

Down the Old Garden Path (Comic Script)

PAGE ONE (five panels) – Right

Panel 1. Establishing shot. We are looking down on a plush countryside in the early hours of the day. The sun is just peaking up from the hills in the background. It's not farmland, but well-manicured grasslands. In the far distance is a booming, metropolitan city marks the sky. Cutting through the countryside, emerging from the city, is a winding road with a single small, red car heading away from the smog. The headlights are on. It's too small to see the driver or passengers. The road ends on the bottom right hand corner of the panel.

Panel 2. Very long shot (VLS). We have zoomed in on the car as it continues its journey through the countryside. The road picks up at the bottom left hand corner of the panel. We are behind the car, watching as it maneuvers the roads, which disappears behind a large hill in the distance. The foreground is still grasslands, but the approaching hills are dotted with evergreen trees.

Panel 3. Long shot (LS). We are positioned so that the car is coming towards us, much closer now. We can see a shadowed driver behind the wheel. The landscape is heavily filled with evergreen trees, but more light is filling the sky

Panel 4. Medium Closeup (MCU). We are in the passenger's seat car, looking at KEITH, a clean shaven, middle-aged man driving the car. Despite the early hour, he looks wide awake and happy. He's holding a tumbler with coffee in his right hand, and driving with his left.

KEITH:

The view is pretty great, Aaron.

Panel 5. MCU. We are face-to-face with AARON, a ten-year-old boy with his face plastered to the window. Here is a kid who is being dragged along reluctantly, and everything about his posture and expression shows this unhappiness. His eyes are half open, and he isn't paying attention to his dad.

KEITH (OP):

Get a load of that!

PAGE TWO (three panels) – Left

Panel 1. LS. Largest panel on the page. The red car is perched at the top of a hill, overlooking a town out of a storybook. The road disappears down the side of the hill, and converges into a roundabout. Rows of shops, tiny restaurants, and a church surround the square, with houses filling in the rest of the town. In the middle of the roundabout is a fountain. Trees and hills fill in the rest of the landscape. In the forefront of the panel is the top of an evergreen tree, with a BIRD landing on the top.

Panel 2. MS. Wide panel. Side view of the inside of the car. Aaron is in the back, disinterested with the view, and propping his legs on the seat in front of him. Keith is in the front seat.

AARON:

The country sucks.

KEITH:

Don't say that around your grandma. It's just for a week.

Panel 3. Close up (CU). Small panel. Instead of a moody, passive response, Aaron lifts his arms in frustration and wears an expression that looks like he's a villain being disintegrated, and hoping that someone will save him from the backseat of the car.

PAGE THREE (one panel) – Right

Keith's speech bubbles will dot the various landmarks.

Panel 1. Full bleed. Top view, street map of the journey Keith takes to get to the end of the trip. The road starts at the bottom left hand side of the page, curves up to the top left, where the town and roundabout are. There are three roads connecting into the roundabout: the one the red car is on, the top most goes off the page, and the right road. The red car takes the right path, over a river, down past a farm, swirling through hills, and landing at an even smaller collection of houses at the bottom right hand of the page. The landscape is filled with hills and trees, which grow thicker the farther south the road goes. Repeat the red car along the road to show its progression.

KEITH (in the town):

This town has a killer ice cream store. You like ice cream, right?

KEITH (passing over the river):

They say there's a hidden lake somewhere in the woods.

KEITH (near the farm):

Did we forget to get lunch? I'm starving!

PAGE FOUR (three panels) – Left

Panel 1. LS. The red car pulls up to a charming, brick cottage, with a thatched roof and gabled frame. A single window and a brick chimney pops out from the roof. A stone fence runs the perimeter of the house, encapsulating a lush garden. It looks like something out of a fairy tale. There is a dense forest in the background. The sun should be fully in the sky now.

Panel 2. MS. Keith is out of the car, stretching and smiling. Aaron is still in the car, but is paying attention to the house as well.

Panel 3. MS. Keith knocks on the windshield to Aaron.

SFX (quiet):

Tap tap tap

KEITH (OP):

Grandma is excited to see you.

