

THE GOLDEN TREE

by

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version 6

Based on the movie

[40th revision]

Story about a little piece of Sacramento's History
For "A Place Called Sacramento" 2010 screenplay contest

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EXT. RIVER BANK 1855 - MORNING

MONTAGE OF RIVER BANK, FOREST, AND RIVER SHOTS AS THE SUN RISES.

1

EXT. BANK OF A RIVER: 1855 - DAY

1

A GOLD PAN is dunked into the flowing STREAM and gathers some rocks and sand. ARLEN, (mid 30's), wearing western mining clothing of 1856, begins to swish the pan in a circular motion dumping the sand and rock out slowly. DINGY GOLDEN FLAKES sit at the bottom of the pan. Arlen smiles and giggles to himself as he takes one of the gold pieces and bites it.

HENRY (O.C.)
Arlen stop yer fussin' and get back
to pannin.

ARLEN
But Henry I was...

HENRY, (mid 30's), bigger than Arlen, wearing western mining clothing of 1856, a few paces away gold-panning.

HENRY
I know what yuz doin. Every time.

ARLEN
But Henry. Ain't ya happy when ya
find gold?

HENRY
Quit actin' like a sage hen and get
back to pannen'.

ARLEN
You tuchy as a teased snake. Ya
old Scallywag.

SNAP!! A twig snaps.

HENRY
Hobble your lip Arlen.

Henry pulls out is pistol and looks into the woods.

ARLEN
Ain't no funnin' ares ya?

Henry **SHUSH'S** Arlen. Arlen sees Henry's pistol pointing and gets quiet.

ARLEN (cont'd)
Bear? Snake? Wha.. What is it?

Henry motions to Arlen to keep quiet and looks intensely into the distance.

ARLEN (cont'd)
Whats got you rattled Henry?

HENRY
Ahh. It's nothin'. Just thought I heard...

RATTLESNAKE DICK (O.C.)
Mornin.

Arlen and Henry turn around to see four outlaw males: RATTLESNAKE DICK, (19), GEORGE SKINNER, (22), ROMERO, (17), and RAFAEL ESCOBAR, (15), wearing western clothing of 1856; standing with bandannas over their faces.

RATTLESNAKE DICK (cont'd)
Such a nice mornin. Too nice to be working hard. Right boys?

GEORGE SKINNER
We was just wondering what you was looking fer.

ROMERO
Like we don't already know.

HENRY
What you boys want?

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Boys? Who you callin boy?

RATTLESNAKE DICK
Now Rafael. Simmer down. Our new friend meant no disrespect. Ain't that right mister?

ARLEN
Weeze just fishin'.

RATTLESNAKE DICK
Boys I reckon he's the funny one.

ARLEN

It's true. Looking for trout
and...

HENRY

Wipe yer chin Arlen.

GEORGE SKINNER

I reckon he's the smart one.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR

Well. We're fishin too.

ROMERO

Fer gold.

Arlen turns away from the bandits and sees CYRUS SKINNER,
(18) blue eyes, pointing a six shooter at him. Arlen stops
in his tracks, raises his arms, and stares at Cyrus.

CYRUS SKINNER

We'll be taking that.

Arlen hides the pouch. Henry slowly pulls out his six-
shooter and cocks it. George Skinner sees this and quickly
pulls out his weapon and points it at Henry.

GEORGE SKINNER

Whoa. I wouldn't do that.

CYRUS SKINNER

Your future depends on it.

GEORGE SKINNER

Don't be stupid now.

Romero laughs a evil enjoyable laugh.

ROMERO

Goney off his chump and on the
shoot. He gonna scratch with five
beans in the wheel.

RATTLESNAKE DICK

Aw. George. Cyrus. Be nice to
our new friends. They want to
oblige. Tain't that right mister?

Henry has a worried but angry look on his face as he puts his
six-shooter away.

GEORGE SKINNER

Shave tail get the guns.

The gang looks back at Romero.

GEORGE SKINNER (cont'd)
Romero! Get the guns you shave
tail!

Romero heads over to Henry first and holds his hand out.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Hey old codger. Give em yer
shootin'-iron. And do it real slow
like.

Henry stares down Rafael and glances at Romero heading over.

HENRY
Yer gonna end up at the end of a
rope one day boy.

Rafael Escobar pulls out his pistol and points it at Henry.

ROMERO
Wooh. Hooh. Show him down Rafael.
Grandpa giving you trouble.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Looks like yer at the end of yer
rope.

ARLEN
(concerned)
Henry?

Henry looks at the pistol pointed at him then at everyone else before revealing his pistol slowly. Rafael Escobar takes it and looks at it.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Mighty fancy lead-pusher fer an old
codger.

HENRY
It's special to me. Given to me by
me wife. God rest her soul.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Then it's special to me.

Rafael shrugs Romero off.

CYRUS SKINNER
Yellow belly. It's your turn.

ARLEN
(afraid)
Henry?

HENRY
Give em yer gun Arlen. They just
bark. Got no bite.

Romero **barks** a few times then giggles. Arlen reaches for his pistol and hands it to Romero who giggles as he strokes the gun.

