

ADVENTURES OF A COUNTRY VET

THIS TAKES THE CAKE

EPISODE 2

Written by

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Based on
"Adventures of a Country Vet" Book Series
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ADVENTURES OF A COUNTRY VET

"EPISODE 2 - THIS TAKES THE CAKE"

TEASER

INT. INSIDE THE CABIN - EARLY MORNING

The phone on the wall is RINGING. Dave throws the sleeping bag back and moves a kitten out of the way. He answers the phone. The rooster starts CROWING outside. Dave sighs.

DAVE
Doctor Perrin.

DICK (O.S.)
Dave? It's Dick Douma. I'm in big trouble with a heifer. Can you come have a look at her?

DAVE
What's she doing?

DICK (O.S.)
She won't get up and she looks like she's in pain.

DAVE
How old is she?

DICK
Ten weeks.

DAVE
Any diarrhea?

DICK
Nope, she's just down.

DAVE
OK, I'm on my way.

Dave puts down the phone, then runs a hand through his hair before going over to the kitchen table and opening a loaf of bread. He examines a piece for mold, picks off a margin of crust, then spreads peanut butter on it. He stops as he's about to take a bite and picks off a piece of hair, giving the kittens a look of rebuke.

ANIMATED MAP WITH CAR ZIGZAGGING DOWN TO FERRY

EXT. AT THE FERRY LANDING - MORNING

Dave drives his car onto the ferry. Bill pulls up the gate and starts the ferry across the river.

BILL
Up early.

DAVE
Yep.

BILL
Work?

DAVE
Yep.

BILL
Get your sink in yet?

DAVE
Nope.

BILL
Need pipes?

DAVE
Yep.

BILL
Got some.

DAVE
I'll be over.

Bill nods and walks away to dock the ferry.

ANIMATED MAP AS CAR DRIVES ACROSS CRESTON, ACROSS THE BRIDGE AND INTO CANYON.

EXT. AT THE DOUMA FARM IN CANYON - MORNING

Dave gets out of the car and brings along his bucket of tools. DICK DOUMA, a middle aged dairy farmer in overalls, comes to meet Dave.

DICK
Thanks for coming, Dave. I don't know what's goin' on with this heifer - she won't get up and she keeps kickin' at her belly.
(MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)

I fed her myself last night, and she was fine - this morning she looks like she's at death's door.

The two men walk into the barn.

INT. INSIDE DICK'S BARN - MORNING

Dave and Dick walk down a row of calf stalls, with the occasional calf sticking its head out through the bars. They remove the front of the stall, and find a very sick looking young Holstein calf. She's lying with her head tucked into her back legs, and she's grunting with every breath. Dave moves the calf sideways, then kneels on the straw beside her. He puts his hand in her mouth.

DAVE

She's cold as ice.

He fishes a thermometer from his top overall pocket and inserts it in the calf's rectum. He takes the stethoscope from around his neck and listens first to the calf's chest, then to her abdomen. Dave's face gets more serious as the exam goes on. Dick looks on, concerned by Dave's lack of comment on the calf's condition. Dave pulls the stethoscope from his ears and begins palpating the calf's abdomen. He pulls the skin on the heifer's eyelid up in a tent to check her hydration, then reaches for his thermometer. He reads the temperature.

DAVE (CONT'D)

37.2 - almost a full degree below normal. This calf IS at death's door.

DICK

Wouldn't you know it - she's out of my best cow and sired by the top bull in North America. I had a lot of hope for her.

Dave palpates the heifer's abdomen again, then thumps it while listening with his stethoscope.

DAVE

There's a lot of gas under pressure here. I'd be willing to bet we have some type of torsion.

DICK

Torsion?

Dave shrugs his arm out of his overall, then grabs the end of the empty sleeve and twists it 180'.

DAVE

See my sleeve? Sometimes the bowel can twist over on itself. If it twists like this, it's called a torsion.

Dave points at the twisted sleeve.

DAVE (CONT'D)

You can see where that would interfere with the blood flow, and the movement of the bowel contents. And if the fluids are trapped like that, in a place where they can't be re-absorbed, then she'll get dehydrated. See how her skin stayed up in a tent when I pulled it up? See how her eyes look sunken?

DICK

What do we have to do? I don't want to lose her.

DAVE

She's a long shot by the look of her, but if you want to try to save her, we'll have to do surgery. Can you move her to someplace out of the flies and with better lighting?

DICK

I'll get the tractor and put her in the front end loader - how about moving her to the meat shop?

INT. INSIDE THE MEAT SHOP - MORNING

Dave and Dick have laid the calf out on a table and Dave is shaving the hair off the surgery site. The calf looks almost dead. Dave leaves the shop.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE DOUMA BARN - MORNING

Dave is rummaging through the back seat of his car. He takes some things out and sets them on his bucket - a three liter IV bag, a cold instrument tray and a kit to administer the IV. He leans back into the car, and rummages around some more, getting more frantic as he looks.

Finally he stops, stands up, and hits the top of the car with both fists. He picks up his material and walks back into the meat shop.

INT. INSIDE THE MEAT SHOP - MORNING

Dave enters and sets everything down beside the calf.

DAVE

Wouldn't you know it - I brought my instruments into the house last night to wash them up after doing surgery. I sterilized them before I went to bed, but I left them on the kitchen table. I have to drive back and get them before we can do the surgery. Meantime, let's start her on an I.V. - she's very dehydrated.

MUSIC UP - "TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS" - BTO

MONTAGE -

- Dave shaves the heifer's neck and washes it down with soap and water
- He squirts alcohol on the neck
- Dave plunges a needle into the vein
- He sutures it into place
- Dave hangs the I.V. bag above the calf
- Dick watches in fascination as the fluid runs down the tube of the I.V. into the calf

EXT. OUTSIDE THE DOUMA FARM - MORNING

Dave trots to his car, climbs in his car and zooms out of the farmyard.

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - MORNING

DAVE
I can't believe I left that stuff
behind!

ANIMATED MAP OF DAVE SPEEDING BACK ACROSS THE CANYON BRIDGE,
BACK ACROSS TOWARD THE FERRY LANDING.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

He's flying along the road, concentrating on his driving.

EXT. ON THE ROAD OUTSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

The little Volkswagen goes zooming past the farms along the
way, passing every vehicle along the way. Dave is closing in
on the ferry landing.

EXT. AT THE FERRY LANDING - DAY

The ferry is on Dave's side - he's coming in fast, in a cloud
of dust.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

DAVE
Yee-Ha! Luck is on my side!

He brakes to go down the ramp and onto the ferry, then puts
on the emergency.

MUSIC OUT

Bill pulls up the ramp and puts the ferry into motion, then
saunters over to Dave's car.

BILL
In a hurry?

DAVE
Yep.

BILL
Work?

DAVE
Yep.

BILL
Somethin' sick?

DAVE
Yep.

BILL
West Creston?

DAVE
Canyon.

BILL
Headin' the wrong way?

DAVE
Forgot something.

BILL
Comin' back?

DAVE
Yep.

BILL
Almost lunch.

Bill secures the ferry at the far side and lets down the ramp.

MUSIC UP - "TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS" - BTO

Dave roars off.

INT. INSIDE THE CABIN - DAY

Dave runs inside, grabs the surgery pack, and runs back out the door.

ANIMATED MAP AS DAVE RACES BACK DOWN THE ZIGZAGS, TO THE FERRY LANDING.

MUSIC OUT - TOTAL SILENCE EXCEPT FOR SFX OF WATER LAPPING ON SHORE, BIRDS OVERHEAD.

EXT. AT THE FERRY LANDING - DAY

Dave's car stops at the ferry landing. The ferry is on the other side of the river.

DAVE

Damn!