PAGE FIVE (five panels) – Right

Panel 1. MS. Aaron, with his rucksack, outside of the car, shoulders slumped and head down.

AARON (CAP):

Well here goes the start of my summer.

Panel 2. MS. He lifts his head, his eyes so far up in his head, that he's not really looking at anything.

AARON (CAP):

Stuck with grandma while all my friends play the newest Tendo RPG, and what do I get -
-

SFX:

RSSH

Panel 3. MS. Over Aaron's shoulder, we are looking in the same direction the sound came from: deep into the dense woods. There is a large, almost overgrown bush at the entrance of a dark woods. There is nothing there.

Panel 4. LS. Aaron bolts for the front door. His eyes are wide. We can see the spot of the woods Aaron looked at in the background. Still, there is nothing is there.

Panel 5. CU. Small panel. From the bush, a pair of floating, glowing eyes shine at us from a shadowed figure of an animal. The silhouette of its body is obscure and blends into the leaves.

PAGE SIX (five panels) – Left

Panel 1. MS. Long panel. Jump cut to a lavish, visually busy, cottage living room. Large, overstuffed couches and arm chairs are shoved together around a lit fireplace. Books, reading glasses, and knick-knacks sit on every open surface – yet for how busy it is, it’s tidy. Aaron is sinking into the couch next to GRANDMA, an elderly woman with a big grin on her face, has positioned herself a bit too close to her grandson, but pays no attention to his apparent discomfort. Keith is sitting in an arm chair, holding a cup of steaming tea, oblivious (or purposely ignoring) Aaron disappearing into the couch.

GRANDMA:

I’m so glad you’re starting your summer with me, Aaron, dear. There may not be many other kids your age, but we have an ice cream shop in town.

KEITH:

Aaron loves ice cream!

Panel 2. CU. Small panel. On the grandma’s smiling face.

GRANDMA:

And the members of my knitting guild want to meet you, too!

Panel 3. CU. Small panel. Aaron looks bored.

AARON (CAP):

Great.

Panel 4. MS. Keith and Aaron are both visible in the shot. Keith is doing a side glance at him, like he is finally noticing him for the first time.

Panel 5. MS. Keith lifts the tea cup to his mouth as he speaks, and smiles, still doing a side glance at Aaron, like he’s waiting for his reaction to what he’s about to say.

KEITH:

Hey, mom. Ever visit the enchanted spring behind the house anymore?

PAGE SEVEN (six panels) – Right

Panel 1. MS. We are focused on grandma, who looks like she's in thought, and Aaron, who is looking at her in anticipation.

GRANDMA:

Oh the springs! The one down the old garden path? I haven't thought of that in a while --

Panel 2. CU. On grandma, smiling.

GRANDMA:

--but sometimes I spot the glitter of spirits when I'm out in the yard. I see them less and less nowadays though.

Panel 3. MS. On grandma, looking down at Aaron, giving him a wink.

GRANDMA:

It's around this time of the day that I've always had the best chance.

KEITH (OP):

Aaron?

Panel 4. MS. Aaron looks over at Keith, who has set his tea cup aside, and is now leaning over to close the gap between the two of them. He has a warm expression.

KEITH:

You can go up to your room if you want unless you'd rather sit here and talk.

Panel 5. CU. Small panel. Aaron looks happy, and re-energized by this suggestion.

AARON:

Ok. Actually, can I go outside for a bit? I want to stretch my legs.

Panel 6. MS. Aaron is at the entrance hall, already putting his shoes on. We can see into the living room where Keith and grandma are still sitting, both still happy.

KEITH (OP):

Sure! Just don't wander too far, ok?

PAGE EIGHT (four panels) – Left

Panel 1. LS. Large panel. Outside the cottage, we are looking at Aaron as he exits the house.

Panel 2. MS. Narrow panel. We are looking over his shoulder as he peers around the corner of the house. Off in the distance is an opening in the stone fence with a stone path that leads into the woods.

Panel 3. CU on Aaron's face. He looks proud of himself.

AARON:
Bingo.

