

Courage the Cowardly Dog

**"The Uncommon Cold"**

by David Steven Cohen

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FADE IN:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - ESTABLISHING - MORNING

An otherwise quiet morning at the Farmhouse -- except for Muriel. ramping up to a sneeze O.C.

MURIEL (O.C.)  
Ah... Aaahhh... Aaaaaaahhhhhh...  
(relaxes, then)  
False alarm.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING - SIMULTANEOUS

ON MURIEL, disheveled, nose red, holding a pan of eggs in one hand and a box of tissues in the other, about to serve the FARMER, who sits at the table with the newspaper in front of his face.

MURIEL  
(sneezing)  
CHOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

Muriel's sneeze blows the eggs through the newspaper. The Farmer drops the paper, revealing the eggs on his face, yolks over his eyes. The eggs slide off his face onto his plate.

FARMER  
Whadya tryin' t'do? Get me sick?!

The Farmer digs into his eggs, eating them with no concern.

Muriel sits at the table and begins to file her nails, trying to distract herself.

MURIEL  
(very nasal; voice hoarse)  
I'm sorry, Eustace. This is  
th'worst cold I've ever ha... ha...  
haaaaaaaa...

Muriel turns away from the Farmer, inadvertently facing Courage, who sits on the floor in front of his food bowl. Courage quickly dons a hospital mask and puts a dome over his bowl.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
(sneezing)  
CHOOOOOOOOOO!!!

This sneeze sends Muriel reeling.

Courage scrambles to grab a chair, holding it under Muriel, trying to spot her as she teeters this way and that. Finally, she falls away from Courage.

Courage manages to get the chair around in time for Muriel to fall face forward onto the seat.

ON MURIEL, her head horizontal on the chair seat.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
Courage...

COURAGE leans into the shot.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
(weakly)  
...thank you.

WIDER as Courage lifts Muriel into a proper sitting position and pushes her to the table.

FARMER  
Y'should get some rest...

MURIEL  
Thank you, Eustace.

FARMER  
...in the barn.

Courage brings Muriel a hot cup of tea.

MURIEL  
That's all I need. A wee spot of  
tea'll fix me right up.

Muriel takes a sip, then starts to sneeze repeatedly:

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
Ahhh-CHOOO!!! Ow! Ahhh-CHOOO!!!  
Ow! Ahhh-CHOOO!!! Ow. ...This is  
startin' t'get a tad painful.

Then... the mother of all sneezes starts to brew...

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
Ahhh... Aaaaaahhhhhhhhh...  
Oooooaaaaahhhhh...

Courage pulls tissue after tissue from the box, creating a catcher's mitt of tissues. Muriel explodes:

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
CHOOOOOOOO!!!

From her nose and mouth appears a ROUND CLOUD. Courage looks at the cloud, concerned. Then...

Within the cloud, in a crystal ball effect, appears the face OF A SLUG-LIKE CREATURE, who speaks in a New Orleans accent.

SLUG  
(New Orleans accent)  
Well hey.

COURAGE  
(screams)

FARMER  
(from behind newspaper)  
No solicitors!

Muriel is too addled to notice the face.

MURIEL  
Did someone say something?

COURAGE  
(panic babbles)

Courage indicates the face in the cloud, which vanishes, along with the cloud, before Muriel can notice.

Muriel sneezes again -- another big one...

MURIEL  
Aaaaahhhhhhhhhh CHOOOOOOOO!!!

...and another cloud appears with the same face inside. Muriel now sees the face.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
(even hoarser)  
Oh my...

SLUG

This here urgent message has been  
pre-recorded, wrapped in a cold and  
sent by magic.

MURIEL

I knew this wasn't an ordinary  
cold...

SLUG

We need your help. We all are  
prisoners, slaves in a sweatshop.  
We'd be obliged if you all would  
come and set us all free.

The Farmer drops his newspaper.

FARMER

Someone say free?

The cloud dissipates before the Farmer can see it. Muriel  
starts to sneeze again.

MURIEL

Aaaahhh... Aaaaaahhhh...  
Mmmmmmmhyyy... Oooooohhhhhh...

