

SHENANDOAH TREASURE HUNT

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FADE IN:

INT. CAR 001 - DAY

MAX, an early 20's handsome guy, slips into the driver's seat of a passenger car. HARRY, an attractive, early 20's geeky/nerdy guy with glasses, is already in the passenger seat. Max has a bag of fast food. As he hands the bag to Harry,

MAX

I don't know if we can do this again. I had to dig deep in the couch for this.

Harry, opening the bag and enjoying the smells as they waft up to his face, frowns.

HARRY

Totally, but I need a break from endless ramen.

Max nods as Harry hands him something wrapped in waxed paper (probably Taco Bell).

MAX

You got anything lined up to pay for fall yet?

HARRY

(around a mouthful)
Nothing. You gotta know someone.

MAX

(nodding)
Same here. Even then, howinthehell you supposed to pay for school at minimum wage?

HARRY

According to my spreadsheet, working all summer at fast food will pay for the first three weeks of school.

MAX

(around mouthful)
Right! What's the point?

HARRY

At least you're smart enough to get a major that makes money.

MAX

Eventually. I'm not even in med school yet. At least you enjoy yourself. I rethink my decision
(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)
 every time I sign up for classes I
 don't give a damn about.

Max heaves a big sigh.

MAX
 My reward for excellent grades and
 all these non-paying internships is
 the privilege to go even deeper in
 debt on medical school, then be dirt
 poor and working a hundred hour
 weeks for another three years.

HARRY
 Yeah, but think of all the bucks
 when you hang out your shingle.

MAX
 Assuming I haven't burnt out and
 become a monk or something. And
 don't even get me started on the
 student loans I'll be buried under.
 (smiling)
 At least then I'll be able to help
 people.

HARRY
 Yeah, well, as a percentage of
 earnings, I bet mine'll be higher
 than yours.

Max nods, then shrugs.

MAX
 Sucks to be us, eh?

INT. KV APARTMENT KITCHEN 002 - DAY

KAYLA, a beautiful early 20's woman, is standing over a
 stove, stirring a pot. She looks over her shoulder when
 VELMA, an attractive glasses-wearing geeky/nerdy woman in
 her early 20's, opens the apartment door. Velma is
 carrying a small bag of groceries.

KAYLA
 Whachaget?

VELMA
 Mmm mmm good chicken thighs, on sale
 for thirty cents a pound.

KAYLA
 What? Are they a hundred years old
 or something?

Velma puts the bag on the counter and takes out the package.

VELMA

Nothing that gross. They were on sale today and I had a coupon.

KAYLA

Sorry. I shouldn't look gift protein in the mouth.

Velma smiles, and starts to cut up the chicken.

KAYLA

Where'd you get the money? I carefully went through the couch cushions last weekend.

VELMA

Wouldja believe I found two quarters when I cleaned the car? And two more when I was walking into the store.

KAYLA

Untold riches!

Kayla dumps her noodles into a strainer in the sink. Velma starts cooking the cut up chicken.

KAYLA

You have any luck with jobs?

Velma shakes her head.

VELMA

I'm beginning to think a history degree was a mistake, though I really can't think of anything else I care about.

KAYLA

Well, it's not like there are huge number of options for physics majors, you know.

VELMA

Yeah, but once you finish your research, getting into graduate school will be a breeze. And at least you'll get paid. No stipends for history masters!

KAYLA

I'm sure you'll start making real money before I will. After my PhD I need to postdoc for a few years
(MORE)

KAYLA (CONT'D)

before I can even start looking for professorships.

(shaking her head)

And assistant professors are barely paid more than postdocs.

VELMA

At least we enjoy what we're doing. I knew I wasn't going to make much money when I started down this path, but it's all that gets me passionate.

KAYLA

Boys get me passionate, but nothing sustains me like exploding stars.

VELMA

(smiling)

Based on my experience, history is better than sex.

KAYLA

(looking at Velma)

Girlfriend, you haven't found the right man if you think reading books is better than sex.

Velma blushes a little and shrugs.

VELMA

Oh, the ways it sucks to be us!

