

Vegged Out
by
John R. Woodruff

24272 S.4090 Road
Claremore,OK 74019
918-342-1524
jrwood97@aol.com

WS1173956

FADE IN:

EXT. VEGETABLE PATCH - MORNING

Neat rows of vegetables lie side by side, each with a little hand-painted sign: "Potatoes", "Lettuce", "Radishes", "Beans".

A threadbare scarecrow, head stuffed with straw, stands guard.

A large crow sails in and sits ON HIS HEAD. The crow brazenly pecks the scarecrow's noggin and pulls tufts of straw out of its ear.

The crow's raucous LAUGH brings others on the fly. They land carelessly in the vegetable garden and begin pecking at the soil, scratching up bugs and jerking up sprouts.

CLOSE ON

One of the largest ruffians tugs on a green shoot. Suddenly, two viney hands encircle the CROW'S neck.

CROW

Akwwww!

BACK TO SCENE

A lumpy FORM sits upright out of the soil, his green grasp choking the crow for all he's worth.

A small dust cloud envelops the flapping struggle until the crow, coughing and choking, takes to the sky followed by the others.

The brown lump, now revealed as SPUDSEY, shakes a fist skyward.

SPUDSEY

AND DON'T COME BACK!

He wipes his hands in the dirt, begins mounding the soil up again.

YOUNG VOICE (O.S.)

Guess you showed him.

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

Way to go, Spud.

THIRD VOICE (O.S.)

You the man, Spudsey.

Spudsey acknowledges the praise with a wave.

SPUDSEY
Time SOMEBODY took charge here.

BEAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
So, who picked you?

Spudsey turns to confront the big mouth BEAN family.

Bean, surrounded by all the little beans, voices a different opinion.

BEAN
Good thing I didn't get my tendrils
on 'em.

LITTLE BEANS
Tell 'em Pa.

BEAN
I'd string 'em all up. Hang 'em high.

Spudsey pulls himself up to his full height, dusts off.

SPUDSEY
Big talk from a string bean.

BEAN
Couch veggie.

SPUDSEY
Gas bag.

BEAN
Taterhead.

SPUDSEY
Potatoes--that's spuds to you
fella--are your natural garden
heroes. Year after year, we put the
starch in everyone's shorts.

Other garden vegetables are starting to gather round,
curious about the ruckus.

BEAN
Oh yeah. And, just who do you think
puts the "beans" in "human beans".
Huh? Huh?

LITTLE BEANS
Tell 'em Pa.

Others in the crowd have their own ideas.

MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

CORN

Whatta ya talkin? I'm an amazing
vegetable!

RADISH

You know, radishes are the REAL hot
item.

LETTUCE

Get back hot lips, most folks let
us make the salads.

TOMATOES

Hey, slice it or dice it...your Luv
Apple de-livers.

PARSLEY

Oh yeah, famous chefs ALWAYS choose
parsley.

RUTABAGAS

Says who? With a name like
Rutabagas you know it's gotta be...

Spudsey shouts them all down.

SPUDSEY

HOLD IT. HOLD IT. Let's just put it
to a VOTE!OK?

A brash, young CARROT forces his way through the crowd.

CARROT

Listen up, I'm the FARSIGHTED
choice here.

A small band of OKRA strikes up a chant.

OKRA

Stewed or Fried...stewed or
fried...we keep you satisfied.
Forget the fuss, VOTE FOR US.

SPUDSEY

WAIT A MINUTE. Wait a minute. How
many are in the runnning here?

All the vegetables raise their hands.

SPUDSEY
 ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT. Everyone can ENTER.
 Everyone can VOTE. But,
 (beat)
 only ONE can win...BEST OF THE BEST.
 CREAM OF THE CROP. MOST POPULAR
 VEGGIE OF All ...

BEAN
 We get it already.

LITTLE BEANS
 You tell 'em Pa.

SPUDSEY
 OK then, everybody run a clean
 campaign and may the BEST VEGGIE win.

Cheers and shouts go up from the crowd.

EXT. VEGETABLE PATCH - NEXT DAY

The sound of paper HORNS, bass DRUMS, as marching feet draw closer.

Down the rows of vegetables: It's a parade!

As veggies line the route cheering and waving, the candidates appear with multi-colored party streamers, straw hats, yard signs and campaign buttons.

MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

-- A PICKLE stoops to hand a young'n a balloon that reads "CUKES NOT NUKES".

-- A campaign sign reads: MOTHERS FOR RESPONSIBLE GARLIC.

-- A phalanx of waving SPROUTS chants "WE LIKE LEEKS" and passes out business cards.

-- Spudsey and company pass by under the banner "VOTE TATER NATION."

-- A couple of old CROOKED NECK SQUASH hobble along in VFW-type hats under the flag "YELLOW ON THE OUTSIDE ONLY".

-- BEAN and all the little beans bring up the rear with their choreographed

BEAN FAMILY
 Gimme a "B"...Gimme a "E"...Gimme a
 "A"...

The parade passes around the bend.

In the dust: a VOTE YOUR TASTE BUDS campaign button.

EXT. VEGETABLE PATCH - DAYS LATER

An exhausted crowd of bedraggled vegetables awaits the voting results.

Under the banner of the League of Veggie Voters, a portly EGG PLANT makes the announcement.

EGG PLANT

And, with 35 candidates running,
the voting results are as follows:

(reading)

Carrots 1; Leeks 1, Tomatoes 1,
Corn 1, Potatoes 1, Radishes 1,
Beans 1, Lettuce...

