

STRAWBERRY MANSION

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11/15/19

In a small pink room, a man in a black suit sits at a table with a hand covering his face. Everything in the room is pink. The table, cabinets, even a house plant is pink.

The man is JAMES PREBLE, 35 years old. By his body language, we sense he's in pain. We get closer - he's pressing his fingers against his forehead, above his eyes. Then he drops his hand to reveal his eyes and face. He looks around the room without moving his head.

The following is handheld with many jump cuts.

He opens the pink cabinets. Looks through his pill bottles. Everything is empty.

He goes to the pink refrigerator. There are bottles and food containers, but everything is empty.

To a pantry, no food.

To a faucet, no water.

Preble collapses to his knees. In agony. He can barely move.

There's a knock at the door. Preble looks up. The door begins to slowly open on its own...

Preble watches as fog filters into the room. Out of the fog emerges a smiling man wearing a Hawaiian shirt. He is BUDDY. He enters the room holding up a giant bucket of chicken from Captain Kelly's and a 2 liter bottle of Red Rocket Soda.

Preble's eyes light up. Buddy leans down next to Preble, and begins pouring Red Rocket Soda down his throat.

Still in slow motion, Preble looks up to Buddy.

PREBLE

You're my best friend.

Buddy smiles and puts out his hand to help Preble up.

BUDDY

You can always count on me, Buddy.
Whenever you need anything, I'm
here for you.

Preble smiles like a child.

0B INT. - PREBLE'S BEDROOM - MORNING 0B

Preble lays in bed and opens his eyes. He takes a moment to wake up. Next to his bed is a strange machine. Preble takes a small USB like device from the machine and exits the room.

0C INT. - PREBLE'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING 0C

A living room with some futuristic elements, like a box with digital jellyfish swimming around. Preble pours a cup of coffee and walks over to a wall and turns on a large projection of numerous TV channels. He scrolls through some screens and then settles on one.

He walks over to a wall of plants and waters them. Above the plants is a digital aquarium filled with exotic fish.

He picks up a small audio recorder and begins to speak into it...

PREBLE

Okay... on the docket for today...
 Arabella Isadora. 80 years old.
 Widow. No records on file. Hmm.
 Assignment length: 1 day. Address
 of Residence: 3102 Domino Lane.
 (*under breath*) Where's that?
 Estimated arrival: 1:00pm.

Preble puts the recorder away and takes one last sip of his coffee.

1 EXT. - FAST FOOD DRIVE THROUGH - DAY 1

A large, fried chicken drive-through sign fills most of the frame. Behind the sign, a perfect blue sky. The sign is filled with pictures of fried chicken. A robotic voice comes from the speaker.

FAST FOOD ROBOT

Welcome to Captain Kelly's Chicken,
 home of the new chicken shake. What
 can I get you today?

Preble leans out the window of his car and talks into the speaker.

PREBLE

A chicken shake?

FAST FOOD ROBOT

One chicken shake. Anything else?

PREBLE
No, I don't want a chicken shake.

FAST FOOD ROBOT
Our new Chicken Shake, made with
real blended chicken meat and
whipped gravy, all under 500
calories. Would you like to try
one?

Preble looks disgusted.

PREBLE
No, no, no. I'll just have a
Barnyard Bucket.

FAST FOOD ROBOT
For an extra dollar you can upgrade
to a Mega Barnyard Bucket.

PREBLE
Ok. Sure.

FAST FOOD ROBOT
And would you like regular or
crispy chicken?

PREBLE
Um, regular is fine.

FAST FOOD ROBOT
And would you like double gravy?

PREBLE
How much extra is that?

FAST FOOD ROBOT
89 cents.

Preble thinks for a second.

PREBLE
Sure.

FAST FOOD ROBOT
Smooth or chunky?

PREBLE
Um. Smooth.

FAST FOOD ROBOT
And anything to drink?

PREBLE
A medium Red Rocket.

FAST FOOD ROBOT
Ok, so I've got a Mega Barnyard
Bucket with extra double gravy,
smooth and a medium Red Rocket.
Will that be all?

Preble thinks for a moment.

PREBLE
And I'll take a chicken shake too.

2 EXT. - PARKING LOT OF A LARGE SHOPPING CENTER - DAY 2

Preble hesitantly takes a sip of the chicken shake. It's not bad. He's sitting in his car in an empty parking lot.

The shopping center has seen better days. Many of the businesses appear to be permanently closed. Preble puts the shake down and looks in the bag. He pulls out a clear bag. He opens it up and takes out a small stuffed animal. Preble looks confused and annoyed by this unexpected toy.

He begins eating his fried chicken. He turns on the radio and scans the dial until settling on a sad song.

Preble sits there, slowly eating his chicken, taking sips of his soda, staring straight ahead.

Preble looks up, sees something strange.

15 feet in front of his car stands what appears to a man covered head to toe in lush, green grass.

Preble is transfixed.

After a few seconds the GRASS MAN is gone.

Preble sits there, holding his half eaten drumstick, unsettled, not knowing what he just saw.

3 EXT. - BUSY ROAD - DAY 3

Preble drives by stores, signs and traffic lights. The endless sprawl of capitalism whizzing past his window. The sad song on the radio continues.

4 EXT. - FOUR LANE HIGHWAY - DAY 4

Preble drives by fields and trees as the landscape becomes noticeably more rural.

5 EXT. - SIDE OF THE ROAD - DAY 5

Preble is consulting a map laid out on the front of his car. He looks over and see a roadside memorial. There's a weathered white cross covered in faded stuffed animals. Preble walks back to the car.

CU of the small stuffed animal from Captain Kelly's being placed on the roadside cross.

6 EXT. - COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 6

The car winds along a narrow road. He pulls off into a driveway. The driveway abruptly stops. We see a house in the distance. The driveway does not connect to the house. There's a sign that says THE END blocking the car from going any further.

Preble gets out of the car.

7 EXT. - FIELD - DAY 7

Preble gets out and inspects the property. He double checks the mailbox. It reads "Isadora." He's at the right place. He begins to walk into an open field in the direction of the house.

8 EXT. - FIELD - DAY 8

AN OLD COUNTRY HOUSE sits atop a hill. Clouds drift through the sky. TWO BUTTERFLIES flutter by. Preble steps into the frame. He surveys the scene for a moment before advancing towards the house.

9 EXT. - MANSION - DAY 9

Preble steps onto the porch and places his suitcase at his feet. He rings the doorbell and adjusts his tie. The two butterflies reappear and flap next to Preble. He looks at them just as the door opens.

ARABELLA ISADORA, a colorfully dressed woman in her late 70s, greets Preble. She's wearing an elaborate machine of wires and blinking lights on her head.

ARABELLA
 (shocked)
 Oh hello!

PREBLE
 Hello ma'am, are you Ms. Arabella
 Isadora?

ARABELLA
 (smiling)
 One second, let me get her for you.

Arabella goes inside. The butterflies flap around the porch.
 Preble watches them.

The moment is interrupted as Arabella steps back onto the
 porch, no longer wearing the machine on her head. She has one
 hand positioned behind her back, holding an ice cream cone.
 The butterflies land on top of Arabella's head.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)
 Hello, Arabella Isadora at your
 service. And what can I do for you
 young man?

PREBLE
 My name is James Preble. I'm a tax
 auditor.

He hands her a business card that reads "James Preble. Tax
 Auditor."

Arabella looks at the card with the hand that's not behind
 her back, and then at Preble.

ARABELLA
 Yes I see.

She hands the card back to Preble and in the same motion he
 grabs a piece of paper from his suit pocket.

PREBLE
 Ma'am, did you send me this letter?

ARABELLA
 Yes, I suppose I did.

PREBLE
 Ms. Isadora, it...

ARABELLA
 Please, call me Bella.

PREBLE

Bella, it appears we do not have any tax records for you or your property.

BELLA

(smiling)

Oh dear, is that so?

PREBLE

Yes. I'm here to perform a preliminary audit-- account, assess, and appraise what you have accumulated here on the premises.

BELLA

Of course. So you'd like to come in?

PREBLE

Yes ma'am. The sooner we get started the sooner I'll be out of your hair.

Bella smiles, her hand still behind her back. The butterflies fly into the house. She looks intensely at Preble, and says the following in the style of an old-fashioned rhyme...

BELLA

(dramatically)

Out of my hair and into my home, to enter you must lick the ice cream cone.

She brings forth the strawberry ice cream cone that she has been hiding behind her back.

Preble stares at the ice cream. Then up at her.

Bella smiles.

BELLA (CONT'D)

It's melting dear.

Preble hesitantly grabs the cone.

CLOSE UP, SLOW MOTION shot of Preble's tongue licking the ice cream.

10 INT. - MUSIC ROOM - DAY

10

A wide shot of a room filled with musical instruments. A piano is the centerpiece. Stacks of VHS cassette tapes of varying colors are everywhere.

On top of the mantle is an old bowling pin.

Preble and Bella enter the room. Bella motions for Preble to have a seat on a reading chair. He does so, and she follows suit

Preble takes out a clipboard and pen.

PREBLE
Shall we get started?

BELLA
Yes, of course.

Bella cries out in the direction of a succulent garden:

BELLA (CONT'D)
You have to get to the witch!

PREBLE
Excuse me?

Bella stands up and walks over the an old fashioned, hand cranked music box. She cranks it and music begins to play.

BELLA
Did you know in ancient times it was believed a witch's heart was made of a beet and during years when the beet harvest was particularly abundant it was believed that there was a new coven of witches living in the area.

Preble looks at Bella as if she is crazy.

PREBLE
I...did not know that.

Bella sits back down.

BELLA
Of course I've always loved beets. So juicy. A perfect side on a dinner plate. I've always thought if you could take a bite from the planet Mars it would taste something like a beet.
(MORE)

BELLA (CONT'D)

Of course the moon probably tastes like a turnip. I'm sure it would be lovely in a stew.

Preble just stares.

PREBLE

I'll need to ask you a few preliminary questions. First, what is your full name?

BELLA

Arabella Henrietta Buckingham Isadora.

Preble takes notes.

PREBLE

And what is your current or former profession?

BELLA

Oh dear, I never know how to answer this. Recently I've been painting, oh I'd love to show you some! And I'm always writing. I'm currently working on a short story about an astronaut who falls in love with a super nova. And of course I've been composing songs for many years and constructing various machines and gadgets. I think of myself as something of an atmosphere creator.

Preble smirks and nods. CLOSE UP of him checking the box next to 'Artist.'

PREBLE

(pointing at the VHS tapes)

I couldn't help but notice all the tapes. Have you not updated to the new format?

For the first time we see a close up of the stacks of VHS tapes.

BELLA

Oh, I'm old fashioned.

PREBLE

Well you know the Air Sticks became mandatory seven years ago.

BELLA
(laughing)
I suppose I've lost track of time.

PREBLE
Ok. And are these are all of them?

BELLA
Oh heavens no! There are many more.
My husband was always trying to get
me to organize them.

PREBLE
Your husband?

BELLA
Yes.

PREBLE
And where is your husband now?

BELLA
He's moved on to that distant
shore.

Preble gives a respectful nod.

BELLA (CONT'D)
He was a terrific man. I miss him
but I do still feel his presence.
Now there was a man who loved
toast.

Preble doesn't know how to react to this out-of-nowhere
statement.

PREBLE
And where are his tapes?

BELLA
I'm afraid they're all gone.

PREBLE
(concerned)
Gone?

BELLA
Burned in a fire.

PREBLE
(jotting something down)
I see. Well, I'm here for yours, so
let's start there.

BELLA
Yes of course!

Preble looks around the room.

PREBLE
I must say, there a lot more than I
was anticipating.

BELLA
(laughing)
Then I'd better make us some tea!

Bella leaves as Preble takes more notes. He stands up and strolls around the room.

He picks up a tape, blows dust from it, and puts it back.