INT. MH DINING ROOM 003 - DAY

A typical guys apartment. Not filthy so much, but cluttered and could definitely do with some cleaning. It probably doesn't smell that great. On the sofa, facing the TV, are a couple of BROS who are playing console games. They completely ignore everything going on around them.

Max and Harry are sitting at the dining table, study papers spread all over the table.

MAX

Splain me again how this is an easy A?

Harry looks up and studies Max's face.

HARRY

Seriously? You memorize great chunks of completely unrelated and impersonal science, yet can't remember fascinating, impassioned events of the Civil War?

MAX

Passion for you, maybe, but a long series of General A did this and General B responded with that.

HARRY

(passionate)

History isn't memorized, history is lived, experienced. These were real people, with emotions. People who made irrevocable decisions, sometimes on the spur of the moment.

MAX

What's passionate about Sheridan's Shenandoah Valley Campaign?

Harry stares at Max.

HARRY

How many of those people simply wanted to be left alone by both sides? Who changed allegiances? Think of all the intrigue.

Max stares off into distance.

MAX

Yeah, I guess. But I don't get that excitement from the books or lecture, I only get it from you.

HARRY

Then you're not using your imagination. We got a good teacher, which is why I encouraged you to take this class. Stop being so literal and listen to the cannon and musket shot when the teacher describes the battles.

Max shrugs.

MAX

I guess that's what makes you the history major.

INT. KV DINING ROOM 004 - DAY

Kayla and Velma are eating the dinner they prepared. The table is covered with history books and they study while they eat.

VELMA

I don't see how you struggle with this stuff. It's fascinating to find out how our ancestors did things.

KAYLA

So much seems mundane, though.
Reading diaries seems pointless.
They're all long dead. Plus, it's
depressing to read how many people
died young.

VELMA

Yeah, I don't think I'd want to live
back then, not unless I can bring a
big bag of medicines with me.

KAYLA

I wonder what people in a hundred
and fifty years will think of how we
do things. Maybe they'll be able to
do surgery without cutting people.
Remember that line in the Star Trek
movie, where Bones talks about the
surgical butchery of the twentieth
century?

VELMA

(rolling her eyes)
Right, because I have all the Star
Trek movies memorized.

Velma reaches out to a book on the table and pulls it
toward her so she and Kayla can read it.

VELMA

Take this, for instance. The Union
had all the official maps and the
Confederates had to make do with
whatever they could scrounge up. Did
you know that the Confederates
basically invented photographic map
reproduction?

Kayla looks at the book and reads while she eats.

KAYLA

What, no online maps and GPS back
then?

VELMA

(staring)
Hmph.
(pause)
Oh, right. Sarcasm.

Kayla rolls her eyes.

KAYLA

We gotta get you out of your books
if you can't recognise something
that blatant.

INT. MH APPT. LIVING AREA 005 - DAY

Max and Harry, shirtless, are wearing exercise shorts. They're stretching in preparation for a run.

HARRY

We should go over the information for the lecture.

Max sighs.

MAX

I guess. At least it's a lot more interesting when I get it from you.

As Harry leans forward to stretch,

HARRY

Last week the teacher started to discuss Sheridan's burning of the Valley. Remember?

Max nods.

HARRY

While he and his men left the citizens alone, they destroyed most crops, mills and barns.

Max nods, a slight look of interest on his face.

INT. KV APPT. LIVING AREA 006 - DAY

Kayla and Velma are wearing exercise shorts and sports bras. They're doing some yoga in preparation for a run.

VELMA

There were some interesting exceptions, though. The Zirkle Mill was spared due to the inspiration of the operator, Samuel Hockman.

KAYLA

(mild look of interest)
Right. Didn't he see the action coming?

Kayla is effortlessly stretching. Velma tries to mimic what Kayla is doing and has to suppress grunts when she struggles.

VELMA

(nodding)
He could see nearby mills being set ablaze. He got a Union Flag and hung it from the roof of the mill.

KAYLA

I like this. The guy's clever and quick thinking.

