

ICE DRAGON

by
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FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: MONDAY

MAGGIE WARNER, 6, lies unconscious on a hospital bed hooked up to a variety of monitoring devices and breathing machines.

JOHN WARNER, 30s, sits beside the bed looking sadly at Maggie. He is dressed in an airline employee uniform.

KAREN WARNER, 30s, pulls a small picture frame out of her purse, and places it on the table next to Maggie's bed.

The picture frame contains a quote, 'Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life - Proverbs 13:12'.

A KINDLY NURSE enters and checks the wires stuck to Maggie's head, and looks at the EEG machine, which shows no activity, just straight lines.

KAREN
Any change?

The Kindly Nurse looks sad and slowly shakes her head then leaves the room.

Karen sits at the bedside, holds Maggie's hand and kisses it.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Hey, Little Magpie, did you think
any more about your birthday list?

The only sounds are monitors beeping, and the machine helping Maggie breathe.

John sits quietly in his chair.

KAREN (CONT'D)
No rush, you've still got a couple
more weeks.

Karen strokes Maggie's hand. The monitors continue to beep.

HEINRICH WIEDLER, 40s, studious, obviously a doctor, enters the room. He talks with a slight German accent.

He grabs Maggie's chart and flips through it.

HEINRICH

I'm sure you are aware of how expensive it is to keep these machines running?

KAREN

A small price to pay for our daughter's life.

Heinrich looks up from the chart.

HEINRICH

Life? She not in there anymore. She's gone.

KAREN

I have faith for a miracle.

HEINRICH

Take it from me, there are no miracles, only hospital bills.

Heinrich leaves the room.

KAREN

We're not going to give up on you sweetheart. You will have your miracle.

Karen kisses Maggie on her forehead.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

John and Karen walk silently down the empty corridor. John walks with a slight limp.

John stops and leans his back against the wall, trying to hold in his emotions. He slides down the wall and sits on the floor with his head in his hands.

Karen approaches John and puts a hand on his shoulder.

She leans her back on the wall and slides down to crouch next to John.

JOHN

I don't know how much longer I can do this.

KAREN

We have to keep believing.

JOHN

She gets thinner every time we come. Soon I won't even recognize her.

Karen holds John's hand.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I just feel like I'm frozen, not able to go forward or backward. I can't let her go, but I know she'll never get better.

KAREN

Have faith. Our miracle will come.

JOHN

And if it doesn't?

KAREN

It will.

Karen pulls herself up and then helps John to his feet.

They walk, arm in arm, out of the hospital wing, and under a large sign reading 'Olivia King Memorial Pediatric Care Center'. Next to the sign is a family painting of a ten year old girl between her parents in their mid thirties. The hair cuts date the picture to the 1980's.

INT. MANSION BEDROOM - NIGHT

A large opulent bedroom containing an antique four-poster bed. The room is decorated with expensive paintings.

DAVID KING, 60s, messy hair, dressed in his pyjamas, sits on the edge of the bed next to a bedside cabinet, on which sits a telephone.

David stares at the phone.

The bedroom door opens. MONICA KING, 60s, attractive, and DOCTOR OTTO, 60s, distinguished, carrying a doctor's bag, enter the room. He talks with a slight German accent.

David does not look up.

Otto sits on the bed next to David.

DOCTOR OTTO

So, David, how are you today?

DAVID

When she's not here she always
calls to wish me a good night.

Otto puts his hand on David's shoulder.

DOCTOR OTTO

Do you remember me?

David looks up and frowns at Otto.

DOCTOR OTTO (CONT'D)

I am Otto. We roomed together in
college. I was the best man at your
wedding. Now I am also your doctor.

DAVID

You do look familiar.

DOCTOR OTTO

Olivia has been gone for thirty
years.

DAVID

But I saw her just yesterday. We
picked out some paint for her room.
We can't afford to move out of this
tiny apartment. The least we can do
is make it look better.

DOCTOR OTTO

Look around you.

David looks around the opulent room and sighs.

DOCTOR OTTO (CONT'D)

It has been a long time since you
could not afford things.

Otto hands David some pills.

DOCTOR OTTO (CONT'D)

These might help bring you some
clarity.

David stares at Otto's hand.

DAVID

Maybe I don't want clarity. Maybe I
prefer to be back then when she was
still with us.

Otto puts the pills on the bedside counter.

INT. MANSION HALLWAY - DAY

Statues and paintings adorn the walls.

MONICA

He's getting worse every day.

