



Selected Works

I.	Synopses	2
II.	TV Episodes	
	A. Mommie Nearest (Pilot)	5
	B. The Inn Crowd (Pilot)	42
	C. Kimmy Gets Famous! (Spec)	98
	D. Whistle Stop (Pilot)	136
III.	Plays	
	A. Psychos (Act 1)	195
IV.	Short Films	
	A. The Peak	237
V.	Humor/Satire	
	A. Freddy Krueger Supports DACA Extension, Says “America Needs More Dreamers”	254
VI.	Themed Entertainment	
	A. The Chronicles of Narnia: Quest for Winter’s End	256
	B. Battle for the Everstone	272
	C. Porto Kaiō	278

Synopses

TV Episodes

Mommie Nearest (Single-Cam Sitcom Pilot)

After she's killed in a freak car accident, Olivia Owens, loving mother of three, is brought back to life by her meddling Guardian Angel, Dolly. The only catch—she's returned to the wrong body. Now, with Dolly a Heavenly outlaw and Olivia unrecognizable to her family, they're forced to make a new life together on Earth. With help from Clarence, her confidant in Heaven, Dolly guides Olivia as she bounces from body to body in hopes of returning to the family she loves.

The Inn Crowd (Multi-Cam Sitcom Pilot)

Aided by an offbeat staff, two estranged siblings, one a tightly wound type-A everyman, the other a self-centered, social-climbing Hollywood reject, reunite to fulfill their mother's dying wish and open the bed and breakfast she'd dreamed of operating in their sleepy Southern hometown.

Kimmy Gets Famous! (*Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* Spec)

When "15 Years a Slave: The Unauthorized Mostly Inaccurate True Story of the Indiana Mole Women" becomes a smash hit on Lifetime Movie Network, Kimmy can't go anywhere without being recognized. Embarrassed by the sensational exposé and uncomfortable with her newfound fame, she resigns to a life of seclusion, leaving it up to Titus to teach her a valuable lesson on #ReclaimingYourNarrative—a concept he's forced to put into practice himself when a humiliating late night infomercial he recorded for Fill-Ups Adult Diapers goes viral. Meanwhile, after hearing the alarming news that murder rates in the neighborhood have reached an all-time low, Lillian spreads rumors of "The East Dogmouth Strangler" to ward off yuppies.

Whistle Stop (Drama Pilot)

Inspired by the nostalgia-driven stories of the "Amblinesque" subgenre and rooted in the myths and legends of Cherokee folklore, this 90s-set horror-comedy follows a plucky ten-year-old misfit and her hypochondriacal best friend as they join forces with the village kook to stop an ancient witch from devouring the children of their sleepy Smoky Mountain town.

Plays

Psychos (Act 1)

When a pair of scheming cheaters end up stranded at a mysterious roadside inn, they begin to suspect that its charming young proprietor and his elderly companion are really the escaped hatchet-murdering duo they've heard about in the news. Hijinks ensue when the innkeepers begin to suspect the same of their new boarders, and a series of deceptions, disguises, and duplicitous dialects prevent both pairs from realizing the real murderers have been hiding out upstairs the whole time.

Short Films

The Peak

In this love story, set against the backdrop of Hong Kong's Hungry Ghost Festival, a young man leads his girlfriend on an elaborate scavenger hunt as they prepare to say goodbye to the city where they first met.

Student Award Winner at The Wrap's 2018 Shortlist Film Festival
Southeast Emmy Award Nominee for Best Long Form Fiction

Humor/Satire

Freddy Krueger Supports DACA Extension, Says “America Needs More Dreamers”

An Onion-style news article offering satirical coverage of horror icon Freddy Krueger's Springwood, Ohio mayoral campaign

Themed Entertainment

The Chronicles of Narnia: Quest for Winter's End (Attraction Treatment)

Welcome Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve! Step through the wardrobe and climb aboard one of Father Christmas' Enchanted Self-Driving Sleighs. Mr. and Mrs. Beaver need your help! In this thrilling trackless 4D dark ride, inspired by C.S. Lewis' timeless classic, *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, you'll race against the clock to free Mr. Tumnus and join the forces of Aslan's army. It's up to you to defeat the White Witch and end her eternal winter. The fate of Narnia is in your hands!

Battle for the Everstone (Attraction Treatment)

In this interactive laser tag adventure inspired by Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, guests are transported to an alien world where two possible leaders are engaged in a battle for the crown. Separated into two opposing teams, they must solve puzzles, escape from cavernous labyrinths, and shoot targets to prove their team's mastery over the powers of the mystical *Everstone*.

Porto Kaiō (Guest Experience Guide)

Ασπάζομαι, Explorers! Welcome to Porto Kaiō, a state-of-the-art exploration center where visitors from across the globe gather to answer the call to adventure! As the official headquarters of The Adventure Guild, an elite international organization dedicated to the preservation of antiquities and the proliferation of the spirit of adventure, Porto Kaiō is the world's preeminent destination for curious minds of all ages and backgrounds. Built directly atop the site of the original Pharos of Alexandria, and centrally located between all Seven Wonders, Porto Kaiō is a gateway to discovery—a modern portal to the treasures of the ancient world—that's sure to ignite the spark of adventure in you!

MOMMIE NEAREST

"Hello, Dolly!"

(pilot)

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. OWENS KITCHEN - MORNING

It's an unusual morning in the Owens' house. For the first time in, well, he can't remember how long, MATT's making breakfast--or trying to, anyway.

With his two year-old daughter, ADDIE, rested on his hip, Matt, thirty-eight and handsome for a father of three, uses his free hand to pop four pieces of bread into the toaster.

Still in his pajamas and struggling to open his eyes beyond a squint, it's plain to see that Matt's out of his element.

VIVAN, twelve, and Matt's oldest daughter, shuffles sluggishly into the kitchen. She knows her routine so well, she never has to open her eyes or raise her drooping head.

GABE, eight years old, with thick, round glasses, follows with the same fervor--head down, eyes seemingly crusted shut.

Like his sister, Gabe's already dressed, though it looks as if he simply slept in yesterday's clothes.

As they sit down at the table, both children are surprised to find their father in the kitchen.

VIVIAN

What are you doing up?

MATT

Mommy's getting ready for work this morning, so I figured I'd help out.

GABE

So you're making breakfast?

MATT

Uh-huh. Is that alright?

VIVIAN

My head says yes, but my stomach is screaming no.

MATT

Look, I'm just making toast. It's pretty hard to mess that up.

Four pieces of toast pop up, burnt to a crisp.

MATT (CONT'D)
Nothing a little butter can't
fix...

Matt grabs the toast, dropping the slices immediately onto two plates and shaking off his burning fingers.

He pops open the butter and Addie immediately tries to dig in. As he slathers the toast, Matt sways back and forth to keep her fist out of the tub.

When he's finished, Matt delivers the toast to the table. It's unappetizing to say the least.

GABE
Dad, can I have sprinkles on mine?

VIVIAN
You're disgusting.

MATT
Vivian, hush. Why do you want
sprinkles, buddy?

GABE
In the Netherlands, everyone eats
toast with butter and sprinkles...
Or is it just plain white bread?
Yeah, I think it's just white
bread. With butter and sprinkles.

MATT
I already toasted this, bud. Can I
just put sprinkles on it?

GABE
That's not really the traditional
Dutch way to eat it, Dad.

MATT
Alright, then. White bread it is.

Matt heads back to the counter and butters two pieces of plain white bread. He searches through cabinet after cabinet, but has no idea where to find the sprinkles.

As he searches, OLIVIA enters the kitchen. Like her husband, she wears thirty-eight well. And like her children, she's surprised to see Matt so active in the morning.

OLIVIA
What are you looking for, Sweetie?

MATT
Sprinkles.

Olivia opens the Lazy Susan and grabs them without looking. She sprinkles some onto Gabe's bread as she walks it to him.

OLIVIA
Going Dutch this morning, huh, bud?

GABE
Yep! Thanks Mom.

Olivia kisses Matt and takes Addie into her arms.

OLIVIA
Thanks for getting the kids ready
this morning.

MATT
It was nothing really. I know this
kitchen like the back of my hand.

OLIVIA
Oh, you do?

MATT
Yep.

OLIVIA
Ok. Can you get me the Cheerios for
Addie?

Matt grins coyly. He has no idea where the Cheerios are. Olivia moves to the pantry to get the cereal herself. She pours some into a small bowl and sets Addie down with it in her high chair.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Alright, hurry up, you guys. Bus is
gonna be here in ten minutes and I
can't drive you to school today.

GABE
Why not?

OLIVIA
I'm already gonna be late for my
first day back at work. Aunt
Christina'll have my head!

GABE
But I don't wanna take the bus. Who
will I sit with?

OLIVIA
Vivian.

VIVIAN
No he won't! Sit with Kyle Wiggins.

GABE
But he stinks!

VIVIAN
So do you. Match made in Heaven!

Gabe looks to Matt, who's just sat down at the table with his own burnt toast.

GABE
Dad, can't you give me a ride?

Olivia looks up from the three lunch boxes she's packing.

OLIVIA
Gabe, your father's gotta work.

GABE
Working from home isn't really
working.

Matt is slightly affronted.

MATT
I'm running my own firm now, buddy.
I may be home a lot more, but that
doesn't mean I'm not working.

GABE
But you're taking care of Addie?

MATT
Until I've got my business up and
running, we don't have the money to
put her in daycare. That's why your
Mom's going back to work.

OLIVIA
So will you help us out and take
the bus?

GABE
Fine. But I'm not sitting with Kyle
Wiggins.

OLIVIA
Right. You're sitting with Vivian.

Vivian begins to object, but Olivia fixes her with a look.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Alright, guys. The bus is gonna be here any minute. Your backpacks are by the door. You'll get lunch boxes when I get a kiss.

Gabe and Vivian kiss their father goodbye and head into the living room. Olivia follows, carrying lunch boxes.

INT. OWENS' LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The kids pick up their backpacks--Vivian's thin and stylish, Gabe's fat and turtle-like. At the door, Vivian kisses her mother in exchange for a lunch.

OLIVIA

There's an extra sandwich in there. Thanks for pretending to eat your Dad's toast.

VIVIAN

I think the dog actually enjoyed it.

Vivian skips out the door. Gabe steps up for his kiss.

OLIVIA

I put your National Geographic in there for you. But don't you dare eat alone just to read it!

GABE

Okay, I'll sit with the lunch ladies. Love you, Mom.

OLIVIA

Love you more.

He shuffles off down the driveway as Olivia shuts the door.

Matt walks into the room carrying Addie.

MATT

He'll be fine. And so will you.

OLIVIA

I know. I just hate being away from them.

Olivia takes Addie from Matt's arms. She hugs her close.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 You be a good girl for Daddy, okay?

ADDIE
 Okay, Mommy.

Olivia leans in and kisses Matt.

OLIVIA
 Bye, love you guys.

MATT
 Love you, too.

Olivia hands Addie back to Matt and grabs her purse as she heads out the door.

INT. OLIVIA'S CAR - MORNING

The Tavares' "Heaven Must Be Missing an Angel," plays over the radio. Olivia gets down with the disco beats. She strums her fingers on the steering wheel, mouthing the words as she heads down the street.

Olivia crosses into an intersection. Running a red light, an 18-wheeler comes barreling down the street toward her.

It smashes into Olivia's tiny car.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. WHITE ROOM - LATER

Olivia wakes up on a white table in a white room. Or maybe it's not a room? It's a space...she thinks. It's ethereal, glowing brightly, unlike anything she's ever seen.

DOLLY, an upper middle-aged woman with a big smile and even bigger hair, sits on the other end of the table, staring.

Perplexed by the space, Olivia hadn't noticed Dolly before. Or maybe she hadn't been there? Either way, she's startled.

OLIVIA
 Where am I?

DOLLY
 Welcome to Heaven, darlin'!

FADE OUT.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. WHITE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Olivia and Dolly resume their conversation.

OLIVIA

So, what, you're an angel?

DOLLY

I'm *your* angel. Your Guardian Angel. The name's Dolly.

Dolly reaches out her hand and pulls Olivia in for a hug.

OLIVIA

So, am I an angel now, too?

DOLLY

That's not how it works, sweetie. I've always been an angel.

OLIVIA

Always?

DOLLY

Since the dawn of time.

OLIVIA

You look pretty good for your age.

DOLLY

Aww, thanks, sugar! I try.

OLIVIA

How come you don't wear a halo?

DOLLY

Couldn't find one that fit over my hair.

Olivia laughs, but soon falls silent. She's finished with small talk.

OLIVIA

Am I dead?

DOLLY

They always told me this would be the hard part. On Earth, you've got the birds and the bees conversation. Up here, we have the "am I really dead" discussion.

OLIVIA

You've never done this before?

DOLLY

You were my first assignment. I've never guarded anyone but you.

OLIVIA

Wouldn't it figure I'd get the amateur.

DOLLY

Hey! Somebody must have seen a spark in me or I'd never have been promoted from Prayer Sorter.

OLIVIA

They gave me a Prayer Sorter! Could it get any worse!?!?

DOLLY

Well, there's the Christmas Tree Toppers. They sit in a box for eleven months of the year.

OLIVIA

So they did me one better than an ornament. And now I'm dead.

DOLLY

Afraid so. Welcome to the afterlife, Olivia.

Olivia looks around.

OLIVIA

Heaven's not what I expected. It's quite bleak, actually.

DOLLY

This is more of a waiting room. I haven't brought you to your Heaven yet.

OLIVIA

My Heaven?

DOLLY

Personalized just for you. Perfect
to the last detail! But I'm not
taking you there.

OLIVIA

I know I haven't been perfect, but
do you really think I deserve
Hell!?!?

DOLLY

Despite what the church tells you,
darlin', it takes a lotta sinnin'
to go to Hell.

OLIVIA

Then where are you taking me?

DOLLY

Home.

Dolly grabs Olivia's hand and pulls her off the table.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

Come on. I'll explain on the way.
We don't have much time.

By waving her hand, Dolly creates a portal in the whiteness
that extends into a long, sterile hallway. They walk into it.

OLIVIA

How did I...you know? Was I
murdered?

DOLLY

No.

OLIVIA

What was it, then? High Fructose
Corn Syrup? My mother always said
that would be the end of me...

DOLLY

It was a car accident. Gruesome.

OLIVIA

My premiums are gonna go through
the roof! Didn't you see the rosary
around my rearview mirror? How
could you do this to me!?!?

DOLLY

It wasn't me! Around here, I have
less say than a mute on talk radio.

OLIVIA

So, what then? It was part of God's plan for me to die at thirty-eight, perfectly healthy, and leave behind three kids who need me? And here I was thinking God was the good guy...

DOLLY

Clearly you've never read the Old Testament.

Olivia thinks for a second. Guilt streaks across her face.

OLIVIA

Do you have to do what God says?

DOLLY

We have Free Will just like you. But the Archangels see to it that we stay in line.

OLIVIA

The Archangels?

DOLLY

Heaven's defenders. The highest ranking angels. You've heard of 'em: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael... Never could dislodge the sticks up their rears, I guess.

OLIVIA

Have you ever crossed 'em?

DOLLY

No. But I'm about to.

OLIVIA

For me?

DOLLY

For us. You'll never know how much it's meant to me being your Guardian Angel. I can't lose that. I need to watch you live the rest of your life. The life I've envisioned for you. A life with your family. Maybe this is part of God's plan, too.

Olivia pulls Dolly into a tight embrace.

OLIVIA

Thank you. I think you were right
about that spark.

DOLLY

I'll get you back to your kiddos,
puddin'. Don't you worry.

OLIVIA

How do we get outta here, then?

DOLLY

First, we need to get you a body.

Olivia looks down at herself.

OLIVIA

I have one.

DOLLY

That's not a body.

OLIVIA

Sure, I could stand to lose a few
pounds, but--

DOLLY

That's not what I mean, sweet pea.
There's no body there. We're
projecting that onto you 'cause
your small mind could never
comprehend the soul's true form. We
need to get you your real body.

OLIVIA

Where do we find it?

DOLLY

The Body Shop.

OLIVIA

I have to buy it back? Do you guys
accept Chuck-E-Cheese coins?

DOLLY

There's no currency in Heaven,
dear. Money's the root of all sin,
you know. Besides, it not that kind
of shop. It's a repair shop.

OLIVIA

How do we get there?

DOLLY
We're here.

Dolly motions to a door that's appeared out of nowhere. Or maybe it's always been there? Who knows? Olivia doesn't understand Heaven at all.

The brightly colored bubble letters on the door seem misleadingly inviting next to the nearby finger scanner.

OLIVIA
How do we get in?

DOLLY
We need Clarence.

OLIVIA
Clearance?

DOLLY
No, Clarence.

OLIVIA
Right. You don't have clearance. So how do we get in?

She puts her hand up to her mouth and hollers.

DOLLY
CLARENCE!

CLARENCE, an older looking angel, short and stout with thick, magnifying glasses, appears out of thin air.

CLARENCE
Well, hey, Dolly!

Dolly hugs Clarence.

DOLLY
Olivia, this is Clarence, my oldest, well... really my only friend.

CLARENCE
They don't understand us up here.
So we stick together.

DOLLY
Clarence is a bookkeeper. He catalogues the bodies that are brought in to be fixed up.

CLARENCE
Pleased to meet ya, Olivia.

He reaches out a hand to shake, contemplating her name.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Wait... Olivia?
(to Dolly)
Isn't this your human?

DOLLY
She died this morning.

CLARENCE
Sorry to hear that. But glad to
have you with us.

OLIVIA
Thanks.

DOLLY
She's not staying.

CLARENCE
What do you mean she's not staying?
Dolly, what are you brewing?

DOLLY
It wasn't her time, Clarence. I'm
sending her back.

CLARENCE
The dead must stay dead, Dolly.
It's written in the Angel Scrolls,
plain as day.

DOLLY
Forget the Angel Scrolls, Clarence!

CLARENCE
You could lose your wings for this.
The Scrolls are God's will!

DOLLY
Was it in God's will for me to be a
Guardian Angel? No. But it's the
best thing I've ever done. And I'm
not going back to prayer sorting.

CLARENCE
You won't have to. You'll get a
brand new baby to guard.

DOLLY

I don't want a new one! I want
Olivia! Will you help me? Please?

CLARENCE

Dolly...

DOLLY

You're the only friend I've got up
here, Clarence. Will you do me this
one favor?

CLARENCE

I guess I haven't got a choice.
Without me, you'd be discovered in
seconds. And if you're exiled,
where does that leave me?

DOLLY

Alone. Without a friend in the
world. And the terrible grief of
knowing you could have made a
difference.

CLARENCE

Then, I guess I'd better help.

Dolly pulls Clarence in for a hug, smashing his face
awkwardly against her breasts. She straightens his glasses
for him upon release.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Olivia, you died this morning?

OLIVIA

I think so.

CLARENCE

So you're body may not be ready.

OLIVIA

What do you mean by that?

CLARENCE

A body's a nonrenewable resource.
We recycle them. After death, we
fix 'em up here, and then reuse
them as a vessel for a new soul.
Have you ever heard of a
doppelgänger, Olivia?

OLIVIA

It's someone who looks exactly like
another person.

CLARENCE

Right. And it's no coincidence.
They share the same body.

OLIVIA

Wait a second. So Jeffrey Tambor
and Benjamin Franklin...

CLARENCE

Same body.

OLIVIA

What about Glenn Close and George
Washington?

CLARENCE

Yep. Same body.

OLIVIA

My mother-in-law and Winston
Churchill?

CLARENCE

Nope. That's just an unfortunate
coincidence...

DOLLY

Alright, you guys. That's enough.
We haven't got much time, so let's
make this snappy.

Clarence places his finger on the scanner. A computerized
voice responds.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Clarence Peabody. Welcome.

The door to the body shop swings open and everyone steps
inside. But the system is smarter than they expected. Red
lights begin to flash and a siren blares.

COMPUTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Unauthorized Angel Detected. Dolly
Hollingsworth. Unauthorized Angel
Detected. Dolly Hollingsworth.

Dolly and Clarence begin to panic.

OLIVIA

What's happening?

DOLLY

The Archangels. They're coming.

CLARENCE

We haven't got much time. We've got
to get to the New Arrivals!

Clarence scurries off into the seemingly endless warehouse.
Dolly and Olivia follow close behind.

The Body Shop is massive. And it's the only part of Heaven
Olivia's experienced that isn't stark whiteness. Hanging from
an array of overhead tracks are bodies--thousands, maybe
millions of them--sorted into numerous categories.

When they reach the "New Arrivals," Clarence smashes a red
button and begins cycling through the bodies on the conveyer.

Sirens continue to blare and the computer voice rings out.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Michael, Gabriel, Raphael--Angels
of the Lord. Welcome.

DOLLY

Clarence, get out of here! I don't
want you to go down for this, too.

CLARENCE

But, Dolly...

DOLLY

No buts. Thanks for your help,
love.

Dolly waves her hand in front of Clarence and he disappears.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

Olivia, do you trust me?

OLIVIA

You've gotten me this far.

DOLLY

Then, hang on. This may get weird.

Dolly waves her hand over Olivia, condensing her soul into a
floating blue wisp. She takes the soul into her hand as she
continues to scroll through the available bodies. Finding
Olivia's, she screams in horror. It's mangled badly.

The sirens grow louder and more intense and Dolly can hear
the commanding footsteps of the approaching Archangels. In
desperation, she draws back her arm and jams Olivia's soul
into an unseen body.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT TWO

BLACK SCREEN:

Olivia breathes heavily. She thinks she's alive, but maybe the plan didn't work. She can't see a thing. And it's freezing cold. She tries to sit up, but hits her head. The sound of clanking metal reverberates around her.

OLIVIA
 Dolly! Help me! It's freezing!
 Where am I?

No response. Olivia bangs on the metal around her.

FADE IN:

INT. ICE BOX - NIGHT

There's an unlatching sound. A small rectangle of light bleeds in at Olivia's feet. Dolly peeks into the dark space.

DOLLY
 There you are, sugar! I was
 beginning to worry I'd gone to the
 wrong mortuary.

INT. MORTUARY - NIGHT

Dolly grabs the tray and slides Olivia out of the freezer. She's naked, covered in a sheet from her shoulders down.

OLIVIA
 This is disgusting! How'd I get in
 here?

DOLLY
 You were a dead body, darlin'. This
 is where they store 'em.

She notices Olivia shivering.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
 Let me get you something to wear.

Dolly disappears into another room, returning soon after with a pair of old white sneakers and a silver platter full of cocktail weenies. Slung over her shoulder is a gaudy sundress. She delivers the clothes to Olivia.

OLIVIA

These aren't my clothes, Dolly.

DOLLY

That's right. They belong to Ms. Sandy Crabtree. But they're all there is, so put 'em on, puddin'.

Olivia unfurls the dress. It looks far too big for her, but she has no other option than to put it on.

To protect her modesty, she shimmies around under the sheet until dressed. Then she tosses it off and slides into her orthopedics. The over-sized dress hangs off her body.

OLIVIA

My mother-in-law was right. These are comfortable! And this dress fits like a glove!

Dolly smiles as she stuffs her face with cocktail weenies.

DOLLY

And these are delicious! What do you call these things?

OLIVIA

Weenies.

DOLLY

Oh. I thought those were something else entirely...

Olivia chuckles as Dolly continues to eat.

OLIVIA

I'm sorry I ever doubted you, Dolly.

DOLLY

Don't even worry 'bout it, sweet pea. You weren't the first and you won't be the last.

OLIVIA

It feels good to have a body again!

DOLLY

I picked a good one, didn't I!?

Olivia's bright smile morphs into a look of trepidation.

OLIVIA

What?

DOLLY
I think she's a pretty good fit.

Olivia moves closer to Dolly and catches a glimpse of herself in the now empty silver platter. She screams.

Staring back at her is an entirely different woman. She does resemble Olivia...slightly. But she's a little older, a little shorter, and quite a bit chunkier.

OLIVIA
Who is that!??

DOLLY
Sandy Crabtree. Well, it was Sandy Crabtree. Now it's you.

OLIVIA
I look like Roseanne!

DOLLY
No, dear. Her name was Sandy.

OLIVIA
What's going on? Where's my body?

DOLLY
Your body was in terrible shape.

OLIVIA
I was in better shape than Sandy Crabtree!

DOLLY
Your body wasn't ready, honey. I had to act quick or the archangels would have stopped us for sure!

OLIVIA
I can't go back to my family like this! What am I gonna do!??!

DOLLY
We'll think of something, sweetie. The most important thing was getting you back--in any way I could.

Their conversation is interrupted by the sound of rattling keys. Someone's at the back door.

OLIVIA
I can't be seen like this!

DOLLY

Don't be so self-conscious,
darlin'. You look ravishing.

OLIVIA

It's not that.

DOLLY

What then?

OLIVIA

I'm a dead woman!

They try to run into the next room, but they're too late. The door swings open and the UNDERTAKER steps inside.

He slings his keys down on the counter, and clearly in a hurry, he walks right past Olivia and Dolly without noticing them. He disappears into the back room.

Olivia and Dolly scramble to get out of sight, but the sterile room offers little in the way of hiding places.

The undertaker returns, carrying the cell phone he must have forgotten. He spots "Sandy" and faints on sight.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

We've gotta get out of here before
he wakes up.

DOLLY

How?

OLIVIA

Can't you magic us away or
something?

DOLLY

It's not magic. We call 'em
miracles. But I can't perform 'em
anymore. The archangels will be
tracking us for sure.

OLIVIA

What has that got to do with it?

DOLLY

Miracles are how they keep track of
us. If we aren't performing
miracles, we don't even show up on
their radar. We'll have to do
things the human way from now on.

Olivia notices the Undertaker's keys glistening on the countertop. She grabs Dolly's hand.

OLIVIA
Come on. We'll drive.

She grabs the keys as they run out into the parking lot.

EXT. MORTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Despite it being the middle of the night, the lot's full.

DOLLY
How do we know which one it is?

Olivia pushes "unlock" on the key fob. Amid a sea of sedans and minivans, the tail lights of the only hearse in the lot glow red. Olivia scowls. Of course it's a hearse...

DOLLY (CONT'D)
Oooh, a limo!

Olivia opens the door and slides into the driver's seat. Dolly follows suit on the other side.

OLIVIA
Only the best for you, Dolly.

INT. HEARSE - CONTINUOUS

Olivia backs out of the space.

DOLLY
Do you know the way home?

OLIVIA
Where are we?

As she asks, she notices the Mortuary's marquee: STIFF BROS. FUNERAL HOME--"THE BEST LITTLE FUNERAL HOUSE IN TEXAS."

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Texas!

It's gonna be a long ride back to Virginia.

INT. HEARSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Olivia and Dolly discuss their plan of action as they drive.

OLIVIA

Am I stuck like this?

DOLLY

Quite the opposite, actually. You see, souls are designed specifically for the body they're intended to inhabit. Yours was tailor made for your body, not Sandy Crabtree's. I'm not sure when--it could be hours, days, or even weeks from now--but at some point, probably soon, that body will reject you.

OLIVIA

And I'll die?

DOLLY

The body will, but your soul will carry on.

OLIVIA

You brought me back so I can haunt my kids?

DOLLY

No, I'll just get you a new body.

OLIVIA

And won't the same thing happen to that one?

DOLLY

Uh-huh. Then I'll get you another.

OLIVIA

What's the point? I'll be bouncing from woman to woman faster than Tiger Woods.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HEARSE - SOMETIME THE NEXT DAY

Olivia and Dolly are surrounded by fast food bags. Dolly sips from an over-sized cup as Olivia jams fries into her mouth. They've been on the road for a long time. And it shows.

OLIVIA

I can't just show up at the door--
"Hey, I'm back. I know I look like
Sandy Crabtree, but that's just
because an angel put me back in the
wrong body!" They'll have me
institutionalized!

DOLLY

Well, when you put it that way...

OLIVIA

There's no other way to put it!

DOLLY

We'll get your body back soon
enough. And until then, you can
look out for your kids from afar.

OLIVIA

What do you mean?

DOLLY

I watched over you for thirty-eight
years and you never knew I existed.
You can be in your kids' lives
without them knowing it's you. Do
what mother's do best--weasel your
way into places you aren't wanted!
Get a job at the kids' school, move
into their neighborhood... Act.
Remember, how good you were in high
school? You were a regular lesbian!

OLIVIA

It's thespian.

DOLLY

And I can act, too! I always played
the angel in the Nativity play.

OLIVIA

That's not really...

DOLLY

My name will be...hmmm, that's
tough... How about Dolly? Yeah,
Miss Dolly! I'll run a boarding
house. You'll play my tenant. All
of 'em, I guess. That'll explain
why you're always changing.

OLIVIA

Dolly, you're brilliant.

DOLLY

Now we just need a place to stay.

OLIVIA

There is one place.

DOLLY

Where's that?

OLIVIA

In my neighborhood. This old abandoned place. The kids swear it's haunted. But we can't stay there.

DOLLY

Why not? You're dead and I'm altogether otherworldly. Let's haunt it!

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia pulls the hearse tentatively into the overgrown driveway of a dilapidated Victorian-style house. Even the Munsters would hesitate taking up residence here.

She parks at the top of the drive, but quickly reassesses. Probably best not to draw attention by parking a hearse at a haunted house... She settles in the backyard.

Dolly and Olivia walk around to the front of the house. As they climb the steps to the front porch, Olivia's leg gives out and she stumbles.

DOLLY

It's already starting. Sandy's fighting back.

OLIVIA

That quick?

DOLLY

It's just beginning, but we'll need to act fast. Why don't you go in and get some rest? I'm gonna pop back to Heaven and see if I can't get my hands on a new body.

OLIVIA

But, what about the archangels?
Won't you ping their radar?

DOLLY

Probably. But we have no choice.

OLIVIA

Thank you, Dolly. Be careful.

DOLLY

I'm nothing if not careful.

Dolly trips backward down the stairs, but rebounds quickly and brushes herself off.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

Nothing.

She disappears as Olivia heads inside.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Olivia runs immediately up the stairs and sits down at a large window in what was once the master bedroom. From here, she has a perfect view of her own house down the street.

EXT. OWENS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The lights in the kids' bedrooms are out, but the living room lights are still on. Dim, but on. Olivia can see Matt stirring inside.

Soon, a car pulls into the Owens' driveway. HEIDI, a beautiful redheaded woman slides out. She slams her door and checks her lipstick in the side mirror.

She struts up the sidewalk to the front door and rings the bell.

Matt answers and greets her with a passionate kiss.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Enraged, Olivia storms into the front yard and marches to the street, fully prepared to give Matt a piece of her mind.

From nowhere, Dolly appears and holds her back.

DOLLY

Puddin', don't do something you'll
regret. It's not what it seems.

Olivia breaks down in tears.

OLIVIA

It's been two days. Two days! How
could he!??

DOLLY

It hasn't been two days, sugar.
It's been a year.

OLIVIA

What are you talking about? No it
hasn't!

DOLLY

Time works differently in Heaven.
What felt like a few hours there,
was really months here.

OLIVIA

Why didn't you tell me?

Dolly puts her arm around Olivia and walks her back inside.

DOLLY

I didn't realize. I've never been
to Earth before. And there's really
no rhyme or reason to it. Sometimes
the opposite is true. It can be an
eternity in Heaven and only a few
minutes here.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dolly brings Olivia upstairs to lie down. There's no bed, so the floor will have to do. Olivia lies her head on Dolly's lap and Dolly strokes her hair.

OLIVIA

So they've already moved on. Do you think they've forgotten me?

DOLLY

Of course not! Matt's always been a needy one. You know that.

OLIVIA

But it's only been a year.

DOLLY

A year's a long time, darlin'. And she's not meant to replace you.

OLIVIA

I guess you're right... But she's still gotta go.

DOLLY

Agreed.

OLIVIA

So you'll help me break them up?

DOLLY

It would be an honor.

INT. MISS DOLLY'S BOARDING HOUSE - MORNING

Olivia wakes up the next morning and is startled by Dolly, who's sitting Indian-style beside her, staring intently. It's clear she's been there for quite some time.

Olivia's even more terrified when she finds that she's lying in a bed, in a room full of furnishings that hadn't been there the night before. She jumps up and runs into the hall.

The walls have been restored and papered, the floors have been refinished, and each room is completely furnished. The decoration is a bit tacky for Olivia's taste, but it's exactly what she should have expected from Dolly. Crucifixes, statues, and pictures of Jesus adorn most nooks.

OLIVIA

The archangels' radar must be on fire! How'd you do this?

DOLLY

I didn't. Clarence did. I went to see him last night.

OLIVIA

How's he doing?

DOLLY

The archangels roughed him up a bit. They suspect he helped us get away, but they have no proof, so he'll be fine. He gave me strict orders not to return to Heaven, though. Says I'm a wanted angel.

OLIVIA

Did you find me a new body?

DOLLY

Clarence wouldn't let me. But don't worry, he's working on it. He's our eye in the sky.

OLIVIA

How'd you convince him to do that?

DOLLY

It was easy. I asked him to be my Guardian Angel. That's all he's ever wanted.

OLIVIA

You've got a great friend in him.

DOLLY

So do you. Oh, and he made us something! Come on, I wanna show ya.

Dolly skips down the stairs. Olivia follows, but her body gives out again. She skids down the stairs on her stomach.

OLIVIA

I sure hope Clarence works quick.

Dolly lifts Olivia and walks her to the hallway. She positions her in front of the folding doors that would normally hide a washer and dryer. She slides them open to reveal two metal canisters, one labeled "In," the other, "Out," connected by an array of futuristic cables.

DOLLY

This is the Body Swap Machine.

OLIVIA

That's a terrible name.

DOLLY

It's Clarence's invention.

Dolly shows it off like a Price is Right model.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

When he's got a new body ready for ya, you'll stand here in this canister and we'll transfer your soul into the body waiting for you in that one.

OLIVIA

It looks like a science fair project. Will it work?

DOLLY

We hope so. Clarence says he should have a body ready for you this afternoon. Until then, what do you wanna do today?

OLIVIA

I was hoping we could go introduce ourselves to the neighbors.

DOLLY

That sounds nice! The Johnsons or the O'Neals?

OLIVIA

No. My family.

DOLLY

Oh, you mean *introduce ourselves*.

OLIVIA

We should bring a dish or something.

DOLLY

Is that customary? What do you think they'd prefer: a plate, a bowl, a mug, perhaps?

OLIVIA

I mean food.

DOLLY

Oh, perfect! I made cocktail weenies this morning!

Dolly grabs Olivia's hand and pulls her into the kitchen. There's a tray on the counter where Dolly's arranged wet Vienna Sausages that she's wrapped in bits of tortilla.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
 I wasn't sure exactly how to make
 'em, so I tried to look it up on
 the internet. Don't google
 "weenies."

OLIVIA
 We're not serving these to my kids.

Dolly grabs one and eats it.

DOLLY
 But they're delicious!

OLIVIA
 I highly doubt that.

DOLLY
 Don't knock 'em till you've tried
 'em.

OLIVIA
 That will not be happening.

Olivia digs around in the freshly stocked cabinets.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 I'll bake some brownies.

EXT. OWENS HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Dolly and Olivia stand on the front porch of the Owens house. Olivia takes a deep breath and knocks on the door. Much to her dismay, Heidi answers.

HEIDI
 Yes, we know that Jesus Christ is
 the one true Lord and savior.
 Thanks for stopping by.

DOLLY
 Why, yes, he is! Very good!

Heidi attempts to shut the door, but Olivia stops her.

OLIVIA
 We're not religious fanatics. We're
 the new neighbors.

HEIDI

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize we
had any.

OLIVIA

We just moved in across the street--
the old Harmon house.

Heidi looks out across the way. Last night, she'd have seen a dilapidated, overgrown shack. Today, sitting in the same spot, is a well-manicured nauseatingly pink house. A large sign in the front lawn reads, "Miss Dolly's Boarding House."

HEIDI

Oh, a boarding house. How nice.

She steps out of the door frame and ushers them inside.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

Please, come in. My name's Heidi. I
don't live here, I'm just visiting
a friend.

Olivia chokes back harsher words as she and Dolly enter the living room.

OLIVIA

That's sweet. Thank you. I'm Ol--
Sandy... Yep, Ole Sandy, that's me!
And this is Dolly.

Dolly reaches out a hand for Heidi. They shake.

DOLLY

Charmed.

Dolly hands the tray of brownies to Heidi.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

Brownies?

HEIDI

Oh, thank you. Take a seat anywhere
you feel comfortable. I'll get
Matt.

As she heads for the couch, Olivia's knees lock and she trips face first onto the floor. Heidi gasps in horror and runs to help her.

As she lifts her, she notices that Olivia's face has contorted like silly putty. Her nose is twisted, her eyes droop, and her smile points up on one end and down on the other. Heidi screams.

HEIDI (CONT'D)
Oh my God!

DOLLY
You shouldn't say that.

HEIDI
Are you alright!?!?

Olivia doesn't realize anything's wrong.

OLIVIA
Oh, I'm fine. Thank you.

Dolly sees what's happened, and swivels Olivia around to face her. She uses her fingers to re-sculpt Olivia's face.

DOLLY
Sandy here is in the middle of a huge lawsuit with a quack plastic surgeon. When she settles, she'll be able to fix this right up.

Matt walks into the room as Dolly and Olivia sit down.

MATT
Did I hear we have new neighbors in the old Harmon house?

HEIDI
Hun, this is Sandy and Dolly.

MATT
Pleased to meet you both. What brings you to the neighborhood?

DOLLY
My husband died suddenly last year and I was feeling mighty lonely, so I decided to open up a boarding house. Sandy's my first tenant.

MATT
My condolences, Dolly. My wife also passed last year.

OLIVIA
Oh, that must be the beautiful woman in all these pictures.

Olivia points to the frames on a nearby table.

MATT

Yeah, that's her. Olivia. She was
beautiful, wasn't she?

Olivia can't put her arm down. Still outstretched, her pointer finger twitches uncontrollably. Soon all of her other fingers shoot out. Then she makes a fist. Her fingers shoot out again. Fist. Out. Fist. Out. She can't stop.

Matt and Heidi look on, bewildered, until Olivia finally regains control.

OLIVIA

If Joan Rivers wasn't already, let this be a lesson to ya--Plastic surgery is not the answer.

Matt nods his head.

MATT

We'll keep that in mind.

Dolly changes the subject.

DOLLY

You have three lovely children,
Matt.

OLIVIA

They take after their mother, I
see.

MATT

Yes they do. And thank you.
(calling upstairs)
Kids, come down here and say hello
to the new neighbors.

Gabe, Vivian, and Addie walk timidly down the stairs.

MATT (CONT'D)

This is Gabe, Vivian, and Addie.

DOLLY

Wonderful to meet you all.

VIVIAN

Hi.

Gabe waves timidly.

DOLLY

We just moved in across the street.

GABE
To the haunted house? That was
dumb.

Overcome with emotion at the sight of her children, Olivia begins to cry. Tears shoot out of her eyes like blow darts. The kids are frightened.

GABE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make
you cry so weirdly.

DOLLY
Oh, no, sugar, It's not you. She
can't control her tear ducts
anymore. Bad plastic surgery.

GABE
Oh, like Meg Ryan.

DOLLY
Exactly.

Vivian eyes her father, looking to be excused. He nods.

VIVIAN
Ok, well, nice to meet you. Bye!

Vivian and Gabe hurry back up the stairs, but Addie doesn't follow. She's mesmerized by "Sandy." She waddles over to her and reaches her arms out for a hug. Olivia dries her tears.

OLIVIA
May I?

Matt nods and Olivia grabs her daughter. She hugs her tight.

ADDIE
Hi, Mommy.

Addie kisses Olivia on the cheek. Olivia's taken aback. Does she really know? How could she?

MATT
No, sweetie. That's not Mommy.
That's Ms. Sandy.

He reaches out for Addie and she goes to him reluctantly.

MATT (CONT'D)
Clearly, Little Miss here is tired,
so we're gonna put her down for a
nap.

HEIDI
It was lovely meeting you both.

Olivia and Dolly take the hint and stand up to go. Matt hands Addie to Heidi and she takes her upstairs. Matt opens the front door and Dolly heads out. Olivia tries to follow, but slams into the wall beside the door.

She turns around, face mashed, and reaches a hand out to Matt. Disturbed, he shakes it awkwardly. Then keeps shaking it. And shaking it. And shaking it. Olivia can't let go.

