

MONSTER HUNTERS

by
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BLACK SCREEN

NARRATION

Nearly three centuries ago, in the small German village of Blehm, there lived a silversmith named Emil Oaker Fricht. The village had recently been established on the outskirts of the then still very mysterious and untamed Black Forest.

An old, tattered, leather-bound book drops into frame, opening to a page detailing the unfolding story on pages stained with age.

NARRATION (CONT'D)

There had been a rash of livestock mutilations in the village with strange tracks left behind. The situation became more serious after some of the children started disappearing. The villagers became convinced that a monster was living in the forest and a posse was gathered together to go into the forest and find the beast. Emil Fricht and his brother, Lorenz, volunteered and offered to provide weapons.

The page turns very briefly to an ancient drawing of a horrible dark beast with a long contorted body, fiery golden eyes and two twisted horns protruding from its head. But before we can lock in to enough detail to really get a sense of the monster we...

FADE TO:

EXT. BLEHM VILLAGE- AFTERNOON

The frightened village is bustling with nervous activity. Most of the shops are being closed down by the villagers preparing to go search for the monster. At the blacksmith's, EMIL FRICHT, a sturdy man with a thick red beard and piercing eyes, pounds out the blade of a uniquely intimidating weapon on his anvil. EUGENE FRICHT, Emil's twelve year old son, comes to his father's side. He is sharpening the blade of another interesting axe-like creation.

NARRATION

Emil had a young son named Eugene who was eager to join the group in tracking down the demon, but his father, worried for the boy's safety, forbade his involvement. The villagers split into groups and followed the tracks into the forest for two days.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATION (CONT'D)

Of course, because children are children- even back then- Eugene, going against the strict orders of his father, snuck out into the woods on his own.

EXT. BLACK FOREST- NIGHT

Eugene is creeping through the forest.

NARRATION (CONT'D)

On the third night... a black, moonless night... Eugene, armed with a special serrated lancet he had fashioned himself, heard a low growl that raised every hair on the back of his neck. Luckily, Emil and Lorenz were close by and rushed to the boy's side just as he lifted his lantern to find himself face to face with a creature that could only have been born in the smouldering depths of hell.

Eugene's lantern illuminates the horned beast (which we can only see from the back) in silhouette. It reaches out towards Eugene and jumps to attack.

NARRATION (CONT'D)

Eugene, trying very hard to keep his eyes open, held his lancet straight and strong. As the monster lunged for him, Emil, Lorenz and Eugene drove their blades straight through the monster's throat.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BLACK FOREST- DAWN

An exhausted Emil trudges along through the forest, pulling a big, awkward, dark stained canvas sack. Lorenz is alongside his brother carrying Eugene, who is asleep in his arms.

NARRATION

They were the only ones who made it back out of the forest... and they did so dragging the head of the beast behind them.

EXT. BLEHM VILLAGE- MORNING

The head of the monster is being hoisted up to a crossbeam in the center of the village (again a clear view of the creature is obscured because we only see its horned head from the back).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATION

The village hung the head, minus one tooth that young Eugene kept for himself, from a lanyard in the town square. The skull was lost sometime before the turn of the 20th Century.

(pause)

The whole event was chronicled in the town records, just in case you don't believe me.

FADE TO:

CLOSEUP: The old book displays in its pages an artist's rendering of the Blehm town square with the creature's head hanging high over the villagers.

NARRATION (CONT'D)

This was an important moment in our long long-standing history with monsters because it was the first time that the monsters got nervous. This was when we started fighting back.

CREDITS IN

Over selected pictures, lithographs and renderings of monsters from folklore and fiction throughout history.

CREDITS OUT

FADE TO:

EXT. IMPERIAL PALACE IN MALTA- SUNSET

A splendid, ancient palace is lit up for a festive evening.

IMPOSE GRAPHIC: "NOW"

EXT. IMPERIAL PALACE (STONE CORRIDOR)- CONTINUOUS

An elderly gentlemen, CARLTON, is seen from the back as he slowly makes his way down a cavernous walkway. Several robed figures with hoods completely hiding their faces are walking towards him. Carlton's posture straightens as he throws a shoulder into one of the hooded men, providing a very solid knock which seems to contrast his advanced years and frail frame. The slammed target whips his hooded head around to confront Carlton as he passes, but the other hooded servant signals him back to their purpose. They move down the vast, still corridor.

