

FADE IN

INT. BARE ROOM -- DAY

ON VIDEO: ART LOUGHLIN, an older, bearded gentleman sits patiently. His eyes are looking straight at US. Everything about his inactivity shows patience and a kind nature.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Ready when you are.

Art's eyes open up a little bit more. He smiles to the WOMAN offscreen, then looks back out at us.

ART

Hello. My name is Art Loughlin, the creator of Over The Troll Bridge. I moved to Philadelphia with my late wife, Nora, back in the sixties.

Art looks to the offscreen woman.

ART

Do you really want me to go through all this stuff?

WOMAN (O.S.)

You can talk about whatever you want, Mr. Loughlin, but we'd really like to know about how and why you created Troll Bridge.

ART

Well, for kids.

There is an astonished silence.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Could you, maybe, elaborate a bit more?

Art nods and turns back to us.

ART

I've always had a fondness for children. When I moved here, I

ART(CONT'D)

noticed that there was nothing of quality, nothing that children could genuinely learn from on television.

Art looks offscreen to see how he's doing, realizes he should keep talking, and turns back.

ART

I've also always had a certain, I suppose you could call it a fondness as well, for the fantastic. I thought

it would be great to create a mythical place, Over The Troll Bridge, where all these monsters, and beasties, and such could teach kids. In a fun way.

EXT. OVER THE TROLL BRIDGE SET -- DAY

ON VIDEO: On a mocked up set resembling a large field surrounded by trees stands LUTHER, a short, hairy, green troll puppet. A short bridge touches the outside edge of the field set. Luther has a lit torch in his hands.

Next to Luther stands an enormous, dull-looking ogre puppet with a massive underbite. DOM. Dom's feet are on fire. He stares at them like he is watching paint dry.

LUTHER

See, Dom? There are now ten of your toes on fire.

DOM

(dim-witted)

Thanks, Luther. You're so smart.

INT. BARE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

ON VIDEO: Art scratches mildly at his beard.

ART

Educate while you entertain. That was the key. Of course, the allure of Troll Bridge was that it takes place somewhere that children can't just go. You'd never see any of your teachers there. They'd probably get eaten by something.

Art takes a sip of water, looks around briefly as if for a cue. His eyes suddenly flash with the discovery of the right words.

ART

We teach children how to cope with reality through a fantastic prism. Yes. That's it. I mean, the media can't be all bad.

Art smiles to himself satisfactorily.

INT. RESTAURANT -- AFTERNOON

Art sips patiently at a bowl of soup in the nicely-done dining room. Across from him sits his son, FRANK, a normal-looking fellow in his mid-twenties.

Frank watches Art eat in anticipation. He finally snatches the right moment from the air.

FRANK

Dad?

Art looks up in mid-sip.

FRANK

I can't believe you're done with the show.

Art smiles, finishes his spoonful of soup, wipes his mouth.

ART

Frank, I've done everything I can with the show. It's time to move on.

Art's eyes turn a little distant.

ART

All of the original characters are gone anyway.

Frank picks up a knife and butters his empty hand. He is oblivious to the absence of bread. Art chuckles.

FRANK

Except for Dr....uhm...

Art's grin quietly disappears.

ART

The Insidious Dr. Fiddlesticks.

FRANK

Wasn't there more to it?

Art nods.

ART

Madman At Large. We shortened it for the sake of the credits.

Frank at last notices his butter-smearred hand. He wipes it off. His quizzical eyes never leave Art's face.

FRANK

If they were so popular, why'd you take them off the show?

ART

I didn't take them off the show. They wanted to leave.

Frank smiles.

FRANK

I'll just pretend that's the artist

in you, and that it doesn't worry me
in the least.

Art smiles back acquiescently. He points his spoon at something on Frank's chest. Frank looks down at the small, bright red emerald amulet that hangs around his neck.

ART

I see you still wear that thing.

FRANK

I've never taken it off.

ART

Do you remember me giving it to you?

Frank sits back in thought. His eyes search the ceiling for the answer.

FRANK

No. I've had it all my life.

ART

I gave that to you the day you were born.

FRANK

Well, that explains me not remembering it.

Frank holds the amulet up fondly.

FRANK

Sometimes I just forget it's there at all.

ART

It is there. And that's the point.

Frank smiles lovingly at his father. Art pats his son's hands softly.

EXT. RESTAURANT -- LATER

Frank and Art button up their fall coats as they leave the restaurant. They walk down the Philadelphia street.

FRANK

What'll you do now?

ART

Catch up on some things. Catch up with some people. I always wanted to take up smoking.

FRANK

You've been a smoker all your life.

Art stops to light a large pipe. As the tobacco catches,

they walk on.

ART

Yeah, but not professionally.

A disturbingly-greasy, thin FANBOY steps in front of Art and Frank, stopping them in mid-stride. His dress is sloppy, and, apart from his jeans and sneakers, consists solely of Over The Troll Bridge merchandise.

Fanboy grins with green-grey teeth.

FANBOY

Hey, you're Art Loughlin.

Art smiles at his fan.

FANBOY

Man, I loved Over The Troll Bridge ever since I was a kid. I buy everything that comes out for it.

FRANK

Who'd have guessed?

Fanboy gives only a cursory glare to Frank the Intruder.

FANBOY

I used to sit there for hours, man.

Frank and Art try to politely move by, but Fanboy blocks their way.

FANBOY

Hey, do you remember in episode 537, when Luther gave Cedric the Cyclops the glasses with the fake eye, and Cedric thought he could see like normal people, but his depth perception was still shit, cause cyclopes only have one eye, and he drove a car around the meadow and almost killed everyone?

Art nods his head politely, his smile never fading.

ART

Not really. It's been a while.

FRANK

You actually know the episode numbers?

Fanboy gets a little razzled.

FANBOY

I know everything about The Troll Bridge.

ART

Except, maybe, that it's just a show.

Fanboy grits his teeth like a cornered animal. He pulls a gun from his grimy coat. Frank looks around desperately, but no one seems to take any notice.

FANBOY

Why'd you leave the show?

Art just smiles good-naturedly. Frank puts a hand up, his eyes glued to the gun.

FRANK

Look, pal, everything's cool.

Fanboy does not take his eyes off Art, his dissatisfaction increasing.

FANBOY

Why don't you remember episode 537?
How about 723 with the Happiness
Machine?

Art shrugs.

FANBOY

That show's my life. How can you
not remember?

Art finally takes the pipe from his mouth.

ART

Son, I think there are more important
things--

Frank takes a step towards Fanboy. Fanboy instantly turns and fires.

The bullet glances across Frank's forehead, knocking him to the ground.

Art drops his pipe and looks down in horror at his son.

Fanboy, having crossed the line and panicking, points the gun at Art. He unloads the rest of the bullets into Art's chest.

People on the street flatten themselves against walls and scream.

Fanboy looks uncertainly upon his work. He HEARS the police SIREN approach and runs.

Onlookers come out of hiding slowly to gather around the bodies of Art and Frank as they bleed onto the sidewalk.

EXT. OVER THE TROLL BRIDGE SET -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Luther and Cedric sit in the meadow.

CEDRIC

You're sure he's not dead?

LUTHER

Frederick's not dead. He's just sleeping.

CEDRIC

He seemed kind of cold.

LUTHER

He's a djinn. Djinn's are cold-blooded.

ELROY, the puppet of a living shadow, floats onscreen. Behind him is ONYX, the puppet of a pixie quickling. She shimmers with movement. Elroy MUMBLES something.

ONYX

Elroy wants to know why Frederick doesn't have a pulse.

LUTHER

How'd he check it, Onyx? He's a shade.

ONYX

I checked it for him.

CEDRIC

He's a djinn.

LUTHER

Yeah. Djinn's don't have pulses.

HAWTHORNE, the puppet with the body of a child and the over-sized head of a boar, stalks onscreen, all attitude.

HAWTHORNE

Hey, Frederick's croaked.

ONYX

He's a djinn.

CEDRIC

They don't have body temperature.

Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

Or pulses.

HAWTHORNE

Sounds like dead, to me.

Luther stands.

LUTHER

Look, would I lie to you guys? I'm telling you, Frederick is not dead. Got it?

The other puppets MURMUR ascent.

Dom lumbers onscreen.

DOM
Why is Frederick--

LUTHER
(cutting Dom off)
Because he's dead, alright? He's
gone. He's not coming back. I know
it stinks, but it's true.

Silence engulfs the world. Luther slumps to the ground and
sags his shoulders.

CEDRIC
But you said he's supposed to be
cold.

ONYX
And you said he's not supposed to
have a pulse.

LUTHER
I know. I lied.

DOM
Why?

Luther wipes away a puppet tear.

LUTHER
Because I didn't want to believe it
myself.

The puppets huddle around Luther. They enfold him in their
arms and have a large group hug.

LUTHER
Goodbye, friend.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Rain pours down outside. Frank ENTERS through the front
door. He's wearing a suit with a black band on his left
arm. Two butterfly band aids cover the part of his head
where he was shot.

Frank brushes the rain out of his hair, takes off the jacket,
and tosses it aside. He looks somberly around the small
room. It's decorated quaintly, even rustically.

The doorbell RINGS. Frank opens it.

There is an attractive, young WOMAN, dressed entirely in
black, holding a fruit basket standing there. She smiles
sympathetically.

WOMAN

Hi, Mr. Loughlin. My name is Janice
Gilgannon. I heard about your father.

JANICE holds up the fruit basket offering for inspection.
Frank stares at her. After a moment, he realizes she's
getting rained on.

FRANK

Come in, please.

Janice enters the house, and Frank closes the door.

JANICE

I just wanted to bring this by for
you and express my sympathies. I
have some fruit and a banana bread.

Frank takes the basket. He leads Janice into:

THE KITCHEN

Frank sets the basket on the kitchen
table.

JANICE

Who'd have thought Art Loughlin was
from Willow Junction, Pennsylvania?

Frank nods as he cuts the banana bread.

JANICE

All we're really known for is...Well,
we're not really known for anything,
I suppose.

Frank offers Janice some banana bread. She declines. He
takes a bite. Janice keeps the smile on her face in
anticipation.

Frank chews. And chews. And stops. His eyes widen. A
convulsion in his stomach forces a cough through his lips.
Banana bread sprays across the room.

Janice grimaces and pats Frank's shoulder.

JANICE

Oh my. Oh dear. I am so sorry.
Dammit. Sorry, I'm a terrible cook.

Frank loosens his tie as he straightens up and wipes his
eyes off.

JANICE

I don't know why I made that. I'm a
terrible cook. I'm not even a cook.
I'm a witch, I mean, wicce.

FRANK

You're kidding.

Janice shakes her head.

FRANK

I hope you're better at casting spells.

Janice smiles bitterly.

JANICE

Yeah...um...No, not really. I made a love potion for a friend once. She wound up with a squirrel chasing her leg. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have brought this over.

Janice reaches for the basket. Frank stops her.

FRANK

No, it's alright. Look, I'm sorry. I do appreciate the gesture. There's still the fruit, right?

Janice bites at her nails.

JANICE

Actually, I put a longevity spell on the fruit to keep it from spoiling.

Frank hands Janice the basket. Together, they walk back out to:

THE FRONT DOOR

Janice reaches for the door and stops.

JANICE

Mr. Loughlin?

FRANK

Frank.

JANICE

Frank, listen. If you need anything while you're in town, just call. I'm in the phonebook.

FRANK

Thanks.

JANICE

Sometimes I get the spells right. Okay, not that often.

(beat)

Okay, never. I'm just gonna go now. Sorry about all this again.

FRANK

It's alright.

Janice EXITS. Frank closes the door behind her and rubs his face in astonishment. There is an audible POP from outside. Frank frowns, opens the door.

Janice walks along the sidewalk, wiping fruit from her face and clothes. There is another POP as another piece of fruit explodes. Then another. POP. POP. POP.

Frank, mouth hanging open, closes the door.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Frank sleeps cozily in his bed. A thin line of drool hangs from his mouth.

There is a BANG from outside followed by the mingling of several VOICES.

Frank's eyes pop open. He rolls out of bed, shuffles to the window and throws it open.

FRANK

Hey. Shut the hell up out there.
I'm trying to sleep.

MALE (O.S.)

No, you shut up.

MALE #2 (O.S.)

Bite me.

Frank closes the window, falls back into the bed and closes his eyes.

A moment or two passes in utter silence.

Which is shattered by an even more clangorous round of BANGING from outside.

Frank's eyes are open, his teeth clenched. He gets up and goes to the window again. He narrows his eyes.

OUT THE WINDOW

There is the faint glow of a fire
burning just beyond the thicket of
trees in the backyard.

Frank goes to the closet, gets on his knees and starts rummaging.

FRANK

Son of a bitch.
(to the people outside)
Just you wait till I get out there.

Frank finally finds his flashlight and checks it. He puts it on the dresser and throws on his robe. Frank storms out of the bedroom.

Then storms back in, grabs the flashlight off the dresser, and storms back out.

EXT. BACKYARD -- MOMENTS LATER

Frank enters the thicket of trees in the backyard. Now that he's closer, the fire seems much larger.

Frank holds the flashlight like a club and tries to stalk his way through the trees.

A small creek with a wide, sturdy bridge divides the backyard. Frank crosses it.

Ahead, there are obscure, unidentifiable figures moving against the fiery background. The SOUNDS of their VOICES can be faintly heard.

Frank stops, trying to make anything out. Undecided, he moves forward, flashlight at the ready.

Frank steps on a branch. The report of its SNAP silences everything in the outdoors.

The figures by the fire freeze.

MALE (O.S.)

Oh shit. Someone's coming.

The figures scatter. Frank charges forward, slipping only once on a thatch of wet leaves. He leaps into:

THE CLEARING

Frank has the flashlight held high like a sword. He whips his head left and right for the intruders. There is no sign of them.

The only things evident in the clearing are the fire, an oldtime, wooden barrel, and a sign attached to a branch stuck into the ground.

Frank looks into the barrel. He sniffs. And gags. After a moment of hacking, he's able to straighten up.

Frank approaches the sign. It's made from a ripped up piece of cardboard. The handwriting on it is childlike and sloppy.

ON THE SIGN: "LUTHERS NOO HOEM"

Frank's expression reflects the chill he feels on his skin.

EXT. MEADOW -- MORNING

Frank, still in his robe, walks around the meadow with SHERIFF DOUGLASS, a portly, lethargic man in his early thirties.

Douglass sniffs at the barrel and winces.

DOUGLASS

(deadpan)

Smells like shine.

Douglass kicks at the ashes from the fire.

DOUGLASS

You had a fire out here.

Frank clenches his teeth, fighting the frustration.

FRANK

That's why I called you.

Douglass nods his head at the truth of Frank's statement. He motions to the sign in the ground.

DOUGLASS

That's not your handwriting?

FRANK

No, Sheriff Douglass. I can spell.

Douglass nods.

DOUGLASS

You weren't able to see any of the perps?

FRANK

Perps?

DOUGLASS

Perpetrators, Mr. Loughlin.

FRANK

No.

Douglass nods. He kicks around the meadow some more. Frank follows him closely.

FRANK

Is there anything you can do?

Douglass nods.

DOUGLASS

Not much, I'm afraid. No physical description, no harm came to anything.

FRANK

They were on my property. They could have burned the place down.

