

THE LOST PEARL OF THE MOJAVE – EPISODE 8 LEFTY'S FOLLY 1946-1954



EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING OASIS PALMS – NIGHT (1952)
SCREEN OVERLAY: "OASIS PALMS 1952"

A bright orange glow flickers in the distance, illuminating the desert skyline. Thick, black smoke billows into the night sky, stretching toward the stars. The sound of crackling flames and collapsing timber echoes through the valley.

From the hilltop, we see the Oasis Palms Hotel and Resort engulfed in flames. The once-proud structure collapses piece by piece, its skeletal remains swallowed by fire.

In the foreground, perched just below the hill, stands Lefty's Mobil Station. The neon sign flickers, casting a faint red glow on the desert

floor.

LEFTY SMITH stands in the open, his hands in his pockets, silhouetted against the blaze. His expression is unreadable—calm, reflective, perhaps even expectant.

MOLLY

Oh my God... Lefty,
it's gone.

Behind him, MOLLY, now a young woman, steps forward, her eyes wide in shock. Curtis and Mary Smith follow, stopping near Lefty, their faces lit by the inferno.

CURTIS

Fire crews won't
make it in time.
There's nothin'
left to save.

A piece of the hotel's grand entrance collapses, sending sparks into the sky. The glow of the fire reflects in Lefty's steely eyes.

MARY

Lefty? Lefty, say
something.

Lefty breathes in deeply, exhaling slow. He finally speaks—low, measured.

LEFTY

Funny thing about
fires. They clear
the way for
somethin' new.

Molly looks at him, her expression
shifting—uncertainty creeping in.

MOLLY

Lefty... you don't
sound surprised.

Lefty finally turns, smirking just enough to be
noticed.

LEFTY

Would it matter if
I was?

Silence hangs between them as the fire consumes
what's left of Oasis Palms Hotel. In the distance, a
faint siren wails, but it's already too late.

EXT. ROUTE 66 – NIGHT (1946)

FADE IN: A '41 Chevrolet Fleetline barrels down the
highway, its headlights cutting through the
darkness. Inside, LEFTY grips the wheel tight, his
knuckles white. MOLLY, very pregnant and deep in
labor, exhales sharply as another contraction grips
her.

INT. CHEVROLET – NIGHT

MOLLY

(panting, wincing)
Louis, I swear, if
you kill us before
we even get there—

LEFTY

(grinning, eyes on
the road) That
ain't happenin',
sweetheart. Just
hang in there.

The car wobbles slightly as he takes a turn a little too fast. A Route 66 sign is seen out the window. Molly clutches the dashboard.

MOLLY

(gasping, warning)
Careful,
Louis—someone could
die here!

Lefty eases off the gas, but only slightly. The neon lights of Barstow Community Hospital shimmer in the distance.

LEFTY

(glancing at her)
Hey, don't forget,

Molls—if we have a
boy, we're namin'
him Lloyd. After my
crew chief in
England. Kept my
P-38 in the air, he
was always my good
luck charm.

Molly exhales through the pain, eyes fluttering.

MOLLY

(half-laughing,
half-groaning)
Louis, if you don't
get me to that
hospital in one
piece, you're gonna
need all the luck
you can get.

Lefty lets out a breathless chuckle, shifting gears,
pushing forward as the hospital looms closer.

**INT. BARSTOW COMMUNITY HOSPITAL – DELIVERY ROOM –
LATE NIGHT**

Molly lies on a hospital bed, sweat beading on her
forehead, gripping the sheets tightly. A NURSE dabs
her brow, while the DOCTOR, a seasoned man in his
fifties, stands at the foot of the bed.

DOCTOR

(calm, instructing)
One more push, Mrs.
Smith—you're almost
there!

Molly lets out a deep breath and pushes with all her strength. A newborn CRIES. The doctor gently lifts the baby, handing it to the nurse.

DOCTOR

(smiling)
Congratulations,
Mrs. Smith, you
have a healthy baby
boy!

Molly leans back, exhausted but beaming, as she hears her child cry for the first time.

MOLLY

(softly) My boy...

The nurse hands her the baby.

NURSE

(gently) Born at
11:55 PM, September
22nd.

Molly cradles the tiny newborn, looking into his fierce little eyes.

MOLLY
(whispering) Lloyd.

A brief moment of peace. Then—

DOCTOR
(surprised,
glancing at the
nurse) Wait a
minute...

Molly frowns in confusion.

MOLLY
(tired, confused)
What? What is it?

DOCTOR
(grinning) Mrs.
Smith, I need you
to push again.

Molly's eyes widen.

MOLLY
(breathless)
There's another
one?!

The doctor nods.

DOCTOR

(calm, reassuring)
Yes, ma'am—one more
coming.

Molly lets out a deep groan, squeezing the nurse's hand. A final push. A second CRY fills the room. The nurse carefully takes the newborn, smiling as she looks at the clock.

NURSE

(softly) Born at
12:05 AM, September
23rd.

Molly exhales, exhausted but smiling, holding both babies now. A little

MOLLY

(whispering) Floyd.

The nurse nods.

NURSE

(warmly) Lloyd the
Virgo. Floyd the
Libra.

CUT TO:

INT. BARSTOW COMMUNITY HOSPITAL – WAITING ROOM –

MOMENTS LATER

Lefty paces nervously, wringing his hands. A DOCTOR steps out into the room.

DOCTOR

(grinning) Mr.
Smith?

Lefty steps forward, tense.

LEFTY

(urgent) Is it a
boy?

DOCTOR

(chuckling) Young
man, you have two
strong boys.

Lefty blinks. Processing. Then—his face lights up.

LEFTY

(laughing) Two? I
got two?!

The men in the waiting room chuckle, offering congratulatory pats on the back. Lefty reaches into his coat, pulling out a bundle of cigars.

LEFTY

(grinning, handing

them out) Alright,
boys! Smoke 'em if
you got 'em!

The room erupts in laughter and cheers.