CLOSE UP: CARLTON LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is disguised (and not terribly well) as an old professor, with a white beard and glasses covering his knowing eyes. His mouth curls up into a little smirk as he watches the robed servants move along in his wake.

The CAMERA TRACKS BACK to show one of the hooded figures, presumably the knocked one, turns to look back over his shoulder, shooting a faceless glare at Carlton. Almost in unison they turn back away from each other and continue their opposite paths.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE (OBSERVATORY)- CONTINUOUS

At one of the computer terminals of a large, sterile white command center, a labcoated CREWMEMBER is charting the arc of several glowing blips on an immense curved screen. A door slides open and an envoy of DIGNITARIES escorts GENERAL DAVIDSON (a man in full military dress and a face set in an ultra serious glower) into the large room.

No one seems to notice as Carlton slips into the back of the room. He unobtrusively moves his way over to a corner, sharing a glimmer of a glance with an elderly Japanese man, MR. AJI. Aji sneaks away from the group of dignitaries to join him. Without any further eye contact, Aji furtively hands Carlton a small bottle of thick, dark liquid. Carlton quickly deposits the bottle into an old saddlebag he has slung over his shoulder.

MR. AJI

(whispering)

Your patience was appreciated. Poolei tree oil is very difficult to come by.

CARLTON

And what of my other inquiry?

Mr. Aji seems amused.

MR. AJI

A legend. Nothing more. Just what are you working on, my old friend? And why all the secrecy? Your lone wolf methods are starting to raise questions.

CARLTON

The less you know, the less they'll know you know.

Aji smiles sadly.

MR. AJI

I don't know who's who anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carlton eyes the seven other dignitaries across the room.

CARLTON
I've been having the same problem lately.

MR. AJI
This is the third satellite launched in
the past six months.

CARLTON
Is that unusual?

MR. AJI
Yes, because he's been there for each
one.

Aji nods Carlton's attention to General Davidson.

MR. AJI (CONT'D)
His uniform suggests a high-ranking
official from over thirty years ago. But
I can find no evidence of a military
career of any kind.

General Davidson who is passing a crystallized square cube to
the SR. TECHNICIAN.

MR. AJI (CONT'D)
And that's Prime Minister's newly
promoted Chief of Operations.

CARLTON
I heard his predecessor had to be
institutionalized.

MR. AJI
He went mad. Quite suddenly and quite
completely. He just woke up one morning
screaming.

Carlton looks at Aji.

MR. AJI (CONT'D)
And hasn't stopped yet. They say his
dreams drove him insane.

They turn back to hone in on the General.

CARLTON
His nightmares.

Just then the General turns and stares right at them from
across the room, as if he knows he's being scrutinized. Aji
and Carlton do their best to turn away and be unobtrusive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MR. AJI

My condolences on your grandfather's passing. He was perhaps our greatest sentinel. And he was my good friend.

Carlton looks at Aji with a gleam of obvious deference.

CARLTON

Yes.

MR. AJI

I must get back. But know that there are still people connected to the fight who possess noble motivations. People you can trust.

Aji rushes out of the room.

CARLTON

(to himself)

Let you know when I meet one, Aji.

Carlton scrutinizes the large tracking screen covering three quarters of the control room walls.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

What are they up to?

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE (BANQUET HALL)- A LITTLE LATER

The PRIME MINISTER, a jolly man encircled in resplendent garb, bursts into the room and addresses a large room full of well-dressed guests.

PRIME MINISTER

Friends! You join us for a happy celebration of our recent successes.

Carlton, still in disguise and still in the background, walks into the banquet almost unnoticed. But someone does take note. General Davidson's eyes follow Carlton as he tries to blend in next to a large potted plant. The palace servers, dressed in those familiar hooded white robes that hide their faces, are preparing the huge table for the upcoming feast. They lay out the plates, glasses and fine silverware, moving in ghost-like silence. One of them walks by Carlton and slams into his shoulder as he passes.

CARLTON

I guess I deserved that.

The door next to Carlton opens as a five year-old girl, ANGELIQUA, walks into the banquet hall. The Prime Minister greets her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIME MINISTER

Ah, Angeliqua! My daughter, gentlemen.
She is terribly excited about our
evening. Angeliqua, bring our new friend
here to us.

He signals her to Carlton, still trying to wallflower
himself.

ANGELIQUA

Come, sir!