A FLY begins buzzing around his face. Preble swats it away but it comes right back and he swats again, more irritated. This fly won't give up. He swats a third time and makes contact.

Preble exits the music room and on the way to the kitchen he notices hundred of more tapes in the library.

11

INT. - KITCHEN - DAY

11

A small, circular table sits in the middle of kitchen. There are more VHS tapes stacked around the room. Bella puts the tea kettle on the stove. Preble enters and notices all the VHS tapes.

PREBLE
(pointing at the tapes)
Just how many would you say you
have?

BELLA
Oh, I don't know. A couple
thousand?

Preble is shocked.

PREBLE
Bella, I'm going to be straight
with you-- what you've got here is
a serious federal offense. I can't
say I've ever seen a case of this
magnitude.

BELLA
 (smiling)
 Oh dear!

PREBLE
 I don't think you comprehend exactly what you have here. You're looking at a lot of fines, not to mention all the money owed on back taxes. Possibly even jail time. There's no way to know exactly until we take a good look at everything. Now my superiors are going to be checking all my findings so let's make this as painless as possible.

Sound of the teapot screaming. Bella saunters over and takes it off the stove.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
 Bella, I'd like to get started right away. With a case like this it will take some time, hopefully not too long. Maybe a couple of weeks, a month at the most.

Toast pops up from a toaster.

BELLA
 Oh darnit. This old thing is going haywire. Let me put a fresh one in.

PREBLE
 No, this is fine.

BELLA
 Oh no, you don't want it burnt.

PREBLE
 Perhaps you can recommend a motel nearby?

BELLA
 Oh nonsense, Preble. You'll stay in Sugarbaby's room.

PREBLE
 Oh no, I couldn't impose. Plus it's against protocol and--

BELLA
 Oh please, it's no bother to me or Sugarbaby.

PREBLE
No, really, I'll get a...

BELLA
I insist.

Preble stares at Bella for a moment. He knows this is a battle he can't win.

PREBLE
Ok then. Thank you.

BELLA
You just make yourself right at home.

Bella pours cream into the tea.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Preble, we are going to have a beautiful time together.

CLOSE UP of the cream swirling around.

12

INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - DAY

12

CLOSE UP of SUGARBABY THE TURTLE, walking along a dresser in a sparsely decorated room. There's a large bed next to the dresser and a few plants by the window. Along one wall is a wooden table and chair.

Preble stands next to the bed unpacking his suitcase. He takes a machine from the suitcase and assembles it on the table. The machine resembles a VCR mixed with an old telephone switchboard. From the suitcase he brings out a pink helmet and connects it to the machine.

Bella enters with a tray of VHS tapes, tea and toast.

She puts the tray down on the table near the door and starts to riffle through the tapes, which are all labeled with dates.

She decides on one.

BELLA
Let's start with this. August 23rd, 1977. This is the first one I had of my father after he died.

PREBLE
Yes, I see. Well I appreciate you being so helpful.

BELLA

Of course! This is going to be great fun!

PREBLE

Right. I'll keep you informed of my progress.

BELLA

Lovely! I hope it goes smoothly.

Bella walks over to the turtle and picks him up.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Come on Sugarbaby. Let's give Mr. Preble enough space to work.

She leaves the room and Preble takes a sip of his tea and a bite of his toast. He gives a quick glance to the sculpture of the man at the foot of the bed. He takes a small tape recorder out of his pocket and begins to speak into it.

PREBLE

Arrived at the home of Arabella Isadora at 2:27 p.m. on Monday, July 22nd, 2035. It is now...3:08 p.m. Arabella, or Bella as she has requested that I call her, has put me in a spare room on the second floor. It appears she has well over a thousand tapes. I will begin the audit immediately.

He picks up a VHS tape and walks over to the VCR-like machine. He puts the tape into a slot, picks up a tablet and pen, sits down and puts on the pink helmet. The helmet comes down over his eyes and nose but his mouth is still visible.

Preble presses the PLAY button on the tablet and the machine begins to come to life.

Cut wide of the scene, and then slowly track into Preble as music and sound design builds...

And then...

We see quick flashes of random video images and then shoot through a VHS wormhole into Bella's dream.

An open field. POV looking right, then left.

Preble appears blue and see through, a HOLOGRAM. He looks around.

He sees someone. In the distance a man with a large beard holds a trumpet. The trumpet sounds.

Preble watches for a moment.

With a whoosh, someone runs right by Hologram Preble, startling him.

It's a young woman running straight at the trumpeter.

They embrace. Whenever FATHER speaks, smoke comes out of his mouth but we never see him smoking anything.

 YOUNG BELLA
Where did you go?

 FATHER
I'm right here.

 YOUNG BELLA
I miss you dad.

Hologram Preble watches and takes notes.

CUT TO:

Young Bella and her Father walk arm in arm and come upon a buffalo laying on the ground with a large gaping wound on the side who appears to be in pain.

Father notices the wound. His arm disappears into the buffalo, up to his own elbow, and he feels around for a second, grabs hold of something...

 FATHER
There we are.

He brings out an airplane dripping with blood and shows it to his daughter...

 FATHER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Nothing is sharper than an
airplane.

Bella looks at the buffalo, concerned.

 YOUNG BELLA
Is he going to die?

 FATHER
Nothing ever dies.

HOLOGRAM PREBLE, looking a little perplexed, watches the scene play out.

Father touches his hand to the beast and the fur is replaced by vibrating colors. The technicolor beast gets to his feet and runs through the landscape.

Father picks a yellow dandelion. He holds it in front of his daughter.

FATHER (CONT'D)

All things are changing.

The dandelion is now all white seeds. Young Bella blows and they scatter in the wind.

We follow close behind one seed as it floats away into the countryside.

14 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - DAY

14

Preble takes off the pink helmet as the tape ejects from the machine. He pushes a button and an official looking form prints out.

CLOSE UP of the form as he checks off boxes for "Buffalo" "Airplane" "Trumpet" "Dandelion." Elements from the dream have been itemized and monetarily assessed. Numbers and money signs are all over the form.

Preble files the form in a folder and takes a bite of his toast and a sip of his tea.

He feels something on his tongue and brings his finger up to get it off.

CLOSE UP of dandelion seed on the tip of his finger.

Preble thinks nothing of it and wipes it off on his pants.

15 INT. - DINING ROOM - DAY

15

Preble enters the dining room with a stack of tapes (ones that he's finished auditing) carried on the same tray that Bella brought to him earlier.

He notices a rat skeleton posed in a glass box, gives it a good look. The rat skeleton is wearing a tiny helmet of wires, like the one Bella was wearing when she answered the door at the beginning. There's also a key in the rat skeleton's hand.

16 INT. - MUSIC ROOM

16

Preble follows Bella into the music room. Bella picks up some more tapes. She hands him one.

BELLA

Oh this one. May 12th, 1985. I had this one the night after I met my husband for the first time. It's a very special one.

PREBLE

Well I'm going to have watch them all, regardless of their personal significance to you.

BELLA

Of course, of course.

Preble looks down.

Again, he can't help but notice the big sculpture of the man sitting in the chair. There's something about it that draws him in. On the head of the sculpture sits a helmet of wires and electronic parts. In the sculpture's hand is a paper mache rat wearing a similar helmet.

BELLA (CONT'D)

My husband made them for me before he died. He didn't want me to be lonely. And I must say, it's nice to have someone to play to.

She turns and takes a violin off the wall.

PREBLE

Do you play all of these instruments?

Out of nowhere, a single note rings out on the piano.

Preble looks at Bella.

BELLA

Yes, and sometimes they play themselves.

Bella brings the violin up to her chin and smiles.

17 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

17

Standing in a cemetery, Young Bella plays a violin.

A skeleton crawls out of the ground and begins dancing.

The music continues over a dream montage of various moments Bella's dreams. Hologram Preble watches all of these off to the side. The dreams are:

1. A clown hands Bella an ice cream cone with 12 scoops and she licks the scoops from bottom to top.

2. Bella sits in a small boat and fishes. Then she's on land holding an enormous fish, twice the size of her.

3. Bella has a bike pump connected a purple character, Fanny, with a round head. She pumps it up until Fanny's head floats away.

4. A furry beast with antlers, The Beast King, is holding a large wasp nest. Bella puts her hand inside the nest.

5. Sitting at a school desk writing math equations on a piece of paper. Bella's tooth falls out and lands on the paper. The tooth suddenly grows in size and has eyeballs and a mouth. It smiles at Bella and picks up the pencil and begins to finish her math work. Bella smiles with a tooth missing.

Hologram Preble smiles.

18

INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

18

The dream tape ejects. Paper prints out. Preble takes a moment to collect himself and wipes sweat from his brow. He jumps as he notices Bella sitting on the dresser watching him.

PREBLE

Ahhhhh!

BELLA

Oh I didn't mean to startle you.

PREBLE

What are you doing?

BELLA

I was watching you do your work.
You were smiling.

Preble is embarrassed. He busies himself with the printout.

PREBLE

Bella, I hate to be rude but I prefer to do my work in private.

BELLA

Ah, of course. My apologies.

On her way out she hands him a plate with a sandwich on it.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Some dinner for the tax man.

Preble inspects it as Bella stands in the doorway.

PREBLE

Bella, you need not...

BELLA

It's avocado and tomato. You love avocados.

She leaves the room. Preble stands up and closes the door. He takes a bite of the sandwich, walks over to a painting of a 17th century British ship hanging on the wall. Preble stares at the ship and eats his sandwich.

He moves over to the bed and sits in front of a small TV. He turns it on.

Behind the TV is a spiderweb. There is a fly stuck in the web.

Preble stares at the fly for a moment before he touches the web and frees the fly.

He takes the last bite of his sandwich and leaves the room.

18A INT. - PICTURE ROOM - NIGHT

18A

Preble peaks into the room next to Sugarbaby's room. There's buckets of paint and large canvases spread out. There's also a small table with machine parts. One wall is nothing but pictures an inspiration wall.

19 INT. - STAIRS - NIGHT

19

Preble walks down the stairs holding the dirty plate.

20 INT. - KITCHEN 20

Preble places the plate into the sink. From the other room he hears the piano.

PREBLE
Hello?

21 INT. - MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 21

Preble enters.

PREBLE
I'm going to-

He sees that it is SUGARBABY walking on the piano keys.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
Oh.

He looks around the corner to make sure Bella isn't around then looks back at Sugarbaby.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
Do you know this one?

He reaches down and spontaneously plays a simple rendition of "Row Your Boat."

22 EXT. - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT 22

Bella sits in a rocking chair, smoking a pipe. She listens, smiling wide, nodding her head, quietly singing to herself.

As Preble plays the last line on the piano ("Life is but a dream")

CUT TO

A long shot of the house at night, bathed in blue moon light.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP ON

23 INT. - PINK ROOM - NIGHT 23

We're back in the same pink room from the opening scene. A simple room where everything is painted pink. Preble sits at a table surrounded by spiderwebs, which fill up the entire room.

Preble looks up. We see a spider dangling. Preble stands up and sweeps the webs with a broom.

He sweeps and sweeps but doesn't appear to be making progress.

He stops the job, frustrated.

Just then, there's a knock on the door.

The door begins to open on its own, like in the opening scene, fog spills into the house. The same jovial man wearing a Hawaiian shirt enters holding a can of bug spray. Preble is relieved to see him, as always...

BUDDY

Whoa buddy! You got a spider problem! Here, try this.

Buddy hands Preble the spray can. The label has a picture of a spider with a red X over it. It reads SPIDER SPRAY.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

This stuff is great! Couple 'o sprays with that and you'll be bug free fo' sure! Haha!

Preble holds the can and smiles.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Three times more deadly than the other leading brand, you're guaranteed to kill 'em all, haha!

Preble begins to spray around his apartment. Buddy is loving it.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Oh yeah! Watch 'em squirm, haha!