Matt tries to pull his hand away. SNAP! Olivia's arm pops out of its socket, dangling only by the skin. Matt's terrified.

MATT
That can't be the plastic surgery!

Mortified, Olivia turns and runs out. Matt closes the door swiftly behind her.

EXT. OWENS NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

Dolly guides Olivia as she hobbles home. Her arm is hanging by a thread. As they reach their own lawn, it rips off completely and drops into the grass.

Olivia tries to pick it up, but she's lost all control. She goes limp. Dolly picks her up and carries her the rest of the way in outstretched arms.

INT. MISS DOLLY'S BOARDING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dolly gets Olivia situated in the Body Swap Machine and closes the lid over her.

DOLLY
(calling up to Heaven)
Whenever you're ready, Clarence!

Lights flash inside the "In" canister and a bolt of electricity darts to the "Out" canister. The machine dings like an oven and the "Out" capsule creaks open.

Olivia steps out, fresh as a daisy. Dolly gasps and Olivia grabs at her face. She runs to the nearest mirror and stares into it.

Staring back at her is a big, burly, old black man. A big, burly, old black man in a sundress. Olivia screams.

FADE TO BLACK.

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. MISS DOLLY'S BOARDING HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Three YOUNG BOYS wander into the yard of the "haunted house." They come across Olivia's disembodied arm. Disgusted, but intrigued, one of the boys picks it up and uses it to bat at his friends. He chases them across the yard.

The door to the house opens and the boys look up in horror. MOSES, a terrifying old black man in a tiny sundress, towers above them. He growls.

MOSES

Get off my lawn, you hooligans! And
quit messin' with my arm!

The boy drops the arm and they all run screaming off the property.

FADE OUT.

THE INN CROWD

"Inn the Beginning"

(pilot)

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"THE INN CROWD"

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. SUITE CAROLINE LOBBY - DAY (DAY 1)
(ARABELLA, DANNY, LURLEEN, MR. MALDEN, MUDGE, TRIXIE)

A CHARMING LITTLE INN IN A CHARMING LITTLE TOWN. THE PICTURE OF SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY.

OSCILLATING FANS ARE SITUATED THROUGHOUT THE LOBBY. MUDGE (30S), THE AFFABLE, IF DIM-WITTED BELLHOP, COOLS HIMSELF BEHIND A FAN NEAR THE STAIRWELL. TRIXIE (20S), THE AWKWARD, UNGAINLY RECEPTIONIST, DOES THE SAME BEHIND ONE ON THE DESK.

SHE VOCALIZES INTO IT AND CHUCKLES AT THE REVERBERATION.

TRIXIE

Do you believe in life after love?

SHE LAUGHS, COMPLETELY OBLIVIOUS TO THE FACT THAT A GUEST, MR. MALDEN (40S), A SURLY MAN IN A DATED TWEED SUIT JACKET, HAS APPROACHED THE COUNTER. HE RINGS THE BELL FOR SERVICE.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

*(UNKNOWINGLY IGNORING HIM) I can feel
something inside me say / I really
don't think you're strong enough now*

HE RINGS THE BELL AGAIN. STILL, SHE IGNORES HIM.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

Do you--

MR. MALDEN

Believe the service around here!

TRIXIE

*(STARTLED) I am so sorry. I didn't see
you there. I was just... you know...
cause the autotune...*

MR. MALDEN

Yes. Bravo. Do you have any rooms
available?

TRIXIE

What?

MR. MALDEN

Do you have any rooms available?

TRIXIE

What?

MR. MALDEN

(LOUDER) Do you have any rooms
available!

TRIXIE

I'm sorry, I can't really hear you
over the sound of the fan.

MR. MALDEN

Then perhaps you should turn it off.

TRIXIE

What?

MR. MALDEN

(HOLLERS) Turn off the fan!

STARTLED, TRIXIE MASHES THE POWER BUTTON, BUT IT JUST MAKES
THE FAN BLADES SPIN FASTER. SHE MASHES IT AGAIN.

THIS TIME, IT ROTATES THE FAN, POINTING IT DIRECTLY AT MR.
MALDEN'S FACE. THE GUST FLIPS BACK HIS TOUPEE. HE CATCHES IT
QUICKLY WITH ONE HAND AND HOLDS IT IN PLACE.

MORTIFIED, TRIXIE MASHES THE BUTTON AGAIN. STILL, THE FAN
GETS FASTER. IN A LAST DITCH EFFORT, SHE YANKS THE CORD FROM
THE WALL, THEN STIFLES A SMALL NERVOUS GIGGLE AS SHE WATCHES
THE TOUPEE SETTLE BACK INTO PLACE ON MR. MALDEN'S HEAD.

TRIXIE

Sorry. Sometimes I can be so hairless.

Careless! I meant careless.

SHE LAUGHS NERVOUSLY. MR. MALDEN SCOWLS.

MR. MALDEN

About that room, then.

TRIXIE

Right, yes. Rooms. Rooms. Let's see.

(SCANS THE REGISTRY) I can put you in
106. That one's lovely. You'll be snug
as a bug in a rug. (RECONSIDERS) Um...
well, not in a... you'll be nice and
cozy. (MORE NERVOUS LAUGHTER) Now
what's a good name for the rug-istry?
Sorry! Registry. For the registry.

MR. MALDEN

Malden. Michael Malden.

TRIXIE

And will Mrs. Malden be joining you?

MR. MALDEN

There is no Mrs. Malden.

TRIXIE

Of course. The other Mr. Malden, then?

MR. MALDEN

No!

TRIXIE

No, he's not with you?

MR. MALDEN

No, he doesn't exist! I'm not married.

Can we please just hurry this along.

TRIXIE

Alright, alright. Keep your wig on.

MR. MALDEN

Now look. I let the first two slide,
but I am getting tired of these bald
jokes. I've got half a mind to walk
right out of here. If you don't tell
me now how much you'd like me to pay--

TRIXIE

I like it very much. It's very
convincing. If it weren't for the fan--

MR. MALDEN

Not my toupee! How much would you like
me to pay!

TRIXIE

Sorry, sorry! With the AARP discount
it's just \$150 for the night.

MR. MALDEN

The AARP discount?

TRIXIE

We give it to everybody over sixty.

MR. MALDEN GRIMACES.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

I mean fifty.

HE SHAKES HIS HEAD.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

(TENTATIVELY) I mean forty?

HE NODS.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

And you're probably not even that, but
I'll give it to you cause you've been
so nice and patient. What do you say?

MR. MALDEN

Fine. But no more wisecracks.

TRIXIE

I promise. Just sign here. (HANDS HIM
THE REGISTRY) Mudge, would you please
show this fine young gentleman to 106.

SHE GRINS WIDE, THEN HANDS MUDGE A KEY. MUDGE TAKES MR.
MALDEN'S BAGS AND ESCORTS HIM TO THE STAIRWELL.

MUDGE

Right this way, sir.

TRIXIE

Enjoy your stay, Mr. Balden.

HE TURNS BACK, GRITS HIS TEETH, THEN EXITS UP THE STAIRS WITH
MUDGE. SHAMEFACED, TRIXIE COLLAPSES ONTO THE COUNTER.

WITH HER HEAD NESTLED IN HER ELBOW, SHE DOESN'T NOTICE WHEN
ARABELLA SCRUBB (LATE 50S) SAUNTERS UP TO THE DESK LOOKING
LIKE THE CENTERFOLD OF SOUTHERN LADY MAGAZINE.

ARABELLA

Chin up, darlin'.

TRIXIE SITS UPRIGHT. SHE SMILES. A FRIEND?

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

That counter looks filthy.

NOPE.

TRIXIE

Can I help you, ma'am?

ARABELLA SWIPES A FINGER ACROSS THE COUNTER. EXAMINES IT.

ARABELLA

A little alcohol should do the trick.

TRIXIE

Yeah, for me, too. But the bar's not
open until--

ARABELLA

Rubbing alcohol. To clean that gunk
off the glass. You wouldn't want You-
Know-Who to see it like that.

TRIXIE

Um... who?

ARABELLA

You know. (HUSHED) The Inn-Timidator.

TRIXIE

Who?

ARABELLA

The Inn-Timidator. Is he here yet?

TRIXIE'S CONFOUNDED. ARABELLA TRIES TO HIDE A SMILE.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

(REACHES OUT A HAND) Arabella Scrubb.

Town councilwoman. I live next door.

TRIXIE

Hi. And this Inn-Timidator? Who is he?

ARABELLA

Only the nation's most esteemed travel
blogger. His reviews can make or break
a place like this. Usually break.

SHE PULLS A MAGAZINE FROM HER PURSE AND FLIPS IT OPEN.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

Listen. (READS) Even NOLA's famed
Chateau Boudreux failed to impress
him. In a scathing review, he wrote,
"Chateau Boudreux. More like, Chateau
Don't Go. I felt about as welcome
there as a fart on an elevator."

TRIXIE GIGGLES.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

Yes, hysterical. They laughed all the
way to bankruptcy court. (HANDS HER
THE MAGAZINE) That's him there.

TRIXIE GULPS. IT'S A PICTURE OF MR. MALDEN.

TRIXIE

Oh, God.

ARABELLA

What?

TRIXIE

I blew it. Right off his head.

SHE HYPERVENTILATES AS LURLEEN (50S), THE INN'S BARTENDER,
COOK, AND DE FACTO DEN MOTHER, ENTERS FROM THE OFFICE.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

We've got a serious problem here,
Lurleen.

LURLEEN

I know, sugar, but don't worry. If we
form a ring of salt around the desk,
she won't be able to come any closer.

ARABELLA

I didn't come here to be ridiculed.

LURLEEN

Please. With those arms in that
blouse?

ARABELLA

Sticks and stones, Lurleen. You two-bit pot-wrestlin' lush. I was merely trying to offer a friendly warning.

LURLEEN

Arabella, you wouldn't know friendly if it bit you on your flat little ass.

ARABELLA

Fine then. I won't tell Daniel. We all know how well he does with surprises.
(TURNS TO GO) I'll see myself out.

LURLEEN

I'll have the valet bring your broom around.

ARABELLA HUFFS, THEN EXITS.

TRIXIE

What was that about?

LURLEEN

Sweetie, all you need to know is that
Arabella Scrubb is a no-good, trouble-
starting harpy and she's had it out
for us ever since Daniel's mother
bought this place. I wouldn't be at
all surprised if she called the Inn-
Timidator herself. If she can dial
with those little rat claws...

DANNY (30S), THE TIGHTLY WOUND, TYPE-A INNKEEPER, ENTERS WITH
TWO BOXES OF GROCERIES IN HIS ARMS.

DANNY

What was Arabella doing here?

LURLEEN

Well, they did say a pale horse would
usher in the apocalypse...

DANNY

Apocalypse?

LURLEEN

Maybe you oughta take a seat.

DANNY

No, I can handle it. What's up?

HE SETS THE GROCERY BOXES DOWN ON THE COUNTER.

LURLEEN

Um... the Inn-Timidator is here.

DANNY LAUGHS.

DANNY

Good one. Seriously, though.

TRIXIE

No, Danny. Really. He's in 106.

DANNY'S STOMACH DROPS. TRIXIE SHOWS HIM THE MAGAZINE.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

That's him. Real charmer.

DANNY

But everything went well, though,
right? (OFF HER LOOK) Right?

TRIXIE

I mean... there have been worse
disasters. Chernobyl. The Hindenburg.

SHE BRACES HERSELF FOR A LASHING. DANNY TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

DANNY

Well, nothing we can't come back from.

TRIXIE

What?

DANNY

No use fretting over things we can't
control.

LURLEEN

Huh?

DANNY

I don't need time to plan or prepare.

LURLEEN

Danny, you study before a urine test.

DANNY

That was the old Danny. The new
Danny's got this.

HE BACKS UP TO THE OFFICE DOOR.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Would you excuse me for a minute?

HE EXITS.

TRIXIE

Is he actually taking this well, or...

SCREAMS RING OUT FROM DANNY'S OFFICE.

LURLEEN

Yeah. Pretty well.

FADE OUT.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. SUITE CAROLINE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)

LURLEEN ENTERS THE KITCHEN, SLIDES THE GROCERY BOXES ONTO THE ISLAND, THEN CONTINUES INTO...

INT. SUITE CAROLINE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
(LURLEEN, OTIS)

IT'S A MESS. TOOLS ARE SCATTERED EVERYWHERE, CURTAINS AND RODS ARE STREWN ABOUT THE FLOOR WAITING TO BE HUNG, A TABLE'S TURNED UPSIDE DOWN WITH IT'S BROKEN LEG IN A CLAMP, AND AN UPTURNED CARDBOARD BOX LITTERS THE ROOM WITH PACKING PEANUTS.

OTIS (60S), THE OVERWEIGHT, UNDERMOTIVATED MAINTENANCE MAN,
SITS CRISSCROSS AMONGST THE PEANUTS, EATING A STEAK SANDWICH.

LURLEEN

What are you doing?

OTIS

Lunch break.

LURLEEN

You had lunch an hour ago.

OTIS

Second lunch.

LURLEEN

What are you, a hobbit?

OTIS

Lurleen, leave me alone. I'm gonna get everything done, okay. I made a list, I've checked it twice...

LURLEEN

That's a different fat man, Otis.

HE FISHES THE LIST FROM HIS POCKET.

OTIS

Rewire the chandelier and replace the burnt out bulbs. Check. Fix the broken table leg. Check. Install the window fan. Check. And...

HE STRUGGLES TO READ THE LAST ITEM.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Okay, well that one's covered with barbecue sauce, but I'm sure I did it. I even souped-up the fan so we could get it extra cool in here before dinner. Watch.

HE STANDS UP AND FLIPS A SWITCH NEAR THE WINDOW. THE ELECTRIC FIREPLACE ROARS TO LIFE.

LURLEEN

Yeah, that's really gonna cool the place down.

HE TURNS IT OFF.

OTIS

I must have got the wires crossed.

LURLEEN

When aren't your wires crossed, Otis?

OTIS

No big deal. I'm sure one of the one's
over there by the door'll do it.

LURLEEN FLIPS ONE. THE CHANDELIER GOES OUT. SHE FLIPS IT
BACK, THEN TRIES THE OTHER. THE FAN BEGINS TO BLOW.

OTIS (CONT'D)

See. Although, I do wonder what the
one by the fireplace does now.

HE CROSSES TO IT AND FLIPS THE SWITCH. A SPRINKLER ABOVE
LURLEEN ACTIVATES AND DOUSES HER WITH WATER.

LURLEEN

If you didn't have so much left to do,
I'd kill you.

OTIS

Sorry. I'll fix it.

LURLEEN

You'd better. Cuz Danny's gonna be on
the warpath now that that reviewer's
showed up, and if he finds out about
this, those curtains won't be the only
thing hanging in here.

OTIS

Reviewer?

LURLEEN

Yeah, a real hard-ass by the sound of
things. They've got him up in 106.

OTIS

106?

LURLEEN

Is that a problem? You did replace
those dry rotted boards in the
bathroom, didn't you?

OTIS STARES AT HIS LIST. HE SCRUBS AT THE BARBECUE STAIN.

LURLEEN (CONT'D)

Otis?

OTIS

Um... yeah. Of course! (FEIGNS
LAUGHTER) If I hadn't, and he stepped
one foot in that clawfoot tub, he'd
have come right through the floor.

MORE FAKE LAUGHTER. LURLEEN JOINS IN, HAMS IT UP, THEN:

LURLEEN

Go move him!

SHE EXITS INTO THE KITCHEN AS OTIS HURRIES FOR THE LOBBY.

CUT TO:

SCENE B

INT. SUITE CAROLINE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS (DAY 1)
(OTIS, TRIXIE)

OTIS SCURRIES OVER OUT OF BREATH.

OTIS

I need you to do me a favor, Trixie.

TRIXIE

I'm not getting that bird out of the
ductwork. I don't care if I'm the only
one small enough. It's mean.

OTIS

No. That man you put in 106. I need
you to move him.

TRIXIE

Where exactly was that bird, again?

OTIS

Trixie, please. I'd do it myself, but
I've still got way too much to finish
in the dining room.

TRIXIE

He and I don't get along so well,
Otis. It'd probably be best if I
didn't see him again.

OTIS

But if you don't go up there, you will
be seeing him again. Right here.
Naked. When his bathtub comes crashing
through the floor!

TRIXIE MASSAGES HER TEMPLES.

TRIXIE

If you didn't have so much left to do,
I'd kill you.

OTIS

Yeah, yeah, take a number.

TRIXIE GRABS THE KEY TO 103, THEN HURRIES UP THE STAIRS.

CUT TO:

SCENE C

INT. SUITE CAROLINE 2ND FLOOR LANDING - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)
(MR. MALDEN, TRIXIE)

A WIDE HALLWAY WITH FOUR DOORS ON EITHER SIDE. UPSTAGE LEFT: A CLOSET, THEN GUEST ROOMS 101, 102, AND 103. UPSTAGE RIGHT: ANOTHER CLOSET, THEN GUEST ROOMS 104, 105, AND 106.

NEAR THE LANDING, A BAR CART WITH COFFEE AND BOTTLED WATER.

TRIXIE TRIES TO COMPOSE HERSELF OUTSIDE ROOM 106. SHE TAKES A DEEP BREATH, THEN KNOCKS.

MR. MALDEN'S NOT PLEASED TO SEE HER.

MR. MALDEN

Can I help you?

TRIXIE

Hey, Mr. Malden. Michael. Mike. Mikey.

Can I call you Mikey?

MR. MALDEN

NO.

TRIXIE

Are you busy, Mikey?

HE SCOWLS.

MR. MALDEN

As a matter of fact, I was just about
to have a bath.

TRIXIE

Perfect timing, then!

HE'S PERPLEXED.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

You see, I figured you were a bath kinda guy. And I got to thinking, you shouldn't have to use that crummy old bath in 106. Why not take a shower? A really fine shower. Cause boy, the shower in 103, now that's a shower!

You haven't showered until you've taken a shower in 103. You know what they're always saying, Paris has the Eiffel Tower, Rome has the Colosseum, and we have the spa shower in 103.

Anybody tells you they have a better shower, it's a bald-faced lie. Well, not bald-faced, but--

MR. MALDEN

Trixie. If I move to 103, will you leave me alone?

SHE NODS. HE REACHES OUT A HAND FOR THE KEY.

CUT TO:

SCENE D

INT. SUITE CAROLINE LOBBY - LATER (DAY 1)
(TRIXIE, VIVIAN)

VIVIAN FAIRCHILD (30S), A SELF-CENTERED, SOCIAL-CLIMBING HOLLYWOOD REJECT, ENTERS, STRUGGLING TO DRAG A HEFTY TRUNK OVER THE THRESHOLD. IT'S CLEAR SHE'S NOT USED TO HARD LABOR.

WINDED, SHE CHECKS HERSELF IN THE MIRROR, THEN STRUTS TOWARD THE DESK, PAUSING BY THE STAIRWELL TO STRIKE A SULTRY POSE. TO HER DISMAY, NO ONE NOTICES. SHE CROSSES TO THE DESK AND RINGS THE BELL FOR SERVICE. TRIXIE RUNS IN FROM UPSTAIRS.

TRIXIE

Sorry. You here to see Danny?

VIVIAN

Um, yeah. How did you--

TRIXIE

You're an entertainer, right?

VIVIAN

(DELIGHTED) Am I looking at a fan?

TRIXIE

Yeah, but it got me into some trouble earlier, so I'm keeping it unplugged.

VIVIAN'S CONFUSED.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

I'll let him know you're coming back.

CUT TO:

SCENE E

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)
(DANNY, MUDGE, VIVIAN)

DANNY TALKS ON THE PHONE.

DANNY

And she doesn't have any bizarre
instruments? No slide whistle, no boom
whackers, no didgeridoo? And no
costume? She's not in drag? Or
blackface? Or redface? Or yellowface?
And she's not violating house arrest?
Great. Already better than everyone
else I've seen. Send her back.

HE HANGS UP. THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Come in.

THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN. VIVIAN PEERS IN, OFFERS A TEPID SMILE.
DANNY'S FACE GOES WHITE.

VIVIAN

Can we talk?

DANNY

No. I don't have time for this today.
You need to go.

VIVIAN

Danny, please.

SHE ENTERS AND CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HER.

DANNY

The nerve of you to show up here on
opening day. You've just always gotta
pull focus, don't you?

VIVIAN

I can't help it, I'm naturally
radiant. Why do you think Meryl
refuses to share the screen with me?

DANNY

Because her movies aren't made for
Lifetime.

VIVIAN

It's Hallmark, thank you very much,
and the *Kitty Kitchenaid Mysteries* are
a massive hit. We're the anchor of the
"Recipe for Murder" programming block.

DANNY

Then why are you here, Vivian?

VIVIAN

Because I need to mend some fences.

DANNY

The Hollywood Reporter was right. You
are a terrible actress.

VIVIAN

Fine. I need a place to stay.

DANNY

No vacancy at the Ritz?

VIVIAN

I need a place to stay... long-term.

For free.

DANNY

What?

VIVIAN

I'm broke, Danny, okay. Are you happy?

That good-for-nothing skid mark I call
a husband was running a Ponzi scheme
and the feds finally caught up to him.
They took everything.

DANNY

You didn't know?

VIVIAN

No! He always handled the business
side of things on his own. I knew he
was selling distribution rights to
overseas investors, but I didn't know
the titles were phony. Nobody would
have if Paul McCartney hadn't gotten
wind of his bogus Beatles reunion
special, *Help!... I've Fallen and I*
Can't Get Up.

DANNY

Well, Vivian, I'd say I'm sorry this
has happened, but karma's a bitch and
so are you, so please leave.

VIVIAN

Danny, I won't make it in the streets.
I've been nominated for a Teen Choice
Award! Don't hang me out to dry!

DANNY

You mean like you did to me and Mama?

VIVIAN

Mama would want you to help me. You
remember what she always said.

DANNY

Chew with your mouth closed, Vivian,
you look like a walrus in heat?

VIVIAN

No! Well, yes, but... the other thing.

DANNY

You do for family?

VIVIAN

Yeah.

DANNY

What were you doing for family when
you couldn't even be bothered to make
it to her funeral?

MUDGE POKES HIS HEAD INTO THE ROOM.

MUDGE

Um, hi, sorry to interrupt, but...

DANNY

Mudge, this really isn't a good time.

MUDGE

(NOTICES VIVIAN) Oh my gosh, Vivian,
wow, hi. It's so good to see you.

HE LOOKS AWAY, STILL TWITTERPATED BY A CHILDHOOD CRUSH.

VIVIAN

Hello, Mudge.

MUDGE

You know, I gotta say, I just love
those *Kitty Kitchenaid* movies. The one
with the Crock Pot Killer, A+.

DANNY

Did you need something, Mudge?

MUDGE

Sorry. Sister Mary Catherine's here to
pick up our food drive donation.

DANNY

It's in boxes on the kitchen counter.

MUDGE

Thanks. Oh, and Vivian, you were quite
the scene-stealer on *SVU*, too. Nobody
covers up an underage sex trafficking
ring quite like you.

HE SMILES, THEN TAKES HIS LEAVE.

VIVIAN

It sounds like Mudge would like it if
I stuck around for a while.

DANNY

Mudge would like it if Wolfgang Puck
served dinosaur chicken nuggets.

VIVIAN

Danny, please! You can put me to work.
I'll do anything! Except cook, clean,
make beds, wait tables, answer phones,
or interact with guests.

DANNY

No. You can stay until tomorrow. But
that's it. And that's only because I
can't see you leaving here today
without making a scene and there's a
very important reviewer upstairs.
Opening this place was Mama's dream
and I won't have you ruining it.

VIVIAN

Well, if that's how you feel...

DANNY

It is. Check out's at 11. See yourself
out. You've always been good at that.

CUT TO:

SCENE H

INT. SUITE CAROLINE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)
(JIMMY, MUDGE, OTIS, SISTER MARY CATHERINE)

MUDGE ENTERS FROM THE LOBBY AND CROSSES TO THE ISLAND.
UNKNOWINGLY, HE GRABS THE WRONG BOXES, THE ONE'S FILLED WITH
DANNY'S GROCERIES, THEN CROSSES TO THE BACK DOOR WHERE SISTER
MARY CATHERINE IS WAITING. HE LEAVES THE PROPER BOXES, THE
ONE'S FILLED WITH CANNED GOODS, BEHIND ON THE COUNTER.

MUDGE

Here we go.

HE HANDS HER THE BOXES.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE

Wow! Veal chops and black truffles.

You're sure this is for us?

MUDGE

Of course! Only the best for our
favorite orphanage.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE

Chardonnay?

MUDGE

You know how much Danny loves those
kids.

ON THAT, JIMMY (10), A PLUCKY ORPHAN DRESSED IN HIS SQUIRREL
SCOUT UNIFORM, SAUNTERS UP.

JIMMY

It's true. Just this morning, I walked into the lobby with a little mud on my shoes and Danny said he would make it his personal mission to see that I'd be adopted and taken far, far away.

HE STEPS INSIDE.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Is Scoutmaster Otis here? He said he's got a way for me to earn my Ornithology Badge.

MUDGE

He's in the dining room. (TO SISTER M.C.) I'll make sure he gets home.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE

Bless you, Mudge.

SHE EXITS AS MUDGE AND JIMMY CROSS TO...

INT. SUITE CAROLINE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

IT'S NOT QUITE AS MESSY AS BEFORE. THE PACKING PEANUTS ARE GONE, THE BROKEN TABLE IS RIGHT-SIDE UP, AND OTIS IS ON A LADDER SCREWING IN THE LAST OF THE CURTAIN RODS.

JIMMY WHISTLES THE CALL OF THE WHIP-POOR-WILL, THE SQUIRREL SCOUT GREETING. OTIS RETURNS IT. SO DOES A REAL BIRD.

JIMMY

What was that?

OTIS

That's what I need your help with.

HE QUICKLY JERRY-RIGS THE CURTAIN TO THE WALL WITH A FEW PIECES OF TAPE, THEN CLIMBS DOWN THE LADDER AND MOVES IT TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM.

OTIS (CONT'D)

There's a bird in the exhaust duct. I
can't reach back there far enough to
get it, but I thought maybe you could.

JIMMY

Okay.

HE CLIMBS UP THE LADDER, PULLS OFF THE VENT COVER, AND SHIMMIES INSIDE. THERE'S A LOUD SQUAWK, SOUNDS OF A SCUFFLE, AND THEN HE EMERGES WITH THE BIRD IN HIS HANDS.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

She's nesting in there.

HE CLIMBS DOWN AS THE BIRD TRIES TO SQUIRM FREE. IT NIPS HIM.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Ow!

HE LETS GO AND IT FLIES OUT INTO THE LOBBY.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Uh-oh.

MUDGE

I'll say. If we don't get it back
before Danny sees it, I'll be fired.

OTIS

I'll be killed.

JIMMY

I'll be adopted!

THEY RUSH FOR THE LOBBY.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE J

FADE IN:

INT. SUITE CAROLINE 2ND FLOOR LANDING - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)
(DANNY, JIMMY, MR. MALDEN, MUDGE, OTIS, VIVIAN)

VIVIAN CRESTS THE STAIRS. DANNY FOLLOWS, LUGGING HER TRUNK.

DANNY

You can have 103. It's nice, but it
smells a little funny sometimes.

VIVIAN

I've shared a trailer with Gwyneth
Paltrow. I can handle funny smells.

DANNY

And the reviewer's right across the
hall, so try to keep it down, okay?

VIVIAN

Gwyneth wouldn't let me talk, either.
Said my voice was bad for her hoo ha.

SHE CROSSES TO THE BAR CART AND MAKES HERSELF SOME COFFEE.
DANNY OPENS THE DOOR TO 103 AND BACKS IN WITH HER TRUNK.

MR. MALDEN (O.C.)

Excuse me. What are you doing?

DANNY TURNS, STARTLED. MR. MALDEN CROSSES TO THE DOOR.

DANNY

Mr. Malden! I am so sorry. I didn't...
I thought you were in 106.

MR. MALDEN

I was. But your, um... delightful
receptionist moved me so I could try
out your "world-famous" spa shower.

DANNY

That's Trixie for ya. (LAUGHS) Always
guests first with her. How was it?

MR. MALDEN

I don't know yet. I haven't tried it.
My room hasn't got any towels.

VIVIAN APPROACHES AND MR. MALDEN RECOGNIZES HER IMMEDIATELY.
FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE SMILES. HIS WHOLE DEMEANOR CHANGES.

MR. MALDEN (CONT'D)

Vivian Fairchild! (SHAKES HER HAND
ENTHUSIASTICALLY) Big fan. Big fan.
Those *Kitty Kitchenaid Mysteries* are
superb! The Christmas Special with the
Candy Stripe Strangler, A+.

VIVIAN

Thank you.

MR. MALDEN

I've been following your career for
years. I actually saw you in your very
first off-Broadway show. How many
people can say that?

DANNY

Not many. Seeing as it closed after
four performances.

MR. MALDEN

Go get me some towels.

SHEEPISHLY, DANNY SCURRIES OFF TO THE CLOSET. HE OPENS THE DOOR, THEN TURNS BACK TO MR. MALDEN.

DANNY

Washcloths, too?

MR. MALDEN

Please.

OTIS' BIRD FLIES UP THE STAIRS AND STRAIGHT INTO THE CLOSET.

MR. MALDEN (CONT'D)

(TO VIVIAN) *Funny Girl, Interrupted*
was a misunderstood triumph. Your turn
as Jenny, Benny, Penny, and Clyde, the
Broadway star with Multiple
Personality Disorder, was revelatory!
Those hack critics wouldn't know good
vaudeville if it bit 'em.

DANNY TURNS BACK TO THE CLOSET. THE BIRD BITES HIM.

DANNY

Ow! What the--

HE SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT.

MR. MALDEN

Everything alright over there?

DANNY

Just agreeing. What the hell were they
thinking closing that show?

HE LAUGHS, OPENS THE CLOSET DOOR A CRACK, AND FISHES OUT SOME TOWELS. THE BIRD BITES HIM AGAIN.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Friggin' bird!

MALDEN GLARES QUIZZICALLY AS DANNY SLAMS THE DOOR AGAIN.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Birdbrains. Friggin' birdbrains.

(CROSSES BACK TO MALDEN) Well, here
are your towels. We best let you
shower. (TRIES TO SHUFFLE HIM BACK
INTO HIS ROOM) See you at dinner.

MR. MALDEN

And I hope I'll be seeing you there as
well, Ms. Fairchild.

SHE TRIES TO ANSWER, BUT DANNY INTERJECTS.

DANNY

No, sorry. She's not feeling so well.

Terrible yeast infection. Even Gwyneth
Paltrow couldn't steam it out.

HE WHISKS VIVIAN INTO 106 AND CLOSES THE DOOR. DEJECTED, MR. MALDEN RETREATS TO HIS ROOM.

A MOMENT OF QUIET, AND THEN JIMMY, OTIS, AND MUDGE CREST THE STAIRS. THEY STOP DEAD AS DANNY RETURNS TO THE HALLWAY.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You three wouldn't happen to be
looking for a bird now, would you?

MUDGE/OTIS

JIMMY

No.

Yes. You seen it?

*

MUDGE AND OTIS GLARE AT JIMMY.

DANNY

Why is it in my linen closet?

JIMMY

It was nesting in the exhaust duct in
the dining room and Otis asked me to
squeeze in there and get it out and--

DANNY

Otis, what were you thinking? What if
OSHA found out we had a kid doing
manual labor in here?

OTIS

That's what you're concerned about?

DANNY

Well, not just that. What if he had
gotten hurt?

OTIS

Thank you.

DANNY

Our insurance wouldn't cover that!

OTIS SHAKES HIS HEAD.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Now, I'm gonna get Little Orphan
Accident-Prone here home before
something happens.

HE TAKES JIMMY BY THE SHOULDER.

DANNY (CONT'D)

And you're gonna get that bird out of
my inn before I get back. Capiche?

OTIS

Yes, master.

DANNY CRACKS A SMILE.

DANNY

Alright, alright. C'mon, Mudge. You
can start setting up the dining room.

MUDGE

Anything you say, master.

HE FOLLOWS DANNY AND JIMMY DOWN THE STAIRS. OTIS CROSSES TO
THE LINEN CLOSET AND OPENS THE DOOR. THE BIRD SQUAWKS.

AT THE SAME TIME, MR. MALDEN RETURNS TO THE HALLWAY AND
CROSSES TO THE BAR CART FOR A BOTTLE OF WATER. WHILE HIS BACK
IS TURNED, THE BIRD SWOOPS OUT OF THE CLOSET AND INTO 103.

OTIS WATCHES IN HORROR AS MR. MALDEN CROSSES BACK TO HIS
ROOM, CLOSES HIS DOOR, AND SEALS THE BIRD INSIDE.

OTIS

Oh, damn.

CUT TO:

SCENE K

INT. SUITE CAROLINE LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)
(OTIS, TRIXIE)

TRIXIE'S NOT THRILLED TO SEE OTIS RUNNING TOWARD HER.

TRIXIE

No. Whatever it is you want, no.

OTIS

But Trixie, the bird is in his room!

TRIXIE

I promised I'd leave him alone, Otis.

You get it.

OTIS

But I can't sneak in quietly enough.

Lurleen says my thighs clap louder
than gays at a Streisand concert.

TRIXIE

Ugh! I should have killed you when I
had the chance.

SHE HURRIES ACROSS THE ROOM, GRABS A ROOM SERVICE TRAY FROM
THE TROLLEY, AND EXITS UP THE STAIRS.

CUT TO:

SCENE L

INT. MR. MALDEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)
(MR. MALDEN, MUDGE, TRIXIE)

TRIXIE STANDS NERVOUSLY OUTSIDE MR. MALDEN'S DOOR. SHE CAN HEAR THE SHOWER RUNNING, SO SHE QUIETLY LET'S HERSELF IN.

SHE SPOTS THE BIRD ACROSS THE ROOM AND HURRIES TO CATCH IT, BUT SHE MISSES AND IT FLIES ONTO THE WINDOWSILL WHERE MR. MALDEN'S TOUPEE RESTS ON A WIG HEAD.

TRIXIE OPENS THE WINDOW AND TRIES TO SHOO IT OUT, BUT IT WON'T GO. IT FLIES AT HER, STARTLING HER, AND SHE KNOCKS OVER THE WIG HEAD. THE TOUPEE DROPS INTO THE BUSHES BELOW.

TRIXIE

Oh, damn.

SHE PEERS OUT THE WINDOW AND SEES DANNY WALKING DOWN THE PATH WITH JIMMY. SHE WHISTLES TO GET HIS ATTENTION, THEN PANTOMIMES: GET OVER HERE! THE TOUPEE! TOSS IT UP TO ME!

BUT HE DOESN'T QUITE MAKE IT. THE SHOWER TURNS OFF. TRIXIE PANICS. WITH NO OTHER OPTION, SHE SLIDES UNDER THE BED.

THOUGH SHE DOESN'T SEE IT, THE TOUPEE FLIES UP AND IN THROUGH THE WINDOW JUST IN TIME. IT SETTLES ON THE WINDOWSILL JUST AS MR. MALDEN ENTERS FROM THE BATHROOM. HE CROSSES TO PUT IT ON.

UNDER THE BED, THE BIRD FINALLY COOPERATES. TRIXIE QUIETLY CAPTURES IT UNDER THE LID OF HER TRAY AND WAITS TO MAKE HER ESCAPE. WHEN MR. MALDEN RETURNS TO THE BATHROOM, SHE DARTS.

BUT JUST AS SHE'S CROSSING THE THRESHOLD, THE BIRD SQUAWKS.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

Quiet, you little bastard!

MR. MALDEN (O.C.)

Excuse me?

TRIXIE SWIVELS AND SEES MR. MALDEN BEHIND HER IN HIS ROBE. THOUGH TERRIFIED, SHE STRUGGLES NOT TO GIGGLE AT THE LITTLE TWIGS AND LEAVES TANGLED IN HIS TOUPEE.

TRIXIE

Um, hey, Mikey... I mean, Mr... um...

MR. MALDEN

Those must be my teacakes.

SHE'S CONFUSED.

MR. MALDEN (CONT'D)

The one's I called down to the kitchen
to request. Twenty minutes ago.

TRIXIE

(PLAYS ALONG) Right, yes...

HE TRIES TO GRAB THE TRAY, BUT SHE PULLS IT AWAY FROM HIM.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

Gee, you know what? I'm such a dunce.

I brought your cakes, but I forgot the
tea. Derr. (LAUGHS) Be right back!

SHE TRIES TO LEAVE, BUT HE GRABS HER SHOULDER.

MR. MALDEN

I didn't ask for any tea.

TRIXIE

No tea? You can't have teacakes
without tea. That's like having coffee
cake without coffee, or... Bundt cake
without Bundt!

MR. MALDEN

Just the cakes'll do, thanks.

HE REACHES FOR THE TRAY AGAIN.

TRIXIE

But you have to try our tea. We're
famous for it. Queen Elizabeth calls
it her Colonial Crack!

MR. MALDEN

Is it strong? I only like strong tea.

TRIXIE

Oh, yeah. The strongest! It'll put
hair on your chest. It might even put
hair on your head!

SHE LAUGHS, THEN DARTS INTO THE HALL, WHERE MUDGE HAS JUST ARRIVED WITH THE REAL TEACAKES ON AN IDENTICAL TRAY.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

Can I have that? (SWAPS TRAYS) Thanks!

SHE RUSHES BACK TO MR. MALDEN AND HANDS HIM THE TRAY.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

Here we go.

MR. MALDEN

Where's the tea?

SHE OPENS THE TOP OF HIS ROBE.

TRIXIE

You've got enough hair on your chest.

SHE SMILES, THEN SCURRIES OUT.

CUT TO:

SCENE M

INT. SUITE CAROLINE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)
(DANNY, LURLEEN, MUDGE, TRIXIE, VIVIAN)

LURLEEN SEARCHES FRANTICALLY THROUGHOUT THE KITCHEN. TRIXIE BURSTS IN WITH THE BIRD TRAY AND SLIDES IT ONTO THE ISLAND.

TRIXIE

I don't know how much more of this I
can take, Lurleen.

LURLEEN

Well, sweet pea, buckle up, cuz things
are only getting worse. I can't find
the groceries Danny got for dinner.

SHE EXHALES, THEN OPENS THE CABINET UNDER THE ISLAND. SHE RETRIEVES A BOTTLE OF MOONSHINE AND POURS HERSELF A SHOT.

LURLEEN (CONT'D)

A little stump water should calm the
nerves. (TAKES SHOT) You wan't one?

SHE NODS. LURLEEN POURS HER A SHOT. WHEN HER BACK IS TURNED, TRIXIE SNIFFS IT, RECOILS, THEN POURS IT INTO THE OPEN GRILL.

LURLEEN TURNS BACK, POURS HERSELF ANOTHER SHOT, DRINKS IT, THEN POURS ANOTHER FOR TRIXIE. AGAIN, TRIXIE DUMPS IT INTO THE OPEN GRILL. THEY REPEAT THIS ONE MORE TIME.

LURLEEN (CONT'D)

I'm impressed. Think you can handle
another one?

SHE POURS ANOTHER SHOT. AND THIS TIME, SHE WATCHES.
RELUCTANTLY, TRIXIE TAKES IT. IT BURNS ALL THE WAY DOWN.

LURLEEN POURS ONE MORE FOR EACH OF THEM AND THEY THROW 'EM
BACK TOGETHER. TRIXIE'S HEAD IS SPINNING AS DANNY ENTERS.

DANNY

What are you doing?

TRIXIE

(SLURRED) Not minking droonshine.

SHE LAUGHS, HICCUPS, AND SLIDES HER SHOT GLASS INTO THE SINK.

DANNY

Where's the food? Dinner's in an hour!

LURLEEN

I don't know what happened. I brought
the groceries in here right after you
came back with them, but now all I can
find are these boxes of canned goods!

DANNY CONNECTS THE DOTS. HE PICKS UP HIS WALKIE-TALKIE.

DANNY

Mudge, can I see you in the kitchen?

MUDGE ENTERS.

MUDGE

Yeah, boss?

DANNY

Why would you give a nun veal chops?

Don't you understand a vow of poverty!

MUDGE

Yes, actually, working for you, I'd
say I understand it quite well.

TRIXIE AND LURLEEN NOD IN AGREEMENT.