Dave watches the ferry. Nothing is happening. He gets out of the car and stares at it. Nothing. He waves his hands.

DAVE (CONT'D)

HEY! OVER HERE! COME ON!!

There's no response on the ferry. Dave reaches into his car and beeps the horn, then leans on it. It lets out a pathetic VW horn sound.

DAVE (CONT'D)

GOD DAMN IT!

He waves his hands again, jumping up and down. He runs up the ferry ramp so he's got a better view across the river.

DAVE (CONT'D)

HEY!!!!

He's waving his arms. Suddenly he sees an arm wave back. Bill is lying flat out on the housing of the ferry in the sunshine. Bill holds up his sandwich in his other hand, then points to his watch - he's on his lunch break.

DAVE (CONT'D)

BILL! Get over here!

Dave runs back down to the car and beeps the horn again.

DAVE (CONT'D)

HEY! I've got a CALF DYING!!! GET OVER HERE!!

Dave picks up a rock and throws it uselessly across the river toward the ferry. He looks around helplessly for a moment, then jumps in his car, backs up the ramp and roars away.

MUSIC UP - "TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS" - BTO

ANIMATED MAP - THE CAR ROARS OFF AWAY FROM THE FERRY LANDING.

EXT. MONTAGE - DAY

- Dave drives along a network of back roads.

- He reaches a road construction site and he's stopped by a flagman. Dave is gesticulating out the window at him. The flagman shakes his head "no" several times. Dave argues with him. The flagman turns to another worker, then turns back to Dave and nods "yes". Dave dodges heavy equipment, caterpillars, earth movers, gravel piles and asphalt trucks.

- Dave comes out on the main road and powers away.

EXT. AT THE DOUMA FARM IN CANYON - DAY

Dave roars into the farmyard and jumps out with his instruments, running to the meat shop.

MUSIC FADES

INT. INSIDE THE MEAT SHOP - DAY

Dick is standing watching the calf, which seems to be barely alive.

DAVE
OK, let's do this.

DICK
Are you putting her to sleep?

DAVE
No, I'm giving her an epidural to paralyse her hind legs, blocking the nerves as they come from the spine to keep her from feeling anything.

Dave scrubs down the operating area, does the injection and puts a drape over her side, then scrubs his hands and puts on a gown and surgery gloves. He takes a scalpel and starts the operation. Dick stares down into the calf's abdomen.

DAVE (CONT'D)
That's where it hurts, isn't it, girl? See how that part of the bowel is all dark and full of gas? And that part down there where it's pale?

Dave puts a needle into a coil of gut and a hissing sound is heard.

DICK
Oh, man, is that ever rank!

DAVE

OK, now I can reposition the bowel. If the blood flow hasn't been cut off for too long, she has a chance. Yep. It looks good - there's still blood there. As long as we treat her for shock, she has a fighting chance.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INSIDE THE MEAT SHOP - LATER

Dave and Dick finish piling a bunch of boxes around the calf on the meat shop floor, then pick up Dave's instruments and leave the building.

EXT. AT THE DOUMA FARM IN CANYON - DAY

Dave and Dick walk over to Dave's car.

DICK

Well, what do you think?

DAVE

(somberly)

The bowel looked healthy enough, after we got things straightened out.....but she's still very shocky. You'll need to keep those fluids running - they'll be the key to our success. I've left you enough to keep her going overnight. I'll come back to change them tomorrow morning. If we can rehydrate her, she has a fighting chance.

DICK

I'll keep my eye on her - and my fingers crossed. Thanks, Dave.

Dave gets into this car and drives away.

ANIMATED MAP AS CAR DRIVES FROM CANYON, ACROSS THE BRIDGE, BACK ONTO CANYON STREET IN CRESTON.

EXT. AT DAVE'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

Dave looks at the exterior of the old building and sighs, then unlocks the front door. He picks up a small toolbox and walks inside.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave looks at the interior of the office. It is horrible. He picks away at the paper on the wall with a scraper. The carpet is bright red, and the wallpaper is green. ACCORDION MUSIC can be heard from next door.

GORDON (O.S.)
Dave? You in there?

Gordon walks into the room.

GORDON (CONT'D)
I saw your car outside. Startin' to make yourself at home?

DAVE
"Home" is not a word that springs to mind. Why would anyone paint wallpaper such a horrible shade of green?

Gordon leans in to peer at the wall.

GORDON
That's not wallpaper - it's rolled roofing that's been glued on the wall. They never spared any expense when they built things back in the thirties.

Gordon and Dave walk towards the back of the building.

DAVE
Is there a restroom on this floor?

GORDON
More or less - it's back there....shared with the barbershop. And you can use the sink in Gunner's old darkroom for cleaning your instruments and stuff, with a little fixing.

DAVE

Guess I'll be seeing Bill a lot more than I'd like....we had a bit of a run in this morning.

Gordon indicates a low, dark looking passage at the rear of the building.

GORDON

There's a whole maze back there that you wouldn't believe, with a stairway that goes up to an apartment and a storage room beside the restroom.

Dave stops, and looks around in awe.

DAVE

Oh man, Gordon, has a fire inspector ever been invited into this pit?

Gordon stops and turns to Dave, smiling, gesturing around.

GORDON

I wouldn't be tryin' to rent it to you if he had been. Norman Husband was thrilled that you were gonna rent part of his building.

DAVE

I'll bet. You really think that people will come to visit someone in a place like this and not be afraid to leave their pet behind?

Gordon points a finger at Dave.

GORDON

Not someone. You. And if you keep people happy and stay busy enough, you won't have to be in this building for long. Beside's.....

He looks up at the dirty ceiling, gesturing like Michelangelo towards the Sistine Chapel.

GORDON (CONT'D)

You'd be surprised what a little paint and wallpaper could do to fix this up.

DAVE
I'm afraid it will take more than
paint and wallpaper to make me
happy with this dump.

GORDON
Coffee?

DAVE
Coffee for you - I'll have milk.
And lunch.

They walk back out to the front and exit.

EXT. OUTSIDE DAVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave locks the door, then Dave and Gordon walk down the
sidewalk together.

GORDON
What're you gonna do for a
receptionist?

DAVE
Hadn't given it too much thought
really. It's one thing to keep from
starving to death when I'm just
worrying about myself. It'll be a
different story if I have to earn
enough to pay staff too.

They turn into the Bus Depot restaurant.

INT. INSIDE THE BUS DEPOT RESTAURANT - DAY

Dave and Gordon sit down at a table and look through menus. A
waitress, CAROL, comes by and pours coffee into Gordon's cup.
Dave covers his up with his hand and smiles at the waitress.

DAVE
Milk, please, Carol.

She smiles back.

GORDON
Thanks, Carol. I'll have the
special.

DAVE
Me too.

The waitress leaves, and Gordon takes a drink of coffee. He shudders and adds milk and sugar.

GORDON

Once you're more visible, and people can get to you without callin' all over town, you're gonna have more to do than you can handle. You'll need someone good to organize you, someone who isn't afraid of work and who'll keep busy without being asked.

DAVE

It sounds suspiciously like you have someone in mind. Are you in the personnel business too?

Gordon is trying not to look devious, and failing badly.

GORDON

Not really. But I do.

DAVE

Who?

GORDON

Her name's Doris Currie. Her husband died a few months ago - he was on a kidney machine for years and she ran it - she's not the least bit scared of blood.

DAVE

How do you know she wants to work?

GORDON

I chatted with her the other day and she said she was gonna have to find a job. I think you should talk to her right away, before she gets one somewhere else.

The waitress brings their food.

DAVE

Thanks, Carol. You may be right.

GORDON

Thanks. MAY be? Of course I'm right! So do you want to meet her tonight? I'll take you over and introduce you to her if you want.