She takes Carlton's hand and leads him over to the other
guests. She stops abruptly as they pass in front of General
Davidson. Carlton notices that she is squeezing his hand and
shaking. The General's face still hasn't budged from his
intimidating scowl.

GENERAL DAVIDSON

(awkwardly)

Hello... little girl.

Carlton looks at his hand which is starting to turn white
around the little girl's terrified grip. He looks up at the
General and smiles.

CARLTON

We gotcha.

The general's scowl cracks nervous. He is beginning to sweat
as everyone looks at him. He smiles and calmly helps himself
to a glass of champagne, deeply savoring his sip.

GENERAL DAVIDSON

It just tastes so much better up here.
Everything seems to.

They are interrupted by a collection of acrobats, minstrels,
fire breathers, contortionists and tumblers that explode into
the room in full performance force. From the champagne-
sipping General Davidson, the CAMERA does a 360 DEGREE PAN
around the room showing increasingly horrified faces of all
the dinner guests. By the time the CAMERA completes its
circle and reaches General Davidson again, he has transformed
into his true demonic being, KRESLOR. Kreslor is even more
repulsive than his associates... with eyebrows that meet
above completely black eyes, a one-nostriled nose, rows of
pointed canine teeth and long sharp fingernails. Everyone in
the room is aghast except for Carlton.

CARLTON

Got to admit I'm more than a little
curious as to what you just uploaded to
the M-6 satellite, Kreslor!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KRESLOR

Something to keep you on your toes,
Carlton!

Carlton leaps out of the way of two hooded servers who try to tackle him from either side.

CARLTON

Apologies, Mr. Prime Minister. But I figured you'd like to know who you're doing business with.

With the dexterity of a seemingly much younger man, Carlton picks up Angeliqua and throws her to her wide-eyed father, who catches her safely. She points to Kreslor.

ANGELIQUA

Daddy! That's the monster from my nightmares!

Carlton pulls back the hoods of the two servers to reveal that they are actually hideous, lizard-like DEMONS. Strange symbols are burned into their foreheads with light tendrils of smoke wisping from them. Carlton launches himself from the back of one of his assailants and knocks over a perfectly-balanced tower of acrobats that has unfortunately assembled itself in his way.

CARLTON

The nice thing about nightmares, sweetheart, is that once morning comes and you wake up... poof! They're gone!

KRESLOR

I'd start being a little more careful about what you promise!

Carlton loses his saddle bag in the fracas and tries to reach back for it, but it's kicked out of his reach by the stampede of dinner guests.

CARLTON

Full of surprises these days, aren't you?
And your disguises are improving!

KRESLOR

Can't say the same for you.

Carlton's fake white mustache loosens and starts to slip away from his stubbled upper lip. He has also lost his glasses, but glances down at his departing facial hair. There's a younger, scruffier face under the camouflage. Mr. Aji moves in next to Carlton for support.

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CONTINUED: (3)

MR. AJI

You'll want this back.

Aji hands Carlton his saddlebag. In a flash, Carlton pulls out a strange object that looks like an old flute carved out of bone. He raises the strange flute to his mouth and points it at Kreslor.

CARLTON

I just wish my grandfather could have been here to see you take your final fall.

KRESLOR

Yes, we heard. One less of you to worry about now.

Carlton blows hard into his weaponized flute. A dart launches out and makes its way through the air towards Kreslor, but before it can connect, its target melts into a disgusting black liquid. Leaving his impressive uniform behind, Kreslor cascades into a puddle on the floor. The dart embeds into the wall and the puddle bubbles slightly and then shoots across the carpet towards the hallway.

Carlton grabs a wine bucket and empties its expensive contents. He jumps up onto the dining table and sprints across it, following the creeping pool of liquefied Kreslor. One of the server demons leaps at him like a panther, tackling Carlton before he can get another dart loaded into his blowgun. They roll off the table and Carlton scrambles underneath it.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE (UNDER DINING HALL TABLE)- CONTINUOUS

Carlton's dart bounces several feet away. Carlton tries to scoop up the rapidly moving Kreslor ooze with the silver wine bucket, but can't quite reach. The attacking demon claws at Carlton and manages to tear a big scratch into his arm. Carlton kicks his legs and pushes the demon's head up, smacking it several times against the top of the table.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE (DINING HALL)- CONTINUOUS

The impact under the table greatly perturbs the one dinner guest who, despite all the ruckus, is trying to enjoy his soup.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE (UNDER DINING HALL TABLE)- CONTINUOUS

One more smack and the demon releases Carlton from its grip. He wriggles out from underneath the temporarily dazed creature.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE (DINING HALL)- CONTINUOUS

Carlton stands up and looks around for the oozing Kreslor.