DANNY

Alright, Norma Rae.

LURLEEN

I'm sure we can scrounge a decent meal together. There's gotta be enough here to make something. Why don't you call Vivian? When she's not solving crimes, Kitty Kitchenaid is a gourmet caterer. Maybe something's rubbed off.

DANNY

No. We can handle this ourselves.

HE TAKES A PLATE OF LEFTOVER CHICKEN BREASTS FROM THE FRIDGE.

DANNY (CONT'D)

We can put some grill marks on these and at least make 'em look fresh.

HE THROWS THEM ONTO THE OPEN FLAME GRILL PLATE, THEN STRIKES A MATCH AND TOSSES IT INTO THE LOGS. THE MATCH IGNITES TRIXIE'S MOONSHINE AND A FIREBALL ERUPTS. IT CHARS THE CHICKEN BEYOND REPAIR.

DANNY PICKS UP THE LANDLINE AND DIALS 106.

VIVIAN (V.O.)

Vivian Fairchild, Hollywood star.

DANNY

I need your help.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SCENE P

FADE IN:

INT. SUITE CAROLINE KITCHEN - LATER (DAY 1)
(DANNY, LURLEEN, OTIS, TRIXIE, VIVIAN)

DANNY, TRIXIE, LURLEEN, AND OTIS GATHER AROUND VIVIAN.

VIVIAN

Pleasing a stuffy reviewer is easy.

They're all phonies. Tell them
something is elegant or expensive or
favored among the elite and they buy
it, no questions asked. We don't need
fancy ingredients, just a fancy
presentation. And itty bitty portion
sizes. Bring me your lunch boxes and
lemme see whatcha got. We used to do
this on *Celebrity Cutthroat Kitchen*.

THEY FETCH THEIR LUNCH PAILS AND EMPTY THEM ONTO THE ISLAND.
VIVIAN TAKES INVENTORY.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Good. We can work with this. Lurleen,
lemme see that salad.

(MORE)

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

(PICKS IT APART) If we get rid of the croutons and onion straws and add the craisins and almond slivers from Trixie's granola mix, we've got a nice little starter.

SHE PLATES EIGHT SMALL PORTIONS AND DRIZZLES THEM WITH OIL AND VINEGAR. DANNY'S ACTUALLY IMPRESSED.

DANNY

Does anyone have a radish? All the froufrou salads always have radish.

LURLEEN

(CHECKS THE PANTRY) No, but there's a can of sliced beets.

VIVIAN

That'll do.

SHE ADDS THEM TO THE PLATES.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Now who's got something for the main?

LURLEEN

How 'bout the steak on Otis' sandwich?

OTIS

But I've already eaten some of it.

VIVIAN

So? You think Guy Fieri's never taken a bite out of a dish leaving his kitchen?

CUT TO:

SCENE R

INT. SUITE CAROLINE DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)
(ARABELLA, DANNY, MR. MALDEN, MUDGE, VIVIAN)

MUDGE PLAYS MAÎTRE D' AS GUESTS ARRIVE FOR DINNER. THE
MCGILLICUDDYS, A SENILE OLD COUPLE, HOBBLE TOWARD THE TABLE
WITH THE BROKEN LEG. MUDGE STEERS THEM AWAY.

MUDGE

Oh, no, not that one. That thing's
legs are in worse shape than y'all's.

HE SEATS THEM ELSEWHERE AS ARABELLA ARRIVES IN THE DOORWAY.

ARABELLA

Hello, Mudge.

MUDGE

What are you doing here?

ARABELLA

I heard you were giving away veal
tonight and I just had to come by and
get some.

MUDGE

(SMILES) Right this way.

HE SEATS HER AT THE BROKEN TABLE. MR. MALDEN IS SEATED BEHIND
HER, NEXT TO THE WINDOW FAN.

DANNY EMERGES FROM THE KITCHEN. TRIXIE AND LURLEEN FOLLOW.
TRIXIE'S A LITTLE WOBBLY. THEY DIVVY OUT SALADS AS DANNY
CROSSES TO THE FRONT OF THE ROOM.

DANNY

Good evening. My name's Danny. I'm the innkeeper here at The Suite Caroline. I just wanted to come and personally thank you all for being here tonight. Opening this little inn was a longtime dream of my mother's and I know this would mean so much to her. I do have to apologize, though. There has been a slight change to our menu. Our executive chef is very socially conscious, and PETA's been riding him pretty hard about veal, so, we're gonna do beef medallions instead.

ARABELLA TURNS BACK TO MR. MALDEN. SHE WHISPERS.

ARABELLA

Pretty unprofessional, if you ask me.

MR. MALDEN

I didn't.

DANNY CROSSES BACK TOWARD THE KITCHEN.

DANNY

Hope you all enjoy.

ARABELLA STOPS HIM.

ARABELLA

Daniel, this table's seen better days.

DANNY

You two have so much in common.

HE CONTINUES FOR THE KITCHEN, BUT MR. MALDEN WAVES HIM DOWN.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Yes, sir? How is everything so far?

MR. MALDEN

It's fine. I was just wondering when
the entertainment would be arriving.

DANNY

Uh, right... entertainment. I had
promised that. Um... coming right up!

HE RUNS TO THE KITCHEN DOOR AND PUSHES IT OPEN.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(A LOUD WHISPER) Vivian!

SHE HURRIES OVER TO THE DOOR.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I never hired an entertainer. I need
you to perform something!

SHE SMILES AND FLIPS HER HAIR.

VIVIAN

I thought you'd never ask.

DANNY

I don't have a microphone.

VIVIAN

That's okay. (PULLS ONE FROM HER
PURSE) I always travel with my own.

DANNY

(LAUGHS) Thank you. Really. You didn't
need to do all this.

VIVIAN

You do for family.

DANNY NODS. AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEY SHARE A SMILE. THEN HE RETURNS TO THE FRONT OF THE ROOM TO INTRODUCE HER.

DANNY

Ladies and gentleman, singing
"Multiple People" from the off-
Broadway hit, *Funny Girl, Interrupted*,
the one and only, Vivian Fairchild!

HE EXITS AS VIVIAN MAKES HER ENTRANCE. MR. MALDEN APPLAUDS THUNDEROUSLY. ARABELLA TAKES NOTICE AND LEANS BACK TO HIM.

ARABELLA

You wanna switch tables so you can
have a better view?

HAPPILY, HE ACCEPTS. THEY SWAP SEATS AS VIVIAN BEGINS.

VIVIAN

(IN HER BEST STREISAND NASAL) *People/*
People who hear voices/ Are the
luckiest people in the world/ We're
many, one but made of many/ And yet
letting the doctors try/ To hide all
the we's inside/ Acting more like
Penny than Jenny

CUT TO:

SCENE S

INT. SUITE CAROLINE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 1)
(DANNY, LURLEEN, OTIS, TRIXIE)

LURLEEN CENTERS A BEEF MEDALLION ON THE PLATE, THEN SLIDES IT TO OTIS, WHO DRESSES IT WITH A CREAM-COLORED PUREE.

DANNY

That sauce actually looks pretty good.

LURLEEN

Chick peas and vanilla bean Go-Gurt.

OTIS

I'd eat it.

LURLEEN

You'd eat a doorknob if I put a little
gravy on it.

DANNY COVERS THE PLATE AND ADDS IT TO HIS CART WITH THE OTHERS. HE HEADS FOR THE DOOR.

TRIXIE

Wait, we forgot one!

SHE SCOOPS UP THE TRAY WITH THE BIRD INSIDE AND ADDS IT TO DANNY'S CART. IT SQUAWKS AS THEY HEAD TOWARD THE DINING ROOM.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

Gotta put some WD-40 on these wheels.

SHE HICCUPS AS THEY EXIT.

CUT TO:

SCENE T

INT. SUITE CAROLINE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS (DAY 1)
(ARABELLA, DANNY, LURLEEN, MR. MALDEN, MR. MCGILLICUDDY,
MUDGE, TRIXIE, VIVIAN)

DANNY AND TRIXIE ENTER AS VIVIAN FINISHES HER NUMBER. A HEARTY ROUND OF APPLAUSE, THEN MR. MALDEN SIGNALS TO TRIXIE.

TRIXIE

Mikey! What can I you for do? (HICCUP)

Do for you. Ya gotta lil twig in your--

SHE REACHES FOR HIS HAIRPIECE, BUT HE BATS HER ARM AWAY.

MR. MALDEN

I was just hoping you could turn the
fan up. It's a little warm in here.

TRIXIE

Well, if you'd take that ski cap off.

SHE CROSSES TO THE FAN, CHOOSES A DIAL AT RANDOM, TURNS IT, THEN HURRIES TO HELP DANNY SERVE. THE FAN REVERSES. IT BEGINS TO SUCK AIR. THE SCARF DRAPED ON ARABELLA'S CHAIR BILLOWS.

DANNY SERVES MR. MALDEN LAST. HE SETS THE PLATE DOWN AND LIFTS THE LID. THE BIRD FLIES TOWARD HIM. THEY BOTH SCREAM.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)

(LAUGHS) I forgot about that!

DANNY

Sir, I am so sorry.

THE BIRD FLIES BACK TO ITS NEST IN THE EXHAUST DUCT.

VIVIAN

That can happen when your chef insists
on absolute freshness. Tomorrow's
roast quail, ladies and gentlemen.

THE GUESTS ERUPT WITH LAUGHTER. MALDEN, TOO. ARABELLA'S PERTURBED. THAT IS NOT THE RESPONSE SHE WAS HOPING FOR...

DANNY HANDS MR. MALDEN A NEW PLATE. TRIXIE BACKS THE CART AWAY, BUT ACCIDENTALLY KNOCKS THE WOBBLY TABLE LEG LOOSE. THE TABLE COLLAPSES AND MR. MALDEN'S MEAL SPILLS INTO HIS LAP.

DANNY

Oh, my gosh, I am so sorry. Please,
have a seat over here.

HE LEADS HIM TO ARABELLA'S TABLE, SITS HIM DOWN, THEN SLIDES ARABELLA'S PLATE IN FRONT OF HIM. SHE SCOWLS.

ARABELLA

This place is a disaster!

MR. MALDEN SHAKES HIS HEAD. DANNY LEANS IN.

DANNY

Some people wouldn't know good
vaudeville if it bit 'em.

MR. MALDEN SMILES AS VIVIAN LAUNCHES INTO ANOTHER SIGNATURE NUMBER. THIS TIME, TO THE TUNE OF "DON'T RAIN ON MY PARADE."

VIVIAN

*I told you what to give/ Or did I
stutter?/ Ten Xanax and a shiv/ Or I
will cut her/ Don't give me what I
want/ and Fanny here's filleted!*

MR. MALDEN

Trixie. (BECKONS HER) Can you turn the
fan down now? It's a little loud.

TRIXIE GIVES HIM A THUMBS UP AND CROSSES TO THE FAN. THIS TIME, SHE TURNS THE RIGHT DIAL, BUT IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. THE FAN SPEEDS UP, CREATING A POWERFUL VACUUM.

SHE TRIES TO READJUST IT, BUT THE KNOB BREAKS OFF. IT SUCKS MR. MALDEN'S TOUPEE RIGHT OFF HIS HEAD. HE'S SO ENTHRALLED BY VIVIAN, HE DOESN'T NOTICE. THANK GOD! DANNY RUSHES TO HELP.

HE TRIES TO PRY THE TOUPEE OFF THE FAN, BUT THE SUCTION'S TOO POWERFUL. HE TURNS THE DIAL TO REVERSE THE AIR FLOW AND THE TOUPEE SHOOTS ACROSS THE ROOM. IT LANDS IN THE FIREPLACE.

PANICKED, HE MOTIONS FOR MUDGE TO GET IT, SPOTS THE SWITCH BY THE WINDOW, AND FLIPS IT. MUDGE IS ABOUT TO REACH INTO THE FIREPLACE WHEN IT ROARS TO LIFE. FLAMES ENGULF THE TOUPEE.

ARABELLA TAKES NOTICE AND LEANS FORWARD TO GET A BETTER LOOK. THE FAN SLURPS UP HER SCARF. IT GETS CLOGGED AND OVERHEATS. BLACK SMOKE BILLOWS OUT. AND THEN... KABOOM! A CHARRED BIRD SHOOTS OUT OF THE DUCT. IT THUDS ONTO ARABELLA'S TABLE.

TRIXIE

I guess that roast quail is ready
sooner than we thought.

ARABELLA SCREAMS, STARTLING MUDGE, WHO'S JUST SNAGGED THE TOUPEE WITH A FIRE IRON. HE FLINGS IT OVER HIS SHOULDER, AND IT TOO THUDS ONTO ARABELLA'S TABLE. SHE LEAPS UP.

THE SMOKE DETECTORS SOUND. LURLEEN RUSHES IN WITH A FIRE EXTINGUISHER. SHE DOUSES ARABELLA. MR. MALDEN LAUGHS.

ARABELLA

What's so funny, you hairless halfwit?
It's your toupee they toasted!

SHE SCREAMS AND STORMS TO THE EXIT.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

I'm heading straight to city hall to
have this death trap condemned!

LURLEEN CROSSES TO THE FIREPLACE AND FLIPS THE SWITCH. THE SPRINKLER ACTIVATES. IT WASHES OVER ARABELLA.

LURLEEN

Sorry. Did I rain on your tirade?

ARABELLA HUFFS, THEN TURNS TOWARD THE DOOR.

DANNY

Don't let the curtains hit you on the
way out.

HE TUGS ON THE CURTAIN AND OTIS' SHODDY TAPE JOB COMES LOOSE.
THE ROD SWINGS DOWN, HITS ARABELLA, AND KNOCKS HER OUT THE
DOOR. THE ROOM ERUPTS WITH LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE.

MR. MCGILLICUDDY

(TO HIS WIFE) They're gonna have a
hard time doing that again tomorrow.

DANNY

(TO VIVIAN) Should we try, though?
Vivian Fairchild in an extended
engagement. I can help you unpack.

VIVIAN

Really?

DANNY

What was it Mama was always saying?

VIVIAN

Stop eating after midnight, Danny, you
know your father had the fat gene?

THEY LAUGH. ACROSS THE ROOM, TRIXIE PICKS UP THE BLACKENED
REMAINS OF MR. MALDEN'S TOUPEE AND SETS THEM ATOP HIS HEAD.

TRIXIE

You know, Mikey, (HICCUP) I like your
hair darker.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

FADE IN:

INT. SUITE CAROLINE LOBBY - DAY (DAY 2)
(DANNY, LURLEEN, MUDGE, OTIS, TRIXIE, VIVIAN)

DANNY AND TRIXIE ARE HUDDLED TOGETHER AT THE COMPUTER.

TRIXIE

try refreshing it.

DANNY

(CLICKS) It's up! It's up!

MUDGE, LURLEEN, AND OTIS RUSH IN AND GATHER AROUND THEM.

MUDGE

Should we wait for Vivian to get out
of the bath?

DANNY

Nah, she doesn't read reviews anymore.

Not since *Entertainment Weekly* called
her performance in *Cross My Heart* and
Hope to Die Hard "more wooden than a
picket fence."

LURLEEN

Well, go ahead, then.

HE READS:

DANNY

At the Suite Caroline, good times
never seemed so good. Part bed and
breakfast, part interactive theater,
the experience was a delight from
start to finish.

A WATER DROPLET ROLLS DOWN DANNY'S CHEEK.

OTIS

Are you crying?

DANNY

No.

OTIS LOOKS UP. WATER POOLS ON THE CEILING. UH-OH.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(READS ON) But do be warned. Enter
with a sense of humor. You will be
roasted. Hopefully by Trixie, a master
comedienne. The real reason to visit,
though: Vivian Fairchild. As the Suite
Caroline's resident songbird, she
makes her biggest splash yet!

ON THAT, VIVIAN'S BATHTUB COMES CRASHING THROUGH THE CEILING.

OTIS

Well, her second biggest splash...

DANNY CRIES.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW

UNBREAKABLE KIMMY SCHMIDT

"Kimmy Gets Famous!"

Written by

David Scanlon

UNBREAKABLE KIMMY SCHMIDT"Kimmy Gets Famous!"CAST

KIMMY SCHMIDT.....	ELLIE KEMPER
TITUS ANDROMEDON/EVIL TITUS.....	TITUSS BURGESS
LILLIAN KAUSHTUPPER.....	CAROL KANE
JACQUELINE WHITE.....	JANE KRAKOWSKI

GUEST CAST

INTERCOM VOICE.....	ACTOR
LIFETIME/HALLMARK ANNOUNCER.....	ACTOR
NEWSCASTER.....	ACTOR
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.....	ACTOR
MORT.....	ACTOR
YUPPIE WOMAN.....	ACTOR
NICOLAS CAGE.....	ACTOR
CANDACE CAMERON BURE.....	ACTOR
TORI SPELLING.....	ACTOR
JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT.....	ACTOR
SOFÍA VERGARA.....	ACTOR
CASHIER.....	ACTOR
TEENAGED BOY 1.....	ACTOR
TEENAGED BOY 2.....	ACTOR
FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER.....	ACTOR
REAL ESTATE AGENT.....	ACTOR
YUPPIE HUSBAND.....	ACTOR

YUPPIE WIFE.....	ACTOR
LIBRARIAN.....	ACTOR
LITTLE GIRL.....	ACTOR
RUDE WOMAN.....	ACTOR
LITTLE BOY.....	ACTOR
WENDY WILLIAMS ANNOUNCER.....	ACTOR
WENDY WILLIAMS.....	ACTOR

FADE IN:

INT. TITUS AND KIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

KIMMY's reading on the couch. She's completely enthralled by the final pages of HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE.

KIMMY

No way! And to think--all these years I thought it was Snape...

TITUS bursts through the door, exultant, expecting Kimmy to react. She doesn't. She's in shock.

KIMMY (CONT'D)

Who would have ever suspected p-p-p-poor st-st-st-stammering Professor Quirrell?

Titus approaches her, eyes rolling.

TITUS

What are you stuttering about, Kim George VI?

He sits down beside her.

KIMMY

I'm almost done with the first Harry Potter book! I started reading it before the bunker and I've always wondered how it ended.

TITUS

I just don't understand people's obsession with those books. What's so interesting about a gardener who finds out he's a werewolf?

KIMMY

(befuddled)

But that's--

TITUS

--enough about you! I agree.

His enormous smile returns.

TITUS (CONT'D)

What amazing news did you find out today, Titus!??

He struggles to contain himself.

KIMMY

Geez, I haven't seen you this excited since the McRib came back!

TITUS

(suddenly angry)

Kimberly, what did I tell you about mentioning that sandwich when it is unavailable!??

He pauses, refocusing on his elation.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Just kidding! You can't say anything that'll make me angry today!

KIMMY

What if I told you that Sandra Bullock just announced she's moving forward with her *Gravity* prequel, *Zero Gravity*?

Titus winces. He considers a rebuttal for a brief moment, but then shakes his head. Nice try, girl.

But Kimmy's not finished.

KIMMY (CONT'D)

And her *Blind Side* sequel, *2 Blind 2 Side*.

He breaks.

TITUS

Sandy, why!?!?! Did you learn nothing from *Speed 2: Cruise Control*!?!?

Fortunately, his relapse is short-lived. He takes a deep breath to recompose himself and wags a finger at Kimmy.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Don't even try to rain on my parade, baby girl, cause much like that watch you bought at the Dollar Tree, it's not gonna work!

Kimmy looks dejectedly at the plastic watch on her wrist.

TITUS (CONT'D)

You're talking to a whole new Titus!

He reaches out a hand, gleefully introducing his new self to Kimmy.

TITUS (CONT'D)
Titus Andromedon, Infomercial
Superstar!

It takes Kimmy a moment to react.

KIMMY
Wait, you got the commercial!?!?

Titus grins, shaking his head.

KIMMY (CONT'D)
And you're sure this isn't another
episode of Crank Yankers? It's real
this time?

TITUS
I'm positive! This is as real as
the email I got from that Nigerian
Prince!

That *is* real! Kimmy pulls Titus in for a hug.

KIMMY
I'm so proud of you, Titus!

TITUS
#MeToo!

Kimmy shakes her head. That's not what that means, Titus...

KIMMY
So, what are you gonna be selling?

TITUS
You're looking at the new face of
Phillips Screwdrivers!

Kimmy tries to hide her confusion.

KIMMY
Oh... that's great. But Titus...
How can you advertise a product you
don't use?

Titus laughs.

TITUS
Oh, Kimmy! Unlike Melissa McCarthy,
you are funny! You don't have to
actually use the product you're
selling.

KIMMY
You don't?

TITUS
 Ask Kirstie Alley's couch cushions
 if she really uses Jenny Craig.

Kimmy nods. Good point.

She's about to respond when LILLIAN enters, frantic, carrying a magazine.

LILLIAN
 You two are not gonna believe this!

TITUS
 Your urine sample came back
 negative this time?

LILLIAN
 No!

KIMMY
 Pringles is dropping that lawsuit?

LILLIAN
 For the last time, I came up with
 "once you pop, you can't stop"
 first and they know it! Of course,
 I was talking about OxyContin,
 but... that's not the point!

She crosses to the living room.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
 I was upstairs riffling through the
 neighbors' mail--as I often do
 while my underwear are in the
 microwave--when I found this!

She throws the magazine down onto the coffee table. It's a copy of *TV Guide*. On the cover, there's an advertisement for a new Lifetime original Movie--"15 Years a Slave: The Unauthorized Mostly Inaccurate True Story of the Indiana Mole Women." Kimmy is horrified.

KIMMY
 What the fudge?!?

LILLIAN
 You're telling me! Who asked for an
American Idol revival!?!?

EXT. SPANISH HARLEM STREETS - DAY

JACQUELINE and Titus stroll down the streets of Spanish Harlem. In their designer clothes (well, Jacqueline's designer clothes and Titus' designer knock-offs), they look wildly out of place.

They approach a dilapidated brick warehouse. A scrap of paper is taped to its rusty metal door. *We Shouldn't Have Productions* is scribbled across it in Sharpie.

Jacqueline looks dismayed. This can't be the place. It's... gross. She checks the address on her phone. This is it. She tries to hide her disgust.

Titus doesn't show nearly as much restraint.

TITUS

What in the hell is this?

JACQUELINE

Why, this... this is Studio 69, the very studio featured in that infomercial for Boreos, the Oreos with no cream in the middle, and the music video for the smash hit, *Crocodile The Rock*, by Dwayne "The Rock" Elton Johnson.

TITUS

This is not a studio, Jacqueline! Where is the glitz? Where is the glamour? Where are the washed-up child stars begging for roles?

JACQUELINE

Oh, Titus! You have so much to learn about the industry. There's no glamour in television!

TITUS

There's not?

JACQUELINE

No! They shoot *The Wendy Williams Show* in an old crack den in Koreatown.

TITUS

Really?

JACQUELINE

Uh-huh. And she wouldn't have it any other way!

Titus shrugs. A smile returns to his face.

TITUS

Whelp, if it's good enough for Wendy, it's good enough for me!

With a spring in his step, he walks up to the intercom by the door and rings it. Jacqueline breathes a sign of relief.

INTERCOM VOICE
(annoyed)
What?

TITUS
(like Wendy Williams)
How you doin'?

INTERCOM VOICE
Uh... fine.

TITUS
Titus Andromedon, here for his big
break!

INTERCOM VOICE
(unimpressed)
It's open.

Jacqueline fishes a handkerchief from her bag and shakes it open. She uses it to grab the doorknob. The door screeches open slowly and Titus darts inside. Jacqueline follows after him, holding her nose.

INT. TITUS AND KIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lillian lies on the floor behind the television, fiddling with a mess of cables that trails in from the hall.

Kimmy appears in the doorway carrying a brand new copy of *Chamber of Secrets*. Perplexed, she steps carefully over the cables and into the apartment.

KIMMY
Lillian?

Lillian turns, startled. She's relieved to find that it's only Kimmy standing behind her.

LILLIAN
Oh, Kimmy. Thank goodness! You
shouldn't sneak up on people like
that, dear. You're liable to end up
like Daddy Warbucks in the much-
maligned musical sequel, *Little
Orphan Annie Get Your Gun!*

Kimmy looks horrified.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Shot right in the face.
(under her breath)
Ungrateful little red-headed Dick
Cheney...

She returns to her work behind the television.

KIMMY

What are you doing?

LILLIAN

Borrowing cable from the neighbors.

KIMMY

Lillian, we already have cable.

LILLIAN

Yeah, but we only get the channels without boobs.

KIMMY

What do we need boob channels for?

Lillian emerges from behind the television.

LILLIAN

How else are we gonna watch your big movie? Thanks to that bastard from the Geek Squad, I ain't allowed in Best Buy no more, so we can't camp out in the home theater section like we did when Titus was on *Crank Yankers*.

KIMMY

I already told you guys I don't want to watch that movie!

LILLIAN

Come on, Kimmy! Everybody ends up with their own TV movie some day or another. It's just a part of growing up!

KIMMY

No it isn't!

LILLIAN

Sure it is. Remember mine? It had the catchiest theme song...

(singing)

"Bad boys, bad boys, whatcha gonna do, whatcha gonna do when they come for you? Bad boys, bad boys--"

KIMMY

That was an episode of *Cops*!

LILLIAN

Oh, yeah...

(beat)

Well, point is, we all have a traumatizing story we'd rather leave in the past.

(MORE)

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

For you, it's all that Mole Women crap. For me, it's that time I woke up naked in the ball pit at a McDonald's play place and thought I'd been sent back from the future to kill Sarah Connor.

Kimmy shakes her head, confused.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Besides, nobody's even gonna watch this dumb movie.

KIMMY

What makes you so sure?

LILLIAN

It's got Tori Spelling in it.

Ew! Kimmy and Lillian exchange disgusted looks. Then Lillian returns to the business at hand. She kicks the side of the television and the picture comes into focus.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Hot dog!

A bumper for the Lifetime Network plays on the screen.

LIFETIME ANNOUNCER

You're watching Lifetime! Up next, *One Face, Two Face, Old Face, New Face: The Meg Ryan Story*. But first, a conversation with Nicolas Cage, writer, director, and star of tonight's brand new Lifetime Original Movie, *15 Years a Slave*--

Kimmy clicks to the next channel--a local news station.

LILLIAN

Hey! What did you do that for?

But Lillian doesn't wait for a response. The NEWSCASTER's story grabs her attention.

NEWSCASTER

A new report indicates that murder rates in East Dogmouth have reached an all-time low. Could this be the start of a neighborhood renaissance?

LILLIAN

Not on Lillian Kaushtupper's watch, you white bastards!

She runs out of the apartment.

INT. STUDIO 69 - DAY

A young PRODUCTION ASSISTANT leads Titus and Jacqueline to the green room. It's little more than a closet with a futon.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Our director, Mr. Spielberg, will
be with you in just a moment.

He exits.

TITUS
Did he just say Mr. Spielberg? As in, Steven Spielberg? As in, the producer of *An American Tail: Fievel Goes West*?

Titus grins.

TITUS (CONT'D)
Jacqueline, I'm sorry I ever doubted you! It's just that... you know... you're usually so wrong.

JACQUELINE
Well now, all thanks to me, Titus Andromedon will one day be counted among the greatest of all the Spielberg characters--E.T., Short Round, the fat guy from *Jurassic Park*...

The door opens. MORT, a slobbish, unkempt forty-something enters the room.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
Speak of the devil!

TITUS
(to Mort)
You must be craft services.

MORT
Oh, no, I'm--

But Titus plows over him.

TITUS
I'll have four slices of pizza--pepperoni, but with the pepperoni's pulled off--a bowlful of M&Ms--but only the green ones; she's the funniest--two fruits-by-the-foot--removed from the paper and squished into the shape of Bea Arthur--and a diet Shirley Temple--three cherries, no stems.

MORT
 (chuckling)
 I'm not craft services. I'm the
 director.

Titus cuts Jacqueline a derisive glance.

MORT (CONT'D)
 Mort Spielberg. Pleasure.

He extends a hand to Titus, who's starting to look ill.

MORT (CONT'D)
 Is everything okay, Titus?

Titus doesn't answer.

JACQUELINE
 He's fine. He was just expecting
 someone a little more... Steven.

MORT
 Yeah. So were my parents... But you
 know what? We're gonna make a great
 commercial. We've got a great
 script--

He digs down into his pocket, retrieves a wad of napkins, and hands them to Titus. Dialogue is scrawled on them in sparkly gel pen.

Titus covers his face to keep from hurling.

MORT (CONT'D)
 --and a great product!

He steps out of the room briefly and returns with the product in hand, displaying the package proudly for Titus and Jacqueline to see: FILL-UPS POO DIAPERS, "FOR WHEN YOU JUST DON'T FEEL LIKE GETTING UP!"

Titus is appalled.

TITUS
 WHAT THE FOOP!?!?

He tries to compose himself.

TITUS (CONT'D)
 Jacqueline, a word.

He pulls Jacqueline into the far corner of the room.

TITUS (CONT'D)
 Jacqueline, how could you mistake
 Phillips Screwdrivers for Fill-Ups
 Poo Diapers!?!?

Jacqueline breaks down.

JACQUELINE

I'm just not cut out for this,
Titus! I'm not supposed to work for
other people, other people are
supposed to work for me! I get lost
in all these phone nonversations!

TITUS

Nonversations?

JACQUELINE

You know, that thing when someone
is talking to you, but you really
don't care about what they're
saying, so you just say, "uh-
huh...uh-huh...uh-huh..." until
they finally stop.

TITUS

So you were having a nonversation
when you booked this commercial?

JACQUELINE

Uh-huh.

TITUS

I can't believe you, Jacqueline!
This is my career your fooling
around with!

JACQUELINE

Uh-huh.

TITUS

And I can't just embarrass myself
like this! Despite my deep
understanding of the desire to
never have to get up to use the
bathroom, I will not wear a diaper
on national television!

JACQUELINE

Uh-huh.

TITUS

Are you having a nonversation with
me right now!?!?

JACQUELINE

I'm sorry! I can't help it!

TITUS

Well you better just get over there
and tell Mort that I'm not doing
this commercial!

JACQUELINE
I can't do that.

TITUS
Why not?

JACQUELINE
I already signed the contract!
(she hesitates)
And I may or may not have already
used my half of the money to put a
down payment on a toe tuck.

TITUS
Jacqueline!

JACQUELINE
Toe-besity is a real problem in
America, Titus! How do you think
Crocs stays in business!?!?

Mort approaches them, concerned.

MORT
Is everything alright over here?

Titus turns, rearing to give a snappy answer. Jacqueline intervenes.

JACQUELINE
Everything is fine, Mort. Titus
just wanted to make sure you had
diapers in extra-large.

Titus scolds her with a glance.

MORT
Oh, sure! We've got Fill-Ups to fit
everybody from the Olsen
Quadruplets to Chris Christie.

He looks Titus over.

MORT (CONT'D)
I'll go get you a Rosie O'Donnell.

EXT. THE STREETS OF EAST DOGMOUTH - EVENING

Lillian hurries down the street with a stack of homemade fliers in hand. She stops in front of a newly renovated storefront and stares up at it in horror. A sign on the building reads, COMING SOON: THE DOWNWARD DOGMOUTH. It's a goddamn yoga studio.

LILLIAN
Friggin' Giuliani!

She removes a flier from her stack and staples it to the door. BEWARE: THE EAST DOGMOUTH STRANGLER. "ARMED" AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. A crude pencil drawing of a grizzly-looking convict accompanies the warning.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
There! Just what this neighborhood needs--a good old-fashioned serial killer!

With pride in her scheme, Lillian continues down the street, stapling wanted posters to telephone poles, information boards, and a variety of sickening New Age establishments like OLIVE AVANT-GARDEN and THE HANDMAID'S KALE.

A stereotypical YUPPIE WOMAN jogs toward her on the sidewalk, pushing a yippy little dog in a custom stroller and sporting expensive athleisure wear. She's talking on the phone.

YUPPIE WOMAN
No, it's a monofloral honey produced by a tribe of gender non-conforming nomads deep in the Himalayan Mountains.
(beat)
Yeah, I saw it on *Barefoot Contessa*.

Lillian interrupts her conversation.

LILLIAN
What's a pretty young girl like you doing in a neighborhood like this?

The woman is affronted.

YUPPIE WOMAN
(to the phone)
Would you excuse me for a second, Lydia?
(to Lillian)
Ma'am, despite the street cred I would invariably gain from sleeping with a housing-challenged lesbian little person, I'm just not really into that these days. No offense.

Lillian shrugs. None taken.

LILLIAN
What I meant was, this neighborhood isn't safe for a woman like you.

YUPPIE WOMAN
But this is one of the safest neighborhoods in New York. I just heard it on the news!

LILLIAN
(she chuckles)
You can't believe everything you
hear on the fake news, dear. Those
are alternative facts!

She hands the woman a flier.

YUPPIE WOMAN
The East Dogmouth Strangler? Never
heard of him.

LILLIAN
That's exactly what they want you
to say!

The woman rolls her eyes.

YUPPIE WOMAN
Well, I'm sure I'll be fine. I
don't think stranglers are really
interested in women like me,
anyway. Don't they usually target,
you know... poor people?

LILLIAN
People? Oh, no, dear, you've got it
all wrong. The Strangler's not
murdering people--he's murdering
dogs! Particularly the dogs of
people who have a "My Dog is
Smarter than Your Honor Student"
bumper sticker on their car.

The woman gasps.

YUPPIE WOMAN
I have one of those!

LILLIAN
I figured.

YUPPIE WOMAN
Maybe it isn't safe for me and
Pawdrey Hepburn to be here, after
all?

Lillian peeks into the stroller.

LILLIAN
Yep. She definitely fits his M.O.

Lillian reaches into her bag, retrieves a wallet, and flips
it open to reveal a long strip of photographs held in
individual plastic sleeves--it's a catalogue of small, yippy
dogs just like Pawdrey Hepburn.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
The victims.

She points to them one by one, feigning sorrow.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
L.L. Drool J, Dame Waggy Smith,
Catherine Zeta-Bones and Michael
Doglas, Spaniel Day-Lewis, and
Bruce.
(correcting herself)
Excuse me, Caitlyn.

The yuppie woman is on the verge of tears.

YUPPIE WOMAN
What kind of sick bastard could do
this to an innocent little
animal!?!? Children I can
understand, but a dog!?!?

LILLIAN
That's just the kind of
neighborhood this is.

YUPPIE WOMAN
Then you can keep it!

She runs off. Lillian celebrates.

LILLIAN
Be sure to tell your friends!

INT. TITUS AND KIMMY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Again, Kimmy's reading on the couch. This time, she's transfixed by a copy of *Chamber of Secrets*.

Titus bursts through the door, looking distraught. The bulge of a large adult diaper is visible beneath his pants.
Jacqueline enters behind him.

KIMMY
Hey! How'd it go, Screwdriver
Man!?!?

Titus storms to his room.

TITUS
I don't want to talk about it! I
have to change my diaper.

He slams his door.

KIMMY
What was that about?

Jacqueline retrieves a silk sheet from her purse. She lays it out over Kimmy's couch and then sits down.

JACQUELINE

Oh, there was just a bit of a mix-up down at the studio. But it all worked out. I'm still the best agent in town.

Kimmy raises an eyebrow. Are you?

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)

Well, I'm the prettiest, anyway.

Another eyebrow raise.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)

Well, I'm definitely the least Jewish!

Kimmy nods. There you go.

Lillian enters, carrying a trash bag full of popcorn.

KIMMY

Where did you get that?

LILLIAN

I liberated it from a movie theater dumpster. Brendan Fraser fought me pretty hard for it!

She scurries over to the couch and sits down between Kimmy and Jacqueline.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Titus, get in here! The movie's about to start!

Titus rejoins them, now wearing an oversized shirt that reads: I SURVIVED THE DURNSVILLE BUNKER AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS LOUSY T-SHIRT.

Kimmy cuts him a look.

TITUS

What? Figured I better get it before they jack the prices up!

He plops down on the couch next to Kimmy. Lillian grabs the barbie doll "remote" and clicks on the television.

It begins.

CANDACE CAMERON BURE appears in a red wig against a black screen.

CANDACE CAMERON BURE
 My name is Kimmy Schmidt and I'm a
 Mole Woman.

Kimmy gasps.

KIMMY
 I'm played by DJ!?!?

TITUS
 Ew, the worst *Full House* kid...

JACQUELINE
 You're forgetting about Nicky and
 Alex.

Titus nods in disgusted agreement.

LILLIAN
 Shhhh! This is startin' to get
 good!

Back on the screen, Candace Cameron Bure fades away. TORI SPELLING appears in her place.

TORI SPELLING
 My name is Tori Spell-- I mean,
 Cyndee Pokorny and I'm a--
 (to someone off camera)
 What it is again? Oh yeah.
 (back to camera)
 I'm a Mole Woman.

As Tori fades out, JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT appears in her place in a bad Michelle Duggar cosplay.

JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT
 My name is Gretchen Chalker and I
 am proud to be a Mole Woman.

SOFÍA VERGARA appears next, speaking in an even more exaggerated version of her stereotypical accent.

SOFÍA VERGARA
 Yo soy Donna Maria Nuñez and I am
 one of the Women of the Moles also.

Finally, NICOLAS CAGE appears, delivering his lines with the unhinged bravado that only Nicolas Cage can.

NICOLAS CAGE
 And I'm Reverend Richard Wayne Gary
 Wayne. These are my Mole Women. And
 these are their stories. DUN DUN.

LATER: Nicholas Cage throws Candace Cameron Bure through the door into the bunker and slams it shut.

CANDACE CAMERON BURE
Why are you keeping me here like
this?

NICOLAS CAGE
Honey, the world is being Fed-Exed
to hell in a hand cart! I'm saving
your ass!

He throws her a book.

NICOLAS CAGE (CONT'D)
Here, read this while I go see if
anyone else is alive out there!

She picks up the book. On the cover he's scribbled: "REVEREND RICHARD'S GUIDE TO SURVIVING THE SCARY-POCALYPSE" BY GOSH AND HIS SON, JEEPERS.

CANDACE CAMERON BURE
I can't.

NICOLAS CAGE
What do you mean you can't!

CANDACE CAMERON BURE
I can't read!

BACK TO KIMMY AND TITUS' LIVING ROOM.

JACQUELINE
Kimmy, you can't read!?!?

KIMMY
I was reading when you got here!
Why are you believing this trash?

JACQUELINE
Because it's on TV. Which is right
almost as often as the internet!

Kimmy rolls her eyes.

BACK TO THE MOVIE.

LATER: Candace hangs a tin-foil star on a fake Christmas tree in the center of the room.

CANDACE CAMERON BURE
Moley Christmas, Sisters!

JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT
I knew it was Christmas cause I was
visited by three ghosts last night.

SOFÍA VERGARA

You are so creepy. You are always
being visited by ghosties. It is
like you are a ghosty whisperer or
something.

Jennifer Love Hewitt winks at the camera.

Nicolas Cage busts in, screaming.

NICOLAS CAGE

How in the name of Zeus' butthole
did you get out of your cells!?!?

Candace swivels toward him, startled.

CANDACE CAMERON BURE

Oh, Mylanta!

BACK TO KIMMY AND TITUS' LIVING ROOM.

Kimmy winces. Everyone else is transfixed, absentmindedly shoveling popcorn into their mouths.

Later: Kimmy stares dumbfounded at the screen. Her friends are moved to tears. They stand up to clap, dropping balled-up tissues all over the floor.

BACK TO THE MOVIE.

Like any good docudrama, the movie ends by displaying the image of the person on whom each character is based alongside a note about their life after the events of the film:

REVEREND RICHARD WAYNE GARY WAYNE IS SERVING OUT A LIFE-SENTENCE FOR HIS CRIMES. IN THE END, HE WILL ANSWER TO GOSH AND JEEPERS.

OUTSIDE THE BUNKER, GRETCHEN CHALKER FOUND COMMUNITY BY FORMING HER OWN CULT. SHE IS CURRENTLY THE H.B.I.C. AT LITCHFIELD PRISON.

DONNA MARIA NÚÑEZ HAS FOUND SUCCESS AS THE CREATOR AND FACE OF DONNA MARIA'S MOLE WOMEN MOLE SAUCE. HER ACCENT IS STILL GRATING.

CYNDEE POKORNY RESIDES IN DURNSVILLE, INDIANA WITH HER BOYFRIEND, BRANDON. HE IS GAY.