Aggravated, the Farmer takes his plate and heads to the back  
door.

FARMER

Well, if you ain't goin' out t'the  
barn, I am!

The Farmer exits out the back door, SLAMMING IT behind him.

Muriel completes her sneeze...

MURIEL

CHOOOOOOOOOO!!!

...launching another cloud with the Slug's face.

SLUG

We apologize for your discomfort,  
havin' t'send y'this cold 'n'all...  
But we sho' need your help...

The cloud dissipates again.

MURIEL

(deep cough; voice deeper and rougher)

Owww... M'wee lungs are shredded.

Muriel lets out another huge sneeze, forming another cloud. The Slug's face appears in the cloud and continues...

SLUG

And that cold ain't goin' away 'til you get your sneezin' self down here for the cure. So you help us, we help you. Here's how to get t'where we are...

MURIEL

Courage... write this down...  
(cough cough; then weakly)  
It may be m'only chance...

Courage takes notes on a pad as the Slug speaks:

SLUG

Make a right at the Mississippi River. Go south three hundred fourteen miles 'til y'see the snakes...

Courage looks up and gulps.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU - DAY

Muriel is in her rocker, holding a box of tissues (which she holds throughout the rest of the episode). The rocker is perched on the front of a raft.

ON COURAGE, at the back of the raft, pushing it along with a stick.

MURIEL (O.C.)

Courage, look. I think we've found the spot.

Courage looks up ahead and sees what appear to be:

A LOT OF BIG SNAKES "standing up" in the marshy waters.

ON COURAGE AND MURIEL

COURAGE

(screams)

The raft beaches on some marshy soil. Courage looks to the left and sees:

COURAGE'S POV: SEVERAL SNAKES looking down at him, glaring, not moving.

Courage gulps, then turns his head right and sees:

COURAGE'S POV: MORE SNAKES

WIDER: MURIEL AND COURAGE dwarfed by the snakes. Courage cowers behind Muriel.

MURIEL

Courage...

(cough cough)

...I don't think they're real.

Courage peeks out. He wades through the mud towards one of the snakes and takes a better look. It's stuffed, lifeless.

Courage looks around at the snakes, then notices...

One of the snakes moves!

COURAGE

(can't even muster a scream)

Ooooohhh...

Courage backs away from the moving snake -- and it falls right on him!

COURAGE (CONT'D)

(screams)

Courage struggles with the snake -- but the snake isn't struggling back. Then, from O.C.:

SLUG (O.C.)

Well hey...

Courage looks up and sees:

THE SLUG from the sneezes, this time in the flesh. He's at the bottom of the stuffed snake, trying to set it upright. On one of the Slug's hand is a shackle attached to a chain.

SLUG (CONT'D)

Didn't mean t'scare ya. Just settin' up another statue of Big Bayou. Big Bayou, he's the snake got us shackled here.

The Slug tugs on his shackle chain to demonstrate. It's taut, at its limit.

Muriel starts another sneezing jag, attracting Courage's and the Slug's attention.

MURIEL  
(sneezing repeatedly)

SLUG  
Lady must be the one caught the  
cold we sent.  
(to Muriel)  
Glad y'could come t'free us. Why  
don'tch'y'all come on inside and  
we'll explain the whole mess to ya.

The Slug heads into a small opening in the thicket of reeds a few steps away. (It's where his shackle chain leads.)

Muriel weakly rises from her rocker, wheezing and coughing.

MURIEL  
(wheezing, coughing)  
C'mon, Courage. Let's see what we  
can do t'help...  
(sneeze)  
YOW! ...before m'lungs turn t'haggis.

Courage helps the sneezing Muriel along as they follow the Slug into the reeds. Courage looks around at all the stuffed snakes and shivers.

CUT TO:

INT. SWEAT SHOP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Slug leads Courage and Muriel into a cramped, dark area enclosed by tall grass and reeds. Slim shafts of light stream through the brush.

Several slugs are shackled to tables inside the sweat shop, stuffing snake skins with dried leaves and grass. They look up and see Muriel and Courage, Muriel coughing and sneezing.