FADE TO BLACK.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE: TRANSFORMATION OF OASIS PALMS (1946-1948)

Lefty embarks on an ambitious plan to remake Oasis Palms into a family-friendly tourist destination that Route 66 travelers will visit.

- **EXT. VICTORY CAFÉ – DAY**

The café's sign is replaced with a new, retro-style neon sign reading "HotRod Diner."□

Inside, booths are reupholstered in red vinyl, and vintage car memorabilia adorns the walls.□

- **INT. SCOOTER'S SALOON – NIGHT**

The old officers club tables and chairs are removed and replaced with booths and high-top bar tables with stools. A shiny jukebox is installed in the corner, glowing with colorful lights.□ Patrons gather around pinball machines, the sounds of flippers and bells adding to the lively ambiance.

- **EXT. LAND BEHIND HOTROD DINER – DAY**

Construction crews break ground, erecting the iconic A&W drive-in restaurant, complete with carhop service stations.□ A giant lighted rotating A&W mug is hoisted atop a tall pole,

becoming a beacon for travelers.□

INT. DON'S BARBERSHOP – EVENING (1948)

OVERLAY: "Two Years Later 1948"

The scent of shaving cream and pipe tobacco lingers in the air. The weekly gathering of Oasis Palms' businessmen leans back in their chairs, sipping coffee, discussing the latest town developments.

LEFTY lounges in the barber chair, one boot propped on the footrest, rolling a silver dollar over his knuckles.

DON

(nodding
approvingly) Gotta
hand it to ya,
Lefty-town's
shaping up nice.

BUSINESSMAN #1

(grinning) Yeah,
you are turning
this place into
more than a dusty
pit stop.

DON

(leaning on the
counter) But what
we really need,

Lefty, is a way to
make this a
destination—not
just another stop
on the highway.

Lefty lets the words hang in the air, thoughtful. He reaches for a dog-eared copy of Variety, left behind by an out-of-town customer.

LEFTY

(smirking, flipping
through pages)
Destination, huh?

His eyes pause on an article headlined “Disney’s ‘Mickey Mouse Park’ Rumors Stir Excitement”. The story speculates on Walt Disney’s growing interest in creating a family-friendly attraction—one inspired by his boyhood love of trains.

LEFTY

(muttering) Disney...
trains...

He taps the page, an idea forming.

LEFTY

(grinning) Boys,
what if we could
build somethin’
folks’ll drive

miles not just to
see but something
folks would pay
money for?

The businessmen lean in, intrigued.

BUSINESSMAN #2
(raising an
eyebrow) Like what?

Lefty folds up the magazine, tapping it against his
palm.

LEFTY
(eyes sparking with
ambition) Something
bigger than just a
stop on Route 66.

The room buzzes with curiosity as Lefty leans back,
a smile creeping across his face.

**CUT TO: MONTAGE SEQUENCE: TRANSFORMATION OF OASIS
PALMS (1948-1952)**

OVERLAY: "Two Years Later 1950"

▪ **EXT. MAIN STREET — DAY**

An old storefront next to the barber shop is
transformed into an ice cream parlor, "Kylan's

Ice Cream” featuring a striped awning and outdoor seating and a giant lighted Ice Cream Cone on the roof.□ Families gather outside, children enjoying ice cream cones.□

▪ **INT. FAST EDDIE’S POOL HALL – NIGHT**

News signs are hung, the interior is renovated with polished wood floors, new pool tables, and a freshly stocked bar.□ Patrons enjoy games in a lively atmosphere, the clinking of billiard balls and laughter filling the air.

▪ **EXT. ROUTE 66 – DAY**

Cars exit off Route 66, drawn by billboards advertising Oasis Palms’ new attractions. Tourists with cameras explore the town, capturing memories with their families against the backdrop of its renewed charm.

INT. DON’S BARBERSHOP – EVENING (1952)

OVERLAY: “Two Years Later 1952”

The weekly gathering of Oasis Palms’ businessmen is in full swing. Curtis Smith, Don the barber, and a handful of other local shop owners lounge in their usual seats—some in the barber chairs, others perched on the wooden benches near the checkerboard table. The air is thick with cigar smoke, the scent of hair tonic and old leather lingering.

Hattie Mae Johnson pours coffee from a well-worn pot, listening with a smirk as the men gossip while pretending to discuss the town’s latest

developments.

The bell over the door jingles. Lefty Smith strides in, looking charged with excitement, a rolled-up blueprint under his arm.

LEFTY

Evening, gentlemen.
Hope you saved a
little room for a
big idea.

The men glance up, half-curious, half-weary. Curtis stares with cream on his face as Don shaves him with a straight razor.

CURTIS

Son, last time you
had a "big idea,"
we ended up with an
ice cream cone on
top of a pool hall.

Scattered chuckles. Lefty doesn't miss a beat.

LEFTY

Yeah, and business
has never been
better, has it?

Don the barber scratches his chin, conceding the point with a nod.

DON

Fair enough. So
what's this one?

Lefty unrolls the blueprint across the counter,
smoothing it flat with his palms.

LEFTY

An elevated scenic
railroad. A loop
around downtown,
giving tourists a
bird's-eye view of
the desert. They'll
ride in open-air
cars, watching the
sun set over the
dunes, the
mountains glowing
purple in the
distance. We give
'em something to
remember, something
to talk about when
they go back home.

A long silence. The men look at each other.
Then—laughter.

CURTIS

A scenic railroad?
Around this town?
Boy, you sure you

didn't hit your
head over in
Europe?

DON

Hell, Lefty, we
just got the town
looking proper
again. Now you
wanna put railroad
tracks above Main
Street?

HATTIE

You mean to tell
me, you want folks
ridin' a train just
to see what they
could already see
by walkin' down the
street?

LEFTY

Not just any train.
A train above the
ground. Just like
you are flying in a
plane! This is
about the
experience. I want
everyone to be able
to experience the
same wonder that I

have had up in the
clouds. That's what
I'm talkin' about.