KIMMY SCHMIDT MOVED TO NEW YORK CITY TO LIVE WITH A LOSER IN A SIDEWAYS TUGBOAT. SHE STILL CAN'T READ.

INT. BOOKSTORE - THE NEXT DAY

Kimmy waits in a bookstore checkout line with a copy of *Prisoner of Azkaban* in hand.

CASHIER
I can help the next guest.

The CASHIER is young and cute and he beckons to Kimmy with a sweet smile. She hands him her book.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
Prisoner of Azkaban, huh? That's my favorite one.

Is he flirting? Kimmy grins nervously.

KIMMY
Oh, yeah, mine too. I'm re-reading it for, like, the seventeenth time.

CASHIER
Don't you just love the part where--

KIMMY
No spoilers!

He looks confused. Kimmy tries to course correct.

KIMMY (CONT'D)
I like to go in each time as if it were the first, you know. So I just kinda pretend to forget what happens.

Great recovery, Kimmy!

CASHIER
Oh, I'll have to try that out next time I read *Everyone Poops*.

Kimmy laughs, obnoxiously at first, but then, reconsidering, she tries a sexy chortle. It's similarly unflattering.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
So, uh, do you come here often?

KIMMY
Usually about once a month.
Whenever they put out a new issue of *Highlights Magazine*.
(reconsidering again)
Uh, I mean *National Geographic*.

CASHIER
I like *Highlights*, too.

Kimmy smiles.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
But seriously, do I know you? You look really familiar.

KIMMY
 A lot of people think I'm the girl
 from *Wendy's*.

The cashier laughs. And then it clicks.

CASHIER
 Wait a second, are you Kimmy
 Schmidt!?!? Like, the Mole Woman?

Kimmy's face drops.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
 I saw your movie last night! It was
 great! So funny!

Kimmy's embarrassed and a little upset.

KIMMY
 There's nothing funny about being
 kidnapped and trapped in a bunker
 for fifteen years!

CASHIER
 I'm sorry. I didn't mean to--

KIMMY
 Can you please just ring up my
 book?

CASHIER
 (genuinely concerned)
 Don't you think you'd rather have
 the audiobook?

Offended, Kimmy grabs the book back from the cashier, slaps
 ten dollars onto the counter, and hurries out of the store.

EXT. THE STREETS OF EAST DOGMOUTH - A WHILE LATER

On her way home, Kimmy passes STEREO SHED, an electronics
 store. A local news station plays on the TVs in the window.
 Kimmy watches in horror.

NEWSCASTER
 Last night, the Lifetime Original,
*15 Years a Slave: The Unauthorized
 Mostly Inaccurate True Story of the
 Indiana Mole Women*, became the most
 watched television movie since
*Tyler Perry's Here's One For White
 People*. This morning on the Today
 Show, when asked if we could expect
 a sequel, Ms. Cameron Bure
 answered, "Yes. At least 12."

Distraught, Kimmy runs off.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
 In other news, a life-sized *FurReal Friend* was found suffocated this morning on the shores of the East River. Could this be a warning from the mysterious East Dogmouth Strangler? A frightened yuppie woman says yes! More after this.

EXT. THE STREETS OF EAST DOGMOUTH - MOMENTS LATER

Kimmy heads quickly toward home, shielding her face to avoid the judgmental gaze of nosy passersby.

She breezes past a couple of TEENAGED BOYS as she hurries to the crosswalk at the end of the block. They recognize her.

TEENAGED BOY 1
 (pointing)
 No way! Was that who I think it was?!?!

TEENAGED BOY 2
 Oh my God!
 (beat)
 The girl from *Wendy's*!

INT. TITUS AND KIMMY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Titus and Jacqueline are glued to the television.

NEWSCASTER
 Move over, *Stranger Things* kids, there's a new group of overrated outcasts in town! After the remarkable success of Nicolas Cage's *15 Years a Slave*, Mole Woman Mania is sweeping the nation. While fans eagerly await the follow-up, *Mole Women: The Squeakquel*, due out next week, be sure to check out MyLifetime.com for your chance to win an all-expenses-paid trip to beautiful Durnsville, Indiana!

Titus reaches across the living room with a barbie doll taped to a broomstick and clicks off the television.

TITUS
 Do you think Kimmy's seen any of this yet?

The door bursts open and Kimmy storms in.

KIMMY
 I am so fudging mad!
 (beat)
 Everyone has seen it! Everyone!

JACQUELINE
 That's a good thing, Kimmy! If
 everyone had seen *Furry Vengeance*,
 Brendan Fraser wouldn't be eating
 out of a dumpster right now!

TITUS
 Yeah, Kimmy. Fame is always a good
 thing--no matter how you come by
 it! Just ask the Kardashians!

KIMMY
 But everyone thinks all that
 garbage is true! And I don't want
 to be famous! I don't want
 everybody to know who I am. That's
 why I never understood *Cheers*. Why
 would you wanna go anywhere where
 everybody knows your name!?!?

JACQUELINE
 But, Kimmy, think of all the money
 you're missing out on. The manias
 are very profitable--Bealtemania,
 Spicemania, Hulkamania! I could be
 your agent! There'd be book deals,
 TV interviews, sponsorships... I'd
 be rich!

(off Kimmy's look)
 I mean, we'd be rich!

KIMMY
 I have no interest in being rich.

Jacqueline gasps. Blasphemy!

KIMMY (CONT'D)
 I don't want the money, I don't
 want the attention, and I don't
 want anybody feeling sorry for me!

She storms off to her room and slams the divider.

KIMMY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 You can just call me Ryan Seacrest,
 cause I'm never coming out!

EXT. THE STREETS OF EAST DOGMOUTH - A FEW DAYS LATER

Lillian drags around a bucket of cow's blood, splattering it
 here and there as she makes her way down the street.

She approaches a building that's under renovation. The facade is being painted and the crew is out to lunch. A large ladder is left unattended.

Lillian seizes her opportunity. She climbs the ladder and scrawls "IT'S STRANGLIN' TIME!" in blood across the fresh paint job.

She climbs down the ladder to evaluate her work, leaving the blood bucket on the top rung.

LILLIAN
Nice work, Lillian. You're a
regular Banksy.

As she goes to climb back up, she stumbles, and knocks into the ladder. The bucket spills, dousing her with blood.

After wiping her face, she opens her eyes to find a large junkyard dog growling and barring its teeth in front of her.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Down, boy. Good. Good boy.

She backs away slowly.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
You don't want to eat me. Ever
since my stint as a cadaver on *ER*,
I taste like formaldehyde.

The dog barks aggressively and lunges toward her.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Run, Lillian!

She runs off screaming as the dog chases after her.

INT. TITUS AND KIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Titus sits down next to Kimmy, who's curled up on the couch in her pajamas reading *Order of the Phoenix*.

TITUS
I'm worried about you, Kim
Possible. You've barely moved from
that spot all week. It's like
you're in the express lane at
Walmart!

KIMMY
I don't have any reason to move.

TITUS

What about when Oprah came to the door to request an interview? That wasn't enough of a reason!?!?

KIMMY

She didn't want an interview, Titus. She thought this was a Panera Bread.

Titus shrugs.

TITUS

Look, I know you're embarrassed to go outside because everybody knows who you are, but that's no reason to turn into a recluse!

KIMMY

How would you know? Nobody cares who you are!

TITUS

You're hurting, so I'm gonna pretend you didn't say that.

He glances at Kimmy's book.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Think about it this way: everybody knows who Harry Potter is, but does that stop him from going outside and living his nerdy little life? No! Cause he has to stop Darth Vader, cause that's his sister, and if she gets her hands on the Ark of the Covenant, he'll never win the Hunger Games and Narnia will be frozen forever!

Kimmy looks befuddled.

TITUS (CONT'D)

My point is, like fidget spinners, unicorn frappuccinos, and hopefully Taylor Swift, Mole Women Mania is just a fad. As soon as some other stupid craze comes around, people will forget all about the bunker.

As if it were on cue, Titus' phone rings. He answers.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Hey, Jacqueline. What? Now? But it's the middle of the day! But they said... Foop!

He grabs the barbie broomstick and clicks on the television.

HALLMARK ANNOUNCER
You're watching the 325 days of
Christmas on Hallmark Channel. Up
Next, Candace Cameron Bure reprises
her beloved role as the dim-witted
Mole Woman, Kimmy Schmidt, in *Help!*
I'm Trapped in a Snow Globe. But
first, a word from our sponsors.

The Fill-Ups Poo Diaper commercial begins.

ON TELEVISION --

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Titus sits across from a suave businessman in what appears to be an important interview.

FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER
Sometimes nature calls and you just
can't answer.

Titus' stomach gurgles. He contorts his face. It's obvious he's holding in a big one.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

Titus struts awkwardly down a crowded sidewalk. He feels a poop coming on. He checks his watch, shakes his head, and continues down the street.

FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER
Life just moves way too fast for
all those pesky bathroom breaks.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Now in his pajamas, Titus sits down in his recliner and turns on the television.

FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER
And when you finally get a little
bit of time to yourself, the last
thing you feel like doing is
getting up to use that cold,
uncomfortable toilet.

Titus reaches for his popcorn bowl, but he's interrupted by another incoming bowel movement. He looks up to the heavens, cursing his predicament with over-exaggerated hysterics.

FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Well now you don't have to!

A package of Fill-Ups Poo Diapers appears in Titus' hands. He's delighted!

FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Introducing Fill-Up's Poo Diapers,
the ultra-absorbent "underwear" for
adults who just don't feel like
getting up!

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Titus sits in the middle of a crowded movie theater. A look of discomfort streaks across his face.

FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER
Don't want to miss the movie? Never
fear! With Fill-Ups Poo Diapers,
there's a bathroom right here!

Titus smiles. Ah, sweet release!

A hefty woman stands up and attempts to climb over Titus. She's headed for the bathroom. Titus taps her and hands her an extra-large Poo Diaper. She smiles, gives the camera a thumbs-up, and returns to her seat.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

Titus hurries down the same busy sidewalk as before with a renewed zest for life. He relieves himself mid-stride. And no one even notices!

FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER
With Fill-Ups Poo Diapers' patented
Code Brown Anti-Leak sealant and
Stink-Lock odor protection, you can
put the go in on-the-go!

BACK TO TITUS AND KIMMY'S APARTMENT.

INT. TITUS AND KIMMY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Kimmy grins ear to ear, but Titus watches in horror as the commercial wraps up.

The ORDER NOW screen appears.

FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER
Fill-Ups Poo Diapers. Because why
should babies have all the fun!

The on-screen Titus holds up a tube of ointment with his face on it.

FILL-UPS ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
 Call now and you'll receive a tube
 of our patented Fill-Ups Diaper
 Rash Ointment absolutely free!
 That's a savings of almost ninety-
 four cents!

Titus gives the audience a thumbs-up.

ON-SCREEN TITUS
 When you think about crap, think
 about Fill-Ups Poo Diapers!

END OF COMMERCIAL.

Titus clicks off the television.

Kimmy begins to speak, but Titus stops her.

TITUS
 You better make like Charlie
 Chaplin, girl, cause I don't want
 to hear a word.

EXT. THE STREETS OF EAST DOGMOUTH - DAY

Lillian runs down the street, hollering, still covered in blood. Now, a whole pack of dogs is in hot pursuit.

A YUPPIE COUPLE and their dog exit an apartment building just up the block. A REAL ESTATE AGENT follows after them.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
 And the best part is, we've just
 been named one of the safest
 districts in New York City by the
 NAAPFTP--The National Association
 for the Advancement of People Who
 FaceTime Their Pets.

Lillian runs past them, screaming bloody murder. The couple exchanges horrified glances.

YUPPIE HUSBAND
 (to the realtor)
 I think this is gonna be a no-go
 for us.
 (to his wife)
 Why don't we go look in Bed-Stuy.
 They just opened a *Flight of the Conchords* Pop-Up Bar over there.

As they head down the stairs, the couple's dog wiggles free of it's collar and joins the pack that chases after Lillian.

YUPPIE WIFE
Fleayoncé Knowles, you get back here right this instant!

INT. LIBRARY - THE NEXT DAY

A LIBRARIAN escorts Titus to a computer.

LIBRARIAN
Do I know you? You look familiar.

TITUS
I'm Titus. I come here all the time to catch up on *Barbie: Life in the Dreamhouse*. I mean... to uh... work on important adult... taxes. You know, you're always shushing me.

LIBRARIAN
I can't keep track of all the people I shush!

She thinks.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)
Wait a second, you're the Fill-Ups Poo Man!
(she laughs)
"When you think about crap, think about Fill-Ups Poo Diapers!"
Classic!

Titus shushes her this time.

TITUS
How do you know about that?

LIBRARIAN
You haven't seen? You're all over the internet.

Titus launches himself at the nearest computer. He searches FILL-UPS DIAPERS and, covering his eyes, he smashes enter.

Sure enough, he's been memed. His commercial is blowing up on youtube and #FillUpsPooMan is trending on Twitter.

Mortified, he rushes into the bathroom.

INT. LIBRARY BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Titus stands in front of the sink, staring down into the basin. He's feeling sick.

TITUS

It's ok, Titus. Maybe this is just the break you needed. Isn't this what you've always dreamed of? You're famous! And like you told Kimmy, fame is always a good thing-- no matter how you come by it.

He looks up, smiling. But what stares back at him from the mirror isn't quite so happy. It's EVIL TITUS, Titus' Gollum-like alter ego. He has sallow skin, sunken eyes, and a few long stringy black hairs.

EVIL TITUS

You're not famous, Tituses. To be famous, you needs to do something great!

TITUS

Tell that to Honey Boo Boo!

Evil Titus recoils at the sound of her name.

TITUS (CONT'D)

People love me because I'm funny!

EVIL TITUS

They're laughing at you, not with you! You're like the Star Wars Kid. Or Sweet Brown. Or Amy Schumer!

Titus recoils at the sound of her name. He covers his ears.

TITUS

Not listening. I'm not listening!

EVIL TITUS

You're nothing but a joke! A fad!

Titus shakes his head, still covering his ears.

EVIL TITUS (CONT'D)

And as soon as some other stupid craze comes around, they'll forget all about you.

Titus grins.

TITUS

Wait, that's it! I'm the next stupid craze! That's how I can get Kimmy out of her funk!

EVIL TITUS

But Tituses are selfish! We don't
help tricksy, fat little Kimmyses!

TITUS

But Kimmy's my friend!

EVIL TITUS

You don't have any friends! Nobody
likes you!

TITUS

Why don't you just go away!

EVIL TITUS

Where would you be without me?

(coughing like Gollum)

Titus. Titus.

(back to normal)

I saved us. We survived because of
me!

TITUS

Well Kimmy looks after me now! I
don't need you! So leave now and
never come back!

EVIL TITUS

What?

TITUS

I SAID, LEAVE NOW AND NEVER COME
BACK!

The librarian pops her head in the door and shushes Titus.
She points to a sign above the trashcan: NO YELLING AT
YOURSELF.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Sorry.

INT. TITUS AND KIMMY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Titus bursts through the door.

TITUS

Get up, Kim Burton! Put on some of
those clothes you bought at *Limited
Too*, lace up your *Keds*, and let's
go! I'm taking you out!

He turns and finds Kimmy bundled up on the couch, crying into
a copy of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Kimmy, what's the matter?

KIMMY

Dumbledore's dead! And he never got
to proclaim his love for Professor
McGonagall!

Titus laughs.

TITUS

Oh, girl, that was never gonna
happen.

KIMMY

Why not?

TITUS

That man's gayer than the front row
at a Liza Minnelli concert.

(beat)

Sparkly eyes... Half-moon
spectacles... A long-time beard...
Learn the signs, Kimmy!

That only makes her feel worse.

KIMMY

Well now he's dead and he never got
to live his truth!

TITUS

Kimmy, it's alright. He's just make
believe. Like Santa. Or a decent
Katy Perry album.

He hands her a tissue.

TITUS (CONT'D)

So wipe your tears and let's go!

KIMMY

I'm perfectly happy right here on
the couch. I've got my books, I've
got my snacks, and you know what,
those Poo Diapers really do work!

Titus winces.

TITUS

But, Kimmy, Mole Woman Mania is
over. Nobody even remembers those
losers anymore!

KIMMY

Hey!

TITUS

They're has-beens--like Pamela
Anderson!

KIMMY
I don't care. I'm not going.

TITUS
What if I told you I was gonna take
you to the zoo?

Kimmy's stunned.

KIMMY
Wait, really!?!? What happened to,
"If I wanted to see a bunch of fat
animals in cages, I'd watch *Orange
is the New Black*?"

TITUS
Kimmy, if watching stinky animals
lay around in their own poo is good
enough for you, then it's good
enough for me, too!

Kimmy jumps off the couch and pulls Titus into a tight hug.
He gets a whiff of her.

TITUS (CONT'D)
You probably oughta change your
Fill-Up before we go...

EXT. THE BRONX ZOO - LATE AFTERNOON

Titus and Kimmy stroll through the zoo together, both
enjoying an ice cream cone. Kimmy's dressed in a ridiculous
disguise--big round glasses, a *Golden Girls* dress, and a
Barbra Streisand wig straight out of *A Star is Born*.

KIMMY
Thanks for letting me borrow some
of your costume stuff, Titus.

TITUS
Anytime, baby girl. It's working
like a charm. I don't think a
single person has guessed you're
actually Dustin Hoffman under
there.

Kimmy laughs as they approach the sea lion exhibit.

KIMMY
Oooh, Titus, come on! Let's go see
the sea lions! I think they have
the one from *Andre* here!

She grabs Titus' hand and pulls him toward the enclosure.

EXT. SEA LION ENCLOSURE - MOMENTS LATER

Kimmy and Titus stand at the edge of the pool, watching the sea lions play. One of the animals takes a particular liking to them. It splashes Titus.

TITUS

Excuse me, sir! I did not come here to get wet!

KIMMY

He really didn't. He wears a rain slicker in the shower.

The sea lion splashes Kimmy instead. Just a bit at first, but then more forcefully. The second wave dislodges her wig and sends her glasses flying. Her long hair falls to her shoulders and her gaudy make-up runs down her face.

A family standing nearby recognizes her instantly. Kimmy looks over at them, mortified. A LITTLE GIRL is just about to call attention to her when Titus rips off his tearaway pants and displays his diaper for all to see.

The little girl points to him.

LITTLE GIRL

Hey, that's the Fill-Ups Poo Man!

Everyone in the enclosure turns to look as the sea lion splashes Titus. His diaper swells and his ravenous fans bum rush him. They push Kimmy right out of the way.

RUDE WOMAN

Move! Who even are you?

Kimmy celebrates her reclaimed anonymity.

A LITTLE BOY tugs on Titus' shawl.

LITTLE BOY

Mr. Poo Man, Mr. Poo Man, can I have your autograph?

Titus eats it up. He has fans! It's a dream come true.

And it's a dream come true for someone else, too. Jacqueline appears out of nowhere with a stack of autographed photos.

JACQUELINE

Autographed Poo Man photos! Get your Poo Man photos here! Only \$40!

INT. TITUS AND KIMMY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Kimmy and Titus sit together on the couch.

KIMMY

Thanks for doing what you did today, Titus. Embarrassing yourself for my sake was very "Un-Titus-like" of you.

Evil Titus appears in a nearby mirror.

EVIL TITUS

Yes, it was, Tituses, it was! All for stupid, tricksy, fat Kimmyses! Curse it and crush it! We hates it forever!

TITUS

(to Evil Titus)

Oh, shut up!

(to Kimmy)

Anything for my best friend!

He hugs Kimmy.

TITUS (CONT'D)

I wasn't about to stand by and watch you put yourself right back in that bunker.

(beat)

Besides, I'm not concerned about any lasting embarrassment. There's already another stupid craze sweeping in to take my place.

He uses the barbie broomstick to click on the television. *The Wendy Williams Show* plays on the screen.

WENDY WILLIAMS ANNOUNCER

Live from an old crack den in Koreatown, it's the *Wendy Williams Show*! And here's Wendy!

Wendy Williams struts onto her stage to rapturous applause.

WENDY WILLIAMS

How you doin'?

More applause.

WENDY WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

On today's Hot Topics, we sit down with Mimi Kanasis, author of the New York Time's Best-Selling tell-all, *So I Married the East Dogmouth Strangler*.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE

WHISTLE STOP

"Pilot"

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FINNEGAN FARM - LATE AFTERNOON

A two-bedroom log cabin sits nestled in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. A simple home for a simple family in a simpler time.

SUPER: Whistle Stop, Tennessee, Fall 1940

One of the season's first chilly breezes whistles through the amber autumn wood. It catches the smoke that billows from the cabin's tiny chimney and disperses it into the trees.

A crow flies, silently surveying the land. It perches atop the cabin and caws loudly, startling ROBERT FINNEGAN who's hard at work harvesting the last of the year's tobacco crop.

INT. FINNEGAN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

FRANCIE, a plucky ten-year-old in a dirty handmade dress, sits criss-cross beneath the living room window. She cuts swatches from the curtains with a pair of rusty scissors.

HAZEL, seven, colors on the floor nearby, a droopy-looking hound beside her gnawing on the body of a corn cob doll.

HAZEL

Didn't Mama tell you to quit
cutting them drapes?

FRANCIE

Yes. But I can't very well be
walkin' around town with a buncha
naked dolls. It's indecent.

Hazel scoffs and returns to her coloring.

In a small kitchen tucked away in the back corner of the cabin, LEIGH prepares supper.

Just shy of thirty, but worn from years of hard work, she's the definitive Mountain Mama. With a baby in her arms and another on the way, she juggles her chores with ease.

In one well-choreographed sweep, she lifts a wooden ice-cream maker onto the counter, removes the lid from a pot that bubbles on the stove, stirs the pot, returns the lid, crosses to the ice box and opens it with her foot. She retrieves a bottle of milk that's all but empty.

LEIGH

Mary Frances Finnegan!

Francie looks up, aggrieved.

LEIGH (CONT'D)
Kitchen. Now.

Hazel snickers.

HAZEL
Shouldn'ta cut up them drapes, huh?

Francie shoots Hazel the dirtiest look. Then stands, notices her doll in the dog's mouth, yanks it out, hands it to Hazel for safe-keeping, and proceeds timidly into the kitchen.

LEIGH
What is this?

She brandishes the empty milk bottle.

FRANCIE
Evaporated milk?

A cheeky titter. Leigh isn't amused.

FRANCIE (CONT'D)
Look, I know what you're thinkin',
Mama. But did you ever stop to ask
yourself if maybe it was Hazel?

Hazel glares from the living room. She returns Francie's doll to the dog's mouth and pats him on the head. Good boy.

FRANCIE (CONT'D)
Sure, it was me the last time, and
the time before that, but Daddy's
belt did a damn fine job convincin'
me I shouldn't try it again.

LEIGH
What did I tell you about swearin'?

FRANCIE
Mama, if the Lord hears everything,
it's nothing he ain't heard before.

Leigh's gasp fails to hide her amusement.

LEIGH
You better hush now. Or them
hellfires'll melt your ice cream.

FRANCIE
You're makin' ice cream?

LEIGH
I was gonna. Till somebody gave all
the milk to that mangy old cat.

FRANCIE
It was a different cat this time!
Uh... I assume.

LEIGH
So nobody fed the other one?

Francie shakes her head.

LEIGH (CONT'D)
Well, that won't do. Can't have it
going hungry, now. You'd better run
to town and get some milk from Old
Man Ogle's. On your way home, you
can stop and give it some. Then, if
we have any left over, I guess I
could make some ice cream.

Francie hugs her mother's waist. Leigh slips a coin purse
from her pocket and fishes out a crumpled bill.

LEIGH (CONT'D)
That's more'n enough, so make sure
you bring me back the change. And
take your sister with you. Maybe
she can keep you outta trouble.

Francie huffs. She plods into the living room, takes a
smirking Hazel by the hand, and heads for the door.

LEIGH (CONT'D)
Feed the cat then come straight
home, ya hear?

FRANCIE
Okay, Mama. Love you.

She hurries out the door.

LEIGH
Hazel?

The younger daughter glances back.

LEIGH (CONT'D)
Watch her.

Hazel smiles knowingly and follows her sister onto the porch.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHTFALL

Francie exits the General Store, milk bottle in one hand, a
fistful of coins in the other. Hazel follows closely behind.

They walk down the street together, headed for home. At
least, until Francie sees the Penny Arcade.

FRANCIE
Say, Hazel, how's about you and I
try our luck at the slots.

Hazel shakes her head.

HAZEL
Mama said to come straight home.

FRANCIE
With all this change burnin' a hole
in my pocket? Mama won't mind.

HAZEL
You must be dumber than I thought.

She starts down the road.

FRANCIE
Please. When we get home, I'll take
the whoopin' for the both of us.

HAZEL
One more whoopin' and your butt's
liable to fall clean off.

Her mind's made up. She continues toward home. But she only makes it fifteen feet before slowing to a stop and standing motionless in the street. A cold chill creeps up her back. An ethereal wind whistles. It speaks in a voice only she can hear. And she listens intently.

FRANCIE
Hazel?

No answer.

FRANCIE (CONT'D)
Hazel. What are you doin'?

Hazel turns back towards Francie. A vacant expression rests on her face. It curls into a smile.

HAZEL
I guess the arcade could be fun.

She rejoins Francie and reaches out an open palm.

FRANCIE
Attagirl! Guess you ain't a snotty
little brown-noser after all.

She claps Hazel on the back and drops half the change into her outstretched hand.

FRANCIE (CONT'D)
Just don't tell Mama.

HAZEL
She'll never know.

Francie smiles. She opens the door to the arcade and ushers her sister inside.

INT. PENNY ARCADE - CONTINUOUS

The arcade is eerily empty, but the girls don't mind. No lines! They split up. Hazel runs to the pinball machine. Francie hits the slots. She spends all but one of her coins there and comes out empty-handed. With her final coin, she moves to her favorite machine: the Fortune Teller.

Francie slips her coin into the slot and anxiously waits for her fortune to print. When it does, she grabs it from the tray and reads it excitedly: HELLO, FRANCIE.

She's stunned.

FRANCIE
Wow, these things are gettin' good.
Hazel, c'mere! You gotta try this!

No response. She looks around, but Hazel's nowhere in sight.

She's startled by the sound of another fortune dropping into the tray. She picks it up: KINDA LONELY IN HERE, ISN'T IT?

Now she's frightened.

FRANCIE (CONT'D)
Hazel! HAZEL!

Still no response.

Another fortune prints. She's afraid to look.

DON'T WORRY. SHE WON'T TELL MAMA.

Francie drops the fortune. She looks up at the fortune teller behind the glass. His lifeless smile curls slowly into a devilish grimace. She screams.

FRANCIE (CONT'D)
Hazel! Hazel, where are you?

She runs through the penny arcade, searching end to end, but her sister isn't there.

Tiny fortunes now shoot rapid fire from the machine. They flutter to the ground in front of Francie, but she runs out into the street, too terrified to read them.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Francie spots Hazel at the far end of the street.

FRANCIE
Hazel, come back here! Hazel!

But Hazel doesn't hear her. She's transfixed. She wanders off down the street and descends into the forest.

Francie runs after her.

FRANCIE (CONT'D)
Hazel! Stop it! Come back! HAZEL!

Still, Hazel doesn't listen. She's following something. A song. And it lures her deeper and deeper into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

When Francie reaches the forest line, she hears the song, too. It's haunting, but alluring. She follows it.

VOICE (O.S.)
Uwe la na tsiku.
Su sa sai. Su sa sai.

The song repeats over and over. It grows louder as Francie travels deeper into the wood.

Hazel finally comes to a stop at the entrance to the Cedar Mountain Mine. Long since abandoned, signs are posted all around: DANGER. NO TRESPASSING.

But Hazel doesn't heed their warnings. She steps inside just before Francie can grab her and disappears into the darkness.

Francie takes a deep breath and heads in after her. She fumbles around in the dark.

FRANCIE
Hazel? You're scaring me. What's going on?

No answer. Francie flails her arms about in front of her, hoping to catch hold of her sister. And after a moment, much to her surprise, she does. What a relief! She clutches Hazel's shoulders and swivels her around.

But it isn't her sister who turns to meet her. Who, or what, it is, she can't tell. She only sees a pair of yellow eyes glowing in the blackness.

Her screams echo through the wood.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY - 57 YEARS LATER

The viewfinder of a low-end camcorder reveals the date to be OCT. 15 1997. The time: 4:24 PM.

A red REC icon appears in the top right corner of the screen and the CAMERA OPERATOR calls out from behind the scenes.

CAMERA OPERATOR (O.S.)
And... ACTION!

A ten-year-old girl runs into frame and the camera tracks after her. This is MONTANA MOSELEY, Adventurer Extraordinaire! She leaps over fallen logs and ducks beneath low-hanging branches with impressive agility.

CAMERA OPERATOR (CONT'D)
Montana, they're gainin' on us!

MONTANA MOSELEY
Don't look back, Quick. Just hurry!
The Grotto ain't much further now.
We've got to get to that staff
before the Nazis do. If they raise
the Army of the Undead we're all d--

She grunts as she trips and falls out of frame.

MONTANA MOSELEY (CONT'D)
Cut!

MIKEY PICCIRILLI, the videographer, lowers the camera and our view of the forest opens wide. We see that the girl has tripped at the top of a steep hill and is currently tumbling down into the gully below.

Mikey, the girl's best and only friend, runs down after her. He's a scrawny kid with a bowl haircut and spindly limbs and he's dressed as Montana Moseley's sidekick, Quick Whitman.

MIKEY
Stella Mae, are you alright?

That's right. He called her Stella Mae. Unfortunately for the girl at the bottom of the hill, when the camera stops rolling, she's no longer Montana Moseley.

She may have Montana's fedora and her trademark leather vest, but in reality, she's just plain old STELLA MAE STARKWEATHER, the chubby misfit with a mouth full of braces, enormous Margaret Thatcher glasses, and famously pullable pigtails.

With an OOF, she hits the bottom of the hill, rolls across a short stretch of flat land, and skids to a stop at the boarded-up entrance to an old mine shaft.

Mikey catches up to her, wheezing heavily. He takes a puff from his inhaler and then reaches out a hand to help her.

MIKEY (CONT'D)
You okay?

STELLA
Yeah, fine. Besides, wouldn't be a very good Montana Moseley movie if I didn't get a little banged up.

MIKEY
Do you need some bandages or Neosporin or Robitussin or something? I have some in my bag.

STELLA
No thanks, Mikey. I'm good.

MIKEY
But, what if--

STELLA
Mikey. I'm fine. You can't die from a couple a' little boo-boos.

MIKEY
Actually, my Mom told me about this kid who had a cut on his knee and he didn't put any Neosporin on it and he just kept on playing and eventually his leg went gangrene and they had to cut it off, but the operation went sour cause they waited too long and his whole body got infected and he died.
(resolutely)
And that was just from a cut!

But Stella's not listening--she's turned around, marveling at the mine. She studies a sign that's nailed to a nearby tree.

STELLA
Cedar Mountain Mining Company.
(turns to Mikey)
Did you know this was here?

MIKEY
Uh-uh. My mom did say they used to do a lotta mining around here, but she said if I ever came across one, I'd better stay far away from it.

STELLA

Your mom is such a worrywart. I ain't never heard a' no harm coming to somebody cause a' some old mineshaft.

MIKEY

That's a lie and you know it.
'Member Baby Judy in Kennesaw Gap?
Poor thing dropped 80 meters and drowned in a subterranean lagoon!

STELLA

Oh, stop it. We'll just take a quick look inside. This could be a great location for the movie. It just screams Grotto of Lost Souls!

MIKEY

Yeah, but I didn't realize the lost souls they were talking about were gonna be ours! Look at this place.

He examines the scene.

MIKEY (CONT'D)

Dry rotted boards, shoddily placed with rusty nails and a bunch of random staples--a telltale sign of danger. And if that weren't enough, a literal telltale sign of danger!

He gestures dramatically to a ramshackle signpost. "DANGER! NO TRESPASSING" is scrawled across it in drippy red paint.

STELLA

Mikey, are you or are you not a card-carrying member of the Adventurer's League?

MIKEY

I am.

STELLA

Did Montana Moseley herself not send you an official Adventurer's League badge?

MIKEY

She did.

STELLA

Did she waste a stamp sending that badge to a scaredy cat?

MIKEY

No!

STELLA
I thought not.

She bends down and grabs hold of the lowest board.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Now help me pry these boards loose.

She struggles. Mikey reluctantly bends to help her. Together, they snap the board in two, creating a hole that's just large enough for them to crawl through.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Perfect!

She stoops down and peers into the cavern. It's pitch black inside. And cold. Eerily cold. A strange, breathy voice calls out from deep within.

VOICE (O.S.)
What are you waiting for?

Huh? Stella looks around, frightened.

STELLA
What did you say?

MIKEY
I said, what are you waiting for?
If you're so brave, go on ahead!

Stella breathes a sigh of relief. It was just Mikey... Yeah, just Mikey... But still, it is pretty dark in there...

She backs away from the hole, but the voice calls out to her again. This time, it's singing. She doesn't understand the words, but she knows they're beckoning to her, and she follows them, transfixed.

Mikey doesn't hear a thing. He watches as Stella backs away, changes her mind, and then trudges forward again.

MIKEY (CONT'D)
Stella, wait! I was only joking.

But she doesn't respond. She ducks under the boards, squeezing her plump little body through the gap.

MIKEY (CONT'D)
Stella Mae! Stop it! Mama says an average of twenty-seven children die in mine shaft related incidents every year! You don't want to be a statistic, do you?

No answer.

MIKEY (CONT'D)
If you die, I haven't got anymore
friends!

Desperate, he lunges forward and grabs her ankle. He musters what little strength he has and yanks her out of the hole.

She looks up at him, disgruntled.

STELLA
Hey! I was almost through!

She scurries back over to the opening and pushes her head inside again. He grabs her quickly and pulls her back out.

MIKEY
Stella Mae, stop it! What's wrong
with you? It's dangerous in there!

STELLA
A voice. It was calling me.

MIKEY
Quit playing. You're scaring me.

STELLA
I'm not playing.

MIKEY
You're always playing!

STELLA
I'm not making it up this time, I
swear! Something was in there! And
it wanted me to come inside.

MIKEY
Quit talkin' crazy.

He turns away from her and heads back toward the hill.

MIKEY (CONT'D)
Now, come on. I gotta be home by
five. Mama's at the salon and I
have to be there to console her
when she gets back. Every time she
asks for the Julia Roberts, they
give her the Little Orphan Annie.

Stella runs after him.

STELLA
Just let me look inside real quick.
Please! I'll just be a minute. You
know your mother always stops at
Baskin-Robbins on the way home.

She grabs his shoulders and swivels him around to face her.

STELLA (CONT'D)
31 flavors to choose from, Mikey.
That should buy us plenty a' time.

She smiles a puppy dog smile, knowing it always melts his defenses. And it's about to... when an alarm on Stella's wristwatch blares and startles them both.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Shoot! Is today Wednesday?

Mikey nods.

STELLA (CONT'D)
The new issue. I almost forgot!

She races forward, remembers her fedora, turns back for it, returns it heroically to her head, then hurries up the hill.

STELLA (CONT'D)
C'mon! They're only open till five!

MIKEY
Shame, really. I so wanted to see
what horrible death traps awaited
us in that cave...

Stella claps him on the back.

STELLA
Don't worry. We'll find out
tomorrow!

His stomach churns.

EXT. THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Ten yards off, from the driver's seat of a beat-up blue pickup, a GRIZZLED WOMAN watches, morose.

Nestled inconspicuously behind a bramble patch on the edge of an overgrown dirt road, she stares unceasingly, without moving, without blinking, until Stella and Mikey have crested the hill and disappeared from view.

Satisfied, she rolls up her window and drives off, black smoke from her muffler and dust kicked up from the road combining to cloak her truck as it sputters away.

EXT. FOREST'S EDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Stella and Mikey trudge through the dense underbrush at the edge of the wood.

MIKEY

I'm just letting you know now, I'm
already starting to feel like I'm
coming down with something, so
don't count on me tomorrow.

Stella puts an arm out in front of Mikey.

STELLA

Stop.

MIKEY

I'm serious. I think it's something
gastrointestinal.

STELLA

No. I mean, shh. Be quiet. Look.

She points. Beyond the tree line is a monster more terrifying
than any yet known to the children of Whistle Stop: RANDALL
HIGGINS, the school bully.

Flanked by his similarly menacing henchmen, BUD and SKEETER,
he lifts a bicycle from beneath a leaf pile and cackles,
examining his prize.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Dammit. I told you we needed a
better hiding spot. They're gonna
try to run off with our bikes.

She heads for the tree line.

STELLA (CONT'D)

C'mon!

But Mikey stays put.

MIKEY

What do you wanna get trounced? Let
'em have 'em!

STELLA

Thunderbolt? My trusty steed? No
way. My dad gave me that bike.

She charges into the clearing.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Hey!

Randall turns, just in time to see Mikey emerge from the wood
and take a puff from his inhaler.

RANDALL

If it isn't the dadless duo.

Bud and Skeeter alternate rebarbative sniggers.

STELLA
Those are ours.

RANDALL
Should have known. Training wheels.

He lifts a set of stabilizers from Mikey's bike basket.

MIKEY
My mom put 'em there. Just in case.

RANDALL
You're such a loser.

STELLA
Just give 'em back so we can go.

RANDALL
Fine. I don't need 'em.

He rips the basket off Mikey's bike and chuck's it at Stella. More sniggers from his goons.

STELLA
Can it, Beavis. Butt-Head.
(to Randall)
I meant the bikes.

RANDALL
Oh, these? No. They're ours now.
Finders, Keepers being what it is.

He mounts Mikey's bike.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
It's for your own good. Keep ya
from ridin' out here and playin' in
the woods. Y'all know the Witch
lives in there. And you 'member
what she did to your uncle.

Skeeter straddles Stella's bike, Bud its back carrier.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
If you ain't careful, she'll gut
you, too.

He rides off, sneering. Bud and Skeeter follow.

STELLA
Assholes!

She stomps, defeated.

Mikey unzips his fanny pack.

MIKEY
 You want a Flintstones Chewable?
 They always make me feel better.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

A picture of idyllic small-town Americana. Mayberryesque, as though Gower's Drug Store and Harryhausen's Movie House haven't the foggiest idea it's almost the new millennium.

For the first time in a long time, a new shop, Ogle's Oddities and Ends, has taken up residence on the block.

JIMMY OGLE, proprietor, clean cut, early 30s, stands on a ladder, carefully gilding the lettering on his storefront as the bells at City Hall chime five.

Seemingly on cue, the ever-eccentric MR. HALLEY, 70s, emerges from Halley's Comics, the adjacent establishment, and flips his sign to closed. With his umbrella as a cane, he wobbles off down the street, nodding to Mr. Ogle as he goes.

Soon after, WILLIE WILSON, mid-20s, similarly eccentric, with his own peculiar sort of 1960s nerd aesthetic, follows behind, brown paper bag nestled under his arm. The Seymour Krelborn to Halley's Mr. Mushnik, he locks up the store, then smiles up at Jimmy as he takes a seat on the stoop.

JIMMY
 Willie, right? I'm Jimmy.

WILLIE
 Good to meet you, Jimmy.

JIMMY
 Likewise.

WILLIE
 Congrats on the store, by the way.
 Be nice to have a decent neighbor
 for a change. That Crusty Cropley
 was a real piece of work.

JIMMY
 I didn't know anyone still called
 her that. We made that up when I
 was a kid. "Come on down to Crusty
 Cropley's Crap House, stinkiest
 knick-knacks this side of the
 Mississippi!"

They laugh.

WILLIE
 I thought you were new in town?

JIMMY

Recently returned. I grew up here, but we moved away when I was sixteen. Woulda been, uh... summer of '75. I remember *Jaws* was playing at Harryhausen's when we left.

WILLIE

Never met anyone dumb enough to leave Whistle Stop and regret it.

JIMMY

(laughs)

That certainly seems to be the consensus. But this town's not so dull, really.

WILLIE

How do you suppose?

JIMMY

Well, you've heard the stories. The disappearing colony, Atagâ'hi, the old Cherokee legends. That stuff is golden to a folklorist like me.

WILLIE

You believe it?

JIMMY

Probably more than I'd care to admit in some circles. Everybody loves the X-Files on TV, but tell anyone you're into that sorta thing in real life and suddenly they're wheeling out the straightjackets.

