, Trelawney's waiting for us.

Arthur forms a question,
but thinks better of it.

ARTHUR
Sure.

EXT. VAN DER LINDE CAMP

OBJECTIVE 1: Meet Hosea at the horses.

INTERIM DIALOGUE: If the player idles.

HOSEA
Quit fooling around, Arthur.

HOSEA
We don't have time to waste.

HOSEA
The day's not getting any younger.

UPON READY STATE: Hosea leads his horse away from camp.
Arthur follows.

HOSEA
Let's take them out a ways--I don't
want anyone stirring from the
noise.

ARTHUR
You still ain't told me what we're
doing...

HOSEA
And I won't 'til we're away from
prying ears.

(CONTINUED)

ARTHUR

You at least wanna tell me why no one's standing guard?

(cont'd)

(pleased)

I swapped shift with Sean.

ARTHUR

(disbelieving)

That hothead passed on the chance to hold a gun?

HOSEA

Boy drank half his weight in liquor last night. I reckon he'd pass on being *alive* if it meant an extra hours' sleep.

ARTHUR

Guess so...(beat)I'm just glad we got outta Big Valley alright.

HOSEA

That alone's cause for a party.

ARTHUR

I *told* Dutch robbing trappers was no good...too much grit.

HOSEA

True, but it wasn't for naught. That's the biggest cache I've seen in years.

ARTHUR

(chuckling)

Was the biggest -- we drank through half of it last night.

HOSEA

Yes well...nothing's everlasting, 'specially with this lot.

EXT. EDGE OF TALL TREES - WEST ELIZABETH

OBJECTIVE 2: Ride for Blackwater.

A lush hilly forest with towering pines. Barren country lurks over the hills in Great Plains.

Hosea mounts his Turkoman horse, Silver Dollar.

(CONTINUED)

HOSEA

That should be far enough. Hop on,
unless you fancy walking all the
way.

INTERIM DIALOGUE:

Hosea idles, waiting for Arthur.

HOSEA

You gettin' on or what?

HOSEA

We'll never get there if you keep
fooling around.

HOSEA

Get. On. The horse, Arthur.

The men ride for Blackwater.

ARTHUR

Whatever we're doing, can't be good
if Trelawney's involved.

HOSEA

You're too hard on him, Arthur.
He's no good in a fight, but he has
his uses.

ARTHUR

Sure, like talking his way outta
debts...slippery bastard still owes
me for that poker game.

HOSEA

You'll make all that back and more
soon enough...we're robbing
Blackwater Bank.

ARTHUR

(incredulous)

At the crack of dawn? Folk may be
be sleepy, Hosea, but--

HOSEA

Calm down, we're just casing the
place. People here are getting
antsy, and I figured it'd be a good
replacement for....

(CONTINUED)

ARTHUR

That nonsense Micah's got Dutch going on about?

HOSEA

The ferry, yes.(beat) Not the soundest lead if you ask me.

ARTHUR

(grumbling, almost hurt)
Dutch ain't. Rat whispers easy money and he's deaf to the rest of us.

HOSEA

Watch it. I recall a few not-so-great jobs you've pitched us.

ARTHUR

(pointedly)
Yeah, 'til you and Dutch talked some sense into me. Someone needs to do it for him, Hosea. It don't feel right...all that money and almost no guard?

HOSEA

I admit it sounds...dubious. Which is why we'll bring this to him. Micah may have his ear, but he's untested. You and I have history, and you *know* how serious Dutch takes his loyalty.

ARTHUR

Sure.(beat) So Trelawney, he gonna help case the place?

HOSEA

Yup. Figured he could do some asking around. Would've asked you, but you don't exactly--

ARTHUR

Yeah, I get it.

HOSEA

I think that's him up ahead.

They come upon an impeccably-dressed man in a top hat and tailored navy suit. He tugs at his handlebar mustache, severely out of place in rural country. His horse paws the

(CONTINUED)

muddy path, clearly accustomed to comfort.

The man sees them and livens, bursting with the charm of a Barnum & Bailey ringleader. It is TRELAWNEY.

TRELAWNEY

(jovial)

Arthur, Hosea-- I was beginning to think you wouldn't show.

HOSEA

(pointing at Arthur)

Had to get this one out of bed. You're awful chipper for the hour.

Arthur stiffens -- the master conmen are at it again. Trelawney warms, sensing opportunity.

TRELAWNEY

I hardly slept -- spent the night talking gold prospects in a town just west of here. It's all bonds and paperwork for now, but if you boys supply the legwork--

ARTHUR

We ain't looking to go East, and I'm not getting tangled in another one of your schemes.