Panel 4. Medium long shot (MLS). The stone path curves between the trees and disappears off into the distance. Aaron is on the path, the stone fence barely visible between us and him. He's looking to his right at the overgrown plants. His eyes are wide with wonder.

PAGE NINE (seven panels) – Right

Panel 1. CU. Small panel. Low angled shot looking up at Aaron. He's looking down at something on the ground.

Panel 2. CU. Small panel of the same size. We're in Aaron's POV looking down at a hoof print in the dirt.

Panel 3. CU. Small panel of the same size. We're looking back up at Aaron. He has turned away, looking forward, lifting his shoulders in a way that makes it look like "if I ignore that huge footprint, it won't have anything to do with me".

Panel 4. MS. Wide panel. Inside Aaron's POV. We're looking up through the trees to see a few rays of sun break through, but not a lot. It's getting denser the farther we go in.

Panel 5. MS. Medium panel. We are looking at Aaron walk towards us, making his way up a hilly section in the path. The top half of him is visible as he reaches the top of the hill. He looks winded, and his eyes are closed.

Panel 6. MCU. Medium panel. Aaron has his hands on his knees.

Panel 7. CU. Small panel. He looks up, and his expression changes from being tired to being amazed by what he's looking at.

PAGE TEN (five panels) – Left

Panel 1. MLS. Largest panel on the page. We're behind Aaron, looking at a small clearing in the woods where the grass is no longer overgrown, and the trees let in a lot of light. In the middle is a large circular pond with a grass pathway leading to a stone pedestal with flowers on it. Glowing spheres float around the surface of the water. It looks like something straight out of a fairy tale.

Panel 2. MS. Medium panel. We are behind Aaron as he walks out into the pond using the grass pathway, looking all around him. His mouth is open, and he looks around in wonder.

Panel 3. MCU. Small panel. He reaches the pedestal and looks at the flowers. They're fresh and appear to be growing out of a mossy part of the stone.

AARON (cap):
What is this place? Is this the enchanted spring?

Panel 4. MCU. Small panel. Aaron turns around to face us, away from the pedestal, and looks up in search of something else.

AARON:
Is this it?
SFX (soft, from behind Aaron):
FSHH

Panel 5. CU. Small panel of the pedestal. Magically, a glass of fizzy liquid and a slice of cake appears out of nowhere. There is no note, or any indication that someone else could have placed it here.

PAGE ELEVEN (six panels) – Right

Panel 1. MCU. Medium panel. We are face to face with Aaron. He has the cake in his hands, holding it close to his face. He looks absolutely stunned.

AARON:
WOAH! Where did this come from?

Panel 2. MS. Medium panel. Cake still in hand, he looks around the other side of the pedestal, looking for the source of the cake.

Panel 3. MCU. Small panel. Aaron looks back at the cake.

AARON:
Is this for me? Am I supposed to eat it?

Panel 4. MCU. Small panel. Aaron takes one more look around.

Panel 5. MCU. Small panel. Aaron has a huge bite of cake in his mouth, and he smiles as he chews.

Panel 6. Small black panel.

CAP:
Greedy fool.

PAGE TWELVE (five panels) – Left

Panel 1. Small black panel.

Panel 2. MCU. Small panel. Aaron is laying on the floor, his cheek is pressed against a cobblestone floor. His eyes are closed. Cake crumbs are in the corner of his mouth.

Panel 3. MS. Small panel. Aaron's eyes start to open a little from rustling noise. He looks like he is waking up from deep sleep, which makes sense because he was drugged hardcore.

AARON (CAP):
Unngg...

SFX:
CLINK KLANK

VOICE (quiet) (OP):
Urg, where is it?

Panel 4. MS. Medium panel. We are looking at a sleepy Aaron, who is sitting up, not really registering that he is behind bars in a cellar. There is a straw littering the ground next to him. Between us and Aaron is a bubbling cauldron. The closest object to us in the panel is a SHADOWED FIGURE, hunched over a box, not realizing that Aaron is there.

SHADOWED FIGURE:
Where did Morgan hide my stuff?!