He scans the room, seeing only skepticism.

BUSINESS OWNER #1

What's the price
tag on this
"wonder," Lefty?

Lefty hesitates, then shrugs.

LEFTY

I've got an
engineer who's
worked on the
elevated lines in
Chicago and New
York. He's working
out the numbers.

CURTIS

You've already
borrowed money to
fix up the town.
Who's gonna pay for
all of this?

LEFTY

Investors.
Tourists. The same

way Great Uncle
Jackson built the
Resort Hotel. He
took a risk and it
paid off, I can do
it too.

BUSINESS OWNER #2
Sounds like a folly
to me.

A murmur of agreement ripples through the room.

CURTIS
Listen, son. You've
done good work
here. The diner,
the garage, the
saloon—hell, you
gave this town a
second wind. But
this? This ain't a
gas station or a
neon sign. This is
tracks, trains, and
big money.

Lefty grits his teeth, frustration creeping in.

LEFTY
I'm tellin' you,
this town's got

more to offer than
just gas and
burgers. We don't
want people to just
stop here, we want
them to experience
it!

CURTIS

I don't doubt your
heart, Lefty. But
sometimes, a man's
gotta know when to
quit while he's
ahead.

Another beat of silence. Lefty glances at Hattie,
but she just sips her coffee, unreadable. He
exhales, rolls up his blueprint, and tucks it under
his arm.

LEFTY

Guess I'll have to
prove it to you.

He nods once, then turns and walks out, the bell
over the door jangling sharply behind him. Inside
the shop, the skepticism lingers—but so does
something else.

**INT. GRAND BALLROOM LOS ANGELES — NIGHT (FLASHBACK
1918)**

The wedding reception is in full swing. Crystal chandeliers sparkle over a grand ballroom filled with Los Angeles high society—Hollywood producers, steel magnates, and the city's elite. Champagne glasses clink, the big band orchestra swells, and the newlywed couple, PETER 40 years old, and ELIZABETH DAVENPORT 28 years old, glide across the polished dance floor for their first waltz.

The crowd watches admiringly—but near the front, JACK SMITH a dashing 40-year-old, Peter's best friend from college and now the best man stands apart. As Peter leads Elizabeth in a graceful turn, his gaze briefly lifts—to Jack. A flicker of something unspoken passes between them. Peter's smile falters slightly before he recovers, twirling Elizabeth with effortless charm. Jack, ever composed, raises his champagne glass just enough for Peter to see. A silent acknowledgment. A private goodbye to something neither man could ever speak aloud. Then—the moment is gone. Peter dips Elizabeth, the crowd erupts in applause, and the orchestra crescendos.

**MATCH CUT TO: INT. DAVENPORT BELAIRE ESTATE NURSERY
— NIGHT (1920)**

A baby's laughter fills the grand estate. Molly, a toddler with golden curls, is cradled in her mother Elizabeth's arms. She sings a soft lullaby while rocking her daughter by the fireplace. Peter watches them from the doorway, smiling as if nothing in the world could touch them. A young Hattie the nanny stands quietly in the corner smiling.

MATCH CUT TO: EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY – DAY (1922)

A cold, gray afternoon. A biting wind sweeps through the cemetery, rustling the black veils of mourning women.

The scent of damp earth lingers as a fresh grave stands open beside an ornate marble mausoleum. A pastor recites the final rites, his somber Bible verses barely heard over the wind.

PETER DAVENPORT, older now, hollow-eyed and gaunt, stands alone, staring at the newly carved name:

ELIZABETH HOLLOWAY DAVENPORT

1890 – 1922 *“Forever Loved, Forever Missed.”* Peter’s face is expressionless, but his hands tremble slightly at his sides.

In the distance, low coughing echoes from another mourner, a haunting reminder of the illness that took her. A few people exchange wary glances, shifting uncomfortably.

A hand rests on Peter’s shoulder—gentle, steadying. He turns. JACKSON SMITH, no longer the best man at a wedding, but his only friend at a funeral, meets his gaze with quiet understanding. At his side, wrapped in a tiny black coat, four-year-old MOLLY DAVENPORT clings to his leg—confused but silent. The wind howls, carrying away the pastor’s final words. Peter closes his eyes, just for a moment, swallowing grief that has no end.

MATCH CUT TO: INT. LAW OFFICE READING OF THE WILL (1922)

A mahogany conference table. A stern-faced lawyer

reads from a thick legal document. With PETER DAVENPORT and his best friend JACK SMITH in attendance.

LAWYER

As per the late
Elizabeth
Davenport's wishes,
her full trust
fund—is bequeathed
to her daughter,
Molly Davenport,
effective
immediately. The
trustee, her father
Peter Davenport is
to manage the trust
it until her 25th
birthday.

Peter rubs his forehead, exhaling heavily. Across from him, Molly, too young to understand, clutches her mother's lace-trimmed handkerchief—the same one she'd later give Lefty before he left for war. Jack, seated nearby, watches Peter, concern in his eyes.

JACK

She's going to need
you now more than
ever.

Peter nods but looks uncertain, like a man who's just realized how unprepared he is to raise a

daughter and manage her fortune alone.

**MATCH CUT TO: INT. DAVENPORT BELAIR ESTATE – NIGHT
(1926)**

A warm fire crackles in a grand but lived-in parlor. The home is elegant yet full of life—framed photos on the mantle, a record player spinning jazz, books stacked high on every surface. A mahogany desk sits to the side, strewn with legal documents, property deeds, and bank statements. Seated behind it, PETER DAVENPORT, now in his early 30s, his sleeves rolled up, studies the figures with a furrowed brow. Across from him, JACK SMITH, now his life partner relaxed yet refined, scans a real estate ledger, a cigar resting between his fingers. On the floor, MOLLY, now six, is tucked against HATTIE MAE JOHNSON, who patiently helps her sound out words from a storybook.

MOLLY

“The princess
stepped into the
golden carriage and
rode toward the
castle.”

