

# Waltz Auto

Waqarkhan Khan



A shiny white SUV sits idle on the gravel lot while a woman's hand reaches out to drop a ring of rusty keys into an open palm. In the backseat, a young boy presses his small hand against the glass, holding up a little red toy wrench in a silent farewell. The vehicle pulls away, leaving a lone figure standing before a weathered building with a dead neon sign that spells out Waltz Auto. The surrounding landscape stretches wide and quiet under the expansive Oklahoma sky, capturing the heavy stillness of a life suddenly upended.



The heavy rolling door of the cinder block garage yields slowly to a firm pull, letting out a sharp, metallic scream that cuts through the morning air. Sunlight spills into the cavernous, dust-filled interior, illuminating rows of idle tools and the shadowy outlines of forgotten car frames. Cobwebs drape gracefully from the exposed roof beams, silently attesting to twelve years of total abandonment. Standing on the threshold, the new owner gazes into the gloom, realizing the daunting magnitude of the task ahead.



A narrow basement room glows with the soft amber light of a single desk lamp, casting long shadows against concrete walls. A small twin bed, a neatly organized dresser, and a folded pullout couch occupy the compact space where life has temporarily found refuge. Through a small, high window at ground level, the passing feet of pedestrians offer a fleeting glimpse of the bustling world outside. Here, amidst the quiet confines of an aunt's house, the heavy thoughts of debt and fatherhood settle in for the night.



Midnight shadows cloak the interior of the abandoned garage as a bright flashlight beam cuts through the thick, settling dust. Seated at a heavy metal desk that belonged to his grandfather, Cole sifts through stacks of yellowed invoices and forgotten paperwork. Deep within the bottom drawer, his fingers brush against a worn green notebook bound by time and neglect. The stark silence of the midnight hour is broken only by the faint hum of distant traffic.



Opening the cover of the green notebook reveals neat, deliberate rows of handwriting detailing the timeless philosophy of a master mechanic. Four simple lines stand out under the dim illumination of the desk lamp, offering a compass for the turbulent days ahead. Outside, the rain begins to patter softly against the leaking roof, echoing the steady rhythm of a renewed purpose. The words on the page bridge a generational divide, offering quiet strength to a struggling father.



Morning sunlight streams through the grimy windows of the garage as a heavy-duty broom stirs up clouds of grey dust. Armed with trash bags, cleaning supplies, and an unwavering resolve, Cole begins the grueling process of clearing out twelve years of accumulated neglect. Every swept corner and wiped-down workbench strips away another layer of the past, preparing the space for a fresh start. The once-forlorn interior slowly begins to reveal its underlying bones and potential.



A small red toy wrench rests on the corner of a polished metal workbench while a seven-year-old boy watches his father tinker with an old alternator. Owen sits on a sturdy wooden stool, his eyes wide with fascination as greasy hands skillfully diagnose a stubborn mechanical problem. The garage hums with the tentative sounds of a father and son reclaiming lost time amidst the scent of motor oil and steel. Laughter echoes off the cinder block walls, breathing literal life back into the old shop.



The rain pours relentlessly on a Tuesday afternoon, drumming a steady tattoo against the corrugated tin roof of the garage. Despite the dreary weather, a vintage pickup truck idles in the gravel driveway, its engine coughing and sputtering in need of expert attention. Cole steps out from the shadows of the service bay, wiping his hands on a rag, ready to welcome his very first real customer in over a decade. The neon sign above remains dark, but the lights inside burn bright and steady.



Month after month, the rhythm of hard work transforms the once-dilapidated garage into a thriving neighborhood fixture of honesty and craftsmanship. Tools gleam neatly on newly hung pegboards, and the floor is swept clean of every trace of its former neglect. Word of mouth brings a steady stream of local drivers who appreciate fair prices and meticulous repairs. In the background, framed neatly on the office wall, sits the open green notebook bearing the grandfather's enduring code.



Ten years into the future, a sleek luxury car pulls up to a bustling, brilliantly lit automotive restoration shop on the edge of Tulsa. A well-dressed woman steps out into the crisp evening air, her gaze immediately drawn to the iconic, beautifully restored rusty door hanging proudly on the brick exterior. As she reads the hand-painted name Waltz Auto gleaming beneath modern spotlights, a profound realization washes over her regarding everything her former life left behind. Inside, through the large glass viewing window, a man and his grown son work side by side under the golden glow of success.