DAVE

Let me think on it. Things are moving just a little too fast for me right at the moment.

GORDON

Well, you let me know. You could sure do a lot worse than hiring Doris, and if you rent that spot for even six months, it'll get you started.

DAVE

I've got an appointment at the bank this afternoon - if my loan comes through I'll feel a lot better about things.

GORDON

Here's to borrowed money - and all the great things you can do with it.

Gordon clinks his coffee cup with Dave's milk glass.

EXT. AT THE BANK OF COMMERCE - DAY

Dave pauses outside the bank, which has a very old and venerable looking exterior. He walks through the doors.

INT. INSIDE THE BANK OF COMMERCE - DAY

Dave walks through the bank, past the TELLERS, who all stop and look up at him as he walks by. Some of the customers turn to look, too - a tall stranger is in town. He walks up to the MANAGER'S SECRETARY.

DAVE

Hello, I'm Dave Perrin - I have an appointment with Mr. Hall, the manager?

SECRETARY

Certainly. Right this way.

She leads Dave over to an oak door with a frosted glass panel in the middle. The name T.M. Hall Manager is stencilled across the glass.

INT. INSIDE THE MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave enters the office and finds himself standing in front of the manager's desk, awkwardly waiting to be acknowledged by the MANAGER, who's on the telephone. The white haired, balding man with hawkish features plucks off his glasses and uses them to gesture Dave towards a chair but continues talking. Dave sits down, and the manager hangs up the phone. He stares at Dave in silence.

MANAGER

So what can I do for you, young man?

He emphasizes the last two words, then puts his glasses back in place and stares through them at Dave.

DAVE

My name is Dave Perrin. I'm starting a veterinary practice in town, and I'm interested in borrowing enough money to get things off the ground. My plans aren't elaborate, but I need a new car, some drugs and basic instruments.

The Manager pauses, and very deliberately crosses one hand over the other in front of him on the desk. His condescending manner gets even more pronounced.

MANAGER

And what, MISTER Perrin, do you plan on offering the bank as collateral?

DAVE

The majority of the loan would be for the car, and I assume you would have a lien on that - the remainder would be for equipment that the bank could market if necessary. I've just spent the last seven years as a student, so you can appreciate that I don't have a lot of assets to put up for collateral.

MANAGER

I assumed that would be the case, MISTER Perrin.

DAVE

Look, I could see that if I came in here with an airy-fairy proposal for thousands of dollars worth of equipment, you could question my chances of success, but I'm talking about starting small. I'm a professional person - I've already invested a lot of time and money in my future. I've got more than enough cash flow to cover a loan payments, and I don't live extravagantly.

MANAGER

I'm sorry **MISTER** Perrin, but I'm not prepared to offer you any hope of a loan with our bank. I'm afraid that I personally don't put a lot of value on university degrees.

Dave jumps to his feet and walks toward the manager's door.

DAVE

Well, that's short and sweet! And I have to say, from what I've seen of you, that if you were the last banker on earth, I wouldn't deal here.

Dave opens the door and starts to walk through.

MANAGER

It has been a pleasure "dealing" with you, **MISTER** Perrin.

Dave is through the door. He turns back toward the manager.

DAVE

Look, **MISTER** Hall - to you, it's **DOCTOR** Perrin!

Dave slams the door behind him. He hears a tremendous crash. He looks back to see that the door no longer has a frosted glass panel, and he can see Mr. Hall, sitting stunned, through the hole in the door. Pieces of the broken panel litter the floor. Every person in the bank has gone into a state of suspended animation - mouths open, staring in awe at Dave as he stalks out of the bank.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

EXT. ON THE STREET OUTSIDE THE BANK - DAY

Dave stands outside the bank for a minute, then walks to the nearby pay phone. He leans his head on his arm against the pay phone for a minute, then puts a dime in and makes a call.

DAVE

Hi, Bea, it's Dave. Any messages?
Werner Beier? A kitten? OK. No. No,
I'll drive out there right now.
Thanks, Bea.

ANIMATED MAP AS CAR LEAVES CANYON STREET, DOWN ON THE BACK ROAD.

EXT. OUTSIDE BEIER'S POULTRY FARM - AFTERNOON

Dave parks the car and gets out.

INT. INSIDE BEIER'S BARN - AFTERNOON

WERNER BEIER, a slender young man in his early twenties, opens the door and shakes Dave's hand, inviting him into the barn. He is clutching a black kitten to his chest with the other hand.

WERNER

Thanks for coming so quickly. Sorry to be so worked up, but I've never seen anything quite this gross before! Albert's leg's just hanging there, and the bone's poking out, all covered with dirt.

DAVE

Have you got somewhere I can examine him?

Werner leads Dave into an office space.

WERNER

This happened yesterday - Albert's really affectionate and follows me around everywhere. Yesterday I was working with the one ton truck, and he kept hanging around me. He was sitting on the box frame.

(MORE)

WERNER (CONT'D)

I chased him away, then got back in the truck to lower the box. He must have jumped right back up as soon as I got in the truck, and I lowered it on his leg. I heard him screech, and lifted it right off. He took off - I've been looking for him since then - I just found him half an hour ago.

DAVE

How old is he?

WERNER

Four months. No he's hardly moving. This isn't like him - he's a perpetual motion machine.

Dave scratches the kitten's head.

DAVE

Have you seen him move his back end?

WERNER

Yeah, he climbed out from under one of the fan units.

Dave looks at the uninjured side of the kitten as Werner is holding him.

DAVE

Let's shift him around....

Dave looks at the damaged side. It's bad.

WERNER

Do you think you can save him?

DAVE

Yeah, but the leg's definitely beyond hope.

WERNER

I figured that. Would it be cruel to let him live with three legs?

DAVE

Cats do just fine with three legs.

WERNER

I like the critter, but he's a barn cat. If it's going to be too expensive...

DAVE
I'll keep that in mind. I'm going
to take him with me to do the
surgery, but first I should start
an IV. Can we use your office?

WERNER
Sure.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE BEIER'S POULTRY FARM - EVENING

Dave and Werner put the cat carrier into the back of Dave's
car with an I.V. bag suspended overtop of the cage. Dave gets
into the car and drives away.

ANIMATED MAP AS CAR LEAVES BACK ROAD, TRAVELS TO CRAWFORD
HILL.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE VEITCH HOUSE - EVENING

Dave parks the car and goes to the door and knocks.

INT. INSIDE THE VEITCH HOUSE - EVENING

Ruth answers the door.

RUTH
Gordon! Dave's here! Dave, can I
get you some supper?

DAVE
No, I've eaten already.

GORDON (O.S.)
Give him some trifle cake! Daktari!
Bring your cake in here!

Ruth pops a bowl of dessert into Dave's hands as he walks
into the living room.

INT. INSIDE THE VEITCH LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Gordon is flat out on the floor, cushion under his stomach
with his dessert in hand, watching TV.

GORDON
Pull up a cushion, Dave.

Dave grabs a cushion and lies down on the floor, spooning in his dessert.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Look at that guy. Lying bugger.

He's watching a news broadcast of Richard Nixon, defending himself against the Watergate charges. He waves his spoon at the TV set.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Imagine, recording everybody that ever came through the White House. And what was in those missing seventeen minutes? How would he know which ones to erase?

DAVE

You've got me. That guy's in a lot of hot water.

GORDON

Hah! WaterGATE.

RUTH

He seemed like such a nice man.

GORDON

They always do. Well, Daktari, you ready to meet your new assistant?

EXT. OUTSIDE THE VEITCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave and Gordon get into Dave's car.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - NIGHT

Dave sits without starting the car before turning to Gordon.

DAVE

Look, Gordon, I don't know if we should do this.

GORDON

We've talked about this...