VELMA

(smiling)

He ran to the Union officers. The flag helped convince them and the troops left the mill alone. It was the only mill on Holman's creek to survive that day. The General in charge was none other than George Armstrong Custer.

KAYLA

I remember seeing a picture of him. Quite a dandy, wasn't he?

Velma nods.

EXT. JOGGING PATH 007 - DAY

Harry and Max are jogging. In the background are Velma and Kayla. They're unaware of each other.

At an intersection in the path, Max and Harry turn. As Velma and Kayla approach,

KAYLA

Did you see the back and butt on that guy?

Velma rolls her eyes.

VELMA

Of course. And the beefy guy looks hot too.

EXT. FITNESS STATION MH ALONG PATH 008 - DAY

A typical exercise station placed along the trail. Harry and Max are making use of the equipment.

HARRY

After the war, so the story generally goes, the local people treated Hockman as a Union sympathizer and refused to patronize the mill.

Max is doing pushups with his feet elevated. Harry tries this, but can't lift himself while keeping his back straight. Max ignores this and looks up to see Kayla and Velma from behind as they jog past. He follows them with such intensity that Harry looks up from his struggles.

HARRY

Nice!

EXT. FITNESS STATION KV ALONG PATH 009 - DAY

At another fitness station where Kayla and Velma are using different equipment.

VELMA

Soon, the owner, Peter Myers, was forced to sell. However, it's just as likely they ignored him because Myers wouldn't extend credit during the war years and was rumored to say "let them eat cake."

Kayla smiles.

INTERCUT BETWEEN TWO PAIRS

HARRY

The Confederates were pushed out of Richmond. As they left, they removed the hard currency they still had.

Max looks on with acute interest as he does his workout.

VELMA

Rumors, then and even now, are that substantial portions of the gold and silver were buried along the route, most famous in Danville, Virginia.

Kayla, alert to what Velma is saying, nods as she does leg lifts. Velma is doing inclined pushups and starts to struggle, so moves to a higher angle.

HARRY

Quite a bit of silver is rumored to have been left in Danville, which was briefly the Confederate Capital in the last few days of the war.

Max pauses his workout, his eyes going unfocused.

VELMA

No one has found the silver, maybe because it was buried in the cemetery.

Kayla stops her workout and is staring intently at Velma.

HARRY

There've been rumors that some Confederate treasure has been buried in the Shenandoah Valley, though never substantiated.

MAX

That's what we need. Find some treasure and all our problems are behind us.

Harry snorts and shakes his head.

HARRY

Might as well buy lotto tickets.

KAYLA

You know, if that treasure was real, and we found it, we could pay for the rest of school.

Velma frowns.

VELMA

No one's found any of it in a hundred and fifty years. No one's ever going to find it.

INT. MH APPT. KITCHEN 010 - DAY

The sort of kitchen you'd expect for several guys living in an apartment together. Not filthy, per se, but certainly in the need of a serious scrubbing. Max is preparing some ramen noodles while Harry leans against the counter watching.

MAX

You're actually related to some of these people and have history that goes back to before the war. What do you mean you can't offer any insight?

HARRY

Dude, you gotta understand. People've been looking for this stuff since the very end of the war. There's no way I know anything that wasn't known by every treasure hunter of the day, let alone the hundred and fifty years since.

Max cracks a couple of eggs into the noodles, then stirs them in.

MAX

We got any other protein?

Harry opens the fridge and looks in. He bends down and looks in the back, pulling open the crisper drawers, etc.

Standing up, he looks at Max and shakes his head. Max sighs.

MAX

Surely your family has personal diaries and notes. Something no one else has?

Harry leans back against the counter, contemplating.

Max splits the noodles into two bowls and carries them to the dining table.

INT. MH DINING 011 - DAY

He pushes their books and notes out of the way. BROS play computer games in the background.

They sit at the table and start to eat.

HARRY

When I was younger, I remember spending many happy hours digging through a big chest we have of stuff like that.

MAX

There you go! Let's take a look and see if we can't find something.

HARRY

(shrugging)
Yeah, I guess.