Preble is getting into it, egged on by his friend.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Bad day to have 8 legs! Oh yeah, good shot buddy!

While Preble continues to spray, there's another knock on the door.

Preble looks up confused. He looks at Buddy.

PREBLE
Who's that?

BUDDY
I'm sure it's nobody.

Another knock.

Preble turns to the door...

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Wait, no.

Buddy puts up his hand preventing Preble from going to the door.

PREBLE
What are you doing?

BUDDY
If you answer that door, you're
only gonna let in pain.

PREBLE
What, no. Somebody's knocking. I
should answer it.

BUDDY
I'll get it!

Preble thinks for a moment and shrugs.

Buddy goes to the door, and opens it slightly.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
We're not interested, thank you.

We can't see who it is, but it's a woman's voice. It sounds like Young Bella.

YOUNG BELLA
Can I speak with James Preble?

BUDDY
He's not accepting visitors at the
moment.

YOUNG BELLA
Well is he here?

Preble leans over to see the woman, but she's being blocked by Buddy.

BUDDY

He's busy. I'll tell him you came by.

YOUNG BELLA

Please I need to see him.

BUDDY

James has everything he needs. I assure you, if there's anything he needs, he can get it from me.

Buddy shuts the door rudely.

He turns back to Preble.

PREBLE

Who was that?

BUDDY

Nobody.

Preble looks a little irritated. Buddy looks to change the subject back to the spiderwebs.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Here, let me help you with these. I got ya, buddy. You need it, I got it.

Buddy takes the Spider Spray and douses the rest of the room.

Preble looks to the door, unsettled.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP ON...

23 A INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - MORNING

23 A

A tiny satellite dish on top of the dream recording machine is rotating and then stops. A VHS tape ejects. The camera rack focuses and we see Preble waking up. A rooster crows in the background.

24 EXT. - BACKYARD - MORNING

24

Close up of a chicken pecking.

Bella scatters seeds for the chickens. Preble stands on the back porch watching her.

They watch the chickens for a moment.

She walks by him holding some fresh eggs and smiles.

25

EXT. - PATIO - MORNING

25

Preble and Bella sit eating eggs in silence. Bella keeps smiling at Preble. He looks uncomfortable. There is a bowl of strawberries on the table.

BELLA

How long have you been auditing dreams?

PREBLE

About 15 years now.

BELLA

And do you enjoy it?

PREBLE

Yes I do ma'am.

They sit in silence for a moment. Bella holds a pinwheel.

BELLA

I used to make them for my son, but he was never interested.

Preble takes a second to ask...

PREBLE

I didn't know you have a son.

BELLA

We don't see much of each other anymore.

PREBLE

Oh yeah, why is that?

BELLA

Well, we don't always see eye to eye. I was so young when I had Peter. His father was an older student. We were divorced before Peter could even crawl.

PREBLE

Oh, so you were married before... the toast guy?

BELLA

Yes. What a mistake. He was an evil man. And unfortunately, our son took after him in that regard.

(beat)

Now he has a son of his own. My grandson. I only met the boy once. Years ago. He tried to flush Sugarbaby down the toilet.

(beat)

If I could go back, there's some things I would do differently. Ah, but that's life.

They sit in silence for a moment, eating their breakfast.

PREBLE

So, what was your second husband like?

BELLA

He was a gentle soul. We had a wonderful life together.

They stare at each other for a long moment, feeling something - sadness or connection.

26

INT. - RESTAURANT - DAY

26

A table at a quaint French restaurant.

Young Bella is positioned in the same spot that Bella and Preble just were.

Hologram Preble stands nearby, taking notes, but also smiling at the scene...

A FROG WAITER (a human body with a giant, hand painted paper mache frog head) walks by Hologram Preble, and approaches the table with two menus...

FROG WAITER

Will anyone be joining you this evening?

YOUNG BELLA

Oh no, it's just me.

Hologram Preble hesitantly goes over and sits down next to her.

FROG WAITER

Can I start you with anything to drink?

YOUNG BELLA

I'll have a glass of wine.

FROG WAITER

Sure thing.

YOUNG BELLA

Thank you! And what's your soup of the day?

FROG WAITER

Today we have a cream of asparagus.

YOUNG BELLA

That sounds good.

FROG WAITER

It is delicious.

YOUNG BELLA

You have a very deep voice. It's nice.

FROG WAITER

Thank you madam.

YOUNG BELLA

I mean it, you could be an announcer on TV or the radio.

FROG WAITER

I've been told that before, madam.

YOUNG BELLA

I bet you're a great singer.

FROG WAITER

I play the saxophone.

The Frog Waiter holds up his saxophone and begins to play as he walks away.

She continue looking at the menu. Just then a bird flies overhead. Young Bella and Hologram Preble watch it.

YOUNG BELLA

Ohh!

The Frog Waiter reappears with the wine on a tray.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)
There's a bird in here.

The Frog Waiter puts the wine glass in front of her.

FROG WAITER
Yes madam, we are aware. We are
working to remedy the situation.

He holds up a net.

Young Bella smiles. Hologram Preble smiles too. Young Bella takes a sip of her wine.

A moment goes by and then the bird lands on the back of Preble's chair. It's positioned directly behind Preble's head, so that when Bella looks at the bird it appears she's looking at Hologram Preble.

YOUNG BELLA
Hello friend.

Hologram Preble smiles, like she's talking to him. The Frog Waiter reappears with the net and just before he can catch the bird it flies away. He walks away.

Hologram Preble looks to another table and notices a bucket of static. Then looks at another table and sees another. Preble begins to look a little unsettled...

The Frog Waiter reappears with a tray filled with static, which he places down on the table. It's the shape of a bucket of chicken.

FROG WAITER
Our apologies about the bird. Here
is a bucket of dsflhbds salihfb
sljhfb, on the house.

The lines he speaks after "bucket" are reversed and distorted. Then he walks away.

Hologram Preble gives a perplexed look. He touches the bucket is and inspects it. It glitches for a second and becomes a bucket of Captain Kelly's Chicken before going back to static.

Preble, with the pink helmet on, sits in front of his machine. The tape ejects and Preble takes off the pink helmet.

He's finishing the paperwork when he looks over to the window and notices the same yellow bird sitting on a tree branch singing.

Preble is unnerved staring at the bird.

29 INT. - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

29

They begin their meal. Preble takes a bite and another sip of wine.

A faint whistling sound is heard.

PREBLE
Did you hear that?

BELLA
Probably just the pipes.

Another beat of silence.

They continue eating. Preble tries to spear a beet on his plate but it inexplicably moves away. Preble looks confused.

When he looks up from his plate Bella is Young Bella.

YOUNG BELLA
Do you want to kiss me?

Preble is shocked.

PREBLE
What?

Bella is back to her old self.

BELLA
Do you want more wine?

PREBLE
Please, excuse me. I--

He gets up and walks out of the room.

30 INT. - BATHROOM

30

Preble splashes water on his face and looks at himself in the mirror. He has a concerned look - he doesn't feel quite right. He stares at himself in the mirror.

Gradually his reflection begins to distort, almost like it's melting.

He closes his eyes and rubs them. He opens his eyes again and his reflection is back to normal. He takes a couple of deep breaths.

31 INT. - DINING ROOM

31

Preble walks back in.

PREBLE

I'm not feeling well. I should go to bed.

BELLA

You should sit down.

PREBLE

Perhaps I had too much wine.

BELLA

Or not enough.

Bella offers him the bottle.

PREBLE

No thank you.

BELLA

Well at least sit with me while I finish.

Preble reluctantly sits down.

Close up of a fork spearing a beet. Bella continues eating dinner.

BELLA (CONT'D)

It looks like there will be a storm tonight.

Preble looks out the window and when he looks back Bella is young again.

YOUNG BELLA

I need to see you again.

Preble closes his eyes and when he reopens them Bella is old once again.

PREBLE

I think I'm losing my mind.

BELLA

Well it's about time!

Bella fills up both wine glasses and raises her glass into the air.

BELLA (CONT'D)
To losing one's mind!

She drinks a big gulp from her glass. Preble waits a moment and then drinks all of his wine.

BELLA (CONT'D)
That's the ticket! Another round!

Bella refills the glasses.

Preble looks troubled.

PREBLE
There's something I don't understand.

BELLA
I'm glad to hear that.

PREBLE
There was a bucket of chicken in your dream...but I couldn't see it.

BELLA
(knowingly)
Oh?

PREBLE
Yeah, it was like it was being blocked.

BELLA
Well maybe it was being blocked because it shouldn't be there.

Preble looks confused.

PREBLE
What do you mean it shouldn't be there?

Bella takes a moment.

BELLA
Let me ask you something.

PREBLE
Okay.

BELLA

Do you believe that your dreams are your own?

PREBLE

Of course, yeah.

BELLA

And you don't think anything should be transmitted in there against your will?

PREBLE

Of course not.

Bella leans back in her chair. We let the moment breathe for a second.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

What are you trying to say?

Bella stands up and leaves the room.

Preble sits for a moment and bats the final beet around on his plate.

Bella reenters wearing the helmet of wires and lights (the same one on her head the first time she answers the door.)

BELLA

Jim and I developed this together. Its an ad blocker.

PREBLE

I don't understand.

Bella realizes she needs to back up.

BELLA

Once we started wearing these, the ads disappeared.

PREBLE

Bella. What ads?

BELLA

The ads they're transmitting into our dreams without us knowing.

Preble is confused.

PREBLE

That doesn't happen. (beat) How do you know that?

BELLA

You of all people should know.
Don't you see them in there when
you're doing your work?

PREBLE

Why would they do that, that's
crazy?

BELLA

Because it makes them money.

Preble just stares at her in disbelief.

PREBLE

I don't...

BELLA

Tell me...what did you dream about
last night?

PREBLE

(trying to recall)

Last night I had a dream where I
was clearing out all these spider
webs in my apartment and I couldn't
get them out, and my buddy came
over with some spider spray. And
then we ate some Captain Kelly's
chicken.

BELLA

You hear what you're saying?

PREBLE

Well of course I see Captain
Kelly's occasionally in my dreams,
that doesn't mean it's an an ad. So
what if I dream of eating chicken?
What if I'm hungry?

Preble puts down his fork.

BELLA

The dream you told me about
earlier. The first one you ever
recorded. It was so adventurous and
imaginative. You were in a boat, in
the forest. When was the last time
you had a dream like that, that
felt that vivid and alive?

PREBLE

I can go back and watch my old tapes any time I want to.

BELLA

No! When was the last time you had a new dream that you realized something or were searching for something?

PREBLE

I don't have to search for much, my buddy is always there.

BELLA

That's not your buddy, Preble! It's an ad!

PREBLE

No, it's not! It's my friend, how dare you!

BELLA

They gave me one to. I had a lady friend. I would be climbing a snowy mountain, and then all of the sudden, I'd be at the mall with my "friend" selling me an arctic tent.

Bella takes off the helmet and hands it to Preble, who doesn't take it...

BELLA (CONT'D)

I read somewhere that thousands of years ago one of the most common dreams of our ancestors was being chased by wolves. Maybe nine times out of ten the wolves would get them. But then the one time they got away, well that memory stayed inside them, and then when a wolf was really chasing them, somewhere deep inside them, they knew how to get away. (beat) Dreams are how we imagine scenarios, how we release anxiety. How we process our lives. How we make sense of ourselves.

Preble just stares at her.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Believe me, the blocker works. Please will you try it, Preble?

(MORE)

BELLA (CONT'D)

It's so dangerous to dream without it. They've taken everything from us, keep your dreams for yourself. Our lives depend on it.

Bella lifts the helmet once again urging Preble to take it.

He finally does, and leaves the room.

PREBLE

Thank you for dinner.