MURIEL  
(coughing, sneezing)

SLUGS  
(overlapping)  
They've come t'save us! / Get us  
out of here! / Hurry hurry!

SLUG

Take it easy, slugs. We owe our guests some explainin'.

(to Courage and Muriel)

It's like this... Big Bayou's a very powerful snake. And very vain. Loves himself. Kept us prisoner here for years, us makin' the stuffed statues of him outta the skins he sheds. It's torture!

LITTLE SLUG

Yeah... and the dental coverage stinks.

SLUG

Big Bayou's magic put us here and only Big Bayou's magic can break our shackles.

MURIEL

(coughs, wheezes, groan)

COURAGE

(babbles plaintively)

Courage mimes giving Muriel a big spoon of medicine.

SLUG

Uh, well, we'd love t'cure her, but, uh, it's like this...

LITTLE SLUG

We don't know how.

SLUG

We were able t'steal just a smidge o'magic from Big Bayou...

The Little Slug pulls out a piece of paper hidden under a rock -- a yellowed half-page ripped from a book.

SLUG (CONT'D)

...Just enough get our message out in a microbe -- and you caught the cold.

MURIEL

(sneezes, then)

I think yer cold just ripped m'nose. You've got t'find a way... ay... aaaaayyyyy... CHOOOOO!!!

Muriel sneezes several slugs out of their seats and against the back wall of the sweat shop.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
...t'turn off m'cold.

SLUG  
(to Muriel)  
Well, all y'got t'do is t'get yer hands on Big Bayou's Book of Big Bayou Magic. He's got all his secrets in there. Then you can get cured...

LITTLE SLUG  
Yeah... and free us.

MURIEL  
I'll... I'll try...

Muriel attempts to take a step, but is too woozy. She stumbles and leans on a table.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
(weakly)  
...Or maybe I'll just take a wee nap...

All eyes turn to Courage.

COURAGE  
(small yelp of fear)

Courage watches in horror as Muriel is literally starting to sneeze herself to bits:

MURIEL  
Courage...  
(sneeze)

Her ear drums balloon out of her ears, then:

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
Please...  
(sneeze)

Her nose flares and shreds, then:

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
Hurry...  
(sneeze)

Her lips swell, near to exploding.

ON COURAGE, who looks at the camera; he has no choice.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWEATSHOP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Courage is pushed out the entrance by several slugs. Muriel is heard O.C., sneezing horrendously.

MURIEL (O.C.)  
(sneezing horrendously)

The Slug points Courage towards the thickest part of the reeds.

SLUG  
(pointing)  
Big Bayou's Lair... Through there.

The Slug gives Courage another push. Courage SLOSHES off...  
...into the thick growth.

CUT TO:

EXT. THICKET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Courage nervously SLOSHES through the thickest part of the rushes. Horrible SNARLING AND HISSING SOUNDS come from all around.

The bones of various creatures are scattered about, pieces of skeletons hanging from tall reeds. Courage tries to avoid contact with anything, but...

He accidentally bumps a stray branch that has a skull stuck on it. The teeth RATTLE at Courage. Courage stifles a scream and dashes forward, out of the thicket...

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU LAIR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Courage emerges on the other side of the thicket, out of breath. He gathers himself, then looks up and spots...

COURAGE'S POV/LS: BAYOU'S LAIR, a dark hut of mud and thatching, in the shape of a snake's head, the door in the mouth, two windows as eyes. A stuffed snake "stands guard" at the door.

ON COURAGE, watching nervously as...

...the door swings open.

Courage ducks back into the brush.

Slithering out of the door is...

THE BAYOU SNAKE, fearsome, venomous, eyes red, a more frightening version of the stuffed snakes. He rises up and turns to his stuffed likeness.

SNAKE

Hello... me. Don't I look...  
fiiiiine. I'm so beautiful... I  
think I'll go see how all the other  
me's are doing. But first...

As though performing a cabaret act, the snake slowly removes his outer skin as if it were a robe. When done, he tosses the skin onto a pile of skins under a sign that says "TO BE STUFFED."