RATTLESNAKE DICK
Now ain't that more civilized?

Rattlesnake Dick looks over at George and makes eye contact. They nod. Rattlesnake Dick walks up to Henry. Henry looks concerned. Rattlesnake Dick gives Henry an annoyed look with his eyes and then shoves his pistol into his gut the cocks it.

Henry looks down at the gun pointed at his gut and reaches for his pouch and drops it in Rattlesnake Dick's hand.

RATTLESNAKE DICK (cont'd)
Thank you.

CYRUS SKINNER
Yellow belly.

Arlen looks at Cyrus who is motioning for him to hand over his pouch. Arlen Look to Henry who motions to give them the pouch. Arlen tosses the pouch to Cyrus who snags it and tosses it up and down.

CYRUS SKINNER (cont'd)
Feels like a few bottles of whisky
in here.

Cyrus tosses it to Rattlesnake Dick who weighs the pouches with his hand, bouncing them up and down.

RATTLESNAKE DICK
I say about thirty dollars.

CYRUS SKINNER
Hot digity. That makes sixty-five
this morning.

GEORGE SKINNER
That all you have?

ARLEN
It's worth more than that.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Is it worth your life you old
codger?

ARLEN
I'm only thirty-four.

The bandits laugh.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Well my thirty-four year old
friend. Do you want to see thirty-
five?

DAD (V.O.)
(faint)
Sierra.

The bandits raise their guns and look around.

DAD (V.O.) (cont'd)
Sierra!?

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

2

INT. ROOM: PRESENT DAY - DAY

2

SIERRA, (15), pretty petite girl, is sitting on the floor holding a book. The bed is unmade, there boxes on the floor, but the bookshelves are still full. The door opens and DAD, (30's), comes in holding a few papers.

DAD
(overly excited)
Look what I found. Our family
tree. Well. My mom's side anyway.

SIERRA
That's great dad.

Dad points to photo on the bookshelf of CECILIA WIMMER (GREAT GREAT GRANDMA)

DAD
My grandmother, my mom's mom, you
and Brooke's great grandmother...

SIERRA
Dad I know how the connections
work.

BROOKE, (12), enters the room.

DAD

We're connected to the gold rush here in Sacramento. My great, great, great, great grandmother, Elizabeth Jane Cloud, helped James Marshall discover gold back in eighteen forty-eight.

(beat)

Isn't that exciting?

BROOKE

I think it is.

DAD

Thank you Brooke.

(looks at Sierra)

Honey. Our ancestors are in the history books. They're famous.

SIERRA

Were they rich?

DAD

Well... There's more important things in life than money.

SIERRA

Says someone without a job and a home.

Dad looks dejected. Sierra looks up and sees this.

SIERRA (cont'd)

Sorry Dad. I'm not blaming you like mom did. I'm just.

DAD

It's okay. We'll get through this if we stick together. Okay? What are you reading?

SIERRA

"A place called Sacramento." It's the title anyway. It's more like a western about outlaws.

DAD

It's by Ron Cooper? There's probably something about our family in there.

Sierra looks at the book with doubt.

DAD (cont'd)
We'll break for lunch a bit. Okay?

Dad leaves the room and Brooke stares at Sierra. Sierra opens the book up and begin reading again.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR (V.O.)
Is it worth yer life? Ya old
codger?

ARLEN (V.O.)
I'm only thirty-four.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR (V.O.)
Well my thirty-four year old
friend. You want to see thirty-
five?

Sierra looks up at Brooke from behind the book.

SIERRA
What do you want?

BROOKE
Can I help?

SIERRA
Help? With what?

BROOKE
Packing boxes with you.

SIERRA
I'm reading.

BROOKE
Dad said we need to pack more
boxes.

SIERRA
You do it.

BROOKE
Fine. I will.

Brooke begins to mess with boxes and books making lots of noise.

SIERRA
Not in here. Go away.

Brooke sticks her tongue out at Sierra.

SIERRA (cont'd)
Ouch. That hurts.

Brooke leaves the room with a huff.

3

EXT. BANK OF A RIVER: 1855 - DAY

3

GEORGE SKINNER (V.O.)
Is that all you have?

ARLEN
It's worth more than that.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Is it worth yer life you old
codger?

ARLEN
I'm only thirty-four.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Well my thirty-four year old
friend. Do you want to see thirty-
five?

ARLEN
Wells Fargo and Company is paying
seventeen an ounce.

CYRUS SKINNER
The stagecoach company? You're mad
you clodhopper. They just transfer
the gold from place to place.

RATTLESNAKE DICK
(to self)
Stagecoach? Gold?
(pulls down bandanna)
George. I have an idea.

GEORGE SKINNER
(pulls down bandanna)
What is it Rattlesnake?

RATTLESNAKE DICK
We need to see Jack Phillips.

CYRUS SKINNER
(pulls down bandanna)
That four-flusher? He serves
nothin but tarantula juice.

Rafael and Romero pull down their bandanna's.

ROMERO
More like bug juice Cyrus.

RAFAEL ESCOBAR
Ya sure waz tangle-legged while
back Cyrus.

Romero giggles.

CYRUS SKINNER
Laugh it up shave tailed biddy.