Hattie smiles, giving her a squeeze.

HATTIE

That’s right, baby.
You’re gettin’ real
good at this.

Peter looks up and smiles at Molly with pure affection, setting down his pen.

PETER

That's because
she's the smartest
girl in all of
California.

JACK

Smartest and
bossiest. Just like
her father.

Molly sticks out her tongue, and the room erupts into warm laughter. Peter looks down at the mountain of documents and a long, heavy silence lingers.

PETER

(finally, exhaling) Will you help me?

Jack raises an eyebrow.

JACK

(curious, but wary) With what?

Peter leans forward, placing his hands on a stack of documents. Molly's laughter echoes from across the room. His expression softens, but his voice is weighted with certainty.

PETER

(gently, but resolute) You have always been better with money than I am. And God knows, I don't trust anyone else.

PETER

(cont.) Elizabeth's trust fund. My money. I want you to manage it, all of it. Invest it. Grow it. It

needs to be here for Molly If something ever happens to me—

Jack studies Peter for a long moment, trying to read between the lines.

JACK

(firmly, interrupting) Nothing's going to happen to you.

Peter meets Jack's gaze, a flicker of something unspoken but heavy between them.

PETER

(soft, but knowing) Promise me.

Jack swallows, then reaches for the legal papers on the desk. He flips through them, eyes scanning the fine print.

JACK

(finally, nodding) Alright. I'll do it.

Peter lets out a breath, relief settling over him.

MONTAGE: JACK'S INVESTMENTS (1926-1932)

• EXT. NAPA VALLEY — EARLY MORNING

Jack surveys a sprawling vineyard, shaking hands with a winemaker over a new investment.

• EXT. SANTA BARBARA — MIDDAY

Jack rides a horse with a rancher up a dirt road examining an expansive Cattle Ranch flanking lush Citrus Groves.

• EXT. ORANGE COUNTY — SUNSET

A sandy spit of land is surveyed, blueprints in hand. A developer points to the future Newport Beach Lido Isle development.

• EXT. LOS ANGELES — SKID ROW — NIGHT

While others suffer joblessness and stand in

bread lines, the Davenport fortune grows.

INT. BELAIR ESTATE – BEDROOM – NIGHT (1932)

SCREEN OVERLAY: "8 Years Later"

Peter 54 years old, falls ill with slow-moving consumption. Now frailer, sits in bed, hands trembling as he folds a silk handkerchief. Jack sits beside him, reading medical reports, his face carefully blank.

JACK

(softly) I could
take you to Mexico.
There are doctors—

PETER

(smiling, weakly)
Jack. We both know
how this ends.

A beat. Jack clenches his jaw.

PETER

(gently, but firm)
Will you take Molly
to the desert so
she can grow up
with family? Both
she and Hattie,
they are **our**

family.

With the last of his strength, Peter squeezes Jack's hand.

PETER (CONT.)

Now, they are **your**
family.

Jack swallows, then nods once. Peter closes his eyes, his grip on Jack's hand tightening for a fleeting moment.

INT. BELAIR ESTATE – BEDROOM – NIGHT (1932)

SCREEN OVERLAY: "8 Years Later"

The bedroom is dim, quiet. A breeze stirs the curtains. **PETER**, 54, gaunt from slow-moving consumption, sits propped up in bed. His hands tremble as he folds a silk handkerchief with slow, practiced care.

Beside him, **JACK** sits in a worn chair, holding medical reports he can no longer bear to read. His face is carefully composed, but his eyes betray the grief beneath.

JACK

(softly) I could
take you to Mexico.
There are doctors—

PETER

(smiling faintly)
Jack. We both know
how this ends.

A long beat. Jack clenches his jaw, staring at the papers but seeing none of the words.

PETER

Will you take Molly
to the desert? Let
her grow up with
your family. Both
she and Hattie they
are **our family**.

Peter reaches for Jack's hand, his grip weaker now,
but still full of love.

PETER (CONT.)

They're **your family**
now.

Jack's throat tightens. He nods once, wordless.
Peter's eyes close. His fingers tighten around
Jack's for one last moment—then fall still.

EXT. OASIS PALMS – TRAIN STATION – DAY (1932)

A dusty locomotive pulls into the tiny station, its
whistle echoing across the vast Mojave Desert. As
the doors hiss open, JACK SMITH, HATTIE MAE JOHNSON,

and twelve-year-old MOLLY DAVENPORT step onto the wooden platform, their trunks and suitcases stacked beside them.

Molly shields her eyes from the brutal sun, taking in the quiet, barren town—weathered storefronts, a rundown saloon, a scattering of houses. But at the edge of town, something unexpected—a beautiful oasis, its palm trees and pink flowers reflected in the water. The train rumbles away, leaving only heatwaves and silence. Jack inhales deeply, as if breathing in old memories.

JACK

(to Hattie,
assured) I grew up
here. Hattie, you
can raise Molly
here. There is good
air and good
people.

Hattie frowns slightly, shifting on her feet.

HATTIE

(worried, glancing
at Molly) Oh Jack,
that child don't
need me like she
used to.

Molly rolls her eyes, half-listening, kicking at the dry dirt beneath her shoes.

HATTIE

(cont.) If I'm
gonna stay here
with Molly, I need
to work. I need to
make myself useful
while she finishes
school.

Jack studies her, then nods slowly.

JACK

(meeting her gaze)
Alright then. What
is it you wanna do?

A small smile creeps onto Hattie's face, a spark of
confidence returning.

HATTIE

(sure now, firm)
The one thing I do
know how to do is
cook.

Jack glances across the street—an empty dirt lot,
just across from the train station. Potential.

JACKSON

(softly, half to
himself) Alright
then. Let's get you

a kitchen.

Molly looks between them, something unspoken in her eyes. As the three of them stand together—a found family, forging a future—the heat shimmers around them, blurring the past and the future into one.

FADE TO BLACK.