TRELAWNEY

(gregarious)

Arthur, dear boy, don't tell me you're still sour about that *game*?

ARTHUR

(gritting his teeth)

I staked nearly half my take for you and--

HOSEA

Arthur's right -- we're westbound. Dutch is aiming for California, but I'll settle for anywhere there's open country.

Trelawney raises his hands in mock surrender.

TRELAWNEY

As you wish.(beat) Now, you mentioned some business about a bank...?

(CONTINUED)

HOSEA

The one in Blackwater. Rumor is it's where the tycoons store their earnings, railroad and factory especially.

TRELAWNEY

(bemused)

And you plan to storm it with a band of desperados? If so, I'm afraid I've brought the wrong clothes.

HOSEA

(annoyed - he's used to being the only silver tongue)

My *plan* is to infiltrate it with a small group of smart men, see what we can learn...then rob the place blind.

Trelawney smirks at Arthur. He can't pass up a chance to rib him.

TRELAWNEY

And Arthur is along because...

ARTHUR

Hey!

HOSEA

(placating)

He may be a bit...hasty, but even you know he's smarter than he looks.

INTERIM DIALOGUE: Arthur jostles Hosea or Trelawney while riding.

TRELAWNEY

Watch it!

HOSEA

I taught you to ride better than that, Arthur.

TRELAWNEY

Look where you're going.

HOSEA

You still drunk from last night?

EXT. TALL TREES TO GREAT PLAINS - 6:00 AM - RIDING MONTAGE

Hosea and Trelawney riding alongside each other, Arthur bringing up the rear. The sky is brightening all the while, sun beginning to peek.

The two in lively conversation, horses racing along the tree-laden road.

Arthur, quiet and disgruntled -- both from the early hour and the company.

Muddy horse prints, half sunk with rainwater.

EXT. BLACKWATER OUTSKIRTS

Blackwater is on the brink of modernization, a town rife with rows of wooden buildings, in-progress construction, and telegraph poles.

From their spot on the hill the men glimpse a barely-waking main street, merchants and early risers on their way to market. Faint light flickers in windows throughout.

A whitestone bank crowns the head of the street. Arthur, Hosea, and Trelawney veer from the main road to cut through the quieter side of town, guiding their horses between homesteads.

They stop a few streets over from the bank, hitching the horses in shadow behind a saloon. Hosea beckons Arthur and Trelawney to him.

OBJECTIVE 3: Case Blackwater Bank.

HOSEA

We're on foot from here. Josiah, I want an account of everything -- security, how many lockboxes, what looks like it's worth taking. Arthur, you wait with me around the side. We move in when we get the signal. Got that?

CLOSE UP - ARTHUR:

Looking dubiously between Hosea and Trelawney.

ARTHUR

How we gonna know? Everything's an emergency with him.

(CONTINUED)

TRELAWNEY

(dry)

Use your head, dear boy-- I'm sure
you'll figure it out.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP - HOSEA:

Galvanized as he rounds on a plan. Sharp-tongued, quick
witted -- a glimpse of the formidable man from his prime.

HOSEA

That's enough, both of you.
Trelawney, be sure you make it
clear. Arthur, keep your eyes
peeled. Either of you gets into
trouble, use your knife or whistle
-- last thing we need is a swarm of
lawmen. Now let's go, we're losing
dark.

INTERIM DIALOGUE:

Arthur strays en route to the bank.

HOSEA

This is no time to wander.

HOSEA

Would you stop messing around?

TRELAWNEY

Come now, Arthur.

EXT. WEST ELIZABETH CO-OPERATIVE BANK, BLACKWATER

The three hide in the bank's alley, watching a GUARD walk by
the opposite end. He moves slowly, feet dragging as his dawn
shift begins.

He takes up post just right of the bank's main door.

HOSEA

(to Trelawney)

You're up.

Trelawney tips his hat.

TRELAWNEY

Wish me luck, gentlemen.

Trelawney exits the alley, heading for the bank entrance.
He composes himself before flagging down the guard.

(CONTINUED)

ARTHUR
(to Hosea)
You really think this is gonna
work?

HOSEA
(to Arthur)
Don't see why not. (beat) But if it
doesn't, I assume you brought your
gun?

ARTHUR
'Course I did.

HOSEA
Good lad. Hopefully we won't we
need it.

The man who speaks is not Josiah Trelawney. His posh accent is dialed to 11, hands sweeping in affect of an affable traveler. This is Upton Reynolds.

TRELAWNEY
(to Guard)
Good morning sir, is this the West
Elizabeth Co-Operative Bank?