HUNGRY GUEST
 (through a mouthful of soup)
 Look out!

Carlton sees another demon descending on him from a chandelier. It grabs Carlton and pushes him back against a window. Carlton grabs two flaming kebabs from an abandoned serving tray and impales the attacking demon it by its ears against the wall.

IMPALED DEMON
 (trying to gingerly pull itself
 free)
 Ow, ow, ow!

Carlton catches a quick breath and spies the bubbling ooze, which has now changed course and is heading towards a gold, grated floor vent. Carlton slams the wine bucket over the floor vent, just as the pool of black Kreslor is about to escape down into it. The thick goo GURGLES in agitation and then shoots across the floor in the opposite direction.

Carlton grabs his loose dart and then stabs it into the kebab-impaled demon's forehead. He then takes out the blowgun and uses the weapon to delicately tap the dart in, as if he were hanging a picture. Mr. Aji, a little late to the rescue, smashes a champagne bottle over the head of the demon as it is mummifying, causing it to explode in a cloud of dust.

CARLTON
 (brushing himself off)
 Cut that one a little close.

MR. AJI
 Some of us are slowing down in our old
 age.

CARLTON
 Not me.

Aji pulls off Carlton's fake grey beard. Carlton and Aji look around for Kreslor's retreating sludge and spot it just as it spills out into the hallway.

EXT. IMPERIAL PALACE (COURTYARD)- CONTINUOUS

The disgusting black ooze trickles down the winding marble stairs and towards the shoreline of an immense sea.

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CONTINUED:

Mr. Aji, The Prime Minister and several of the remaining guests follow Carlton as he runs after the strange cascading liquid. They watch helplessly as it escapes down the grate.

CARLTON

(to the Prime Minister)

You could be a little more selective with your dinner guests.

MR. AJI

You almost had him this time.

CARLTON

We've been playing this all wrong. Waiting for them to come to us. Then hoping they make a mistake.

MR. AJI

You'd rather go to them?

CARLTON

Maybe.

MR. AJI

They're trying to get out. Now you're trying to get in. At least one of you must have the wrong idea.

Carlton takes a flask of clear liquid from his saddlebag and adds a drop from the bottle that Aji gave him. The contents of the flask turn a shade of light green for a moment, then the color dissipates. He SIGHS.

CARLTON

(to himself)

Closer.

SLOW FADE TO:

INT. HOUSE (KITCHEN)- MORNING

Typical suburban family scene; a conservatively-dressed father, BRUCE FRICK, is eating his oatmeal and reading the morning paper while his immaculate wife, SUSAN FRICK, is flipping pancakes.

BRUCE

What time is it, sweetheart?

SUSAN

(slightly annoyed)

You have time. This is the one morning a week you honor us with your presence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Their son, SAM, a precocious fourth grader, sits at the table. He takes out a tube of Blistex and runs it over his lips. As he does so his watch starts playing an annoying digital version of Wagner's "Flight of the Valkyries". MAGGIE, the slightly chubby, black-clad, black sheep teenaged daughter, enters and sits at the table next to Sam.

MAGGIE

Turn that stupid thing off.

SAM

I can't. It's busted.

Susan puts a plate of pancakes in front of her daughter.

SAM (CONT'D)

(still trying to muffle his
watch)

I have to hear this every hour on the
hour.

Bruce pulls out his cellphone.

SUSAN

No work at the table, sweetheart. These
pancakes are all-natural and vitamin-
enriched. I got the recipe from "The
Morning Gourmet".

Maggie rolls her eyes. Susan sees and seems a little
insulted, but tries to keep the perky going strong.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Well, that's what's for breakfast.

Bruce pockets his phone.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Maggie, I bumped into Mr. Zimmerman at
the PTA meeting last night. He said that
anytime you want to rejoin the gymnastics
squad, he's saving a place for you.

SAM

She's afraid she'll break the balance
beam.

Maggie glares at him and then pushes her plate away.

SUSAN

(to Sam)

You be quiet and eat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAGGIE

The whole societal impression of the attractive female has pigeonholed normal women into an unhealthy, undernourished stereotype.