DOCTOR OTTO

I am sorry but we can only delay
the inevitable.

MONICA

All this money and there is nothing
we can do?

DOCTOR OTTO

He desperately needs a jolt from
the present to release him from the
cage of his past.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A nice suburban neighborhood.

John and Karen pull up in a clunker of a car, a disabled
parking tag hangs from the rear view mirror.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John switches on the light.

The well decorated room has spaces on the wall where pictures
and a wide screen television used to hang. On a table sits
the smallest television in the world.

John limps to the couch, slumps down, picks up a remote and
switches on the tiny television.

Karen walks through to the kitchen.

KAREN

I'll make us some dinner.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A small but functional kitchen.

Karen pulls out some food items from the fridge and puts them
on the counter top, pushing aside a large stack of overdue
bills.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Karen lays on the couch, her head in John's lap. He strokes her hair as they watch television together in silence.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

John limps up the last couple of stairs and walks down the hallway.

John walks stops at a room with a pink child's nameplate on the door. 'Maggie'. The door is open, lights off, an empty bed inside.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom is spacious with two sinks and a large mirror stretching over both.

Wearing boxer shorts and an undershirt, John cleans his teeth. Karen washes her face at the other sink.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

John limps to the king sized bed. He has a large scar on his left leg from his knee to his ankle. Karen follows him to the bed.

John and Karen get in the bed, kiss each other, and John turns out the bedside light.

JOHN

I love you.

KAREN

I love you too.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: TUESDAY

John's alarm blares. He looks over at the clock. 5:00 am.

RADIO DJ (V.O.)

Hey, Southern California. It's a cold morning today and scheduled to get colder every day this week. Better break out the sweaters and coats.

John rolls over and switches off the radio.

Karen remains sleeping in the bed as John gets out.

John limps to the bathroom.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - EARLY MORNING

John cleans his teeth.

Suddenly the mirrors change to show a forest, and the bathroom melts away.

EXT. PATHWAY THROUGH A FOREST - DAY

A canopy of trees covers a dirt pathway.

John wears a medieval leather jerkin, and has a sword in a scabbard at his side. A MAGPIE sits on his shoulder. He strolls next to a fat, human sized, SQUIRREL, that walks on its hind legs.

SQUIRREL

...and I told him that if he thinks
I'm giving up the location of my
winter store HE must be nuts.

JOHN

Huh?

SQUIRREL

Weren't you listening to me?

John stops, looks around, then stares at the Squirrel.

JOHN

Where am I?

The Squirrel points at him.

SQUIRREL

Standing there. If you're trying to
play hide and go seek, I really
don't think you understand the
rules.

JOHN

I mean, what am I doing here?

SQUIRREL

Asking a lot of silly questions?

The Squirrel scratches himself and a cloud of fur erupts.

John takes a step away to avoid the floating fur.

The Squirrel points at a poster nailed to a nearby tree.

SQUIRREL (CONT'D)

We're still on the right path.

The poster reads 'The King is being held captive in his castle. All heroes of the realm are required assist in rescuing him from this chilling menace.'

Beneath, the same message is written in a fantasy language.

Underneath this is a picture of a crown in a cage, an arm flexed to show a muscle, a castle and an ice cube.

At the bottom is the same text in braille.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - EARLY MORNING

John stands at the bathroom mirror. He blinks, shakes his head, looks around and rubs his eyes.

John touches his nostril and sees a small drop of blood on his finger.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - LATER

John now dressed in an airline employee uniform, walks to the bed and kisses the sleeping Karen on the forehead.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John waits at a red light. The light turns green.

JOHN

One. Two. Three.

A car honks from behind. John proceeds.

A little further on he enters the employee parking lot at Burbank's Bob Hope Airport.

He pulls into a parking space. Turns the car off, gets out, and then the car melts away and the surrounding asphalt turns into a forest.

EXT. PATHWAY THROUGH A FOREST - DAY

The Squirrel cups his ear.

SQUIRREL

Do you hear something?

The Squirrel rapidly climbs a nearby oak tree.

The Magpie cups her ear with her wing and flies up into another tree.

FAT BANDIT, 20s, THIN BANDIT, 20s, and THREE UNSAVORY BANDITS walk around a bend in the pathway ahead. They nudge each other, point and smile at John.

FAT BANDIT

Nice day for a walk in the forest.

THIN BANDIT

Yeah, shame the toll is so expensive on this road.

FAT BANDIT

True. And such a pity that we have to collect it.

They nudge each other again and laugh.