AARON:
What stuff?

Panel 5. MLS. Medium panel. Profile/side view of the shadowed figure looking over their shoulder, past the cauldron at Aaron, who is just sitting there unfazed by the situation.

PAGE THIRTEEN (seven panels) – Right

Panel 1. MS. Medium panel. We are face to face with the shadowed figure, CARMEL, who jumps back and looks shocked to see Aaron. A young girl about the age of sixteen or seventeen, Carmel has long, straight, dark hair, and is dressed in all black.

CARMEL:

AH! What are you doing in there?

Panel 2. MS. Medium panel. We are now face to face with Aaron, who is startled by Carmel's shout. He looks more alert, and responsive.

Panel 3. MLS. Medium panel. We're still looking at Aaron, who is now more focused on the fact he is behind bars than at Carmel.

AARON:

Wait! Where am I?

Panel 4. MCU. Medium panel. Aaron has crawled towards the bars and is pulling on them with all his strength.

AARON:

Let me out of here, you! I didn't do anything wrong.

Panel 5. MS. Carmel is ignoring him, now that she realizes he can't do anything, and continues to search through boxes.

CARMEL:

What's the big deal? Just magic yourself out.

Panel 6. MS. Aaron shoves his face through the bars, looking upset and confused.

AARON:

What do you mean "magic myself out"? Just let me out!

Panel 7. MS. Small panel. A look of confusion crosses Carmel's face, like Aaron just asked the dumbest question in the world.

PAGE FOURTEEN (six panels) – Left

Panel 1. MS. Side view. Carmel approaches Aaron, standing just outside of his reach and looks down at him. She is hunched over, just staring at him, hoping that if she just gives him a good look, she can figure out her confusion.

CARMEL:
Are you telling me you don't have magic?

Panel 2. MS. Side view. Aaron reaches his arms up towards her, but gets stopped by the bar, so his expression of exasperation is a bit less dramatic that he was hoping for.

AARON:
Of course I don't! Are you telling me you do?

Panel 3. MS. Carmel twists her wrist around, finger pointed in the air, and a long, knitted scarf appears. She still looks like this is a total waste of her time.

SFX:
SNAP

Panel 4. MCU. The rolled-up scarf lands next to Aaron, and he grabs at it.

AARON:
AH!! How did you make this appear?

CARMEL (OP):
I already told you. Magic.

Panel 5. LS. Carmel has resumed looking through boxes while Aaron freaks out over the scarf. She looks so annoyed by the volume of his voice.

AARON:
AHHH!!
CARMEL:
You are so overreacting.

Panel 6. MLS. Carmel goes to the door of the cellar to leave. Her hand is on the knob.

CARMEL:
Well, my stuff isn't here, so I'm out. Good luck, human. Don't let Morgan eat you.

PAGE FIFTEEN (six panels) – Right

Panel 1. MLS. Medium panel. We're standing in the doorway, with both Carmel and Aaron in view. Aaron has reached through the bars again, and Carmel is paying no attention to him.

AARON:
Wait!

Panel 2. MCU. Small panel. We're face to face with Aaron, his face between the bars.

AARON:
Please take me with you! I don't want to be eaten!

Panel 3. MLS. Medium panel. Same view as panel one. This time, Aaron is in the back, looking innocent and small, playing up his size to get what he wants. Carmel rotates her head, not her body to look back towards him.

CARMEL:
Well, why should I?

Panel 4. CU. Small panel. Aaron looks totally dumbstruck by Carmel's lack of interest in saving him. He is speechless.

Panel 5. MCU. Medium panel. Tears well in Aaron's eyes, and he breaks down. The majority of this panel should be focusing on the words, and making Aaron look small by comparison. It should also be comical, not serious.

AARON (hysterical):
Because if you don't help me, I'm never going to get home! I wasn't meant to be gone for super long, I just followed the path from my grandma's house and if I don't get back soon, my dad and grandma will be super worried!!

Panel 6. MS. Medium panel. Carmel looks at Aaron, this time not in a disinterested way, but in a serious manner.

CARMEL:
Ok, I'll help.