MAX

Road trip!

INT. KV APPT. LIVING ROOM 012 - NIGHT

A neat, if spare, living room, decorated with a woman's touch. The ladies are sitting on opposite ends of the recycled couch, eating salads.

KAYLA

Come on, man. You're steeped in this stuff. You eat and drink it. Probably even sleep it.
= FP CU Velma
Velma's eyes narrow as she looks at Kayla over her bowl.

KAYLA

Sorry.
(pause)
Seriously, though. Surely your family has material from the era that no one else has.

VELMA

Of course. I imagine a lot do. It wasn't that long ago, you know. But I don't see how our family's stuff is any different from what's publicly available.

KAYLA

(around a mouthful)

Can we look? Maybe, since we're looking for it, we'll find something.

Velma shrugs, then focuses on eating. As Kayla stares at her,

VELMA

(heavy sigh)

I'm guessing I'll get no peace until you've seen there's no "there" there.

KAYLA

(smiling with triumph)

Just a few hours, that's all I'm asking.

Velma frowns.

KAYLA

Look at it this way. I'm excited about the topic for the first time. You don't want to squash that enthusiasm, do you?

Velma gives Kayla a dark look, then shrugs.

VELMA

Total BS, but if it'll get you off my back, it'll be worth it.

EXT. V FARM HOUSE 013 - DAY

Velma and Kayla get out of their car and walk toward the house. It's a house from the era, typical white clapboard walls and covered front porch. Not messy, so much as cluttered.

KAYLA

(looking around)

We're expected?

VELMA

Of course.

(smiling)

On top of cell phones, they even have TV and internet out here.

They step up on the front porch and go to the door and knock.

VELMA
Hello! We're coming in!

INT. V FARMHOUSE 014 - DAY

A wide collection of knick knacks and even more widely varied furniture collection face the ladies as they enter. The couple living there get up from their chairs and greet the ladies. The woman, LOUISE, and the man, CHUCK, look in their 60's, rugged people of the earth.

VELMA
(giving them kisses on
their cheeks)
This is my friend and roommate
Kayla.
(turning to Kayla)
This is uncle Chuck and aunt Louise.

LOUISE
Happy to meet you Kayla.

Chuck reaches out to shake her hand.

CHUCK
It's good to see Velma's made some
friends. Usually she's over here all
by herself.

Velma rolls her eyes.

INT. V STORAGE AREA 015 - DAY

A small room full of clutter. There's some organization, but on first glance it appears random. On the wall is a series of framed pictures or text. Velma, with a cheerful expression on her face, gives a happy sigh.

VELMA
This brings back some great
memories.

She takes a deep breath.

VELMA
Smell the history!
= FP CU Kayla

Kayla rolls her eyes.

KAYLA
Just smells old and musty to me.

VELMA
 Yep! History!

Velma digs into some of the piles, carefully shifting them around. Some dust raises up and floats in the air. Kayla wanders around, looking at what's in the frames. She stops in front of one that is a handwritten poem.

KAYLA
 "Stonewall Jackson's Way."

Velma looks up briefly.

VELMA
 That was a fairly popular song for
 the era.

Velma hums a few bars of the music and Kayla hums along.

INT. H ATTIC 016 - DAY

Max and Harry are in an attic in an old house. There are a number of old chests and trunks. Everything is covered with fine dust. On top of a couple of the trunks are stacked picture frames.

MAX
 I'm surprised there's no animals in
 here.

HARRY
 Maintenance, Max. Maintenance.

Harry hums to himself as he takes an accounting of the materials. He picks one of the trunks, opens it, and begins to rummage round inside. Max goes to the stacked picture frames on another trunk, lifts the top one off, then blows the dust off revealing an old portrait.

He looks through the stack, then stops at one with a handwritten poem on it.

MAX
 Becha have this memorize: "Stonewall
 Jackson's Way."

HARRY
 (looking up)
 That was big, back in the day.

Looking back down at the trunk, he starts to hum the same bars that Velma was humming. Max starts to hum along.