GUARD 1
Sure is, but it ain't open for
another thirty minutes or so.

TRELAWNEY
I wonder if they might make an
exception? My aunt has a tidy sum
tied up here and sent me to see how
it fares. She's heard reports of
ill conduct -- theft, really -- by
the staff. I wonder if I might put
her mind at ease?

GUARD 1
(hesitant)
Well, I don't know--

TRELAWNEY
Please, sir. It's a long ride from
here to Annesburg, and I'd like to
bring back some good news. (beat)
I'll reward anyone who's of
assistance.

The guard piques.

(CONTINUED)

GUARD 1

(beat) Guess it can't hurt...Mr. Maxwell should be in already. Won't be happy to see you so early, but I reckon you'll want to get back before the sun gets too high.

TRELAWNEY

You're a saint among men, sir. Aunt Tilda will be so pleased...

Guard leads Trelawney into the bank. Arthur rounds on Hosea, impatient.

ARTHUR

And now?

HOSEA

We give him a chance to work.

ARTHUR

Whatever that means.

HOSEA

I'm surprised at you, Arthur -- you used to enjoy a bit of con magic.

ARTHUR

Sure. (beat) But things were simpler then. Less law, not so many people to look after...

HOSEA

(knowingly)
Different people?

ARTHUR

(burdened)
That too.

HOSEA

(chipper, but hollow)
You won't have to worry about it much longer. Soon as we land this we'll be back out West. Then what'll you have to complain about -- too much open space, too many pretty women?

ARTHUR

(lightening)
I'm sure there'll be somethin'.

(CONTINUED)

From inside the bank, faint chatter from two voices.
One sounds like Trelawney.

ARTHUR
Is he done already?

HOSEA
Doubt it. That man's stories put
Dutch's books to shame. He'll be
there a while yet.

Chatter grows louder, more irritated. Arthur's strays for
his knife.

ARTHUR
Trouble?

HOSEA
Too soon to know, but get ready.

Voices travel, reemerging outside. Trelawney, Guard, and
MANAGER -- a pudgy, owlish looking man, 50s -- in argument.
All three are visible on the opposite side of the alley.

TRELAWNEY
(outraged)
I've never had such an unpleasant
experience in my life!

MANAGER
(combative, to Trelawney)
You come into *my* bank and accuse
me of theft when *you* forgot your
lockbox key? It's a wonder you're
entrusted with anything at all!

MANAGER
(to Guard)
And you, Horace -- letting buffoons
disturb my quiet hour.

GUARD 1
Sorry, sir I--

TRELAWNEY
(overlapping, dramatically
incensed)
No matter. Aunt Tilda will make a
full inquiry of your bank -- we
will get to the bottom of this!

MANAGER

I welcome it! Perhaps she should inquire for a new nephew.

Manager retreats inside, waving dismissively.

GUARD 1

(annoyed, to Trelawney)
You'd best be getting on.

TRELAWNEY

Of course, Horace. Thank you for your time.

Guard returns to his post. In-character Trelawney trudges off, waiting a moment before tracking back to Hosea's hiding spot.

He is himself again, preening as he waits for either man to ask how he did. Arthur cracks first, surly but curious.

ARTHUR

Well?

TRELAWNEY

(proud)
Three big safes, two miniatures. A teller mentioned something about payroll in a few days -- could be promising.

(cont'd)

And security?

TRELAWNEY

It's well-guarded -- a barred teller's booth and two armed guards roaming the floor. The manager's office is in a hall left of the vault room. (pointing) That window should let out near it. Rumor is he's on the rocks with the higher-ups (beat) They may replace him soon...

HOSEA

(sly, understanding)
So if one were to roll in from out of town...

TRELAWNEY

(confirming)
I daresay he'd be welcome.

(CONTINUED)

HOSEA

Perfect. Looks like we'll need disguises. (beat) Arthur, think you can search for guard uniforms if I make a little noise?

ARTHUR

Sure.

HOSEA

Alright then -- slip through the window and take care of that manager fellow. Big bank like this, they'll likely keep spare uniforms in his office... Anything goes wrong, we meet at the saloon. (beat) Oh, and Arthur? Search his desk if you can.

Arthur in his element, spoiling for mischief. He nods dutifully at Hosea -- a proud son.

ARTHUR

Yes sir.

Hosea departs for the bank. Arthur covers his face with a black bandana and follows suit, shaking his head at Trelawney, who struts away prouder than a peacock.

INT. WEST ELIZABETH BANK - MANAGER'S HALLWAY

Damask wallpaper and fine wood span the narrow hall, lit periodically by gas lamps. Portraits of notable bankers line walls -- the manager is not among them.