SNAKE (CONT'D)

(refreshed)

Ah! I do so love to exfoliate.

The Snake slithers off.

Courage quietly makes his way to the frightening Bayou Hut, carefully avoiding the freshly shed snake skin. He looks around, then tentatively reaches to open the door...

CLOSER as Courage tentatively tries the handle on the door. It's locked.

Courage slinks over to one of the "eye" windows and looks inside.

COURAGE'S POV/INSIDE BAYOU LAIR:

Dimly lit -- we don't see much -- but for an old wing chair in front of the window next to a small table with a few books on it. The rest of the room recedes into darkness.

ON COURAGE as he reeeeeaches into the window... and can't quite reach the book.

COURAGE

(deep breath)

Then, Courage has an idea...

He begins to pull fur from his torso, pulling it out in one long thread, exposing his midriff.

He picks up a twig and ties it to the end of the pink thread.

He tosses the twig into the window and then reels in a book, just small enough to fit through the window. He looks at the title on the cover:

"MOTIVATIONAL THINKING: YES I CAN"

He puts the book down and tosses in the line again, pulling out another book. He looks at the cover:

"ENTERTAINING POLYNESIAN STYLE"

Then, from O.C., in the distance, Courage hears the Snake returning:

SNAKE  
(in distance)  
Oh, yesssss... I am pretty... I  
love me...

The Snake's voice gets louder as he approaches. Now growing frantic, Courage tosses the book down and quickly casts his line again.

Courage pulls the thread, reeling in a book -- which gets stuck; it's too big for the window!

SNAKE (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
(a bit closer)  
I can't wait to look in my  
mirror... I love my look after  
I've look at all my me's...

Courage plants his feet against the side of the hut and PULLLLLLLLLLS hard -- until the large book BUSTS OUT of the eye-window, making a larger, book-shaped opening.

The book is a dusty, snakeskin-covered, tendril-bound, hand lettered old tome:

"BIG BAYOU'S SECRET BIG BOOK OF BIG BAYOU MAGIC"

SNAKE (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
(almost there)  
Oh, I am sssso lucky to be me...

Courage holds the book above his head with both hands and runs off back the way he came, through the thicket, in the opposite direction from which the Snake's voice is heard.

CUT TO:

INT. SWEATSHOP - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS

ON MURIEL, SNEEZING CONSTANTLY, parts of her head expanding and contracting with each sneeze. Her clothes are shredded, her face blistered. She's a mess.

MURIEL  
AAAAAH -- CHOOOOOOOO!

The left side of her head swells and contracts.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
Yaaaaaaaaa -- CHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

The right side of her head swells and contracts.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
Ahahah haaaa haaaa haha  
haaaaaaaaaa -- CHOOOOOOOOOO!!!

Her whole head expands and contracts like a balloon.

THE SLUGS are all lined up against the wall, as far away from Muriel as possible.

COURAGE comes running in, out of breath, holding the Bayou Magic Book.

LITTLE SLUG  
He got it! He got the book!  
(to Courage)  
Bust us free! C'mon!

SLUG  
(to Courage)  
Feel free t'cure the lady first. It's  
gettin' mighty disgustin' in here.

ON COURAGE as he flips through the pages of the book. He finds what he's looking for.

COURAGE'S POV: PAGE OF BOOK. The top half of the page is missing. The bottom half has a heading:

"CURING THE UNCOMMON COLD."

Below are line drawings of a figure in a series of weird contortions, along with foot print patterns. It looks like a psychotic dance instruction manual.

ON COURAGE as he follows the instructions in the book, doing a CRAZY CHICKEN DANCE. After several bizarre moves, he finishes...

CU: COURAGE, embarrassed and out of breath.

COURAGE  
(crazy pained laugh)

ON MURIEL, still sick.

MURIEL  
(hacking cough)  
Courage, I don't think it worked...

ON COURAGE: Confused, he looks again in the book. Ah! He forgot something...

He lays an egg, cracks it in half and hands the half shell containing the liquid to Muriel. She drinks it...

...and instantly morphs back to health.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
(clearing throat)  
Oh... Oh my... I can breathe...  
Oh, that's so much better... I  
feel m'self again.