Frank slips and falls on his back with a GRUNT. Douglass bends slowly, ignoring Frank, and scoops at the ground with a rag. Frank stands, rubbing the back of his head.

DOUGLASS

I assume this isn't yours, either.

Douglass holds out the rag. A thin, slick goo drizzles off it. Frank grimaces.

FRANK

God, I hope not.

Douglass nods and places the rag in a ziploc bag.

DOUGLASS

I'll just have this looked at then,
should I?

Frank's annoyance shows.

FRANK

I would appreciate it, sheriff.

DOUGLASS

Just doing my job.

Frank and Douglass walk back towards Douglass' patrol car. Douglass opens the driver door and tosses the ziploc bag inside.

FRANK

So, there's pretty much nothing I
can do.

Douglass nods, pondering this. And pondering. He turns to Frank.

DOUGLASS

Could buy yourself a shotgun.

FRANK

A shotgun?

Douglass nods.

DOUGLASS

Any kind of gun, really. It's
perfectly legal to shoot trespassers,
you know.

Douglass gets lazily into the patrol car. He guns the car out of Frank's driveway in a cloud of smoke.

Frank stands in the driveway, watching Douglass peel out.

EXT. CEMETERY -- AFTERNOON

Frank walks through the tree-enshrouded cemetery. He has a bunch of flowers in his hand.

Frank stops at Art Loughlin's tombstone. It is carved in a group portrait of the characters from Troll Bridge. Art sits in the middle of them.

Frank places the flowers next to the tombstone and sits down. He stares at the marker for a moment or two. His mouth moves silently, then:

FRANK

So, how's it going...Um...

Frank looks around him. He tries it again.

FRANK

I just wanted to, uh, stop by.

Frank runs a hand through his hair.

FRANK

This is ridiculous. I feel like
such an ass.

Frank looks around uncomfortably.

The tombstone doesn't make a move.

With no provocation or buildup of any kind, Frank instantly
bursts into a gale of tears.

FRANK

(helplessly)

I want you back.

A walnut pelts the back of Frank's head. He stops crying
and looks up. There's no tree above him. He looks around.

There is not another person visible in the cemetery.

Frank wipes away the tears. He turns back to the tombstone.

And bursts into hysterical sobs again.

Five walnuts pelt against the back of Frank's head.

Frank stops crying and leaps to his feet, infuriated.

FRANK

Awright, what the hell's going on?

Frank still can't see anyone. He picks up a walnut and whips
it aimlessly across the cemetery.

There is the FAINTEST LAUGHTER of several voices.

FRANK

Leave me alone. I'm trying to talk
to my father.

Frank gazes around. Nothing moves around him. The cemetery
is now silent.

Satisfied, Frank sits back down at his father's grave.

The insta-tears start again. Frank abruptly stops. He
swivels his head around suspiciously. Then continues crying.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY -- EVENING

Frank ENTERS the bowling alley. It's league night, and the place is packed with BOWLERS. Frank looks around. He catches sight of Douglass sitting at a lane and walks over.

Douglass nods a hello to Frank.

FRANK

Isn't this kind of casual?

DOUGLASS

Yeah. Put on some shoes and bowl a square.

FRANK

I haven't got shoes.

Douglass takes his off and hands them to Frank. Frank grimaces but puts them on. He grabs a ball from the return and steps into the lane. He starts his approach.

DOUGLASS

That shine we found was some kind of wicked cider. My boys could barely stomach it.

Frank stops in mid-windup.

FRANK

Your boys?

DOUGLASS

My deputies. Two of 'em passed out at the smell. And they can drink, let me tell you.

FRANK

I'm sure. You gave my evidence to your deputies?

Douglass nods.

DOUGLASS

It's just homemade cider, Mr. Loughlin.

(beat)

Did you wanna drink it?

FRANK

That's not the point. It was on my property.

DOUGLASS

You're over twenty-one. It's okay. Bowl, please.

Frank glares lightly at Douglass, turns, winds up, and bowls.

The bowling ball veers towards the gutter.

Frank contorts his body like a living joystick.

The ball is literally on the edge of the gutter.

Frank waves at it with his hands.

At the last second, the ball moves back to the middle of the lane and slams into the pins. A strike.

Frank lets out a breath of relief.

DOUGLASS

Damn. Have a beer.

FRANK

No, thanks.

Frank sits down next to Douglass.

FRANK

What about that goo I almost broke my head on.

DOUGLASS

None of my boys--

FRANK

(cutting him off)

They didn't drink that too, did they?

Douglass mulls this over, nodding.

DOUGLASS

No. No telling what the hell it is.

FRANK

Did you get it examined?

Douglass motions to Frank's shoes. Frank takes them off and hands them over. Douglass puts them on. He stands, grabs his ball, throws it. A seven-ten split. Douglass' face shows no emotion.

DOUGLASS

Huh.

Douglass turns back to Frank.

DOUGLASS

Yeah, I had it looked at.

Frank seems lost.

FRANK

Had what looked at?

DOUGLASS

Your goo.

Frank looks over. The BOWLER in the neighboring lane gives him a curiously disgusted look. Frank rubs at his eyes.

Douglass sits back down.

DOUGLASS
Came back inconclusive.

FRANK
Great.

Frank stands and Douglass hands him the shoes. Frank puts them on and grabs his ball. He starts his approach

DOUGLASS
Had some kind of DNA in it. Doc
couldn't tell what it came from.

Frank releases the ball in mid-swing. It flies past Douglass' head. He doesn't flinch.

DOUGLASS
That's odd.

FRANK
DNA?

DOUGLASS
Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid.

FRANK
(sarcastic)
Thanks.

DOUGLASS
It's the building block of life.

Douglass takes a swig of beer from his paper cup.

INT. BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON

Birds CHIRP outside the window in the rust-leaved trees. The sun shines bright through the window shade.

Frank lies motionless in bed, staring at the ceiling. He looks around, notices the clock: Twelve-fifteen in the P.M.

Frank stares again at the ceiling. He tilts his head, keeping his eyes on the various razor-thin cracks in the ceiling above.

Frank's stomach lets loose a vicious GROWL. He looks down at it admonishingly.

Frank turns to the night stand. He stares at the framed portrait of his parents and he when he was just a little tyke. He notices the emerald around his neck in the picture.

He lifts the emerald up for inspection between then and now.

Frank lets out a forlorn SIGH and sits up.

An autumnal shiver passes over him as he slides into his fuzzy slippers.

He trudges out of the bedroom and:

DOWNSTAIRS

Frank moves down the steps methodically, one at a time. He reaches the bottom, scratches his groin and picks the mail up from the letter slot in the front door.

Without looking at any of the mail, he tosses it onto the table next to the front door.

Lethargically, Frank makes his way to:

THE KITCHEN

Frank opens a cupboard, checks out what cereals he has. He shuts the cupboard and moves to the fridge.

Frank opens the fridge and inspects a few items, not really showing a preference for any of them. He shakes a milk carton. SOUNDS FULL.

Frank closes the fridge without taking anything. He gazes around the kitchen as if seeing it for the first time.

Frank lets out an early-morning cough and goes back to the fridge. He grabs the milk and places it on the counter next to the sink.

He mulls over the idea of the milk. Frank picks it up, half-turns towards the fridge, then puts the milk back on the counter.

Frank opens the cupboard, rifles through a few boxes of cereal. Rifles through them again. On the third pass, he pulls out a box of corn flakes.

He puts the corn flakes box on the counter and opens it all the way up. He opens the already-unsealed milk carton and pours it over the entire box of corn flakes.

But for some reason, the milk won't leave the carton. Frowning, Frank checks inside the carton.

Missing his face by an inch, a mixture of milk and goo GLOPS out of the milk carton into the box of cereal.

Frank grimaces in disgust. That's it. He slams the carton and cereal roughly into the sink and storms to:

THE FRONT DOOR

Frank rips the door open with authority and marches out of the house in his underwear and slippers. He SLAMS the door behind him.

It takes a moment for the house to settle back down.

The knob on the front door turns but not far enough. Locked. There is a sharp, decisive pounding on the door, but only once.

A window in the adjoining living room rattles from an outside force. Not wanting to give an inch, the old window is lifted up.

A.

Little.

At.

A.

Time.

Frank squeezes himself through the window and lands behind the living room couch. He stands and rubs some of the cold out of himself.

Shaking some of the frost out of his brain, Frank marches back to the front door.

He grabs a watchman's cap from the table by the door. He puts the hat on and fixes it, so it looks right on his head.

Frank yanks the front door open and once more heads outside. Still in his underwear and fuzzy slippers.

INT. POLICE STATION -- LATER

Frank stomps into the tiny, sparse room which houses the police station. A concerned look from a PASSERBY suggests he might be a little skewed.

Douglass sits at the only actual desk in the room. His feet are propped up on it, and his hat is pulled down almost completely over his eyes. He barely moves his head to check Frank out. Totally unfazed.

Frank peers around the room. Two DEPUTIES slumber in disarray on a short, wooden bench, the only other real furniture in the station. They both hold empty cowboy-boot-shaped mugs at sloppy angles.

Mouth agape, Frank looks from them to Douglass. His intensity quickly returns.

FRANK

Look, sheriff, I-- The smallness of the room hits Frank.

FRANK

Where's the jail cells?

DOUGLASS

Over in City Hall. Toilet's there,
too.

Frank regains his anger. He points a sharp finger at Douglass and stops. He looks down and realizes how he is dressed. Frank's face goes slack in astonishment.

DOUGLASS

Nice gotchies, Mr. Loughlin.

FRANK

(to himself)

Insane. That's it. I'm going insane.

Douglass nods.

DOUGLASS

Sounds about right to me.

Frank turns tail and shuffles somnambulistically out of the police station.

DOUGLASS

Take care.

Douglass adjusts himself in his chair and closes his eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Frank crawls back into the house through the window. His feet move him to the telephone without leaving the floor.

He opens the phonebook and flips to the yellow pages. He scans the pages, finds what he wants and shakes his head.

FRANK

One shrink in the whole damned town.

Frank picks up the phone and dials. Waiting for an answer, he looks down at his attire and wonders where he went off the deep end.

Someone finally answers.

FRANK

Hi. I was wondering if you had any appointments available?

(beat)

Today.

(beat)

You're kidding. How many nutjobs can there be in a town this size?

(beat, irritated)

I don't give a rat's ass what they prefer to be called, lady. I'm telling you right now, I out-whacko every goddamn one of them.

Frank flinches as the phone is SLAMMED down in his ear.

He sets the phone down and thinks for a moment. He raises his eyebrows in resignation and rifles through the phonebook. He finds what he needs at the end of the yellow pages.

PHONE BOOK INSERT: "WITCHES, SEE ALSO WICCAN"

Frank back pedals a few pages and jabs his finger at the listing he needs.

He dials the phone.

INT. JANICE'S KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

The Phone RINGS. Once. Twice.

Janice ENTERS the kitchen at a run. She yanks the phone off the cradle, almost ripping it out of the wall.

JANICE
(sounding pleasant)
Wicce N' Things.

INTERCUT FOR CONVERSATION

FRANK
Hi. May I speak with Janice
Gilgannon, please.

JANICE
This is she. I'm the only one that
works here.

FRANK
Oh. This is Frank Loughlin.

JANICE
Oh, Mr. Loughlin. How're you doing?

Frank scratches his chin.

FRANK
Well, that's kind of why I called.
Can you do anything for insanity?

Janice is vaguely stunned.

JANICE
Insanity, huh? Um, well trepanning
is recommended.

FRANK
Trepanning?

JANICE
Yeah, you cut a hole in your skull
and let the bad spirits out. I've
personally never done it, and I
understand it's illegal anyway.

FRANK

That doesn't sound very feasible,
does it?

JANICE

No. Um...

Janice gets a bolt of inspiration.

JANICE

I could do a purification.

FRANK

Would I have to get cut?

JANICE

No.

FRANK

Leeched?

JANICE

Not as a requirement.

FRANK

Branded or dipped in anything?

JANICE

I could give you some aroma therapy
products.

FRANK

And what's a purification do?

JANICE

It cleanses the spirit.

Frank shrugs to himself.

FRANK

Got any openings today?

JANICE

Just a minute.

Janice opens her appointment book.

JANICE

Let's see here. Um...yeah. Sure, I
can do it today. Just stop by
whenever you want.

FRANK

Thanks.

Frank looks at his underwear.

FRANK

I'll see you in a little bit.

He hangs up and heads for the stairs.

There is a CLATTER OS. The sound of MUFFLED WHISPERS.

Frank stops and tilts his head to hear better.

He follows the sound, tiptoeing as he does.

Frank stops at the cellar door and puts his ear to the wood. The NOISE is LOUDER from here. Frank clenches his teeth.

He looks around frantically and picks up an oxford shoe. He inspects it and decides it is better than nothing.

Frank silently opens the cellar door and heads to:

THE RUMPUS ROOM

Frank cautiously descends the cellar steps. There are definitely people down here. The RUMMAGING NOISES are unmasked now, as are the VOICES.

DIMWIT VOICE (O.S.)

What's this for?

MALE VOICE #1 (O.S.)

For screwing things.

MALE VOICE #2 (O.S.)

(disapproving)

That is so droll.

MALE VOICE #1 (O.S.)

Heh heh hee.

GRUFF VOICE (O.S.)

I ain't seen a TV with rabbit ears in years.

Frank takes a fortifying breath and jumps the last few steps down, shoe at the ready.

FRANK

Gotchya, you little-- Frank's jaw drops.

Luther, Cedric, Dom, Hawthorne, Onyx, and Elroy, the puppet characters from Over The Troll Bridge, stop. Caught in the act.

Dom holds an electric screwdriver. Hawthorne sits on top of the old TV, rabbit ears twisted in his hands.

Luther drops the match he is lighting a cigarette with. Cedric stands deprecatively.

Onyx hangs from the faux chandelier in the ceiling. Elroy huddles off to the side of the room.

The puppets do not look like puppets now. They look very real. Because they are.

They are coated in a thin, shiny film, like they just jumped out of the shower.

They are as surprised at Frank's appearance as he is at theirs.

Luther regains himself and takes a puff of smoke.

LUTHER

Hey, Frank.

The shoe in Frank's hand drops to the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Frank and the creatures sit around the living room. All eyes are trained on Frank.

Frank is catatonic but trying to act nonchalant.

FRANK

(repeated, under breath)

I'm insane. I'm insane. I'm insane.
I'm insane.

LUTHER

Frank, you're not insane.

Frank refuses to look at any of them.

FRANK

I'm insane. Puppets aren't real.

LUTHER

We're not puppets.

FRANK

You're characters from my father's puppet show. There's Dom the ogre...

Dom smiles boyishly.

FRANK

...Cedric the cyclops...

Cedric arches an eyebrow.

FRANK

...Elroy the shade and Onyx the quickling...

Elroy and Onyx huddle lovingly to the side.

FRANK

...Hawthorne the...umm...

LUTHER

Yeah, Hawthorne, what the hell are

you?

Hawthorne wipes some slime from his nose and flings it.

HAWTHORNE

Never you mind, troll.

FRANK

See? You're puppets. And I'm talking to you, so that means I'm insane.

Luther shrugs.

LUTHER

So, we're not master thespians.

HAWTHORNE

Who you callin' a thespian?

LUTHER

But we're not puppets.

Luther forces his way into Frank's line of vision.