ROMERO
Why you always callin me names?

GEORGE SKINNER
Cause we can.

RATTLESNAKE DICK
Boys! Well my new friends. Thank
you kindly for the information
and...

Rattlesnake Dick bounces the pouches up and down in front of
Henry.

RATTLESNAKE DICK (cont'd)
...all your hard work. Name's
Rattlesnake Dick.

DAD (V.O.)
It says it right here.

4

INT. ROOM: PRESENT DAY - DAY

4

Dad is standing in the door and enters the room holding a
book open. Brooke follows him.

DAD
Many scoffed at Marshall that it
was only mica or fool's gold, iron
pyrites. Jennie Wimmer immediately
recognized the small nugget as
being gold that was brought to her
by her young son William in
eighteen forty-eight.

(beat)

Marshall took the gold to his boss
Captain John A Sutter at his fort
near the junction of the American
and Sacramento Rivers.

Dad looks down at Sierra showing her an old picture of Sutter's Fort.

DAD (O.C.) (cont'd)
You want to see it?

Brooke nods with a smile.

5 EXT. OUTSIDE SUTTER'S FORT: PRESENT DAY - DAY 5

Dad, Sierra, and Brooke walk to the front gate and Dad is impressed trying to get Sierra excited about being there -- she isn't. They head for the gate to enter.

6 EXT. INSIDE SUTTER'S FORT: PRESENT DAY - DAY 6

MONTAGE: DAD, SIERRA, AND BROOKE VISIT SUTTER'S FORT.

DAD
Allot of this is because they had... They had... Originally John Sutter wanted to have Sutter's fort down by the river down by old Sacramento, but because of the flooding they brought it more inland... See because it was on the highest ground he could find convenient.

BROOKE
Oh wow.

DAD
See this. It's an aerial view.

DAD (cont'd)
And these are all the families right here. See, John Sutter, said I was so foolish I understood so little about the business, but he's the name you remember now. This is exciting you guys.

DAD (cont'd)
There's the man himself. John Sutter he was seventy-seven. Tremendous, this is great. Some of our ancestors may be here.

DAD (cont'd)

This is one of the original signs.
Sutter's Fort founded in 1839 by
John A Sutter.

DAD (cont'd)

Interesting too because allot of
those people that came to the gold
rush, you know they come up on
their boats in the river and they
would just leave their boats on the
shore and just desert them and they
would take those boats apart and
that's what allot of this wood they
used later on was from those
original boats.

7

EXT. OUTSIDE SUTTER'S FORT: PRESENT DAY - DAY

7

Dad, Sierra, and Brooke exit the main gate of the fort.

DAD

It's amazing back then the way they
would do these things.

SIERRA

Yeah. But there was no mention of
our *famous family* dad.

DAD

Well. They were close. They were
in Sutter's mill in Coloma. About
45 minutes away. They'd have to do
that by horse or by carriage.
Wouldn't that be cool?

BROOKE

Yeah it would.

Sierra rolls her eyes and walks away.

DAD

Oh come on. You know you enjoyed
it.

Dad and Brooke follow Sierra across the lawn to the car.

8

INT. ROOM: PRESENT DAY - DAY

8

Sierra flips through pages in a book at a fast pace then
stops and fingers the paragraphs quickly as she reads various
words.

SIERRA

He noticed some particles of yellow mixed in with the reddish earth... Could they be gold? Took them to Sutter at his fort... Sam Brennan... Said he must talk to him alone... with some acid... they touch the grains... Marshall had discovered gold...
(turns page then back)
That's it?

Sierra closes the book "A place called Sacramento" and drops it on the box below. Sierra eyes the books on the shelf.

MONTAGE: SIERRA RUMMAGES THROUGH THE BOOKS, PAPERS, BOXES, AND ALL THE OTHER ITEMS IN THE ATTIC.

88

INT. ROOM: PRESENT DAY - LATER

88

Sierra stops exhausted and disheartened and goes to the picture of Cecilia Wimmer and picks it up. Behind it is an OLD RUSTY ROUND TIN.

SIERRA

Not really famous were we Great Grandma Cecilia? Just a normal, run-of-the-mill, obscure family. Probably different Wimmer's.

Just then a SMALL BLACK BOOK drops from behind the shelf onto the floor startling Sierra. Sierra looks down at the photo and sets it down on the table then cautiously goes over to the fallen book and picks it up then opens it.

SIERRA (cont'd)

Private Journal of William Riley Wimmer.

(turns page)

Eighteen hundred forty-six.
Friday, November twenty. I have decided to keep a journal of events in my life. After arriving at the fort, they call it Sooter's Fort, in New Helvetia, Father, Elijah, and John went off to fight in the Mexican war leaving Jennie, George, Sarah, and myself. How sad.

(flips more pages)

Eighteen hundred forty-seven.
Wednesday, February ten.

(MORE)

SIERRA (cont'd)

Word is going round about a group of travelers stranded in the mountains during the heavy snow. There are rumors about terrible things. Captain Sooter sent a rescue party.

Sierra flips a few more pages when she come she across a FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER. Sierra opens it revealing that it is a very crud HAND-DRAWN MAP of Sutter's Fort and the area around it. She puts the map down on the box below her.