John searches his pockets.

JOHN

I don't understand what's going on,
and I don't have any money.

The bandits all draw their swords and circle around John.

The Squirrel notices some acorns in the tree and inches towards them along a branch. The branch bends.

Fat Bandit gets closer to John. John backs up and slips on some gravel, accidentally lunging forward, knocking Fat Bandit into a blackberry bush.

Two other bandits attack from opposite sides of John. John slips on the gravel again and falls backward onto his bottom.

The two bandits knock their heads together, and fall to the ground.

John gets up.

The last two bandits look at each other, confused. BANDIT LEADER, 40s, shifty looking, pushes them aside.

BANDIT LEADER

Enough fun and games. Let's see how you do against me, and the Swordbreaker.

Bandit Leader holds up his sword which has a flat sharp blade on one side and a series of notches on the other.

JOHN

I don't want any --

BANDIT LEADER

I have no problem attacking an unarmed man. However, I suggest you draw your sword.

John draws his sword cautiously. Bandit Leader lunges at John, who panics and manages to parry the blow.

Bandit Leader attacks again and catches John's sword with one of the Swordbreaker's notches and twists. John's sword snaps in half.

Bandit Leader pushes John to the ground and raises his sword.

BANDIT LEADER (CONT'D)

Good night, stranger.

An arrow suddenly parts Bandit Leader's hair.

BOB HOOD, dressed all in green, face in shadow under a large hood, already has another arrow in his bow.

BOB HOOD

Back away, or the next arrow will rearrange more than just your hair. I thought you were banished.

BANDIT LEADER

I never agreed with that verdict.

BOB HOOD

Well maybe I should --

Bob is knocked over by a muscular CYCLOPS, 30s, eight feet tall, shoulder length black hair, who is walking along the pathway.

Bandit Leader and his men turn and run away.

Cyclops blinks his large solitary eye at Bob.

CYCLOPS

I'm so sorry. It's the one eye thing. Happens all the time. I thought you were taller but further away.

BOB HOOD

(weakly)

Hand me my bow. Whereever this arrow lands, there shall I be buried.

Cyclops bends down and hands Bob his bow.

Bob pulls an arrow from his quiver, weakly draws his bow and releases the arrow.

It flies through the air and embeds itself in the oak tree branch next to the Squirrel.

BOB HOOD (CONT'D)

Well, maybe I won't be dying today.

Bob Hood gets up and pulls back his hood. He is in his sixties with a head of white hair.

John gets up and approaches Bob Hood and Cyclops.

BOB HOOD (CONT'D)

And what is your name, cyclops?

CYCLOPS

Cyclops.

BOB HOOD

(slowly)

No. Your name.

CYCLOPS

That is my name. Every member of my race is called Cyclops. Gets very confusing sometimes, especially at school.

BOB HOOD

Well, I am the famous Bob Hood.

JOHN

Bob Hood? Not Robin Hood?

BOB HOOD

Not again! This is so aggravating. Why does nobody get my name right? Look, I am Bob Hood.

(MORE)

BOB HOOD (CONT'D)

Some used to call me Bob In The Hood, which was shortened to Bob In Hood, which was corrupted to Robin Hood. I am the real hero, Bob Hood. Robin Hood does not exist.

JOHN

Sorry. I didn't know. I'm not from around here.

Bob snorts his disapproval.

Galloping horses are heard behind them on the pathway.

BOB HOOD

Maybe those are bandit reinforcements. We'd better hide this time. Just in case.

The Squirrel stretches to reach for the acorns at the end of the branch, which bends almost to breaking point.

John, Bob and Cyclops hide behind a tree trunk and all peek out to see who is coming.

FOUR HORSEMEN, dressed in full armor and riding massive horses, race along the pathway. Each holds a royal standard. Their main colors are, in order, blue, red, green and yellow.

The oak tree branch breaks sending the Squirrel and branch plummeting onto the pathway in front of the speeding riders.

The riders continue without slowing.

A cloud of fur hangs in the air around the fallen Squirrel.

The sound of the horses diminishes as they continue on down the path.

John races to the unconscious Squirrel's side. It has no visible injuries.

JOHN

Looks like he's been knocked out.

CYCLOPS

We can't leave him here. Maybe that house in the woods can help. Do you need help carrying him?

Cyclops smiles revealing a missing tooth, as he points into the undergrowth. John flinches, as Cyclops mighty fist narrowly misses his head.

CYCLOPS (CONT'D)

Sorry if I'm a little scary. It's the missing tooth, right? I can't help it. It's genetic. My whole family are missing that tooth.