WILLIE

Jimmy, you're not trying to tell me there are aliens in Whistle Stop, are you?

JIMMY

No, of course not. Don't be ridiculous.

(beat)

But do stay inside tonight. There's a full moon and I haven't totally ruled out werewolves.

Stella runs up, out of breath.

STELLA

Sorry I'm late, Willie.

WILLIE

Did you run here?

STELLA
Long story. You closed already?

He nods.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Okay. Well, put one to the side for
me tomorrow, will ya?

She slumps and turns to go. Willie grabs her shoulder.

WILLIE
Wait a second, now.

He slides a crisp new comic book from it's brown paper sleeve
and offers it to Stella. MONTANA MONTHLY #101: AT LAST, THE
SPEAR OF DESTINY!

WILLIE (CONT'D)
This one's way too good to leave
for tomorrow. He's gonna love it.

Stella's face lights up. She hugs him around his neck.

STELLA
Thank you, Willie!

She slips a plastic wallet from her pocket.

STELLA (CONT'D)
What do I owe ya?

WILLIE
It's a gift. From one Moseketeer to
another.

He hands Stella the book and she hugs him again.

STELLA
Willie, I love you! Cause you know
there's nothing in this wallet.

WILLIE
Love you, too, kid. Now go! I'm
sure he's waiting.

She darts off.

STELLA
Later!
(beat)
Sorry for interrupting, Mister!

She waves back to Jimmy. He smiles.

JIMMY
Seems like a good kid.

WILLIE

Yeah. I'm sure you'll be seeing a lot more of her. She's gonna love your store. Name's Stella. Stella Mae Starkweather.

JIMMY

Related to Steve Starkweather?

WILLIE

Yeah, his daughter. You knew him?

JIMMY

He was a few years below me in school. Troubled kid. Terrible what happened to his brother.

WILLIE

You heard about that?

JIMMY

Who didn't? Not every day there's a murder in a place like Whistle Stop. Especially one like that. Horrible.

(shudders)

How is Steve these days?

Willie shakes his head.

INT. POP'S HARDWARE - LATER

A bell rings as RICHARD BUMPUS, early 60s, a blue-collar, flannel-wearing, salt of the earth kinda guy, enters the local hardware store, toolbox in hand. Radiating Appalachian grit, shaped by hard work, and tough as woodpecker lips, he's a mentor to all in Whistle Stop who know him simply as "POP."

He crosses to the back of the store, over-worked knees buckling as he goes, and slings his toolbox onto the counter.

POP

Well, Mrs. Silvestri's toilet is fixed. Again. I told her she cannot keep flushing kitty litter.

(beat)

Did Rodney come in to pick up those bungee cords?

GEORGE BAXTER, thirty-six, Pop's similarly flanneled right hand man, emerges from the back storeroom.

GEORGE

Yeah. And Mr. Fredrickson called about his hot water heater again. I told him you'd stop by tomorrow.

POP
Thanks. Stella make it in?

GEORGE
Nope.

POP
Figured. Comic book day.
I'll go get her.

He tosses George his keys.

POP (CONT'D)
Lock up?

GEORGE
Yeah. Night, Pop.

POP
Goodnight, Georgie.

He pulls on an oil-stained Carhartt and heads out the door.

INT. STARKWEATHER HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The front door flies open. Carrying more grocery bags than it should be possible for such a tiny woman to carry, JESSICA STARKWEATHER, thirty-five, steps inside and kicks off her clogs. With a bare foot, she swings the door shut, and with a shoulder, she switches on the light.

Like every other day, she returns home in a bland pair of scrubs, her frazzled hair tied half-up with a scrunchie.

JESSICA
Sammy, Stella, I'm home.

No response, of course. Who could hear her over the sound of Alison Krauss' *Steel Rails* blaring through the house?

She slings her purse onto the dining room table, then crosses to the kitchen and slides her grocery bags onto the counter.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Sammy, hon, can you stop that for a minute? Come help me put some groceries away.

Again, no answer. The music continues.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Sammy!

Still nothing. With a huff, Jessica stomps down the hall to her son's room, finds his door cracked, and pushes it open.

On his bed, SAMMY, sixteen, '90s teen gone country (complete with DiCaprio's "heartthrob" haircut), picks his mandolin to the music, jamming like no one's watching.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Sammy!

Startled, he drops his pick.

SAMMY
Mom! What if I had been naked?

JESSICA
Please, it's not like I haven't
seen your little dingle before.

SAMMY
Mom!

JESSICA
Sorry, sorry, I'll knock next time.
Just turn that off for a bit. I
need some help in the kitchen.

Sammy sets his mandolin in its stand and mashes the power button on his boombox. He joins his mother in the hallway.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
You're soundin' real good, ya know.

She smiles, then cracks Stella's bedroom door.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
C'mon, Sweet Pea, dinner.

No response. She swings the door wide. No one's there.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Is your sister in her clubhouse?

SAMMY
Isn't she supposed to be with Pop?

Jessica palms her forehead.

JESSICA
Right, right. Gosh. I'm glad I have
you to keep my head on straight.

She puts an arm around Sammy's shoulder and squeezes him in for a hug. They cross to the kitchen.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
I guess we'll wait to eat. Glad I
got an extra burger for Pop.

SAMMY
Ugh, McDonald's.

Jessica fishes a large McDonald's sack from one of the grocery bags and plops it guiltily onto the table.

JESSICA
Sorry, bub. I don't have time to make anything else. I gotta cover the overnight at the motel.

SAMMY
Again?

He joins his mother in storing groceries.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Can't the manager cover? You're working yourself to death.

JESSICA
We need the money.

SAMMY
I can get a job.

JESSICA
I told you, school is your job.

SAMMY
It'll only be a few nights a week. I already have an interview at the video store.

JESSICA
Chick's Flicks? Ugh. No. I hate that man.

SAMMY
It's not that bad, Ma. Huck works there. And his brother Dewey's the manager, so we'll barely even have to see Chick. Please?

JESSICA
Fine. Just promise me it won't interfere with your schoolwork.

SAMMY
I promise.

JESSICA
Good. Cause what we really need around here is college degree money, not video store money.

SAMMY

Don't worry, Ma. One of these days
I'm gonna buy you the moon.

JESSICA

You're a good man, Sammy.

SAMMY

Better than him, anyway.

JESSICA

What did I tell you about saying
stuff like that?

A moment of awkwardness.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Why don't you do me a favor and go
put some laundry on? I don't have
any clean uniforms.

Sammy nods and hurries off, leaving his mother to ruminate.

EXT. ENTWISTLE ELMS CEMETERY - DUSK

Stella sits amongst the fallen leaves at the base of a sprawling tree, Montana Monthly #101 laid open in her lap.

With showmanship, she performs the issue's final panels like a radio drama. Music, sound effects, accents, the whole nine.

STELLA

Montana ignites her torch. WHOOSH.
It illuminates the passage in front
of her. Bone fragments pepper the
walls like coquina.

(as Montana)

This is it. The Cavern of Sorrows.

A musical sting. Dramatic, like Williams' *Miracle of the Ark*.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Two troughs of oil line the
passageway, extending off into the
darkness. Montana lights one.
WHOOSH. Then the other. WHOOSH.
Flames race down the corridor.
Montana and Quick follow, emerging
from the antechamber into a
treasury encircled with flames. In
its center, a golden burial table
and a glass-topped sarcophagus.

(as Montana)

Hic jacet Longinus, centurio,
confidio Christi.

(MORE)

STELLA (CONT'D)
 Here lies Longinus, centurion,
 piercer of Christ.
 (beat)
 We've done it, Quick. The Spear of
 Destiny.

Pop approaches. He sits down next to Stella and puts an arm around her. She smiles up at him, but doesn't skip a beat.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 Suddenly, a voice from the
 darkness.

POP
 (in a bad German accent)
 Vell, vell, vell... I'm afraid I've
 underestimated you, Dr. Moseley.

STELLA
 (as Montana)
 Oberhauser.

POP
 It appears you have indeed been
 chosen by God... to hand deliver ze
 Spear to ze Zousand Year Reich!

STELLA
 He smashes the sarcophagus with his
 elbow and pries the spear from
 Longinus' mummified grip. Then he
 raises it into the air and screams--

POP
 Heil, mein Führer!
 (as himself)
 Nazi bastard.

Stella feverishly flips the page.

STELLA
 And... darn it! That's it. Another
 cliffhanger, Dad.

We pull out to reveal she's been reading to a tombstone.
 STEVEN STARKWEATHER. 1962-1997. LOVING HUSBAND AND FATHER. ON
 TO NEW ADVENTURES.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 (narration voice)
 Will Montana and Quick stop Hitler
 from harnessing the power of the
 Holy Lance? Find out next month in:
 Beware, the Blood and Soil!

A dramatic musical outro. She closes the book.

Hi, Pop. STELLA (CONT'D)

She plants a kiss on his cheek.

POP
Hiya, Sweet Pea. You ready to go?

STELLA
Mm-hmm. Sorry I didn't make it by
the store today.

POP
Some things are more important than
sorting drywall screws.

They share a smile.

POP (CONT'D)
How was school?

STELLA
Good. We played Oregon Trail in computer lab.

She zips her comic into her backpack and stands.

STELLA (CONT'D)
I died of dysentery.

Pop smirks.

POP
Couldn't get your shit together?

Stella laughs and offers him a hand.

STELLA
You drove here, right? I'm really tired of walking.

As they pass, she kisses two fingers and touches them to her father's headstone.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Love you, Dad. Be back soon.
Adventurer's honor.

She trots off. Pop holds back, lowers his head, and solemnly rests his palm against the stone. With a sigh, he collects himself, then hurries to join her.

POP
Wait, what do you mean you're tired
of walking? Where's Thunderbolt?

STELLA

Randall Higgins took her.

POP

That little shit stain. I'm calling his father as soon as we get home.

STELLA

No! Please. If you do that, I might as well just stay here and dig myself a plot. He'll pulverize me!

POP

Well you're not just gonna let him have it, are ya? Montana would never let Oberhauser get away with something like this.

STELLA

Yeah, but she also wouldn't need her Pop to call Oberhauser's dad. She'd just beat the snot out of him and take it back.

POP

Good. 'Member what I taught ya?

She nods, then demonstrates.

STELLA

Nose, neck, nuts.

Jab to the nose, elbow to the neck, knee to the groin.

POP

Perfect.

EXT. POP'S HARDWARE - DUSK

A chilly autumn breeze nudges at the leaf litter collecting around the tires of the rusty blue pickup parked haphazardly by a dumpster in the alley behind Pop's Hardware.

The fire exit door swings open. George, oversized garbage bag in hand, steps into the lane just as a discarded 2x4 launches itself from the dumpster and lands with a clatter on the pavement. Another follows. Then another.

GEORGE

Who's there? I'll call the police.

DUMPSTER VAGRANT (O.S.)

Oh, don't get your titties twisted.

George scowls.

GEORGE
 You better get the hell outta
 there, Old Lady. I told you not to
 come around here beggin'.

A fourth 2x4 leaps out and lands among the others, followed quickly by a handful of loose nails.

DUMPSTER VAGRANT (O.S.)
 I ain't beggin'. I'm takin'.

A woman peeks over the rim of the dumpster. The same woman who'd watched as Stella and Mikey exited the wood. An old woman, late 60s, with a tangled mane of grey hair hanging at her shoulder in a shapeless bun, one eye milky, assuredly blind, the other piercing, a window to a tortured soul.

For now, we'll call this woman THE WITCH. Everyone else does.

THE WITCH
 And you oughta be thankin' me.

GEORGE
 For what?

She vaults over the dumpster's edge and lands among her take.

THE WITCH
 Any luck, you'll never haveta know.

GEORGE
 You got a lotta nerve showing up
 here, spoutin' your nonsense.

The Witch pays little attention to George's rebuke. She's heard it before. No sense fighting. She simply tosses her boards into her truck bed and offers the occasional grunt.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 You're lucky I'm not Pop. He'd
 shoot you dead on sight.

THE WITCH
 November 1st, I'll give him the
 bullet.

She climbs into her truck.

GEORGE
 I ever see you around here again,
 I'll shoot you myself.

THE WITCH
 I'd hold ya to it if I thought ya
 had the nads.

She cackles, honks twice, then speeds off.

EXT. PUSHAW STATION - DUSK

The poorest section of town, the backwoods' backwoods. But for the Starkweathers, "Shawnees" since '81, it's home. And they like it just fine.

So do the Milligans, their nearest neighbors, all eight of them, who share three bedrooms just down the street.

Naturally, the Milligans spend much of their time outside.

And this evening, as on many before it, that's where Pop finds them as he rides by: GARNER beside the house splitting firewood, WILLADEENE, RANDY, FREIDA, AND FLOYD running around the yard, LARRY on the porch with his TALKING BARNEY, and DODIE at the mailbox with little CASSIE on her hip.

POP
Evenin', Dodie. Congratulations.

DODIE
Oh, thank you, Pop.

She touches her belly.

DODIE (CONT'D)
This Halloween we're going as the Bradys. Next year, the von Trapps.

POP
Still plannin' on a baker's dozen?

DODIE
No. After this'n, kitchen's closed.

Pop laughs.

POP
Well, anything I can do for y'all, just holler.

DODIE
Thanks, Pop. My best to Miss Susie.

Pop nods, honks twice to catch Garner's attention, waves, then continues down the road.

In a hundred feet or so, past a crooked mailbox, he turns off onto a long gravel drive and follows it through the wood to the Starkweathers' small rambler.

It's modest, but well kept. Not pitiable by any means. Just a starter home for a family who'd hoped by now they'd be long past the starting line.

INT. STARKWEATHER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Stella bursts through the door.

STELLA
Mama, we're home!

She kicks her shoes off willy-nilly and runs for the kitchen.

Almost instantaneously, Jessica hits her with her famous staccato grunt, a monosyllabic utterance known far and wide to mean, "You better think again."

Just as instantaneously, Stella grins guiltily, turns back, and straightens her shoes against the wall with the others.

JESSICA
Thank you. Now c'mere.

She pulls her daughter into her arms for a tight embrace.

STELLA
Mama, ow, my bones.

JESSICA
Please. Did Montana complain about her bones when she got attacked by that boa constrictor in Bosnia?

STELLA
Borneo, Mom. And it was a python.

JESSICA
Same difference.

Stella shakes her head, not meaning to hurt her mother's feelings, but certainly doing so. Jessica tries to hide it, but the disconnect is palpable. She knows she's no good at being the fun parent. But at least she's trying...

Thankfully, Pop steps in and breaks the tension.

POP
Hey, Jessie.

She stands and kisses his cheek.

JESSICA
Y'all have a good day at work?

Stella looks at Pop, unsure how to respond.

POP
Sure did. We got a natural-born handyman here, Jessie.

He points to Stella. She nods along with his ruse.

JESSICA
 Well, good. Maybe you can figure
 out why the tap's gurgling mud.

Stella grimaces.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
 Y'all hungry?

They nod enthusiastically and follow her to the kitchen.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
 Sammy, come on, dinner!

Stella sits at the table. Pop slides her backpack off his shoulder, drops it beside her, then takes a seat himself.

Jessica divvies out paper plates, one unwrapped dollar menu cheeseburger on each, then dumps two boxes of fries onto an empty plate in the center of the table.

STELLA
 Looks good, Mama.

JESSICA
 Hold on. Can't forget our veggies.

With flair, she sprinkles ketchup packets onto the table. Stella claps satirically. They share a laugh.

Jessica smiles to herself. Small victories. She joins Pop and Stella at the table.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
 Wanna say the blessin', Stella?

Stella nods. They join hands.

STELLA
 (hollers)
 Sammy! Blessin'! You ain't
 grateful, you ain't eatin'!

Sammy slinks in from the hallway, sits, and closes the prayer circle. Pop squeezes his hand affectionately.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 Okay. Bow your heads.
 (clears her throat)
 Thanks for the shower, thanks for
 the tub, thanks for my family,
 thanks for the grub.

ALL
 Amen.

JESSICA
That was very nice. Thank you.

Stella curtsies. And then the front door bursts open again and a voice radiates through the foyer. A voice that elicits a grin from Sammy and a groan from everyone else. A voice attempting its best *4 Non Blondes*.

HUCK (O.S.)
(singing)
And I say, hey-ey-ey-ey-ey, hey-ey-ey,
I said, "Hey..."

The singer leaps into the kitchen.

HUCK (CONT'D)
...what's going on?"

Jazz hands. And (what he believes to be) a well-deserved bow.

Sammy claps. Everyone else just stares.

This isn't an unusual entrance by HUCKLEBERRY FINNERTY's standards. In fact, there's very little he'd classify as unusual. Perhaps that's what makes him a perfect foil for the overly-ordinary Sammy, with whom, for whatever reason, and it is a mystery to most, he's been best friends since grade one.

HUCK (CONT'D)
Is this a bad time? I can just wait
for you in the living room, Sammy.

He backs away.

JESSICA
Don't be ridiculous, Huck. Get in
here and make yourself a plate.

HUCK
I don't want to intrude, Mrs. S.

STELLA
You let yourself into our house.

JESSICA
Stella.
(beat)
There's plenty, hon, c'mon. Here.

She skids her plate across the table to an unoccupied seat.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Why don't you get yourself
something to drink.

He grabs a glass off the table and crosses to the sink.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Just don't get it from the--

Too late. A brown sludge bubble explodes from the spigot.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Huck, I am so sorry.

She jumps up, grabs a dish towel, and helps him clean off.

HUCK
It's all good, Mrs. S. This
happened at my place once. Only
there it came from the shower head,
so... count your blessings.

POP
I'll take a look at it before I go,
Jessie. Should be an easy fix.

JESSICA
Good. Lord knows I can't afford a
plumber right now.

She crosses back to the table.

HUCK
Might not have to worry about that
too much longer, Mrs. S. I got
Sammy here a job interview.

STELLA
Where at? Radio Hack?

She cracks herself up.

SAMMY
It's at Chick's Flicks, dillweed.

POP
Ugh, that shyster.

HUCK
He's actually a real Renaissance
man, Pop.

POP
What was the Renaissance, Huck?

HUCK
What do you mean *was*? It happens
every May at Ye Olde Fairgrounds.
(beat)
Point is, Sammy needs a job and my
brother Dewey's the regional
manager, so...

JESSICA
Chick's is a franchise now?

HUCK
Chick has a toe in every pond, Mrs. S. That's why it's so lucky he's got eleven toes. There's just the one video store, but he's also got Chick's Tricks Novelty Shop, Chicks's Kicks Discount Shoe Warehouse, and coming soon, Chick's Wicks. For specialty candles.

POP
Lyin', cheatin', and stealin' at every one of 'em, no doubt.

HUCK
For \$7 an hour and unlimited free rentals, who cares? Who else can say they've seen *Honey, We Shrunk Ourselves* sixty-three times?

STELLA
Who would want to?

POP
I told you I can find some work for you at the store, Sammy.

SAMMY
You can't afford it, Pop. And they actually need help at Chick's.

HUCK
Mary Ellen Moffit quit cause I'm, quote, very distracting. Guess I made her too thirsty.

STELLA
For what? Bleach?

SAMMY
And Vivienne Hammond's out of town for the month so they're pretty short-staffed.

STELLA
Why would the mayor's daughter have a job in the first place?

POP
So her dad can pretend they're just shitkickers like the rest of us.

SAMMY

Well, my interview's Friday and I'm going, so... end of story, I guess.
(stands)

You ready, Huck? We can't be late.

JESSICA

Late for what?

SAMMY

Auditions. I told you. For the bluegrass showcase at the Bicentennial Bash. We're trying to get Amity Harbor Patrol a spot.

JESSICA

Right, right. Well, good luck.

STELLA

You're gonna need it.

He flips her the bird and she flips one right back. It's playful. Warm, even. Their secret sibling handshake.

HUCK

Thanks for dinner, Mrs. S.

JESSICA

Anytime, Huck. Knock 'em dead.

STELLA

Shouldn't be hard with that breath.

Another secret handshake as Sammy and Huck head out.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Can I be excused, too? Gotta do some rewrites.

JESSICA

If you have homework tonight, do that first, please.

STELLA

Okay.

JESSICA

Stark Tower?

Stella nods.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Alright, well, write us a hit. I gotta do a shift at the motel tonight, so I'll come up and check on you before I go.

Stella slings her backpack over one shoulder.

STELLA
Thanks, Mama.
(beat)
Oh, and here. I saved you half.

She slides her plate to Jessica, then whispers in her ear.

STELLA (CONT'D)
I know you gave the last burger to
Huck.

She kisses her mother's cheek.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Night, Pop. Love you.

He waves as she scampers out the back door.

POP
You want me to babysit tonight?

JESSICA
Would you mind?

She starts to clear the table.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
That can be your punishment for
lying to me. I know Stella didn't
show up for work. You think I'm an
idiot? It's comic book day.

POP
I'm sorry, Jessie. I just... I know
you two have been clashing lately.

JESSICA
Yeah, cause she's always lying to
me. Telling tales. Just like her
father. You shouldn't encourage it.

POP
I just want her to remember him.
The way she thinks he was.

JESSICA
So do I, Pop. But she needs to
learn some responsibility. He never
did. And look where that got him.
Wrapped around a goddamn tree.

She starts to cry.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
And I'm worried she's headed down
the same path. Like one day, under
some grand delusion, she's just
gonna get on that bike of his and
ride straight off a cliff.

POP
I don't think you need to worry too
much about that. She doesn't even
have that bike anymore. Apparently
Randall Higgins took it.

JESSICA
That little shit. I'll kill him!

She picks up the phone.

POP
Jessie, no. Let Stella deal with
it. She can handle herself. She is
her father's daughter, after all.

JESSICA
That's what I'm afraid of.

EXT. THE WOODS - EARLY AFTERNOON - THE FOLLOWING DAY

Mikey situates the camera on a stump and presses record.

MIKEY
And... action!

They jump into character.

STELLA
(as Montana)
That's it, Quick! You're a genius.

MIKEY
(as Quick)
I am?

STELLA
Don't you see? He's been giving us
the answer this whole time.

She retrieves a scrap of parchment from her satchel. Clearly
printer paper she's aged with a tea bag and a lighter.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Look. It's an anagram.

MIKEY
 (as himself, whispering)
 What are you doing? This isn't in
 the script?

STELLA
 I made a few changes. Go with it.

He nods.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 (as Montana)
 Look. It's an anagram. I see and I
 am honored. I. S. A. I. A. H.
 Isaiah. 2:20 isn't a time stamp,
 it's a bible verse!

MIKEY
 Brilliant.

Mikey's genuinely impressed.

STELLA
 At that time, men will throw their
 silver and gold idols, which they
 made for themselves to worship,
 into the caves where the rodents
 and bats dwell.
 (beat)
 The entrance to the Grotto's in a
 cave, Quick. The Cave of Bethel.

MIKEY
 (as himself)
 Nope. No. Cut!

He turns off the camera.

MIKEY (CONT'D)
 That's an accident waiting to
 happen, Stella, and you know it.

STELLA
 But Mikey, it's perfect!
 The new pages--

MIKEY
 Don't need to be filmed on
 location. We can shoot establishing
 shots at the adit and my basement
 can fill in for the rest.

STELLA
 How realistic. A Cave of Bethel
 lined with shag carpeting...

MIKEY
You're impossible.

He looks at his watch, then starts up the hill.

MIKEY (CONT'D)
C'mon. Recess is almost over.

Stella hurries after him.

STELLA
Please, Mikey.

He turns to face her.

MIKEY
My mind's made up, Stella. If
Spielberg can shoot *Jaws* in Verna
Fields' pool, we can shoot this in
my basement.

He walks backwards, gloatingly, swept up in the elation of a rare victory. Stella wouldn't dare question Spielberg...

Distracted, he backs onto the dirt path that separates the wood from the schoolyard. He doesn't notice the blue pickup that barrels toward him at full speed.

Stella yanks him to safety in the nick of time and the truck screeches to a stop in front of them.

Its driver sends shivers down their spines.

THE WITCH
What the hell, kid! You tryna get
yourself killed?

Mikey quivers, too frightened to answer. Like every kid in Whistle Stop, he knows the stories. This woman's certifiable.

THE WITCH (CONT'D)
S'matter? Deaf, dumb, or stupid?

Again, just blank stares.

THE WITCH (CONT'D)
What was y'all doin' out here,
anyway, huh? I know you wasn't
messin' around at that old mine.

They both shake their heads.

THE WITCH (CONT'D)
Hate to find out about something
bad happenin' to ya if you did.
(MORE)

THE WITCH (CONT'D)

Way I understand it, a lotta people
gone in there and never come back.
Kids, mostly. Like y'all. Said they
heard a voice callin'.

(beat)

Tell you the truth, it sounds like
hokum to me. But why tempt fate?
Round these parts, not every
story's just a story.

(beat)

Understand what I mean?

Fervid nodding.

THE WITCH (CONT'D)

Is that a yes?

MIKEY

Yes, ma'am.

STELLA

Yes, Miss Witch.

Mikey punches Stella's arm. He laughs nervously.

MIKEY

She's sorry. She didn't mean to say
that. She just kinda... It just...
Please don't make her liver into a
lampshade.

The Witch cackles.

THE WITCH

Why would I do that? Her skin would
work so much better.

Gulp.

THE WITCH (CONT'D)

But y'all best be runnin' along
now. Wouldn't want you to keep Ms.
Nelson waiting. Just remember what
old Witch Hazel told ya. If you'd
like your internal organs to stay,
well, internal, you'd best keep out
of these woods.

She grins wide, exposing two gappy rows of long-neglected
teeth, then waves them off.

But they just stand there, paralyzed, nodding stupidly until
the Witch blares her horn and startles them into action.

They hurry across the road and disappear into the schoolyard
without looking back.

INT. MS. NELSON'S FIFTH GRADE CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lecturing at the front of her classroom, MS. NELSON, late 20s, looks more like a Ronette than a fifth grade teacher.

Nevertheless, her kitschy '60s-throwback style and her infectiously sunny disposition make her a favorite amongst the children at Whistle Stop Elementary.

MS. NELSON

Alright class, as you know, the Bicentennial Bash starts one week from tomorrow and we're gonna be kicking off the festivities right here at Whistle Stop Elementary! Mayor Hammond needs all of our help to make it a success, so this morning, his office sent over a short video to help us prepare. I'd like to play it for you before we dismiss for lunch.

The STUDENTS let out a collective groan.

MS. NELSON (CONT'D)
Oh, come on. It won't take long.

She reaches for the door just as Stella and Mikey open it from the other side. They stare up at her sheepishly.

MS. NELSON (CONT'D)
Ms. Starkweather, Mr. Piccirilli.
Nice of you to finally join us.

STELLA
Sorry, Ms. Nelson. Won't happen again.

MS. NELSON
See that it doesn't.

They nod and hurry toward the two empty desks at back of the classroom. Ms. Nelson disappears into the hallway.

As Mikey passes, Randall extends a beefy leg and sends him sprawling across the linoleum. Bud and Skeeter roar.

RANDALL
He's such a faggot he can't even stand up straight!

His mullet bobs as he cackles.

Stella fumes. She's about to say something, but Mikey shakes his head. She offers him a hand and lifts him to his feet.

MIKEY

Thanks.

Beet red, he takes his seat. Stella stomps off to hers, mad as a wet hen.

Ms. Nelson returns, wheeling in the television cart. She positions it in front of the class and pops in the tape. The video whirrs to life. She turns out the light and takes a seat at her desk as MAYOR HAMMOND appears on the screen.

MAYOR HAMMOND

Greetings to Whistle Stop's finest! Mayor Hammond here with a very special invitation. As you all know, we're about to celebrate an enormous milestone: the 200th anniversary of our beloved Whistle Stop. Though known to many as "the Sleepiest Little Town in the Smokies," here at City Hall, we know Whistle Stop has a rich and exciting history, and we need you to help us share it. In partnership with Principal Owens and the exceptional staff at WSE, we've developed a brand new take on the school's annual history fair and we're gonna use it to open our Bicentennial Bash with a bang! Each class has been assigned a unique era of Whistle Stop's history and it'll be up to you to research that era to develop a short vignette to perform at next Friday's kick off. Doesn't that sound exciting!? Your teachers have your assignments and they're all set to begin, so what are we waiting for? Let's make this a fair to remember!

The video crackles out. Ms. Nelson hits the light just as the lunch bell sounds. Her students rush to the door.

MS. NELSON

Stella, Mikey, stay behind for a moment. I'd like to speak with you.

STUDENTS

Ooooooooooooh...

MS. NELSON

That'll be quite enough of that, thank you.

Stella and Mikey approach her desk.

MS. NELSON (CONT'D)
 Why were you late coming back from
 recess today? Haven't we talked
 about this?

They nod.

MS. NELSON (CONT'D)
 Nazis again?

More nods.

MS. NELSON (CONT'D)
 I see.
 (beat)
 Now I realize they must be stopped,
 and I know you two are just the
 team to do it, but I really need
 you to start taking your schoolwork
 a little more seriously.
 (beat)
 Do you know what the Nazis
 considered to be the greatest
 threat to their power?

They shake their heads.

MS. NELSON (CONT'D)
 Knowledge. You see,
 (grabs Mikey's arms)
 You don't have to have big muscles
 (taps Stella's glasses)
 Or perfect 20/20 vision to defeat
 your enemies. You just need to
 outsmart them. I learned that from
 the best.

She pulls open one of her desk drawers and retrieves a shiny golden pin. She holds it up for Stella and Mikey to see.

MIKEY
 You're in the Adventurer's League!?

MS. NELSON
 Lifelong Moseketeer. When I was a
 little girl I wrote to Eleonora
 Spruce and she actually wrote me
 back. You know what she told me?
 The most important adventure of all
 begins in the classroom.

STELLA
 Sounds like a bad motivational
 poster.

Ms. Nelson gasps.

MS. NELSON

Are you really gonna tell the creator of Montana Moseley that her sage advice sounds like it came from a lousy poster?

STELLA

No! No. Please don't tell the League I said that.

MS. NELSON

I won't. If... you promise to start putting a little more effort into your schooling.

(beat)

And I'd like you to begin by taking the lead on this history project. I want you two to write our script. You're very creative.

She smiles.

MS. NELSON (CONT'D)

What do you say?

Stella reaches out a hand to shake Ms. Nelson's.

STELLA

You've got yourself a deal.

MS. NELSON

Good. We'll talk logistics when you get back. Just don't tell anyone we had this conversation. League membership's secret, you know.

Stella and Mikey both raise two fingers in the air.

STELLA AND MIKEY

Adventurer's honor.

They turn to go.

MS. NELSON

Oh, and one more thing. Something else Ms. Spruce told me. Explore everything. You often find adventure in the sleepiest places.

They nod and hurry out. Ms. Nelson smiles and leans back in her chair, congratulating herself on a game well-played.

INT. WHISTLE STOP ELEMENTARY CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

Stella and Mikey sit at their own table, a secluded two-seater wedged between the snack machines and the trash cans.

Behind them, a poster hangs on the wall. On it, a teacher stands atop a mountain of books and raises an apple into the air in triumph. Written across it in block letters, a slogan: THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVENTURE OF ALL BEGINS IN THE CLASSROOM!

Mikey and Stella have never noticed the poster before and they don't notice it now. They're far too engrossed in their own conversation.

MIKEY

That's not what she was saying at all. No teacher in her right mind would tell her kids to go play in a mine. And another thing. While we're on the subject of people who are out of their minds, you heard the Witch. She'll kill us if we go back down there.

STELLA

She's all talk. Last month I heard her tell Lenny at the Gas-N-Sip she'd kill him if he didn't refill her slurpie cup. I think she's got something in that mine she doesn't want us to find. And doesn't that kinda make you wanna find it?

MIKEY

Nope. I've actually never wanted to find anything less.

(beat)

What about the people she said were disappearing in there? The one's that were hearing voices. Didn't you say you heard a voice?

STELLA

My mind was just playing tricks. I don't know what I heard. She's probably the one hearing voices. The woman's a lunatic!

Randall and his henchmen approach with their garbage.

RANDALL

That's rich. The girl who wears a cheap Halloween costume every day calling someone else a lunatic...

STELLA

Go away, Randall. I don't feel like smelling your ass breath right now.

The cafeteria falls silent. Nobody talks back to Randall like that. Least of all a nobody like Stella Mae Starkweather.

RANDALL
What did you just say to me?

STELLA
I said, get your stinky ass breath
out of my face and leave us alone.

RANDALL
(to Mikey)
Hey. Fruit cake. Why don't you tell
your fugly little friend here she
shouldn't talk to a man that way.

Mikey says nothing. He's paralyzed with fear.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Oh, that's right. You wouldn't know
anything about being a man. Ain't
got nobody to teach ya since your
dad walked out.

Bud and Skeeter join him in a wicked cackle.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Parents didn't love each other?

Mikey takes a deep breath, contemplating his next move.

MIKEY
At least my parents aren't cousins.

Randall's taken aback.

RANDALL
What did you say, fudge packer?

STELLA
He said, you're an inbred little
degenerate.

RANDALL
Well that sure ain't very nice. And
I thought you was a Moseketeer. You
don't deserve to wear this badge.

He rips Mikey's Moseketeer badge from his shirt and snaps it
in half. He tosses the pieces into the garbage.

Mikey fights to hold back tears.

STELLA
You son of a bitch!

By this point, the whole cafeteria's watching.

RANDALL
To apologize, gimme your Yoo-hoo.

He swipes a pudgy mitt at Mikey's milk carton, but Stella grabs it first and holds it tight.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Give it to me, you little shit!

STELLA
Don't you get enough milk from
suckling your mother's tits!?

This one elicits gasps from the crowd.

Randall revs up his fist and punches at Stella. She ducks, just in the nick of time, and he smashes his hand against the vending machine. He recoils in pain.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Damn, fat ass. If you want it that
bad, have it!

She smashes the carton over his head and milk explodes onto him. Everyone watching is floored. And Randall is pissed.

RANDALL
That's it, bitch! You're done!

He swings at her again, but she blocks it with her tray. Breathing heavily, she remembers Pop's lesson.

STELLA
Nose.

She jams the tray straight into his face...

STELLA (CONT'D)
Neck.

...lands an uppercut elbow to his throat...

STELLA (CONT'D)
Nuts.

...then lays him out flat with a knee to the groin.

Cheers erupt throughout the cafeteria.

Stella's as stunned as anyone. She knows she can't hold her own any longer. She grabs Mikey and they dart into the hall.

Enraged, Randall stands and hobbles after them.

RANDALL
You're dead. Dead! You can only run
so far, you little assholes!

INT. WHISTLE STOP ELEMENTARY HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

As Stella and Mikey whip around a corner, PRINCIPAL OWENS emerges from his office and catches Randall by his collar.

PRINCIPAL OWENS
In-school suspension, Mr. Higgins.
A week.

He leads him away.

Around the bend, Mikey pulls Stella into a tight hug.

MIKEY
That was amazing. I can't believe you just did that!

STELLA
I can't believe I got away with it.

Ms. Nelson rounds the corner with her lunch. Fearing the worst, Stella and Mikey stand at attention as she passes, trying to look as innocent as they know how. Much to their surprise, she doesn't reprimand them. She simply smiles.

MS. NELSON
Finding adventure already, I see.

She winks and continues down the hall.

EXT. WHISTLE STOP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YARD - AFTER SCHOOL

The bell rings and children flood out of the building. Stella and her act of defiance are the talk of the student body.

HENRIETTA NESBITT
I didn't know she had it in her.

TABITHA GELLAR
I didn't even know she went here.

BILLY RAY GUNDERSON
Did you hear what she said about his mother's tits? Legendary!

Stella and Mikey exit the school and descend the stairs into the schoolyard. Students point and stare.

MIKEY
Everyone's talking about you.

STELLA
It'll be old news by tomorrow.

MIKEY

I don't know. You're kind of a big deal now.

As if to prove Mikey's point, TAMILEE WEBBER, queen bee of the Whistle Stop Elementary mean girls, approaches them. She's accompanied, as always, by POPPY and PRUNELLA PETERSON, her pretentious twin sidekicks.

TAMILEE

Stacy, right?

Stella clams up. She doesn't know how to talk to popular people. She's never had to. She just nods.

TAMILEE (CONT'D)

I gotta give you major snaps, girl. That was hella phat.

STELLA

Um. Thanks... I think.

Tamilee holds up her hand for a high-five. Stella attempts it and makes slight contact. Score!

TAMILEE

See ya around, I guess.

She and her friends walk off.

POPPY (O.S.)

Is she new here?

Stella Mae's in shock. Mikey's elated.

MIKEY

You just got a high-five from the most popular girl in school. Do you know what this means?

STELLA

They'll finally stop calling me Stella Mae Stinkweather?

MIKEY

Probably not. But maybe! And that's a start. Plus...

He points to a bike rack across the schoolyard where Thunderbolt and Lightning have been left unattended.

MIKEY (CONT'D)

With Randall tied up for a bit, we can take our bikes back.

STELLA

Thunderbolt!

Stella runs to her bike and nearly embraces it. Overjoyed, Mikey reunites with his helmet, knee pads, and elbow pads.

STELLA (CONT'D)
We better hurry and get outta here.
This is a temporary victory, Mikey.

They ride off.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Any minute now Principal Owens is
gonna escort Randall outside and
it'll all be over.

As if on cue, Principal Owens releases Randall onto the stoop. Stella and Mikey are too far gone to notice. But Randall certainly notices them. And if looks could kill, they'd drop right off their bikes, dead as doornails.

Randall barrels down the steps to the schoolyard, knocks poor BERNADETTE D'ANGELO from her bike, and mounts it himself.

EXT. THE STREETS OF WHISTLE STOP - CONTINUOUS

Stella and Mikey ride on.

STELLA
You didn't think he'd let us live
after what we did today, did you?

MIKEY
I was kinda ridin' high off this
whole newfound popularity thing. I
didn't really think about it.

STELLA
The boy who can come up with 1001
ways to die in any situation,
didn't think, after that
humiliation, Randall Higgins would
be planning on wringin' his neck?

RANDALL (O.S.)
I ain't just plannin' on wringin'
necks, shitface! I'm gonna beat the
living hell outta you two!

Horrified, Stella and Mikey glance back and see Randall about 100 feet off. He pedals wildly on Bernadette's tiny pink bike, vengeance in his eyes.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
I hope you two like eatin' through
a feedin' tube!

They pedal around a bend as fast as their little legs can manage and disappear temporarily from Randall's view.

MIKEY
We'll never outrun him!

STELLA
I know. But we can outsmart him.

She swerves off the road and onto the dirt path that leads back into the woods. With no other choice, Mikey follows. But he isn't fast enough. Randall catches a glimpse of Mikey's bike just as he recedes from view.

EXT. THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Randall changes course and races down the path after them.

RANDALL
It ain't that easy, you li'l shits!
You ain't smart as you think!

They've got a lead on him, but on a straight path, he'll catch up in no time. Stella thinks quick and veers off the drive into the woods. Mikey follows. But the bikes are no good traveling through the dense underbrush.

Stella looks back to ensure they're out of Randall's view, then leaps from her bike and buries it quickly under a pile of leaves. Mikey follows suit.

Together, without looking back, they dart through the woods faster than they ever thought possible.

MIKEY
We've got to find a place to hide.

Stella takes his hand and steers a new course.

STELLA
The mine. Come on!

MIKEY
Stella, I can't. I'm scared.

STELLA
It's either the mine or Randall,
Mikey. And so far, the mine has
given you less reason to believe
it's gonna kill you.

She makes a good point. He follows, reluctantly.

EXT. THE MINE - MOMENTS LATER

They reach the adit, now freshly sealed with new boards.

STELLA
Shit! Help me pry one loose.

She grabs a plank and pulls with all her might. Mikey pulls, too. With a strength only the fear of certain death can muster, they snap it, creating a hole just large enough for them to squeeze through.

Stella crawls in, but Mikey hesitates.

MIKEY
Stella, wait. This isn't a good idea. What if he traps us inside?

STELLA
We ain't got any other choice.

MIKEY
Please, Stella. I just don't have a good feeling about this. C'mon. Look. There's a patch of underbrush over there that we can hide in.

Stella backs out of the hole, annoyed.

STELLA
Fine, Mikey! You've wasted so much time, he's probably seen us anyway.

They run and duck into the bushes. Mikey unzips his backpack and pulls out his video camera.