SIERRA (cont'd)

Eighteen hundred forty eight, Monday. January twenty-four. During my chores I heard the cries of Mr. Marshall calling me to take a shiny rock to mother that he thinks is gold.

YOUNG WILLIAM (V.O.)

Eighteen hundred forty eight, Saturday. January twenty-nine.

DISSOLVE TO:

9

EXT. SUTTER'S MILL-RACE: SATURDAY, JAN 29, 1848 - DAY

9

PETER WIMMER is walking along the river bank with his son GEORGE WIMMER and son YOUNG WILLIAM, who is playing with the rocks near the water a few feet behind them.

JAMES MARSHALL walks along the bank down stream and waves to Peter as though to motion "I see you" as he walks along side JOHN SUTTER.

YOUNG WILLIAM (V.O.)

Father allowed George and I to walk the river bank with him waiting for Marshall's return with Mr. Sooter.

JAMES MARSHALL

I need to keep the men busy on the mill. If they find out...

JOHN SUTTER

I know James. I'll think of something.

JAMES MARSHALL

John this is Peter Wemmer.

PETER WIMMER

Mr. Sooter, it's a pleasure to meet you.

JOHN SUTTER

Ah, yes Mr. Vemmer. Please call me John my good man.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER, high society type, very pretty, makes her way into the scene and gives John a look of disappointment and she sighs.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER

John. Your manner's leave you this morning?

JOHN SUTTER

Forgive me dear. Peter this is my wife Anna Dubelt. Anna this is Peter Vemmer.

Anna looks at John as though to say "That's not what I was talking about." She turns and has a polite smile for Peter.

PETER WIMMER

It's a pleasure to meet you Mrs. Sooter.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER

Anna. Please.

JOHN SUTTER

Well. This is a day of rejoice. If this be what James says it is.

PETER WIMMER

Jennie, my wife, has worked with gold back in Lumpkin County, Georgia, so if she says it is, it must be. George, go fetch your mother. Tell her Mr. Sooter is here with James.

GEORGE WIMMER

Why can't William do it? He's the youngest.

PETER WIMMER

George. This is important.

George looks at William who sticks out his tongue at George. George gives William an evil look.

PETER WIMMER (cont'd)
George! Go now.

GEORGE WIMMER
Yes father.

George takes off.

JAMES MARSHALL
As you can see John. There's
nuggets and flakes along this race.
I know it's gold.

PETER WIMMER
It's not mica or iron pyrite.

JOHN SUTTER
Look at them sparkle. Be ashamed
if it were fools gold. And you've
kept this hush hush?

JAMES MARSHALL
Yes. Only the Wimmer's and a few
of my trusted men know about it.
But it won't long before...

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER
John.

JOHN SUTTER
Yes Anna.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER
Do I get to see what the fuss is
about?

JOHN SUTTER
Can't you see the glimmer in the
water?

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER
You expect me to go in there and
get one up myself.

William comes over and holds his hand out with a nugget
inside it.

YOUNG WILLIAM
Here you go ma'am.

Anna Dubelt Sutter takes the nugget.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER
Hello. And who are you?

PETER WIMMER

William. Don't bother Mrs. Sooter.

James Marshall and John Sutter talk to each other in the background pointing to various things.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER

Oh no. He's fine. William is it?
I have a son also named William.
What a handsome boy you are. How
old are you?

YOUNG WILLIAM

I'm no boy ma'am. I'm eight.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER

How adorable.

John Sutter bends down and picks up a small nugget out of the water.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER (cont'd)

So this is what the fuss is about?
This little golden rock. It
doesn't look much like gold that
I've seen before.

YOUNG WILLIAM

And you've seen gold before ma'am?

Anna Dubelt Sutter scoffs and shows off her jewelry as JENNIE and BEATRICE (16), enter the scene from the right.

JENNIE WIMMER

Morning everyone. Ma'am.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER

Anna. Please. You have an
adorable little boy.

JENNIE WIMMER

Oh. William? He's not mine.

Anna Dubelt looks quizzical.

JOHN SUTTER

Mrs. Vemmer. It's a pleasure to
meet you. I understand that you
believe this to be gold?

John Sutter shows Jennie the nugget he picked up.

JENNIE WIMMER

Mr. Sooter. I do. Because it is.
All of it is.

Jennie Wimmer points to the stream.

JAMES MARSHALL

As do I John. Remember I said it
first.

JOHN SUTTER

(to Jennie)
Call me John. How did you come to
your conclusion?

JENNIE WIMMER

I used to work with gold back in
Lumpkin County, Georgia.

JOHN SUTTER

Yes. Peter told me that. But how
did you test it?

JENNIE WIMMER

I took that lump that William gave
me and I threw in the lye kettle.

JAMES MARSHALL

The one I found and reckoned it was
gold.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER

Lye kettle?

BEATRICE

We leach creek water through wood
ashes and put it into a pot of left-
over cooking grease. Ma'am.

Anna Dubelt gets queasy.

YOUNG SAHARA WIMMER (12), has entered the scene.