LUTHER

Can puppets make cider? Can puppets throw walnuts?

CEDRIC

Can puppets slop goo all over your corn flakes?

LUTHER

(to Cedric)

Shut up.

Frank takes a very deep breath.

FRANK

So, that's your meadow in the backyard?

LUTHER

It just felt kind of...right.

FRANK

Uh huh. Any particular reason you're tormenting me?

DOM

Tor-who?

Luther smiles.

LUTHER

Just trying to take your mind off things.

Frank nods to himself, glances at his watch.

FRANK

Well, I have an appointment with a
wicce.

DOM

Huh?

CEDRIC

A witch.

Dom fingers his nose.

DOM

Which what?

Cedric gives Dom a stern look.

CEDRIC

A witch. Pointy hat, flying broom,
taste for chubby German kids.

LUTHER

Glad we never had one around the
bridge.

Frank stands.

FRANK

Actually, she's more like a pagan
naturalist.

CEDRIC

What a disappointment.

HAWTHORNE

Stinkin' hippies.

Frank grimaces.

FRANK

Why am I explaining this to you?
You're not real.

Frank goes to the door, opens it, and EXITS.

The creatures look around in silence.

Frank ENTERS and shuts the door.

LUTHER

Helps to put clothes on.

Frank points a collective finger at the creatures.

FRANK

If any of you are still here when I
get back, I'm having myself committed.

Frank goes upstairs.

The creatures wait patiently like in a doctor's waiting room.

After a moment, Frank comes back downstairs. His clothes are disheveled but on his body.

FRANK

Goodbye.

CREATURES

Bye.

Frank EXITS.

The creatures go back to waiting.

Luther lifts his head.

LUTHER

Hey, let's go tinkle in Frank's slippers.

The creatures GIGGLE like children.

INT. JANICE'S KITCHEN -- LATER

The shades are all drawn in the kitchen. Several unlit candles are spread over the room. Frank sits at the small table in the center of the room.

There is a crystal ball, a tarot deck, a glass of water, a salt shaker, a pinwheel, and a book of matches on the table in front of Frank.

Janice races around the room, throwing a few atmospheric, witchie things around. Frank watches her blankly.

JANICE

I am so sorry about this. Normally, I'm very well-prepared.

FRANK

That's alright. I kind of popped in on you.

JANICE

No excuse. Witches, wicce, are supposed to be prepared at all times. Cosmic preparedness or something.

She smiles nervously, wraps a shawl about her shoulders. Frank motions to the stuff on the table.

FRANK

What's this stuff do?

Janice smiles like a tour guide.

JANICE

Oh, um, the salt represents earth, the pinwheel represents air, the matches symbolize fire, and the water

represents, well, water.

Janice lights a match and puts it to the candle on the table. Plumes of thick smoke billow out, hitting her right in the face. A coughing fit overtakes her.

Frank stands to help, but Janice waves him to sit.

FRANK

My God. Are you alright?

Janice nods, obviously in terrible discomfort. She wipes tears away and settles herself down.

JANICE

Whooh, that was rough.

(beat)

So, how have you been holding up, Mr. Loughlin?

FRANK

Frank, please. Puppets have taken over my house.

Janice nods naturally.

JANICE

Yeah, that can be trouble.

FRANK

You believe me?

JANICE

Sure. Last time I did a house clearing, I turned the owner into a goat.

Frank is unsettled. Janice smiles.

JANICE

Accidentally.

(beat)

Okay, a half-goat. Very Pan-like.

Frank unconsciously fingers his amulet.

JANICE

Clearings are not my forte. Okay. Ready?

Frank nods uncertainly.

Janice closes her eyes. After a beat, she queers up her face.

JANICE

I sense death.

FRANK

Yeah, my father--

JANICE

(cutting him off)

No, it's not that. It's moribund.
Something's dying right now.

Janice opens her eyes wide and looks at Frank. He is a little nervous.

Janice puffs her cheeks out with a small BELCH. She smiles at Frank.

JANICE

Better. Give me your hands.

Frank slowly offers his hands across the table. Janice closes her eyes again and grips Frank's hands.

Janice frowns. Her grip tightens. Frank winces. Something SQUISHES.

Janice's eyes open. She looks down at the goo from Frank's hands.

JANICE

What's this?

Frank fumbles for words. He edges his chair away from the table.

Janice looks from the goo to Frank with a puzzled expression.

JANICE

This is where it's coming from.

Frank stops.

JANICE

Whatever left this behind is dying.

Frank is taken aback.

INT. BARE ROOM -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Art motions with his hands.

ART

That's what I mean by reality through a fantastic prism. When Frederick the djinn died, all of the, um, characters were very distraught.

Art stops, remembering the scene.

ART

I thought it was a great way to teach children about death.

EXT. OVER THE TROLL BRIDGE SET-- DAY

ON VIDEO: The puppets sculpt away at a large, red monument to FREDERICK. The sculpture's long aural, nasal, and facial hair all but obscures the amiable, bulbous djinn's face.

Luther carves away at the seams of the monument's robes.

Dom slaps another pile of red putty on the ground in front of the sculpture.

CEDRIC

What's this stuff again?

LUTHER

Play Doh.

Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

It doesn't feel much like playing.

LUTHER

Frederick would've appreciated this.

The puppets all stop and take a step back to admire their work and remember their friend.

Hawthorne scoops some Play Doh into his mouth.

HAWTHORNE

Tastes more like Salt Doh.

Cedric glares at the boar-boy.

CEDRIC

Try not to ruin the moment, huh?

HAWTHORNE

Sorry.

ART (V.O.)

Eventually, they honored their friend and dealt with their loss.

Silently, the puppets all stretch their arms out to embrace each other, their eyes on the monument.

INT. BARE ROOM -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Art's eyes are glassy. He pretends like he has a hair in his eye.

ART

Oohhh, we got a lot of letters about that.

Art pauses and grins his innocent grin.

ART

Most of them were positive.

EXT. MEADOW -- AFTERNOON

Frank and Luther walk around the meadow the creatures have claimed as their own.

FRANK

I can't believe this.

LUTHER

It's just a clearing. Put up a sign.
Poof. Done.

FRANK

No, I mean I can't believe you guys
are really real.

LUTHER

It's a real kick in the head, ain't
it?

FRANK

I can't believe you're dying.

Luther stops.

LUTHER

I can't tell you where that's kicking
me.

FRANK

How'd you pull it off? Where are
you really from?

(beat)

Why are you all dying now?

Luther lights a cigarette.

LUTHER

Slow down, cowpoke. Cedric's better
at explaining things.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Cedric stands in front of a projection screen. The light of the slide projector illuminates him. He holds a bread stick as a pointer and directly addresses the CAMERA.

CEDRIC

Ahem. The denizens of Over The Troll
Bridge are actually beings from the
land of Dwyr Goluth.

A slide appears on the screen. It is a crude crayon drawing of a mystical realm, complete with castle and unicorn.

Cedric waves the bread stick at the projection.

CEDRIC

A far less mundane reality, than
Earth, separated by an eith...eat...

Cedric puts on a pair of glasses with a picture of a real eye covering the left eyehole. He picks up a thin stack of index cards and inspects them closely.

After a moment, he covers the fake eye on the glasses with a hand.

CEDRIC

...Ethereal fabric of magick.

LUTHER (O.S.)

Was that "magick" with a "k"?

Cedric is above taking the bait. Almost.

CEDRIC

Yes. Slide.

The slide shows a crayon drawing of Art Loughlin. Cedric points.

CEDRIC

Art Loughlin, in his ever-good-natured tamperings with magick, with a "k", transformed his body into a portal from Dwyr Goluth. In essence, a one way door from there to here. Slide.

The slide shows a drawing of Luther stepping through Art.

FRANK (O.S.)

Neat.

DOM (O.S.)

I drew that one.

Cedric maintains his stern composure.

CEDRIC

Yes.
(beat)
Slide.

The slide shows a drawing of a skull and crossbones.

CEDRIC

With Art's death, our link to Dwyr Goluth, and, subsequently, our life force has been severed. Consequently, all of the original "characters" of Over The Troll Bridge are dying. Thank you.

Offscreen, Frank and the creatures CLAP. Cedric cannot resist a slight bow.

EXT. MEADOW -- AFTERNOON

Frank nods in understanding.

FRANK

How'd you keep your secret all this time?

LUTHER

It wasn't us, it was Art. He used some masquerade spells to make us look like puppets. But Less so.

Luther CHUCKLES.

LUTHER

Say, that reminds me of the time Frederick cut the cheese right over one of the puppeteers' heads. Christ, he went green.

Frank goes a little distant.

FRANK

It makes all those Emmies seem so...fake.

LUTHER

Yeah, well, TV lies. That's its job.

Frank stops in revelation.

FRANK

My father lied to me.

Luther crushes his cigarette out.

LUTHER

Frank, snap out of it. He couldn't tell you. He couldn't tell anybody.

Frank nods.

FRANK

I guess you're right.

LUTHER

Darn tootin', I am.

Frank fiddles absently with his amulet.

FRANK

And now you're dying.

LUTHER
Everybody does.

Frank looks down at the emerald in his hands. His eyes take on a strong determination.

FRANK
No. There has to be something I can do.

LUTHER
Frank, forget it.

FRANK
I refuse to accept this.

LUTHER
Frank...

Frank charges for the house.

LUTHER
Shit.

Luther follows after Frank, taking his sweet time.

EXT. POLICE STATION -- EVENING

Douglass ambles lazily to his patrol car. He finds the key and puts it in the lock.

Tubular metal arms ending in gripping pincers snag Douglass by the shoulders and hoist him into the air.

Douglass' face shows no surprise as he looks at the cylindrical, patchwork KILLBOT that holds him aloft. The Killbot's "face" is painted in a mean-spirited grimace, apparently by a child.

Four other Killbots stand as backup around Douglass.

DOUGLASS
I'll be.

SINISTER VOICE (O.S.)
Hello, Sheriff Douglass.

Douglass tries to see where the voice is coming from, but he cannot see past the Killbot.

DOUGLASS
Sorry. I can't quite make you out from this vantage point.

There is a SCUTTLE OS.

SINISTER VOICE (O.S.)
How about now?

Douglass cranes his neck.

DOUGLASS

Nope.

SINISTER VOICE (O.S.)

Dammit.

SCUTTLE, SCUTTLE, SCUTTLE.

SINISTER VOICE (O.S.)

Now?

Douglass nods.

DOUGLASS

Huh uh.

SINISTER VOICE (O.S.)

Son of a bitch.

(to Killbot)

Killbot Number Five.

KILLBOT NUMBER FIVE picks up a small form, no higher than an adult's knee and places it on the roof of Douglass' car.

SINISTER VOICE (O.S.)

I trust you can see me now, you
doddering dimwit.

DOUGLASS

(non-nonplussed)

That don't beat all.

The form on the roof is a minuscule, reptilian biped with coke-bottle glasses and a waxed mustache. A thin film of slime drips from the REPTILE onto the car. He grins, caught up in the moment.

REPTILE

Yes, cower before the evil genius of
the Insidious Dr. Fiddlesticks, Madman
At Large.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS rolls his hands around maniacally. Douglass frowns.

DOUGLASS

Who?

Dr. Fiddlesticks face changes to blank astonishment.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Don't you ever watch television?

Douglass nods.

DOUGLASS

Not really, doc.

(beat)

You know, you're dripping all over

my car.

Dr. Fiddlesticks flares up in anger.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Never you mind that. And it's not
"doc", you insipid ignoramus. It's
"Doctor". "Doctor Fiddlesticks".

Douglass tries to shrug in the Killbot's grip.

DOUGLASS
Okay.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Enough of this prattle. Killbot
Number One, prepare the sheriff.

KILLBOT NUMBER ONE shambles off, Douglass in its clasp.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
(to no one in
particular)
Soon, it shall begin.

DOUGLASS (O.S.)
Who you talking to?

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Shut up. It's rhetorical, you ninny.

Dr. Fiddlesticks fingers his mustache anxiously.

EXT. MEADOW -- MORNING

The creatures sit around the meadow. They wipe the sleep
from their eyes.

Frank stands at the edge of the meadow with a video camera
set up. Childlike excitement governs his every move. He
puts his eye to the camera.

THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER
Luther lights a cigarette.

LUTHER
Frank, I don't think this is a good
idea.

ON FRANK
He pulls his head up from the camera.

FRANK
Of course, it is. My father kept
you and the show alive. Maybe
reviving the show will revive you
guys.

Cedric narrows his eyes.

CEDRIC

That's just dumb.

FRANK

Come on. Give it a shot.

Frank looks through the camera and hits the record button.

FRANK

Okay. Wait. Onyx, would you mind not molesting Elroy right now?

THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER

Onyx is crawling lasciviously over Elroy. Hawthorne leers at the peepshow.

ONYX

Hey, we only have a couple days left, I want to spend them with my sweetheart.

Elroy demures, because he can't blush.

FRANK (O.S.)

Could you move offscreen then?

Onyx and Elroy, with Hawthorne eagerly in tow, walk OS.

FRANK (O.S.)

Okay, Luther.

(beat)

Action.

Luther stands stock still.

FRANK (O.S.)

Anytime you're ready.

LUTHER

Frank, it was a kids' show. It wasn't real. We had scripts and stuff.

ON FRANK

He lifts his head up, his enthusiasm diminishing slightly.

Luther sees Frank's defeat and concedes.

LUTHER

Oh, alright.

(beat)

Umm...

He gets an idea.

LUTHER

Hey, Cedric, why don't you put on your special glasses and show us how well you can see.

Cedric throws his arms up in exasperation and walks off.

Dom stares blankly into the camera.

Luther SIGHS and lights another cigarette.

LUTHER

Frank, I really think you should reconsider this. You're not doing anyone, least of all yourself, any good.

Car tires SQUEAL OS.

Everyone turns.

Frank's sedan, piloted by Cedric in his special glasses wheels onto the meadow. Everyone dives for cover.

The car slams into Dom. He is unhurt and unaware.

The sedan is totaled.

Luther LAUGHS hysterically.

Frank's eyes bulge out of his head.

FRANK

That's my car.

Dom is oblivious to what is going on.

FRANK

What the hell did you do to my car?

CEDRIC

I knew this wouldn't work.

Cedric climbs out of the car and tosses his special glasses aside.

INT. SHOP N' BAG -- DAY

A small town food store. SHOPPERS, young and old, bustle around for groceries. The Loudspeaker PINGS for an announcement.

FEMALE (V.O.)

(over loudspeaker)

Will the owner of the tan Suburban, license plate VLC24398, please move your truck? It's parked in a fire zone.

The Shoppers gape around at each other. A MAN looks down guiltily and heads for the EXIT.

The Shoppers go back to shopping.

AT THE REGISTER

A disgruntled CASHIER passes groceries over the UPC scanner. It BEEPS at each item.

A metal, pincer hand hovers over the scanner. The scanner lets out an ugly, constant BEEP.

The Cashier looks up haggardly.

CASHIER

Sir, please don't mess with the scanner.

The Killbot removes its arm from the scanner. The Cashier gawks at the sight.

AT THE EXIT

Killbots block off the doors. SUBURBAN MAN struggles with the door to get back in, but it won't budge.

The loudspeaker PINGS.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS (V.O.)

(over loudspeaker)

Attention, sheep. Please line up at the front desk to receive your free mind control device with any purchase over one dollar.