JOHN

Yeah. Sure. It was the tooth.

CYCLOPS

OK. Let's get going to the house.

John looks but sees nothing but bushes and trees.

JOHN

What house?

CYCLOPS

I may not be able to see the house from here, but I can smell it.

Cyclops sniffs the air.

CYCLOPS (CONT'D)

Yes, about a mile through the undergrowth. What my people lack in binocular vision, we make up for in binocular --

Cyclops tries to think of the word.

JOHN

-- olfactory acuity?

CYCLOPS

-- smelling.

Cyclops lifts the Squirrel, carries him over one shoulder, and heads into the undergrowth. John hesitates.

CYCLOPS (CONT'D)

Please follow.

John looks both ways along the pathway and then at Cyclops. Magpie flies down from the tree and lands on John's shoulder.

JOHN

I guess I'm following.

John follows Cyclops further into the undergrowth.

EXT. BURBANK AIRPORT EMPLOYEE PARKING - DAY

John inhales, blinks and looks around. A drop of blood is at his nostril.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY - DAY

John shows his airline identification and limps through the airport security, putting his keys, jacket and a sack lunch through the x-ray machine.

THIN X-RAY TECHNICIAN, 20s, scans his screen. FAT X-RAY TECHNICIAN, 20s, watches John suspiciously. They were Thin Bandit and Fat Bandit in John's dream.

INT. AIRPORT GATE - DAY

At the gate is DOUG, 30s, an airline employee, tall, overweight with very thick glasses, making his eyes appear to be huge. Doug was Cyclops in John's dream.

DOUG
Hey, John. How are you doing?

JOHN
It's been a weird morning.

Doug steps backwards knocking over ROBERT, 60s, in an airline employee's uniform. He was Bob Hood in John's dream.

ROBERT
Hey. Watch where you're going.

DOUG
I'm so sorry.

Doug helps Robert back to his feet.

JOHN
Do I know you?

ROBERT
I doubt it. I'm the new trainee.

JOHN
Trainee?

ROBERT
Yes.

JOHN
Nobody told us you were coming.
(beat)
Welcome to Gate B5.

INT. AIRPORT GATE - LATER

The last passenger enters the door to join the line of people boarding the airplane. John and Doug tidy up.

JOHN
Ready for lunch?

DOUG
I'm starving. Panda Express?

JOHN
I brought a lunch with me.

DOUG
My treat.

JOHN
OK. Thanks.

DOUG
Robert, do you want to come?

ROBERT
No. That stuff gives me chronic
gas.

DOUG
OK, then.

INT. PANDA EXPRESS - DAY

John and Doug finish their lunch. John closes his still half filled Styrofoam container and places it into a plastic bag.

John puts on his coat, and they leave.

EXT. SIDEWALK BACK TO THE AIRPORT - DAY

The wind has picked up a little. John pulls his collar up.

A chattering squirrel bounds along a tree branch high above the road. It reaches for an acorn, slips and falls.

Four successive Ford Mustang cars drive over the spot where the squirrel fell, their horse emblems glinting in the sunlight. The colors of the cars are, in order, blue, red, green and yellow.

FLASHBACK - EXT. PATHWAY THROUGH A FOREST - DAY

The Squirrel stretches to reach for the acorns at the end of the branch, which bends almost to breaking point.

FOUR HORSEMEN, dressed in full armor and riding massive horses, race along the pathway. Each holds a royal standard. Their main colors are, in order, blue, red, green and yellow.

The oak tree branch breaks sending the Squirrel and branch plummeting onto the pathway in front of the speeding riders.

The riders continue without slowing.

END FLASHBACK

The unconscious squirrel lies in the road with no visible injuries.

JOHN

That's weird.

(beat)

Probably just a coincidence.

DOUG

What do you mean?

JOHN

Nothing. I suppose we should go save it?

DOUG

Go ahead.

JOHN

I don't know.

DOUG

It'll get squashed.

John studies the squirrel.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Fine. I'll do it.

Doug grabs John's bag and takes out the Styrofoam box and hands it to John.

Doug walks into the road, opens the bag and gently rolls the squirrel into it with his foot.

Doug returns to the sidewalk and hands the bag to John.

JOHN

I'll see if Charlie can keep an eye
on it down with the baggage.

They approach a crosswalk as the light turns red.

Doug starts to jaywalk.

John pushes the button and remains on the sidewalk.