32 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

32

Preble walks around the bedroom, preparing to go to sleep. He crawls into bed. He adjusts the covers. The helmet sits on the bedside table. He wonders if he will put it on, but decides against it...

He turns off the lights.

A moment later the lights come back on and Preble reluctantly picks up the helmet and slowly places it on his head. He turns it on and a few dim blinking lights start up. He turns off the bedside lamp.

33 INT. PINK ROOM - NIGHT

33

Preble is back in the simple pink room. He's standing at the table holding a toothbrush in one hand and the toothpaste in the other. He's trying to squeeze the last of the toothpaste out but is struggling.

The doorknob rattles. Preble looks over. CU of the doorknob.

Buddy appears in the window with a confused look on his face.

BUDDY

Hey buddy! Let me in!

The doorknob keeps rattling.

He locks eyes with Preble. Preble looks down. He keeps trying to squeeze his toothpaste out.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Hey dude, what's going on!

Buddy holds up a fresh tube of toothpaste.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Got ya covered bud! Just let me in.

Preble looks back over. This is hard to see. Buddy has been his trusted friend for years. He's conflicted.

Buddy unscrews the top of the toothpaste.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Fr-fr-fr-fresh and mi-mi-mi-minty,
gonna keep your Te-Te-Te-teeth
clean ALL DAY LONG!

Preble shakes his head at Buddy.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
What's going on? You need a fresh
tube.

Quick CU of more tube squeezing....

Preble grits his teeth and makes one last squeeze. Nothing comes out.

He puts down the tube, takes a breath.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
It's okay, I just wanna talk.

Preble finally goes to the door.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
That's it. Just open the door.

PREBLE
I can't.

BUDDY
After all I've done for you.

Preble listens.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
How many years have I been by your
side?
(beat)
After the divorce. Who was there
every night with a 6 pack of ice
cold Double Duckpin Ale, brewed
fresh with the coldest glacier
water known to man.

Preble listens more intently...

BUDDY (CONT'D)

And when your dad got sick. Who came over with a pint of all new Dion's Delicious Double Chocolate Mint Ecstasy. With ice cream this good, who cares if your sad.

Another shot of Preble. He's trying to stay unemotional.

PREBLE

I can't do it, Buddy.

Buddy begins to glitch out and suddenly glitches right through the wall. Comes face to face with Preble:

BUDDY

You can't keep me out, James.

(beat)

Trust your cravings.

Preble takes a step back. Buddy lifts up the tube of toothpaste.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Sparkling cl-cl-cl-clean! Wow!
Teeth so br-br-br-bright you'll
make the moon jealous, haha!

Now Buddy's voice is skipping like a CD and his body keeps randomly filling with static.

He begins to squeeze toothpaste out all over the room.

33A INT. SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

33A

Cut back to Preble sleeping wearing the helmet. Red lights blink all over.

33 INT. PINK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

33

Back to the dream. A knock at the door.

BUDDY

It's no one. Don't get it!

Buddy is glitching out of control. Preble hurries to the door.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

I wouldn't do that.

Preble opens the door. It's Young Bella.

YOUNG BELLA

Hi Preble.

PREBLE

Hi Bella.

They share a smile and, as they do, the four walls of the pink room fall away suddenly, revealing an open field all around them.

34 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

34

A huge flash of lightning fills the room with light, followed by a crash of thunder. Preble startles awake.

He sits there a moment.

He looks out the window. Another flash of light, another crash of thunder, and a downpour begins.

Preble walks over to the window and watches the rain for a moment. Another lightning strike, thunder roll.

Preble turns and walks out of the room, not wanting to be alone. He's holding the ad blocker.

28 INT. -HALLWAY - DAY

28

Preble looks out in the hallway and standing there is a VHS MAN, a man's body covered entirely in flowing VHS tape. Preble stares at it, eyes wide. This is a tense moment. The VHS Man disappears.

Preble stands there a moment longer, in shock.

35 INT. - MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT

35

Preble enters the music room, noticing Bella sitting in a large chair by the fire. He's got the ad blocker in his hands.

Preble sits down next to her.

Preble and Bella sit for a moment.

PREBLE

The storm woke me up.

BELLA
Were you dreaming?

PREBLE
Yeah.

She looks at him, waiting for him to say more.

BELLA
And?

PREBLE
I think it worked.

Bella smiles.

BELLA
What did you see?

PREBLE
You were there?

BELLA
Oh was I?

PREBLE
Well you as a young woman.

BELLA
And your buddy?

PREBLE
Well, he was there, but not doing
so well.

A huge clap of thunder just then. Preble flinches, looks around, then back to Bella...

PREBLE (CONT'D)
Does anybody else know?

BELLA
I'm not sure.

PREBLE
What am I supposed to do with this?

BELLA
That's up to you.

Preble is fidgeting with the ad blocker helmet in his hands.

PREBLE

Well then why did you bring me
here?

BELLA

I wanted someone to share my dreams
with.

That line sits in the air for a moment. Bella takes out a VHS
tape that has a star drawn on it.

BELLA (CONT'D)

I want you to see this.

She hands him the tape.

BELLA (CONT'D)

We're more connected than you
think, Preble.

Preble can sense the intensity in her words. They lock eyes.
He's searching for something but he doesn't know what it is.

37 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - MORNING 37

Preble's eyes open. He wakes up slowly and sits up in bed.

38 INT. - MUSIC ROOM 38

Preble enters and sees Bella sitting in the chair by the
fireplace.

PREBLE

Good morning Bella.

He walks up to the chair and gently touches her shoulder.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

Bella. Bella?

Preble shakes her shoulder and she does not move.

BELLA IS DEAD.

Preble stares in disbelief.

39 INT. - MUSIC ROOM - DAY 39

Paramedics wheel Bella out on a stretcher. A man with a small
notebook talks with Preble.

- 40 INT. - KITCHEN - DAY 40
Preble talks on the phone and nods.
- 41 EXT. - BACKYARD - DAY 41
Preble stands on the back porch, getting some fresh air. He notices the chickens and walks over to their pen. He grabs some of their feed and sprinkles it down, just as he has seen Bella do.
- 42 INT. - KITCHEN - DAY 42
Preble takes some strawberries from the fridge and chops them up into slices.
- 43 INT. - MUSIC ROOM - DAY 43
Preble puts the strawberry slices into Sugarbaby's aquarium.
Close up of Sugarbaby eating.
- 44 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - DAY 44
Preble's suitcase is on the bed. He's packing up. He places the special tape, with the star on it that Bella gave him the previous night, on top of his clothes.
He picks up the ad blocker helmet and considers whether to pack it.
He shakes his head slightly.
- 45 INT. - STAIRS - DAY 45
Preble, with suitcase in one hand, and the ad blocker in the other, walks toward Bella's room at the end of the hall. He gets to the door and looks in.
- 46 INT. - BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY 46
Preble walks into her bedroom. Puts down his suitcase.
He puts down the ad blocker on her bedside table, deciding not to take it with him. Then wanders around the room. Soaking up her spirit, saying goodbye, what have you.
The doorbell rings. Preble turns to look in the direction of the door.

47 INT. - FRONT DOOR - DAY

47

Preble opens the door.

PETER
Hello, you must be James Preble.

PREBLE
Yes.

PETER
Peter Bloom. Bella was my mother.

PREBLE
Oh. Yes. Hello.

Peter enters and looks around.

48 INT. - MUSIC ROOM

48

Peter and Preble walk into the room. Peter takes a look around.

PETER
Terrible thing to lose your mother.
Very sad.

PREBLE
Yes. I'm sorry for your loss.

PETER
Thank you. She was rather old so I
guess it's not terribly surprising.

PREBLE
She was a beautiful soul.

PETER
Yes yes, she was. Listen James, I'd
love to have a few words with you
about the last couple of days.

Preble stares at him.

PETER (CONT'D)
To be honest, I think her mind had
been slipping these past few years,
ever since Jim died. I hope she
didn't fill your head with any of
her nonsense.

Preble half smiles.

PETER (CONT'D)

Of course you understand she was totally delusional.

PREBLE

I wasn't aware.

PETER

Oh yes. Quite. Listen, my wife and son are arriving this afternoon. Why don't we all have dinner here tonight. We can all talk and then send you on your way.

PREBLE

Okay, that sounds fine.

PETER

Great. I have some business in town, but we'll see you tonight.

They stand looking at each other for a moment.

51 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - DAY 51

Preble opens his suitcase and takes out the special tape with the star on it. He puts it into the viewing machine and presses play.

52 EXT. - FOREST - DAY 52

Young Bella walks with a man made of grass.

Now Young Bella and the Grass Man are sitting on a picnic blanket, with a full spread of food and drink. The Grass Man reads from a book of poetry...

GRASS MAN

I've loved you in many lifetimes.
In many forms. In many places.
Through many storms. In the desert.
Lost at sea. With little hope to
comfort me. But there you were, all
alone. Arm in arm we made it home.

They share a passionate look. It feels like the moment before a kiss.

Hologram Preble is watching the scene with rapt attention. His notepad is down at his side.

The Grass Man plucks a flower that has been growing from his chest and hands it to Young Bella.

Young Bella takes the flower and smiles.

Hologram Preble can't help but smile himself.

Young Bella walks through a forest. She's smiling and laughing as she goes. She comes to the end of the forest and walks into a field. She turns around, waiting for someone to come out.

After a moment the Grass Man appears. Young Bella is delighted. He walks over to her, and they begin to slow dance, her head on his grassy shoulder.

After a lovely moment, Young Bella and the Grass Man separate.

Bella puts her hand on his face and rubs it lovingly.

The Grass Man smiles.

Bella lifts her other hand up to his face, and begins brushing the grass off his face, almost like removing makeup.

Hologram Preble watches on.

She slowly begins to peel off the layers of grass. We're starting to see signs of a human face underneath, at first a hint of a nose, then eyes and a mouth.

Back to Hologram Preble for a beat.

Bella makes one last wiping motion and it's about to reveal...

53

INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

53

Peter is standing in the doorway watching Preble lost in the dream. It's creepy - Peter is calculating...

After a couple moments, Peter knocks on the door to signal to Preble that he is here.

PETER

There you are.

Preble presses PAUSE and we see Young Bella and the Grass Man pause.

Preble takes off the helmet.

PETER (CONT'D)
Come on down and get some dinner.

54 INT. - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

54

Peter enters the room with Preble close behind him. At the table sits BRIAN. Brian is in his mid 20s. He's wearing a shirt with a penguin on it. His hair is disheveled. He's devouring the greasy chicken in front of him.

On the table sits a bucket of Captain Kelly's Chicken and a bottle of Red Rocket soda.

PETER
This is my son, Brian.

PREBLE
Hello.

BRIAN
(with food in his mouth)
Mhhesliollo.

PETER
Chicken?

Peter offers Preble the bucket of chicken.

PREBLE
Thank you.

Preble takes a chicken leg. Off screen a toilet flushes. MARTHA enters. She is in her early 50s, trying too hard to hold on to her youthful looks.

PETER
Here's Martha.

MARTHA
How do you do?

PREBLE
James Preble. A pleasure to meet you.

MARTHA
So you're a tax man?

PREBLE
I am.

MARTHA
It must be very interesting.

PREBLE

It is. I enjoy it. I get to travel and meet a lot of interesting people, like Bella.

PETER

Yes. So what was my mother like these past few days?

PREBLE

Well, she was...a very unique person. Never really met anyone else like her. Full of stories. And her tapes...so different and...

Brian burps. Preble stops talking. Peter looks at Martha.

PETER

Martha dear, do you want to take Brian and start going through mother's belongings.

Martha doesn't respond. She just gets up and leaves the room with Brian.

Once they are gone, Peter continues talking.

PETER (CONT'D)

Did my mother ever mention me?

PREBLE

Just one time, briefly. I didn't ask her much about her personal life. Just here doing my job.

PETER

So, found anything interesting on her tapes?