The Shoppers gradually herd towards the front desk, eager for a deal.

IN THE FRONT OFFICE

Dr. Fiddlesticks replaces the loudspeaker microphone. Douglass stands next to him. He wears a thin, metal collar with a red LED light on the front. He is slightly more lethargic than normal.

Dr. Fiddlesticks grins maliciously.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Like moths to a flame.

AT THE FRONT DESK

A Killbot stands behind the counter. As Shoppers queue up, it affixes a mind-control collar on each of them.

The LED flickers to life, and the Shoppers' faces go slack, one at a time.

A CURIOUS SHOPPER points suspiciously as he is about to be collared.

CURIOUS

Say, what is-- His collar is snapped on. Zonk. Under control.

Dr. Fiddlesticks emerges from the front office, Douglass in tow. He awkwardly climbs onto the counter and spreads his arms out, addressing his flock.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the wonderful, mind-controlled world of the Insidious Dr. Fiddlesticks. Are you prepared to serve your lord and master?

The Shoppers do not react.

Dr. Fiddlesticks leans curiously over to the Killbot with the collars.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

You're sure these things are on?

Something inside the Killbot WHIRRS, and it nods affirmative with its whole body.

Dr. Fiddlesticks turns back to the crowd with a regal air.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Me. I am your lord and master. You're prepared to serve me.

(beat)

Right?

The Shoppers glance zombielike at each other and collectively decide to nod their heads. There is no emotion left in any of them.

SHOPPERS

(as one)

Yes, Dr. Fiddlesticks.

Dr. Fiddlesticks shakes joyfully at his success.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Elroy and Onyx get in some heavy petting, while Hawthorne keeps a close eye on them.

Dom picks up a ceramic horsey. It breaks in his hands, and his face flushes with childlike guilt.

Luther and Cedric sit peacefully on the couch.

CEDRIC

I honestly don't know why he's doing this.

LUTHER

He's just like his old man. Always trying to do the impossible.

CEDRIC

But Art could do the impossible.

LUTHER

That's true.

Dom SMASHES something else OS.

DOM (O.S.)

Sorry.

LUTHER

That's alright, big guy.

CEDRIC

What's he up to now?

LUTHER

He's sitting right there.

CEDRIC

(incredulous)

Not Dom. Frank.

LUTHER

He's in the kitchen, brainstorming what he's gonna try next. He's been playin' around with magick.

Cedric's eye widens.

CEDRIC

Magick, huh? Sounds deadly.

Luther nods.

LUTHER

He found some cheesy book in a bargain bin. The whole thing sounds iffy to me.

CEDRIC

Hardly trustworthy. All the magick I've seen on Earth has been smoke and mirror stuff. That does not impress me.

Luther lights a cigarette. Cedric looks to see that no one is listening. He leans close to Luther.

CEDRIC

Luther, are you scared?

LUTHER

Sure, Frank can barely boil water.

CEDRIC

No, what I mean is, are you scared of dying?

Luther thinks about this.

LUTHER

I'm not looking forward to it, but
I'm not scared. We knew this day
would come.

CEDRIC

Not like this.

LUTHER

No, not like this. But I'm sure
it's not going to be painful or
anything. Why? Are you scared?

CEDRIC

(faking it)
No, of course not.

Luther nods knowingly.

CEDRIC

Luther?

LUTHER

Yeah?

Cedric comes as close to emotion as he can.

CEDRIC

I trust you.

LUTHER

I know.

CEDRIC

Thanks.

Luther pats Cedric on the back, consoling.

There is a FIERY WHOOSH OS.

None of the creatures stir.

FRANK (O.S.)

I'm okay.

Cedric and Luther exchange a glance.

Frank ENTERS the living room smoldering. The creatures cannot
help but grin.

LUTHER

How goes it, warlock? Everything
alright in there?

Frank's eyes are dazed.

FRANK

Yeah. No. I forgot I had the gas
stove on for about fifteen minutes
and tried to light a candle.

HAWTHORNE

Is there anything left of the kitchen?

FRANK

Yeah, it was mostly charring.

HAWTHORNE

Good. I'm starvin'.

Hawthorne heads for the kitchen.

LUTHER

(to Frank)

Learn any magick?

Cedric stifles a GIGGLE.

Frank shakes his head.

FRANK

No, but I learned how to palm a quarter.

Frank produces a quarter and palms it in various ways, none of them impressive.

LUTHER

My cup runneth over.

Crestfallen, Frank puts the quarter away. An idea suddenly strikes him.

FRANK

I know who can help.

LUTHER

Jesus. You're not gonna drag somebody else into this?

Ignoring him, Frank picks up the phone and looks down at his feet.

FRANK

Why are my slippers soggy?

The creatures GIGGLE mischievously.

INT. JANICE'S BASEMENT -- EVENING

Janice is confused and just a little scared.

Frank and the creatures are seated around the rim of a blue rune circle chalked on the basement floor.

FRANK

(to Janice)

I can't believe you're not shocked by all this.

Janice smiles calmly but cannot totally hide her anxiety.

JANICE

Oh, sure. Wiccae believe in
werewolves and all kinds of...stuff.

Janice fumbles with a cigarette, drops it. Hawthorne picks
it up and SNIFFS it. He holds it up for Janice.

HAWTHORNE

Cloves?

Janice nods, unable to speak directly to him.

HAWTHORNE

Can I get one?

JANICE

Keep it.

Hawthorne joyfully fires up the cigarette.

FRANK

(to Janice)
You ever meet one?

JANICE

One what?

Frank's face goes blank for a second, lost.

FRANK

Uh...werewolf?

Janice scoffs.

JANICE

No, they don't exist.

Janice quickly takes inventory of her company.

CEDRIC

(to Janice)
Aren't you a little pragmatic to be
a witch?

JANICE

(ignoring him)
Ready?

Janice RINGS a small BELL. The creatures look up at the
sound.

Janice dances wildly around the circle with a tambourine.
The creatures exchange numb glances.

After the seventh time around the circle, Janice stops and
moves to the middle of the pentacle. She holds her arms
out.

JANICE

Darksome night and shining moon,
Hell's mistress, heaven's queen,
harken to the witch's rune, Diana,
Lilith, Melusine! Queen of witchdom
and of night, work my will by magick
rite.

Luther stares at Frank. Frank casually looks away.

JANICE

(continuing)

Earth and water, fire and air,
conjured by the witch's blade, move
ye unto my desire, aid ye as the
charm is made. Queen of witchdom
and of night, work my will by magick
rite.

Janice looks to see if the spell is having any effect, then presses on.

JANICE

(continuing)

In the earth and air and sea, by the
light of moon or sun, as I pray, so
mote it be. Chant the spell, and be
it done. Queen of witchdom and of
night, work my will by magick rite.

Silence falls over the room. Everyone looks around at everyone else.

DOM

I don't feel different.

CEDRIC

Sounded more like a pre-spell, you
ask me.

LUTHER

What's supposed to happen?

Janice backs out of the circle.

JANICE

Call on the...spirits of... You're
all in the healing blue pentacle.

Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

And?

Janice breaks down, tears start to flow.

JANICE

I can't do it. I'm a failure. My
whole life's been a failure.

Janice hunches into a fetal position on the floor and SOBS.

Frank and the creatures look around awkwardly.

Quietly, everyone gets up and leaves Janice alone to cry.

EXT. CITY HALL PARKING LOT -- MORNING

MAYOR FLINTOSH, a thin, severe-looking man in a tight business suit, gets out of his luxury car and sets the ALARM. He walks toward the front of city hall.

TOWNIES, all wearing thin, metal collars, stop and stare at him. Mayor Flintosh smiles briefly as he passes them.

The Townies follow Mayor Flintosh, their ranks swelling the closer he gets to the front door.

He casts a concerned glance around. The Townies are definitely converging on him. He quickens his pace.

Mayor Flintosh dashes up the city hall steps and flings the door open.

Even more Townies flood out of city hall and surround him.

Mayor Flintosh searches for a way out. There is none. The Townies peer through him, their faces devoid of expression.

Mayor Flintosh composes himself officially.

MAYOR FLINTOSH
(assuredly)
No new taxes.

The Townies grab Mayor Flintosh and lift him off the ground, their VOICES raised in one LOUD GRUMBLE.

MAYOR FLINTOSH
(hopefully)
More free school lunches?

City hall's front door opens, and Douglass steps out. Mayor Flintosh becomes irritated.

MAYOR FLINTOSH
Sheriff Douglass, what is the meaning
of this?

Douglass motions the Townies forward, and they carry Mayor Flintosh into city hall.

INT. CITY HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

The boisterous crowd rounds the corner with Mayor Flintosh held over their heads, and Douglass leading them. Mayor Flintosh squirms, but he cannot break free.

MAYOR FLINTOSH

We're raising the speed limit on
Main Street, I swear.

His promises buy him no ground.

MAYOR FLINTOSH
All across town? I have a proposal
ready and everything.

THE TOWNIES STOP AT:

THE MAYOR'S OFFICE
The door is closed. The Townies
instantly QUIET DOWN.

Mayor Flintosh's eyes dart back and forth worriedly.

Douglass KNOCKS lightly on the Mayor's door.

MAYOR FLINTOSH
What the hell are you doing, man?
(beat)
If this is about the bathroom
situation--

DR. FIDDLESTICKS (O.S.)
Enter.

Mayor Flintosh is frozen in uncertainty.

The Townies carry Mayor Flintosh into his office, drop him
roughly to the floor, and EXIT as a unit. Douglass remains
in the room.

Mayor Flintosh nervously stands and brushes himself off. He
notices the five Killbots flanking his desk. His chair is
turned to face the back window.

Mayor Flintosh glances at Douglass. No help there.

MAYOR FLINTOSH
Alright, what's going on here?

The Mayor's chair swivels around, revealing Dr. Fiddlesticks
comfortably reclined. His fingers are steepled in certain
superiority.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Greetings, Mayor Flintosh. I'm taking
over your town.

Dr. Fiddlesticks BURSTS OUT in diabolical LAUGHTER. The
laughter switches to a HACKING COUGH, and Dr. Fiddlesticks
bunches over. Killbots move in to aid him, but he waves
them roughly away.

MAYOR FLINTOSH
What is that crap you're getting all
over my chair? That's Corinthian
leather.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Silence, dolt.

Dr. Fiddlesticks SNIFFLES and wipes his nose. He motions casually at Mayor Flintosh.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Take him away and collar him. I'm through gloating.

(beat)

For now.

Mayor Flintosh protests, but a Killbot yanks him off the ground and carts him out of the office.

MAYOR FLINTOSH

You won't get away with this. I'll sue.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

That's what they all say.

Dr. Fiddlesticks waves sarcastically as Mayor Flintosh disappears down the hall.

INT. BARE ROOM -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Art gestures his point for the CAMERA.

ART

Children learn by example, and they look up to these characters. Sure, they pull a lot of pranks on each other, but that's all in fun.

Art smiles to the Woman OS.

ART

Right?

WOMAN (O.S.)

Sure, Mr. Loughlin.

ART

Please, call me Art.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Okay, Art. The characters?

Art furrows his brow.

ART

The what?

WOMAN (O.S.)

You were talking about the characters and children.

It all comes back to Art, and he turns back to address the

CAMERA.

ART

Right. Even though the characters aren't perfect, and who is?

He casts a quick glance OS.

ART

They still have to be good role models.

(beat)

It is television, after all.

Art grins contentedly.

EXT. OVER THE TROLL BRIDGE SET -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Various clips from the show

SHARING

Hawthorne lets loose a BOOMING SNEEZE. All of the other puppets SNIFFLE and wipe their noses.

Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx. She turns and glares at Luther.

ONYX

Thanks so much for sharing your cold with us, Luther.

Luther nods to himself.

LUTHER

Sure, you know, sharing's what it's all about.

Hawthorne leaps at Luther, but Dom restrains him with a massive hand.

COOPERATING

Cedric hammers the last nail on the side of a hot tub in the middle of the meadow. Luther is already in the tub. He fires up the bubbles.

LUTHER

See? When we all cooperated, building my hot tub was real easy. Right, guys?

The other puppets lie about in various stages of sweat and exhaustion. All but Dom look scornfully at Luther, who appears shocked.

LUTHER

What?

(beat)

I'd invite you guys in, but I like a

lot of salt in my hot tub. I wouldn't want you all pruning up.

Cedric lunges at Luther, but Onyx tackles him to the ground.

EXERCISING

The puppets aerobicize in gym outfits. Luther leads them.

LUTHER

Come on, guys. Feel the burn. Now, cross step.

Luther goes first. The others follow along but are not nearly as coordinated. They stumble over themselves and each other.

LUTHER

See? Exercise is good for you, and it can be a lot of fun.

Dom passes out from the strain. Luther draws the puppets' attention back to him.

LUTHER

Don't mind him. Let him sleep it off. Now, march.

Luther marches in place. The puppets try to keep up.

INT. RUMPUS ROOM -- DAY

The creatures aerobicize around the rumpus room. Frank energetically leads them.

The creatures are still not coordinated. They flop around like wet noodles.

Behind Frank, an exercise video plays on the old television set. Frank takes occasional cues from it.

FRANK

Come on, ladies. Aerobics makes everyone feel better.

CEDRIC

Only if you're watching them.

HAWTHORNE

Who you callin' ladies?

The creatures HUFF and PUFF. Dom's head BANGS off the ceiling repeatedly.

FRANK

That's not an attitude I want to hear. Keep going.

Luther, cigarette dangling from his mouth, is next to collapse.

LUTHER

Christ almighty. I think I'm throwing
a coronary.

CEDRIC

(to Luther)

Not so damn good for you when you do
them for real, huh?

Luther wrinkles his nose but will not respond.

FRANK

Alright, follow me.

Frank changes up his steps.

Slime flings off the creatures and SMACKS into the walls.

FRANK

Try to keep it together, now.

Hawthorne stops.

HAWTHORNE

Screw this.

He heads up the steps.

The other creatures follow Hawthorne's lead and gradually
disburse around the room.

Frank, disheartened, stops exercising, turns off the video,
and grabs a bottle of multi-vitamins from the floor behind
him.

FRANK

Here. Everybody needs to take one
of these.

Frank doles out the vitamins. Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

He thinks this is the end.

Frank scoffs.

FRANK

That's crazy talk. Now, take your
vitamins.

There is a CRUNCH. Cedric grips his jaw in agony.

CEDRIC

I think I broke another tooth.

Luther studies the vitamin and tosses it over his shoulder.
He takes Frank by the arm and leads him away from the others.

FRANK

Luther, these things cost money.

You have to take them.

Luther lights a cigarette.

LUTHER

Forget the vitamins. Forget the home videos. Forget the pagan healing rituals. Just forget it, Frank.

Disappointment flows over Frank's body.

LUTHER

I know you're doing what you think is right, but you have to face facts. This just isn't working.

Frank tries to muster some last-ditch resolve.

FRANK

You don't believe that.

LUTHER

Yes. I do.

FRANK

Then why did you come here? If I can't do any good, why drag yourselves up here?

Luther shrugs sincerely.

LUTHER

It's as good a place as any to die.

Frank shakes his head in frustration and walks away. Luther returns to the others.

CEDRIC

(meaning Frank)

What's the matter with him?

LUTHER

He just found out he can't save the world.

Cedric nods. Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

I kind of liked that coin-palming trick he did.