Doug rolls his eyes and steps back onto the sidewalk.

The signal turns green. John checks both ways.

Doug checks his watch. After three seconds they proceed
across the road.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY - DAY

Doug goes through the metal detector.

John picks at his teeth, not paying much attention.

John puts his lunch and the bag containing the squirrel on
the conveyor belt to the x-ray machine, then walks through
the metal detector.

John continues to pick at his teeth.

The X-ray technicians stare at the skeleton of the squirrel
on their screen. They move the conveyor belt back and forth
several times.

THIN X-RAY TECHNICIAN

Sir. Is this your bag?

JOHN

Oh. Sorry, I completely forgot.

FAT X-RAY TECHNICIAN

I don't care what kind of hillbilly
recipe book you're working through,
but do you really need to bring
your ingredients into the terminal?

JOHN

You see I --

THIN X-RAY TECHNICIAN
 Want to make squirrel pot pie?
 Squirrel nuggets? Salisbury
 squirrel? Look, there's no actual
 regulation against x-raying road
 kill, but just make sure that it
 stays out of sight.

JOHN
 I'm going to --

FAT X-RAY TECHNICIAN
 Whatever. Move along, you're
 holding up the line.

John picks up the Styrofoam box and plastic bag.

INT. AIRPORT GATE - DAY

John and Doug work at the gate, with Robert watching their every move. Two other AIRLINE EMPLOYEES relieve them.

INT. AIRPORT BAGGAGE HANDLING AREA - DAY

CHARLIE, 40s, hands the bag containing the squirrel to John.

CHARLIE
 It's still out cold. Also, it's
 been snoring all afternoon.

John stares, motionless, at Charlie. His surroundings melt away and become a forest.

EXT. IN THE FOREST UNDERGROWTH - DAY

John tries to keep up with Cyclops' pace through the dense undergrowth. Magpie clings on to John's shoulder dodging branches.

They reach a clearing in the forest. A circle of about half a mile diameter has been cleared of trees.

In the middle of the clearing is a large log cabin, with a black roof. Around the house are some fruit trees and a large vegetable garden.

Chickens and goats wander around in a fenced area.

A stream runs through the clearing next to the cabin and turns a small water wheel.

Further away is a huge pile of neatly stacked firewood, next to which stands what looks like a hang glider.

EXT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - DAY

An exquisitely made wooden cabin.

John knocks gingerly on the door.

Cyclops nods his head towards the door again to indicate a louder knock is needed.

INT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - DAY

The cabin is full of strange contraptions, and half finished inventions. A blacksmith's forge is in one corner, a workshop in another, a further area contains a chemistry lab, and finally a large library.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT, who is Heinrich in reality, stands behind the closed door. He wears a long colorful robe.

He rubs at the small glass spy hole in the door, trying to clean it enough to look through.

He squints through the spy hole. He steps backwards, fear racing across his face.

There is another knock on the door.

Heinrich grabs an umbrella from its stand, and holds it like a sword.

EXT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - DAY

CYCLOPS

Let me try knocking for you. You
are so puny.

Cyclops bangs his mighty fist on the door, which breaks a hole through it.

He tries to pull his fist out of the hole in the door, but pulls the door off its hinges.

This reveals a startled Heinrich.

The umbrella pops open, and Heinrich promptly faints.

Cyclops looks at the Squirrel on his shoulder then at Heinrich on the floor.

CYCLOPS (CONT'D)
Not another one.

INT. AIRPORT BAGGAGE HANDLING AREA - DAY

Charlie still holds the bag containing the squirrel.

CHARLIE
Are you OK?

John wipes a drop of blood from his nostril and looks confused.

JOHN
Yeah. Thanks.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John gets into his car and puts the bag containing the squirrel on the rear seat. He places his Styrofoam box on the passenger seat.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - LATER

John pulls into a parking spot at the Hospital.

He hears snoring from the plastic bag on the backseat.

John gets out of the car.

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

Karen is already in the room, sitting next to Maggie, holding her hand, as John enters.

John pulls up a chair and sits down.

Karen looks up.

KAREN
Hi, Honey, I just got here too.

Karen turns to Maggie.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Hi, Pretty Girl. What's new?

A SLIMY LAWYER, 40s, greased back hair, enters the room. He is Bandit Leader from the dream.

SLIMY LAWYER
Mr. Warner?

JOHN
Yes?

SLIMY LAWYER
I have some paperwork to present to
you.

Slimy Lawyer hands over a stack of papers to John.

JOHN
What is this?