PREBLE

She had a very vivid imagination.

PETER

Indeed she did. I'm curious, if you don't mind me asking, what's the protocol for cases of this nature?

PREBLE

Yes, it can be tricky when someone passes mid audit. I personally deal with the living. We have a specialized team that this case will be passed along to now.

(MORE)

PREBLE (CONT'D)
They could be arriving as early as
the next few days.

PETER
So your work is complete?

We start to hear some odd noises from the other room.

Preble looks to where the noise is coming from and then back
to Peter.

PREBLE
Well yes, my work is done but the
agency will ensure the audit is
complete.

PETER
Sure, Sure. Listen Preble, I have
to ask you: did my mother tell you
anything that seemed strange or
unbelievable?

Peter stares at him.

PREBLE
Nothing stands out like that, no.

PETER
You can understand that someone in
my position needs to make sure that
my family is...protected from any
unwanted attention.

PREBLE
If you'll excuse me, I have to
finish packing.

Preble gets up and leaves the room. Peter follows close
behind him.

55 INT. - MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT

55

Martha and Brian are ripping the insides out of VHS tapes. At
their feet are a few already finished tapes. Preble enters in
a panic.

PREBLE
What are you doing?!

Peter walks in behind them.

PETER
All of these belong to us now.

PREBLE
They're still part of the audit.

Preble rips the tape out of Martha's hand, and heads towards the stairs.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
What's wrong with you people?

56 INT. - STAIRS - DAY 56

Peter grabs Preble's arm as he's about to climb the stairs.

PETER
Those don't belong to you.

PREBLE
I'm just doing my job.

PETER
My mother is dead! This audit is over!

PREBLE
Well you'll have to square that away with the bureau. But just so you know, you and your family have just committed a federal crime. And I'll have no choice but to report it.

Preble frees his arm from Peter's grasp and walks up the stairs.

57 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT 57

Preble walks back in to Sugarbaby's room and is about to eject the paused tape. But he can't help himself. He's got to go back in and see the face of the Grass Man...

58 EXT. FIELD - DAY 58

Young Bella continues taking away the grass on the face...

59 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM 59

Peter appears in the doorway. He watches Preble ominously...
We see he's holding a bowling pin in his hand.

60 EXT. FIELD - DAY 60

Young Bella finishes clearing away the grass and the face is revealed...

IT'S PREBLE!

Hologram Preble sees himself for just one second and then...

61 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM 61

Peter slams the bowling pin down hard on Preble's head, knocking him out immediately. The pink helmet is smashed into pieces. Preble slumps to the floor.

The room stretches and contracts. After a moment Preble staggers to his feet, wiping blood from his face. In a daze he looks around the room and stumbles into the hallway.

62 INT. - HALLWAY 62

Peter is walking down the hallway, bloody bowling pin in his hand. Preble sees him and woozily calls out.

PREBLE
Excuse me, Peter!

Preble catches up to him.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
I-I think something happened, I think I'm in trouble.

Peter turns around and he has a WOLF HEAD! Preble leaps back and Wolf Peter begins creeping towards him, growling.

WOLF PETER
You!?! What are YOU doing here?

PREBLE
(delirious) I-Iaaaaaaay.

WOLF PETER
You've been a bad boy and you need to be punished!

Wolf Peter lunges at Preble! Preble ducks under his claws and runs down the stairs.

63

INT. - DINING ROOM

63

Martha has her back to Preble. She's stooped over a giant bucket of chicken, treating it like a cauldron. Preble is still woozy.

PREBLE

Excuse me, I've been a bad boy.

Martha turns around and she's a WITCH. She cackles.

WITCH MARTHA

Death to all bad boys!

Witch Martha laughs and creeps towards Preble. Preble runs from the room and crashes right into Brian, except now Brian looks like an OGRE!

OGRE BRIAN

You should watch where you're going
you dumb donkey boy!

PREBLE

I'm lost and my head hurts.

OGRE BRIAN

I'm going to break your head wide
open!

Ogre Brian, Witch Martha and Wolf Peter stalk towards Preble.

WOLF PETER, WITCH MARTHA, OGRE BRIAN

Death to all bad boys! Death to all
bad boys!

Preble tries to open the front door but it's locked. He runs back up the stairs and down the hallway. A hand grabs him and pulls him into a closet.

64

INT. - COAT CLOSET

64

Young Bella stands surrounded by coats.

PREBLE

Bella!

YOUNG BELLA

Shhhhh!

She puts her hand over Preble's mouth and locks the closet from the inside. Outside the door Wolf Peter, Witch Martha and Ogre Brian are making a racket.

WOLF PETER
You can't hide from us! We'll find
you little man!

Young Bella removes her hand from Preble's mouth and brings
her finger to her mouth, motioning him to remain quiet.

PREBLE
(whispering) Bella, I'm in trouble.

YOUNG BELLA
(whispering) I know. Look, first
things first, we have to get out of
this closet.

PREBLE
(whispering) How are we going to do
that?

YOUNG BELLA
We're going to swim.

The doorknob rattles.

OGRE BRIAN
Hey dad! This door is locked!

PREBLE
How are we going to swim?

YOUNG BELLA
Hold your breath.

Wolf Peter begins to break down the door.

WOLF PETER
Now I'm angry!

YOUNG BELLA
One-

Wolf Peter repeatedly slams against the door.

WOLF PETER
Open this fucking door!

YOUNG BELLA
Two-

WOLF PETER
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

YOUNG BELLA
Three!

Young Bella and Preble fall backwards into the coats just as Wolf Peter breaks down the door. He searches through the coats and finds nothing.

WOLF PETER
AAAAAARRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHHH!

65 EXT. - OCEAN - DAY 65

Young Bella and Preble land in the ocean. Preble begins sinking. Hazy blue waters overtake the frame.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP ON...

66 EXT. - ISLAND - DAY 66

A small desert island with a single palm tree.

A hand gently rubs Preble's cheek. A soft voice calls.

YOUNG BELLA
Preble. Preble.

In a daze, Preble opens his eyes and comes to. He's laying with his head in Young Bella's lap.

He looks at his hands and realizes he's no longer a hologram.

Back to Young Bella...

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)
It's okay.

PREBLE
Bella?

YOUNG BELLA
Hi Preble.

They're smiling at each other. Young Bella picks up a conch shell and holds it to her ear. Then she holds it up at Preble's ear. Preble smiles as he hears the ocean.

Music begins and we cut ahead.

Preble walks around the island and brings his tape recorder out of his suit pocket.

PREBLE
 (into tape recorder) This little island became our home. We have everything we need. Fresh coconut water to drink.

We see what he's talking about.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
 All sorts of vegetables from under the sand. We invented games with pebbles and pieces of driftwood.

A shot of pebbles and driftwood arranged in a pattern in the sand. Young Bella moves one and they both laugh.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
 One morning a boombox washed up on the shore and we danced until the sun went down.

A beautiful silhouetted shot of them dancing against the sunset sky.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
 We wrote novels in the sand and whispered poetry to the rising sun. For every dolphin in the water there was another in the sky.

We see a dolphin jump out of the water and then a cloud that looks like a dolphin.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
 The days stretched out in front of us like diamonds on a necklace.

Sitting on the sand, they watch the ocean at sunset.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
 But like all fairytales, it had to come to an end.

66B EXT. - ISLAND - DAY

66B

Preble sitting next to Young Bella but now there is blood dripping down his forehead.

PREBLE
 I don't feel so good.

YOUNG BELLA
 You're bleeding.

He feels his head.

PREBLE

Ouch.

Preble looks up at Young Bella.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

What's going on?

Out of nowhere, BUDDY appears... But he's not like he was before - it's like the personalized settings have been reset, and now he's functioning as a generic ad.

He pulls out a bottle of pills and begins shaking them around.

BUDDY

Fast acting! Double strength! These puppies will take away the pa-pa-pain!

Buddy glitches away for a moment...

YOUNG BELLA

Preble, there's something I have to tell you.

PREBLE

What?

YOUNG BELLA

You're in danger.

PREBLE

Huh?

She stands up.

YOUNG BELLA

They're trying to kill you!

PREBLE

What, why?

Buddy glitches back into the scene. He's not even looking at Preble or Young Bella. He repeats...

BUDDY

Fast acting! Double strength! These puppies will take away the pa-pa-pain!

Preble looks to Bella.

PREBLE

What's wrong with him?

YOUNG BELLA

There's interference with the signals. Come on, we gotta go.

Young Bella takes his hand and turns to leave.

PREBLE

Why are they trying to kill me!?

YOUNG BELLA

Because of what you know!

PREBLE

What do I know?

Another Buddy pops up in front of Preble, blocking him. This time shilling another product...

BUDDY

(holding a bucket of chicken)

Captain Kelly's Barnyard Bucket.
It's your Clucky Day!

(immediately repeating)

Captain Kelly's Barnyard Bucket.
It's your Clucky Day.

Young Bella peeks out from behind the ad...

YOUNG BELLA

You know about the ads!

They take off for another part of the island.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)

Do you know who my son is?

PREBLE

No, who is he?

YOUNG BELLA

Have you ever heard of Guavatron Industries?

PREBLE

I don't know, maybe.

YOUNG BELLA

It's the largest ad agency in the country. My son is their CEO.

Another Buddy pops up...

BUDDY
 (holding a 2 liter of
 soda)
 Red Rocket Soda! One sip and you'll
 blast off.
 (repeating)
 Red Rocket Soda! One sip and you'll
 blast off.

YOUNG BELLA
 Don't watch that, come on.

They take off in another direction.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)
 You know how they got to be the
 biggest ad agency in the country?
 (pause)
 Because they put ads in our dreams.

PREBLE
 How do you know all this?

YOUNG BELLA
 The experiments! Jim and I
 discovered it with our experiments.
 The rats. Come on!

She gets a step ahead.

Another buddy appears, and then another, and another. All at once now. It's hard to see Young Bella.

PREBLE
 (losing track of her)
 Bella!

Dozens more Buddies appear, a cacophony of ads selling different products, making it impossible for Preble to spot Bella.

67 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

67

Peter is picking up Preble's limp body, trying to get him into the bed.

Preble begins to come to...

PREBLE
 Bella. Bella.

He gradually opens his eyes and faintly sees Peter dragging him.

PREBLE(CONT'D)
No, no! Stop it! What are you
doing?

Peter is frightened. In a panic he repeatedly beats Preble over the head with the bowling pin, knocking out Preble once again.

68 EXT. - SHIP DECK

68

FADE UP

Preble is laying on the deck of a large skipper ship. He opens his eyes and two sailors with RAT HEADS stare down at him.

RICHARD RAT
He's waking up!

Preble groggily sits up.

PREBLE
Where is Bella?

MARCUS RAT
Who's Bella?

The Rats help Preble to his feet.

PREBLE
I've got to find her.

The Rat sailors look at each other and then back to Preble.

71 EXT. - OCEAN - DAY

71

Wide, epic shot of a 17th century British Sailing Ship sailing across the ocean (the same ship that was in a painting hanging in Sugarbaby's room)

72 EXT. - SHIP DECK - DAY

72

Preble is now decked out in full captain regalia with medals and elaborate fringes. He's surrounded by three life sized Rat Sailors. Preble rings a giant bell.

CAPTAIN PREBLE
Gentlemen, all hands on deck.

RAT SAILORS
Ay ay Captain!

Preble is now behind a giant steering wheel.

CAPTAIN PREBLE
Come hell or high water, we're
going to find Bella!

The ship sails onward through the waves.

CAPTAIN PREBLE (CONT'D)
Richard, stay on an even keel!

RICHARD RAT
Yes Captain!

CAPTAIN PREBLE
Stewart, batten down the hatches.
Keep us at nine knots!

STEWART RAT
Yes Captain!

Captain Preble looks determined behind the steering wheel.