CEDRIC

I thought it was amateurish.

LUTHER

Everybody starts somewhere.

(beat)

Put that video back on. The chick in the blue spandex was smokin'.

CEDRIC

The one with the uni-brow?

LUTHER

No, the other one.

DOM

What's a uni-brow?

LUTHER

Cedric will explain.

Cedric pops the video into the VCR, and it plays.

CEDRIC

I most certainly will not.

Luther motions to the television.

LUTHER

Just watch.

The creatures settle in to watch the show.

DOM

Ohhh. A uni-brow.

Luther trots up the cellar steps.

EXT. CEMETERY -- AFTERNOON

A small funeral goes on a few aisles away. Frank sits at Art's grave. He is visibly frustrated.

FRANK

And they stink. Why didn't you at least tell me they stink? I'm doing everything I possibly can to save them, and they're ungrateful about it, those bastards.

Frank stares at the headstone, forming his next thought.

FRANK

Why'd you have to go and die on me?

(beat)

I miss you.

ART (V.O.)

I miss you, too.

Frank's eyes widen. He looks around, but there is no one near him. He narrows his eyes.

FRANK

Dad?

ART (V.O.)

Yes, Frank.

FRANK

I don't believe this. There's so much I want to tell you.

ART (V.O.)

It'll have to wait. I haven't got much time. Do you want to help the puppets?

FRANK

Yes.

ART (V.O.)

Okay. Stand up and take down your pants.

Frank is confused.

FRANK

Beg pardon?

ART (V.O.)

Hurry, Frank. It may be their last hope.

Frank gets to his feet and drops his pants to his ankles. The FUNERAL-GOERS across the way are aghast at the sight. Frank blushes.

ART'S VOICE GIGGLES.

Frank shakes his head and hurriedly pulls up his pants.

FRANK

You son of a bitch.

Luther steps out from behind Art's tombstone, laughing.

LUTHER

You should have seen your face.

FRANK

That's just mean. What are you doing up here anyway?

LUTHER

Just trying to help, Frank.

FRANK

(to himself)
I need a drink.

Frank stomps off.

LUTHER

Hey, we'll come with you.

Luther follows on Frank's heels.

INT. BAR -- NIGHT

Frank and the creatures sit around a table in the bar. The creatures are in ill-fitting, haphazard clothes, and they all have hoods pulled up to cover their heads. The bar is deserted.

Dozens of empty glasses litter the table.

FRANK

I mean, I don't get it. Why, I mean, why can't I do anything to help you guys. It doesn't make sense.

LUTHER

That's life.

CEDRIC

Pinhead.

Frank throws some beer pretzels at Luther.

FRANK

Shut up, you damned pessimist.

LUTHER

I think I'm a realist.

CEDRIC

I'm a pessimist.

FRANK

You know, medicine makes marvelous advances every day.

LUTHER

It wouldn't work.

Frank nods resignedly. He glances around and sees Janice sitting on a stool at the bar. She has three full and three empty shot glasses in front of her.

FRANK

Hey, there's Janice. Wait here, guys.

The creatures WHOOP and CHEER Frank on. He flips them a nonchalant bird and moves across the room.

AT THE BAR

Frank sits next to Janice and smiles.

FRANK

Hi.

Janice turns. Her eyes are glazed, and her expression is dour. She turns away from Frank and does a shot. She quickly points a finger at Frank.

JANICE

I used to be in advertising. Did

you know that?
(beat)
I was horrible at that, too.

FRANK
I'm sure you weren't--

JANICE
(cutting him off)
National Orange Campaign. Know what
I came up with?

Janice does not wait for a response.

JANICE
"Oranges: They're Orange." That's
what I came up with. Your little
monster friends are right. I am too
pragmatic.

Frank opens his mouth, but Janice has moved on.

JANICE
Maybe if I was more impulsive.

Before Frank can move, Janice slaps a kiss on him. Frank
pulls back in shock. Janice squints at him.

JANICE
How's that?

Frank's mouth moves, but no words come out.

There is a SHRIEK OS.

Frank knows where it's coming from. He holds a finger up to
Janice.

FRANK
Wait right here.

FRANK RACES BACK TO:

THE TABLE
The WAITRESS stands with an angry
expression and a broken serving tray.

WAITRESS
(to Frank)
Are these assholes yours?

Hawthorne rubs at his jaw where the Waitress hit him.

HAWTHORNE
What?

WAITRESS
He goosed me.

HAWTHORNE
You're lucky I didn't pluck you.

Frank smiles uncertainly to the Waitress and turns to the table.

FRANK

I think we'd best be going.

Frank herds the creatures away from the table. He hands the Waitress a few dollars.

FRANK

Sorry about this.

WAITRESS

It's bad enough, there's no business...

HAWTHORNE

Wait. I wanna get her number.

Frank shoves Hawthorne to catch up with the others.

As they pass the bar on the way out, Frank glances over.

Janice is gone.

A brief look of disappointment passes over his face as they EXIT the bar.

INT. BEDROOM -- DAWN

Frank sleeps.

Luther's hand shakes him. Frank SNORTS and opens an eye.

Luther's expression is downcast.

LUTHER

Dom's dead. We should bury him in the meadow.

Frank opens both eyes and sits up.

EXT. MEADOW -- MORNING

Onyx places a flower on the fresh burial mound. The creatures comfort each other.

Frank clutches painstricken at his stomach. Luther approaches him.

LUTHER

You alright?

FRANK

(pained)
Yeah.

LUTHER

Sorry about that. You're the biggest guy here. You had to take most of the weight.

HAWTHORNE

I heard that.

Frank stares at the grave, reality sinking in.

FRANK

He really died.

LUTHER

I know.

Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

It stinks we couldn't bury Dom like he wanted.

Onyx turns to comfort Elroy.

ONYX

Aww, sweetie. He was too big to fit down the toilet.

Frank shakes his head.

FRANK

There must have been something...

LUTHER

There really wasn't.

The creatures turn mournfully from Dom's grave and head back to the house.

As Frank gets about halfway through the backyard, he catches something out of the corner of his eye.

Janice is running towards him.

Frank does not know how to act, so he smiles. Janice is in a panic.

FRANK

Hi, Janice. I must be a good kisser.

Janice is confused.

JANICE

What? I kissed you?

FRANK

You don't remember?

JANICE

No.

Frank slumps his shoulders. Janice needs to change the subject.

JANICE

It doesn't matter. They're coming this way.

FRANK

Who?

JANICE

Everybody.

EXT. DRIVEWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Frank and Janice race to the end of the driveway and stop.

UP THE STREET

What appears to be the entire town of Willow Junction marches towards Frank's house. They all have metal collars on.

FRANK

A parade?

JANICE

That's not a parade.

Dr. Fiddlesticks and the Killbots emerge at the front of the crowd.

JANICE

What is that?

Frank is in disbelief. He grabs Janice by the arm and yanks her into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Luther and Cedric sit on the floor playing a fantasy roleplaying game.

CEDRIC

I don't get it.

Frank and Janice charge into the room. The creatures look up. Luther smiles.

LUTHER

Congratulations, kids.

JANICE

(taking offense)

What does that mean?

FRANK
(interjecting)
Luther, whatever happened to Dr.
Fiddlesticks?

Luther shrugs.

LUTHER
That prick? Who cares? The only
reason he was around at all is cause
Art had a bad habit of getting along
with everyone. Why?

The front door is torn off the hinges, and the Killbots ENTER,
followed by the Townies.

CEDRIC
Run!

Frank is grabbed by a Killbot.

The creatures spring to their feet and dash towards the back
door with Janice.

JANICE
What about Frank?

LUTHER
Not now.

Luther shoves Janice out of the house.

EXT. BACKYARD -- CONTINUOUS

Janice and the creatures run with all their strength to the
thicket of trees. Once safe, they turn.

AT THE HOUSE
Townies have the place completely
surrounded.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Frank struggles, but the Killbot has him fast.

The crowd parts, and Dr. Fiddlesticks steps forward.

FRANK
Dr. Fiddlesticks.

Dr. Fiddlesticks smiles.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
I'm flattered you remember me. We
have some business, you and I.

Frank swallows.

INT. HOLDING TANK -- NIGHT

The large jail cell has been converted into a laboratory. A control panel has been set up along one wall. Smaller jail cells line the hall.

In the middle of the room, Frank is strapped to a metal slab which is hooked up to other gizmos and doodads.

Dr. Fiddlesticks fritters away at his control panel. His Killbots occupy sentry positions around the place.

Frank strains against his bonds.

FRANK

I don't get it. You were never this bad on the show.

Dr. Fiddlesticks stops playing with his controls.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Loughlin made me tone it down. That simp.

A melancholy lingers over Dr. Fiddlesticks.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

They never understood me, my genius.
(beat)
Leave me out of their games.

FRANK

You alright?

Dr. Fiddlesticks recoups his villainous composure.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Of course, I am, fool. I am the Insidious Dr. Fiddlesticks.

Dr. Fiddlesticks comes around the control panel and prances about in front of Frank.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I'm the smartest one there is. I'm the only one who could recreate the gnome's portal.

Frank frowns.

FRANK

The gnome?

Dr. Fiddlesticks stops, devilish glee lights up his eyes.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Your furry friends never told you.

FRANK

Told me what?

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

They never told you about Art
Loughlin? AKA Loughlin the gnome?

Frank is in shock.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Art Loughlin, that paramour of kiddie
fare, was a gnome from Dwyer Goluth.
No more human than I am.

Frank bristles and tugs at the straps. Dr. Fiddlesticks
CHUCKLES.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

True, he created the original portal
that brought us all here, but I know
how to recreate it with your help.
Of course, you won't be alive to see
it.

Dr. Fiddlesticks moves close to Frank's face.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Do you know anything about matter
manipulation?

EXT. CITY HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Townies stand guard all over the town and outside city hall.

As a Townie walks by, her shadow disengages itself and moves
to:

THE SIDE OF CITY HALL

The shadow forms itself into Elroy. Hawthorne emerges from
the darkness of the shade's body, a rope coiled across his
chest. He shakes his head roughly.

HAWTHORNE

Man, that's creepy.

A brisk wind kicks up and stops. Onyx stands next to them,
out of breath. They huddle against the building, checking
for guards.

Hawthorne hands Onyx one end of the rope. In a blur, she
speeds straight up the side of the building, trailing the
rope out behind her.

Hawthorne and Elroy watch her go. Hawthorne tugs at the
rope and starts climbing.

INT. HOLDING TANK -- CONTINUOUS

Dr. Fiddlesticks hits a button. The Machine HUMS to life.
Electricity fills the air.

Dr. Fiddlesticks bobs his head to an internal song.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

(singsong)

I'm a genius, I'm a genius. I'm the
smartest one there is.

Frank looks about in fear.

EXT. CITY HALL -- CONTINUOUS

The Townies stand stock still, only moving to check unseen
areas of the streets and town.

There is a WHISTLE OS.

Townies turn their heads.

UP THE STREET

Luther and Cedric flip off the Townies
with obscene hand gestures.

The Townies are unsure what to do, so they do not move at
all.

Luther throws his arms up.

LUTHER

Oh, come on.

INT. HOLDING TANK -- CONTINUOUS

Douglass approaches the holding cell.

FRANK

Hey, sheriff.

Douglass ignores Frank. Dr. Fiddlesticks looks up from the
controls.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

What?

DOUGLASS

Two intruders have been sighted up
the street. They...flipped us off.

Dr. Fiddlesticks flips out.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Catch them at all costs.

Douglass turns and EXITS.

Frank turns to Dr. Fiddlesticks.

FRANK

You know, I think he's more lifelike now.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I shall miss your sarcasm.

EXT. CITY HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Cedric and Luther stand around, waiting for a reaction. Luther lights a cigarette.

There is a RUMBLE OS. Luther looks up.

Townies are piling out of city hall, headed their way.

After a moment of surprise, Luther and Cedric take off running away from city hall.

INT. HOLDING TANK -- CONTINUOUS

Dr. Fiddlesticks rests his head on his arm. His eyes check the clock, and he hops to his feet.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

There. I feel I've built that up sufficiently.

(to Frank)

Ready?

FRANK

Not really.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Too bad.

Dr. Fiddlesticks moves to throw the switch.

HAWTHORNE (O.S.)

What kind of genius doesn't guard the airshafts?

Dr. Fiddlesticks SMACKS his forehead in regret.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

The airshafts.

The vent grating in the middle of the ceiling opens, and Hawthorne, Onyx, and Elroy fall through to the floor.

Dr. Fiddlesticks looks at the Killbots.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I don't actually have to say it, do I?

The Killbots CLICK and WHIR and advance on the creatures.

Hawthorne attacks with both fists. He staggers the nearest Killbot, denting its hull.

Onyx races back and forth. The Killbot is unable to get a fix on her.

Elroy appears at the table Frank is strapped to and undoes the restraints.

FRANK

I gotta admit, I'm impressed.

Elroy MUMBLES something.

FRANK

You can tell me later.

Dr. Fiddlesticks ducks under the control panel. He re-emerges with a ridiculously-large, overly-intricate raygun. He CLONKS it down on top of the control panel.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Hey, Hawthorne. I never liked you.

Hawthorne turns from the fight.

HAWTHORNE

Bite me.

Dr. Fiddlesticks pulls the trigger. The force knocks him against the back wall.

ZAPFT.

Hawthorne is reduced to a pile of ash.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Whoo.

Frank winces. Elroy wraps him in the shadow of his body and whisks him back up through the airshaft.

ONYX

We're not finished, Fiddlesticks.

Onyx zips around the room, along the walls, and up the airshaft.

Dr. Fiddlesticks rises to his feet and lets out a puff of smoke.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

That's "Dr. Fiddlesticks".

He picks up a tin cup and throws it off a Killbot with a TING.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Buffoons. You are so in trouble.

(beat)

Not that you care. You're robots,
but I trust you get the picture.

The Killbots let out nervous CLICKS and CLACKS.

EXT. CITY HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

Elroy and Frank race down the street.

FRANK

Where is everybody?

Onyx zips by them.

ONYX

Hurry. We're meeting up at the lake.

Frank crinkles his brow.

FRANK

The lake? Which one?

ONYX

Just come on.

Onyx runs ahead, as Frank and Elroy do their best to maintain speed.

EXT. LAKE -- LATER

Aside from some lamp posts, the lake area is empty. Frank is a madman. The others watch as Luther tries to placate him.

FRANK

A gnome. Why didn't you tell me my
father was a gnome?

(beat)

What the hell does that make me?

LUTHER

I really think you should calm down.

Frank will hear none of this.

FRANK

Now, that slimy lizard-

LUTHER

(correcting)

Kobold.

FRANK

--Whatever, wants to turn me into a
goddamn door.

LUTHER

A portal.

Frank lets out a SCREAM, drops to the ground and tears at
the grass.

Janice bites her nails. Luther approaches Frank and puts a
hand on his shoulder.

LUTHER

Look, do you feel any different about
your father knowing what you know
now?

Frank relents.

FRANK

No.

Luther brightens up.

LUTHER

There. See?

Frank's jaw tightens.

FRANK

Hawthorne's dead.

Luther's eyes reflect his pain.

LUTHER

He chose to fight.

FRANK

That doesn't make it better.

Silence drapes the lake area.

ONYX

What now?

LUTHER

Lie low for a bit and come up with a
plan.