YOUNG SARAH

It's just soap fer washing clothes
Ma'am.

Anna Dubelt looks down at Young Sarah's clothing and turns
her nose.

JENNIE WIMMER

I told em. If was is gold, it will
be gold when it came out.

BEATRICE

We forgot all about it tills next mornin'. But it wasn't in the soap.

YOUNG SARAH

It was at the bottom of the pot. Right under the potash as bright as could be.

BEATRICE

Just like that one there.

Beatrice points to the nugget that Anna Dubelt is holding.

JOHN SUTTER

Quite a story ladies.

JAMES MARSHALL

It's all true John. I was there. I found the gold that she tested. I brought it to...

JOHN SUTTER

Yes James. Jennie. You are a woman of strength and knowledge. Walk with me and tell me more about this lye.

JENNIE WIMMER

You lookin to do yer own washin?

Anna Dubelt gets a look of fear.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER

John. No.

JENNIE WIMMER

I can send you off with a couple o jars. No problem.

JOHN SUTTER

I want to know more about the process. Shall we?

John Sutter motions to Jennie to walk along he path that him and James came down.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER

We're leaving so soon? We just got here.

JOHN SUTTER

I told you to stay back at the Fort.

ANNA DUBELT SUTTER

I wanted to see this important discovery.

JAMES MARSHALL

We need to keep this quiet. If word got out....

JOHN SUTTER

We need treaty with the Indians and file a claim with Governor Mason in Monterey.

JAMES MARSHALL

Very well John.

JENNIE WIMMER

Gold changes people. Makes them do things they wouldn't normally do.

JOHN SUTTER

James. Double the mens wages not to say anything. Have a few of your trusted men pick up the nuggets every morning. Shall we?

John and Anna Dubelt Sutter, James Marshall, and Peter and Jennie Wimmer begin to walk away.

JENNIE WIMMER

Sarah. Check on Benjamin. Beatrice. Check on the kettle for me please.

BEATRICE

Yes Jennie.

PETER WIMMER

George. Go freshen up the horses and check Mr. Sooter's wagon.

GEORGE WIMMER

Yes father. What about William?

PETER WIMMER

Stay out of trouble boy.

Peter walks away.

GEORGE WIMMER

You can come and help me with the horses William.

William holds a gold flake or two in his hand. George takes it from him.

GEORGE WIMMER (cont'd)

Yer not to be touching that. Tain't yers.

YOUNG WILLIAM

Twas on the ground.

Beatrice and Young Sarah slowly move toward the small stream to gaze at the glittering rocks below the water.

BEATRICE

This is what they didn't want us to see?

YOUNG WILLIAM

Just yellor rocks.

GEORGE WIMMER

You're not even suppose to be down here.

YOUNG SARAH

William go take care of Benjamin.

YOUNG WILLIAM

But Jennie told you to do it.

YOUNG SARAH

And I'm telling you to do it.

GEORGE WIMMER

Baby watching is woman's work.

BEATRICE

If yer mother heard you say that you's be in a heap o' trouble.

GEORGE WIMMER

And who's gonna tell her?

Beatrice stares George down.

GEORGE WIMMER (cont'd)

William. Go look after Benjamin.

YOUNG WILLIAM

Just cause you soft down on. I get
no fair shake.

George punches Young William.

YOUNG WILLIAM (cont'd)

You gonna kiss her?

George punches Young William again.

GEORGE WIMMER

Bite yer tongue William.

George smiles at Beatrice.

YOUNG SARAH

They reckon this be gold.

Young William and George stop pushing each other and gaze
into the water.

YOUNG WILLIAM

Where is it coming from?

George pushes Young William.

GEORGE WIMMER

Goney. From the mill up there.

YOUNG SARAH

We gonna be rich now?

YOUNG WILLIAM

Able to get nice things fer the
family.

GEORGE WIMMER

It's not our gold. Just leave it
alone.

BEATRICE

It sure is pretty.

CAMERA FOCUSES IN ON A GLITTERING NUGGET AT THE EDGE OF
WATER. YOUNG WILLIAM WIMMER'S HAND COMES INTO FRAME AND
GRABS THE NUGGET.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. SUTTER'S MILL-RACE: THURSDAY, FEB 3, 1848 - DAY 10

Young William Wimmer brings his wet hand and the small nugget up to his eyes then puts it in a jar filled with golden flakes and pea sized nuggets as he walks the river bank.

 YOUNG WILLIAM (V.O.)
Eighteen hundred forty eight,
Thursday. February third. I
filled my pockets with my gold
findings along the river bank that
Mr. Marshall's men miss every
morning. Been thinking about a
safer place to hide my pocket-fulls
as there are too many people
looking for gold stashes around the
mill.

11 INT. ROOM: PRESENT DAY - DAY 11

 SIERRA
Dad.

Sierra flips many more pages and stops.

 SIERRA (cont'd)
Eighteen hundred fifty-nine,
Wednesday. June eighth.

12 EXT. FOREST PATH: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 1859 12

WILLIAM (20), tall, walks along a path in the forest.

 WILLIAM (V.O.)
The pickings from around the mill
are getting scarce.