DAVE

Things didn't... go too well... at the bank today.

GORDON

What do you mean?

DAVE

I went to the bank, and the manager
wouldn't give me a loan.

GORDON

What! Why not?

DAVE

He said he didn't value university
degrees....

GORDON

Wait! Which bank?

DAVE

The Commerce. I've always.....

Gordon is laughing hysterically.

GORDON

You just went to your competition's
bank.

DAVE

I broke his window.

GORDON

You what?

DAVE

I broke the window in his office
door.

GORDON

Daktari, you're a treasure.
Tomorrow, I'll introduce you to MY
bank manager. And I don't think
he'll turn you down. Now let's go -
destiny awaits us a half mile down
the road!

DAVE

OK, but we can't stay long - I have
to do surgery on a kitten back at
my place. It's in that carrier in
the back seat. Are you sure this
lady will work out alright?

GORDON

Madame C? Oh, yeah, don't worry
about her. She's a real trooper -
exactly what you need.

EXT. OUTSIDE DORIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon rings the bell, with Dave standing behind him. The door is opened by DORIS, a tall, very proper looking woman in her mid-fifties, immaculately dressed, and with hair straight out of a beauty parlour.

DORIS
Come on in.

INT. INSIDE DORIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Doris and Dave are sizing each other up.

GORDON
Doris, this is Doctor Dave Perrin,
the new veterinarian in town. Dave,
this is my friend, Doris Currie.

DORIS
Glad to meet you, Doctor Perrin.

DAVE
Good to meet you too, Doris.

Dave shifts uneasily as he meets Doris, and shakes her hand. He glances uncomfortably at Gordon. Doris sees the look, and tries to put Dave at ease.

DORIS
Well, come in and sit down - I've
got some coffee and cookies out
here...

GORDON
Just set the cookies down by me,
Doris. Doctor Perrin is obviously
not interested in them.

There is an uncomfortable silence while Doris pours coffee and hands it around.

DAVE
Have you lived in Creston for a
long time?

DORIS
We moved here from Ontario when I
was a year and a half old, and I've
lived here since.

Silence. Doris and Dave pick up their coffee. Dave takes a sip, grimaces and sets it back down. Gordon comfortably grazes on the cookies, smiling at them both benignly.

DAVE

Have you worked on a farm all that time? Or do you have any other job experience?

Doris smiles, and sits back on the sofa.

DORIS

I went to school with Stu - my husband. We got married in 1941. We lived in a little house up the road a bit, and when they upped the rent to ten dollars a month, we built here. Stu bought this farm from his dad after he was discharged from the airforce in 1945. He was wounded in the war and they treated him with sulfonamides. That landed him with chronic nephritis, and he lived with it for twenty-odd years before he finally went on dialysis.

Doris put down her cup and takes a deep breath, glancing at Gordon, who smiles and nods at her.

DORIS (CONT'D)

I guess I've been pretty much a housewife, a farmer, and a mother for my three children. As Stu got worse, I spent my time looking after him. At first we went back and forth to Trail for dialysis. When they came up with home units, I took training as a renal technician, and we started doing it here.

Doris stops talking and looks out the window, blinking back tears.

DORIS (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Stu died in March.

There is utter silence in the room, except the ticking of a clock somewhere. Gordon clears his throat, getting ready to bridge the gap somehow. Dave makes a decision.

DAVE

So...when do you think you could start?

Doris turns back to Dave, shocked.

DORIS

Well, I don't have anything keeping me from starting right away....

She puts her cup down and clasps her hands together. She's made a decision too.

DORIS (CONT'D)

I think it's time I got on with my life and stopped moping around this house.

DAVE

Good. Would you like to start tonight or tomorrow morning?

DORIS

Pardon me?

DAVE

I know this is Saturday night, but I have a kitten in the car that needs a leg amputated. If the surgery doesn't bother you and we don't have to scrape you off the floor, it's not likely any of the others will either. I'm not sure how busy we're going to be at the start - it may be just part-time. If it gets slow, you can always bring your knitting.

DORIS

I guess we could do it tonight....

DAVE

Are you OK with driving up to West Creston? That's where my surgery is at.

DORIS

Could we do it here? I've still got everything set up from Stu's dialysis - countertop, sinks....

DAVE

Yeah, we could, if you're OK with that. I'll get the kitten.

Dave turns to go. Gordon sidles up to him.

GORDON
 What did I tell you? What did I
 tell you?? (to Doris) Any more
 cookies, Doris?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INSIDE DORIS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dave and Doris are concentrating on the kitten laid out on the counter, while Gordon lounges in the background.

DAVE
 That's great, Doris - we're almost
 finished. The stump looks good - we
 just have to close up the incision.
 I need some of the other suture
 now, Doris, if you don't mind.

Dave points to a container of Vetafil on the counter.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Just pop open the lid and then grab
 the suture material and pull it
 straight up.

DORIS
 He just twitched his ear. Should I
 give him some more anesthetic?

DAVE
 No, I'll just be a couple more
 minutes. That's almost perfect
 timing. We're done. Albert's going
 to be just fine.

GORDON
 That looks good. Have you done a
 lot of these?

DAVE
 Just this one. My first. Thank you,
 Doris.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - MORNING

Dave and Doris are in Dave's car on the way to Canyon. Dave is concentrating on the road, a worried look on his face.

DAVE

I thought you might as well come along on this farm call. I tried phoning Douma's several times from my house. It took me half an hour to get a call out...

DORIS

Party line?

DAVE

You bet. I had to try the phone every five minutes before my neighbours took the hint and the line got freed up. When I finally dialled Dick's number, there was no answer.

DORIS

Dick was probably out in the barn. He and Marie have a lot on their plate with that place.

DAVE

I know, but I wanted to find out if the calf was still with us or not. It was still in pretty rough shape when I left. If she's still alive, you can help me change over the I.V. bag.

DORIS

You think she might not have made it?

DAVE

She was in dire straits by the time we did the surgery. Part of that was my fault - I forgot my instruments and I wasted time going back to West Creston to get them.

DORIS

Dave, we farmers know you can't save them all.

Dave nods his head, but still looks worried.

EXT. AT THE DOUMA FARM IN CANYON - MORNING

Dave parks, and he walks toward the meat house with Doris following. He has a bag of ringers lactate in his hand.

DAVE

We'll change the bag, and keep the fluids running. Hopefully, after this one, we'll be able to take out the I.V.

INT. INSIDE THE MEAT SHOP - MORNING

Dave stops in the doorway, blocking Doris. She steps around him. The meat shop is empty - no calf. There's a puddle of blood on the floor, and the boxes that had surrounded the pallet of straw are knocked all over the room.

DAVE

She's gone. She didn't make it.

Dave sets down the bag of ringers lactate on a table.

DORIS

Are you sure?

DAVE

Yeah, it's my fault. If only I hadn't forgotten my instruments.... If we'd just had that extra hour....

DORIS

Maybe he just moved her back to her pen...

DAVE

She had all the I.V. stuff in - he knew I was coming back this morning. Why would he move her?

DORIS

Let's check.

Dave and Doris leave the meat shop.

INT. INSIDE THE DOUMA BARN - MORNING

Dave and Doris walk along the row of calves and come to the empty pen where the sick calf had been.

DAVE

She's not here.

DORIS

I guess you're right. What a shame....

DICK (O.S.)
 Dave, is that you in here?

Dick enters. He looks unhappy.

DICK (CONT'D)
 We didn't get our shipment of
 brewer's mash yesterday and the
 cows have really gone into a
 tailspin. They dropped almost five
 hundred pounds this pickup. Hey,
 Doris, what are you up to?

DORIS
 I'm working for Dave now. His
 assistant.

Dick's mind is still clearly on his low milk yield.