73

INT. - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

73

Captain Preble now has a full, dark beard. He pours himself a brandy, sits down at a writing desk, dips a feather quill into ink and begins writing.

CAPTAIN PREBLE (V.O.)
We've been at sea now for seven
years with no sign of Bella. As we
stay on course across endless
waters I'm beginning to wonder if
she was ever out here in the first
place. Time and tide waits for no
man and despite our fruitless
efforts morale remains high as the
men stay merry with song and swill.

Classic shot of Captain Preble drinking with the rat sailors.

CAPTAIN PREBLE
Last week Vincent found a stowaway
hidden among the potatoes and we've
put him to work scrubbing the
barnacles from the deck.

Quick shot of someone scrubbing the deck.

Captain Preble is no longer writing in his journal, but speaking into his tape recorder.

CAPTAIN PREBLE (CONT'D)
 Marcus is teaching me to play the fiddle and these new melodies keep my old heart afloat.

Quick shot of Captain Preble with a fiddle and a Rat Sailor playing in the underbelly of the ship.

Richard Rat and Marcus Rat nervously enter the cabin.

RICHARD RAT
 (exasperated)
 Captain, no sign of Bella.

CAPTAIN PREBLE
 Keep looking men.

MARCUS RAT
 Captain, with all due respect, I don't think we're ever going to find her.

CAPTAIN PREBLE
 Nonsense! She's out there.

RICHARD RAT
 What's so special about her anyway?

Captain Preble walks dramatically over to the window, with a soft gaze focus on the open seas...

CAPTAIN PREBLE
 She's the only one that knows.

RICHARD RAT
 Knows what?

Pause for effect.

CAPTAIN PREBLE
 The way home.

69

INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM

69

Peter stands next to the bed staring at the bleeding Preble.
 Martha appears in the doorway.

MARTHA
 C'mon Peter, let's get going.

She notices Preble bleeding in the bed.

PETER

Go get Brian and wait in the car.
I'll be right down.

Martha leaves. Peter looks around the room.

He goes to the window and lights the curtain on fire.

Some flames start to rise.

Peter leaves the room as flames continue to leap up the curtain. Preble lays on the bed, motionless.

74

EXT. - SHIP DECK - DAY

74

Captain Preble appears on the deck. The Rat Sailors run around in a panic.

STEWART RAT

Captain! We're being attacked!

Captain Preble looks through a telescope.

CAPTAIN PREBLE

Good Lord.

A giant BLUE DEMON with jagged horns and teeth emerges from the water. The Rat Sailors stare up in disbelief. Captain Preble seizes this moment to be the heroic leader of the bunch. He pulls out a large sword.

CAPTAIN PREBLE (CONT'D)

Men! From stern to stern we'll stay
on course! Ready the canons! Steady
the oars! Let's show this ungodly
beast what we've--

The Blue Demon interrupts Preble's dramatic speech by picking up the ship, like King Kong picking up a tiny human. He brings the ship up to his mouth and swallows it whole.

A blur of wood splintering, water spraying and faces in agony as the ship travels down the demon's esophagus and lands in the stomach.

75

INT. - BELLY OF THE BLUE DEMON

75

Captain Preble floats in a yellow bile, among the ship's remains, past the rib cage and internal organs. Feels like the inside of the whale in Pinnochio.

Preble pulls himself up to a rocky shore where a small wooden cabin sits. Yellow light streams out from the windows. Captain Preble slowly enters.

76

INT. - CABIN - NIGHT

76

The room is sparsely decorated. A stove in one corner, a grandfather clock in the other. There is an eerie silence in the room. Captain Preble sits down in the chair and looks across the table.

The gigantic Blue Demon that just swallowed Captain Preble has now assumed a smaller form, and sits across from Preble.

They have a stare down for a moment.

Then, the Blue Demon picks up a large chain on the ground and begins to bring it in. Eventually we see what's on the other end of the chain.

It's Young Bella. Chain around her neck, like Princess Leia in Return of the Jedi.

She's carrying a glass pitcher filled with a blue liquid.

Captain Preble notices her before she notices him.

CAPTAIN PREBLE
(whispering)
Bella.

Young Bella sees him and silently nods.

She gets to the table and pours the blue liquid into two cups. There's a feeling of danger hanging over the scene so Captain Preble and Young Bella are afraid to show they know each other.

The Blue Demon lifts up his glass in the air and toasts Captain Preble. Captain Preble picks his up and toasts him back. Each gulp is heard as they slowly drink the blue liquid. They finish drinking and place their cups back on the table. Tick. Tock.

TICK. TOCK. Time crawls by. They sit frozen in an epic duel of silence.

Young Bella and Captain Preble steal another round of secret looks at each other. The Blue Demon notices that they're looking at each other.

The Blue Demon opens his mouth and instead of a scream, the sound that comes out is the loud blaring of a fire detector.

The sound is deafening. Captain Preble and Young Bella throw their hands over their ears to protect against the piercing sound.

Back to a frightening close up of The Blue Demon screaming!

77 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT 77

Preble lays unconscious on the bed. Flames and smoke fill one wall of the room. The smoke alarm is blaring.

The flames reach the fire detector and it begins to melt. As it melts the noise slows down and stops.

Preble lays helpless on the bed.

78 INT. - CABIN 78

Back in the cabin. The Blue Demon is now standing at the stove cooking a steak in a large pan. Taking great care not to burn it.

Captain Preble and Young Bella look at each other, afraid.

YOUNG BELLA
(whispering)
You have to get out of here!

CAPTAIN PREBLE
(whispering)
I'm not going to leave you.

The Blue Demon interrupts them by walking over to the table with his steak. He cuts two small pieces off and gives them to his house guests. Then goes to turn on the TV.

He switches through a few channels and settles on a news program that consists of a blue demon in a suit reading the news. The Newscaster Blue Demon's voice is all garbled.

The Blue Demon sits back down and gets to work on his steak.

Captain Preble and Young Bella eat their tiny portions, while they exchange a few more glances...

After dinner the Blue Demon yawns and heads over to a small cot. He removes the key that has been hanging around his neck and hangs it on a nail right next to the cot.

The Blue Demon begins to snore. Captain Preble and Young Bella look at each other, knowing what has to be done.

Captain Preble tip toes over to the cot. One false move and the Blue Demon will wake. Captain Preble slowly takes the key off of the nail.

He tip toes over to Young Bella and unlocks the chain around her neck. They're careful to gently place the chain on the floor.

They walk over to the front door together and stop before leaving. They're both kind of shocked with how easy that was. They smile and leave the cabin.

79 EXT. - ROCKY SHORE - SUNSET 79

Preble and Young Bella walk out of the ocean onto a rocky shore, laughing.

For a couple moments, they are in exuberant relief. It's amazing - how did that just happen? They got away!

After a moment Bella begins to shiver in her wet clothes. Preble notices this.

PREBLE
I'll start a fire.

80 EXT. - ROCKY SHORE - NIGHT 80

Young Bella and Preble stand around a small fire, peeling off layers of clothes, positioning them on rocks or propping them up on sticks near the fire.

Eventually they're down to the underwear. It's slightly awkward.

They smile and sit down.

They look at the fire, then at each other, then back at the fire. Slow build up here.

At one point we see Old Bella's face around the fire.

Preble gives a warm smile seeing Bella again.

Then when we cut back she's Young Bella once more.

81 INT. - TENT - NIGHT 81

Preble and Young Bella are in a camping tent laying next to one another. A tender moment.

PREBLE
I want to stay here.

He looks over to Young Bella.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
I don't wanna go anywhere else.

Young Bella doesn't know what to say.

YOUNG BELLA
It can't last.

PREBLE
Why?

YOUNG BELLA
The house is on fire. You're gonna die soon.

PREBLE
I'm here. You're here.

YOUNG BELLA
Once the fire takes over, you won't be.

PREBLE
I can't be without you again.

YOUNG BELLA
Then you have to go back.

81B EXT. - ROCKY SHORE - MORNING

81B

Preble sits around the smoldering fire, wearing his shirt, but no tie, jacket or hat. He's bleeding.

YOUNG BELLA
You're bleeding again.

PREBLE
I know.

Young Bella looks at him, preparing to say something she knows will be shocking...

YOUNG BELLA
You need to turn yourself into a caterpillar.

PREBLE
What?

YOUNG BELLA

Preble, look, I know this sounds crazy. But you need to trust me.

Preble doesn't know how to react.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)

I understand. (pause) You've been lied to your whole life. By the whole world. And worst of all, you thought you had a friend.

PREBLE

Buddy?

YOUNG BELLA

Yes Buddy.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)

You're lost, Preble. You need to get back to yourself. I know you think you love me. But you can't love me unless you trust me. (beat) You need to become a caterpillar.

Preble just stares at her.

Cut to Young Bella holding a caterpillar in her hand.

Cut to two cocoons on a tree branch.

81C Cut to two butterflies flying through landscapes.

81C

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)

Okay, here's the deal. We're about a hundred miles from my house. We can make that in a day. Once we get there, we need to get you back in your body.

PREBLE

Got it!

Still flying, over a different landscape....

PREBLE (CONT'D)

This is really beautiful, by the way.

YOUNG BELLA

It really is.

PREBLE

I know we're in a hurry, but gosh.

They keep flying.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
So, do you have any brothers, or
sisters?

YOUNG BELLA
I do. A brother and two sisters.

PREBLE
That's nice.

YOUNG BELLA
You?

PREBLE
Just me. I always wanted a brother.

They continue to chat here and there, getting to know each other. And commenting on the places they are flying over.

After awhile...

YOUNG BELLA
Oh my god, that's it.

Preble doesn't respond.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)
We're here.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)
Preble!

He's sleeping.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)
Preble, wake up! We're home!

PREBLE
Huh.

YOUNG BELLA
Were you sleeping?

PREBLE
No, no. I'm up.

YOUNG BELLA
It's bad. Look.

As they fly back, you can see a room on fire, smoke billowing out...

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)
We have to hurry.

PREBLE
Oh shit.

81D INT. - STRAWBERRY MANSION - NIGHT 81D

Smoke fills the stairwell as Butterfly Bella and Butterfly Preble fly to Sugarbaby's room.

PREBLE
(coughing) I can't breath.

YOUNG BELLA
We're almost there.

81E INT. SUGARBABY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 81E

They fly into Sugarbaby's room.

PREBLE
There I am!

YOUNG BELLA
Go fly into your mouth, quick!

They fly to the bed and hover around.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)
Go, go, go!

PREBLE
Okay, okay!

YOUNG BELLA
Shit, shit, shit.

PREBLE
My mouth's shut. I can't get in!

YOUNG BELLA
Try again!

PREBLE
Wake up! Wake up! You idiot. You're gonna die. Open your mouth!

YOUNG BELLA
It's not gonna work. We have to go back.

PREBLE

What?

YOUNG BELLA

We have to go back to the beginning.

Cut to the title shot when Preble is approaching the mansion for the first time.

The two butterflies fly into view.

82

INT. FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

82

Butterfly Preble lands on Preble.

BUTTERFLY BELLA

Okay, fly into your mouth.

Butterfly Preble looks up and sees a clear opening into his mouth. He hesitates.

BUTTERFLY BELLA (CONT'D)

Now!

Preble shoos him away.

The original scene plays out...

Bella comes to the door.

PREBLE

Ma'am, are you Ms. Arabella Isadora?

BELLA

One second, I'll get her for you.

Butterfly Preble hovers around the scene.

BUTTERFLY BELLA

What are you waiting for. Go in.

He doesn't budge.

BUTTERFLY BELLA (CONT'D)

Preble!

Butterfly Preble flies into the house. Bella follow, irritated.

BUTTERFLY BELLA (CONT'D)

What are you doing? Why didn't you fly into your mouth?

BUTTERFLY PREBLE

I just...I don't know...It wasn't the right time. We'll find another way.

