Title: Lage
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Assignment: Page by Page Synopsis
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Page 1:

Splash.

Arnie is thrown out of the main doors of an upper class theater. The front of the theater is lavish, white cream with gold accents. In lights, the theater lights say "FINAL WEEK: SHOWING [unnamed film here]." Those don't have to be the exact words, but something along those lines, saying that a special film will only be showing for the week. I don't want the name visible – cover it up with bubbles or balloons or something. The name of the film isn't important, just the content (revealed later on). You can also put other films in lights, all with fishy puns, like "Gone With the Wave" or "Iron Fin," something like that. The Manager of the theater – a two-legger in a well-pressed uniform, snobby – is the one who tossed Arnie out.

Pages 2 – 3:

Not a two-page spread. First, the Manager tosses a beanie at Arnie's feet. Arnie picks it up and crams it on his head. The Manager just told Arnie that "his kind" isn't welcome at his theater, so I reckon Arnie's got a really rebellious, angry look on his face. Next follows a montage of several attempts of Arnie to break into the theater. He sneaks in through the vents, but when he emerges the Manager is standing there, foot tapping. Arnie puts on an elaborate disguise, and makes it all the way into the theater. But security spots him and motions to the Manager. Arnie doesn't even get to sit down before the Manager's hand comes down on his shoulder. Lastly, Arnie makes a run for it through the front doors, but is only inside for a second (a panel) before he's tossed right back out, skidding on the street. Throughout all of these attempts, Lage, an old Merlock man, can be seen in the background, shaking his head.

Page 4:

The Manager yells at Arnie and tells him that, if he sees him around again, he'll call the cops. The Manager slams the door on Arnie's defeated face. Arnie picks himself up as Lage approaches him. Lage helps Arnie up and puts his hand on Arnie's shoulder. He tries to give advice to Arnie to stop trying. Arnie stubbornly shrugs Lage's hand off and

tells him to mind his own business. Lage shrugs and walks away. A sound catches Lage's attention and makes him turn back to where he left Arnie.

Page 5:

Arnie is surrounded by three sinister-looking two-leggers: Laylyn, Marcus, and Brine. All look like *way* upper-class individuals, like skeezy punks who hurt people to have a good time. They are taking a creepy interest in Arnie, who is too young and innocent to be afraid. They all try to convince Arnie to come with them, to trust them, because they can get him into the theater. Lage is not having it, and smacks Marcus' hand on Arnie's shoulder with his cane, telling them to scram.

Page 6:

Lage pulls Arnie behind him. Arnie struggles at first, but Lage tells Arnie that he's got a bootlegged copy of the film. This convinces Arnie to stick with Lage. The three thugs leave, furious, and Arnie immediately asks when he can borrow Lage's bootlegged copy of the film. Lage reveals that he lied to get Arnie away from those punks – he doesn't have the film. Arnie is furious that Lage took away his only chance at seeing the film. Arnie is adamant that he "needs" to see the film.

Page 7:

Lage makes a deal with Arnie: Lage will walk Arnie home, and if, by the time they get there, Arnie can convince Lage that he really "needs" to see the film, that Lage will take him. Arnie is less trusting, and questions how Lage can get him into the theater. Lage opens his bag: inside is a theater uniform that has the same colors and basic style as the Manager's, but is significantly more shabby. Lage reveals that he is an employee of the theater (that's the only way Merlocks can get in – as labor). Lage's job is to crank the handles for the film reels (since they can't run on electricity). Arnie accepts the deal, and they shake hands.

Pages 8 – 9:

Again, not a two-page spread. Arnie and Lage walk through the opulent two-legger part of town. It's filled with beautiful two-leggers in lovely clothing. Children are playing, and everyone looks happy or self-satisfied. Those close to Arnie and Lage turn up their noses at them. A toy some children were playing with lands at Arnie's feet, and Arnie tries to hand it back to the child. The child isn't afraid and reaches for it, but a mother runs and grabs the child, dragging them away from Arnie. Arnie looks hurt by this, and

holds onto the toy. All the while, Arnie is trying to convince Lage. The bottom of page 8 and from the top of page 9, the opulence gives way to the firmly middle class part of town: merfolk with tails and very few two-leggers. Everyone is fairly well dressed, but they're all harried and stressed, like over-worked businessmen and stressed stay-at-home moms. Typical suburbia, but with merfolk with tails and a great deal of visible stress. The quality of light decreases as Arnie and Lage walk through these areas of Merlantis.

Page 10:

Lage and Arnie's conversation continues, Arnie getting more and more excited about the "Merlock main character" in the film. Only now, they're in the Merlock, lower class area of Merlantis. The houses are now more ramshackle and broken. The light that has been gradually decreasing since the top of page 8 is now nearly gone, turning the water murky and dark. Arnie passes the toy along to some Merlock kids, who treat it like it's gold and run off, absolutely thrilled. Lage and Arnie reach Arnie's house.