DICK
 Hummph. So I guess you want to look
 at the heifer.....

Dave and Doris exchange a look. Dave sighs.

DAVE
 Yeah, sure.

Dick turns to leave the barn. Dave and Doris follow him.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 (quietly to Doris)
 I guess you get to watch your first
 post mortem....

EXT. BESIDE DICK'S BARN - MORNING

Dick leads them out of the barn and stops alongside one of the outbuildings. There's the calf, anything but dead. In fact she's standing up, picking at the new grass along the side of the building. She looks up when they approach, lazily switching her tail at flies that are settling on her smoothly shaved side.

DICK
 Boy, I'm glad that ordeal's over.
 Yesterday when I changed the fluid
 around five, she was starting to
 move her legs a bit and holding up
 her head. Everything was moving
 inside because she took a couple of
 big dumps. I came out again about
 ten and she was quiet.
 (MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)

Then I came out here this morning,
and there she was standing in the
middle of the room! She'd knocked
the boxes all over and was bleeding
a bit from where she unhooked the
I.V., so I took it out and turned
her out here where there's some
green grass for her to pick at.

Doris and Dave are staring at the calf. Dick slaps Dave on
the shoulder.

DICK (CONT'D)

You did good, doc.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

ANIMATED MAP AS CAR DRIVES FROM CANYON, ACROSS THE BRIDGE, AND SCREECHES TO A HALT IN FRONT OF THE NEW OFFICE ON CANYON STREET.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Doris is standing inside the door of the new office space, looking around in disbelief.

DORIS

Oh, dear...talk about your fixer-upper....

DAVE

Pretty depressing, isn't it? Do you think there's any hope?

DORIS

You know, I came into this building dozens of times when it was Gunnar Larson's Photo Studio, and I never got the impression it was such a dump. I never thought about it when I dropped off a roll of film.

DAVE

Any brilliant ideas?

Doris walks around the room, then stops in the middle.

DORIS

Well, when Stu and I moved into our first house in Erickson, the walls were covered with this same stuff - we just plastered it with wallpaper - it hides a multitude of sins. Let's go down to Creston Hardware and look at wallpaper. I bet that the Barnes boys will have some ideas.

INT. INSIDE CRESTON HARDWARE - DAY

BOB BARNES is leading Doris and Dave along the aisles of the store.

BOB

Yeah, that place is in pretty rough shape. Here's the wallpaper - this is one of the new ones...

Bob holds up a roll of wallpaper with big roses all over it.
Doris shakes her head.

DORIS

No, that's too much. More for a
kid's room.

She reaches for a roll of heavy off-white paper that is
covered with a black velvet pattern.

DORIS (CONT'D)

Here we are. This might work.

DAVE

That one?

DORIS

THAT one!

BOB

Good choice - just got those in -
got lots of it in stock. And you'll
need paint - lots of paint.
Brushes, rollers, drop sheets.
We've got a sale comin' up - I can
give you a good deal.

DORIS

And a mop and bucket, and a broom
and dustpan.

DAVE

Here's hoping my loan comes
through.

INT. INSIDE OFFICE OF THE MANAGER, BANK OF MONTREAL - DAY

Dave is shaking hands with the bank manager, KEVIN GIBBS,
while Gordon looks on.

KEVIN

No problem, Doctor Perrin, we're
happy to do business with you. Just
let me know if you need a bigger
loan, if you've forgotten
something. We hope that you'll do
all your business here. But watch
out for this guy. He's got big
plans - for everybody.

Kevin claps Gordon on the shoulder, and Gordon and Dave turn
to leave.

GORDON
I have big plans for Dave anyway.

DAVE
Not until I get a new car.

ANIMATED MAP AS CAR DRIVES FROM CANYON STREET TO RIVERVIEW.

EXT. PARTINGTON DAIRY FARM BARN - DAY

Dave is doing rectal exams on Holstein cows to check for pregnancies. JEAN PARTINGTON calls out to Dave.

JEAN
Dave! You've got phone call.

Dave pulls his hand out and peels off the long glove, then walks over to the wall phone.

DAVE
Doctor Perrin speaking.

MRS. LENNARD (O.S.)
Doctor Perrin, this is Mrs. Lennard from out at Yahk. I got a little horse that's bin hurt. Kids found him lyin' down all caught in his tether chain. Now his back leg's stickin' out funny.

DAVE
Near the hock?

MRS. LENNARD (O.S.)
Don't know much about horses - just that it's about halfway up.

DAVE
OK - that doesn't sound good. I'm almost done here, then I'll be on my way.

Dave hangs up the phone and turns to Jean.

DAVE (CONT'D)
OK, Jean, that's the last one. I've got a horse emergency in Yahk, so I'd better take off.

JEAN
Yahk? That's quite a drive. Anyone I know?

DAVE
The Lennards.

JEAN
Oh.....

DAVE
Oh?

JEAN
They're a little....different. Good
luck.

DAVE
Thanks - I think.

Dave exits the barn.

ANIMATED MAP AS DAVE DRIVES TOWARDS YAHK.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Dave is driving out to Yahk. He turns on his car radio, and
adjusts the tuner. He's relaxed as the miles fly by.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
You're listening to Radio CFKC,
Creston Radio, 1340 on your radio
dial - if you're out there on the
road, here's a song just for you!

MUSIC UP - "SIX DAYS ON THE ROAD" - Sawyer Brown

EXT. MONTAGE - DAY

- Shots of the countryside going by
- farms
- fields
- animals
- bridges
- sign that says "Entering Yahk"
- passing the General Store
- crossing the Yahk bridge
- slowing as he searches for the road sign

MUSIC FADES

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LENNARD FARM - DAY

Dave rolls to a stop and compares his directions to the sight he's facing - the Lennard farm. On some level, it's amazing. The old white house has been repaired with every description of building material. The cedar shake roof now sports patches of tarpaper and flattened out oilcans. The fields are spotted with rocks and boulders, interspersed with aging wrecked cars in various stages of destruction and rust. Dave pulls up, parks by the house and gets out. MRS. LENNARD, a pleasant forty-ish woman emerges from the house.

MRS. LENNARD

Dr. Perrin? The pony's out in the pasture.

EXT. IN THE PASTURE - DAY

Mrs. Lennard and Dave dodge their way through the pasture between rocks and cars, walking towards a GROUP OF CHILDREN who are gathered around a pony. A portly, grey haired man, MR. LENNARD, is seated on one of the boulders nearby.

MRS. LENNARD

He's a prince of a pony, that one. The kids kin do absolutely anythin' with 'im. He was fine when we put 'im out here at nine this mornin'. The kids come over to fetch 'im and found 'im just layin' with his broken leg under 'im and the chain wrapped 'round. We got 'im untangled but the leg just kinda hangs there and dangles funny - shur hope that he's gonna be all right or them kid'll be some upset.

MR. LENNARD

(yelling)
THE CHAINSAW!

DAVE

Pardon me?

Mr. Lennard thrusts a bandaged arm out at Dave.

MR. LENNARD

The chain saw! I cut my damn cords
with the chain saw. Just got back
to work too - only my second day.

He thrusts his fingers right up into Dave's face for him to see.

MR. LENNARD (CONT'D)

Can't wiggle the damned things yet.
First me, now the bloody horse!

Dave bends down to look at the pony's leg, with Mrs. Lennard and all the children crowding around. He carefully palpates around the location of the change in angle then moves the bottom of the leg back and forth.

DAVE

See this joint? The pony didn't
break his leg - the problem is a
dislocation. The pony must have
gotten the chain wrapped around his
hock, then he fell over sideways.
He didn't break a bone, but he tore
the supporting structures that hold
the leg together. The bones pulled
apart, and now they're badly
overlapped.