Miners say the gold rush is getting
dry in California.

Many have headed east to Comstock
or even further to Pikes Peak.

Though some have gone to the Empire
Mine, I've been thinking about
heading east to Kansas.

I almost filled the round tin I
found by the river before it was
time to go to the fort.

William steps out of the brush onto a dirt road startling SAMUEL BRANNAN, well dressed, and, MEE LIEN, pretty lady.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

As usual I snuck out of the fort.
But today...

SAMUEL BRANNAN

William?

WILLIAM (V.O.)

Was different.

William looks over at Samuel Brannan and Mee Lien.

SAMUEL BRANNAN

William my boy.

WILLIAM

Mr. Brannan? Senator.

SAMUEL BRANNAN

I was never sworn in my boy. How fortunate that we meet. I am heading to Napa later this month. I could use someone like you William. Become your own man.

WILLIAM

Well... Thank you Mr. Brannan, but I...

SAMUEL BRANNAN

Don't be so quick to turn down such a golden opportunity.

MEE LIEN

Now Samuel. Leave the boy alone.

WILLIAM

I'm no boy ma'am. I'm nineteen.

SAMUEL BRANNAN

Mee. William here was an integral part of the discovery of gold in the region. This is Mee Lien. She's my attaché to China.

WILLIAM

Nice to meet you miss Lien.

MEE LIEN

(looks at William)

I'm waiting for Samuel to make me his business partner.

SAMUEL BRANNAN

Women, finance, and business just don't go together.

MEE LIEN

You will live to see the day we women get equal rights.

SAMUEL BRANNAN

A woman's place is in the kitchen or the bedroom. William will agree.

MEE LIEN

(embarrassed of sorts)

Samuel.

SNAP! A twig snapping draws their attention behind them. Samuel Brannan turns to look then back to William and begins walking.

SAMUEL BRANNAN

(hurried)

Think about my offer. There's more to California than this small little corner. Let's go May.

Sam reaches his hand out to grab Mee.

WILLIAM

I will Mr. Brannan. I will.

SAMUEL BRANNAN

See you around William.

(motions to William's pouch sticking out of his pocket)

And be careful.

MEE LIEN

Nice to meet you.

William watches Samuel Brannan and Mee Lien walk away. He looks down at his hand holding the gold inside his jacket and turns around and standing in his way is Rattlesnake Dick, Cyrus Skinner.

CYRUS SKINNER

Well well. What do we have here?
Hay seed blowing in the wind.

RATTLESNAKE DICK

He's like a snake built on stilts.

CYRUS SKINNER

Don't look like no high society
type.

RATTLESNAKE DICK

What's yer name boy?

WILLIAM

I'm not a boy.

RATTLESNAKE DICK

He ain't boy. You ain't got no
shootin' iron. Even Wild Bill
Hickock is smarter than that.

WILLIAM

I can take care of myself.

CYRUS SKINNER

We come across a real curly wolf.
You ever drink corn juice?

William looks confused.

CYRUS SKINNER (cont'd)

It's whisky boy. I take it you
haven't had a real woman than
either.

WILLIAM

Whisky is the devil's drink and I'm
waitin till marriage. Father and
Jennie say it's the right thing to
do.

Cyrus and Rattlesnake look at each other than laugh it up.

CYRUS SKINNER

Father says. Oh that's a good one.

RATTLESNAKE DICK

What a hoot.

Cyrus and Rattlesnake keep laughing as they walk passed
William. William grabs is jacket where the tin is as though
the tin slipped down.

CYRUS SKINNER

What that in yer pocket boy? Your gold stash?

Cyrus laughs causing Rattlesnake to laugh.

RATTLESNAKE DICK

His gold stash? That's a hoot Cyrus.

CYRUS SKINNER

Bet he's got a whole pile of it buried somewhere near a tree.

Cyrus and Rattlesnake walk away laughing it up. William watches as they walk away. Cyrus and Rattlesnake look back once and start laughing again. William checks his pocket again and turns around and begins walking. Looking back over his shoulder now and then.

VICTORIA MARIE (O.C.)

William!

VICTORIA MARIE, (17), pretty, dressed very nicely, comes out from hiding in the trees and puts her arms around William and gets real close.

VICTORIA MARIE (cont'd)

William. Now what you doing hanging around them boys?

Victoria looks at them walking away.

VICTORIA MARIE (cont'd)

They're not my type. I don't want you getting mixed up with them.

WILLIAM

I wasn't getting mixed up with them Victoria Marie.

William tries to break Victoria Marie's hold on him.

VICTORIA MARIE

Where you off too in such a hurry William? Don't you love me no more?

WILLIAM

(stutters)

Well. Huh. Yeah. I guess.

BENJAMIN (O.C.)

You gonna kiss her?

William roles his eye and looks down at BENJAMIN, (12), short.

WILLIAM
Benjamin Franklin. Go away.

VICTORIA MARIE
Well? You gonna kiss me?

WILLIAM
What do you want?

BENJAMIN
Dad wants you to help him with the supplies?

WILLIAM
Does he need help right now?

BENJAMIN
No.

VICTORIA MARIE
So kiss me already.