FRANK

Yeah, that'll give me time to work
on your problem.

Luther turns wearily to Frank.

LUTHER

Frank, please. Right now, our problem
is your problem.

Frank is determined.

FRANK

Don't tell me what to do, troll.
This isn't your show.

Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

Where are we going to hide? Dr.
Fiddlesticks knows where Frank lives.

Janice steps forward uncertainly.

JANICE

I've got a cottage in the woods.

Everyone turns to look at her.

EXT. OVER THE TROLL BRIDGE SET -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Luther sets up the bare frame for a shed. Cedric ambles to his side.

CEDRIC

What are you doing?

LUTHER

Putting up a toolshed.

Cedric inspects the frame critically.

CEDRIC

I don't think that's going to keep
anything out.

LUTHER

This is just the frame. All buildings
have frames. They provide structure
and support, so buildings don't just
fall over.

Cedric nods, having learned something new.

CEDRIC

Need any help?

LUTHER

Sure. Hold this for me, while I put
some nails in to hold it together.

Cedric bends and takes the frame from Luther, holding it upright. Luther hauls off with the hammer. Directly over Cedric's head.

INT. BARE ROOM -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Art lights his pipe.

ART

The numbers and letters stuff...
It's important, don't get me wrong.
Children have to learn to read and
write and so on.

Art takes a toke of the pipe.

ART

But the real meat of the show is the
practical things. The things that
kids need to get by in the real world.
Common sense stuff.

Art grins.

EXT. OVER THE TROLL BRIDGE SET -- MOMENTS LATER

Cedric holds his head and screams in agony. The toolshed
frame lies on its side. Luther stares at the hammer in
wonder.

LUTHER

Well, I guess we know what not to
do, right?

Cedric can only SCREAM.

LUTHER

Hey, Cedric, you dropped my frame.

Dom ambles onto the set.

DOM

Hey, you guys need any help?

Luther smiles slyly to himself.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE --NIGHT

A television set plays Over The Troll Bridge. BOOM. The
set is blown to bits by a laser beam.

Dr. Fiddlesticks, sitting at the Mayor's desk, blows imaginary
smoke from the barrel of the small raygun in his hand.

A Killbot picks up the ruined television set and tosses it
on a growing pile of discarded sets.

Douglass stands to the side. He scratches his rear.

Dr. Fiddlesticks jumps up on the desk in anger.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I hate that show. Hate it, hate it,
hate it, hate it.

Douglass watches, a question forming in his mind.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

"Three R's" my scaly ass. They should stand for "Ridiculous, Rotten, and Wretched".

DOUGLASS

"Wretched" starts with a "W", master.

Dr. Fiddlesticks wheels on the sheriff.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

So does "Writing", you cro-magnon.

Dr. Fiddlesticks motions at the wrecked television sets.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

That show never taught nobody anything.

Killbot Number One interjects a series of CLICKS and WHIZZES. Dr. Fiddlesticks glares at it.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

What?

DOUGLASS

I think he's saying that it should be "never taught anybody anything". Master.

Dr. Fiddlesticks grins and motions Killbot Number One over with a finger. Once it does, Dr. Fiddlesticks opens the rear panel and pours a cup of water inside.

Killbot Number One SPUTTERS and SMOKES dramatically. It collapses to its knees and falls over flat. The other Killbots quiver.

Douglass raises an unsure hand.

DOUGLASS

If you hate it so much, why are you always watching it?

Dr. Fiddlesticks narrows his eyes.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Is your collar busted?

Douglass checks the collar and nods his head.

DOUGLASS

Nope.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Then shut up. I didn't give you permission to speak.

Dr. Fiddlesticks turns away, a sadness in his eyes.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Besides, you wouldn't understand.

DOUGLASS
Yeah. You're right.

Dr. Fiddlesticks' eyes widen in disappointment.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
I don't... I'm trying to reach...

Dr. Fiddlesticks thrusts a rigid finger at the office door.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Get the hell out of here, all of
you. I have plots to hatch.

Like scolded children, Douglass and the Killbots shuffle out
of the office.

Dr. Fiddlesticks sits in the leather chair and opens a
spiral-bound notebook laying on the desk. Large, scrawled
letters decorate the cover.

ON THE COVER: "FIENDISHLY CLEVER IDEAS"

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
(forlorn)
Why me?

He SNIFFLES.

EXT. WOODS -- NIGHT

Moonlight shines through the trees, casting eerie shadows
over the decent-sized, dilapidated cottage. It reeks of
witchery.

Frank, Janice, and the creatures stand before the cottage.
Frank and the creatures exchange wary looks. Janice shrugs
guiltily.

JANICE
I thought it would be good for the
whole "wicce" thing.

FRANK
How would people find it? There's
no roads.

JANICE
I know.

LUTHER
It's not like finding a Mister Donut.

JANICE
I know.

CEDRIC

Is depreciation considered upkeep
here?

Janice fumes and it all pours out.

JANICE

I know. I know it's not practical.
It's a witch's cottage, isn't it?
It's not supposed to be practical.
It burns me up just how impractical
it is, but I'm a witch, see?

Everyone gapes at Janice. Luther strikes a daring move.

LUTHER

Wicce.

Janice's eyes bore through him.

JANICE

Shut up.

Janice huffs and puffs. No one is brave enough to stir.

Janice's face suddenly lights up with a bright smile.

JANICE

Well, come on. I'll put some herbal
tea on.

Janice trots happily to the cottage.

Nervously, Frank and the creatures follow.

LUTHER

(to Frank)

You're not getting romantically
involved with her. Right?

FRANK

Hey, she kissed me, pal.

Luther gives Frank a conciliatory pat on the back.

INT. COTTAGE -- LATER

The kitchen gives off a witchy ambience. Lots of ceramics,
wicker, candles, etc.

The rest of the place is loaded with electronics of every
variety. Chipboards, circuits, wires, etc.

The creatures inspect the hardware in awe. Frank and Janice
sit at the kitchen table with their tea.

CEDRIC

Hardly very witchlike.

JANICE

It's kind of my hobby shop out here.
What with no business and all.

LUTHER

I don't get it. Witches--

JANICE

Wiccaae.

LUTHER

--Are supposed to be all-natural,
right? I mean, you don't use an
electric cauldron, do you?

JANICE

No, but there's an electric fireplace
for when it gets chilly.

The creatures nod their head at the sense of it.

JANICE

It just takes my mind off the world.
Tinkering in here. Electronics are
so easy.

(beat)

They make sense.

Frank stands and inspects the electronics closer.

FRANK

A lot of this stuff looks like what
Fiddlesticks had in city hall.

Janice shrugs.

JANICE

There's only one Radio Shack in town.

Luther knows where Frank is going with this.

LUTHER

Frank, don't.

Frank frowns at Luther and turns inquisitively to Janice.

FRANK

Janice, do you think you could slap
together, say, a bio-genetic,
trans-dimensional, matter manipulator
with this stuff?

Janice LAUGHS.

JANICE

Are you kidding?

(beat)

Sure.

Luther puts up a warning hand, but Frank waves him off.

FRANK
(to Janice)
Could you make it non-lethal?

JANICE
Ummm...

Janice queers up her face in thought.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Dr. Fiddlesticks paces back and forth in front of a mobile chalkboard. It is cluttered with a mass of computations.

Dr. Fiddlesticks stops his pacing. He jots some figures on the board. The chalk SCREECHES. Dr. Fiddlesticks drops the chalk in pain.

As he picks it up, he realizes one of his fingers has dropped off as well. He picks up the digit and stares sadly at it.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Dammit.

A KNOCK at the door.

Dr. Fiddlesticks hurriedly hides the finger behind his back.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Enter.

Douglass ENTERS. He gives Dr. Fiddlesticks an odd glance and thinks nothing more of it.

DOUGLASS
Master, we can't find Frank Loughlin
or the others anywhere in town.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Keep searching. He must be found.

Douglass raises a hand. Dr. Fiddlesticks SIGHS.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
I can't use somebody else. A normal
human wouldn't be able to maintain a
stable link to Dwyer Goluth.
(out of left field)
Carry the two.

Dr. Fiddlesticks spins and scribbles at the chalkboard.

Douglass raises his hand again. Dr. Fiddlesticks casts his eyes up in a "why me?" expression.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Because it just wouldn't work, that's
why. Now go.

Douglass nods and turns.

Dr. Fiddlesticks continues at his math. He accidentally drops the finger. Douglass stops and stares. Dr. Fiddlesticks looks like a deer in headlights.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

You didn't see that. Understand?

Douglass nods slowly, turns, and beats a hasty retreat.

Dr. Fiddlesticks ponders the fallen digit for a moment. He lays it in the chalk tray and scrawls away at the chalkboard.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Yes, carry the two.

A fiendish grin alights on his face.

INT. COTTAGE -- MORNING

There is a large, piecemeal machine occupying most of the living room. A Matter Manipulator. The creatures stare at the contraption.

Frank leans against the Manipulator uncomfortably. Wires are attached subcutaneously to his arms and chest. He moves and winces.

FRANK

Do the wires have to be under my skin?

Janice makes some adjustments on the Manipulator. She looks up.

JANICE

Sorry. I didn't have any of those suckie-thingies.

CEDRIC

Suction cups?

JANICE

Yeah.

LUTHER

Ever heard of tape?

Janice rubs the bridge of her nose.

JANICE

Please. I'm about to commit murder. Not now.

She flashes a smile at Frank.

JANICE

Kidding.

Frank tries to smile back.

Janice lets out a SIGH and drops her wrench. She moves over to a tiny, archaic television set. All of the wires from the Manipulator lead to the television.

JANICE

Ready?

LUTHER

Frank, is there any chance I can talk you out of this?

FRANK

No.

Luther shrugs and flops onto the couch with the other creatures.

Frank looks with some doubt from Luther to Janice and back.

FRANK

You're sure this is non-lethal?

Janice bites her nails.

JANICE

Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

CEDRIC

Am I the only one who smells disaster here?

FRANK

If my father did it, so can I.

LUTHER

Your father was a different man.

Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

He was a gnome.

FRANK

Right.

(to Janice)

Ready when you are.

JANICE

Cross your fingers.

Cedric covers his eye.

CEDRIC

I can't watch.

Janice turns the television on. The lights DIM, energy BUZZES.

Frank closes his eyes.

Janice turns the channel to "0".

The Manipulator SHRIEKS with electricity. Frank convulses.

LUTHER

He's killing himself.

Cedric peeks between his fingers.

CEDRIC

Really?

A dull glow throbs in Frank's chest. It expands slowly outward, becomes brighter.

Janice fiddles with the television antenna.

LUTHER

I can't let this happen.

Luther hops off the couch, over to the Manipulator. He licks his index finger and SLAPS it on a wire connection.

The force of the discharge stands Luther's hair on end and knocks him into the couch.

The Manipulator's power quickly FADES and VANISHES. Frank returns to normal.

Janice plays frantically with the television. No good.

Frank's eye twitches.

FRANK

Christ, that hurt.

Janice bites a nail.

JANICE

Sorry.

Frank glares at Luther. Luther casually lights a cigarette.

FRANK

(to Janice)

That's alright. It's not your fault.

LUTHER

Funny, coming from a guy with no hair on his arms.

Frank looks at his arms.

FRANK

Aww, come on.

Janice picks up her wrench.

JANICE

Let me just make an adjustment.

FRANK

(quickly)

No. Let's just take a break.

Tears well up in Janice's eyes. She whirls out of the room.

CEDRIC

Smooth move.

LUTHER

You need some help there?

Frank's mouth quivers.

FRANK

I can't feel my legs.

The creatures GIGGLE.

EXT. COTTAGE -- MOMENTS LATER

Janice sweeps at the dirt in front of the cottage with a witch-style, wicker broom.

Frank walks out of the cottage. His legs give out, but he catches himself on the doorway and straightens up.

Janice turns to look at him, abashed, then returns to sweeping.

Frank rubs his forearms. There is an awkward silence.

FRANK

You know you're sweeping dirt on dirt.

Janice sweeps harder.

JANICE

It's natural, isn't it?

Frank tries another approach. He SNIFFS the air.

FRANK

Ever wonder why burnt hair smells like that?

Frank instantly winces at his insensitivity. Janice throws down the broom. Frank takes a cautionary step back.

Janice bursts out in tears.

JANICE

My whole life, I tried to do what's right. It didn't matter whether it could be done or not. Now, I almost

killed you.

I quit. I'm moving out here permanently. Just to get away from all the people and all the mistakes.

Frank smiles sheepishly.

FRANK

Was kissing me a mistake?

Janice turns, her eyes soften.

JANICE

Yes.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Frank.

Frank looks like someone hit him with a sledgehammer, but he plays it off and smiles.

FRANK

That's alright.

Janice picks up her broom and sweeps.

Frank plods back into the cottage with his tail between his legs.

OFF IN THE TREES

A Killbot observes the scene.

A lark perches on its shoulder. The Killbot waves it away and presses a button on its chest unit. A steady light pulses.

The lark lands again on the Killbot's shoulder. It flails its arms, but the bird flies out of reach.

The Killbot maintains its vigil.

The lark perches again on its shoulder.

With a robot-equivalent of a SIGH, the Killbot ignores the lark.

The lark pecks innocently at the Killbot's head.

INT. MAYOR'S BATHROOM -- MORNING

The shower is on full-blast, and steam fills the small bathroom.

Dr. Fiddlesticks stands in the shower. He sings an IRISH FOLK SONG and smears some apricot scrub on his face. As he rubs, several layers of skin come off in his hands.

He looks forlornly at his flesh.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

That's just not right.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Dr. Fiddlesticks cannot hear above his singing and the water.

After a moment, Douglass ENTERS and CLEARS HIS THROAT.

Dr. Fiddlesticks SINGS LOUDER.

DOUGLASS

(meek)

Ahem.

Still no response.

DOUGLASS

(loudly)

AHEM!

Dr. Fiddlesticks SHRIEKS like a girl, grabs a towel, and wraps himself. He turns off the shower and pops his head out of the curtain, incensed.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

You'll pay for this intrusion, you bovine bag of barfy bits.

Douglass raises a lazy eyebrow.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

So, it was a stretch. What do you want?

Douglass stiffens his back.

DOUGLASS

Killbot Number Two reports he found Frank Loughlin in a cottage out in the woods.

Dr. Fiddlesticks rolls his eyes.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

What does that narrow it down to? About fifteen thousand square miles of wilderness?

DOUGLASS

We have the exact location of the cottage, master. We traced it from the Killbot's homing beacon.

Dr. Fiddlesticks brightens.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Excellent.

DOUGLASS

Shall we bring him in?

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

No. My plan is almost complete.
Frank Loughlin will come to me.

Dr. Fiddlesticks CACKLES EVILLY. He does a little jig in the shower. He loses his footing on the wet ceramic but quickly recuperates. He shoots Douglass a sharp glance.

Douglass stares at the chunk of Dr. Fiddlestick's skin in the shower.

DOUGLASS

Is that yours, master?

Dr. Fiddlesticks narrows his eyes.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

No. Get lost.

Douglass nods his head and EXITS.

Dr. Fiddlesticks PLOPS the skin into a waste basket and turns the shower back on. He picks up his SINGING exactly where he left off.

INT. COTTAGE -- DAY

Frank fiddles with the Manipulator. Luther strolls up, munching a muffin.