Arthur hides in a closet as a TELLER knocks on the office door.

MANAGER

(muffled, offscreen)

What is it?

TELLER

Another customer askin' for you, sir.

MANAGER

Better not be another dandy...

TELLER

No sir, an older feller from Flatneck. Claims he'd like to keep

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TELLER (cont'd)
his horse profits in our bank -- no
bills, only gold.

MANAGER
(attention piqued)
Tell him I'll be right out.

Teller leaves the hallway. When the coast is clear, Arthur slips out of the closet. He is surprisingly agile for a man his size, making no sound until he hooks an arm around the Manager's neck.

He holds fast until the Manager is subdued, stripping him of his clothing and leaving him unconscious in a corner. Arthur finds guard uniforms -- plain burgundy duds -- in a nearby chest.

Arthur pockets them and rifles through the desk, producing a sheaf of valuable correspondences.

INTERIM DIALOGUE:

Manager, Teller, or Guard if Arthur is spotted for the duration of the segment. Triggers an instant fail state.

MANAGER
Good god, who are you? Security!

TELLER
Help!

GUARD 2
What are you doing back here?

Beyond the hall, Hosea keeps the teller busy with chatter. The teller breaks off.

TELLER
(to Hosea)
...excuse me a second, sir -- Clem,
can you check on Mr. Maxwell? I
know he takes his time, but this
gentleman's waited far too long.

ARTHUR
(upon finding documents)
This should do fine.

ARTHUR
(upon finding uniforms)
Hope he's right about these.

(CONTINUED)

Approaching footsteps from GUARD 2. Arthur crouches behind the door, ready to take him out. Guard 2 hardly makes it inside before Arthur attacks, knocking him out.

Sounds of a scuffle draw Arthur's attention.

ARTHUR
(calling)
Hosea? You alright?

He rushes out of the office toward the main floor.

INT. WEST ELIZABETH BANK (MAIN)

A well-appointed city bank. metal bars wall off the teller's booth; stone and varnished wood make up the rest.

Hsoea stands behind the teller's booth, teller's uniform in-hand. Arthur surveys the damage, surprised the old man can still brawl. He looks for the floor's other guard, expecting one last fight. The man is down, legs sticking out from the booth door.

ARTHUR
(skeptical)
Thought you said not to make a mess.

Hosea shrugs, wily smile tugging his lip.

HOSEA
Do as I say and all that. Have any trouble getting what we need?

ARTHUR
Not much...searched the desk like you said. Found some letters -- they're expecting a big haul next week.

HOSEA
Good, we can plan things back home.
(beat, looking out the window) Come on -- we were quiet, but town's liable to be up any moment.

OBJECTIVE 4: Return to camp.

INTERIM DIALOGUE: If Arthur doesn't follow Hosea out of the bank.

(CONTINUED)

HOSEA

There's nooses with our names on it
if we stay here.

HOSEA

For god's sake not now, Arthur.

Hosea and Arthur slipping out of the bank, returning to their horses hitched at the saloon. Blackwater is stirring -- people leaving their homes, leading their horses to water, and greeting each other on the street.

HOSEA

(patting Arthur's shoulder)
What'd I tell ya? In and out.

ARTHUR

Folks gonna be in for a shock when
that bank finally opens.

HOSEA

We'll be long gone by then. They'll
probably blame it on Colm's boys.

Arthur heartens, never passing up an opportunity to shame rival gang, the O'Driscolls.

ARTHUR

'Bout time those bastards took some
heat.

HOSEA

(pensive)
Agreed, there's been too much law
lately. And this ferry
business...(beat) Well, nevermind.
You did good, Arthur.

ARTHUR

(understanding, also
concerned)
All we gotta do now is convince
Dutch.

They nod at Trelawney, all in silent agreement as they mount and start the ride back. The sun is out, revealing each of their faces as they track past the homesteads.

Hosea is weary but satisfied, able to blend as he nods to people on the street. Trelawney veils nervousness behind theatric waves, ever the showman. Arthur's determination is a mask, doubt fissuring as he ponders Dutch's reaction.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST SURROUNDING TALL TREES

Galloping horses, racing along the treeline back to camp. The sun throws all into blurred, vibrant relief.

Camp's smoke appearing just over a short hill.

The three at camp outskirts, slowing their horses to a canter.

Arthur glances at Hosea, questioning. Hosea nods. Trelawney steels.