STELLA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

MIKEY
If he's gonna kill us, I wanna leave proof he did it.

He turns the camera on himself and presses record.

MIKEY (CONT'D)
This is Mikey Piccirilli, here with Stella Mae Starkweather in what could be our last ever video. Ma, I love you. Please water my plants.

He sets the camera down at the edge of the underbrush and points it directly at the mine's entrance. Then, from inside the bushes, he and Stella watch as Randall enters the clearing, approaches the mine, and knocks on the boards.

RANDALL

Little shits, little shits, let me
in. I'm gonna bash in your shinny,
shin, shins!

He laughs maniacally at his cleverness.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Nobody home? Guess you wouldn't
mind if I let myself in, then.

He crouches down and wiggles himself through the hole.

Stella and Mikey hear Randall's shouts and obscenities reverberating in the mine as he goes deeper and deeper. But soon, the nature of his shouting changes.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

What the hell? Hey! Stop it! STOP!
GET OFF A' ME!

He lets out a blood-curdling scream.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Help! HELP ME! HELP ME!

He shrieks again. A long, spine-tingling shriek. It has an awful finality to it.

MIKEY

What's going on?

STELLA

He's just trying to lure us out.

MIKEY

No, Stella. Something's wrong. I
think we oughta get outta here.

STELLA

That's exactly what he wants us to
do, Mikey. Show ourselves so he can
pounce. We ain't fallin' for that.

MIKEY

Then what are we gonna do?

STELLA

Wait him out.

Mikey takes a heavy puff from his inhaler.

EXT. THE MINE - DUSK

Stella and Mikey are huddled together, doing their best to keep warm. Night falls.

STELLA
I'm starting to think he's not
coming out.

MIKEY
Oh, you are!?

STELLA
Do you really think something
happened to him in there?
He is a very patient abuser...

MIKEY
I don't think he's playing this
time, Stella.

She takes a deep breath.

STELLA
I'm gonna go check on him.

She attempts to stand, but Mikey tugs her back down.

MIKEY
No. Let's just get outta here.

Stella pulls her arm away.

STELLA
We can't just leave him to die,
Mikey. Even if he is a big turd.
Adventurer's code.

MIKEY
But, Stella--

She brings a finger to her lip. The sound of crunching leaves
echoes from the clearing.

Mikey wipes his brow with the back of his hand. Thank God!
Randall's fine. And he's leaving.

But why are his footsteps getting closer?

Stella and Mikey exchange a horrified glance. Quietly, they
turn and look into the clearing. Randall isn't there. Another
far more terrifying creature stands in his place. A demon-
like crone with glowing eyes and one long, sharp claw.

Fortunately, the creature doesn't see them. It shrieks,
searches left and right, then disappears back into the mine.

Mikey sucks his inhaler like a madman.

STELLA
What was that thing?

After a few deep breaths, Mikey answers, panic-stricken.

MIKEY
God I hope it was mutual
hallucination.

STELLA
There's one way to find out.

She grabs the camera and runs back the footage. They watch it together on the camcorder's tiny monitor.

The monster is real alright. The proof is right there.

Mikey hurls into the leaves.

INT. STARKWEATHER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jessica waits on the edge of the couch, arms crossed, cordless phone in hand.

Right on cue, Stella bursts into the foyer, gasping for air. She slams the door shut behind her, locks it, deadbolts it, and pulls down the blinds. She doubles over, head between her knees, and breathes deeply to compose herself.

Jessica claps.

JESSICA
Bravo. What a performance!

Stella looks up and notices her mother for the first time.

STELLA
Mama, what are you talking about?

JESSICA
That little show you just put on.
Very convincing. If you were any
other kid, I'd probably believe it.

STELLA
What?

JESSICA
Where have you been?

STELLA
In the woods. But I didn't--

JESSICA

You had us worried sick, Stella. Your brother's been out riding all over God's green earth looking for you, Pop's been on the phone with everyone in town, and you're just out there playing in the woods?

STELLA

I wasn't playing, Mama. I had no choice. Randall was gonna kill us.

JESSICA

Stella, stop it. Who's Randall?

STELLA

Randall Higgins. I've told you about him a thousand times! If you would just listen to me for once...

JESSICA

If you ever told me the truth, I would!

STELLA

I am telling you the truth, Mama. I swear. Mikey and I were hiding out in the woods cause Randall was trying to kill us. I smashed a Yoo-hoo over his head at lunch and--

JESSICA

Stella!

STELLA

He deserved it! But that's not even the point. There was something down there, Mama. In the mine shaft.

She starts to cry.

JESSICA

Cut it out, Stella. I just got off the phone with Mrs. Piccirilli and she told me all about your run-in with the mine demon. At least you and Mikey finally learned to corroborate your stories.

STELLA

It's not a story, Mama!

JESSICA

You know, Stella, if you walked in late and just owned up to it for once, I wouldn't be so mad.

(MORE)

JESSICA (CONT'D)
But you've always got some tall tale to tell. Mikey was kidnapped by Nazis... or you were held hostage by Egyptian grave-robbers... It's time for you to grow up and take some responsibility for a change.

STELLA
But I can prove it this time.

She pulls Mikey's camera out of her backpack.

STELLA (CONT'D)
We got it on tape.

Jessica doubts it seriously.

Stella rewinds the footage and turns the screen toward her mother. She smashes the play button.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Just watch the middle of the clearing there.

The creature crawls out of mine and looks around. Stella points furiously to the footage.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Look. Right there.

But Jessica sees something different. When she looks at the footage, the creature's just a deer, meandering about in the clearing, eating leaves.

JESSICA
That's a deer, Stella.

STELLA
What? Are you blind?

She runs the footage back.

STELLA (CONT'D)
It's walking on two legs. Look.
Look at its eyes. And that claw.

JESSICA
It's a goddamn deer, Stella, stop!

Flummoxed, Stella starts to cry.

STELLA
Why are you lying to me?

JESSICA
Go to your room. You're grounded.

STELLA
I know you can see it. Why are you
doing this?

The back door swings open.

SAMMY (O.S.)
I've looked everywhere, Ma. I can't
find her.

JESSICA
She's here, Sammy. She's fine.

He steps into the living room and runs to his sister's side.

SAMMY
Stella, what's the matter?

STELLA
Sammy, I need you to look at this
footage and tell me what you see.

She runs it back.

STELLA (CONT'D)
There. In the clearing. What is it?

SAMMY
A deer. Why?

Stella's face drops.

STELLA
You're only saying that because she
did. You're always on her side.

SAMMY
It's just the truth, Stella. What
did you want me to say?

STELLA
It's not a deer! I know what I saw!
I know what I see!

She sobs.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Dad would have believed me.

SAMMY
Why don't you go lie down for a
bit. In a little while, I'll come
in and we can talk about it. Okay?

She nods and retreats to her room.

JESSICA

I'm worried about her, Sammy. She's too much like your father. I have no idea how to handle her.

Sammy puts an arm around her and she cries into his shoulder.

INT. STELLA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

On her bed, Stella replays the footage again with tears in her eyes. It's right there. Why don't they see it?

EXT. CHILHOWEE MOUNTAIN MOTOR TRAIL - LATE THAT NIGHT

CHRIS WATKINS grips his steering wheel, knuckles white. He's focused hard on the fog line. You wouldn't have to see his Louisiana tags or the Tennessee atlas opened in his lap to know he's not from around here.

Even for a local in the clear light of day, these winding mountain roads are no cakewalk. Tonight, for an outsider, in this deluge, they're an absolute nightmare.

It's just as he's contemplating this nightmare that Chris' crackling radio finally picks up a station. It startles him half to death.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 You're listening to the Freddie Fillmore Show on WSTP Whistle Stop. Music worth whistlin' to. Up next, a classic: Ronnie Milsap's *Smoky Mountain Rain*.

CHRIS
 Real funny.

He reaches for the power button, then reconsiders.

The song plays and he actually gets into it. By the chorus, he's singing along. Mumbly at first, but building quickly in confidence and intensity until he's ready to belt.

And he's about to... when the station fizzles out.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Piece of shit.

He smashes the dashboard with an open palm, taking his eyes off the road just long enough to miss the blurry figure that emerges from the wood and hobbles to the center of his lane.

Not a moment too soon, he looks up and slams on his brakes, narrowly sparing the figure he can now see clearly is a boy.

It's not just any boy, though. It's Randall Higgins. Bloodied and beaten, cradling his mangled arm.

He limps over to Chris' passenger window and bangs furiously.

RANDALL

Help me, mister, please! Let me in,
you gotta help me!

Chris leans over and unlocks his door. Randall practically leaps inside. He mashes the lock behind him.

CHRIS

Don't worry, kid. It's okay.
Nothing to be afraid of.

RANDALL

You wouldn't say that If you knew
what I knew.

He cries.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

She's coming. And she's gonna get
you, too. Then they'll all forget.

Chris wonders if he's made a mistake. Should he be worried about this boy? He seems... troubled.

CHRIS

What are you talking about, kid?
What's the matter with you?

RANDALL

She's already here.

CHRIS

Who?

Randall smiles a wicked smile.

RANDALL

Me.

He holds up his right hand, now a claw, forefinger like an obsidian blade, and slashes it across Chris' neck.

CUT TO BLACK.

Psychos

A Farce

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Setting: The Ripper Lodge in sleepy Butcher Falls, California, Late 1960

Characters: 4 Male Characters. 3 Female Characters.

Mark Freelng (Mid-30s) — Tall, blonde, and well built. The picture of early-60s WASPiness. Not as smart as his wife, but definitely smarter than his girlfriend. As a locally famous radio DJ, he brings that "Freeling Feeling" to dozens of Butcher Fallsians every night.

Janet Hendricks (Mid-30s) — The stereotypical blonde bombshell — hourglass figure, ultra-light bouffant, and not a whole lot going on upstairs. Her usual sex appeal is inhibited this evening by her intense paranoia. She's married to Deputy Sam Hendricks, but she's sleeping with Mark Freelng.

Jack Ripper (Early 30s) — The peculiar young proprietor of Ripper Lodge. Scrawny, boyishly handsome, and oddly charming. He always acts in the best interest of "Mother."

Ms. Rose (Early 70s) — An eccentric spinster who helps Jack run the lodge. She suffers from terrible insomnia and sporadic psychosis. Often believing she's a widowed billionaire socialite, she wears gaudy costume jewelry and speaks with an affected Transatlantic accent.

Bud Parker (Late 20s) — Brutish and domineering, he's the mastermind behind the hatchet-murdering, bank robbing duo known as *Ma Schneider and the Sauerkraut Kid*. With his strong physique and dusty blonde hair, he does indeed resemble Mark, but his early-60s garage rock attire and ever-present joint make it clear they come from opposite sides of the track.

Candy Parker (Late 20s) — The Bonnie to Bud's Clyde. Though she speaks with an incongruously mousy voice, she's every bit as vicious as Bud — and twice as smart. When not disguised as the elderly Ma Schneider, she wears a cut off t-shirt and grungy jeans and lets her blonde hair flow freely.

Deputy Sam Hendricks (Late 30s) – Janet's husband. The inept Deputy Sheriff of the Butcher Falls Police Department.

Notes

The stage is broken into three distinct playing spaces. The first and largest is Ripper Lodge's grand foyer, comprised of a dining area stage right, a living area center stage, and a guest registration lobby stage left. The manor's front door, also stage left, leads out to the second playing space, a covered front porch. The third playing space is a small kitchen located stage right, which is accessible through a swinging door near the dining area in the main room. Focused lighting is used to direct the audience's attention to the appropriate playing space. For the purposes of our story, it's presumed that, unless otherwise noted, characters cannot see or hear anything that's occurring in a playing space in which they are not currently located.

In an attempt to keep their identities hidden, several characters in the play speak with a phony German accent. For Mark, Bud, and Candy, this accent should be passable, but far from perfect. For Janet, it should be laughably bad. Dialogue that's intended to be accented in this way is written in *italics*.

ACT 1

Setting: Ripper Lodge, a once-grand Victorian Gothic manor home, now reduced to a dilapidated bed and breakfast deep in the midst of a long-overdue renovation. Though lavishly furnished and adorned with an array of beautifully ornate period features, the manor's original old-world decor has long since been replaced by an infestation of garish tchotchkies and an unnerving assortment of taxidermied animals. The accommodation primarily comprises of an open-plan living and dining area with a staircase, which leads to a gallery above, and a quite extensive range of entrances and exits. On the ground floor, at stage left, the home's main entrance gives access to the front porch beyond it. At stage right, a swinging door leads to a small utilitarian kitchen. There are four more doors along the lower level's back wall. The first door, nearest the staircase at stage right, opens into a private wing of the house, which contains the bedrooms of the inn's two proprietors. Beside that, moving stage left, a second door leads down to the cellar below. Next to that, there's a large window, which is bordered on either side by heavy, floor-length drapery. To the window's left is the entrance to Jack's study and beside that, a coat closet. On the gallery level, there are four additional doors. The first opens to Mother's room, the second and third to guest bedrooms, and the fourth to a shared guest bathroom.

At Rise: *(MARK trudges up the front steps. He carries two very heavy, olive green, Samsonite suitcases. He puts them down onto the porch with a sigh of relief and shakes the rain from his clothes. JANET follows cautiously behind him, matching cosmetic case in hand. She closes her umbrella, shakes the water off, oblivious to the fact that she's soaking MARK in the process, and takes a look around.)*

JANET

Uh-uh. I don't like the looks of this place. I thought I said no motor lodges.

MARK

This isn't a motor lodge. It's the house behind a motor lodge.

JANET

That's worse! That's where he kept his mother!

MARK

Oh, Janet, come on! You're not still hung up on that, are you?

JANET

I certainly am.

MARK

Isn't it bad enough that you haven't showered in weeks?

JANET

I'm using perfume!

MARK

It was only a movie!

JANET

Oh, sure! And I suppose next you're gonna tell me "The Blob" was only a movie, too!

(MARK sighs. He's fighting a losing battle.)

JANET

Freaky stuff like that happens all the time, you know. Did you hear about that Gein fellow in Wisconsin, skinning ladies to make a woman suit? Betcha he lived in a freaky old place just like this!

MARK

You would make a lovely woman suit.

JANET

Mark!

(She slaps his chest hard. He chuckles.)

MARK

I'm joking. Sorry. But you're just being paranoid.

JANET

No, I'm being careful. And when there's a pair of hatchet murderers running around in your neighborhood, being careful is the least you can do!

MARK

Well I don't think the innkeeper's a hatchet murderer. He seems like a very nice man.

JANET

So did Norman!

MARK

Janet!

JANET

Can we please just go somewhere else? Anywhere else!

MARK

I've already paid for the room.

JANET

Why would you go and do a stupid thing like that!?!?

MARK

He gave me a really good rate cause they're doing renovations.

JANET

Oh, great, so he's got power tools!

MARK

Janet, stop. C'mon. There's nowhere else for us to go. It's getting late. It's pouring down rain. It was dangerous for us to be driving in this to begin with.

JANET

I know, I just... I--

(MARK cups JANET's face in his hands.)

MARK

You wanted to be alone didn't you? Finally.

(She nods.)

MARK

Well here we are. Alone. In the middle of nowhere. Ok? They'll never find us here.

(He kisses her.)

MARK

Now can we go inside?

(JANET takes a deep breath.)

JANET

Fine. But if we get killed I'm never gonna let you hear the end of it!

MARK

Fair enough.

(He reaches for the doorknocker.)

MARK

Oh! And by the way, we're German.

JANET

No. I'm not. I'm Swedish. And a little bit Pueblo on my father's side.

MARK

That's not what I mean. I didn't want to use our real names, so I told the innkeeper we're Mr. and Mrs. Braun. He thinks we're from Germany, so just play along.

JANET

Why didn't you just use an American name?

MARK

I started doing an accent so he wouldn't recognize my voice. It came out kinda German, so I just went with it.

JANET

Nobody has ever recognized your voice, Mark! Why do you always think they will?

MARK

Uh, maybe because I'm the third most popular radio DJ in Butcher Falls!

JANET

Yeah, out of three!

MARK

Third is third, Janet!

JANET

Ugh. Well, I don't think I can do a German accent. Why couldn't you have made us Chinese?

MARK

Something tells me he wouldn't have bought that.

JANET

No, my Chinese accent's really good!

MARK

Well, next time, then... For now, why don't you just try acting German, alright? Wanna practice?

JANET

Um, okay... Let's see...
(she thinks)
Alright, here we go.

(Suddenly, she snaps to attention. All expression leaves her face. She stomps her left foot, raises her right arm, and shouts.)

JANET

Sieg Heil!

(MARK quickly cups a hand over her mouth and lowers her outstretched arm.)

MARK

Nope. No. Definitely do not do that.

JANET

What? That was pretty good!

MARK

I'll tell you what - why don't you just let me do the talking, alright? Only speak if you're spoken to. The quicker we get to our room, the better.

JANET

Fine by me. I'm not here to chitchat.

(MARK bends to pick up their luggage.)

JANET

You know what I'm here for.

(She grabs his butt, startling him upright. He turns back to her and smiles.)

MARK

Now, now, Fräulein, save it for ze bettroom.

(He kisses her playfully, then turns back to the door. As he knocks, the lights come up at center stage and the manor's grand foyer is revealed. JACK scurries to the door to answer it.)

JACK

Ah, Mr. Braun, Mrs. Braun, come in, come in.

(They step inside.)

JACK

Welcome to Ripper Lodge.

MARK

Sank you. It's very nice.

JACK

I appreciate that. Thank you. It doesn't shine the way it did when Mother was alive, but we're getting there.

(JANET looks concerned.)

JANET

Muzza?

JACK

Yeah, my mother used to run this place.

JANET

But now she has passed avay?

JACK

Yeah, uh, she died a few years ago.

JANET

And you had sumpsing to do wit zat or...?

JACK

Oh, God, no! Why would you ask that?

MARK

I'm sorry! My vife's English is not so goot. Vat she meant to say vas, "How do you go on after sumpsing happens like zat?"

JACK

Oh, well, as you can see, I just kinda wallowed for a bit and let this place fall apart. But, you know, I have my coping mechanisms. Mother's always here.

(beat)

In spirit, of course.

(He laughs.)

JACK

And it's honestly been easier than I thought it would be to fix this old place up. It really does have good bones.

JANET

Bones?

(He notices her concerned look.)

JACK

Oh, I'm sorry, Mrs. Braun. That's just a figure of speech.

(beat)

But look, I'm sure you guys didn't come here to listen to my old sob story. You'd probably like to get to your room and freshen up a bit, huh?

MARK

Oh, ya, zat vood be nice, sank you.

JACK

Okay, great. I'll take you to your room as soon as I get back.

MARK

Back from vare?

JACK

I just want to bring your car around to the garage before the storm gets any worse.

MARK

Oh, no, sank you, but zat von't be necessary.

JACK

No, I insist. Really. It's on my property and I'd feel right awful if something were to happen to it. Sure is a beauty. What is it, a Ford Custom? '57?

MARK

Zat's ze vun. Vite as snow.

JACK

Won't take me but a minute.

(He reaches out for MARK's keys.)

MARK

Vell, alright. Sank you very much.

(MARK hands them over.)

JACK

Be back in a flash. In the meantime, just make yourselves right at home. *Mein haus ist dein haus!*

(MARK and JANET have no idea what he just said. And it shows.)

JACK

Oh, I'm sorry. Did I say something wrong? German's never been my strong suit.

MARK

Clearly not. So best not to try it anymore.

JANET

Ya, you don't sprechen sie deutsch, vee von't sprechen sie deutsch, okay?

JACK

Sounds good.

(He slips on his raincoat and walks over to the stereo console.)

JACK

I'm just gonna put on some music before I go.

(He clicks on the radio and big band music fills the room.)

JACK

That's better. Now it's not so deathly quiet in here.

(JANET mouths, "Deathly?" MARK scolds her with a glare.)

MARK

Zat's wunderbar. Sank you, Mr. Ripper.

JACK

Jack will be fine.

MARK

How's zat?

JACK

My name is Jack.

MARK

Jack Ripper?

(JANET's eyes widen.)

JACK

Yeah, but this is a first name establishment, so you can just call me Jack, okay.

MARK

Okay, Jack. And you may call me Werner.

JACK

Thank you, Werner.

(beat)

And what about you, Mrs. Braun? What's your first name?

JANET

Uh... um...

(She spits out the first thing that comes to mind.)

JANET

Eva!

(beat)

Ya. Eva. Eva Braun.

(She smiles. Nice save, girl! MARK palms his forehead.)

JACK

Eep. That's unfortunate.

JANET

Vut's unfortunate?

JACK

Uh...nevermind. Touchy subject.

(laughs nervously)

Back in a jiff.

(He exits quickly through the front door.)

MARK

Eva Braun! Are you kidding me!?!?

JANET

I think it's a lovely name.

MARK

It doesn't sound familiar to you?

JANET

No.

(MARK just shakes his head.)

JANET

But you know what does? Jack. Ripper.

MARK

Are you serious?

JANET

What if his middle name is The!?!?

MARK

He isn't Jack the Ripper, Janet!

JANET

All I'm saying is they never caught the guy, Mark. He could be anywhere.

MARK

I'm thinking he's probably in the ground.

JANET

That would be a good place to hide.

(Exasperated, MARK drops onto the couch.)

JANET

What? You don't think this guy's acting a little strange?

MARK

I mean, yeah, I guess he's a little awkward, but so what. He seems like a perfectly nice guy. He doesn't have to be out there moving my car.

JANET

He's probably out there sinking it into the swamp.

MARK

I think you're being a little unfair. He hasn't done a thing wrong.

JANET

Yeah, except rob every bank in Northern California and hatchet murder a bunch of people.

MARK

Are you trying to tell me you think we've stumbled into the lair of the Sauerkraut Kid?

JANET

Yep. Look around, Mark. It's obvious nobody actually lives in this dump! He's just squatting here, waiting for some unsuspecting fool like you to fall right into his trap.

(beat)

But I'm no fool. Nobody's gonna pull the rug out from over my eyes!

MARK

Of course not. There's just one problem with your theory, Janet.

JANET

Yeah? And what's that?

MARK

If Jack is the Sauerkraut Kid, then where's the old lady?

JANET

Ma Schneider?

MARK

Yeah. He's never been known to go anywhere without her.

JANET

Well, that is true, I guess...

MARK

Of course it's true. We have absolutely nothing to worry about.

(JANET considers this. It seems to calm her. She rests her hand on the back of a swiveling armchair that faces away from them.)

MARK

Trust me, Janet. There's no old lady here.

(JANET swivels the armchair around to sit and is horrified to find that a shriveled old woman already occupies it. She screams bloody murder and falls backwards onto the couch. The woman, MS. ROSE, wakes with a start. Without missing a beat, MARK resumes his German persona.)

MARK

Ach du lieber! How long have you been zere!?!?

(MS. ROSE sounds an awful lot like Katharine Hepburn.)

MS. ROSE

I'm ever so sorry to have frightened you. T'wasn't my intention.

MARK

How much of our conversation did you overhear?

MS. ROSE

Don't worry, darling. I didn't hear a single word. Really.

MARK

Oh, danke.

MS. ROSE

Have something to hide now, do we?

JANET

No, uh, nein. Vut vood make you sink zat?

(She laughs nervously.)

MS. ROSE

Small joke, dear. Don't get your lederhosen in a bunch, now.

(There's an awkward silence.)

MS. ROSE

So tell me, huh, what brings a coupla fine lookin' Krauts like you two to Butcher Falls?

MARK

Vee ver just passing troo, but ze storm got so bet, vee had to pull over. Jack vas nice enough to rent us a room for ze night.

JANET

Vut about you? Vut are you doing here?

MS. ROSE

I live here, Silly Billy.

(JANET gulps.)

JANET

Are you his muzza?

MS. ROSE

Who? Jackie? No. He's a nice boy, but he didn't spring from my loins. We're just old friends. We run the inn together. Partners in crime, you might say.

JANET

Might ze ausorities say zat, too?

(MS. ROSE looks at her quizzically.)

MARK

Vell, ziss is certainly a lovely place you've got here, Ms... uh, sorry, but I don't know your name.

MS. ROSE

Oh, how terribly rude of me.

(She crosses to MARK and extends a limp gloved hand to shake.)

MS. ROSE

The name's Rosalind Bettencourt Medici Goldman-Sachs Vanderbilt Rockefeller-Rothschild.

(beat)

And I've got six dead husbands to thank for that!

(She cackles.)

MS. ROSE

But you can just call me Ms. Rose. Everyone does.

MARK

Pleased to meet you, Ms. Rose. I'm Werner. Werner Braun.

MS. ROSE

Charmed, I'm sure.

MARK

And ziss is my wife, Eva.

MS. ROSE

You look good, darling. Could have sworn you bit the old capsule.

(She laughs fiendishly at her own joke. JANET doesn't get it, but she laughs anyway.)

JANET

Ya, goot vun!

(Another awkward silence.)

MS. ROSE

Well, then...how would you two like something to eat?

MARK

Oh, no sank you. Kind of you to offer, but ve've been on ze road all day and ve're uber tired. Ven Jack gets back, I sink ve'll just head up to our room if zat's alright.

MS. ROSE

No, no, I insist. You simply must join us for dinner. My Pasta Puttanesca is the best in the west!

MARK

I'm sure it's wunderbar, but--

MS. ROSE

(suddenly stern)

I won't take no for an answer, Mr. Braun.

(She exits quickly into the kitchen.)

JANET

She's definitely trying to poison us.

MARK

Janet.

JANET

Just like she poisoned her six husbands!

MARK

Janet!

JANET

Six dead husbands, Mark! Six! Don't you find that a little suspicious?

MARK

No! Some people just have really bad luck. I feel sorry for her.

JANET

God, Mark, you're so naïve!

MARK

Sorry I choose to see the best in people.

JANET

That's a stupid thing to do! People are terrible!

MARK

We don't know anything about these people!

JANET

Exactly! They could be cannibals for all we know! She could be back there right now trying to turn her Pasta Puttanesca into a Pasta Puttan-us-ca!

MARK

Now you're just being ridiculous.

JANET

Okay, so maybe cannibalism's a little extreme, but I know a black widow bride when I see one!

MARK

How many black widow brides have you seen?

JANET

That isn't the point! This is a textbook case! A bizarre old lady, a spooky mansion, six rich husbands who all died gruesome, unexplained deaths--

MARK

She never said that!

JANET

She didn't have to, Mark! They call it textbook for a reason!
(beat)

I just hope the Sauerkraut Kid knows what he's getting himself into, cause as soon as he robs enough banks, she's probably gonna kill him, too.

MARK

You know, this is really turning me off.

JANET

Oh really, Mark, the idea of being murdered is turning you off?
I would hope so!

MARK

No, Janet, you are turning me off. You're not very sexy when you're being neurotic.

JANET

Not very sexy? Are you kidding me? You think you could leave the decision making to the head on your shoulders for once, Mark?

(beat)

How can you just sit there and ignore all this evidence?

MARK

Evidence! What evidence? You're jumping to meritless conclusions!

JANET

Let's see how meritless you find them when Jack is killing me!

*(As she says this, the front door swings open.
JACK enters.)*

JACK

What's that?

JANET

Oh, I said, ach du lieber, my back is killing me!

JACK

I better get you upstairs so you can lie down, then.

JANET

Zat vood be much appreciated, sank you.

(JACK removes his rain slicker and hangs it in the closet by the door. He crosses to his study and disappears inside.)

JANET

As soon as we get upstairs, we're going out the window.

MARK

No we aren't!

(JACK returns with a ring of skeleton keys.)

JACK

Alrighty, then. Let me show you guys to your room.

(*MARK stands and grabs his suitcases.*)

JANET

Do you still have Werner's car keys?

JACK

They're in the pocket of my rain slicker.

JANET

Oh, vell, maybe ve should have zem back so ve don't forget zem in ze morning, huh?

JACK

Oh, no, they'll be nice and safe there. I'll bring the car around tomorrow.

(*He crosses to the stairs.*)

JACK

You don't need to worry about a thing while you're here.

JANET

(under her breath)

Oh, how I vish zat ver true.

(*MARK jabs her in the rear with a suitcase and then hurries to the stairs. JANET follows reluctantly. As she crosses, the big band music on the radio is interrupted by a special news bulletin.*)

RADIO ANNOUNCER

We now bring you the latest in the ongoing saga of Ma Schneider and the Sauerkraut Kid, the crazed German hatchet killers who've spent the last three months terrorizing a series of small towns in Northern California. Today, they're suspected in connection with the robbery of the Bailey Brother's Building and Loan in Crane County. According to an eyewitness report, the pair was last spotted on Fairvale Drive, headed south toward Butcher Falls in a cream-colored--

(*JACK clicks off the radio.*)

JACK

There's really no need to hear about such awful things. I don't know why they insist on giving those two so much attention.

JANET

Perhaps zey're just varning travelers to be careful.

(to MARK, pointedly)

Especially if zey happen to be traveling south on Fairvale toward Butcher Falls!

JACK

Well, good thing you guys got off the road when you did. You're perfectly safe here.

(He climbs the stairs, but MARK and JANET don't follow. MARK seems a little nervous now, too.)

JACK

You coming?

(MARK plods up timidly. JANET sticks close behind.)

JACK

We've got two guest bedrooms up here, so I'll let you guys take a look at both and you can pick which one you like best.

(He pushes open the second and third doors on the landing. MARK and JANET peer inside.)

MARK

I sink I like zat vun.

(He points to the second door.)

JACK

Then it's yours.

(He takes the key off the ring.)

JANET

Vait a second. Vut's behind zat door?

(She points to the fourth door.)

JACK

That's the guest bathroom.

JANET

And zat vun?

(She points to the door nearest the stairs.)

JACK

Mother's room.

JANET

I sought your muzza vuz det?

JACK

She is. I just never cleaned out her room. It's exactly the way she left it when she died.

(sternly)

So it's absolutely off limits to guests! Do you understand?

(MARK and JANET nod, both taken aback by JACK's sudden change in demeanor.)

JACK

I'm sorry. I just miss her so much, you know. After all, a boy's best friend is his mother.

(JANET grabs MARK's arm.)

MARK

Ya, of course ve understand, zat's perfectly normal. Not veird at oll.

JACK

Thank you.

(beat)

So what room was it that you wanted?

JANET

For sake of curiosity, if vun vere to need to make a qvick escape, you know, in ze event of a fire or somesing, vich room vood provide ze best route?

JACK

Oh, a disaster plan. I forgot they said I needed one of those...

(He points to the third door.)

JACK

I guess that one. There's a trellis from the window down to the garden. I used to use it to sneak out as a kid.

JANET

Ve'll take zat vun, zen.

JACK

*Okay.**(He hands JANET the key.)*

JACK

You'll find everything you need in there. Just make yourselves comfortable.

MARK

Sank you, Jack.

JACK

And there are towels in the bathroom if you'd like to take a shower.

JANET

Ve von't be taking any showers vile ve're here, sank you!

MARK

Ve're European.

JACK

*Oh, yes, of course.**(MARK and JANET step into their room.)*

MARK

*Have a goot night, Jack.**(He tries to close the door. JACK stops him.)*

JACK

Wait. I know you guys need a little rest, but I was hoping you'd at least join us for dinner this evening. Ms. Rose will be dying to meet you.

MARK

Ve've met. Qvite ze character, zat vun.

JACK

She is that. You can't believe a word the old bat says, but she's a dynamite cook.

JANET

She's in ze kitchen fixing somesing as ve speak.

JACK

Oh, good. Then you'll join us?

MARK

Ve've been on ze road for such a long time and Eva's back is hurting somesing terrible, so ve'd best just turn in.

JACK

Come on. You've gotta eat. Aren't you hungry?

JANET

*Actually, ve're from Germany.**(She attempts to close the door.)*

JANET

*Gute Nighte, Jack.**(JACK catches the door with his foot.)*

JACK

Please. I don't want to beg, but we haven't had guests in so long and we've really been looking forward to hosting. Honestly, we need the practice...

MARK

*Alright, Jack. If it vood help. You've been so kind.**(JANET stomps on MARK's foot. He winces.)*

JACK

Oh, thank you, Werner. Thank you.

JANET

Yes, Werner. Sank you.

MARK

Just give us some time to freshen up and ve'll be right down.

JACK

*Sure, sure, take all the time you need. I'll just go help Ms. Rose in the kitchen.**(He hurries down the stairs.)*

JANET

You're crazy.

MARK

I have an idea. Just go with it.

(They disappear into their room. Across the stage, JACK enters the kitchen and finds MS. ROSE busy at work on her Puttanesca.)

JACK

Mmm, puttanesca, my favorite!

MS. ROSE

Oh, stop it! You're just trying to butter me up!

JACK

And why would I do a thing like that?

MS. ROSE

Cause you're a sneaky little scoundrel and you took advantage of a tired old lady.

JACK

I would have asked you, but you needed your sleep.

MS. ROSE

I've been sleeping just fine, thank you, Jack.

JACK

You have not! You've been up wandering around every night this week. I know you're not taking the barbiturates Dr. Loomis prescribed.

MS. ROSE

Quit going on about the goofballs, Jack, I don't like 'em.

JACK

They're supposed to help you, Ms. Rose. Insomnia is a serious problem.

MS. ROSE

Not the way I see it. I like the extra hours. I finally have time to do my taxidermies.

JACK

What keeps you so busy the rest of the day?

MS. ROSE

You know I can't do anything when my soaps are on.

JACK

Well, I'm glad you're making the best of it, but I want you to promise me you're gonna start--

MS. ROSE

Enough with the ballyhoo, Jack! You're just trying to change the subject. What in the hell are those two Krauts doing here?

JACK

I don't think we're supposed to call them that anymore.

MS. ROSE

Sorry. What in the hell are those two *Nazis* doing here?

JACK

Ms. Rose!

MS. ROSE

Answer my question, Jack.

JACK

There's a terrible storm out there. They needed a place to pull over for the night.

MS. ROSE

Well it's not gonna be here!

JACK

I've already given them a room!

MS. ROSE

Then you'd better take it back.

JACK

They've already paid!

MS. ROSE

War reparations!

JACK

Stop being a bigot, Ms. Rose.

MS. ROSE

Fine. Give 'em back their money, then.

JACK

But we need it!

MS. ROSE

They're gonna shut us down, Jack. You remember what the man said. We take one more guest before we pass that inspection and we're through.

JACK

Who's gonna know?

MS. ROSE

It's the principle of the thing, Jack.

JACK

I'm not really concerned about principle when we're one late payment away from losing the house! They have a wad of cash and we need it, so they're staying.

MS. ROSE

Well, I don't trust them.

JACK

You're just saying that because they're German.

MS. ROSE

So what if I am?

JACK

You're being ridiculous.

MS. ROSE

That's rich coming from the man who let Eva Braun into our house.

JACK

You know full well she isn't that Eva Braun.

MS. ROSE

Do I, though? We don't know a thing about these people.

JACK

That kinda comes with the territory when you're running an inn, Ms. Rose.

MS. ROSE

Yeah, but something just seems off about these two, Jackie. I don't like them.

JACK

Well, you don't have to. They'll be gone in the morning.

MS. ROSE

We might not make it that long.

JACK

What's that supposed to mean?

MS. ROSE

You have heard of those dreadful hatchet murderers running around, haven't you?

JACK

Yeah. What about 'em?

MS. ROSE

They're in the area, you know.

JACK

So?

MS. ROSE

They're Krauts, Jackie.

(JACK *guffaws.*)

JACK

Oh, come on now, that's what you've got your panties in a bunch about? It's just a coincidence.

MS. ROSE

I don't believe in coincidence, Jack. It's them. I know it.

JACK

Stop it! Werner and Eva are not hatchet murderers! They seem like perfectly lovely people.

MS. ROSE

I'm sure Bonnie and Clyde could be perfectly lovely when they needed to be.

JACK

It can't be them, Ms. Rose. Ma Schneider's an old lady!

MS. ROSE

What is age but a number, Jack?

JACK

That doesn't make sense here.

MS. ROSE

Fine. Perhaps they aren't the hatchet killers. But they're hiding something, I'm sure of it!

JACK

Everyone's hiding something, Ms. Rose. We know that better than anyone!

MS. ROSE

Speak for yourself, Jack. I haven't got a thing to hide!

JACK

Oh, so when you met Werner and Eva, you introduced yourself as Rosanna Rubinstein, the spinster taxidermist from Eureka, Nevada?

MS. ROSE

Is it a sin to play a character, Jack? I like Rosalind. She's fancy.

JACK

No, Ms. Rose, that's what I'm saying. Everyone has their quirks. I mean for Christ's sake, I have my dead mother taxidermied upstairs! Werner and Eva may be a little strange, but they're probably good people.

MS. ROSE

Well, maybe you're right.

(beat)

But at dinner I'm still gonna try to figure out what's wrong with them. I read far too much Miss Marple to let a good mystery go unsolved.

(Suddenly, lighting strikes outside. A booming thunderclap follows. The power surges and then cuts out. JANET screams from offstage.)

JACK

Shoot.

(He rushes into the main room. MS. ROSE grabs two flashlights from a drawer, clicks them on, and follows after him. JANET and MARK enter onto the landing.)

JACK

You guys alright up there?

MARK

Ya, everysing fine here.

JACK

Great. I'm just gonna go downstairs and flip the breaker. I'll have the power back on in no time.

JANET

Sank you, Jack.

JACK

And why don't you guys just do me a favor and wait in your room until I get the lights back up, okay? Don't try to come down the stairs. That's how mother died.

(He takes a flashlight from MS. ROSE and exits into the basement.)

MS. ROSE

At least, that's what the coroner thinks.

(She cackles and follows after him.)

JANET

Oh, God, she killed his mother, too!

MARK

I don't think that's what she meant, Janet.

JANET

What else could she have meant?

MARK

I don't know. She's a weird lady. Why does she talk like Katharine Hepburn?

JANET

Same reason we're talking like Hansel and Gretel! Because she has something to hide! You heard what they said on the radio.

MARK

Yeah, but--

JANET

I thought you agreed we should leave?

MARK

I mean, I still don't think it's them. I just thought it would be better to be safe than sorry. But now the storm's gotten so bad--

JANET

I don't care, Mark! I want to leave. Now! While they're still downstairs you better go get those goddamn keys.

MARK

Fine. But just to have them. We're only leaving if we absolutely have to.

JANET

Go!

(MARK tiptoes toward the stairs. Meanwhile, headlights shine onto the front porch. From offstage, we hear a vehicle grind to a halt. Car doors slam. Followed by a trunk. As MARK steps carefully onto the third stair, a MAN and a WOMAN appear on the front porch. These savory characters are BUD and CANDY PARKER. Decked out in early '60s garage rock attire, they each smoke a joint. MARK reaches the bottom of the stairs as BUD reaches for the doorknob. He struggles to open it and jiggles the handle aggressively.)

JANET

Mark, come back, come back! They're coming in through the front!

(MARK pivots and flies up the stairs. He scoops JANET up and they disappear into their room just as the front door swings open. BUD and CANDY step inside. He carries nothing. She carries two very heavy, olive green, Samsonite suitcases. They're identical to MARK and JANET's.)

BUD

Hot damn! Look at this place! Beats the hell out of our last spot.

CANDY

Yeah, it has four walls.

(Exhausted, CANDY drops the suitcases onto the floor.)

BUD

Careful with those!

CANDY

Why do I always have to carry the loot?

BUD

Cause all my treasures are yours, baby.

(He steals a kiss.)

CANDY

You always know just what to say, you skuzz.

BUD

I didn't spend four years in kindergarten for nothing.

CANDY

My little Einstein.

(They kiss again.)

BUD

Whaddaya think of your new palace, babe? Fat city, right!

CANDY

Maybe too fat. There's an awful lot of stuff in here. You're sure this place is deserted?

BUD

Of course! I've been scoping it out. Haven't seen a single person come or go.

(She tries to turn on a lamp. Nothing happens. She clicks on the radio. Still nothing.)

BUD

See. No power. No people. No problems.

(He pulls CANDY into his arms.)

BUD

Nobody will ever find us here.

(They kiss.)

BUD

Now whaddaya say we go upstairs and see if this place has any beds?

CANDY

Yavohl, Mr. Sauerkraut. I like ze vay you sink.

BUD

What are you doing?

CANDY

I wanna do it in character. Ze accents are sexy.