The voice trails off, covered by murmuring in the crowd.

EGG PLANT (COND'T)

Squash, Yellowneck 1, Squash, Acorn
1, Squash, Butternut 1, AND Okra
(long beat)

1.

VOICE IN CROWD

I want a recount.

The Egg Plant signals for quiet.

EGG PLANT

With all precincts reporting, the
result is a 35-WAY TIE.

(boos and raspberries
arise from the crowd)

So, according to the rules of the
League of Veggie Voters the
DECIDING vote must be cast by the...
(dead silence)

MASTER GARDENER.

The words reverberate through the crowd.

Vegetables exchange stunned glances.

Chaos breaks out with campaign buttons being thrown, yard signs being smashed on heads and muffled insults being hurled about.

EXT. VEGETABLE PATCH - MORNING AFTER

The garden never looked better.

The rows are neat. Not a weed anywhere.

Under the little signs for each row now appears an additional line of copy.

MONTAGE OF SIGNS:

-- "POTATOES": Yet another white meat.

-- "LETTUCE": Get a head, eat your salad.

-- "RADISHES": Hot flashes are good for you.

-- "BEANS": Put wind in your sails.

The unmistakable sound of the garden gate creaking open.

SPUDSEY'S VOICE

Quiet. Everyone!

A large brown work shoe appears, then a large brown hand extends out of a blue work shirt cuff.

The hand scoops through the dirt to extract a POTATO. It is placed in a splint-wood basket, quickly followed by other potatoes.

LATER.

Many baskets are stacked together filled with beans and corn and squash and all the other vegetables.

A simple little tune is hummed as the baskets themselves begin to disappear.

The garden gate closes.

But now...the garden lies empty. Down the long rows-- everything GONE.

EXT./INT. ROOT CELLAR - MINUTES LATER

A wooden door creaks open into a darkened room.

The baskets are stacked side by side on shelves and on the earthen floor.

The door closes. All is dark.

CARROT
Hey, what happened?

FIRST VOICE
Who won?

SPUDSEY
He picked me first!

BEAN
Don't mean a thing.

SPUDSEY
Means something, Garbanzo breath.

BEAN
Get over it.

SECOND VOICE
We still don't know who won?

SPUDSEY
Not you. That's for sure.

EXT. ROOT CELLAR - FALL

Winds blow brown leaves deep against the wood door.

FIRST VOICE
Listen, that footsteps?

CARROT
Go back to sleep.

SPUDSEY
We know who won yet?

BEAN
No, lard lips.

SECOND VOICE
I'm bored. When's he coming back?

FIRST VOICE
Later.

THIRD VOICE
It is later.

SPUDSEY
Hush up.

BEAN
You hush up.

EXT. ROOT CELLAR - WINTER

The wind howls. Snow piles up against the wooden door.

SPUDSEY
That footsteps?

BEAN
You're dreaming, fry boy.

SECOND VOICE
So...who won?

BEAN
Don't know.

THIRD VOICE
I'm cold.

SPUDSEY
It's winter. We're all cold.

EXT. ROOT CELLAR - EARLY SPRING

Fruit tree blossoms, chased by bees, collect by the door.

CARROT
Hey, that footsteps?

SPUDSEY
No.

BEAN
So, who's still left?

SPUDSEY
Not many now.

FIRST VOICE
Well, who won?

SPUDSEY
Vote's still out.

SECOND VOICE
Whaat?

THIRD VOICE
Hey, footsteps!

EXT. ROOT CELLAR. CONTINUING.

A small pair of athletic shoes stops at the door.

The door SQUEAKS open. Sunlight pours in. The baskets are all nearly empty.

CHILD(O.S.)
Grandpa. Your cellar's almost empty.
Where's all the stuff?

GRANDPA (O.S.)
We ate it. Last winter. Remember?

CHILD(O.S.)
Oh, yeah.

Small hands reach into baskets, searching.

CHILD
Everything's dried up!

GRANDPA
Everything?

CHILD
Well, the spuds are all wrinkled.
The carrots are ...

GRANDPA
Shriveled?

CHILD(O.S.)
Yeah swiveled. And the beans...don't even ask.

GRANDPA(O.S.)
Any onions left?

Little fingers scratch around, extract a couple of onions.

The onions, crusty and flaking are held up to the light.

CHILD
Here's some, but their skin's falling off.

GRANDPA
Rub 'em real good.

The little hands rub and turn and rub the onions till the old layers peel away and the bright insides shine forth.

CHILD
Hey, there's new ones inside!

GRANDPA
That right? Well, bring 'em up here
and we'll plant 'em in the garden.

CHILD
You can do that?

GRANDPA
Sure. Come on.

CHILD
That's a winner!

The fingers grasp a basket and pull it out the door.

The door shuts. All is dark.

SPUDSEY
Onions? Onions won?

BEAN
Didn't see that coming.

CARROT
They did look nice.

BEAN
You on the payroll or what?

FIRST VOICE
I want a recount.

SPUDSEY
Hush up.

BEAN
You hush up.

EXT. VEGETABLE PATCH. CONTINUING.

The garden gate swings open to emit a small pair of tennis shoes.

A hoe handle cuts a furrow in the fresh plowed earth.

Tiny hands turn and rub an old onion till it glistens in the sun-- all NEW again.

The same little hands set the bulb carefully in the furrow as a pair of older, rougher hands push dirt up around it.

GRANDPA
You're right. They are winners.