BENJAMIN
Yuck.

William is about to kiss her when MARTHA JANE, (8), cute little girl, walks up and tries to separate William and Victoria Marie.

MARTHA JANE
He's my brother.

Victoria Marie gets an annoyed look on her face then looks down at Martha Jane.

VICTORIA MARIE
Little sis's are a pain.

MARTHA JANE
Over-grown crumpet.

Victoria Marie lets William go and looks down at Martha Jane who has grabbed onto William.

VICTORIA MARIE
Look you little twit. You best be on yer way for I toss ya in a cow patty.

WILLIAM

Now. No. Now Martha Jane she
won't do that.

VICTORIA MARIE

Oh yes I's will.

MARTHA JANE

Try it you old goat.

BENJAMIN

Get her.

Martha Jane and Victoria Marie begin to push each other
between William.

WILLIAM

Come on Ladies.

VICTORIA MARIE

Who's an old goat

BENJAMIN

Get Her, Come on Get her.

VICTORIA MARIE

I'm gonna toss ya in a cow patty

BENJAMIN

Get her, come on come on. get her
get.

VICTORIA MARIE

He's mine you mule brain.

WILLIAM

Come on you two break it up.

MARTHA JANE

I'm Williams favorite girl. Not
you. You Barber's Cat.

BENJAMIN

Get her, get her.

VICTORIA MARIE

Who's an old goat

WILLIAM

Martha Jane! Victoria Marie! Knock
it off right his minute.

BENJAMIN

Get her, get her.

WILLIAM

Victoria Marie! Martha Jane!
Knock it off right now. Stop doing
this every time.

Martha Jane and Victoria Marie put their arms around William.

VICTORIA MARIE

He's mine.

MARTHA JANE

He's mine.

Just then SARAH WIMMER, (23), steps up.

SARAH

William! Does father know about
you and her?

MARTHA JANE

Sarah?

BENJAMIN

Uh Oh.

VICTORIA MARIE

It's none of yer business Sarah.

SARAH

My family is my business Victoria
Marie.

VICTORIA MARIE

Not what I heard.

WILLIAM

Sarah. What are you doing Sooter's
fort? Thought you lived in
Sacramento City?

SARAH

Sacramento City is a big city.

VICTORIA MARIE

We're gonna to live there when
William finally asks me ta marry
him.

MARTHA JANE

No he's not.

Victoria Maria pushes Martha Janes face away. Martha Jane
tries to kick Victoria Marie.

WILLIAM

Ladies.

MARTHA JANE

She's no lady.

VICTORIA MARIE

You little twit.

SARAH

Did you change yer plans again?

WILLIAM

No. I haven't.

SARAH

You haven't told her?

VICTORIA MARIE

Told me what? William? You got
some slazy trug?

Victoria Marie pushes William away in a huff.

MARTHA JANE

No more than you.

WILLIAM

No. No.. It's not a woman.

Victoria Marie pulls William back into her arms.

VICTORIA MARIE

I knew you loved me and I'm the
only girl.

SARAH

He's talkin bout headin back east.

VICTORIA MARIE

Fer What William? You planning to
leave me?

Just then ZEKE, (24), Victoria Marie's older, and bigger,
brother shows up.

ZEKE

Dagnabit. I told ya to leave my
sister alone. Now I'm-a-gonna
break ya in half.

Zeke breaks William and Victoria Maria apart. Matha Jane
runs to Sarah.

VICTORIA MARIE

Zeke. Leave us alone. Yer not my
daddy.

ZEKE

No. But yer my sister. And I
don't like him.

Zeka pushes William. Victoria Marie gets between Zeke and
William.

VICTORIA MARIE

Zeke. Leave him alone. He ain't
hurtin no one.

ZEKE

And he's not gonna after I get done
with him.

BENJAMIN

Get em William.

WILLIAM

Benjamin hobble yer lip you're no
help.

Zeke and William get face to face as William looks up at
Zeke.

ZEKE

I'll give you first whack.

William takes his finger and pokes Zeke in the chest.

WILLIAM

Lucky for you I've got things to
do.

The last push William pushes harder but only pushes himself
away and walks away.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

Benjamin take Martha Jane back to
the fort. Bye Sarah. Nice to see
you.

William walks away

VICTORIA MARIE

William? What?
(turns back at Zeke)
You beef-headed yack. Don't you
have chores to do?

ZEKE

Where's he going?

EXT. WOODED AND OPEN AREAS - 1859 - CONTINUOUS

William makes his way through the countryside walking and protecting his metal tin.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

For 11 years I've not told the family about the gold.

I started doing it for them, but I wasn't suppose too.

They're just yellow rocks. You can't drink 'em. You can't eat 'em. But they've made men like Mr. Brannan very rich.

Jennie says. Gold changes people.

14

EXT. SPARSELY WOODED AREA: 1859 - CONTINUOUS

14

William cautiously moves to an area in the woods constantly looking around to see if anyone is following. William gets to a spot and stops and opens his jacket and pulls out a tin container and opens it to view the gold flakes and pea sized nuggets.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

I think my family's changed.

BENJAMIN (O.C.)

Where are you going?