BUTTERFLY BELLA

What are you talking about? That was the perfect chance!

BUTTERFLY PREBLE

It's okay. I just...I just need to land here and think for a second...

83 INT. - MUSIC ROOM - DAY

83

Butterfly Preble and Butterfly Bella fly into the music room and land on a cactus in a bowl of sand. Preble and Bella talk in the background (one of the first scenes in the movie when Preble first interviews her).

84 EXT. - DESERT - DAY

84

Preble and Young Bella, standing next to a cactus, are now back to their familiar selves.

YOUNG BELLA

What the hell happened back there?

PREBLE

I don't know. I panicked. I can't explain it.

YOUNG BELLA

You had a perfect path!

PREBLE

I know. I know! I just couldn't do it. It didn't feel right.

YOUNG BELLA

Well when is it ever going to feel right?!

Preble just shrugs. Young Bella looks around the desert.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)

Well what are we supposed to do now?

Bella's head is large, looming in the distance. When she speaks it echoes over the land.

BELLA

You have to get to the Witch!

Preble and Young Bella scan the landscape and sees desert in every direction.

PREBLE

Where's the witch?

Preble looks through a telescope. We see the witch ripping out the insides of VHS tapes.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

Oh no! She's destroying the tapes!
We have to hurry!

They start walking aimlessly. They walk for a few minutes.

Preble puts his hand to his forehead to block the light and scans the horizon.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

I'm so hot. I'm so thirsty.

Buddy pops up in front of Preble.

BUDDY

Did somebody say thirsty?!

PREBLE

Yeah, I need water.

BUDDY

Straight from the freshest,
mountain clear springs, it's new
Heaven's Cascade.

PREBLE

No, nevermind. I don't need it.

BUDDY

Looks like ya need it to me, my
friend. One sip and you'll hear
angels singing. Heaven's Cascade,
purify your thirst.

PREBLE

Bella.

He notices that Bella is no where in sight.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

Bella?

Bella is gone.

He sees someone in the distance.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

Is that the witch?

85 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

85

Preble lays in the bed, blood and sweat on his forehead. Flames are creeping ever closer, almost to the bed now.

86 EXT. - DESERT - DAY

86

Preble is now dressed in a giant, ugly sweater that is way too big for him. He is sweating profusely, barely able to move.

As he gets closer to the table, he sees it's Ogre Brian drinking coffee and chowing down on hot chicken wings.

PREBLE

(delirious) I'm so hot. Do you have any water.

He sits down.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

I'm so hot.

He closes his eyes.

Preble sits at the table across from Ogre Brian. He wipes the sweat from his brow and his hand comes back down covered in blood.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

I'm going to die.

Ogre Brian picks up a penguin toy and tosses into a toilet next to the table, then flushes it.

Ogre Brian begins pouring some coffee.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

It's too hot.

OGRE BRIAN

Drink it.

Preble sips the coffee, while Brian picks up another penguin toy, same as the other one, tosses it into the toilet as well, flushes it again.

Preble, weak and confused, brings his tape recorder up to his mouth and begins recording.

PREBLE

I can barely breathe I'm so hot.
I'm hoping to find something to
cool me down.

The tape recorder is now a cherry popsicle and Preble licks it. Preble offers the popsicle to Ogre Brian.

PREBLE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Would you like a lick?

OGRE BRIAN

Take off your pants.

Preble is caught off guard. Things are slowing down. The cherry Popsicle is quickly melting in his hands.

OGRE BRIAN (CONT'D)

Take off your pants so I can give
you a spanking.

Preble accidentally knocks his cup of coffee over. Crickets emerge from the cup and cover the table. Preble slowly rises to his feet.

PREBLE

No thank you.

OGRE BRIAN

Sit down.

Preble sits back down. He has to figure out how to get away.

Ogre Brian flushes another penguin toy down the toilet. This gives Preble an idea.

Preble takes off the over-sized sweater and puts it in the toilet. He flushes. The sweater swirls for a moment and then gets caught. The toilet backs up and Ogre Brian's head explodes.

Preble smiles before succumbing to the heat and passing out in the sand.

Fade to Black.

87 EXT. - DESERT - DAY

87

Preble is laying in the sand.

A tiny periscope emerges from the sand and moves towards Preble. A pink submarine surfaces from the sand and circles Preble.

TINY SUBMARINE
Captain! Captain!

Preble looks down at the tiny pink submarine.

88 INT. - SUBMARINE - DAY

88

Preble, dressed in a Russian Submarine Captain's outfit, climbs down a ladder into the sub. The same rats from earlier are there, though now they are dressed in Russian sailor sweaters.

STEWART RAT
Captain, we finally found you!

Preble regards Stewart Rat and nods approvingly.

RICHARD RAT
Captain, what's our course?

PREBLE
(with total determination) To the witch.

STEWART RAT
But Captain, the witch lives in the Swamp of Evaporating Snakes.

MARCUS RAT
Where all things go to be erased!

PREBLE
Do not fear men, for we have--

Preble looks down at his foot.

PREBLE (CONT'D)
My foot is on fire.

89 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

89

Flames are about to reach Preble's feet as he lays unconscious on the bed.

90 INT. - SUBMARINE - DAY 90

Preble smashes his burning foot on the ground to extinguish the flames.

PREBLE

Double speed men, balls to the wall! We're running out of time!

91 EXT. - DESERT - DAY 91

The submarine speeds up in the sand and passes old VHS tapes half buried in the sand. Eventually the sand turns into the black tape found inside VHS tapes. The submarine slowly moves through the black tape swamp.

92 INT. - SUBMARINE 92

MARCUS RAT

Captain, we've entered the swamp.

PREBLE

Stay alert men. Things are not what they seem. The witch is near.

An eerie quiet descends upon the submarine. The rat sailors look around, waiting for something to happen. Richard Rat inspects his compass.

RICHARD RAT

Napkin, I can't get a reading. The compass is going haywire.

PREBLE

Keep your wits men! We've got to stay strong!

More eerie silence.

STEWART RAT

Captain it appearaappa ti naitpac.

PREBLE

Come again Stewart?

Stewart Rat's head is now slowly turning around 360°.

STEWART RAT

ohlololo ohlololo ohlololo ohlololo

PREBLE

Hmmmm.

Preble glances across the submarine and observes a rat quietly beheading another rat.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

Hmmmmmm.

Preble walks over to Richard Rat.

PREBLE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I've been thinking about the bubble bath. Where are the marigolds?

Richard Rat morphs into a chicken. He clucks for a second before opening his beak and roaring like a T-Rex.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

Oh dear.

MARCUS RAT

(backwards and distorted)
sabbabhfbasuhfewinjaksnfdl

PREBLE

Of course I removed the tourniquet. It was a wonderful addition to the party.

Preble wanders away, muttering to himself.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

Getting the old job done.

Preble is slowing down. All the rats are gone. Preble sits down on the submarine floor.

PREBLE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Health and wholesome milk. Just a small taste is enough for me.

He's now holding a glass of milk with a long straw that he puts into his mouth. He begins blowing bubbles.

Close up of the bubbles.

PREBLE (CONT'D)

If the bubbles get lost, how do they find their way home?

Preble's face is being wrapped in VHS tape. Slowly, around and around, like he's in a cocoon.

PREBLE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Wait now a moment! What goes on here?

93 INT. - PICTURE ROOM - DAY

93

Preble sits on the lap of Witch Martha. Preble's whole body is wrapped in VHS tape, resembling a caterpillars cocoon.

WITCH MARTHA

Calm your heart. You are going to sleep. Away from all pain. Away from all memories. I will erase you.

As she says this last line she covers Preble's face in VHS tape.

Static and video distortion flicker on the screen. Image of Preble walking backwards with his suitcase. Preble as a young boy running backwards. Preble as a baby going back into his mother's vagina. Preble as a fetus in his mother's womb.

Static and distortion and Preble is in an endless sea of VHS tape. He struggles to stay afloat. When he goes under images flash on the screen. A high diver going back to the diving board. A flower closing. Barf going back into a mouth.

Preble rips through the image and he surfaces in the room in the mansion, though now there is VHS tape everywhere. It's up to his waist. Preble is in one corner of the room and the Witch is in the other.

WITCH MARTHA (CONT'D)

Go to sleep my darling!

PREBLE

I'm not tired!

Preble charges through the tape towards the Witch. She lifts her arms up, conjuring tape that flows up like water around Preble and drags him under.

More images flash on the screen. Scenes from life. A baby blowing out a candle on a cake, in reverse. A couple hugging backwards. Cars driving in reverse. VHS images breaking down and erasing and distorting all together. Lightning flashes.

94 INT. - MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT

94

A hit of loud thunder. Preble jolts awake. He's sitting in the music room, in the chair next to Bella. Sugarbaby is playing the piano.

PREBLE

Oh. Ohhhhhh. I just had quite the dream. Wow. It was so real.

BELLA

I always have vivid dreams during a lightning storm. Maybe it's all the electricity in the air.

PREBLE

But this one was SO real.

BELLA

I hope it was a nice dream.

PREBLE

Parts were nice. Yeah. But...but you were dead.

BELLA

Oh dear.

PREBLE

And then your son came and his family and I was with you and we hid in a closet and then we were on an island and then a ship with rats and then a desert and there was this witch-

BELLA

What did the witch look like?

PREBLE

She had a big nose and horrible teeth and just looked awful!

Bella swivels around in the chair and it's really the Witch!

WITCH MARTHA

That's not very nice!

The Witch cackles and Preble screams. The music room begins breaking down. Items in the room begin floating away and glitching out until VHS distortion takes over. Preble surfaces once more from the tape.

WITCH MARTHA (CONT'D)

Did you think she was still alive you silly stupid boy!

The Witch brings her arms up and more tape envelops Preble, dragging him under.

More images. Static and video distortion and chaotic images all mixing together.

We see flashes from Bella's dreams - of the Grass Man, of the Frog Waiter and then...

We see Bella's father bringing out the airplane from the buffalo and holding it in his hands. (from Bella's first dream)

Preble notices the airplane and grabs it from the dream.

Preble reemerges right in front of the Witch.

He slices with the airplane and cuts open The Witch's chest. He plunges his hand into the wound.

PREBLE

Ahhhhh!

Preble removes his hand from the wound and there, in his palm, is her still beating heart.

95 INT. - PICTURE ROOM 95

The Witch collapses into the VHS tape. The tapes slither away. Preble looks down at the heart in his hand and now it's a beet. He shrugs and takes a bite.

96 INT. - DINING ROOM - NIGHT 96

Preble and Young Bella are BEETS on a plate. Around them is chicken, peas and salad. This is the dinner scene between Bella and Preble from earlier in the film.

They are sitting next to each other, looking straight ahead, embarrassed, unsure.

Beet Preble looks over to Beet Bella

Just then a fork comes down, missing beet Preble.

BEET PREBLE

When he eats me what's going to happen to you?

Beet Bella doesn't answer, she's still upset...

BEET PREBLE (CONT'D)

Once I get back to my body, I'll be alive and you'll still be dead.

BEET BELLA

Don't worry about me.

Silence for a moment. The fork comes down again and Beet Preble dives away again.

BEET PREBLE

I don't want to leave you anymore.
Maybe we can just live as beets.

The giant fork comes back down and Beet Bella moves so it spears her.

BEET BELLA

Take me!

Beet Bella gets eaten.

BEET PREBLE

Bella no! Eat me! Come on! EAT ME!

Over and over the fork comes down and takes other food away. Finally, Beet Preble is the last bit of food on the plate. The fork comes down but stops.

BEET PREBLE (CONT'D)

No! What are you doing!

ORIGINAL PREBLE

Thank you for dinner.

Original Preble leaves the room.

Beet Preble is all alone on the plate. A fly lands on the plate and walks over to Beet Preble. The fly jumps onto Beet Preble's face.