Everyone is peering over Dave's shoulder in total silence.

DAVE (CONT'D)

There's not much doubt that even if
it was possible to repair this
dislocation, the pony would end up
with arthritis in the joint and not
be good for riding.

Silence as the whole family continues to peer over his shoulder. This is getting uncomfortable for Dave, and he's squirming now, uncertain how to handle these people.

DAVE (CONT'D)

So....I'm afraid he'll have to be
put to sleep.

Silence from one and all. Dave turns his attention rather desperately to Mrs. Lennard.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Is that what you'd like me to do?
Would you like me to put him to
sleep?

Mrs. Lennard looks at Dave with a baffled expression, with no emotion.

MRS. LENNARD

OK.

Dave picks his way back to his car, fills up a large syringe with euthanasia solution, sticks a bottle of alcohol in his pocket, and walks back to the pony.

DAVE

Uh, wouldn't it be better for the children if they were to go back to the house?

MRS. LENNARD

They won't be in yer way, will they?

DAVE

O....kay... Can you all stand back a bit, then?

Dave wipes the pony's hair down with alcohol, and is poised to insert the large fourteen gauge needle.

MRS. LENNARD

What'er you gonna do with Freckles when he's sleepin'?

Dave freezes with the needle against Freckles' neck. He pulls his hand with the needle carefully away from the horses's neck and steps away from the pony.

DAVE

Mrs. Lennard, you obviously don't understand what I was suggesting. What I meant was that I don't think the pony has much chance of a normal life, and that he should be put to sleep permanently - destroyed!

MRS. LENNARD

(horrified)

Kill 'im?

In unison, the entire family bursts into loud blubbering tears. Mrs. Lennard throws herself on the pony's neck and weeps into his mane. Dave turns to Mr. Lennard, only to find that he's weeping too.

DAVE

(a little desperately)

I doubt if there's any way I'd be able to fix it even if I tried! There's so little chance that he'd be normal even if I could get it back in place. You wouldn't want to see him crippled and limping around for the rest of his life?

Everyone is openly wailing now. Dave is at a loss.

DAVE (CONT'D)

The only thing we could possibly do would be to anesthetize him and see how well it would reduce, but it may never stay in place.

Suddenly there is dead silence. They've all stopped crying and are staring at him like he's an angel dropped from heaven.

MRS. LENNARD

OK.

Dave is horrified - he's stepped his own trap.

MR. LENNARD

Where'll you want to do it? Do ya want 'im over at the house? I think he kin hop that far.

Dave is trying to come up with a reply, but he can't get anything out, and he looks helplessly from one Lennard to the other, playing for time. Mr. Lennard raises his eyebrow and looks at him questioningly.

DAVE

Uh....sure. I guess if you can get him to move over there.

Dave takes a step to leave, then turns back to face the Lennards.

DAVE (CONT'D)

You can move him over there. It's going to take me some time to go back to town and get all the supplies together that I'll need to have for this.

The Lennards nod and smile. Dave starts to leave, then turns around and addresses them again.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I have to tell you, this may not work.

MRS. LENNARD

Oh, Doctor, at least we have to try to save Freckles....

The children start weeping again. Dave looks down at the unused syringe of euthanasia solution in his hand, and heads for the car.

MUSIC UP: "HORSE WITH NO NAME" - AMERICA

ANIMATED MAP OF DAVE'S CAR DRIVING ON THE MAP BACK TO CRESTON.

EXT. MONTAGE OF SHOTS - DAY

- farmers on tractors
- going by dairy farms
- driving through forests

Dave drives back into Creston and cruises down Canyon Street, stopping in front of his new clinic building.

MUSIC FADES

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave enters the clinic. Doris has rubber gloves on, and is scrubbing away at the counter tops.

DORIS

I found a light switch under the sink, but I can't find anything that it turns on.

DAVE

Hi, Doris! I've got to get some things together - got a bit of an emergency out in Yahk. If I need you, can you drive out there with me?

DORIS

Sure, this can always wait till later. What's up?

DAVE

I've got a pony out there with a dislocated hock. Doesn't look good.

DORIS

OK - what do we need?

DAVE

I've got to find the glycerol guacolate- it's a muscle relaxant. One of the drug salesmen left me some yesterday when he stopped by.

Dave digs around in a box, then comes up with two bags of the drug.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I hope this is going to be enough - it's a powder, so I've got to get it into solution before we can use it. And we'll need Atravet, some Biotol....what else? Do you remember where you put that box with the bottles I told you had to be sterilized?

Doris rummages in the back room and returns with a two liter glass bottle that has been wrapped in green cloth.

DORIS

Is this what you're talking about?

Dave nods, then unwraps the bottle, unwraps a funnel, and sticks it in the top of the bottle. Dave carefully empties the powder through the funnel. He's getting frustrated as he tries to get all the powder into the bottle. Then he adds saline and starts shaking it. The powder won't go into solution.

DAVE

Arghh! What's WRONG with this stuff? It just sits there and won't it go into solution!

Dave is now shaking it like a madman. No luck.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Damn.

He looks at the lump-filled bottle of fluid, gives it one more shake, then gives up. He empties the material and takes another envelope of the powder.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Maybe sterile water will work
 better.

He repeats the performance with the funnel and then dumps the material into the sterile water and shakes it. Still no luck - it has big lumps in the water. Dave is now beside himself with anger.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 ARRGHHHH! What are we going to
 DO??? I have to get this stuff into
 solution before we can use it! We
 can't work on the pony without it!
 DAMN!

Doris has been watching, trying to stay out of the line of fire.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Doris - see what you can do with
 this damned stuff! I need to get
 some things at the hardware store.
 When I get back, I need to pack up
 some cast padding and some Velroc
 to take out there too!

INT. INSIDE CRESTON HARDWARE - DAY

Dave is going along the aisles, looking for things. Bob Barnes appears.

BOB
 Hey, Dave - what can I get for you
 today?

DAVE
 I need some thick cotton rope, nice
 and soft, and a come along.

BOB
 Finally decided to hang Gordon for
 renting you that place? Thought it
 was only a matter of time. I can
 help you with the cotton rope, but
 I sold my last come along the other
 day.

DAVE
 Gordon! Of course! He has one of
 everything - he's bound to have a
 come along. I'll get that rope, Bob
 - thanks!

INT. INSIDE VEITCH REALTY OFFICE - DAY

Gordon is going through a listing book with a husband and wife - MR. AND MRS. KENNEDY - prospective clients. Dave opens the door, then stops abruptly.

GORDON
Hey, Dave, what's up?

DAVE
Gordon, I need you.

The husband and wife look up from the listing book, glancing with interest at Gordon and Dave.

GORDON
He's my vet. Ruth!

Ruth walks out of her office.

RUTH
Hi, Dave.

GORDON
Dave needs to borrow me for awhile -
can you look after Mr. and Mrs.
Kennedy?

RUTH
What is it this time?

DAVE
A pony with a dislocated leg.

RUTH
Sure, I'll help them out. Have a
good time.
(aside to the Kennedys)
He's our vet.

MRS. KENNEDY
What kind of animals do you have?

RUTH
A dog. But there's nothing wrong
with HIM.

She glances at Gordon.

GORDON
Where are we off to, Daktari?

DAVE
Yahk. Do you have a come along?

GORDON

Of course.

DAVE

Good. Then come along, Mr. Veitch.

END OF ACT 3

ACT 4

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Gordon is in the front passenger seat, Doris is in the back, and the other seat is piled high with equipment, casting material and drugs.

MUSIC UP: "A HORSE WITH NO NAME" - AMERICA

THE ANIMATED MAP OF DAVE'S CAR FOLLOWS THE ROAD BACK TO YAHK.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Dave glances over his shoulder at Doris as he's driving along.