SLIMY LAWYER
A legal notice that due to lack of
payment these machines will be
switched off at the end of the day
on Saturday.

JOHN
What?

SLIMY LAWYER
Without positive proof of live, we
have no obligation to keep these
machines running without adequate
payment.

KAREN
Proof of life? Look at her. Her
heart is still pumping. She's still
breathing.

SLIMY LAWYER
But nobody's been home for the last
eighteen months.

Slimy Lawyer taps his temple.

SLIMY LAWYER (CONT'D)
It's an absolute impossibility that
she will recover.

John stares at the lawyer and the room melts away to become a
wooden cabin.

INT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - DAY

Heinrich is unconscious on a wooden bed. Next to him, on the
floor, the Squirrel snores.

John sits in a wooden chair and Cyclops is wedged into a similar chair that strains under his weight.

Heinrich wakes up. He rubs his eyes and sits up in bed.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
(in German; subtitled)
I just had the weirdest dream.

Heinrich looks up at Cyclops, then screams like a girl. The scream keeps going and going. John and Cyclops look at each other and back at Heinrich.

Finally Heinrich runs out of air. He inhales heavily.

Cyclops holds up his hand to indicate Heinrich should not scream again.

JOHN
We don't mean you any harm. We just wanted some help with this squirrel. He was run over.

Heinrich nervously looks at the Squirrel, back at Cyclops, then at John, back to Cyclops, the Squirrel again, then Cyclops. Heinrich shakes his head and rubs his eyes. He takes a breath trying to compose himself.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
(switching to English with a German accent)
You will not eat me?

CYCLOPS
Me? No way. My people don't eat anything that complains about being eaten. And you look like you'd complain a lot.

Heinrich exhales in relief, but is still cautious.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
Fantastic. I apologize for my initial reaction. My father said I should not talk to strangers, or open the door to them. It is dangerous out there. I hope he returns from town soon.

JOHN
We can wait outside until he returns if it makes you feel better. When will he be back?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
I'm not exactly sure.

JOHN
How long has he been gone?

Heinrich closes one eye and thinks.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
About thirty eight years.

JOHN
Thirty eight years?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
Yes, I am sure he will be home any
minute now.

John and Cyclops exchange a quizzical glance.

HEINRICH
Just kidding.

Heinrich smiles.

HEINRICH (CONT'D)
Actually, I do not expect him to
ever come back.

Heinrich's smile disappears, and he looks away.

An awkward silence descends.

JOHN
I'm John.

He shakes Heinrich's hand.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
I am Heinrich The Magnificent.

JOHN
The Magnificent?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
Yes, it is my family name. My
father is Otto The Magnificent.

CYCLOPS
I'm Cyclops.

Cyclops stands up to reach over and shake Heinrich's hand,
but his bottom is wedged in the chair and it rises with him.

JOHN

You've got a lot of equipment here.

Heinrich looks around the cabin.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

The forge belongs to my father. The other items are used in my experiments.

CYCLOPS

You're a wizard?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

There is no such thing as magic.

Another awkward silence.

CYCLOPS

Your cabin sure is nice.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

Thank you. I have made many upgrades since father left. Did you notice anything special about the roof?

CYCLOPS

No.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

Tar.

CYCLOPS

Tar?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

Indeed. It might be highly flammable, but it has kept this cabin completely dry all these years.

Cyclops tries to extract his bottom from the chair, with no success.

CYCLOPS

You sure are smart.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

Perhaps, but I am not as smart as my uncle. He was a fantastic mathematician.

(MORE)

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)

He was sitting under a tree one day when an apple fell on his head. Do you know what he discovered that day?

CYCLOPS

Gravity?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

No. The greatest apple pie recipe in the kingdom.

Heinrich gets up from the bed.

Magpie hops off John's shoulder and starts investigating some shiny objects on a workbench.

Heinrich examines the squirrel.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)

He is not injured. We should let him wake up by himself rather than shock him into action.

Heinrich steps over the Squirrel and goes to the blacksmith area, where he rummages through a pile of swords.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)

I see that your scabbard is empty. You can have one of these swords. I have no use for such things. What is your sword measurement?

JOHN

Sword measurement? I didn't know there was such a thing.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

Hmm. Interesting.

Heinrich goes over to a series of hooks on the wall that hold thin strips of leather. Above each hook is a label: HELMET, BREASTPLATE, BELT, BOOTS, SHIELD, SWORD. He removes the sword strip, which is made of red leather, the others are brown leather.