LUTHER

I don't know what she puts in these,
but Onyx can't stop laughing, and
Cedric's eating everything in sight.

Frank is too involved in his tinkering.

LUTHER

I don't think you should play around
with that.

Frank does not take his eyes off the work.

FRANK

Just a couple of adjustments.
(beat)
Maybe if someone hadn't sabotaged
it...

Luther finishes his muffin and lights a cigarette.

LUTHER

Frank?

Frank ignores Luther.

LUTHER

Frank?
(beat)

FRANK!

Frank SLAMS the screwdriver to the ground and glares at Luther.

LUTHER

Frank, we're dying here. You. Cannot. Stop. It.

Frank's severe expression lessens.

FRANK

But my dad--

LUTHER

Your father's already dead, Frank.

FRANK

I know.

LUTHER

But you don't get it. You've got to move on. You can't stop life, and you can't bring your father back.

Frank's eyes turn glassy. He stifles the tears, stands and attaches the Manipulator's wires to himself.

FRANK

Hit the switch.

Luther shrugs, moves to the television control, turns it on, and changes the channel to "0".

ZAAATT.

A Spring TWANGS and a puff of smoke POOFS from the Manipulator.

Frank's eyes go wide and totally vacant.

Luther turns the television off and runs to Frank. He waves a hand in front of Frank's face.

No reaction.

Janice races into the room.

JANICE

What the hell's going on?

She removes the wires from Frank.

LUTHER

Frank was dickin' around with your doohickey.

Janice peers into Frank's eyes.

JANICE

Is he dead?

LUTHER

He's breathing. He seems sort
of...interrupted.

JANICE

More than usual.

LUTHER

Yeah.

Luther rubs his stomach.

LUTHER

Man, I'm getting hungry.

Luther strolls off to the kitchen.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- DAY

A large, cylindrical structure stands menacingly in the middle
of the square. Steel cables web back and forth, attached to
electric poles, buildings, trees, anything.

Dr. Fiddlesticks takes in his genius creation with glee.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

(to himself)

Yes, carry the two, indeed.

Douglass nods his head passively. He scrunches his face
with a question.

DOUGLASS

What is it?

Dr. Fiddlesticks scoffs.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

What is it? What is it?

It's...very...um...

(beat)

Your puny, human mind wouldn't
understand.

Douglass nods.

DOUGLASS

Well, what's it do?

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

It attracts magick of a certain
frequency.

DOUGLASS

Oh.

(beat)

Like a magnet?

Dr. Fiddlesticks narrows his eyes to slits.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Yes, like a magnet, you clod. Now,
just grab me a four-leaf clover to
power it, and this baby'll be ready
to go.

Douglass' mouth forms a worrisome "O".

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

What is it now?

DOUGLASS

They're kind of...rare, master.
Unique, in fact.

Dr. Fiddlesticks curls his lip. His anger slowly builds to
a boil.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Shit.

(beat)

Well, start looking, you neophytic
natterjack.

DOUGLASS

What's a natter--

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

(cutting him off)

Go.

Douglass dutifully ambles off.

Dr. Fiddlesticks hauls back and kicks the Magnet. His foot
SNAPS at a right angle. He hops back and forth, clutching
at it and MOANING.

INT. COTTAGE -- DAY

Frank sits at the kitchen table, dazed. A tea cup sits in
front of him. He reaches for it, misses, and drinks air.

FRANK

This tea is really mild.

The creatures and Janice all watch Frank with great interest.

LUTHER

(to Janice)

Sure he'll be alright?

CEDRIC

I'm not spoon-feeding him.

(beat)

Or changing him, for that matter.

JANICE

I don't know much about synapses,
but it couldn't have been that bad
of a shock. It's powered from a
crappy Magnavox.

Frank strokes dully at his chin.

FRANK

I miss my beard.

Luther raises an eyebrow.

LUTHER

Your beard?

Frank smiles distantly.

FRANK

Oh, yes. It was lovely. It used to
go all the way down to my...ummm...

Frank gestures under the table.

LUTHER

Knees?

FRANK

No, thanks. I have a cup.

Luther's eye catches Frank's amulet.

LUTHER

Frank, that amulet, how long have
you had it?

Frank shrugs.

FRANK

Always.

(beat)

At least, I think always. I can't
quite remember. Why, Joey?

Luther shakes his head dismissively.

LUTHER

No reason. It's a nice emerald.

Frank looks down at the amulet as if for the first time. His
face lights up with surprised joy.

FRANK

Oh, it's beautiful. Thanks, guys.

Cedric tosses Frank a muffin. This is Frank's day. He CLAPS
his hands together excitedly.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- DAY

Dr. Fiddlesticks stands on a Killbot's shoulder. His broken foot is bandaged, and he leans against the robot's head.

Douglass looks up at Dr. Fiddlesticks, who is slavering wildly.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Because I don't want you to just grab him. Where's the fun in that? How does that display my superior intellect to my most unworthy foes? Well? Huh?

Douglass wipes some slime off his face, his expression neutral.

DOUGLASS

It just seems easier--

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

(cutting him off)

Screw easier. Was splitting the atom easy? Was achieving flight easy? Was building the twin-engine umber hulk army of Shinn Dall easy?

Douglass moves to speak, but Dr. Fiddlesticks is on a roll.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

No. But it was worth it, because everyone recognized the genius behind the achievements.

Douglass blinks.

DOUGLASS

The what army?

Dr. Fiddlesticks seethes.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Never. Mind. Just find me the clover.

Douglass shrugs noncommittally and shambles away.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

(to himself)

Astounding. His stupidity almost seems to override the collar.

Dr. Fiddlesticks turns to the Killbot he stands on.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I'm beginning to question the benefits of remaining on this plane.

The Killbot CLICKS and WHIRRS. Dr. Fiddlesticks gives its head a big hug.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I knew you'd understand.

He looks around quickly to see that no one is watching. He twiddles a finger under the Killbot's chin.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
(baby talk)
Who's my tiger? Who's my tiger?

Steam SPURTS from the Killbot's head valve.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
(baby talk)
Yes, you are.

EXT. OVER THE TROLL BRIDGE SET -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Luther waits anxiously for Cedric to open a blatantly fake jar of peanut brittle. Onyx sits to the side, shaking her head sadly.

The cyclops pries the lid off.

BOOM.

Luther busts out in LAUGHTER.

Cedric claws at his eye.

CEDRIC
Aarrgghh! I think I'm blind, you malignant troll.

Luther falls over, hugging his stomach.

INT. BARE ROOM -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Art taps the tobacco from his pipe with a smile.

ART
I really loved the little surprises.
I think they taught a lot of children
how to laugh at the bad things.
(beat)
I guess in some ways, I'm as much a
prankster as Luther. But it was all
in good fun.

Art laughs to himself.

ART
At least, I always thought so.

He winks to the Woman OS.

EXT. OVER THE TROLL BRIDGE SET -- MOMENTS LATER

ON VIDEO: Luther finally gets to his feet, his laughter subsiding.

Cedric rubs his eye, the jar of peanut brittle re-sealed.

Dom trots on up, happy-go-lucky. He spies the jar in Cedric's hand and lights up.

DOM

Hey, is that peanut brittle?

Cedric offers Dom the jar.

CEDRIC

Yeah, have some.

Onyx CLICKS HER TONGUE in disgust.

ONYX

Guys, that's just not nice.

Dom pulls at the jar lid, tongue sticking out of his mouth.

INT. COTTAGE -- DAY

Frank's head BANGS off the kitchen table. He GROANS.

JANICE

That's what you get for screwing around with things you shouldn't be screwing around with.

Frank lifts his head and rubs his aching brow.

Cedric grins mischievously.

CEDRIC

Still miss your beard, Frank?

Frank screws up his face, checks his chin.

FRANK

I didn't know I had one.

LUTHER

You don't.

FRANK

Then, no, I don't miss my beard.

Luther raises an eyebrow.

LUTHER

Your father never told you, did he?

FRANK

I already know he was a gnome.

CEDRIC

Not that.

Frank frowns.

FRANK

Never told me what?

Luther cannot help but smile.

LUTHER

About your conception.

Frank puts his head in his hands.

FRANK

I'd really rather not hear about it.

LUTHER

(ignoring him)

Art gave your mother that amulet of yours.

Frank lifts his head, suddenly interested.

LUTHER

She wore it until the day you were born.

Frank shrugs.

FRANK

So? I've had it all my life. So what?

CEDRIC

So, humans and gnomes can't procreate.

Frank looks to Janice for some help. She shakes her head.

JANICE

I'm just a witch.

Frank looks at Luther.

FRANK

So, you're saying my father's not my father?

LUTHER

Oh, Art's your father, all right.

(beat)

See, in order for a gnome and a human to get it on--

FRANK

(interjecting)

Please.

LUTHER

(continuing)
--There needs to be a channel to
trans...trans...

JANICE
Mogrify.

Luther nods.

LUTHER
Right. His essence into your mother.

JANICE
(guessing)
Kind of like a two-prong adapter for
a three-prong cord.

CEDRIC
Something like that.

Luther points at the amulet.

LUTHER
You see, that amulet contains the
spirit of a very special creature.
A creature who gave up his earthly
existence, so you could live.

It begins to sink in to Frank's head.

LUTHER
A flaming-red, forgetful creature
with magick powers and a long beard.

Frank's mouth hangs open.

FRANK
Frederick the djinn.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- DAY

Dr. Fiddlesticks leans impatiently against the Magnet.

Douglass approaches with something in his hands. Dr.
Fiddlesticks moves forward anxiously.

Douglass hands over the clover. Dr. Fiddlesticks is
delighted. He inspects the plant.

Dr. Fiddlesticks frowns and moves in for a closer look.

The four-leaf clover is just a three-leaf clover with a fourth
leaf taped on.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
What the hell is this?

DOUGLASS
A four-leaf clover, master.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

No, it isn't.

Douglass chews his bottom lip and nods.

DOUGLASS

Yes, it is. See? It's got four leaves.

Dr. Fiddlesticks thrusts the clover in Douglass' face.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

One of them held on with tape. I... You...

Dr. Fiddlesticks' fire dwindles.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

The hell with it.

He motions to a Killbot. It dutifully lifts Dr. Fiddlesticks and places him on top of the Magnet.

Dr. Fiddlesticks pops open a cover on the top of the Magnet and wearily tosses the clover in. He lets the lid drop back down and slumps onto his behind.

Douglass looks around at anything but Dr. Fiddlesticks. Dr. Fiddlesticks SIGHS.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Do you know how many kingdoms fell because of morons?

Douglass droops his head down.

There is a SOFT CLICK. Dr. Fiddlesticks glances down.

The Magnet GRUMBLES and FARTS to life.

Dr. Fiddlesticks stands in astonishment.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Well, I'll be.

Douglass raises his head up and nods slightly.

INT. COTTAGE -- DAY

Frank sips his tea. His face shows bemused acceptance.

FRANK

So, I'm Frederick.

LUTHER

No, you're Frank. Frederick's spirit just gave your parents a way for you to be born.

Frank nods and looks to Janice. She shrugs noncommittally.
Frank turns back to the creatures.

FRANK
Can I do magick?

CEDRIC
(sarcastically)
Like coin-palming?

Frank and Luther ignore the cyclops.

LUTHER
I don't know.
(beat)
Give it a try.

Frank puts his tea cup down and stares intently at it. He
queers up his face in concentration.

FRANK
Alakazam.

CEDRIC
Alakazam?

JANICE
What are you trying to do?

Frank motions with his head.

FRANK
Levitate the cup.

Janice sneers.

JANICE
With Alakazam? I don't think so.

Frank stops and turns to Janice.

FRANK
Well, what would you do?

Janice raises scholarly eyebrows.

JANICE
First, I'd get a-- Frank's chair
skids a few inches back from the
table.

Everybody stops.

FRANK
Alright. Did I do that?

LUTHER
You don't know?

Frank squints.

FRANK

I don't remember any spells.

(beat)

Exactly.

Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

Neither did Frederick.

CEDRIC

They were all kind of by accident.

Luther shakes his head.

LUTHER

It's probably not you.

FRANK

Great.

Suddenly, Frank's chair takes off with Frank in it. His face is frozen in horror as the chair flies right through the cottage door.

EXT. COTTAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Frank holds on to the skidding chair for dear life.

Janice and the creatures charge outside, as Frank is pulled further away from the cottage.

No one knows what to do.

Frank's chair hits a twig in the path. It overturns.

Frank bounces out of the chair, right onto his feet. The chair drops to the side and lays to rest.

Frank continues to be pulled backward. His feet cut trails in the forest dirt.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- CONTINUOUS

The Magnet HUMS busily. Dr. Fiddlesticks hops around it, minding his bad foot.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

It's working. It's working.

Dr. Fiddlesticks stops and peers around.

All of the Townies are watching him disinterestedly.

Dr. Fiddlesticks regains composure.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Of course, it's working.

He throws his arms out majestically.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Gaze upon my genius and cower at the
full might of The Insidious Dr.
Fiddlesticks, Madman At Large.

The Townies just stare.

Dr. Fiddlesticks puts stern hands on his hips.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Well? Come on, then.

The Townies mock up amazed expressions. There is no real
joy there.

TOWNIES

(all)

Oooohhhh.

EXT. FOREST -- CONTINUOUS

Franks runs in place, getting nowhere. The amulet dangles
in the air around his neck, pulled toward the Magnet.

Janice and the creatures tug and pull at Frank to no avail.

Luther looks up and sees the amulet hovering.

LUTHER

Frank, take off the amulet.

FRANK

But my father--

LUTHER

Whatever it is is pulling the amulet.
Take it off.

Frank pulls at the amulet's chain. It sinks into his skin
as he pulls it off.

The amulets ZIPS off through the forest and out of sight.

Frank flies forward and lands in a pile with Janice and the
creatures.

CEDRIC

Get the hell off me.

Everyone wearily gets to their feet.

Frank wipes his brow, takes several exhausted breaths.

And is suddenly jerked back towards town. His legs churn

again against the draw. Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX

Oh shit.

Realizing what she has said, Onyx gently slaps Elroy's shoulder.

JANICE

Now what?

FRANK

Mah...mah...manip...

Luther peers back towards the cottage.

LUTHER

How mobile is that manipulator thingie
of yours?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- CONTINUOUS

Dr. Fiddlesticks waits victoriously. Douglass stands to his side.

DOUGLASS

Something's coming, master.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Excellent.

Dr. Fiddlesticks TITTERS to himself, all excited.

DOUGLASS

It's coming in now.

Dr. Fiddlesticks shakes in anticipation.

CLONK.

Dr. Fiddlesticks runs around the Magnet, clapping his hands together.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Fetch it. Fetch it.

Douglass reaches under the Magnet and pulls forth Frank's amulet. He hands it to Dr. Fiddlesticks.

Dr. Fiddlesticks frowns.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

What the hell is this?

DOUGLASS

Looks like the Loughlin kid got
smaller.

Dr. Fiddlesticks pierces Douglass with a stare. He turns

back to the amulet and crinkles his brow.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

You know this looks oddly familiar.

(beat)

No, it couldn't be.

(beat)

Could it?

He grins deliciously.

EXT. FOREST -- CONTINUOUS

The creatures drag and shove the Manipulator through the woods. There is much GRUNTING and PANTING. Janice follows with the television control.

They reach Frank. He is running and sweating profusely.