**EXT. OASIS PALMS – MOLLY’S DINER LOT – MORNING
(1932)**

A flatbed truck rumbles forward, carrying a prefabricated diner, dust billowing as it rolls through town. Locals gather, murmuring curiously as the stainless-steel structure is slowly lowered onto its foundation—a permanent home in a town that desperately needs something new. The chrome trim glints in the afternoon sun. The soft hum of excitement grows in the air. Jack stands back, arms crossed, watching Molly and Hattie take it all in. Above them, workers hoist a brand-new sign into place. The bold lettering catches the light as it swings into position: **MOLLY’S DINER**. Jack’s brow furrows as he smiles and glances over at Hattie, surprised.

JACK

(raising an
eyebrow) Why
Molly’s?

Hattie wipes her hands on her apron, already thinking ahead.

HATTIE

(matter-of-fact,
but with warmth)
Because she's my
child.

Molly's head snaps toward her, but she says
nothing—just watching.

HATTIE

(cont.) I'll teach
her to cook. I'll
teach her to run
the business. I'll
show her how to be
a self-sufficient
woman. And when I'm
gone, it will be
hers and she can
stand on her own
two feet.

Jack nods slowly, understanding now. Molly, her
expression unreadable, keeps staring at the sign
with her name on it. A future she didn't ask for—but
maybe, just maybe—one she's willing to claim. The
crowd claps, some already peering through the
windows, imagining a plate of hot food for the first
time in a long while. As the last bolt is tightened,
the diner is real. Their future is real.

FADE TO BLACK.

**EXT. OASIS PALMS RESORT HOTEL – FRONT LAWN TERRACE –
DAY – (PRESENT DAY 1952)**

A warm desert breeze carries the scent of sagebrush as LEFTY SMITH and an ENGINEER stand on the elevated terrace of the Resort Hotel, gazing out over Oasis Palms. Below them, the town hums with life—cars rolling down Main Street, the distant clang of a blacksmith, the buzz of workers outside Molly's Diner. Lefty squints, visualizing his grand idea—an elevated scenic railroad weaving through the town, looping the oasis, and returning with panoramic views of the Mojave.

The ENGINEER, a middle-aged man in suspenders, thumbs through a blueprint, creases deepening on his brow.

ENGINEER

(bluntly) Oooo it
can be done. But
it's gonna cost
you.

Lefty nods absently, eyes still fixed on the town.

LEFTY

(distracted) How
much?

The engineer exhales, folding his arms.

ENGINEER

(deadpan) At least

a million dollars.

Lefty turns sharply, eyebrows raised.

LEFTY

(half-laughing) A million? Is that all? I've already borrowed a million to fix up town, what's another million?

ENGINEER

(nods, unfazed) And that's just the construction.

He taps the blueprint, tracing his finger along a line that runs straight through the heart of the town.

ENGINEER

(cont.) Biggest problem ain't just the cost—it's where the tracks to get up here need to go.

Lefty glances at the plans, following the engineer's path with growing unease.

ENGINEER

(pointing toward
the hotel) You
wanna get that
train up on an
elevation? You're
gonna need a long,
steady incline.

The engineer turns, motioning toward the back of the Resort Hotel—the proud, towering structure that overlooks all of Oasis Palms.

ENGINEER

(final, unwavering)
That means laying
track right through
the back of the
hotel.

A long silence. Lefty's jaw tightens as he looks from the hotel to the town, then back to the blueprint.

LEFTY

(low, half to
himself) Tear down
the hotel...

The words hang in the dry air, heavy with meaning. The landmark of Oasis Palms. The pinnacle of his grandfather's legacy. Gone.

ENGINEER

(shrugs, practical)
If you want your
railroad, the Hotel
has to go.

Lefty clenches his jaw, his dream suddenly feeling bigger than he ever imagined—and so do the sacrifices that come with it.

INT. DON'S BARBERSHOP – DAY (1952)

The low hum of clippers and the scent of shaving cream fill Don's Barbershop, the unofficial meeting place for Oasis Palms' town leaders. A group of men sit in leather chairs, some getting a trim, others nursing cups of coffee while swapping gossip and grievances. At the center of it all, CURTIS SMITH, his sleeves rolled up, listens with arms crossed, his face unreadable. Across from him, LEFTY SMITH stands, tense, holding blueprints under his arm—but the conversation isn't going well.

CURTIS

(incredulous) Tear
down the hotel?

A few of the town elders scoff, exchanging bemused looks.

SHOP OWNER

(shaking his head)
No way in hell.

RAILWAY FOREMAN

(grumbling,
flipping a
newspaper closed)
That hotel's been
standin' since
before most of us
were born.

CURTIS

(to Lefty, shaking
his head) You know
how much blood,
sweat, and damn
near tears went
into building that
place?

Lefty exhales sharply, gripping the back of a chair.

LEFTY

(firm, but
measured) I know,
Pa. But Oasis Palms
is growing. This
railroad could make
it a destination— a
real town, not just
a stop on the map.
Disney wants to
build one in Los
Angeles, we can
build one right

here!

SHOP OWNER

(snorting) This is
already a real
town, son. Disney's
town is a fantasy.

The room murmurs in agreement, nodding as the barber
dusts off a fresh haircut.

CURTIS

(leveling his gaze
at Lefty) And what
do you think
happens when you
bulldoze the hotel?
You think people
are just gonna
accept it?

LEFTY

(frustrated,
pushing forward) I
think they'll see
the bigger picture.

RAILWAY FOREMAN

(shaking his head,
muttering) Bigger
picture, my ass.

Lefty looks around the room, scanning the hardened faces of men who built this town, men set in their ways.

CURTIS

(soft, but firm)
That hotel ain't
just a building,
son. It's part of
Oasis Palms'
history.

SHOP OWNER

(gruffly, folding
his arms) And if
you think we're
gonna let you tear
it down for some
fancy tourist
train, you got
another thing
comin'.

A long silence.

Lefty's jaw tightens. He looks to his father, but Curtis won't budge.