SLUGS  
Now us! / Free us! / Our turn!

Courage hurriedly flips through the book, looking for the correct spell, when, from O.C.:

SNAKE (O.C.)  
What the Bayou's goin' on here?!

Courage looks up in terror to see...

THE SNAKE at the entrance.

SNAKE (CONT'D)  
You messin' with my Bayou Magic?!  
I don't think so...

ON COURAGE, still holding the book.

COURAGE  
(screams)

Courage shoots straight up through the roof of the Sweatshop like a Roman candle, leaving behind his skin, which looks around and then shoots straight up, too.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWEATSHOP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ON COURAGE, running, holding the book above his head with both hands. He looks around and sees:

LS: THE SNAKE coming quickly at him from the Sweatshop entrance.

COURAGE, holding the book, SLOSHES into the swamps as quickly as he can.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

COURAGE is floating on the book in the swamp, through the marshy rushes populated by the stuffed snakes.

Panicking, Courage looks through the book for some magical help. He reads aloud the words on the page:

COURAGE

(reading)

"To make stuffed Bayou snakes your obedient Bayou slaves, use deadly venom from a real Bayou snake."

(looking up; disgusted)

Oooh...

ON SNAKE, swimming through the swamp at Courage, among the stuffed snakes, baring his fangs, forked tongue probing, venom foaming.

SNAKE

Oh, you get it now, child... You get it now...

The Snake opens its mouth wide and bends down to bite Courage...

SNAKE (CONT'D)

As we say in the Bayou... 'bye you.

Courage holds up the book, hiding behind it.

The Snake's fangs go through the book and venom pours out, forming foam on the surface of the mud.

The Snake's fangs are stuck in the book! He struggles to get free, Courage using all his strength to hold him back. Then...

The Slugs pop out of the swamp!

MURIEL (O.C.)

Courage!

Courage turns and sees:

MURIEL on the bank, holding up her damaged nail file.

MURIEL (CONT'D)  
I need a new file... but I got 'em  
free!

LITTLE SLUG  
She's better'n magic!

SLUG  
(to Courage)  
Looks like you could use a hand,  
dog.

Courage babbles to the Slugs while holding back the Snake, its  
venom still dripping into the mud.

COURAGE  
(babbles)

SLUG  
(understanding Courage's  
babble)  
Gotcha!

The Slugs suck in the venom from the surface of the mud, filling  
their cheeks without swallowing.

They swim to the stuffed snakes and, as Courage continues to  
keep the Snake from getting free, the Slugs spit the venom out  
on the stuffed snakes.

WIDER: All around Courage, the STUFFED SNAKES COME TO LIFE!

COURAGE  
(still wrestling with book and Snake;  
calling to the zombie snakes)  
Charge!!!

Courage releases the book, which is still stuck on the Snake's  
fangs.

WIDE as the zombie snakes slither, surrounding the Bayou Snake.

COURAGE climbs from the swamp and goes to Muriel in time to see:

THE SNAKES becoming a slithering mound, obscuring the Bayou Snake.

SNAKE (O.C.)  
Hey! You all are me! I can't do  
this t'me! No... No! Noooooooo!!!

ON COURAGE AND MURIEL as the SLUGS join them.

MURIEL  
Courage! You sure know how t'work  
that Bayou magic!

LITTLE SLUG  
(to Muriel)  
And you one big Bayou mama!

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS

Muriel is at the table, sipping a cup of tea, Courage sitting nearby, knitting his midriff back on.

MURIEL  
Ah, Courage. It's sure is lovely  
t'sip tea just for the pleasure of  
it.

From O.C., is heard:

FARMER (O.C.)  
(hacking cough)

THE FARMER enters through the back door, looking sickly.

FARMER (CONT'D)  
(coughing, then)  
Muriel! I caught yer dern cold!  
(huge sneeze)

In front of the Farmer appears a cloud. Inside the cloud is a praying mantis.

MANTIS  
Help us! You gotta help us!

ON COURAGE, who looks at the camera, and starts doing the chicken dance from earlier.

IRIS OUT

THE END