

Roadkill

The Time: Saturday afternoon
The Place: Lee's backyard

Cast of Characters

Lee: 40's. Nervy.

Curt: 40's. Lee's brother. Unflappable.

Marcus: 60's. Curt and Lee's dad. Laconic.

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(LEE and CURT sit at a backyard picnic table, nursing beers. LEE is in the middle of an animated story.)

LEE

And I barely had time to hit the brakes.

CURT

So you couldn't see it coming at all?

LEE

Naw. It was pitch black out, and foggy, so my high-beams were off. Couldn't have been more than 30 feet away when I spotted it.

CURT

Musta wrecked your whole front end.

LEE

Naw. I got one o' them cow-catcher grilles on the Ranger. Deer bounced right off of it. Not even a dent.

CURT

Huh.

LEE

'Course, then it bounced right into the windshield.

CURT

Dead by then, huh?

LEE

Nope. Scrambled off the hood. Had to chase it into the woods. Tracked it for a good half-mile 'fore I got a clean shot at it. And then I had to drag the damn thing back.

CURT

Jeez.

LEE

Dad always told me, finish what you started.

CURT

More power to you. Wha'd you do with it?

(MARCUS crosses with a plate full of meat. He wears an apron.)

MARCUS

Venison's up!

(MARCUS exits. LEE smiles.)

LEE

Cost me \$300 to replace that windshield. Figured the universe owed me.

CURT

Hmm.

LEE

You woulda done the same thing.

CURT

'S illegal.

LEE

You woulda done the same thing.

(CURT shifts in his seat.)

CURT

Lotsa wildlife on the roads these days. Hit something myself few days ago.

LEE

Yeah?

CURT

I had to run a few chores down in the Valley. Came back over the pass. One of them mountain roads. All curvy.

LEE

Sure. At night?

CURT

(nods)

Dusk. I didn't have the lights on yet. Shoulda, probly. Don't think I coulda seen it anyway.

LEE

Seen what?

CURT

Well, I dunno. Don't know where the hell it came from, either. Seems like it fell right out of the sky, onto the road in front of me. You can guess from there.

LEE

Dead-on?

CURT

Direct hit. Killed on impact.

LEE

Sure, but what?

CURT

It was all bloody. Had fur. Big paws. Pretty mangled face. Might've had a mane.

LEE

A mane? You hit a lion?

CURT

I thought so, maybe. Too dark to tell by then. So I popped the back and shoved it inside. Heavy sumbitch too.

LEE

Ha! Told you you'd do the same thing.

CURT

Last I checked state ain't got a bag limit for lions.

LEE

But is that what it was?

CURT

So I drove home. Lucky for me one headlight still worked. I got in and asked Susie for the number of that guy she knows at Fish and Game. Figure he could tell me what to do. She asks me why.

LEE

Woman asks too many questions. Wha'd you tell her?

CURT

'Bout that time she noticed my pants and jacket.

LEE

Blood?

CURT

And fur. And feathers.

LEE

And *what*?

CURT

I tell her I hit something. She asks what. I tell her see for herself.

LEE

Sure.

CURT

So she's looking at this thing. She's got no idea. But while she's out there Janey comes walking home from school.

LEE

So what?

CURT

Kid's smarter than me already. She comes in all excited. She knows what it is.

LEE

And?

CURT

(pause)

A griffin.

LEE

What?

CURT

Hold on. I wrote it down.

(CURT takes a paper out of his pocket, unfolds it, and reads.)

CURT

"The griffin is a legendary creature with the body of a lion and the head and often wings of an eagle. As the lion was traditionally considered the king of the beasts and the eagle the king of the birds, the griffin was thought to be an especially powerful and majestic creature. Griffins are normally known for guarding treasure. In antiquity it was a symbol of divine power and a guardian of the divine." (He gestures to the paper) Wikipedia.

LEE

Powerful and Majestic Creature. A Guardian of the divine.

CURT

That's what they say.

LEE

(disbelieving)

And you nailed one with your F150.

CURT

Actually I was drivin' the Silverado that day -

LEE

Why you keep doin' this, Curt?

CURT

Doin' what?

LEE

Everything I do, you gotta do better.

CURT

That's not true.

LEE

I made all-division. You made all-state. I married the prom queen. You married Miss Colorado.

CURT

Now you know she was only second runner-up.

LEE

I buy a doublewide, you buy a house. I get a truck, you get a second truck.

CURT

You finished?

LEE

I smash into a deer, and you run into...! (Disgusted.)
A griffin! Now I'm finished.

CURT

I was just driving down the road and it landed in
front of me. Ain't no accomplishment.

LEE

And that's the other thing! You're always so damn -

(MARCUS re-enters with two plates
of venison.)

MARCUS

You don't get the meat, fine, meat comes to you. (to
CURT) Hey, what happened to your truck?

CURT

Hit a griffin.

MARCUS

(Pause, thoughtful)

Musta been a big one.

CURT

Sure was.

MARCUS

Insurance gonna cover that?

CURT

Doubt it.

MARCUS

Huh. (reflective pause.) Well, I'll have some more
grub up in a minute.

(MARCUS leaves. CURT yells after
him.)

CURT

And no cheese on mine! (to LEE) He always uses American cheese. Don't even think it's really cheese. Like insulation or somethin'.

LEE

You're doing it again! Stop being so damn - nonchalant! Like all that stuff you do don't mean anything.

CURT

It don't, mostly.

LEE

But this is enough. Lying to dad, too.

CURT

He don't know no better anyway.

LEE

So you admit you lied to him.

CURT

No, I didn't. Why would I be lying?

LEE

'Cause you can't stand the fact that I have better roadkill than you.

CURT

You know how dumb that sounds?

LEE

'Bout as dumb as a lion with an eagle head.

CURT

Hey, I didn't originate the concept. I just ran one over. You think I'm lying, go look at my truck.

LEE

I already saw it. Susie told me you had a blowout and hit a tree.

CURT

You saw it? Why didn't you tell me?

LEE

Because I wanted to see what you'd do to one-up my story. I knew you'd come up with something. Didn't think it'd be so damn stupid though.

CURT

I told Susie not to tell anyone. You know she shoots her mouth off.

LEE

I thought you were gonna call Fish and Game about it.

CURT

Changed my mind. Why have them confiscate it? Thing busted up my front end. It's mine now. You'da done the same thing.

LEE

So you've still got it. Show me.

CURT

Couldn't keep it. It was starting to smell.

LEE

Oh well, of course, you can't keep a mythical lion-beast sittin' around the house. So wha'd you do with it, so I can't see it?

CURT

Can't tell you. It's a surprise.

LEE

A surprise?

CURT

Yep.

LEE

Curt, when you gonna cut the horseshit?

CURT

When you gonna learn to trust your brother?

LEE

I'm sick of this. Give me one good reason I shouldn't leave right now.

CURT

I got a proposition for you.

LEE

Let's hear it.

CURT

Well, I'm thinking since griffins are known for guarding treasure, we ought to ride back to where I had the accident. Poke around the side of the road. See if maybe there's some gold or somethin'.

LEE

That's your proposition?

CURT

We can split it fifty-fifty. How's that for a deal?

LEE

I'm leaving. Call me when you learn how to come in second.

(LEE leaves. He crosses paths with MARCUS, carrying more meat.)

MARCUS

Hey, where you goin'? You're gonna skip the main course? (to CURT) What's his problem?

CURT

You know how us boys are.

MARCUS

Well, he missed out on some damn fine barbecue. This meat you brought puts his venison to shame. Wha'd you say this was?

(CURT picks up a piece and looks at it.)

CURT

It's a surprise.

END OF PLAY