LEFTY

(low, controlled)
So that's it?

CURTIS

(steady,
unapologetic)
That's it.

Lefty grits his teeth, shakes his head, then turns on his heel, shoving the blueprints under his arm. As he storms out, the brass bell over the door clangs loudly. A few of the men exchange glances, some shaking their heads, others watching him go with curiosity. Curtis sits back, rubbing his jaw, watching his son walk away frustrated—but he doesn't call after him. Because in his mind, the matter is settled.

EXT. RESORT HOTEL – FLAMES RAGING – NIGHT (1952)

Smoke billows into the desert sky, turning the moon an eerie shade of orange. The Resort Hotel, the proud landmark of Oasis Palms, is engulfed in fire—flames licking at the grand structure as windows explode outward, showering glass onto the lawn below. Some work to form a bucket brigade, passing water up from the well, while others watch in frozen horror.

MATCH CUT TO: EXT. TRAIN STATION PARKING LOT – NIGHT (1952)

The townsfolk gather in frantic clusters, their faces illuminated by the blaze above them on the hill. In the chaos, LEFTY SMITH stands a few yards away, his face set like stone, eyes locked on the inferno. The firelight flickers in his gaze, unreadable. Behind him, murmurs spread like embers

on the wind. Hattie, Molly, and her twin 6-year-old boys LLOYD and FLOYD SMITH stand silent.

SHOP OWNER

(whispering to a
railway worker)
That hotel's been
standin' for 50
years... and now,
just like
that—gone?

RAILWAY WORKER

(gruff, low-voiced)
Damn sure
convenient.

Nearby, CURTIS SMITH and MARY SMITH arrive, pushing through the crowd, their faces pale in the glow of the fire.

CURTIS

(under his breath,
eyes darting to
Lefty) Oh son...

Mary's hand tightens on Curtis's arm, her gaze flicking to her son.

MARY

(soft, wary) No! He
would never.

Curtis doesn't answer. A few feet away, HATTIE MAE JOHNSON, arms crossed, watching Lefty closely.

HATTIE

(low, to Molly)
They're gonna say
he did it.

Molly exhales, shaking her head slowly.

MOLLY

(flat) They already
are.

FLASH CUTS – RUMORS SPREADING IN THE CROWD – NIGHT (1952)

- A rancher muttering to his wife: *"He needed to clear that land for his damn railroad—now, here we are."*
- A group of old-timers near the saloon: *"Lefty's Folly. We all said it. Now the hotel's just ashes."*
- A younger worker, shaking his head: *"Couldn't get the town's blessing, so he just took what he wanted."*

BACK TO LEFTY

As the fire rages, Lefty finally tears his gaze from

the flames, jaw clenched. He can feel the town's eyes on him—watching, judging. Then he sees it—doubt. In their faces. In his own family. Even in himself. He stands, fists clenched, but says nothing. MOLLY leaves the twins with HATTIE and strides toward the murmuring crowd.

MOLLY (O.S.)
(firm, unwavering)
He didn't do this.

Lefty spins. MOLLY stands at the edge of the crowd, chin lifted, eyes fierce.

MOLLY
(louder, certain)
You all know him.
You know Louis. He
wouldn't burn down
the hotel.

A tense silence. Lefty meets Molly's gaze. Something unspoken passes between them. Then—from within the crumbling hotel, a deep groan of timber. The roof collapses inward, sending a fireball into the night sky. The crowd stumbles back. A gasp ripples through them. The Resort Hotel of Oasis Palms is no more. And in the flickering embers, something changes—the town quietly divides. Between those who believe in Lefty—And those who never will again.

EXT. CAVES BARCO DISTILLERY (EARLIER THAT NIGHT)

Sunlight cuts across the desert as the camera glides along a dusty rail spur leading into the caves of the Barco Plateau. Inside the caves just past the boarded-up entrance of the long abandoned Barco Mine, stands the **Barco Distillery**—a low building built of stone and timber, weathered but proud.

Beside it, an **old wooden rust-orange Santa Fe boxcar**—its faded lettering stenciled with a bold white “**No. 5**”—rests on stacked railroad ties. Its side doors open, revealing a dimly lit storage room with a make-shift tasting room, lined with old oak barrels a couple of dusty chairs with a small table.

Out front, the **copper still** gleams atop a raised wooden platform. Coils snake around the back, dripping slow, steady heart-cut rye into a barrel. A **small loading dock** sits just beyond—still solid—where the train stops to haul off freight: *cases and casks of Barco Rye.*

CAMERA PANS slowly into the shadowed interior of Old No. 5. Dust motes dance in shafts of light. At a small table, **SCOOTER** and **ANDREW**, both in their late 80s, sit across from each other.

Their hands are rough and veined. Their eyes still hold sparks of mischief. Between them: two tumblers, half full of dark amber whisky.

Scooter raises his glass in a slow salute. Andrew nods, matching him. No need for words. Just the hum of the desert wind outside and the clink of glass.

SCOOTER

60-year old from

our first batch.
Tastes better when
it's quiet.

ANDREW

Always did.

They sip in silence. From deep in the cave above, the flutter of wings echoes – **bats** slipping out into the dusk, one by one. Out front near the still, the **clang of a shovel** and the **roar of flame** as coal hits the firebox. A young worker grunts as he feeds the heat.

ANDREW

Careful, boy! Not
too much.

SCOOTER

Kids these days.
Everything is full-
speed ahead. They
don't know, the
good stuff takes
time.

The shovel pauses. Silence returns, broken only by the hiss of steam and the settling creak of the old boxcar wood around them. Scooter smirks, raises his glass again.

INT. BARCO DISTILLERY – STILLS PLATFORM – EVENING

The **young worker** wipes sweat from his brow, shovels one last load of **coal** into the roaring firebox beneath the still. The metal groans. Steam hisses. A faint whine begins to build. The boy frowns. Steps back.