BUD

*Mmm, okay. Vat do you vant me to do to you up zere, Muzza?**(beat)**Okay, ew. No. I don't like that.*

CANDY

*I do.**(She grabs his hand and pulls him playfully up the stairs. They disappear into the room behind the first door. Mother's room. For a moment, all is calm. Then CANDY lets out a bloodcurdling scream. The door flies open. She runs out and stumbles back against the banister.)*

CANDY

*Ew. Ew. Get it out of here!**(BUD hobbles onto the landing, pants around his ankles.)*

BUD

Geez, Candy, you're acting like you've never seen a dead body before!

CANDY

It's different when we kill them.

BUD

Why?

CANDY

*Cause they're not watching us trying to do it on their bed!**(beat)**Why do her eyes look like googly eyes!?!*

BUD

She must have been surprised to see us there, too.

CANDY

That's not funny.

BUD

It's a little funny.

CANDY

Just get her outta here, will ya?

BUD

Fine.

(He pulls up his pants and exits into the room.)

BUD

I guess now we know why the owner left all their shit here.

(He grunts and groans from offstage.)

BUD

God, she's stiff as a board. That rigor mortis is no joke!

(He reappears on the landing with MOTHER under his arm like a surfboard. He heaves her up and over the banister and she drops to the floor with a thud.)

CANDY

Bud! That is not what I meant. Wrap her in a sheet or something, take her outside, and get rid of her!

(Bud grumbles and exits into the room again. He returns with a sheet.)

CANDY

Before you go, check that room for dead people.

(She points to the second door. He opens it and looks around.)

BUD

All clear.

CANDY

Good. Well, I'll be waiting in there. If I can get in the mood again...

(She exits into the second room and closes the door behind her. BUD descends the stairs and crosses to MOTHER. He wraps her in the sheet and lifts her up onto his shoulder. He crosses to the front door, opens it, looks out into the storm, thinks better of it, and slams the door closed. Instead, he opens the closet beside the study, stands MOTHER up inside, shuts the door, and then runs back upstairs. He unzips his pants and exits into room number two. As soon as he's gone, room number three's door creaks open. JANET peeks out.)

JANET

I think the coast is clear.

(She opens the door a bit wider and MARK steps out onto the landing.)

MARK

I'm only getting the keys to make you feel better, you know. It doesn't mean we're leaving.

JANET

Mark, for the last time, there is no amount of feeling better that could make me sleep with you in this house!

MARK

How bout just a quickie?

JANET

No!

MARK

A little aggressive groping?

JANET

Mark. You will never touch me again if you don't get those goddamn keys!

(She exits into her room and slams the door behind her. Begrudgingly, MARK descends the stairs and scurries over to the closet by the study. He opens it. MOTHER spills out and knocks him to the floor. She lands on top of him. He screams and struggles beneath her. He flips her over and shoves her across the floor. Then he stands, rips JACK's coat from its hanger, and

fishes out his keys. Majorly skeeved, he uses the coat to lift MOTHER upright and shove her back into the closet. He closes her inside, runs back up the stairs, and yanks open his door.)

MARK

Open the window, Janet. We're leaving.

(He exits into the bedroom. For a moment, there's silence throughout the house. And then the power returns. The lights surge back to life and big band music bellows from the radio. JACK and MS. ROSE emerge from the basement.)

MS. ROSE

Shame. I was beginning to like the idea of dinner in the dark with a couple of serial murderers.

JACK

Would you stop it! For the last time, Eva is too young to be Ma Schneider!

(The radio signals an incoming bulletin.)

JACK

What's that thing doing back on?

RADIO ANNOUNCER

We now bring you a surprising new development in the manhunt for serial murderers Ma Schneider and the Sauerkraut Kid. In a shocking twist, a recent eyewitness report suggests that Ma Schneider may not be a "Ma" at all. That eyewitness joins us in the studio now. Good evening, sir. Tell us what you saw.

EYEWITNESS

Uh, yeah, I was filling up my car at a service station out on Fairvale and this man and this old lady pull into the lot in a cream-colored convertible coupe. I recognized 'em right away cause I've seen 'em all over the news, so I jumped outta sight behind a dumpster and watched the whole thing. They go into the store, hold the place up, and run out with a bag full of cash. Then the Sauerkraut Kid jumps into a different car. Musta swiped the owner's keys or something. I think it was a white Ford Custom. '57. Maybe '58. Meanwhile, the old lady starts stripping down and I'm thinking, ugh, I don't wanna see all that, but I look anyway cause I'm curious and she pulls off her dress and it ain't that bad. Then she pulls off her glasses. And then her hair! And that's when I realize she ain't no old lady at all.

EYEWITNESS, CONT.

It's just a disguise. She's probably thirty-something, just like him. Soon as she got in the car, they sped off. Southbound, I guess, toward Butcher Falls.

(JACK clicks off the radio.)

MS. ROSE

Well, there goes your age theory right out the window.

(As she says this, JANET can be seen through the upstage window dropping into the yard behind the house. MARK falls down after her and faceplants into the mud. He picks himself up, wipes himself off, and they scurry out of sight.)

JACK

So? What does that prove?

MS. ROSE

That you invited a couple of hatchet murderers to stay the night with us and that you'll probably deny it right up until they come to chop off your empty little head.

JACK

I just think we owe our guests the benefit of the doubt here.

MS. ROSE

I don't have any doubts, Jack. And neither should you.

(beat)

You put their car in the shed, didn't you?

JACK

Yeah.

MS. ROSE

So, tell me then, what were they driving?

(JACK gulps.)

JACK

A '57 Ford Custom. White.

MS. ROSE

And I suppose that's a coincidence too, huh? They haven't done anything wrong. They're just a couple of sweet, cuddly lovebirds from the Eastern Bloc who happen to be driving a stolen car. Is that it, Jack?

JACK

I don't know! I just don't wanna do anything rash until we have proof!

(MS. ROSE spots BUD and CANDY's suitcases in the foyer.)

MS. ROSE

How about we find a little proof, then?

(She crosses to them.)

MS. ROSE

Surely, if they haven't got anything to hide, we won't find anything suspicious in their luggage.

(She lays one suitcase down on its side and crouches to open it.)

JACK

No, I don't think we should.

MS. ROSE

It's the only way to be sure, Jack. We have to be sure.

(He considers this for moment, nods, and then crosses to the foyer. He kneels beside MS. ROSE and lays the second suitcase on its side.)

JACK

Okay. On the count of three.

(beat)

One, two, three.

(They open the suitcases.)

JACK

Oh, shit.

(JACK's case is packed tight with bundles of cash, MS. ROSE's with a number of costume disguises. She rifles through them. An assortment of old women's dresses, wigs, glasses, ski masks. Beneath them, weapons. Guns, knives, and of course, hatchets.)

MS. ROSE

I'm disappointed, Jack. I thought it would feel better to say I told you so.

(beat)

Ope, no, wait, now that I've said it, it does feel pretty good!

(She laughs.)

JACK

This is no time to gloat, Ms. Rose.

MS. ROSE

C'mon, Jack, I may not get another chance. You know, seeing as how you've sentenced us to certain death.

JACK

We are not gonna die. We just need to come up with a plan.

MS. ROSE

There's not much we can do at this point, Jackie. We better just call the police and hope we live long enough for them to get here.

(She stands and rushes to the telephone.)

JACK

No! We're not calling the police.

MS. ROSE

And why in the hell not?

JACK

I don't want 'em in here snooping around. What if they find Mother?

MS. ROSE

What reason would they have to snoop around, Jack? All we have to do is hand over the crooks and they'll go.

JACK

They're gonna want to know where the money is.

MS. ROSE

Well, there it is! They can take it!

(She picks up the phone.)

JACK

No. We're keeping it.

MS. ROSE

That money belongs to the bank, Jack.

JACK

Yeah, the same bank that's trying to take our home away from us.

(Ms. Rose considers this.)

JACK

This money will solve a lot of problems, Ms. Rose. And we need it a hell of a lot more than the bank does. Just think how great your soaps could look on a bigger television!

MS. ROSE

Well, it is a terrible thing to do, Jack, but if it'll help you that much, I guess we can keep it.

JACK

I'd thought you'd come to see it my way.

(He closes the suitcases, picks them up, and crosses to his study.)

MS. ROSE

Wait a second, now. That still doesn't solve our immediate problem. How in the hell are we gonna get those psychos outta here? We can't just let 'em go. We've gotta turn 'em in somehow.

JACK

We'll just take 'em down to the station ourselves.

MS. ROSE

They're not gonna go easy, Jack.

JACK

Don't worry. I've got a plan.

(beat)

Just go finish dinner.

MS. ROSE

Why?

(He steps into his study.)

JACK

And get your barbiturates.

(He exits and closes the door behind him.)

MS. ROSE

Oh. This could be fun.

(She exits into the kitchen. Curtain.)

END OF ACT ONE

THE PEAK

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. JUNK BOAT ON VICTORIA HARBOUR - DAY - **PRESENT** 1

ROSIE clutches the handrail of a moving boat. She breathes deeply, taking a long look out at the city skyline. As it always does, the view fills her with wonder. She smiles wistfully as a distant memory returns to her.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. VICTORIA HARBOUR - DAY - **PAST** 2

The water laps the docks of Victoria Harbour near a collection of ramshackle buildings.

The serenity is interrupted by BEN, who runs quickly across the frame.

3 EXT. SIDE STREET NEAR VICTORIA HARBOUR - DAY - **PAST** 3

Ben runs into an alleyway just off the docks and hurries past an array of cluttered storefronts. Swiftly, he whips around the corner and disappears.

4 INT. LOST AND FOUND - DAY - **PAST** 4

The walls of the Lost and Found are lined with collections of impeccably archived knick knacks: hats, binoculars, cameras-- all labeled with tags indicating the date and time the objects were obtained. It's clear they've been arranged with love.

BEN enters in a hurry, not stopping to browse. He scuttles past a sign that reads "Lost and Found" in both Cantonese and English. He checks his watch as he approaches the counter and then he rings the bell for service.

The SHOPKEEPER, an elderly local woman, turns to BEN and spits rapid fire Cantonese.

SHOPKEEPER
You wait your turn! Everybody
always in such big hurry!

She looks away quickly, returning her attention to a SMALL BOY who stands nearby. As she approaches him, her stern expression softens. Stooping to his level, she points to the lost and found items behind her.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

You know what all these things have in common? They are not lost, they are simply forgotten. I am the keeper of forgotten things.

The shopkeeper retrieves a small toy boat from the shelf and returns it to the boy with a warm smile on her face.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

But you have not forgotten. It is clear you love this boat very much. Always remember, you can never lose what you truly love.

The boy smiles and runs off, boat in hand. Ben is touched by this and he smiles at the shopkeeper.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

Some things more important than hurry, hurry, hurry all the time. I've been here forty years. I've seen many people, many items--all important to someone.

The SHOPKEEPER looks at him as if to say, "what is it that's important to you?" He points to a shelf behind the counter.

BEN

(in Cantonese)

That umbrella please.

The woman turns and retrieves an umbrella with a handle that's carved in the shape of a bird's head. She places it in Ben's hands and looks at him with a knowing smile.

SHOPKEEPER

You love this?

Ben nods.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

Next time, don't be so quick to let it go.

She releases the umbrella and quickly recedes to the back of the store, leaving Ben to contemplate her words.

Rosie grips the boat's handrail, waiting to depart. She looks out, mesmerized by the city before her. Ben sneaks up behind her and taps her shoulder with the beak of the umbrella's figurehead. She turns, but she sees no one--he's waiting on her other side. They laugh.

ROSIE

Geez! I thought you'd forgotten
about me!

BEN

Forget about you? Never!

He kisses her.

ROSIE

Where have you been?

BEN

I was rescuing someone.

Rosie looks puzzled.

ROSIE

Who?

Ben holds up the little figure on the end of the umbrella.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

You found him! He was there!

She hugs the umbrella close as the boat begins to move.

BEN

Just like you thought! That crazy
old woman has all sorts of junk.
I'd have been here sooner, but she
kept going on and on about love...
and losing lost things that are
found or something... I don't know.
Anyway, I'm here now. And so's Mr.
Fredricksen!

Rosie's smile fades. She grows somber. She rests her hand on
the umbrella and lays her head against Ben's chest. Ben
places a hand on top of Rosie's and leans his head to hers.
For a moment, they stand in silence, contemplating the view.

ROSIE

Two years goes by a lot faster than
you'd think, doesn't it?

BEN

It sure does.

She looks at Ben solemnly.

ROSIE

I know this is a great opportunity.
I'm excited for you--I really am.
But, I just don't want you to go.

BEN
I thought we agreed, Rosie?
We talked about this.

ROSIE
Please don't go!

She sweeps her hand out, highlighting the view.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
I'm mean look. Have you ever seen
anything more beautiful than this?

Ben fixes his eyes only on Rosie.

BEN
Yeah. And I'll be back to her just
as soon as I can.

He flashes her a toothy grin. She giggles.

ROSIE
How is it you always know exactly
what to say?

BEN
I watch a lot of Rachel McAdams
movies.

They embrace as the boat begins to dock.

BACK TO PRESENT.

6 INT. MAN MO TEMPLE - DAY - **PRESENT**

6

Rosie strolls through the beautiful Man Mo Temple. An OLD WOMAN stands at a metal altar, folding Joss Paper into intricate shapes. A fire burns beside her.

Rosie pulls up near the woman to watch and her mind wanders, drifting back into memory.

FLASHBACK TO:

7 EXT. MAN MO TEMPLE ENTRYWAY - DAY - **PAST**

7

Rosie and Ben approach the temple, walking hand in hand down a crowded street.

ROSIE
I love this time of year.

BEN
The 40% off sale at H&M?

She nudges him playfully.

ROSIE
No! The Hungry Ghost Festival.

BEN
Oh, right, yeah... when the spirits
of the dead roam free.

She nods, smiling.

BEN (CONT'D)
Never really been a fan.

ROSIE
You're not afraid of a few little
ghosties are you, Ben?

BEN
Please. Me? I'm not afraid of
anything!

From nowhere, a gong rings loudly. Ben jumps backwards,
knocking into a lantern. Rosie chuckles as they enter the
temple.

8 INT. MAN MO TEMPLE WALKWAY - DAY - PAST 8

Inside, a MAN folds Joss Paper at a metal altar. He displays
an intricately detailed paper flower and then drops it into
the fire without a second thought.

BEN
(in Cantonese)
That was beautiful. Who was it for?

MAN
(in Cantonese)
My grandmother. China Roses were
her favorite.

Rosie leans in close to Ben.

ROSIE
It's such a shame to burn something
so beautiful.

The man understands her and responds in English.

MAN
You can find great beauty in many
things you can no longer see.

Rosie nods, smiling.

MAN (CONT'D)
Here, have one.

He offers her a paper flower.

ROSIE
Oh, no, but thank you.

MAN
No, I insist. I think this one was
made for you.

Rosie takes the flower and is surprised to find her name
written across it. She looks at Ben, perplexed. He smiles a
slick smile. She gasps.

ROSIE
Is this what I think it is?

BEN
If you think it's the first clue in
a romantic and very cleverly
plotted scavenger hunt that takes
us back to each of our favorite
haunts one last time, then yes.
Yes, it is.

Rosie squeals, unable contain her excitement.

ROSIE
Not even Rachel McAdams has gotten
one of these!

She turns the flower over and finds a short poem. She reads
it aloud.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
A note, a letter, no, a clue.
To what? Can't tell you yet.
To find out what's in store for
you, just look where first we met.

Excitedly, Rosie grabs Ben's arm and darts off down the
street. Ben glances back at the man and mouths, "thank you." The
man smiles and gives him two thumbs up.

BACK TO PRESENT.

Rosie opens her purse and fishes around inside. She withdraws
a paper flower--Ben's clue. She stares at it longingly for a
moment and then drops it into the fire.

The woman standing at the altar looks at the flower as it falls, and then over to Rosie. Rosie smiles and walks on.

FLASHBACK TO:

10 EXT. SCAD HONG KONG BUILDING - DAY - **PAST** 10

Students trudge up the slope to the main entrance, hurrying to get to class.

11 INT. SCAD HONG KONG BUILDING - DAY - **PAST** 11

Ben and Rosie stroll through the building reminiscing.

ROSIE
I was sitting right over there sketching.

BEN
And all of a sudden, you had this strange feeling--like there was magic in the air. And you looked up and you saw me, basking in the warm glow of my own charm. And you just sat there, staring--there may have even been a little drool dribbling down your chin...

Rosie laughs.

ROSIE
Is that how it happened?

BEN
I was embarrassed for you...

ROSIE
Oh, really...

BEN
But you can't deny, it was love at first sight!

ROSIE
That's not even close to the truth.

Ben feigns devastation.

BEN
What? You don't love me?

Rosie nudges him playfully but they're interrupted by a voice calling from behind them.

VOICE 1 (O.S.)
 Hey, do you know where Professor
 Dang Vu's class is?!

VOICE 2 (O.S.)
 We have to get to Foundation
 Studies!

Rosie and Ben recognize the voices instantly. They turn to find their friends DANIEL, KAREN, JESS, and SAM laughing and coming toward them. They run to each other and exchange hugs.

ROSIE
 What are you guys doing here?!

DANIEL
 What do you mean? We always sneak
 around campus eavesdropping on
 nauseating banter.

They laugh.

KAREN
 And thank God we do! If we hadn't
 been here, we may have never seen
 Ben again!

JESS
 I can't believe he's leaving
 tomorrow--even though we agreed we
 would all stay here together after
 graduation--and you two were
 planning to spend the entire day
 without us!?!?

DANIEL
 How dare you!

They're joking, but we see Ben take the sentiment to heart.

ROSIE
 What!?! We'd already planned to
 have dinner with you guys tonight!

Sam interrupts.

SAM
 Hey, what is that?

He points to a paper flower hidden obviously in an vase of
 ordinary blooms.

JESS
 A heinously mismatched flower
 arrangement?

DANIEL

What could that mean? *

KAREN

Maybe it's a clue... *

Rosie grins, noticing the flower. *

ROSIE

You guys are in on it, too? *

KAREN

You didn't think Ben could do this
on his own did you?

DANIEL

You do know which Ben we're talking
about, right? It takes him an hour
to make minute rice.

They laugh as Rosie reads her clue.

ROSIE

You like this little game, my dear?
It's fun to reminisce.
You'll find another clue right near
the sight of our first kiss.

Rosie scurries off. Her friends run after her.

12

MONTAGE - VARIOUS - **PAST**

12

A) EXT. POTTINGER STREET - DAY - Ben and friends try to keep pace as Rosie hurries up the stone steps of Pottinger Street.

B) EXT. THE STREETS OF SHEUNG WAN - DAY - The group explores Sheung Wan, an eclectic Shopping District. They examine the pungent display cases on Dried Seafood Street. Ben leaves Mr. Fredricksen behind at a fish market. Upon realizing, he runs back to fetch it, holding his nose to stifle the obnoxious odor.

C) EXT. LASCAR ROW - AFTERNOON - Ben and Rosie peruse the antique carts on Lascar Row. Rosie examines a heart-shaped locket with an engraving of the Double Happiness character. When she's turned away, Ben buys it and slips it around her neck.

D) EXT. POTTINGER STREET - AFTERNOON - Rosie runs back down the steps, reading the poem on another clue. The gang follows after her. They're having a blast.

END OF MONTAGE

13

INT. RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON - **PAST**

13

Ben and Rosie sit at a table with their friends, laughing and having a good time. Ben opens the lid on his steamer bowl and brandishes a fork.

KAREN

I know you're not gonna eat dim sum
with a fork!

JESS

That's sacrilege!

ROSIE

He has a very complicated
relationship with chopsticks.

BEN

The food just never quite seems to
make it to my mouth.

Daniel laughs.

DANIEL

I've never known food not to make
it to your mouth...

Ben mocks Daniel's joke with a condescending, "haw, haw." Then he picks up his fork, stabs a dumpling, and inhales it.

KAREN

Alright! Let's see what's on the
dessert menu.

She picks up a menu and hands it to Rosie.

ROSIE

How can you even think about
dessert? I'm stuffed!

Rosie puts the menu down.

DANIEL

Just give it a look. I'm sure
there's some great stuff in there.

ROSIE

I know what they have. We eat here
all time.

Jess widens her eyes at Rosie and mouths, "open it." Taking the hint, Rosie obeys. She's delighted to find another paper flower inside.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Guess I should have seen that
coming...

She laughs, turns the flower over, and reads the clue.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
 Almost there. We're almost through.
 A prize is what you seek.
 So board the tram, take in the view
 And find it on the peak.

She smiles wide as she closes the lid on her steamer bowl.

MATCH CUT TO:

14 INT. RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON - **PRESENT** 14

Rosie sits alone in the same seat at the same table. She stares contemplatively out the window. The maître d' approaches, with several guests following. He seats them at Rosie's table. She looks over to them and smiles.

FLASHBACK TO:

15 EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE PEAK TRAM - DUSK - **PAST** 15

The gang approaches the entrance to the Peak Tram.

KAREN
 Alrighty, this is where we get off.

ROSIE
 You don't want to come?

SAM
 You know we don't stay out after
 dark during the Hungry Ghost
 Festival. Bad juju.

ROSIE
 That's ridiculous! Come on!

JESS
 This is your last night together.
 It should just be the two of you.

This idea hits Ben especially hard. He contemplates it.

KAREN
 Go on. We'll see you at the airport
 tomorrow.

They exchange goodbye hugs.

SAM
 Have fun up there!

DANIEL
 But not too much--public
 indecency's a crime here!

Ben and Rosie walk off, hand in hand. Without Rosie seeing, Ben turns back to them. They wink, giving him playful thumbs up. Ben puts his arm around Rosie's waist and they walk on.

BACK TO PRESENT.

16 EXT. VICTORIA PEAK - DUSK - **PRESENT**

16

Alone, pushing earnestly against the stream of foot traffic, Rosie ascends the steps to the top of Victoria Peak. At the mountain's summit, she stops to take in the view. Closing her eyes, she inhales, and smiles from deep within.

FLASHBACK TO:

17 EXT. VICTORIA PEAK - DUSK - **PAST**

17

Rosie and Ben sit together on a bench, one hand each holding the umbrella, their heads leaning against one another. They stare out at the skyline.

ROSIE
 We haven't talked about custody.

BEN
 What?

ROSIE
 Mr. Fredricksen. Who's he gonna
 live with?

BEN
 He's coming to New York with me. He
 is mine after all.

ROSIE
 Yours!?!?

BEN
 You gave him to me on our first
 date. Don't you remember?

Rosie looks up at him.

ROSIE
 But I love him!

Ben looks back and her.

BEN
 Well I'm not leaving him behind.

Playfully, he tugs the umbrella towards himself.

ROSIE
Well I refuse to let you take him!

Rosie pulls back.

BEN
Then I guess we'll both just have
to stay here.

It takes Rosie a moment to register what he's just said.

ROSIE
...What?

BEN
I'm staying in Hong Kong. I'm
turning down the job.

Rosie detects a hint of sadness in his voice.

ROSIE
But you love that job?

BEN
I love you more. And when you find
something you really love, you
shouldn't let it go.

Rosie smiles.

ROSIE
D'you get that from Rachel McAdams?

BEN
Actually, I think it was from that
crazy Chinese lost and found
lady...

They both laugh. But after a moment, Ben grows serious.

BEN (CONT'D)
And because, as you know, I only
take advice from magic eight balls
and crazy old Chinese ladies, I
need to ask you something.

He slides off the bench, bends on one knee, and holds out
another paper flower. A diamond ring sparkles in the center
of the blossom.

BEN (CONT'D)
Will you marry me?

Rosie's thrilled. She struggles to find the right words.

BEN (CONT'D)
 Would you hurry up and say yes! I
 think I'm kneeling on a rock or
 something...

Rosie nods through her laughter.

ROSIE
 Yes! Yes, of course, yes!

Ben slips the ring onto her finger and jumps into her arms.
 They kiss.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
 So this means forever, huh? You
 think you can love me that long?

BEN
 Longer. Rosemary Connolly, I will
 always love you. Never forget that.

Rosie giggles as Ben picks her up into another kiss.

BACK TO PRESENT.

18 EXT. VICTORIA PEAK - SUNSET - **PRESENT** 18

Rosie sits alone in the middle of the same bench where Ben proposed. She stares into the distance, twisting the engagement ring on her finger. Tears well up in her eyes.

FLASHBACK TO:

19 EXT. THE STREETS OF MONG KOK - NIGHT - **PAST** 19

Rosie and Ben walk hand in hand down the bustling streets of Mong Kok, their skin glowing under the light of a thousand neon signs. Rosie carries a brown paper bag that's been folded over and stained with grease.

BEN
 Got any mooncakes left in there?

Rosie smiles coyly.

ROSIE
 Nope. Just looking for a trashcan.

BEN
 Oh, well, I don't want my fiancé to
 have to carry around greasy
 garbage. Here, I'll hold that for
 ya.

He lunges, snatching the bag from her hand before she can pull away. He opens it and looks inside, feigning surprise.

BEN (CONT'D)
Would you look at that? It appears there's one left for me after all!

ROSIE
Alright, very funny. You know you had more than I did. Give it back!

She reaches for the bag, but he darts off down the street.

BEN
If you can catch me, it's yours!

She gains on him. But caught up in their game, neither one realizes that they've run out into the street. A car barrels toward them. There's a cacophony of noise--horns, sirens--and then complete silence.

BACK TO PRESENT.

20 EXT. VICTORIA PEAK - NIGHT - **PRESENT** 20

Rosie opens her eyes, wiping away tears. An OLD MAN sits on the bench to her right.

OLD MAN
(in Cantonese)
You should go home. Hungry ghosts are roaming.

But Rosie doesn't respond. Instead ANOTHER VOICE speaks from beside her.

OLD WOMAN (O.S.)
(in Cantonese)
You're right. I wouldn't want to run into my mother-in-law...

We pan to Rosie's left. An old woman sits beside her.

Slowly, the focus widens, revealing the entirety of the bench. The woman sits on the left side and the man sits on the right, but we see that there's an empty spot between them where Rosie should be.

CUT TO:

21 MONTAGE - VARIOUS - **PAST** 21

A) EXT. MAN MO TEMPLE - DAY - A paper flower flutters down into the fire.

The old woman watches, confused, then looks into the empty space where Rosie had originally been standing. There's no one there.

B) INT. RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON - The maître d' walks three people to an empty table where Rosie once sat.

CUT BACK TO:

22 EXT. VICTORIA PEAK - NIGHT - **PRESENT** 22

Rosie is back on the bench. The woman beside her stands.

OLD WOMAN
(To the OLD MAN in
Cantonese)
Walk me home?

The Old Man nods and slides off the bench after her. They walk off together, leaving Rosie alone.

After they've gone, a man approaches using a walking stick. As he gets nearer, we see that the walking stick is an umbrella. And the man is Ben, though he's much older now.

He sits down beside Rosie, smiling his same boyish smile. He reaches into his pocket and hands her a paper flower.

ROSIE
After all these years, you haven't
forgotten?

Ben looks tenderly at Rosie and she smiles. Reaching down, she pulls up a beautiful bouquet of the most remarkable paper flowers that she's been collecting throughout the years.

She places this new flower in the bunch and then rests her hand on the umbrella between them. She lays her head against Ben's chest. Ben places a hand on top of her hand and leans his head to hers.

In silence, they sit together, smiling as we pan out.

After a moment, the camera slowly turns around them. Upon returning to our original view, we reveal that Ben is seated alone on the bench.

We move in closer to see Ben glowing with the most hopeful smile on his face, unaware of the single paper flower that sits on the bench beside him.

FADE OUT.

Freddy Krueger Supports DACA Extension, Says “America Needs More Dreamers”

By David Scanlon

SPRINGWOOD, OH—After formally announcing his mayoral bid earlier this month, Democratic rising star Frederick Krueger has today unveiled a comprehensive campaign platform outlining his plan for a radically different Springwood.

At a rally held this morning in the gymnasium of Springwood Elementary, where the rags-to-riches candidate once worked as a custodial engineer, Krueger promised that his first priority as mayor would be to roll back the stringent regulations that have made life in this community difficult for undocumented immigrants. When asked if he supported the extension of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a controversial policy that allows some individuals brought to the U.S. unlawfully as children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation, he responded, “Unquestionably. Dreamers are this nation’s lifeblood.”

And Krueger made it clear he’d welcome them all in Springwood. “If you’ve got a dream,” he regaled, “Springwood’s got a bed for you to dream it in!”

Rhetoric like this has catapulted the candidate to local stardom. Followers admire him for his razor-sharp one-liners and working class, grunge chic fashion choices. Ardent Krueger supporters, decked out in red and green striped sweaters emblazoned with the campaign slogan *One, Two, Freddy’s Coming for You*, turned out in droves for today’s rally.

But not everyone in Springwood thinks Krueger is the right man for the job. Some residents are concerned about the legality of his proposition. A Supreme Court decision regarding DACA’s constitutionality isn’t expected until sometime in 2020. Still others, like local Walmart greeter Bobby Shaye, simply don’t like his face. “He’s just using that grotesque disfigurement of his to gain sympathy with voters.”

Other critics of Krueger’s campaign worry that an influx of Dreamers will do nothing but further inflate the problem of overcrowding that’s been plaguing the city for decades. “Just think how

bad traffic will be in the congested parts of town,” longtime resident Heather Thompson laments, “It’s gonna be a nightmare on Elm Street.”

Krueger’s campaign manager, Pamela Myers, has addressed these claims directly, assuring voters that “Freddy has an excellent plan in place to keep the population of Springwood under control.” When pressed for more information, she said only that additional details regarding the aforementioned plan would be shared with the public “in a few more sleeps.”

Though his stance on immigration has garnered the most media attention, Krueger used today’s rally to outline policy proposals in several key areas. Among other things, he promised to slash taxes for the middle class and proposed a comprehensive criminal justice reform bill that would eradicate mandatory minimum sentencing laws for petty crimes such as drug possession and child murder.

In a press conference after the rally, Krueger was asked what his next move would be should he be defeated on Election Day. To the cheers of his supporters he responded, “I can’t be defeated. I may lose this time, but I’ll be back. I always come back. Again and again and again. As many as nine times, if that’s what it takes.”

For more information on Krueger and his campaign, visit him online at www.BetterOffFred.com.

The Chronicles of Narnia: Quest for Winter's End Attraction Treatment

David Scanlon

Queue:

- Guests enter the attraction by walking through the front gate of the estate of Professor Digory Kirke. His historical manor is open to the public for tours given by his housekeeper, Mrs. Macready. Signs hung around the grounds read, “Macready’s Marvelous Manor Tours—Featuring Artifacts, Antiques, and Other Treasures from the Collection of Professor Digory Kirke.”
- The exterior overflow queue winds through several gardens on the Professor’s property. An apple tree stands prominently in one garden. Hidden in the flowerbeds around it, eagle-eyed guests can spot stone garden ornaments that resemble the creatures of Narnia.
- Guests enter the mansion through its front door and the queue winds them through several rooms containing treasures from the Professor’s travels. Many of these artifacts are from his Earthly voyages, but some are distinctly Narnian. For these objects, no mention is made of their origin and their placards are blank.
- After exploring several rooms, guests ascend the mansion’s central staircase. At the top, they are joined by a “Tour Guide” who counts off a group of roughly 72 and leads them to the end of the hall.
- The “Tour Guide” opens the door to a room that is empty except for the large, ornate wardrobe against the wall at the far end. Guests are shepherded into the room and the “Tour Guide” closes the door behind them, leaving them alone.

The Wardrobe Room (*Spare Room*):

- Guests stand in the room for a few moments of complete silence. Soon, the lights begin to flicker as the sound of a howling wind fills the room. The lights dim and a blue glow can be seen through the crack between the wardrobe’s doors. The doors begin to quiver and a chill creeps into the room. Screens behind the room’s two windows create a frosting effect. The doors eventually creak open. As they do, snowflakes blow into the room from the wintery forest inside. The backsides of the doors are covered in a frosty layer of ice that sparkles and glistens with lighting effects. These effects carry onto the floor of the room as a sheet of ice forms across it, creating a subtle pathway that beckons guests to enter the wardrobe.

Preshow (Lamppost Room):

- Guests proceed through the wardrobe and find themselves in the iconic snowy wood where Lucy Pevensie first met Mr. Tumnus. The room is cold and the forest is white and bleak. The only warmth comes from the lamppost at the center of a clearing. A flame dances inside the lamp, seemingly moving back and forth with the whipping wind.
- The Guests form a group around the lamppost. A snowy bank creates a stage in front of the guests just past the lamppost.

- When the guests are settled, audio-animatronic versions of Mr. and Mrs. Beaver rise up out of the snowdrift, giving guests the illusion that they have just walked up over the hill. The Beavers act as the guests' hosts in Narnia, explaining the world of the ride to them.
- The Beavers ascend the hill in the middle of a conversation:

MRS. BEAVER

You've been sneaking second helpings again, haven't you? You seem to be having a mighty tough time getting up this hill!

MR. BEAVER

Well these days, you never know what meal is gonna be your last. Especially with your cooking...

- The Beavers make it to the top of the hill and are startled to see the guests huddled around the lamppost. Mrs. Beaver screams and Mr. Beaver gasps:

MR. BEAVER

Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve!

MRS. BEAVER

But how are they...? What about the Witch? She'll kill them!

MR. BEAVER

(to guests)

You mustn't be here. The White Witch has forbidden it!

MRS. BEAVER

Go back where you came from while the portal's still open!

MR. BEAVER

Quickly now! You're not safe here!

- Mr. Beaver motions for guests to return through the door into the spare room. As they turn to leave, the wardrobe opening begins to shrink, collapsing in on itself as the view of the spare room slowly fades away. The same crack of light that was initially visible on the other side of the wardrobe is the last impression left of the Professor's house, and soon, this too disappears. In the end, all that remains is an expanse of snowy forest.

MRS. BEAVER

That's not good.

MR. BEAVER

Catastrophic is probably the word I'd use.

MRS. BEAVER

Isn't there some way we can open it back up?

MR. BEAVER

Only Aslan can open portals between worlds, I'm afraid. And nobody's seen Aslan in years...

MRS. BEAVER

Mr. Tumnus has! Says Aslan's forming an army to take back Narnia!

MR. BEAVER

Only one problem, dear—the White Witch has kidnapped him. She's holding Tumnus prisoner until he spills Aslan's whereabouts.

MRS. BEAVER

Well what are we gonna do? The Witch probably already knows they're here.

MR. BEAVER

We've got to get them to Aslan.

MRS. BEAVER

How?

MR. BEAVER

By rescuing Mr. Tumnus!

MRS. BEAVER

We can't just break into the Witch's castle alone!

MR. BEAVER

We won't be alone.

(pointing to guests)

We'll have a whole army!

MRS. BEAVER

So you intend to serve them up to the Witch on a silver platter!??!

MR. BEAVER

We'll sneak in and out before she even knows we're there. *I am* a master of stealth, you know.

MRS. BEAVER

The only thing you've ever snuck into is the refrigerator! And you're louder than a bullhorn doing that!

MR. BEAVER

Well unless you have a better idea...

(to the guests, with a paw shielding his mouth)

And trust me, the way she tells it, she always does...

(back to Mrs. Beaver)

It's our only option.

MRS. BEAVER

I hate to admit it...

(to the guests, similarly shielding her mouth)

And this is the first time I've had to...

(Back to Mr. Beaver)

But, you're right.

MR. BEAVER

(angry, not processing what was said)

Well fine! But you know what!?!?

(realizing, with shock)

Wait... I'm right!?!?

MRS. BEAVER

Yes. And there's no time to rub it in. Mr. Tumnus may not have long. You see what she's done to the others.

- Mrs. Beaver points to a spot in the wood a little ways off, where, hidden amongst the trees and covered by a layer of snow, a stone stag stands mid-leap.

MR. BEAVER

If we must be quick, we certainly can't walk. It's quite a long way to the Witch's palace.

MRS. BEAVER

What about Father Christmas? His enchanted sleighs!

MR. BEAVER

We haven't had Christmas in a hundred years! There's no magic left in those.

MRS. BEAVER

The Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve carry a special magic with them. The prophecy speaks of it! Theirs should be enough!

MR. BEAVER

Mrs. Beaver, you are brilliant!

MRS. BEAVER

Now I'll run home and gather some provisions. I know you'll be hopeless without a bit of jam and toast. You go ahead to Father Christmas' and ready the sleighs.

- Mrs. Beaver turns to go. Her animatronic lowers beneath the snowy bank, creating the illusion that she has descended the hill.

MR. BEAVER

Alright you guys, you heard the boss! I'm gonna run ahead and get the sleighs ready to go.

- Mr. Beaver points to a clearing on the other side of the room that leads into another bit of queue line.

MR. BEAVER

You all head through that clearing there. Mrs. Beaver and I will be waiting for you on the other side.

- Mr. Beaver turns to go, and like Mrs. Beaver before him, his animatronic lowers beneath the snowdrift as if he had walked downhill. A cast member appears to usher guests into the holding queue.

Holding Queue (Pathway to Father Christmas' Sleigh Emporium):

- After the preshow with Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, guests continue through the snowy wood in the last stretch of queue before loading their ride vehicles.
- The woods here are dense and snowy like the forest in the preshow room. The Witch's magic is a bit stronger here, so guests who are paying careful attention can find clues of her presence scattered throughout. Some trees appear to have eyes—opening them quickly to look around, but shutting them before they can be spotted. One or two good creatures who lost their battle with the Witch are sprinkled through the wood in their stone form.
- At the end of the holding queue is the entrance to “*Father Christmas' Sleigh Emporium*,” a dilapidated wooden shack that must have been beautiful in its better days. A sign next to the door reads, “*Introducing Father Christmas' Enchanted Self-Driving Sleighs—For When There's No One Else to Carry You Ho-Ho-Home.*” The advertisement includes an image of the ride vehicle.
- Guests are held outside of the shack until the loading zone is ready to accommodate them. The doors open automatically when guests are meant to enter.

Load (Father Christmas' Sleigh Emporium):

- As the doors to *Father Christmas' Sleigh Emporium* magically open, guests are ushered in by cast members acting as Father Christmas' busy elves.
- The interior of the shop looks like a Narnian variation on Santa's workshop that has fallen into disrepair after one hundred years of desolate, Christmas-free winter.
- Once inside, the elves distribute 3D glasses, designed to look like goggles, and said to protect guests' eyes from the wind-whipped snow.
- The elves then sort guests into 9 groups of eight and file each group into a line to wait for their sleigh. Each “sleigh” is a eight-passenger trackless ride vehicle, dressed to look like one of *Father Christmas' Enchanted Self-Driving Sleighs*. Vehicles load three at a time.
- Passengers are seated in two rows of four guests each and are secured in place with a lap bar. After safety checks have been performed, guests embark on their journey through the forest, exiting the *Emporium* through a hole in its back wall.
- After exiting the station, ride vehicles follow a set path, but aren't limited by a track. Unique computerized movement allows for each vehicle to move in a different way than the last, making each ride a one-of-a-kind experience.

Scene 1A (Journey to the Witch's Castle):

- After entering the forest, the sleighs make a stop to rejoin Mr. and Mrs. Beaver. Pepper's ghost hologram versions of the characters wait on a snow bank along the edge of the track. Mr. Beaver carries a pack, tied to a stick that he has slung over his shoulder. The pack is presumably filled with Mrs. Beaver's goodies.

MR. BEAVER

Glad to see the sleighs are in working order, but you haven't left much room for us, now have you?

MRS. BEAVER

There's a fine little nook right down there in front. We'll sit there.

- The Beavers scurry down in front of the sleigh to take their seats. The guest is left to presume that they remain seated on the front of the ride vehicle for the next portion of the journey. When they speak, they are heard, but not seen.
- The ride vehicles begin to move and they continue through the forest, gliding as if on ice. They move past the scenery quickly, relaying a sense of urgency and anticipation to the guests.

MR. BEAVER

It's really kind of tight down here.

MRS. BEAVER

It wouldn't be if you would lay off the biscuits. Now be quiet. She can't know we're coming.

- The glistening, white forest of the preshow and boarding area has now given way to a much darker, colder, and more menacing forest. It is now abundantly clear that the trees are not to be trusted—their grimacing faces and haunting eyes reveal their true allegiance.
- A bitter wind chills guests' faces, its howling echoing through the trees.