DAVE

I'm sure glad you decided to heat that glycerol guacolate to try and put it in solution, or I'd still be there shaking the bottle. What made you decide to give it a try?

Doris leans forward over the seat, smiling.

DORIS

When you make jelly, you have to heat up the juice to dissolve the sugar. I had a hunch it might work.

EXT. ON THE MAIN HIGHWAY IN YAHK NEAR THE GENERAL STORE - DAY

Dave's car is cruising toward the bridge at the edge of town.

MUSIC FADES

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

As Dave nears the bridge, they become aware of cars parked all along both sides of the road.

DORIS

What on earth is going on?

GORDON

Haven't seen that many cars out here since the Yahk Raft Race. Is there an auction or something?

DORIS
Haven't seen anything about one in
the paper.

They cross the bridge, and there are more cars lining both sides of the road, and even more on the road into the Lennard farm. People are milling about down by the Lennard house.

DAVE
Oh, no....

Dave pulls the car over onto the shoulder, and puts his head down on the steering wheel.

GORDON
Holy.....the entire town is
here....

A car pulls up and parks behind them. TWO WOMEN get out, carrying plates of sandwiches and squares down to the house.

DAVE
They've turned this into a bloody
carnival. There's no way I'm going
in there! This is just ridiculous!

DORIS
You have to! What about the pony!

DAVE
What about me? I can't work with a
bunch of idiots running everywhere!
I'm supposed to go out there and
anesthetize a horse for the first
time in front of all those people?

GORDON
The first time?

DORIS
You've never done this before?

GORDON
Well, there's always a first time
for everything. We can't turn back
now. Too many cars in the way.

Mr. Lennard is walking up the driveway toward them, lifting his good left arm like Moses.

MR. LENNARD
Make way! Make way! The vet's here!

Dave takes a deep breath, and drives up the narrow path that's been cleared through the vehicles, stopping beside the pony. Freckles is surrounded by children, hugging his head and neck.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LENNARD HOUSE - DAY

Dave, Doris and Gordon emerge from the car, and are immediately offered beverages and snacks by the neighbours in attendance.

MR. LENNARD

What can we get for ya, Doc? Where do ya want to do him?

Dave looks around at the rock strewn pasture.

DAVE

Is there an area somewhere around the house that's free of rocks?

Mr. Lennard looks around his domain.

MR. LENNARD

Not really.

DAVE

Well, let's clear one then.

Dave stoops down and picks up one end of an old car bumper. Mr. Lennard shows no sign of helping, but organizes his neighbours.

MR. LENNARD

Doc says we have to move a bunch of these rocks and car parts here to make a flat space for Freckles. Lend a hand!

Everybody grabs something and starts dragging it out of the way. Dave walks back to the car and starts sorting out his drugs and tools. Gordon gets out the rope and the come along.

MR. LENNARD (CONT'D)

How's that, Doc? Is that space big enough?

Dave glances around - the worst of the rocks are gone.

DAVE

Bring Freckles ahead a couple more steps while I get the anesthetic.

Dave bring out a large syringe, and fills it from the various containers, then walks over to Freckles. The children scatter, eyes on the needle, as Dave advances on the pony.

DAVE (CONT'D)

OK, guys, you back up now, it's time for Freckles to go to sleep. Gordon, could you hold the horse's head while I give the anesthetic?

Gordon has been standing over to the side, talking to one of the crowd, a nanaimo bar in his hand.

GORDON

Me? Uh...OK.

He finishes the nanaimo bar, then steps up and grabs the halter shank.

DAVE

Hold him tight and support his weight until the last moment.

Dave adjusts Gordon's hold on the halter then strokes the jugular vein with an alcohol swab.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Remember that when he goes down, we want the bad side up.

Dave thrusts the needle into the vein and draws back the plunger then injects the contents of the syringe. The pony wobbles for a moment, then goes down like a rock. CALVIN and JERRY, two of the locals, watch with admiration.

CALVIN

Boy, did you see that?

JERRY

Is he ever good! Look at the way he put that horse to sleep!

Dave is staring intently down at the horse. Gordon joins him, looking down as well.

GORDON

(whispers)

What are we waiting for.

DAVE

(whispers)

He's not breathing....oh my god. Oh my god.

GORDON

(whispers)

Should we give mouth to mouth?
Chest compressions?

DAVE

(whispers)

Come on, you son of a b....breathe!

The horse takes a huge shuddering breath, and starts breathing regularly. The crowd applauds. Dave relaxes and takes a breath of his own, then attaches the glycerol guacoate solution to the needle still in the jugular vein. Dave hands the bag to Gordon, and shows him the clamp on the IV line.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Run about half in at this speed,
Gord, then stop it. I'll let you
know when we need some more.

Dave puts two loops of rope around the pony's upper thigh and ties it to a nearby cottonwood tree. He ties the second rope in a half hitch above and below the fetlock joint. He looks around the yard.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Who owns that blue four wheel drive
pickup?

Jerry steps forward.

JERRY

I do.

DAVE

Could you back it over here to give
us something to pull against?

Dave lays the come along out on the ground, and connects one end of it to the cotton rope around the lower part of the horse's leg. The pickup truck backs into place, stopping about eight feet away from the prostrate horse.

DAVE (CONT'D)

OK, park it - that should be fine!
Just snug up the come along but
don't pull it tight yet!

Dave hooks the other end of the come along to the clevis on the truck hitch. Jerry comes around to the back of the truck and starts reefing on the chain of the come along till it is nearly straight out on the ground from the pony to the truck.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Gordon, give him about half of
 what's left - he doesn't want to be
 feeling this.

The spectators are closing in the circle, trying to get a better look at what's happening. Dave glances around a bit desperately at his audience.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 OK, put more tension on.

The pony slides across the dirt until the rope attached to the cottonwood stops him. Now the leg is stretching, the ligaments strung as tight as a bow fiddle. Dave feels the bones.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Damn! They're still overlapping by
 at least three inches! Some more.

The rope tightens, still not enough. Jerry is waiting, watching intently for more instructions. Dave has his feet braced and is pulling with all the strength he has to try and reduce the dislocation.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 (through gritted teeth)
 Some more yet! Almost! Almost!

Suddenly the rope goes slack and everything slips back out of place. The crowd lets out a collective "Awww".

DAVE (CONT'D)
 What happened?

JERRY
 The truck slid backwards. I'm out
 of chain, no more purchase!

Dave puts his head down on his arm, and lifts his coveralled arm to wipe away the sweat on his forehead.

DAVE
 OK. We better release it and try
 again. Can you drive the truck
 forward a bit and park it more on
 an angle?

Jerry removes the come along, moves the truck and parks it again, then gets out and reattaches the come along to the trailer hitch. He pulls up the slack with a rattling of chains and waits for word from Dave. They tighten things up again, until the leg is as tight as a bow string.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Again!

Jerry pulls on the chain.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Again!

The chain rattles as Jerry tightens it. Dave is putting every ounce of strength he has into pulling the hook toward his chest.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Hold it!

Dave gives a big heave. Suddenly the leg goes back into place with a resounding THUNK!

The crowd CHEERS.

CALVIN

Wow, look at that! I didn't think they were ever gonna get it!

DAVE

(under his breath)

Neither did I.

Dave feels around the edge of the joint.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Try releasing the pressure.

Jerry slowly releases the slack on the rope. Dave unties the rope from around the leg. He flexes the joint.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I'll be damned. Better give him the rest of the bottle, Gordon. His eye's twitching - we're not going to have much time left for the anesthetic. Mrs. Lennard, can you bring me some warm water?

Mrs. Lennard hurries off toward the house.

DORIS

You did it, Dave.

DAVE

So far....so good. Doris, let's get the material for the cast out of the car.