Something's wrong. The copper still begins to **rattle violently**, pressure valve screaming. The worker turns to run– **BOOM!** – The still **explodes** in a blast of steam and fire, sending shrapnel and flame across the distillery platform. Barrels ignite. The flame leaps.

INT. OLD NO. 5 BOXCAR – CONTINUOUS

Inside the tasting room, **Scooter and Andrew** are still at their table, unfazed, mid-sip. The explosion makes the walls quake. Dust falls from the ceiling. A glow begins to creep through the open boxcar door.

SCOOTER

You hear somethin'?

ANDREW

Might be the angels
callin'.

They both **laugh softly**, raise their glasses in a final toast as the firelight swells behind them. The flames **engulf the building**, then spread to the boxcar, wrapping it in orange heat.

EXT. BARCO REFINERY – CONTINUOUS

The fire **races up the old wooden staircase** built during prohibition that leads to the basement of the **Resort Hotel** perched on the cliff above. Flames lick the railing, climb like a living thing.

INT. OLD NO. 5 BOXCAR – LATER

The tasting room is fully ablaze. **Scooter and Andrew** are still at the table, silhouetted by fire and smoke, glasses raised. They **never move**.

MALIKA (V.O.)

They lived life on
their own terms.
They shared the
healing water of
the oasis with the
world. They went
out peacefully
doing what they
loved.

EXT. OASIS PALMS – NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

Away from the crowd, in the shadow of his Mobil Service Station, Molly finds Lefty staring into the distance.

MOLLY

(soft, but sure) We
can rebuild, Louis.
We'll be fine.

Lefty exhales, rubbing a hand over his face. When he finally speaks, it's not his usual confidence—it's something closer to doubt.

LEFTY

(low, admitting)
"Molls... it's more
than that."

A beat. He swallows hard.

LEFTY (CONT.)

(quietly, almost
ashamed) I borrowed
money. A lot of it.

Molly's breath catches.

LEFTY (CONT.)

(grim) I bet
everything on Oasis
Palms. On fixin' up
the town. And I
doubled down on the
railroad. I've
already signed the
papers and
committed.

His voice tightens, as if the weight of it all finally settles on his chest.

LEFTY (CONT.)

(hoarse) I don't
know if I can pull
it off, Molls.

Molly studies him—her husband, the dreamer, the gambler. She reaches for his hand, squeezing it.

MOLLY

(gentle, but firm)
Louis, I believe in
you. I'm going to
go talk to Uncle
Jack.

Lefty looks at her, the burden too heavy to carry alone.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. LAW OFFICE – LOS ANGELES – DAY (1952)

A mahogany desk, a stack of legal documents, and the faint scent of polished wood and old paper. Sunlight filters through tall windows, casting long shadows.

MOLLY DAVENPORT-SMITH, now 32, sits across from JACK SMITH, Lefty's uncle, her surrogate-father and trustee of her inheritance. A cup of untouched coffee sits between them.

MOLLY

(earnest, leaning
forward) Uncle
Jack, Louis needs

my help. I know
you've always taken
care to secure our
future—mine, the
boys'—but now I
need to use that
money to help him...
and to help our
town.

JACK

(calm, reassuring)
Molly, your family
is going to be just
fine. It's a shame
about the hotel,
but it was well-
insured. There's
plenty of money to
rebuild.

MOLLY

(shaking her head)
It's more than
that. Louis has
borrowed a lot of
money. And he's
committed to
building his
elevated railroad
above town. It's...
it's a massive
investment.

JACK

(measured) How
much?

MOLLY

(hesitant) Almost
two million
dollars.

Jack exhales, shaking his head. He pulls a thick binder closer, flipping through Molly's investment paperwork. His fingers tap against the page as he calculates.

JACK

(thoughtful) Molly...
you don't have that
much in your stocks
and bonds.

A heavy beat. Molly's shoulders sink, disappointment flickering across her face.

JACK (CONT.)

(gently) But your
real estate
holdings? That's a
different story. If
you sell your
properties in Santa
Barbara and Orange
County... I could get
you what you need.

Molly stills. Her fingers tighten around the arms of the chair. She blinks, processing.

MOLLY

(quietly) Uncle
Jack... how much am I
worth?

Jack studies her for a moment, smiles then pushes a balance sheet across the desk. Molly picks it up, scanning the figures. Her breath catches.

MOLLY

(barely above a
whisper) Five
million dollars?

Jack nods, his expression calm but knowing. Pointing to the number at the bottom of the page.

JACK

(softly) As of last
month, five point
six, to be exact.

Molly shakes her head, as if the number is too big to be real.

MOLLY

(disbelieving,
half-laughing)

You're joking. I
knew there was
money, but not...

JACK

(smirking slightly)
You've never cared
much about money,
have you?

Molly exhales, still staring at the figures.

JACK (CONT.)

(leaning back,
folding his hands)
It's simple math,
Molly. Your mother
left you her
trust—over two
million in 1922.
Since it was
invested in East
Coast real estate,
it barely took a
hit in '29. Your
father's estate
added another half-
million in '32.
Today its \$5.6.

He pauses, watching her reaction.

JACK (CONT.)

(letting it sink
in) Your father
asked me to be
conservative, so I
put your money in
what I knew
best—California
real estate. Napa.
Santa Barbara.
Orange County. Back
then, farmland was
cheap. When the war
ended, California
boomed, and people
needed houses.

Jack gestures to the document.

MOLLY

(softly) Who else
knows about this?

JACK

(firm) Just you and
me. My brother and
Mary had a hint,
but it was never
any of their
business. And
that's how it
should stay. This
isn't just money,

Molly—it's your
boys' legacy.

Molly runs a hand through her hair, her mind racing.
Slowly, the initial shock fades... replaced by
something else. Resolve.

MOLLY

(softly, almost to
herself) Well... it's
time I put it to
use.

She exhales, straightens her shoulders—her decision
made.

MOLLY (CONT.)

(steady,
determined) I'm
going to help Louis
build Oasis Palms.
Not just for us,
but for our
boys—and for their
children after
them.