LUTHER

Geez, Frank, you don't look so hot.

Frank is at the end of his rope.

FRANK

Turn. The. Friggin'. Machine.
On.

Janice turns the television knob and fixes the channel. The Manipulator gives a SHARP HUM.

Frank flies forward onto his face. He barely raises his head to spit out dirt.

Janice and the creatures help him to his feet and dust him off.

Frank is grey and pasty. Janice grimaces.

JANICE

Frank, you really don't look good.

FRANK

(between breaths)

I just ran fifty miles without moving
an inch, but I get it. You're not
attracted to me.

JANICE

No, I'm not, but that's not what I
mean. You look like them.

Janice motions to the creatures. They smile, wave, and drip goo.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- CONTINUOUS

The Magnet WARBLER. Dr. Fiddlesticks snaps to attention.

DOUGLASS

Something's wrong, master.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

(sarcastically)

Really?

Dr. Fiddlesticks approaches and inspects the Magnet.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

We're being blocked. That can't be.

Douglass conspicuously says nothing.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

No snide comments for a change? You, sir, are unreliable.

Dr. Fiddlesticks shuts the Magnet off.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I wonder...?

He gazes down at the amulet in his hand.

INT. COTTAGE -- AFTERNOON

Frank is wrapped in an afghan on the couch. He shakes uncontrollably. Janice and the creatures have gathered round.

FRANK

So, without the amulet, my link is severed, and I'm dying too?

Cedric nods somberly.

CEDRIC

Looks that way.

LUTHER

Sorry, Frank.

FRANK

It's not your fault.

Silence engulfs the room.

Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx. She turns tenderly to him.

ONYX

I know, sweetie. It's not much longer.

Luther pretends not to hear.

Frank lifts his head, the spark of an idea in his eye.

FRANK

Luther, since that magnet-thing kept pulling at me after the amulet was gone, that means I do have some magick in me, right?

Luther shrugs.

LUTHER

Well, yeah, I suppose. But you're not trained-- Frank jumps to his feet, throws off the afghan, wobbles, and falls over.

FRANK

Dammit. Let's take the fight to them, then.

Cedric gapes.

LUTHER

Do you think anything through?

Frank lifts his head off the floor.

FRANK

If I did that, I wouldn't get anything done.

LUTHER

Touche.

Frank's head SLAPS back onto the floor.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- EVENING

Douglass takes a siesta, leaning against the Magnet. The Townies mill about uselessly. Dr. Fiddlesticks is not around.

FRANK (O.S.)

Hey! Sheriff!

Douglass opens his eyes and peers lazily up.

DOWN THE STREET

Frank, Janice, and the creatures form a line across the road. The Manipulator rests idly in a toy wagon to the side. Janice holds Frank up. None of the creatures look too good.

FRANK

I want a word with the doctor.

All the Townies turn and stare. The Killbots CLICK and blow steam.

Douglass slowly rises, and, taking his own sweet time, goes into city hall.

Luther tugs at Frank's arm.

LUTHER

I don't know if this is a good idea.

FRANK

Of course, it is. I'm a magician.

CEDRIC

No, you're not.

JANICE

You're really not, Frank.

FRANK

Would you guys shut up? How hard can this be? Watch.

Frank twiddles his fingers at the Magnet.

FRANK

Yabble dabble.

Nothing happens. The Townies still stare back.

LUTHER

I hate to say "I told you so"...

Frank lowers his hands, nervousness creeping over him.

FRANK

Janice, is the Manipulator ready?

JANICE

Yeah.

FRANK

The hell with this.

Frank waves a dismissive hand at the Magnet.

A green magick bolt leaps from Frank's hands, slamming into the Magnet, and blowing it to pieces. Townies are thrown about. The Killbots remain rigid.

Frank, Janice, and the creatures stare in awe.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS (O.S.)

That is so rude.

Frank and the gang look up.

Dr. Fiddlesticks stands hunched over on the city hall steps. He looks no better than the creatures. Frank's amulet dangles from his rotting fingers.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I believe you're looking for this?

FRANK

You'll never win, Fiddlesticks.

Luther grimaces at Frank.

LUTHER

"You'll never win"? What are you?
The Shadow?

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

But, you see, I already have. With
the djinn's lifeforce, I can destroy
whomever and whatever I want.
Observe.

Dr. Fiddlesticks aims the amulet at a tree in the square. A
magick bolt leaps from the stone.

BOOM.

The tree is gone, the ground where it stood charred.

Dr. Fiddlesticks turns triumphantly.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Surrender yourselves, or I start
doing the same to the people of this
town.

FRANK

(to the others)
Shit. I think he's got us.

CEDRIC

Like fun.
(yelling to Dr.
Fiddlesticks)
Go ahead. See if we care-- Luther
leaps onto Cedric's back and clamps
a hand over his mouth.

LUTHER

We surrender.

Dr. Fiddlesticks gestures to the Townies.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Seize them.

All of the Townies rush in. Frank, Janice, and the creatures
are swallowed by their pawing limbs.

Dr. Fiddlesticks stamps his bad foot in frustration and lets
loose an AGONIZED SCREAM.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Not all of you.

The Townies thin out, leaving Douglass with his arms on Frank,
and Townies holding the creatures. They move towards city
hall.

Luther looks around inquisitively.

LUTHER

Hey, Frank, are we missing--

FRANK

(cutting him off)

Shut up and walk.

Dr. Fiddlesticks CHUCKLES to himself.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

This is almost too easy.

He queers up his face in suspicion but dismisses the thought.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I'm just a genius--No, a super-genius.

Frank and the creatures are hauled up the city hall steps.

INT. HOLDING TANK -- LATER

Frank is strapped into the Machine. His eyelids flutter wearily.

In a cell across the hall sit the creatures. Luther plays a sad song on a harmonica.

CEDRIC

Where'd you get that?

LUTHER

Get what?

Luther continues playing.

Dr. Fiddlesticks strolls down the hall, swinging the amulet around. His Killbots follow obediently. He points to Luther in passing.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Confiscate.

A Killbot stops at the cell and extends an arm through the bars.

Luther stops playing and sadly hands the harmonica over.

Dr. Fiddlesticks prances behind his control panel.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Does anybody else feel an overwhelming sense of deja vu?

The new inmates glare at the kobold.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I guess it's just me.

Dr. Fiddlesticks turns on the Machine. The hallway lights dim slightly.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Normally, this is where I do a little soliloquy, but I think time is of the essence, so let's just begin.

Dr. Fiddlesticks presses the large START button.

Frank spasms, his torso sucking in, like a string is being pulled through him. A light flares from his chest.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Just think, soon I will be very much alive, and you will all be very much dead.

LUTHER

Hey, Fiddlesticks.

Dr. Fiddlesticks peers over at Luther.

LUTHER

You're a real asshole, you know that?

Dr. Fiddlesticks grins maliciously.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Killbots. Kill.

The Killbots approach the cell. They tear the bars from the surrounding building. Dr. Fiddlesticks rolls his eyes.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

You could just unlock the... Never mind.

The creatures cower.

EXT. CITY HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Janice sneaks out from behind a tree, the Manipulator trailing behind her.

She looks around for prying eyes and scurries right up next to the building.

She crouches at the wall.

A hand grasps her shoulder from behind.

Janice spins.

Douglass nods his head at her.

DOUGLASS

I'm afraid I can't let you do that,

Miss Gilgannon.

INT. HOLDING TANK -- CONTINUOUS

Frank's eyes bulge from their sockets. The light in his chest burns more intense.

The Killbots are upon the creatures, throttling them.

Dr. Fiddlesticks nods his head in time to some unheard music.

EXT. CITY HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Janice glances around, trying not to attract any more attention.

JANICE

Come on, sheriff.

DOUGLASS

No. Now, I promised my master I would guard this building. I can't let you go any further, I don't care how good-looking you are.

Janice stops.

JANICE

Did you say "good-looking"?

Douglass blushes slightly.

DOUGLASS

Now, see here-- Janice points astonished behind Douglass.

JANICE

That Elvis impersonator looks just like Bigfoot.

Douglass turns to check it out.

Janice lunges and rips the metal collar from Douglass' neck. A short, electric charge surges through his neck, and he falls to the ground, unconscious.

Janice crosses quickly to the Manipulator and fires it up.

ACROSS TOWN

Townies all over stop, the life returning to their faces.

They shake their heads as if just waking up.

INT. HOLDING TANK -- CONTINUOUS

The Killbots SPUTTER and stop moving. The creatures pry themselves from their grasp and catch their breath.

Dr. Fiddlesticks leaps to his feet.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Hey, what gives?

The Machine CONKS out.

Frank GASPS for air as the light retreats from his chest.

FRANK
My God, that hurts.

Dr. Fiddlesticks' eyes dart around frantically. He pounds at the control board.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Now, I know I'm supposed to mess
with these to no avail. I just can't
seem to help myself.

A DOOR CLANGS open OS, and a large mass of VOICES approaches.

Dr. Fiddlesticks looks up, his mouth forming a small "o".

The Townies, led by Janice, storm the cells. They move the Killbots out of the way.

Others unstrap Frank.

ZAP. A laser beam scores the metal next to Frank's head.

FRANK
Hey! You almost hit me.

Dr. Fiddlesticks levels his small raygun.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
Sorry. Won't happen again.

Dr. Fiddlesticks turns slightly, the gun's sights landing on Janice.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS
I'll just shoot her.

Luther yanks his harmonica away from the defunct Killbot's clutches and whips it across the room.

The instrument hits Dr. Fiddlesticks dead in the eye, and he staggers back. The raygun shoots high and wide.

Dr. Fiddlesticks bangs into the wall. He drops the amulet.

The stone cracks as it hits the floor. It FIZZLES and SPUTTERS bright, red sparks.

Dr. Fiddlesticks is very worried.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

Oh, dear.

The amulet cracks completely open and a maniacal, zigzagging red bolt charges around the room.

Everyone ducks to avoid getting hit.

Dr. Fiddlesticks quietly scuttles under the control panel.

FRANK

What's that?

Luther smiles.

LUTHER

Frederick.

The bolt flies under the control panel and snatches Dr. Fiddlesticks from his hiding place. It bounces him roughly around the room. Dr. Fiddlesticks flails his arms in despair.

The bolt and Dr. Fiddlesticks suddenly stop and hover in midair.

Mini-red bolts and mist dance around Dr. Fiddlesticks. The doctor's body pulls in on itself with a RUBBERY STRETCHING SOUND.

DR. FIDDLESTICKS

I'm too smart to die this way.

There is a very FAINT POP, and Dr. Fiddlesticks disappears from existence. Some shreds of him float down to the floor.

The red bolt dances around the room once more and stops next to the control panel.

The bolt stretches and morphs into a bulbous, amiable imp. His skin is deep red, and hair from his ears, nose, and beard all but obscure his face. His head is completely bald. FREDERICK the djinn smiles to everyone.

The creatures race over to their friend. He almost seems to remember them.

CEDRIC

Frederick, is it really you?

Frederick checks himself inquisitively.

FREDERICK

Yes, I think so.

(beat)

Oh, dear. Where have I placed...

Frederick searches his robes and gives up.

FREDERICK

Couldn't matter that much.

LUTHER

We really missed you.

Frederick pats Luther and flicks the slime from his hand.

FREDERICK

Awww, I missed you too, Joey, is it?

LUTHER

Luther.

FREDERICK

Of course.

Frank, leaning on Janice, approaches.

FRANK

Frederick?

Frederick peers around disconcertedly and finally realizes that he is being addressed. He raises his eyebrows ruminatively.

FRANK

Thanks. For everything.

Frederick nods absently, looks around, and lets out a breath.

FREDERICK

Well, I must be going.

Before anyone can stop him, Frederick morphs into the red bolt, bangs around the room a little more, and disappears through a crack in the wall.

Everyone is astounded by what they've seen.

JANICE

It's like a bad soap opera.

Frank looks understandingly to Luther.

FRANK

It's never long enough, is it?

Luther shakes his head.

EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

Janice helps Frank walk along the rows. They stop at a tree.

FRANK

I can take it from here.

JANICE

Are you sure?

Frank nods and glances back. Douglass stands expectantly, a

bouquet of flowers in his hand. He smiles lazily.

FRANK

He's waiting for you.

JANICE

I know.

(beat)

I'm just not sure about this.

FRANK

I don't know. Hooking up with the town sheriff seems pretty practical to me. Be impulsive.

Janice smiles, but it fades quickly. She leaves Frank's side and heads back towards Douglass.

Frank hobbles slowly to Art's grave. The creatures are already sitting around it. They are in the last mile.

Frank slumps down next to them.

FRANK

So, this is the end, huh?

LUTHER

Yup. You get used to it.

Frank nods. He looks around.

FRANK

Anyone have any last words?

LUTHER

I know some dirty limericks.

CEDRIC

Doesn't sound quite appropriate.

LUTHER

I offered.

Onyx and Elroy kiss one last time.

A somber quiet descends upon the grave site.

Frank closes his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

Frank opens his eyes and looks around. His color has returned to normal, and he looks healthy.

Frank takes the last step from under a large, covered bridge. Miles of green fields stretch out in front of him.

In the distant mountains, a massive, human-like FIGURE stomps through the range.

Frank looks up. WINGED SERPENTS stream overhead.

A long way ahead of him stands the majestic spires and fortress walls of a large kingdom.

Frank is in the wonder of it all. He frowns.

FRANK
(to himself)
This is the afterlife?

LUTHER (O.S.)
No. This is Dwyr Goluth.

Frank looks down. The creatures stand to next to him, having crossed the bridge behind him. They are all back to their normal, unslimey selves.

Frank smiles to his friends then turns back to the wonders around him.

FRANK
It's amazing.

CEDRIC
Eh, it's alright. It's mostly for show.

LUTHER
I think the bars close too early, personally.

Frank looks at Luther inquiringly.

FRANK
How?

LUTHER
Easy. Bartender calls last call and kicks your ass out.

FRANK
No, I mean, how'd we get here?

Luther shrugs. Elroy MUMBLES to Onyx.

ONYX
It just feels right.

Frank grins.

FRANK
It's always something, huh?

LUTHER
Yup. Come on.

As a group, they start off across the vast meadow.

LUTHER

Hey, I think I left my stove on.

Cedric slaps the back of Luther's head jovially.

INT. BARE ROOM -- DAY

ON VIDEO: Art stares contemplatively at the ceiling.

ART

You know, there's good, there's bad.
I suppose there's indifferent, but I
really don't care about that. We
all learn as we grow, and it isn't
always easy. If it was, it wouldn't
be worth doing. Maybe we didn't
always get it right, but we always,
always, always had the best intentions
at heart. I think that's why we're
so successful. Maybe it's all
exaggerated, and maybe it's just
television.

(beat)

But that's life.

Art smiles a patriarch's smile and waves to the CAMERA. He
looks to the Woman OS.

ART

How was that?

WOMAN (O.S.)

Fine.

ART

I can do it again.

WOMAN (O.S.)

That's alright.

Art tosses her a wink.

EXT. DWYR GOLUTH -- CONTINUOUS

Frank and the creatures fade off into the distance.

A unicorn tramps across the field, stops to eat some grass,
and continues on its way.

As we PULL BACK, we can just make out the outline of the
theatrical lights illuminating the realm and the boundaries
of the soundstage on either side.

FADE OUT

THE END