They carry the material over to the pony. Dave takes out some stockinette material, measures it on the pony so that it goes well above the hock. He cuts the material, then pulls it up over the pony's leg. He starts applying the cast padding, rolling it around the stockinette. The pony makes its first move, twitching a front leg.

GORDON

Dave! He moved his front leg!

DAVE

Where is that woman with the water!
Doris, can you go check?

Doris trots toward the house while Dave continues to roll the cast padding around the leg. She reappears a minute later with the water.

DORIS

They don't have running water here,
so Mrs. Lennard had to go to the
neighbour's house to get it.

Dave quickly plunges a roll of Velrock into the water, squeezes it, then begins rolling the cast material around the leg. He looks at the amount of casting material, and the size of the leg.

DAVE

We don't have nearly enough casting
material to finish this! Doris, can
you get someone to run you into
town? Go to the hospital and see if
you can bum some from the hospital?
I'll need at least another full box
to finish this properly!

Jerry comes forward.

JERRY

I'll do it!

Doris and Jerry jump into the truck and head off through the crowd. Gordon hands off his bag holding duties to Calvin and clears a path for the truck. Dave applies the last of the casting material, then kneels down on the ground for a rest. An aggressive red headed guy, STEVE, comes forward with a sandwich halfway to his mouth.

STEVE

What's the holdup? What's the
holdup?

DAVE
I've run out of casting material.

Steve glances at the box on the ground.

STEVE
I've got lots of plaster of Paris
at home.

DAVE
This isn't just plaster of Paris!
It's special casting material. I'm
pretty sure you wouldn't have any
at home.

STEVE
Do so! I live just next door.

He walks toward the road.

GORDON
Dave! He's movin'!

Dave looks around as Freckles raises his head and tries to
sit.

DAVE
Easy, fellow! We're not quite
finished with you yet.

Dave grabs the pony's halter and kneels on his neck, holding
the pony's head at right angles to the ground.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Can you hold him like this Gordon?
I'm going to need a few more
minutes before we can let him up.

Gordon grabs the halter and plants himself on Freckle's neck,
anchoring him firmly to the ground. Steve arrives back and
drops a box on the ground.

STEVE
There you go - same as yours!

Dave looks at the box - it is exactly the same as the stuff
he's been using.

DAVE
Great! Just lean back a little
more, Gord, in case he tries to
strike with his front foot.
(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

If he struggles, just pull his head
up towards you and lean back a
little harder.

Dave dives into the box and continues to apply the casting material.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LENNARD HOUSE - LATER

Dave sits back, tired, as he surveys the pony's cast. It's done. The pony is starting to struggle.

DAVE

OK, Gordon, we can sit him up.

Dave folds the pony's front legs under him. The pony obligingly sits with his injured leg stretched out straight. Mr. Lennard inspects the pony, then turns and gestures to the crowd with his good hand.

MR. LENNARD

Doctor Perrin has saved the pony!
Horse shoe pitch is open,
everybody! Tables are all set up in
the shade over by the house - help
yourselves to the grub!

The crowd starts to drift away towards the food. The children come over and hug the pony's neck.

GORDON

What in the world were you doing
with all that casting material,
Steve?

STEVE

Keep lots of stuff on hand. Broke
mah foot a couple of years ago when
mah medical run out. Cost me a
fortune! What a rip-off for that
cast! If I ever break anythin'
again, I'll just fix it myself.

Doris and Jerry come roaring up the driveway in the blue truck, scattering the crowd. Jerry jumps out with the box of casting material in each hand and runs over to Dave with it, setting the boxes down with a flourish. Doris climbs down shakily from the truck, her usually immaculate hair wind blown and down over her forehead. She sees the pony, now standing up with children around him, and leans back against the truck.

DORIS

If you only knew what this trip was like! You have no idea what it was like!

DAVE

Sorry, Doris - but look at Freckles. He looks like he's going to make it!

Dave and Gordon are packing up all the gear into Dave's car. Doris pulls her hair back into a bun.

DORIS

You've never in your life seen anyone drive like him - we passed every car in sight. I bet you can still find my handprints embedded in his dash.

Dave and Gordon finish packing up the car and shut the door. Dave finishes writing out figures on a piece of paper. He walks over to Mr. Lennard and hands him the sheet.

DAVE

Here's my bill, Mr. Lennard. I've tried to be as reasonable as possible.

Mr. Lennard pauses with horseshoes in his hand and glances down at the bill.

MR. LENNARD

Uh, I'm a little short right now - had that big accident with the chain saw too. Can I pay you when I get my next paycheck?

DAVE

Uh....OK. I guess that would be OK.

Mr. Lennard stuffs the bill into his pocket, then walks away to the horseshoe pitch while Gordon joins Dave.

GORDON

Did he pay you?

DAVE

Said he'd do it when he gets his next paycheck.

Gordon makes a sound strangely like strangled laughter, then turns it into a cough. Dave looks around suspiciously at him.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Why? When did he get his LAST
 paycheck?

GORDON
 Oh.....I'd say about twenty years
 ago.

DAVE
 (sighs)
 Let's get something to eat.

GORDON
 Could be worse...

DAVE
 At least the horse didn't
 die....for a minute there.....

GORDON
 But you never showed it - cool as
 ice.....a true professional!

They walk over to the tables and pick up some sandwiches,
 digging in hungrily. Mrs. Lennard appears with a platter full
 of chocolate cake slices, covered with a thick fluffy layer
 of white icing.

MRS. LENNARD
 Just finished icin' it. Do you
 think he's gonna be all right, Dr.
 Perrin?

Dave and Gordon dig in to the cake, while Doris declines.

DAVE
 I sure hope so, Mrs. Lennard. But
 only time will tell.

DORIS
 Let me give you and the girls a
 hand in the kitchen.

The men continue eating as the women leave.

END OF ACT 4

TAG

INT. INSIDE THE LENNARD KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. Lennard walks into the kitchen, followed by Doris. Doris' face has a big smile as she enters the kitchen. Her smile freezes, and then it disappears. She turns and walks outside.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LENNARD HOUSE - DAY

Doris is trotting across the grass toward Dave and Gordon, waving her arms. They watch with interest as they each attack another piece of Mrs. Lennard's cake.

DORIS
Don't eat it! Don't eat it!

Gordon stops with a piece halfway to his mouth.

DORIS (CONT'D)
STOP! You wouldn't believe the kitchen! You've got to see it! I've never seen anything like this in my whole life!

Doris puts her hand over her mouth, on the verge of retching. She grabs Gordon and drags him toward the kitchen. Dave tags along. Mrs. Lennard exits with a plateful of cookies, smiling at them as she passes, leaving the door open. Dave, Gordon and Doris peer into the room.

INT. INSIDE THE LENNARD KITCHEN - DAY

A makeshift counter is buried in layer upon layer of filth. Dirty dishes are piled high on every surface. A cat is on the counter, licking icing off the cake. It lifts its head to show a white icing moustache, while twitching its ears to keep the circling flies from landing.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LENNARD KITCHEN - DAY

DAVE
Is that spoon standing up by itself on the counter? An archeologist's delight.

GORDON

Yeah. You could excavate layer by layer to find out what they had for supper each year at this time.

MUSIC UP: "A HORSE WITH NO NAME - AMERICA"

Still holding their cake, Dave and Gordon walk back into the yard. Doris trails behind.

DORIS

I think I'm going to be sick.

Doris rushes away around the corner.

DAVE

What the hell.....

Dave holds his cake up in a toast to Gordon.

GORDON

Here's looking at you.

Gordon toasts with his own piece, then devours it whole.

DAVE

Good cake. Real good cake.

MUSIC HIGHER AND OUT.

END OF TAG

END OF EPISODE