

Big Fish

Sequence Outline 3/31/00 Draft

Seq. 01 – Pages 1-6 The Catfish

Edward tells the same big fish story throughout Will's life, finishing at Will's wedding. Will and Edward have an argument.

Seq. 02 – Pages 6-8 Those Three Years

The next three years pass. Will's voiceover explains how he and his father communicated indirectly. Edward swims; Will and Josephine check on the health of their unborn child.

Seq. 03 – Pages 8-11 The Day My Father Was Born

Will tells the story of the day his father was born, the day it finally rained in Ashland.

Seq. 04 – Pages 11-14 Will gets the phone call

Will gets word that his father's condition has worsened. He and Josephine board a plane for the States.

Seq. 05 – Pages 14-23 The Old Lady and The Eye

Retrieving a toy plane, Edward is caught by the one-eyed old woman, who will only give him the plane if he returns her glass eye, stolen by Don Price. She warns him not to look into the eye, for in it he will see the last moments of his life.

Edward manipulates Don and his friend into looking into The Eye, scaring them off. Too curious not to, Edward looks into The Eye himself. Armed with the foreknowledge of his own passing, Edward never fears death.

Seq. 06 – Pages 23-27 Will Returns Home

Will and Josephine arrive. We meet Sandra Bloom and Doctor Bennett.

Seq. 07 – Pages 27-30 Will Talks with Edward

The first time we've seen ill Edward. He and Will talk

Seq. 08 – Pages 30-37 Edward and the Giant Leave Ashland

Will tells the story of his father and Karl the Giant. When the townsfolk organize a lynch-mob to stop the menace, Edward volunteers to try to talk sense into Karl. He ends up convincing Karl to leave Ashland with him.

Seq. 09 – Pages 37-48 The Town of Spectre, the First Time

Splitting from Karl at a fork in the road, Edward finds himself in Spectre, a town full of people who can never leave, including Beaman, Norther Winslow, Piano Phil and Baton Woman. Edward tries to leave Spectre ten separate times in ten separate directions, but each time finds himself back where he started.

He asks a mysterious Girl in the River how to leave. She says the answer is in him. River Girl for advice on how to get out of Spectre. She points to him – he knows how.

Edward discovers what has been keeping Spectre's inhabitants hostage; they keep repeating the same mistakes. He's able to walk backwards out of town.

Seq. 10 – Pages 48-50 Mysterious Woman at the Winn-Dixie

Will and his mother shop for groceries. They lightly discuss the rift between Will and his father. A beautiful blonde woman keeps looking at Will. Does he know her?

Seq. 11 – Pages 50-54 Edward and Josephine

Edward tells Josephine about his portentous dream, then explains he's always had that ability. His story turns into a Milk Man joke. Edward tells her the story of how he met, wooed, and won Sandra.

Seq. 12 – Pages 54-66 The Circus and his Many Labors

Edward and Karl visit a circus where Karl dwarfs the main attraction. Edward sees a beautiful girl and falls in love. Amos Calloway knows who it is, but doesn't think Edward is worthy. Edward convinces Amos to let him work for information about this girl he's madly in love with.

Edward completes Amos's tasks, each more difficult than the last, each time getting one more piece of information about the love of his life. Finally, Edward plays fetch with Amos — a kind of werewolf. Amos, grateful, gives Edward the finally piece of information. The girl's name is Sandra Templeton and she goes to Auburn.

Seq. 13 – Pages 66-73 The College and The Fight

Edward attempts to court Sandra but discovers not only does he already know her (she was Sandy back in Ashland) but unfortunately he's too late – she's engaged to wed Don Price. Edward doesn't give up, continuing to profess his love in every manner possible. Don Price arrives and beats a passive Edward within an inch of his life. Sandra dumps Don and agrees to go out with Edward. Don Price, true to his destiny, falls off the toilet, dead.

Seq. 14 – Page 74 But Wait There's More

Josephine asks again, why didn't Edward and Sandra have a full wedding? He continues the story.

Seq. 15 – Pages 75-81 The War

Before Sandra and Edward can marry, he is drafted into the Army. He volunteers for the most dangerous assignments to shorten his tour. He parachutes into an enemy USO-like show where he meets Ping and Jing who, after hearing of his love for Sandra, let Edward join them as they escape the country for the United States. Edward returns home to Sandra.

Seq. 16 – Pages 81-83 In Bed with Will and Josephine

Will explains that he doesn't truly know anything about his father, only tall tales and stories with punchlines.

Seq. 17 – Pages 83-85 Breakfast

Over breakfast Will tries to talk with his father about what, if anything, he truly believes. Will gets a Jesus/Pinocchio joke for his troubles.

Seq. 18 – Pages 85-89 Will's Chores, and his Discovery

Will takes out the trash and skims the family pool, which apparently has a monster in it. In the cluttered garage, Will goes through his father's old papers. Discovering a property loan application, Will heads off to investigate.

Seq. 19 – Pages 89-93 Will meets Jenny Hill

Will arrives at Jenny Hill's house. She explains how she and Edward met.

Seq. 20 – Pages 93-104 Edward Buys A Town

Caught in a deluge, Edward finds himself back in Spectre. Falling in love with it, he buys up all of Spectre except for one small shack in the swamp, which belongs to Jenny Hill.

Edward tries to buy Jenny's land, but she won't sell. After mistakenly breaking her front door, Edward starts to repair the entire home. Jenny falls in love with Edward and the two begin their relationship. People in the town look at Edward in a different light, he's no longer an outsider but rather a part of the town. Edward leaves the town and as Jenny waits and waits for him to return, her house is taken over by the swamp, transforming into the Old Woman's house from the beginning of the story.

Seq. 21 – Pages 104-105 What Jenny Tells Will

Finished with her account of the story, Jenny tells Will about how proud his father was of him, and how envious she was of him.

Seq. 22 – Pages 105-108 Turn for the Worse

Will returns home to find the house empty. At the hospital, he learns Edward has had a stroke.

Seq. 23 – Pages 108-111 The Hospital

Dr. Bennett tells Will the real story of Will's birth. Will makes a list of all his father's stories. When Will wakes the next morning, he finds Edward has died.

Seq. 24 – Pages 112-116 The Funeral

At the service, the "real" versions of many of the characters from Edward's tall tales arrive to pay their respects. As his father's last wish, Will tells the story about the cat on the roof.

Seq. 25 – Page 116 Jumping Ahead

Will tells his young son the story of his Grandfather's death.

Seq. 26 – Pages 116-122 Edward's Death, the Funny Version

Will wakes in the hospital to find Edward sitting up in bed getting dressed. They escape the hospital, racing to the banks of the Ashland river. There a crowd of more than a hundred wait, including most of the faces we've met along the way.

Edward says his good-byes as Will carries him into the water. There Edward turns into a catfish and swims away.

Seq. 27 – Pages 122-123 How it Ends

Will, Josephine and their Son leave the cemetery. The Son wants to hear more stories about his grandfather.