Heinrich approaches John.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)

Will you allow me to measure you?

JOHN

Sure.

Heinrich measures from John's elbow to the floor, and writes the number on a piece of parchment.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
I might as well measure you for the other pieces in case you ever need them.

Heinrich grabs the helmet strip.

JOHN
So why do you have six measuring tapes, why not just use one?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
Each item has it's own measuring standard, developed by separate master armorers eons ago.

INT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - LATER

Heinrich rummages through the pile of swords inspecting a number stamped on the blade just above the hilt.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
There, one sword, size thirty six.

Heinrich hands John the sword.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)
Here are your other measurements.
Helmet, size six, shield size seven, boots size eighteen, breastplate, size twenty three, belt, size forty two.

Heinrich hands the parchment to John who inspects it.

The numbers written are 6, 7, 18, 23, 42 and 36. 36 is circled.

JOHN
Thanks.

In the background the Squirrel wakes up.

Magpie watches the Squirrel intently.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
I am sorry for the quality of the sword. My father was the real craftsman in our family.

John inspects the sword.

JOHN

It looks good to me.

In the background the Squirrel grabs a loaf of bread and runs out of the cabin.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

You are too kind. Perhaps one day you will see some of my father's work. He was quite famous.

JOHN

You don't have any around here?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

No. My father's work was in high demand and fetched a high price. In fact my father was even commissioned by the King in his younger days to create an exquisite suit of armor.

Heinrich opens a drawer and rifles through some old papers.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)

It was made from the last of the Elven steel. It was rumored that the combination of numbers on the suit had magical properties. It is the most valuable treasure in the kingdom, if not the world.

Heinrich pulls out a drawing of a beautiful suit of armor.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)

Here is a drawing he made of it. I would very much like to see it in person, but it is locked up in the King's treasure vault in the castle.

CYCLOPS

Castle? That's where I was going. You should come with us.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

I will remain here. I do not believe it is safe for me out there.

CYCLOPS

Don't be silly. We'll look after you.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

I do not mean to be rude but you are an example of my safety concerns.

CYCLOPS

Firstly, that WAS rude. And secondly do you smell burning?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

It is probably the forge, I was creating some things for my flying machine earlier.

CYCLOPS

No, this is leaves burning, and also something else that I can't quite put my finger on.

The Squirrel, partially on fire, runs past the open back door and dives into the stream.

EXT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - DAY

John sees WARRIOR KAREN, his wife Karen but dressed in a leather jerkin and warrior's leather skirt. She stands at the edge of the clearing, stamping on some burning leaves. The top of her head is on fire.

JOHN

Don't worry, I'll get some water!

John grabs a bucket, fills it from the stream and runs towards Warrior Karen.

As she is a quarter mile away, he starts to slow down, then he stops to catch his breath. Magpie flies over and unsuccessfully tries to lift the bucket herself.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Don't worry -- I'm still coming --
Be there any second now.

John continues running.

Upon reaching her, he empties the bucket of water, dowsing the flames on her head.

Warrior Karen slaps John's face.

WARRIOR KAREN
What was that for?

JOHN
You were on fire.

The flames on her head erupt again.

WARRIOR KAREN
I'm supposed to be on fire.

JOHN
What?

WARRIOR KAREN
I'm from the Eastern Fire Fields.
This is normal for me. Well, except
for catching the forest on fire. We
don't have forests where I come
from, for obvious reasons.

Magpie jumps on to Warrior Karen's shoulder and is fascinated
with her flame hair.

Magpie raises herself up to full height and gets her head
dangerously close to the flame.

John grabs Magpie and puts her on his shoulder.

JOHN
That's dangerous. Stay away.

WARRIOR KAREN
She's fine.

Cyclops arrives, still stuck in the chair, carrying another
bucket of water.

WARRIOR KAREN (CONT'D)
Besides she's almost ready to --

Cyclops throws the bucket of water over Warrior Karen.

WARRIOR KAREN (CONT'D)
Hey. Stop it!

Heinrich arrives.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
(whispering to John)
Is this a girl?

WARRIOR KAREN
What's his problem?

JOHN
He's a hermit.

CYCLOPS
I hate crabs.

WARRIOR KAREN
I don't know who you are, but the
three of you had better stay away
from me. Or else.

Warrior Karen walks off.

A couple of leaves blow by her head and catch on fire. They
continue on the wind towards Heinrich's cabin.

One burning leaf touches down on the cabin roof, which erupts
in flames and instantly turns to ash.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
This is not a problem. I can
replace the roof.