INTERCUT WITH KAYLA AND VELMA

MAX

(reading in a sing song
manner)

*Come, stack arms, men! Pile on the
rails,
Stir up the camp-fire bright;*

KAYLA

(reading in a sing song
manner)

*No matter if the canteen fails,
We'll make a rousing night!*

Harry and Velma continue to hum the tune as Max and Kayla sing together.

MAX AND KAYLA

*Here Shenandoah brawls along,
And burly Blue-Ridge echoes strong,
To swell our brigade's rousing song
Of "Stonewall Jackson's way."*

Music begins to be heard, Harry starts to sing.

MAX, KAYLA, HARRY

*We see him now, - the old slouched
hat,
Cocked o'er his eye askew;*

Velma starts to sing.

KAYLA, VELMA, HARRY AND MAX

*The shrewd, dry smile, - the speech
so pat,
So calm, so blunt, so true.
The "Blue-Light Elder," his foe
knows well.
Says he, "that's Banks, - he don't
like shell;
Lord save his soul! we'll give him
hell!"
In Stonewall Jackson's way.*

DISSOLVE TO:

KAYLA, VELMA, HARRY AND MAX

(CONT'D)

(singing together)

*Ah! Maiden, wait and watch and
yearn
For news of Jackson's band!
Ah! Widow, read, with eyes that
burn,
That ring upon thy hand;
Ah! Wife, sew on, pray on, hope on;
Thy life shall not be all forlorn
(MORE)*

(CONT'D) (CONT'D)
*The foe had better ne'er been born
 That gets in "Stonewall's way."*

Music ends, Harry and Velma stop singing. As Max and Kayla continue, Harry and Velma look toward them in shock.

KAYLA AND MAX
 (singing together)
*The Valley's afire, the treasure's
 arisk
 Hard currency, for those provide
 secrets
 At the turncoat's mill, follow down
 his creek
 Left first, then right, past where
 solemn
 Fly to the moon, reach for the
 stars*

HARRY
 Wait a minute!

VELMA
 What was that?

Harry comes and looks at the poem. Max looks at Harry in confusion.

MAX
 What do you mean?

VELMA
 (looking up from where
 she's crouched)
 The poem ends with "That gets in
 'Stonewall's way.' "

KAYLA
 No it doesn't, look.
 = FP M Velma and Kayla

Velma gets up and looks at it.

HARRY
 "The Valley's afire, the treasure's
 arisk." What the heck?

MAX
 Isn't that part of the poem?

VELMA
 That doesn't belong there!

INT. H ATTIC 017 - DAY

HARRY
Let me see that.

Max hands the picture frame to Harry.

HARRY
(reading)
*Fly to the moon, reach for the
stars
A distillery he has, on the corner
across the road
For John, he walked 60 before
arriving
From Michael's rest, Samuel stepped
off 492*

MAX
(reading over Harry's
shoulder)
*Samuel headed off toward 40 when he
walked
John looked at his watch, and it was
100 past the hour
Later, John changed to 280 instead
Half the depth of a man, when he
meets his maker*

Harry looks at Max.

HARRY
I've read that poem dozens of times.

Max's eyes get wide.

MAX
It's a poetic treasure map!

Harry looks at Max in consternation at first, then his eyes start to get wide.

HARRY
You know, it does sound like
instructions to find something. And
it sure doesn't match the meter and
rhyme of the rest of the poem.

Harry uses his phone to take a picture of the poem.

MAX
As if it were added later. Just for
us!

INT. V STORAGE AREA 018 - DAY

Velma gets up and walks to stand next to Kayla.

KAYLA

It's written in the same hand.
Doesn't look like it was added
later.

Velma gets very close, brushing some light dust off the
glass.

KAYLA

(reading)

*Michael owned it, when first
measured
Swim the ocean blue
From the north back porch of
Michael's house, John stepped 55.5
John headed at 280, according to his
reckoning*

VELMA

(reading)

*Samuel did his walk at 53.5 past
the hour
Of his paces, Samuel did many: 550
Órfhlaith, she's been laid to rest
here.
Five fathoms beneath*

VELMA (CONT'D)

(looking at Kayla,
surprised)

In all the ones I've read, there are
some variations, but they're all
small word choices. None of them
have added stanzas.