BEET PREBLE

Shoo! Get out of here!

Beet Preble blows but the fly does not budge. He blows again and still nothing. The fly takes a bite of the beet and Preble becomes the Fly. He flies away.

FLY PREBLE looks back and sees the lone beet receding below.

97B INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

97B

FLY PREBLE flies into a spider web in Sugarbaby's room. He gets stuck, he tries to shake himself out. To no avail.

FLY PREBLE

Well this is it. This is how it's gonna end... I know you can't hear me, but we're gonna die soon...

(MORE)

FLY PREBLE (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry. I screwed up. I got
 scared. That's no way to live, I
 know. She was right. I was so
 stupid...

A shot of Preble in bed, flames ever closer...

Fly Preble stuck in the web...

FLY PREBLE (CONT'D)
 I need your help. I'm just a tiny
 creature that needs help. I'm
 stuck. I swear if I just had once
 more chance, I wouldn't screw it up
 this time. If there's anyone or
 anything in this universe listening
 to me right now.

A finger enters the frame and free FLY PREBLE.

99

INT. - MUSIC ROOM

99

Fly Preble flies around the music room, trying to fly into
 Preble's mouth. (This is the same scene from the beginning of
 the film when Preble has just arrived at the mansion and
 swats at the fly.)

FLY PREBLE (SCREAMING)
 Open my mouth! OPEN MY MOUTH!

Preble's hand hits Fly Preble in slow motion. Fly Preble
 hurtles through the air, out of control.

FLY PREBLE (CONT'D)
 Ahhhhh!!!

Now it's actually Preble falling through an endless blue sky.
 He lands on a giant piano key and a single note rings out. We
 see the scene from earlier when Bella says:

BELLA
 Sometimes they play themselves.

Preble stands up on the piano key and begins running. Slowly
 the piano keys change into a snowy tundra. Preble is dressed
 in furs, running through a blizzard.

100

EXT. - MOON - NIGHT

100

The blizzard calms down and reveals a sky of endless stars.
 The frozen snowy ground is now the surface of the moon.

Preble keeps trudging along and in the distance sees a small building next to a giant radio tower. The tower is sending bright colors up into the sky.

Preble approaches the building and enters.

101 INT. PINK ROOM - NIGHT

101

Preble walks through a door and quickly realizes...

It's the Pink Room.

BUDDY
(from offscreen)
I've been looking for you.

Preble looks over startled.

Buddy is there sitting in a chair blocking a door. He looks more real now. He doesn't say anything. It's unsettling.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
I know what you did.

PREBLE
I don't want you here.

BUDDY
That's no way to talk to an old friend.

PREBLE
You're not my friend.

BUDDY
No?

Buddy looks over to the wall. Preble hears a sound.

The walls of the room start to move in. The room is rapidly shrinking.

Preble panics.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
When you were hungry, I gave you food. (pause for effect) When you were thirsty, I gave you drink. (beat) When you were sick, I made you well.

As Buddy says these lines, food, drinks, and other branded objects start to materialize and fill the now tiny pink room.

The objects are the normal shapes of household items we recognize, but are all painted bright colors.

PREBLE
Buddy stop it!

More products surround Preble, creating a layer that covers the entire room...

PREBLE (CONT'D)
I don't want any of this!

BUDDY
But you wanted it before.

PREBLE
Did you give me a choice?!

BUDDY
I just gave you what you wanted.

The room keeps shrinking, and the products keep piling up, starting to crawl up past Preble's head. Preble begins to thrash around...

PREBLE
Buddy I can't breathe!

BUDDY
(holding up a plastic bottle)
New PureAir™. 100% naturally
sourced Oxygen for all of your
respiratory needs.

Preble is now completely submerged in products. He gasps for air.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
You need more. (beat) You need me.

With his last breath, Preble yells out...

PREBLE
Bella!

When he says this, it rings out.

Then all goes quiet.

Every centimeter in the room is covered with products.

All hope is lost.

For a good five or six seconds, we watch the top of the garbage pile with no sign of life.

Then all of a sudden, a hand punches up triumphantly through the trash, holding the ad-blocker.

Music begins...

The hand starts walking toward where we last saw Preble.

Eventually we see who the hand belongs to, as she emerges from the trash...

YOUNG BELLA

Preble!

She desperately searches for Preble.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)

Preble, where are you?!

After several frantic seconds, she feels something in the heap. She shoves aside enough trash to get some room, and confirms its Preble that she's found.

She grabs him and maneuvers him to a position where she can place the ad-blocker helmet on his head.

She throws on the helmet...

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)

Breathe, Preble! Breathe!

Lights begin to flash on the helmet.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)

Breathe! You're okay. Just breathe!

An enormous 'booting up' type sound begins to rumble through the room...

And then it begins...

All the trash begins to be sucked away.

It's a mess of images... hard to see what's going on...

Until eventually we begin to make out Preble laying in the lap of Young Bella.

He's still passed out, but all the trash is gone, and we're back to the normal sized pink room.

YOUNG BELLA (CONT'D)
Wake up. Wake up, Preble.

Finally, Preble comes to.

He looks up at Bella and smiles.

They kiss.

But before long, they begin to hear a disturbing sound...

Buddy is cowering in the corner. He's glitching out.

BUDDY
Preble. Don't do this.

Preble sits up and turns toward Buddy. He makes intense eye contact with him.

Then adjusts a dial on the ad blocker and Buddy glitches out even more.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Preble. Stop.

Preble adjusts the dial again and Buddy glitches once more.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
No.

Preble reaches his hand to the dial one more time and turns it.

All goes quiet and we hear Buddy's last line:

BUDDY (CONT'D)
What planets will I be?

Buddy explodes into a thousand blue pixels.

The room is quiet.

Celebratory music begins...

Young Bella helps Preble to his feet and they walk through a door.

102 INT. BROADCAST ROOM - NIGHT

102

Young Bella and Preble walk into a large room, where a group of people and creatures are cheering and smiling and shooting confetti into the air. It's a big celebration.

Everyone we've seen in the movie is there: Bella's Dad, The Frog Waiter, The Rat Sailors, The Blue Demon, and a few characters we have not even seen yet like Sylvio, Herpert Herpels, and Fanny.

They break off into two lines, forming a tunnel in between them. Young Bella and Preble are led through, and they can't help but get caught up in the reverie even though they don't know exactly what's going on.

They pass Bella's father who says:

FATHER

Hello Bella, I'm so proud of you.

After awhile, they look up and see an unsettling sight...

It's Bella's son, Peter, but he has a different air about him. He's all smiles and warmth...

PETER

Hello Mother!

Young Bella smiles in disbelief.

YOUNG BELLA

Peter?

PETER

I'm so sorry for everything. I love you so so SO much.

For a moment we see Bella as the older version of herself. She smiles and a single tear falls out of her eye.

Peter smiles and Bella is young again.

Peter and Young Bella embrace. When they pull apart Peter looks at Preble.

PETER (CONT'D)

Hello Preble. It's time to go home.

Preble looks at Young Bella and then at Peter. A giant glowing orb is behind Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)

Step right up. The rides about to begin.

Preble and Bella step into the orb.

PETER (CONT'D)

Please keep your hands inside the
ride at all times and don't forget
to have fun!

Everyone in the room has moved around them as the orb begins
to float away.

107 EXT. - MOON - NIGHT 107

When Preble and Young Bella hit the top they becomes a
colorful comet of energy and are shot out into space.

108 EXT. - SPACE - NIGHT 108

COMET PREBLE and COMET BELLA, comet's with faces on them, are
speeding faster and faster towards Earth. Flames begin to
form around them as they pass into Earth's atmosphere.

COMET PREBLE

He tricked us! This isn't the way
home! We're disintegrating!

COMET BELLA

No! I don't believe that!

COMET PREBLE

I can feel the fire. It's
overtaking me. I can't stop it.

COMET BELLA

Fight it Preble!

COMET PREBLE

I can't!

COMET BELLA

Yes you can!

COMET PREBLE

Goodbye Bella! I'm melting!

Comet Bella has been disintegrating at a more rapid pace and
she is almost gone.

COMET BELLA

Melting! That's it! The ice cream
cone...

Comet Bella turns to a single flake of dust and is gone.

COMET PREBLE
Ice cream cone? What ice cream
cone?

Suddenly he gasps! He knows what to do! He begins to steer himself as a rapidly dwindling fireball.

Triumphant music begins.

COMET PREBLE (CONT'D)
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

Comet Preble shoots through the atmosphere.

- 109 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM 109
CLOSE UP of Preble's face in bed. Fire is so close to burning him.
- 110 EXT. - SPACE - NIGHT 110
Comet Preble is disintegrating as the dark of space is turning into dark blue and then light blue as we're getting closer to Earth. Eventually the comet is just a speck of dust.
- 111 EXT. - FRONT PORCH - DAY 111
The speck that was once Preble lands on top of the strawberry ice cream that Bella gives Preble from the very first scene of the film. Super CLOSE UP, SLOW MOTION shot of Preble's tongue licking the ice cream.
- 112 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT 112
Preble wakes up in the bedroom, fire burning all around him.
He's back in his body! He groggily touches his head and jumps out of the bed. He stumbles out of the room.
- 113 INT. - MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 113
Preble runs downstairs, and sees Sugarbaby sitting on the aquarium on top of the piano. He grabs the turtle.

114 INT. - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT 114

Preble, holding Sugarbaby, tries to open the front door but it's locked. He kicks at it. It won't budge. He looks around, unsure of what to do. Smoke is filling up around him.

A quick flash of one of Rat Sailors, wearing an ad-blocker helmet.

RICHARD RAT
Here Captain, I've got the key!

The Rat Sailor holds up a huge, over sized key.

115 INT. - DINING ROOM - NIGHT 115

Preble runs into the room, he breaks the glass around the rat skeleton and grabs the key.

116 INT. - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT 116

Preble, still holding Sugarbaby, unlocks the front door and exits the house.

117 EXT. - OUTSIDE MANSION - NIGHT 117

Preble runs out of the house, coughing. He places Sugarbaby on the ground so he can catch his breath. He looks up at the house as it burns.

CU of Preble's face with fire reflecting on it. He stands there a moment.

Then all of the sudden without explanation, he takes off on a sprint back to toward the house...

118 INT. - STAIRS - NIGHT 118

Preble runs back up the stairs through the fire.

119 INT. - SUGARBABY'S ROOM - NIGHT 119

Evading flames all the way, Preble runs back into the burning room and grabs the VHS tape Bella gave him the night she died, and the ad blocker helmet.

Then runs back. Out of the room. Down the stairs.

Before he leaves he looks over into the music room and sees a VHS tape man standing there. The statue turns and looks at Preble through the smoke.

And then Preble is out of the house.

120 EXT. - OUTSIDE MANSION - CONTINUOUS 120

Holding the ad blocker, the last VHS tape, and Sugarbaby, Preble watches the house burn.

FADE TO BLACK

121 INT. - PREBLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 121

CU of Sugarbaby eating a strawberry.

Preble, with a bandage around his head, stands next to Sugarbaby, watching him eat. He pats Sugarbaby on his head and then walks over to his desk.

He sits down and picks up the ad blocker helmet. He turns it around in his hands, studying it. He turns a switch and a light begins to blink. He turns it off and sets it back down.

Next he picks up the tape that Bella gave him the night she died. He puts it into his VCR and presses play.

122 EXT. - FRONT PORCH - DAY 122

CU of Preble's face with grass around it. Young Bella helps him removes the layers of grass from the rest of his body.

They smile back and forth and walk into the house together.

A few VHS Tape Characters enters the frame and walk into the house.

123 EXT. - OUTSIDE MANSION 123

Cut to wide shot of Strawberry Mansion atop the hill. Fifty VHS Tape Characters walk up the hill towards the house. Clouds drift through the sky. Two butterflies flutter into view and then are gone.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END