The other burning leaf floats down into the cabin and touches
down on a vial of bubbling liquid in the chemistry lab.

The cabin explodes in a ball of flame, creating a small
mushroom cloud.

The chair falls off Cyclops' bottom.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)
This is more of a problem.

EXT. DESTROYED CABIN IN THE WOODS - NIGHT

Warrior Karen, John, Cyclops and Heinrich sit around the
still burning remains of Heinrich's cabin.

WARRIOR KAREN
How many more times can I say I'm
sorry?

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
It was not your fault.
(beat)
Actually, it was, but I cannot
blame you.
(beat)
Well, I can blame you, but I choose
not to.

WARRIOR KAREN
Thanks. I think.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
What will I do now?

CYCLOPS
Come with us to the castle. The
King needs heroes.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
I'm no hero.

Heinrich picks up a book from the floor.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)
The only book to survive is this
useless spell book.

Heinrich gets ready to hurl the book on to the fire.

CYCLOPS
Wait. You can't do that.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT
It's full of total nonsense.

CYCLOPS
Magic is real. I've seen it.

Heinrich rolls his eyes. He gets up and throws the book into
a large charred wooden chest adorned with mathematical
symbols.

Magpie hops too close to the fire and John grabs her and puts
her on his shoulder.

JOHN
Please stay away from the fire.
It's not made of gold.

Cyclops sits back and kicks off his boots. He wiggles his
toes in front of the fire.

Warrior Karen and John wince and shuffle away from Cyclops.
Magpie flies away to land on the wooden chest.

CYCLOPS
I can't help it. It's genetic. My
whole family have this condition.

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

Karen leans over John.

KAREN
John? John, are you OK?

John blinks a few times. A small trickle of blood rolls down his top lip.

He looks around. The lawyer is gone.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Where were you?

JOHN
I don't know, but I feel like it's important.

Karen grabs a tissue from a box and wipes John's lip.

KAREN
We need to get that looked at.

JOHN
Sure. Maybe tomorrow. I feel fine.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT

John stops in the driveway to his house. Karen is in the passenger seat.

He turns and reaches in the backseat for the bag, but it is empty. He looks around inside the car, but cannot see the squirrel anywhere.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Karen sits on the couch eating popcorn from a bowl and watching the news on the tiny television.

John walks over to the couch and drops a stack of bills next to Karen. The uppermost bill has "Foreclosure" written on it.

JOHN
Both of us working, and me taking extra shifts isn't enough. What are we going to do?

John slumps down next to Karen, grabs some popcorn and eats it.

KAREN

Keep praying for a miracle.

JOHN

I know you don't want to talk about this, but it's time to face reality.

John grabs a large handful of popcorn and forces it into his mouth.

The news displays today's winning lottery numbers, 6, 7, 18, 23, 42 with 36 as the Mega number.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - DAY

Heinrich hands the parchment to John who inspects it.

The numbers written are 6, 7, 18, 23, 42 and 36. 36 is circled.

END FLASHBACK

In his surprise, John spits the popcorn across the room and all over the TV.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

No winners today. The estimated jackpot for Saturday will be three hundred and twenty million dollars.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - DAY

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT

In fact my father was even commissioned by the King in his younger days to create an exquisite suit of armor.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)

It was rumored that the combination of numbers on the suit had magical properties. It is the most valuable treasure in the kingdom, if not the world.

HEINRICH THE MAGNIFICENT (CONT'D)

I would very much like to see it in person, but it is locked up in the King's treasure vault in the castle.

END FLASHBACK

John grins.

JOHN
I think the reality is we just got
our miracle.

Karen frowns quizzically at him.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: WEDNESDAY

John shows his airline identification and moves through the airport security, putting his keys and jacket through the x-ray machine.

While John is not looking, the Fat X-ray Technician places stuffed squirrel toys amongst John's belongings as they disappear into the x-ray machine.

Fat and Thin X-ray Technicians chuckle as John picks out his belongings from the scurry of squirrels.

INT. AIRPORT GATE - DAY

John, with a huge smile on his face approaches Doug and Robert at the gate.

DOUG
You seem to be in a good mood.

JOHN
That's because on Saturday I'm
going to win the lottery.

DOUG
And how are you going to do that?

JOHN
You wouldn't believe me if I told
you.

DOUG
Doesn't matter if you tell me or
not, I'm not believing you.

INT. AIRPORT GATE - LATER

The last passenger enters the door to join the line of people boarding the airplane.