Jack watches her carefully, then leans forward, his
voice dropping, serious.

JACK

(measured, warning)

Molly, listen to me. Old money endures because it follows one rule—never spend the principal. You spend your earnings, you spend your interest, you spend your dividends, but never touch the principal.

Molly's brow furrows, listening intently.

JACK (CONT.)

(pressing) Once you start spending principal on projects, you'll be tempted to start spending principal to maintain those projects. And the bigger the projects, the faster the money goes away.

He taps the balance sheet between them.

JACK (CONT.)

(pointed) I've seen
fortunes bigger
than yours vanish
in a generation
because someone
thought they could
'build something
big' with it.

Molly meets his gaze, the weight of his words
sinking in.

MOLLY

(quiet, thoughtful)
We won't waste it,
Uncle Jack. I trust
Louis.

JACK

(soft, but firm)
See that you don't.
Because once it's
gone, it's gone.

A long silence. Jack leans back, watching her,
measuring her resolve. Molly exhales slowly, then
nods. Jack smirks faintly, shaking his head. She's
her father's daughter, through and through.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. OASIS PALMS – CONSTRUCTION SITE – MIDDAY (1954)
SCREEN OVERLAY: "2 Years Later – 1954"

The desert sun blazes high, casting sharp shadows over Oasis Palms, now a town transformed. Steel girders glint in the sunlight as workers weld beams together, their sparks flying, constructing the long-awaited elevated railway. The low hum of machinery, the clang of hammers, and the whir of drills fill the air.

Just beyond the tracks, a sleek mid-century modern motel is taking shape—THE FLAMINGO MOTEL, its pink neon sign is being installed on the roof, awaiting the moment it will light up the town.

On a hill overlooking the site, LEFTY SMITH stands, hands on his hips, his face full of pride. Beside him, MOLLY SMITH, now in her mid-30s, watches with a mixture of wonder and warmth, her hand resting on his arm. Their twin 7-year-old boys, FLOYD (short dark hair) and LLOYD (curly blonde hair) stand nearby, Lloyd holding a toy train, the Floyd pointing excitedly at the tracks.

LLOYD

(grinning, wide-eyed) Dad, look!
They're putting the
bridge up!

FLOYD

(mimicking a train
whistle, excited)
Choo-choo!

Lefty laughs, ruffling their hair, his gaze never

leaving the railway.

LEFTY

(softly, to Molly)
Can you believe it?

Molly leans into him, smiling.

MOLLY

(warmly, looking at
him) I always
could.

Lefty exhales, taking it all in—the tracks stretching over the town, the new Flamingo Motel rising, the promise of something bigger than just a dream. A nearby worker signals, and a large crane lifts a final section of rail into place. No longer folly. It's real. It's happening.

LLOYD

(tugging at Lefty's
sleeve) When can we
ride it, Dad?

Lefty chuckles, looking down at his sons.

LEFTY

(smirking, glancing
at the nearly
completed track)

Soon, boys. Real
soon.

Molly watches him, her heart full, knowing that everything he fought for—all the doubt, the sacrifices, the whispers about the fire—was worth it. Lefty wraps an arm around her, pulling her close. Behind them, the neon letters on the Flamingo Motel's sign catch the sun—a new icon for a new Oasis Palms. The twins laugh, racing each other toward the tracks, their voices mixing with the sounds of progress. Lefty and Molly stand together, watching the future take shape. A new era for Oasis Palms has begun.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. OASIS PALMS – TRAIN DEPOT – DUSK (1961)

The sun sinks low, casting long, golden shadows over the quiet train depot. The rails shimmer, but there's something different now—something missing. A lone Santa Fe freight train is heard passing in the distance, its whistle piercing the still desert air, but it does not appear. It never will again.

INT. LEFTY'S OFFICE – NIGHT

LEFTY SMITH stands at his window, looking down at Main Street. The neon signs flicker, but the hustle of tourists has waned. On his desk, a telegram from Santa Fe Railway Headquarters sits unfolded, the ink still fresh. CLOSE ON TELEGRAM: **"EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, DAILY PASSENGER SERVICE TO OASIS PALMS DISCONTINUED. FREIGHT SERVICE TO FOLLOW. SPUR LINE**

REMOVAL PLANS IN MOTION. STOP." Lefty leans forward, gripping the edge of his desk, jaw clenched.

FLASH CUTS – OASIS PALMS FEELS THE BLOW

- **MOLLY STANDS BEHIND THE COUNTER AT THE FLAMINGO MOTEL, FLIPPING THROUGH EMPTY RESERVATION BOOKS.**
- **HATTIE WIPES DOWN A NEAR-EMPTY DINER, CASTING A WORRIED GLANCE OUT THE WINDOW.**
- **A GROUP OF TOWN ELDERS MUTTER OUTSIDE DON'S BARBERSHOP, SHAKING THEIR HEADS IN DISBELIEF.**
- **THE THEATER MARQUEE READS "WEST SIDE STORY" WITH MISMATCHED LETTERING**

BACK TO LEFTY

Lefty paces, the weight of something far greater pressing down on him. This isn't just railroad business. This isn't just profit loss. This is something else. Something deliberate.

LEFTY

(low, to himself)
They don't just
walk away. Not
unless someone's
pulling the
strings.

A gust of wind rattles the windows. His desk lamp

flickers. He turns, pulling open a filing cabinet, rifling through maps, land deeds, and old agreements with the railroad. He stops on one page. His eyes narrow.

CLOSE ON DOCUMENT – A MAP OF WATER RIGHTS ACROSS THE MOJAVE.

The railroad tracks. The FENNER VALLEY, The aquafir beneath Oasis Palms. It all intersects. Lefty exhales sharply, a new fear settling in his gut. This wasn't just a business decision. This was about control. And someone wanted Oasis Palms cut off. The town had survived fire, doubt, and the weight of its own ambition. But now? It was up against something unseen. And Lefty wasn't about to let it happen without a fight.

FADE TO BLACK.