MR. BEAVER

(to guests)

Keep your heads down and your voices low. The trees are always listening. And most of them are on her side.

- In the distance, looming over the entire scene, the Witch's ice palace sits between two foreboding crags. A dark storm rages in the sky above it.
- As the sleighs approach the castle, more and more stone creatures can be seen peppering the forest, their faces contorted in fear.

Scene 1B (Arriving at the Witch's Castle):

- The ride vehicles reach the base of an icy mountain. Rounding the corner, they come face to face with the Witch's palace. It's sharp and cold, appearing as if an enormous icicle had erupted from the ground beneath it.

- The palace towers above guests menacingly as they cross through its iron gates. Ominous music and a dark, sinister aurora borealis effect adds to the suspense of the scene.
- Gliding through the front gates, guests enter into a stone courtyard populated by fauns, centaurs, foxes, griffons, and other members of Aslan's army who were frozen in stone by the White Witch.
- The sleighs ascend a stone staircase to the front doors of the palace. The ride vehicle pitches and yaws on its base to simulate the climb.

Scene 2A (Encounter with the White Witch):

- The palace's large wooden doors creak open as the sleigh approaches them.
- Beyond the door is a vast, icy throne room. Its vaulted ceilings seem to rise up to the heavens. Thick stone pillars run in rows down the aisles.
- The front half of the throne room is depicted through practical show sets. Depth is created with the help of a large screen, seamlessly integrated into the physical scenery.
- On the screen, guests see the White Witch standing menacingly near her throne. She is clutching Mr. Tumnus firmly by the scruff on his chest, pulling him in to her face. Ginnabrick, her dwarf servant, stands next to them and Maugrim, a wolf and the captain of the Witch's guard stands watch.
- The sleigh pulls up behind one of the large stone pillars, giving guests the sense that they are hiding behind it to spy on the Witch.

MR. BEAVER
(whispering to guests)
There he is. That's Mr. Tumnus!

WHITE WITCH
(angrily, to Mr. Tumnus)
I'm only going to ask this one more time. Where is Aslan?

MR. TUMNUS
For the thousandth time, I don't know! No one does!

WHITE WITCH
Why won't you tell me where he is!?!?

MR. TUMNUS
Because I believe in a free Narnia.

WHITE WITCH
(raising her wand)
Let's see how you feel after a few days on ice!

- A blast of frosty magic erupts from the tip of the Witch's wand and Tumnus hardens, quickly morphing into one of the palace's stone ornaments.
- The sleigh swerves out into the open as Mr. Beaver screams:

MR. BEAVER
No! You stone cold old broad!

- Upon hearing Mr. Beaver's outburst, the Witch glances up and spots the sleigh.

WHITE WITCH
Maugrim! After them!

- Maugrim snarls in agreement and leaps into action. He howls loudly and the rest of his guards emerge from somewhere within the castle. The horde of wolves gallops through the throne room toward the guests.

MRS. BEAVER
You've really done it this time!

Scene 2B (Flight from the Castle):

- As the wolves advance on the guests, the sleigh reverses, swerving quickly and then high-tailing it out of the throne room.
- Escaping the castle, but still being pursued by the howling wolves, the sleigh ventures back into the forest.
- Unlike in the practical forests of previous scenes, the ride vehicle is now flanked by screens on all sides, allowing the ride to simulate a high-speed chase through a vast and changing environment. The vehicles pitch and yaw in sync with the action on the screens, creating the feeling of a high-speed sleigh ride.
- Midway through the scene, Maugrim catches up with the sleigh and lunges onto it. He lands on the front edge and bites at guests. He is shaken off by the twirling and twisting movements afforded to the vehicle by its trackless ride system.

Scene 3A (The Bank of the Frozen River):

- The woods come to an end at the bank of a frozen river. A cliff face is formed along the other bank by a frozen waterfall. This room is large and open, the walls, floor, and ceiling are all screens.
- The sleigh glides hesitantly onto the frozen river. A creaking sound is heard as a small crack splinters into several larger ones. The effect is accomplished with projection mapping on the floor. The vehicle drops, as if one rail has dipped beneath the surface of the river. The crack in the ice continues to spread, shooting forward to the horizon.
- The sled stops, knowing it can't go further without falling through the ice. It spins to face Maugrim and his pack, who have surrounded the vehicle in a half circle formation.

MAUGRIM

Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve, you have nowhere left to run. Give yourselves up now and I know her Majesty will look on you with favor.

MR. BEAVER
You lying fleabag! We'd rather drown.

MAUGRIM
Fine! Have it your way.

- Maugrim pounds his front paws into the ice in front of him, shattering it with a splash. The ice cracks all around the sleigh, leaving it floating on a chunk of ice. It cascades down the river, undulating as the water swells.

Scene 3B (River Action Sequence):

- The trackless ride vehicle is used to great effect in this scene, as the sleigh is pulled down the quickly flowing river. Rapids knock the vehicle around and swells cause it to tilt and spin uncontrollably.
- The ice on the river continues to break apart and soon the cracks reach the frozen waterfall. It too begins to crack, sending massive shards of ice down into the river. They splash down around the sleigh, causing it to rise up with the waves.
- Throughout the scene, a foggy mist fills the room and splashing water is shot at guests in synchronization with the movement of the water around them.
- In the background of the scene, Maugrim and his pack can be seen on the riverbank, following after the ride vehicle to ensure that the Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve don't make it out alive.
- At the end of the scene, one final gigantic shard of ice, cascades down the waterfall and splashes into the river. It causes an enormous wave to form. The wave races toward the ride vehicle, crashing over top of it. Wind and water splash the guests to accompany the effect.
- The power of the great swell launches the sleigh backwards. It spins out of control, allowing for the ride vehicle to slip into the next room. Here, the bank of the river is a practical set, with a screen blended seamlessly behind it to allow for character interaction and an expansion of the space.

Scene 4 (Aslan Saves the Day):

- Upon entering the new room, the sleigh runs aground on the riverbank, continuing to spin as it grinds to a halt, leaving guests face-to-face with the wolf pack.
- Maugrim and his pack snarl as they move toward the ride vehicle. Maugrim bares his teeth.

MAUGRIM
I really didn't want to get my paws dirty, but I guess I'm gonna have to kill you myself!

- Maugrim leaps forward and the 3D makes it seem as though he has landed on the front of the sleigh. The vehicle buckles under his weight. He howls and bites at guests. He raises his paw and is about to swipe when, seemingly from out of the blue, Aslan pounces, landing on the ride vehicle with a thud. He knocks Maugrim off the sleigh with his massive paw, hurling him into the flowing river where he cascades out of sight.
- Aslan then jumps off of the ride vehicle and lands on the bank of the river just in front of Maugrim's pack. The ride vehicle rises, springing back to its normal position as it's freed of Aslan's weight.

- The wolves move toward Aslan, but he stands his ground. He rears back his head and unleashes a ferocious roar. The roar reverberates through the landscape, blowing snow off of trees and awakening dormant birds, sending them flying from their roosts. The wolves whimper, turning quickly and fleeing into the forest.
- At this point, the ride vehicle moves onto a large rotating turntable, stopping in place between three curved screens. The rest of the action in this scene occurs on these screens, which turn slowly with the vehicle until it is deposited into the next room. The turntable is divided into three sections, allowing three ride vehicles to travel on it at one time, while still maintaining the illusion that they are having a solitary experience.
- Aslan stands with his back to the guests in a fearsome stance until he is sure the wolves have left. Mrs. Beaver points at him, beaming and in awe of his majesty:

MRS. BEAVER
It's him! It's Aslan—the true King of Narnia.

- Aslan turns toward the guests. Intense sunlight glistens around him, marking the first time that sunlight has featured prominently in the attraction. Guests can feel the warmth of his presence. His fierce persona softens and he exudes a warm friendship.
- The Beavers crawl off of the sleigh and scurry onto the screen. They stand near Aslan, staring at him in awe.
- As the scene unfolds, the winter scenery slowly begins to melt away, revealing the first signs of spring.
- Aslan nods to the Beavers and then bows to guests before speaking.

ASLAN

Welcome brave Sons of Adam, courageous Daughters of Eve. I've been expecting you for some time now. I've heard that you need to get home?

MR. BEAVER
That's right. Can you help them, Your Majesty?

ASLAN

I'm afraid my powers are still too limited to open a portal between realms. The Witch is doing everything she can to make sure our guests don't escape. She fears they'll fulfill the prophecy.

MRS. BEAVER
The prophecy?

ASLAN

*When Adam's flesh and Adam's bone,
Sits at Cair Paravel in throne,
The evil time will be over and done.*

It is foretold that our visitors will overthrow the Witch and end her eternal winter. You have been traveling with the rightful kings and queens of Narnia.

MRS. BEAVER
(under her breath)

It would figure. The one day I leave the den looking like rubbish...

ASLAN
(to guests)

So I need your help. Together we can defeat the Witch and take back Narnia. When she no longer has power over this land, I'll be able to send you home.

- Aslan looks around and sees the first signs of spring blossoming from beneath the melting snow.

ASLAN (CONT.)

Look, your magic is already taking effect! Spring is almost upon us. The White Witch's power is surely dwindling and my troops are ready for battle! Beavers, thank you for all you have done. I must ask one final favor of you. Return to the wood and spread news of my arrival. We will do battle at the Fords of Beruna. Send all the help you can.

MR. BEAVER
We will, sir. For Narnia.
(to guests)
Goodbye, Your Majesties. And good luck.

MRS. BEAVER

I've left my pack in front of the sleigh in case you get hungry, dears. Take care now.

- The Beavers wave goodbye and then scurry off to the forest.
- As the Beaver's exit, the sleigh rotates to face the exit of the turntable, which has now aligned perfectly with the entrance to the next room.

ASLAN
All right, follow me! There's no time to lose!

- Aslan runs ahead. The sleigh takes off just afterward, catching up quickly and then gliding across the melting snow beside him.

Scene 5 (The Return of Spring):

- As Aslan leads the sleigh away from the river back, the vehicle moves into another screen-based tunnel. The environment in this scene is projected onto large, curved screens that surround the ride vehicle on every side, giving guests a 360-degree view of the beautiful Narnian landscape.
- The scenes playing out across the screens move much faster than the ride vehicles themselves, creating the illusion that Aslan is leading guests across a great distance.
- Passing out of the forest and into the lush fields and valleys of the Narnian countryside, guests are treated to the reawakening of spring after more than one hundred years of desolate winter.

- A warm breeze flows through the tunnel and the bright glow surrounding Aslan's majestic gallop mimics the dawning of a new era.
- Snow melts from the hillsides, seeping quickly into the ground. Instead of mud, dense green grass is left in its place. The soft wind blows powdery snow from the branches, relieving the trees of a heavy burden, and allowing them to stand tall once more.
- Flowers bloom, rising swiftly from the earth and opening gleefully to collect the much-desired sunlight. Petals and leaves blossom on the trees, blowing gently in the warm breeze.
- Birds and other previously dormant woodland creatures awake from their slumber and return to the actions of their daily lives. The joyful tune of songbirds fills the air.
- Flower petals collected by the wind coalesce into the feminine form of dryads, who wave at guests as they flutter from tree to tree.
- The sleighs begin to slow as they reach the end of the tunnel, passing through the low point in two adjacent hills and entering into Aslan's campsite, which is nestled in the valley behind them.

Scene 6A (Aslan's Campsite):

- Like the Witch's castle, this scene features practical set pieces in the foreground, blended seamlessly with screens in the background to create depth and allow for immersive character interaction.
- The campsite is littered with regal tents and flags. Creatures of all sorts, clad in gold and silver armor, buzz around preparing for the ensuing battle.
- A centaur, the commander of Aslan's army, emerges from one of the tents. He bows to Aslan before speaking.

CENTAUR

The White Witch and her troops are almost upon us, Your Majesty.

ASLAN

Get our troops in line. We'll be ready when she arrives.

- The centaur gallops out of sight to gather the troops. Aslan prepares the guests for battle.

ASLAN

(to guests)

Your presence in Narnia has greatly weakened the Witch, but she still has one very powerful source of magic—her scepter. I cannot confront the Witch while it's still in her possession. While I distract her troops, I need you to retrieve the scepter and destroy it. And don't worry—you have the deep magic of Narnia on your side. I know you won't let me down! Now join the troops in line and prepare for battle.

Scene 6B (Preparing for Battle):

- The sleigh turns and faces a large screen. Aslan's army has formed a line in front of the guests. His army consists of unicorns, satyrs, stags, phoenixes, rhinoceroses, naiads, dryads, griffons, fauns, centaurs, jaguars, leopards, horses, and an assortment of other birds and woodland creatures. The sleigh pulls in behind them.

- The White Witch's army rises over a hill in front of Aslan's Army and then descends into the valley. Decked out in dark armor, the troops follow behind the Witch, who rides into battle on a golden chariot drawn by two polar bears.
- The Witch's army consists of cyclopes, giants, ghouls, goblins, hags, harpies, minotaurs, sprites, vultures, wolves, and wraiths.
- As the Witch's army draws near, Aslan raises his paw and yells:

ASLAN
For Narnia!

- Aslan's Army echoes, yelling back, "For Narnia," and then charging the Witch's army.
- The Witch's army charges in return.

WHITE WITCH
I have no interest in prisoners. Kill them all!

Scene 7A (The Battle):

- The sleigh charges forward with Aslan's army, entering into the main battle room. This scene is brought to life through a mixture of massive screens and physical set pieces. Large creatures and the battlefield's broad vistas are brought to life on the screen, while smaller creatures and other scenic items such as boulders, roots, and mountainsides are presented in the form of standing sets and animatronics.
- The battle is expansive, chaotic, and at times, disorienting. The trackless ride vehicles can bounce, glide, spin, and shake in a variety of different ways depending on how they enter or exit each portion of the scene.
- For the duration of the scene, the enchanted sleigh has its sights set on the White Witch, determined to retrieve her scepter. The Witch's minions are constantly getting in the way. The battle between the two armies rages in the background—occasionally entering into the foreground to interact with guests.
- When the sleigh first moves toward the Witch, a minotaur, the general of the Witch's army, comes running to her aid. He raises his massive axe and swings, slamming it into the sleigh. The sleigh jolts, giving guests the sensation of being hit, and then spins violently across the field.
- The sleigh stops suddenly as it slams into the fatty leg of a giant. The giant picks up his leg and stomps down, intending to crush the ride vehicle. The sleigh swerves out of the way just in the knick of time, jolting with the force of the giant's step.
- The sleigh creeps up on the Witch again, but is suddenly and violently pulled backwards away from her. The vehicle spins around to see massive roots erupting from the ground and attacking guests as if they were alive. An audio-animatronic root grasps the ride vehicle, attempting to drag it under the ground.
- A phoenix swoops in and grabs onto the ride vehicle, wrenching it away from the roots and carrying it into the sky above the battle, preparing to place guests down near the Witch.
- A harpy swoops into frame, hissing and snarling, and claws at the phoenix, attempting to capture the sleigh. In the tussle, the phoenix loses grip on the sleigh and drops it. The screens scroll rapidly from aerial scenery back down to the battlefield to elicit the

sensation of falling. The vehicle lands in the next show room with a thud, squashing a goblin.

Scene 7B (The Witch's Demise):

- The sleigh now has a clear path to the Witch who is distracted by a confrontation with the General of Aslan's troops. It pulls backward, as if revving its engine, and then plows forward, ramming into the side of the Witch's chariot. The force of the hit jolts the Witch and her scepter flies out her hand, shattering as it smashes into the exposed cliff face beside her. A bolt of blue magic bursts from the wand, fizzling out to signify the loss of the Witch's power.
- The Witch scowls at the guests, grabbing her sword and leaping down from her chariot. She marches over to the ride vehicle, pointing her sword at the guests.

WHITE WITCH

You insolent fools! I won't give up my throne!

- She raises the sword and is just about to strike when Aslan leaps from behind the sleigh and lands on its front edge. The vehicle buckles under his weight.

ASLAN

That's because it isn't yours to give!

- Aslan pounces onto the Witch, knocking her out of view of the guests. He raises his paw, claws bared, and strikes, killing her off screen.
- Aslan raises his head, roaring triumphantly. The ferocious sound echoes through the room as the rest of the Witch's Army flees the battlefield.

Scene 8A (Transition to Cair Paravel):

- The sleigh passes through a gap between two hillsides, rounding the corner and emerging on the beach. A sandy shore extends out in front of the ride vehicle. To the right, the Eastern Ocean extends to the horizon. Across the shore, sitting high atop a cliff is the castle, Cair Paravel.
- Aslan walks up the beach, approaching the guests.

ASLAN

It's time for you to take your place as the rightful kings and queens of Narnia.

(Motioning to Cair Paravel)

That is your castle—Cair Paravel. Your coronation awaits.

- As Aslan finishes, the seawater swells up and gently flows under the sleigh, dragging it out into the sea.
- The water rushes forward, carrying the sleigh to Cair Paravel.
- A mist of water splashes guest and a warm sea breeze blows over them. The smell of salt water fills the air. Naiads, feminine nymphs formed from water, leap from the sea, playfully dancing around the ride vehicle as it heads toward the castle. The sun is setting, filling the room with beautiful pinks, oranges, and yellows.

- At the base of the cliff atop which Cair Paravel sits, the ride vehicles round a corner into a cavern carved out from the stone by years of erosion.

Scene 8B (Ascent to Cair Paravel):

- Inside the cavern, the water beneath the ride vehicles bubbles up, creating a geyser that carries them gently up the cliff face. This effect is created with a ramp, hidden by water features and projection mapping.
- The geyser deposits the sleigh at the top of the cliff, where it rides through the castle's bountiful gardens to a magnificent stone courtyard.

Unload (Castle Courtyard):

- In the castle courtyard, the sleighs come to a stop. Cast members dressed as the court's servants open the sleigh doors and guests exit their ride vehicles.
- Cast members then usher guests, referring to them as "Your Majesties," into one of three throne rooms for their coronation.

Post Show (Coronation):

- Guests enter into the throne room of Castle Cair Paravel. Cast members in servants' costumes wait in the room.
- On the left, four lavishly ornate thrones sit atop a raised platform. Beside them, audio-animatronic versions of Mr. and Mrs. Beaver carry crowns and tiaras on satin pillows.
- On the right, a full-scale audio-animatronic Aslan stands majestically on a balcony.
- At the front of the room is an enormous, intricately detailed stained glass window. Its design resembles that which adorns the doors of the wardrobe.
- As the doors to the courtyard close, the show begins.

ASLAN

Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve, thank you for your unfaltering bravery in the face of extraordinary danger. You have restored peace and prosperity to Narnia and for that, I am forever grateful. I am honored to call you all kings and queens of Narnia. And though I wish you could stay here, I must honor my promise and open a portal for you to return to your own realm.

- Aslan waves his great paw in the direction of the stained glass window. Using projection mapping to animate the effect, the window scrambles its pieces, ultimately rearranging them into the image of a gift shop. The glass then begins to melt away, opening up the wall to reveal a portal back to Professor Kirke's manor.

ASLAN

Go well. But remember, once a king or queen of Narnia, always a king or queen of Narnia. Come back and see us anytime.

- Aslan and the Beavers wave goodbye as the guests exit into the gift shop.

MR. BEAVER
Goodbye. Take Care!

MRS. BEAVER
Visit anytime! Our den is your den!

- Once every guest has left the coronation room, the portal reseals, closing off Narnia from the gift shop and allowing the show to reset for the next group.

Battle for the Everstone: An Interactive Laser Tag Adventure Inspired by Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

David Scanlon

Backstory/ Attraction Summary

After falling through a mysterious wormhole, several members of an early 16th century Danish royal family and their courtiers arrived on a strange alien world. Once home to a great civilization, the planet, as they found it, was devoid of life. Some time ago, a violent civil war had broken out amongst warring factions of the Krystallirians, the planet's indigenous people, ultimately resulting in the eradication of their species. Upon their extinction, the Krystallirians left behind a vast, technologically advanced city. The city was beautiful, having been erected from the natural crystal formations that formed the surface of the planet. The crystals, unbeknownst to the planet's new inhabitants, were much more than decoration. All of the amazing technology on the planet was powered by these crystals, which were tied directly to the magical *Everstone*, a crystal formation deep within the planet that provided energy and life to the Krystallirians and their home world.

Stranded on a strange world with no way to return home, the royal family was forced to adapt to life on this new planet, which they dubbed Krystaljord, or "Land of the Crystals," after its most distinct geological feature. They quickly mastered the technology of the Krystallirians, and though much of the city was in ruins, its new residents were able to rebuild. Using remnants of the alien city, the royal family restored the city's crystalline palace, infusing the technological advancements of their new world with the style of their own castle back home.

Having now a magnificent place to live, the royal family decided that, in order to ensure their survival, it was time to begin a new civilization. King Heimric, who had been well loved in their previous world, was set to be the leader of this new establishment. This plan never came to pass, however, as King Heimric was found dead in his chambers on the eve of his coronation. The mystery of the king's death led to accusations of murder and slander, which hurled the newly formed monarchy into turmoil and split the group into two factions. One group called for the king's son, also named Heimric, to be king, while the other insisted the king's brother, Klaus, inherit the crown.

Guests play the role of modern day humans, who have fallen through the same wormhole, landing in Krystaljord just as the conflict between Heimric and Klaus is coming to a head. Upon their arrival, they are recruited by one of the two factions, joining the fight for either Heimric or Klaus. Only one who has harnessed the power of the planet can be its true ruler, and so, led by a close ally of one of the possible successors, guests journey deep into the caverns of Krystaljord to retrieve the legendary *Helm of the Everstone*, a crown worn by the king of the Krystallirians and formed from the planet's power source. Along the way, guests must solve puzzles, escape from cavernous labyrinths, retrieve clues, and shoot targets to prove their team's mastery over the powers of the *Everstone*. This all culminates in a final laser tag battle between the two teams, set within the *Grotto of the Everstone*, the world's largest laser tag arena.

Attraction Experience

Lobby

Guests enter through the main gate of the castle into the Grand Hall. The ticket booth is located here. Guests purchase tickets and are assigned to a team, either Heimric or Klaus. Teams consist of 4-6 people, meaning some parties may be separated into two teams. Guests are given a return time for their experience and a scroll that explains the backstory of the attraction and details game play.

Introduction Room

When it's time to play, guests meet their team leader in the Introduction Room. The team leader is portrayed by a cast member and acts as a recruiter for either Team Heimric or Team Klaus. On Team Heimric, male team leaders are named Hans and female team leaders are named Odette. On Team Klaus, male team leaders are named Ludvig, while female team leaders are named Gerta.

In the introduction room, the team leader explains how the royal family came to live on Krystaljord and discusses the conflict that has arisen as a result of King Heimric's death. He/She explains that there has been a gentlemen's agreement made between the two parties, stating that whichever candidate, Heimric or Klaus, is able to successfully harness the power of the planet first, shall be named king.

Team Heimric's leader insists that Klaus is to blame for the King's death and asks the guests to join him on a quest to find the power source of the planet and prove that Heimric should be king. Team Klaus' leader says that Heimric is attempting to slander Klaus and asks the guests to join him on a quest to find the power source of the planet to prove that Klaus is the rightful king.

The team leader then explains that his people have uncovered a secret chamber beneath the castle that they think may hold the key to finding the planet's power source. He/She cautions that they cannot be sure what lies ahead or what danger may await them and insists that guests must always be ready to battle the opposing team. Guests are then led into the Weaponry, where they gear up for their adventure.

Weaponry (Heimric and Klaus tracks are separate, but identical)

The team leader ushers guests into their Weaponry. There are two separate Weaponries, one for Team Heimric and one for Team Klaus. The rooms are identical in all but their color. Team Heimric's color scheme is purple, while Team Klaus' is green.

Inside the Weaponry, the team leader explains the guns and the vests and talks about how they are powered by the crystals that adorn them. He/She then helps guests to get suited up and explains how the vests and guns work. After they are completely geared up, guests are given a few minutes to practice shooting targets. Points scored here do not affect the final scores of the game. When target practice is finished, guests are led into the Chamber of King Eze Ihe.

Chamber of King Eze Ihe

Groups are staggered upon entering the secret chamber, so that when one group arrives, the other is already there. Upon this realization, the two team leaders bicker over who discovered the chamber first and who has the right to move on. One team leader leans up against a crystal, causing it to depress into the wall. It begins to glow and there is a hum of electricity in the room. A crystal on the opposite wall also begins to glow, and deciding that it may be a trigger to unlocking the secrets of the chamber, the other team leader pushes the crystal into the wall. As he does this, the rest of the crystals in the room begin to hum and glow and a large formation of crystals emerges from a crevice in the center of the room.

A larger-than-life ghostly figure appears, hovering above the crystal formation, and reveals himself to be King Eze Ihe, ruler of the Krystallirians. Eze Ihe explains the history of Krystallir and the civil war that brought about his people's extinction. He states that he does not want the same fate to befall the new residents of his beloved home and so he has devised a challenge that will determine, without a doubt, the man who is to be king.

Eze Ihe explains that the power of the planet is held within his crown, *the Helm of the Everstone*. The *Everstone*, he says, is a crystal formation that was found at the center of the planet, believed by the Krystallirians to be the source of the planet's power. It was formed into a crown by his ancestors and was used by each king to harness the energy of the planet. The challenge is to retrieve *the Helm of the Everstone* and to prove to the *Heart of Krystallir* (an unseen entity/deity that is believed to control the Everstone) that either Heimric or Klaus is worthy of being king.

At the conclusion of his discussion, King Eze Ihe reveals two hidden passageways. A pattern of light spirals across the ground and onto the walls. The light forms the shape of a doorway and magical doors swing open, revealing the first challenge room. Eze Ihe disappears and each team leader leads his or her group deeper into the heart of the planet.

Challenge Room 1- Team Heimric

Hans/Odette leads guests into a room filled with an assortment of strange objects. Among the objects are a scale, a fish, a deed of land ownership, a jester's hat, garden sheers, a brick, a ship, and a hammer. The room appears to be a dead end, with no visible means of moving forward. There are two Krystallirian skulls sitting on a stone plinth in the center of the room.

When guests enter the room, the skulls come to life and welcome them. They say that their names are Yorick and Osric and they banter back and forth for a while. After being prompted by Hans/Odette, the skulls promise to open the door to the next room if the guests can successfully complete their challenge.

Yorick and Osric tell a story featuring characters of several occupations and then ask the guests to shoot the objects in the room that represent those occupations in the order in which they appeared in the story. When the challenge has been completed, the skulls open a magical door to the next room and tell the guests that a clue to help them find *the Helm of the Everstone* can be found there.

Guests earn points for successfully completing the challenge. If guests complete the challenge with time to spare, targets will come online and they will be given an opportunity to shoot for extra points. If guests should have trouble with the challenge, the team leader will prompt them, enabling them to complete it in enough time to move to the next room.

Challenge Room 1- Team Klaus

Ludvig/Gerta leads guests into a room filled with flowers and a babbling underground stream. Flowers present in the room are rosemary (pink), violets (purple), pansies (red), fennel (green), rue (orange), daisies (white), columbines (blue), and crow flowers (yellow). The room appears to be a dead end, with no visible means of moving forward. A statue of the Krystallirian princess, Princess Amamihe, comes to life as the guests enter.

Princess Amamihe promises to open the portal into the next room if the guests can successfully complete her challenge. The princess tells a story involving numerous flowers and their colors. Guests are then tasked with shooting the flowers in the same order in which they appeared in the story. When the challenge has been completed, the princess opens a magical door to the next room and tells guests that a clue to help them find *the Helm of the Everstone* is located there.

Guests earn points for successfully completing the challenge. If guests complete the challenge with time to spare, targets will come online and they will be given an opportunity to shoot for extra points. If guests should have trouble with the challenge, the team leader will prompt them, enabling them to complete it in enough time to move to the next room.

Battle Room 1- The Labyrinth

Guests enter a labyrinthine cave maze. Team Heimric enters on the left side of the maze and Team Klaus enters on the right. The two teams are separated from each other until they get to the center of the maze.

Upon entering the maze, the team leader informs guests that they need to venture into the cave to look for the clue that the skulls/princess mentioned. He/She tells guests to be cautious because the opposing team will most likely also be searching for the clue. The team leader encourages their team to shoot at the opposition, should they encounter them, and then disperses the group, asking them to meet him/her at the other side of the cave in eight minutes, whether they have retrieved the clue or not.

The clue is found in the center of the maze—it's a scroll adorned with paintings of a series of crystals that will help guests to earn more points in the next room. There is only one scroll, so the team that finds it has an advantage in the second challenge room.

This room provides the first of two opportunities for guests to face each other in a traditional laser tag battle, as players from opposing teams will come face to face in their attempt to retrieve the scroll. Points are racked up here by shooting opponents. After five minutes, weapons are powered down in order to remind guests to meet their team leader at the exit of the maze. Upon returning to their team leader, guests are led into the second challenge room.

Challenge Room 2 (Heimric and Klaus tracks are separate, but identical)

Large elevator doors open, revealing a cavernous room filled with crystals. There is a separate room for each team, though they are identical. Screens that blend with the cavern walls have hundreds of gemstones of all different shapes, sizes, and colors zooming around on them. The team leader ushers guests to the center of the room.

The disembodied voice of King Eze Ihe is heard echoing through the chamber. He tells guests to shoot the proper crystals in order to prove their understanding of the *Everstone*. The correct gems to shoot in order to gain points can be found on the scroll that was retrieved from the labyrinth. For the team that doesn't have the scroll, determining the proper gems to shoot is a game of trial and error. Shooting the correct gems earns points, while shooting the incorrect gems deducts points from the team's score.

As guests are partaking in this challenge, the cavern is slowly stretching, lowering them to the basement level where the final battle occurs. When the lift comes to a stop, the elevator doors slide open, revealing *the Grotto of the Everstone*.

Final Battle Room- Grotto of the Everstone

The final battle occurs in a massive cavern filled with the dilapidated archways of the throne room that once existed in the space. Tall crystal formations jut out in all directions from the walls, ceiling, and ground, creating perfect hiding places for the opposing teams. In the center of the room is *the Helm of the Everstone*, immense in scale and covered in gemstone targets.

The disembodied voice of Eze Ihe returns, informing guests that the only way to control the *Everstone* is to control each of the gemstones on its surface. *The Grotto of the Everstone* acts as the second of the traditional laser tag battle arenas. Guests shoot at each other to rack up points, while simultaneously attempting to shoot and control as many of the *Everstone*'s gems as they can. In order to keep track of which gemstones each team controls, they change color to reflect the color scheme of their ruler (purple for Heimric and green for Klaus).

The final battle lasts for twelve minutes, or until every single gem on the *Everstone* belongs to one team—whichever comes sooner. The new ruler of Krystaljord can be crowned in one of two ways: whichever team has the most points at the end of the game; or whichever team controls every gem on *the Helm of the Everstone*, regardless of their total number of points. When a new ruler is crowned, every crystal and gemstone in *the Grotto of the Everstone* glows with that team's color scheme.

Debriefing Room/Viewing Area/Gift Shop/ Exit

After a new king is crowned, the teams are separated once again and brought into the final room—the debriefing room. Here they return their vests and guns and they are thanked for their service to the cause of either Team Heimric or Team Klaus. The team leader of the winning team congratulates his/her teammates and sends them on their way, inviting them to return to the kingdom any time. The team leader of the losing team sends

his/her teammates on their way, asking that they return soon to turn the tides on their misfortune.

Upon exiting the debriefing room, guests can climb the stairs to a balcony that lines the arena, allowing them to observe the next battle. To maintain the illusion of the game, this viewing platform is hidden from the sight of the players in *the Grotto of the Everstone*. Guests/family members who choose not to participate in the attraction are also welcome to view the arena from this area.

Climbing the stairs a little further returns guests to the ground floor, where they can exit the attraction through the gift shop or return to the lobby to purchase another round of play.

Porto Kaiō Guest Experience Guide

David Scanlon

Ασπάζομαι, Explorers!

Welcome to *Porto Kaiō* (Ancient Greek for “Port Ignite”), a state-of-the-art exploration center where visitors from across the globe gather to answer the call to adventure! As the official headquarters of *The Adventure Guild*, an elite international organization dedicated to the preservation of antiquities and the proliferation of the spirit of adventure, *Porto Kaiō* is the world’s preeminent destination for curious minds of all ages and backgrounds. Built directly atop the site of the original Pharos of Alexandria, and centrally located between all Seven Wonders, *Porto Kaiō* is a gateway to discovery—a modern portal to the treasures of the ancient world—that’s sure to ignite the spark of adventure in you!

A first-of-its-kind destination in Alexandria’s Eastern Harbour, *Porto Kaiō*, which aims to drive much needed tourism to Egypt’s northern coast, was designed with guidance from the Egyptian government and its Ministry of Antiquities to bring a uniquely Egyptian experience to a global audience. Much like the ancient city of Alexandria, a rich cultural mecca that blended the best of Greek and Egyptian societies, *Porto Kaiō*’s open-air marketplace and bustling community center envelope guests completely in the local flavors of the region.

In keeping with our revitalization efforts, and to facilitate the construction and enjoyment of our underwater research labs, we’ve also partnered with the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency to implement short and long-term solutions to quell the flow of domestic sewage into the Harbour and reduce its considerable mercury contamination. At *Porto Kaiō*, we believe it’s our responsibility to ensure that the world we love to explore is around until we become ancient history!

So pack your knapsack and set sail for *Porto Kaiō*. Adventure awaits!

Our Story

In 1919, as a reaction to the destruction of World War I, Sir Thaddeus J. Ravenscroft, Professor of Egyptology Chair at University College London, called a meeting of the minds between seven of the world’s most prominent antiquarians. Together, these great adventurers, each the preeminent expert on one of the Seven Ancient Wonders, founded *The Adventure Guild*, an elite global organization whose mission was to discover, study, catalogue, preserve, and protect the remains of the great Wonders and to ignite the spirit of adventure in people all across the world.

By its tenth anniversary, the Guild had expanded its ranks to over 100 members and the founders sought a location to construct a permanent, state-of-the-art guildhall. After the Guild’s discovery of the submerged ruins of the Pharos of Alexandria, it was decided that its headquarters would be built as an underwater research base in Alexandria’s Eastern Harbour. The Guild prospered there

for the next few years, but by the end of the 1930s, it became clear that the spirit of adventure was dwindling, and by the 1960s, the Guild had largely been forgotten.

In 1994, Greek archaeologists led by Jean-Yves Empereur rediscovered the physical remains of the lighthouse and, by extension, the Guild's abandoned facility. Inspired by the work of their spiritual forefathers, they rededicated *The Adventure Guild* and set out to carry on its mission. Now, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Guild's founding, we've rebuilt the Lighthouse as it originally stood and publically opened the doors of *Porto Kaiō*, our beacon to adventurers from around the globe, for the very first time!

Your Journey

Your journey begins at the *Port of Call*, our mainland visitor center, where you'll be introduced to your *Adventure Guide* and officially initiated into *The Adventure Guild*. From there, you'll board one of our ancient Egyptian galleys and set sail for *Porto Kaiō*, the gateway to the Seven Wonders, and the official headquarters of *The Adventure Guild*!

Upon disembarking in the caverns beneath the Island of Pharos, you'll discover a magnificent archeological dig site where the Guild has been busy unearthing the ruins of ancient Alexandria. Then, with help from the remains of a colossal statue—and a little bit of technical wizardry—you'll rise from the caverns into *The Grand Foyer*, the hub of our spectacular discovery center. From there, you're free to do what Guild members do best: Explore!

Many guests begin by experiencing our three main expeditions—*Alexandria: The Rise and Fall*, an exhilarating elevator-based dark ride through the turbulent history of our host city, *The S.P.I.R.I.T.S. Vault: Treasures of the Seven Wonders*, an interactive tour through the Guild's private collections, and *Alexandria Up Close: An Undersea Expedition*, an archaeological excursion through our one-of-a-kind underwater research labs. When you're not partaking in one of our guided expeditions, you can explore the Guild's highly interactive, multi-level exhibition hall, have a bite to eat or do some shopping in our beautiful courtyard marketplace, or have a harbourside picnic on one of the island's sandy beaches.

You can also visit *The Top of the Tower* for breathtaking views from our 360° observation deck or to have a mouthwatering meal at *The Beacon*, our four-star restaurant, or *The Lantern Room*, its adjoining lounge. And no trip to *Porto Kaiō* is complete without experiencing *Ignite! The Spirit of Adventure*, a rousing nighttime spectacular that celebrates the adventurer in all of us and encourages us to go out into the world and ignite the spark of discovery in everyone we meet!

The Wonders of Porto Kaiō

From the moment you set foot inside the *Port of Call* and meet your *Adventure Guide*, it's clear that a day at *Porto Kaiō* is unlike any other! Where else can you join a league of extraordinary adventurers, sail the harbour on an ancient Egyptian galley, explore a cavern chock full of ancient treasures, or catch a lift on the palm of a colossal statue?

At *Porto Kaiō*, the difference is in the details. Every nook and cranny is yours to explore, replete with magical flourishes and hidden clues that allow you to make brand new discoveries each time you visit! Always keep your eyes peeled for puzzle doors and secret passageways. You never know what you might find!

Founders' Factoid: Thanks to carefully planned sightlines and a pinch of theatrical wizardry, as our galleys enter the caverns beneath the Island of Pharos, it appears to passersby watching from the shores that they've simply vanished into thin air. It's quite the parlor trick!

Expeditions

The S.P.I.R.I.T.S. Vault: Treasures of the Seven Wonders

Put your adventure skills to the test in the world's most extraordinary escape room!

For the very first time, you're invited to join us on a journey through *The S.P.I.R.I.T.S. Vault*, the founders' private collection of rare and never-before-exhibited artifacts from around the globe! With help from the official *Adventure Guild* app, you'll explore a series of highly interactive treasure rooms, working closely with your fellow adventurers to solve puzzles, uncover hidden clues, and rack up adventure experience points.

Founders' Tip: Your time with *The Adventure Guild* doesn't have to end when you leave *Porto Kaiō*! Adventure is everywhere—and so is the Guild! Download the official *Adventure Guild* app to stay up to date on our latest news, to connect with your local chapter, and to discover how you can ignite the spirit of adventure in your own community!

Alexandria: The Rise and Fall

Experience an elevator ride like no other on this high-octane journey through the past!

Climb in and buckle up, because at *Porto Kaiō*, even our elevators lead to adventure! On *Alexandria: The Rise and Fall*, an exhilarating journey through the turbulent history of our host city, you'll travel up, down, forwards, backwards, side to side, and all throughout time in one of our state-of-the-art *Exploravators*. But be careful—it's a dangerous expedition! Can you survive the fires, floods, and earthquakes that brought down the great city of Alexandria?

Founders' Factoid: This state-of-the-art attraction, which uses projections and intricate physical show sets to bring its story to life, combines LPS trackless dark ride and drop tower technologies to create a thrilling, wholly original new experience. It's not to be missed!

Alexandria Up Close: An Undersea Expedition

Journey beneath the waves for an up-close look at the wonders of ancient Alexandria!

Hop aboard a research galley and set sail for discovery! At our cutting-edge underwater *Observation Stations*, you can now get closer than ever before to the sunken Island of Antirhodos and the ancient treasures that have been hidden beneath Alexandria's Eastern Harbour for thousands of years.

Founders' Factoid: At *Porto Kaiō*, we believe it's our responsibility to ensure that these incredible artifacts are around for the enjoyment of all future generations, so we've partnered with the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency to clean up the harbour and promote green initiatives throughout Alexandria. To do our part, the facilities at *Porto Kaiō* are powered almost exclusively with energy from the wind and tides around us.

The Top of The Tower

After a full day of exploring, you've probably worked up quite an appetite! To satisfy your most decadent cravings, join us at *The Top of the Tower*, where mouthwatering meals and breathtaking views are served nightly. Experience a banquet of global delicacies at *The Beacon*, our signature four-star restaurant, or treat yourself to a drink with friends at *The Lantern Room*, our full-service lounge.

Every great night at *Porto Kaiō* begins with *Ignite! The Spirit of Adventure*, a dazzling nighttime spectacular that celebrates the adventurer in all of us. For an extra special experience, join us after the show to dine directly beneath our iconic flame or to gather at the community bonfires that burn around our 360° observation deck!

Founders' Tip: If you're only looking for a quick bite, be sure to check out the local vendors in our beautiful courtyard marketplace for a casual, authentically Alexandrian dining experience!