Page 11:

Lage tells Arnie that he really doesn't want to see the film, that he'll only be disappointed. Arnie is stricken, before he nods, as if in defeat. He motions for Lage to come in – Arnie asks if Lage wants to come inside for a moment to rest. Lage agrees, relieved that Arnie seems to be taking this so well. Lage freezes in the doorway as Arnie enters his house.

Page 12:

Arnie's house is falling apart and barely held together. But it's clear that Arnie takes care of it, because everything is as clean and neat as possible, with small vases of colored seaweed scattered around the place. The house is a single room, with a bed in the corner separated from the rest of the room by a barrier; this is clearly Arnie's "room." In the other corner of the room is Arnie's mother, propped up on a bed and clearly sick. She's old and weak, but she still sits up and grins widely at Arnie when he comes in. Lage watches as Arnie gently and lovingly cares for his mother, fixes her cushions, and asks how she's feeling. Arnie's mother waves off his concern and asks him if he was able to see the Merlock film he was so excited about. Arnie lies and says he'll go tomorrow, that he was too busy today. He sits on the side of her bed and holds her hand. Arnie's mom strokes his head, apologizing for being sick and promising that she'll go with him tomorrow. Arnie nods and says that he'd like that – it's clear that the two of them are lovingly lying to each other, and that they've done this before. Lage sighs.

Page 13:

Lage steps into the house and interrupts, stating that he'll take Arnie to see the film himself, tomorrow, and that Arnie can tell her all about it when he gets back. Arnie and his mom are thrilled. Lage nods and tries to wave off her thanks, because he doesn't think he deserves it. Arnie's mom tries to invite Lage to dinner, but he declines. Lage motions for Arnie to walk him out.

Page 14:

Outside Arnie's house, Lage tells Arnie to meet him outside of the theater first thing in the morning, promising to sneak him in. Arnie agrees, before offering to walk Lage home. Lage declines, and Arnie goes back inside while Lage walks off.

Page 15:

Lage is walking home, not really paying attention to where he's going. He muses about the cheekiness and cleverness of kids, although he's impressed with how well Arnie manipulated him. The group of kids from before distracts Lage as they play with the toy Arnie gave them. As such, Lage is completely blindsided when he's dragged into an alley.

Page 16:

Splash.

The three two-legged punks from before – Laylyn, Marcus, and Brine – have returned to make Lage pay for taking away their "little plaything." They menacingly stand over Lage's fallen body, one of them holding Lage's cane in a threatening manner. All three of them wear wide, sickening grins.

Page 17:

The three punks beat up Lage, kicking and beating him with the cane. Lage calls out for help, but is kicked in the jaw. Merlock blood sprays and floats in the water. A voice calls out from the mouth of the alley, and Lage looks up in hope, eye swollen.

Page 18:

It's a Cop. He asks what's going on here, and the three punks weave a tale about how Lage attacked them. Lage can't defend himself due to his kicked-in jaw. The cop whips out his baton and states that there's only one punishment for attacking someone of a higher station. Lage's eyes close in defeat as the club comes down on him.

Page 19:

Cut to the next morning, with Arnie waiting impatiently outside of the theater. He's excited, but clearly nervous as his watch ticks past clock-in time. The three thugs walk past Arnie, one of them holding / swinging Lage's cane. They smile, innocent as you please, at Arnie. Automatically, Arnie smiles back, but he doesn't have time to fully register what he's seeing because the Manager of the theater comes out. Arnie ducks around the corner and hides, eavesdropping as the Manager complains about one of his stupid Merlock employees who didn't show. Arnie reveals himself, the Manager growling: "YOU!"

Page 20:

Arnie quickly offers to take the missing employee's shift. The Manager rejects Arnie, until Arnie offers to only work for half-pay. This clearly perks the interest of the greedy Manager, who reluctantly agrees. The Manager makes sure Arnie knows that it's just for the day, but Arnie is totally, completely fine with that.

Page 21:

Cut to Arnie sitting next to the film projector, in a badly fitting theater uniform. Intercut panels of Arnie's face with images of Lage's dead body in the alley. Arnie's face gradually goes from "excited" to "broken understanding" as the two-leggers' comments (who are taking their seats) affect Arnie. Comments such as: "I can't believe they put a Merlock in this film" … "Yeah, but he's a total idiot. He almost gets Theolina killed!" … "Don't worry; he dies in the first fifteen minutes" … "It's hilarious; the best part!" just to give you a sense for what is hurting Arnie so terribly. He now understands what Lage was trying to tell him all along.

Page 22:

Very top of the page is a skinny panel of Arnie's eyes squeezed shut, as a tear leaks from his eye. Arnie's mom speaks up, causing Arnie to open his eyes and look at her. Arnie is no longer in the theater; he's sitting next to his mother's bed. She grabs his hand and asks him how his day was and if he liked the film. Arnie is silent for a moment as he stares at

their clasped hands. Then Arnie smiles, wide and beaming, as he “describes” the film to her. Cut to an outside shot of the house, with the kids playing in the foreground with the toy. Leave some space for a text bubble of Arnie telling his mom all about the “awesome Merlock who saved everybody and who was smarter and braver than everyone else…”

THE END