Kayla starts to get excited.

KAYLA

See! I told you it was worth
checking things out!

VELMA

"The turncoat's mill." I wonder if
that's Zirkel's.

KAYLA

That was in the lecture notes,
right?

Velma gets her phone out and pulls up a map of the area
around the Zirkel Mill.

Kayla bends over to look at it.

VELMA

Look, it turns left, then right,
when oriented from the Mill.

KAYLA

What does "solemn" mean?

VELMA

(turning to take a picture
of the poem)

Dunno. Maybe a cemetery?

KAYLA

Let's check it out!

INT. KAYLA'S CAR 019 - DAY

Kayla and Velma are parked at a gravel lot across from the Zirkle Mill. Next to them is Max's car, though it's empty. Though the mill's sign is plainly visible, the mill itself is hard to see due to the trees and leaves surrounding it.

KAYLA

Are you sure this is the place? I don't see anything.

VELMA

You can see the sign right there, but obviously the picture on the web site was taken during winter.

As Kayla starts to open the door, Velma notices Max and Harry walking around.

VELMA

Wait. I think I see someone.

Kayla studies the gaps between the tree leaves.

KAYLA

Yep, I think there's two of them.

Velma gets her phone and starts to take some pictures.

VELMA

I think I know one of those guys.
(pause, shakes head)
Let's look up who used to own the property on the other side of the creek. We can come back later.

EXT. ZIRKLE MILL 020 - DAY

Max and Harry are walking toward the mill. In the background, behind them, Kayla and Velma are in their car.

MAX

This is no better than the satellite map.

Harry looks at Max with pity.

HARRY
This is a piece of Civil War
history, man. Can't you just feel
the vibrations?

MAX
(shrugging)
Right.

HARRY
I think this is the mill the poem is
talking about, but I'm not sure. I
just want to get a sense of the
place, OK?

Max shrugs again and nods.

They walk around the building.

Then down to the creek.

Harry pulls his phone out and is manipulating an online
map.

He leans toward Max.

HARRY
(pointing)
See, "down" is this way. The map
clearly shows the creek makes a
sharp left, then makes a sharp
right.

Max looks at the phone.

HARRY
We should figure out who owned that
land during the Civil War.

EXT. WOODSTOCK LAND OFFICE 021 - DAY

Kayla parks the car and she and Velma start into the
building. Velma gets a backpack out of the back seat.

INT. LAND OFFICE 022 - DAY

The two women enter the land office. Behind the counter is
matronly older woman VICKY, whose eyes light up when she
sees Velma. She bustles around the counter and gives Velma
a hug.

VICKY
I haven't seen you in months! I've
missed you.

VELMA

I'm sorry. I really should have stopped by and said "Hi."

VICKY

How's your research going?

VELMA

Very nicely. But I'm starting something else right now.

(turning toward Kayla)

This is my roomie Kayla. She's nagged me into a spot of research in the Valley.

KAYLA

(holding her hand out)

Hello,

(looking at the nameplate on the counter)

Vicky.

Vicky takes Kayla's hand and shakes it.

VELMA

Sorry, I should have introduced you.

VICKY

So what are you into this time?

VELMA

Looking up ownership of a property near Zirkle Mill. Off Holeman's creek.

Vicky nods. Velma takes her backpack off and sets it on the counter.

VELMA

I trust your tastes are the same?

Vicky's eyes light up.

VICKY

As much as I missed your company, I think I missed your weedling even more. Though I've lost a few pounds since then.

Velma pulls out a package slightly larger than palm sized and carefully hands it to Vicky.

Vicky pulls it to her face and smells it with an increasing smile on her face.

VICKY

Ahhh, baklava.

Vicky moves back to the other side of the counter and puts it out of sight.

VICKY

Go on. Just be sure to explain the rules to your friend.

Kayla and Velma turn to walk away.

FADE OUT.

The End.