William closes the tin quickly and hides it in his jacket and turns to face Benjamin.

WILLIAM

Never you mind. What do you want?

BENJAMIN

Dad says he wants you to help him with the supplies.

Martha Jane walks up beside Benjamin.

WILLIAM

Okay. I'll be there in a awhile.

Benjamin turns to see Martha Jane.

BENJAMIN

I said don't follow me Martha Jane.

MARTHA JANE

Mom said to follow you and make
sure you do what you're told.

BENJAMIN

Snitch.

Martha Jane sticks out her tongue and Benjamin.

WILLIAM

You two can go away now. Well go.

Benjamin and Martha Jane just stand there.

William (cont'd)

(annoyed)

The sooner you two go away, the
sooner I can follow you.

Benjamin and Martha Jane look at each other then look at
William.

William (cont'd)

(really annoyed)

Get out of here or I'm gonna pummel
ya.

Benjamin turns and walks away.

BENJAMIN

Snitch.

MARTHA JANE

Baby Benjamin.

BENJAMIN

I'm not a baby. Martha pain!

Martha Jane stares at William and William stares back.
Martha Jane smiles at William.

WILLIAM

Well I can't pummel you and you
can't snitch on me, so we'll call
it a draw. Now go away.

Martha's smiles turns to a frown as she turns and walks away.
William hurries deeper into the wooded area.

15

EXT. SPARSELY WOODED AREA: DEEPER: 1859 - CONTINUOUS

15

William makes his way to a secluded area as he looks back he reaches for the metal tin.

William drops to his knees near a tree and opens the tin to reveal that it is filled with gold. William smiles.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

No. I'm not gonna tell them.

William closes the tin, sets it down on the ground, and begins to dig dirt. He takes the tin and places it in the hole.

BENJAMIN (O.C.)

What you doing?

William scurries to cover the tin with dirt.

WILLIAM

Benjamin Franklin! I told you to go away!

William finishes filling in the dirt and stamps it down with his feet and faces Benjamin and Martha Jane who look down at the dirt beneath the tree.

William (cont'd)

I'm just digging for worms.

BENJAMIN

You find any?

WILLIAM

No. It's too dry. Come on.

BENJAMIN

You going fishing?

William and Benjamin start walking leaving Martha Jane still looking back at the dirt beneath the tree.

WILLIAM

Maybe.

William looks back at Martha Jane.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

Martha Jane. Come on.

Martha Jane turns and heads toward William and Benjamin.

BENJAMIN

You take me this time?

WILLIAM

Of course. You're my brother. You want to go too.

William looks down at Martha Jane who shakes her head.

MARTHA JANE

Ewe.

BENJAMIN

Girls don't know how to fish. Make her clean it.

MARTHA JANE

EWE!

William reaches his hand out to Martha Jane.

WILLIAM

He's just joshing.

Martha Jane holds Williams hand and they begin walking out of the trees along side Benjamin.

BENJAMIN

No I wasn't.

WILLIAM

Yes you were.

BENJAMIN

No I wasn't. She's a girl and they clean and cook what men bring home.

MARTHA JANE

I guess your not getting married.

DISSOLVE TO:

16

INT. ROOM: PRESENT DAY - DAY

16

CAMERA PANS FROM A OLD PICTURE OF WILLIAM WIMMER UP TO SIERRA LOOKING DOWN AT THE JOURNAL.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

As we walked back to the fort I could tell they knew something. Maybe it was time to tell them.

Sierra looks at the map again.

SIERRA

Dad. Dad!

17

EXT. SPARSELY WOODED AREA: DEEPER: PRESENT DAY - LATE
AFTERNOON

17

Dad, Sierra, and Brooke make their way to an area in the trees. Sierra is holding the map, Dad is carrying a shovel, and Brooke is carrying a camping light. Sierra looks at the map.

DAD

This is exciting. A treasure hunt.

SIERRA

This isn't like the movie Dad.

BROOKE

What movie?

DAD

I'd play me in it.

Sierra gives her dad a look.

DAD (cont'd)

What? I'm good looking. I'm a good actor.

SIERRA

Yeah right.

Sierra looks at the map.

SIERRA (cont'd)

I guess over there. That one.

They walk up to a large tree and look around.

BROOKE

Where's the x?

SIERRA

Dad. You read her too many stories.

BROOKE

I like Dad's stories.

SIERRA

So do I. Sort of.

Sierra looks at Brooke and smiles at her. Brooke looks surprised but happy.

Dad begins digging up the dirt near the tree.

SIERRA (cont'd)

You do know things have changed in one hundred and fifty-one years right?

DAD

Yeah, but that's what makes treasure hunting exciting.

BROOKE

Yeah. You never know what you will find.

DAD

That's right Brooke.

Sierra rolls her eyes at the two of them.

SIERRA

I can't believe I am buying into all this treasure and history stuff.

DAD

Isn't it exciting though?

BROOKE

Dad keep digging.

SIERRA

There's probably nothing there.

Just then "CLUNK!" Dad puts the shovel in and hits something metal. All three look down and then at each other in wonderment.

CUT TO BLACK

... to be continued in ...
THE GOLDEN TREES?