CUT TO:

EXT. VAN DER LINDE CAMP

Camp is awake. To the left, a firepit -- SEAN, JAVIER, and MAC nursing coffee, trying to ward off their hangovers. Their chatter is inaudible as Arthur walks by. GRIMSHAW crosses Arthur's path, shouting after TILLY and MARY-BETH. CHARLES whittles at a table with LENNY, who is hunched over a bowl of stew.

Tucked in the back is Dutch's tent, flap open. MOLLY -- a fiery Irish woman -- primps on a cot, heedless of the world outside.

DUTCH -- rogue-baron reject in his 40s; dark curly hair, mustache and gold rings with a red brocade vest. He moves with the charisma of a politician.

He is hunched over a map with JOHN (greasy, handsome face marred by wolf claws), MICAH (slinking, venomous blonde wearing a white Stetson), and DAVEY (stocky brunet, wringing his hands).

Dutch looks up, leaves off reading the map. Arms crossed, he waits for an explanation.

DUTCH

Just where did you run off to? I went to your tents and you were nowhere to be found.

MEDIUM - ARTHUR:

Looking to Hosea for help. Hosea steps forward.

(CONTINUED)

HOSEA

Had a bit of business to attend.
Chasing a lead, actually --
Blackwater Bank.

DUTCH

Were you planning on tellin' any of
us?

HOSEA

(unfazed)

If it panned out, yes. And it did.
Got a good tip, used Trelawney to
help case the place. Even got a few
uniforms so we blend in.

Hosea nods at Arthur, who reaches in his satchel. Arthur
hands one of the guard uniforms to Dutch, who eyes it
critically.

ARTHUR

(eager)

It's sound, Dutch. Got at least a
couple thousand holed up in those
safes with more comin' in a few
days.

Behind Dutch: John piques, curious. Micah is unmoved. Davey,
undecided.

DUTCH

(parental, almost patronizing)

A few thousand? Son, the ferry
Micah's told us about is worth a
hundred times that.

Arthur grits his teeth. Micah steps forward, itching for a
fight.

ARTHUR

(scoffing)

A *hundred* times? That even sound
right to you? We don't even know
where he heard this shit from--

MICAH

(with a snarly edge)

Typical Morgan, can't stand someone
stealin' his shine. I have it on
authority from the dockmen that
ferry's bringin' in cash.

(CONTINUED)

Arthur seethes, clenching his fists as he stares past Dutch to Micah, who hovers behind Dutch's right ear. They are a word away from blows. Hosea waits to intervene.

ARTHUR

And I suppose these dockmen just told you outta the kindness of their hearts?

MICAH

(antagonising)

Y'know cowpoke, one of these days you're gonna learn to respect me--

Dutch gestures for both to stop.

DUTCH

Enough!(pointing to the trees) We have enough fighting to do out there. I won't have it in here too. (beat) Hosea, you say the lead is sound?

HOSEA

If we move in a week or two, yes. Won't take much-- only two men if you count me and Arthur here.

Dutch calculates.

DUTCH

Go on, then. Pick your two and make arrangements. The rest are with me for the ferry. Jenny too.

Hosea nods, understanding. This is a test of wills.

HOSEA

Davey?

Davey paws the ground and reads the room. He isn't one for making waves without his brother, Mac, to back him.

DAVEY

I'm gonna stick with Dutch on this one.

Hosea is unmoved, expecting this. He turns to John, hopeful.

HOSEA

John?

MEDIUM CLOSE UP - JOHN:

(CONTINUED)

Silent. Gaze switching between Hosea and Dutch, narrowing when he lands on Arthur.

MICAH
(mocking)
How come you didn't ask me, old man?

CLOSE UP - ARTHUR:

On the verge of lunging at Micah.

ARTHUR
We *already* know where you stand, rat.

CLOSE UP - DUTCH:

Teetering on lost patience.

DUTCH
(warning)
Arthur...

ARTHUR
What, Dutch? We been with you how many years and you gonna pick him over us?

HOSEA
(overlapping, sharp)
That is *enough*, Arthur! John?

John's scarred lip flattens to a grim line.

JOHN
...Dutch.

Arthur tosses his hands, disappointment sagging his shoulders as he glares at John.

ARTHUR
(defeated)
Somethin' don't feel right, Dutch.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP - DUTCH:

Looking between Arthur and Hosea. Hurt flashes, then disappointment.

DUTCH
You're right. My two oldest friends have lost their faith. (beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DUTCH (cont'd)
...you'll have your two men. But I
won't speak about this again,
understand?

Arthur is about to reply. Hosea taps his arm, shakes his
head -- "won't do any good."

HOSEA
(quiet)
I used to. Come on, Arthur.