

Ralph

49. 1

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- DAY

Ralph's Ford drifts off the road and plows right over a wood-carved bear holding up a sign saying, "The William's Den - Please wipe yer paws." This jars Ralph awake and he deftly maneuvers the truck back onto the road.

RALPH

Whoa!

He checks the windows and mirrors to spot any witnesses of which there are none. He SIGHS deeply and CHUCKLES to himself. He pulls a pill-bottle from his pocket, pops it open with one hand, and pours a couple pills into his mouth.

EXT. GILBRETH MANSION -- DAY

Ralph's Ford pulls up in front of a mailbox with brass numbers 3646 and parks.

INT. GILBRETH MANSION -- DAY

Marcus Gilbreth opens the front door revealing Ralph on the other side.

MARCUS

You must be Mr. Jones. Please come in.

Ralph steps inside and checks out the place.

RALPH

You can call me Ralph. Well, Mark, I hear you lost something.

MARCUS

Actually, it's Marcus. Please come into the study.

INT. GILBRETH MANSION STUDY -- DAY

Marcus pours a bourbon and a soda water at the bar. Ralph sits in a leather chair in front of a large oak desk. Marcus hands Ralph the soda water and sits at the desk.

MARCUS

There were two items stolen from here last night, an antique sword and its scabbard. Two derelict teens, one with an injured pinkie took them.

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Marcus slides a set of photos over to Ralph. As Ralph reaches for them, his shoulder twitches.

RALPH

I appreciate you calling me over here. But, I should warn you, I track dead-beat-dads, not antiques.

Ralph sifts through the photos. He shakes his head as he sifts.

INSERT:

Various photographs of the sword with a loving Marcus in the bg.

MARCUS (O.S.)

I've heard you're discreet. I'll pay you 25,000 dollars if you help me locate them.

On the word "them," the photos in Ralph's hand begin to shake.

BACK TO SCENE

Ralph steadies his trembling right hand with his left.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You ok?

Ralph nods.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

The sword's worth a great deal of money which is why discretion is paramount. I'm afraid it's going to be very difficult to locate, if it hasn't already disappeared in someone's private collection forever.

RALPH

Why is it worth so much? If you don't mind my asking . . .

MARCUS

It's the sword Cortez thrust into the ground when he proclaimed the New World for Spain.

Ralph's eyes widen at the image.

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MARCUS (CONT'D)

When it clove the earth, it foreshadowed the destruction of one of the most powerful of all the ancient civilizations.

Ralph polishes off his soda water.

RALPH

Well, I'll be danged.

Ralph stands up and heads for the door.

RALPH (CONT'D)

My daddy, a rancher by trade, used to say, you can pay me in cash or you can pay me in beef. Twenty-five thousand is a lot of beef. I'm on the job.

Ralph shakes Marcus' hand. He turns for the door.

MARCUS

I've sent word to all the major collectors telling them to keep an eye out for it. Wait, there's one more thing...

Marcus follows Ralph out of the study.

EXT. GILBRETH MANSION -- DAY

Ralph makes a beeline for his truck. Marcus follows him.

RALPH

(over his shoulder)
I need that money awful bad. Shoot, I needed that money yesterday. The sooner I find your toy, the sooner my exes get off my back.

MARCUS

Aren't you going to take the photos?

Ralph climbs in his truck and shuts the door with a noisy CREAK and BANG.

RALPH

Got a photographic memory.

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