SAM

Yeah, I hear a lot of ugly fat girls saying that.

Susan smacks Sam on the head with her spatula.

SUSAN

Special delivery from both of us.

Maggie softens towards her mother for just a fraction of a second, then ices over again. Susan straightens Sam's hair.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You look a little ruffled, tough guy. Bad dreams again?

MAGGIE

That dumb scorpion cow thing chasing you?

SAM

The Scorp**bull**. And yes.

Bruce's head pops up.

BRUCE

The what?

SUSAN

What movie is that one from?

SAM

That one's all mine unfortunately.

SUSAN

Well, even so maybe we should take down some of those posters in your room. Especially that awful one above your bed; "It Came From Under the Sand".

SAM

(correcting her)

"The Thing Beneath the Beach". And no, I don't think so. That's a modern day classic. A genetically-engineered, amphibious creature feasting on girl guts? Yes, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SUSAN

Breakfast is gross, but a mutated dolphin thing dragging people under a beach to eat their entrails is classic entertainment.

MAGGIE

It's not their guts. They're absorbing the girls for their brain waves.

Sam tried to be defiant, but is clearly a little confused.

SAM

No.

MAGGIE

That's why the beach is near an all-female scientific research facility. For no good reason at all.

SAM

No!

MAGGIE

(scoffing)

You missed the whole stupid point of the whole stupid movie.

SUSAN

I didn't know you liked those stupid movies.

SAM

They're not stupid!

MAGGIE

I didn't say I liked it.

SUSAN

(to Sam)

At least eat your eggs.

SAM

But they touched the syrup from the pancakes.

His father finally perks up.

BRUCE

Well that's because you were overzealous with it. Aunt Jemima is your friend, Sam. She doesn't want to ruin your breakfast.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

She wants to make it sweet and special
for you. What you could do...

Sam's father takes his knife and fork and starts cutting a hole about the size of a silver dollar in the center of Sam's stack of pancakes. Sam and Maggie collectively roll their eyes.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

... is make yourself a central repository
for your syrup to keep it contained and
keep your bacon out of danger. Then,
when you want a bite of pancake...

He cuts a perfect square of pancake from the edge of the stack.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

... you move from the outside inwards,
dipping into the repository as you go.

He dips it into the syrup pool in the center of the stack and eats it.

SAM

(unenthusiastic)
Thanks, Dad. Neat-o.

SUSAN

(to Bruce)
You're expanding your consulting practice
to the breakfast table now?

BRUCE

Ever vigilant.

SUSAN

Well, Aunt Jemima just had an accident on
your tie, Captain Efficiency.

BRUCE

And my phone!

He scrubs at the screen of his phone with a monogrammed handkerchief. He is confused by what he is seeing.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

What is going on... what is this?

Sam comes up to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SAM

I uploaded a screen saver picture for you.

CUT TO:

INSERT SHOT: BRUCE'S ORGANIZER SCREEN

It is a terrific shot of the Frick family on a ski slope. Everyone is smiling except for Bruce who is looking down at his phone which he is holding in his gloved hand.

SUSAN FRICK (V.O.)

Hey! The Poconos trip. That's great.

BACK TO:

INT. FRICK HOUSE (LIVING ROOM)- CONTINUOUS

Bruce shakes the phone.

BRUCE

So, how do I get back to my calendar?

He shakes it again.

SUSAN

(a bit fed up with him)

It's not an Etch-a-Sketch, Bruce.

SAM

(sighs)

Just hit the "escape" button.

Bruce does and then smiles, relieved to see the digital readout of his life once again.

SUSAN

What time are we expecting your brother tonight?

BRUCE

Who knows? I'll be surprised if he even shows up. Bye, family.

He leaves and Maggie slunks up to the door.

MAGGIE

Dad's brother is coming to visit?

SUSAN

Yes. You're probably too young to remember him, but he came to meet you both after you were born.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
How long is he staying?

SUSAN
One night. I'm sure we'll all manage.

SAM
Bye, mom.

SUSAN
Bye, sweetie.

Sam trots off.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Bye, Magpie.

Maggie closes the door behind her without a word. Susan slouches against the wall, looking glumly around the empty house and the stack of breakfast dishes in the sink.

MONTAGE

Multiple satellites are being launched from space shuttles. Nerdy programmers are writing endless streams of unreadable code, screaming in dark red against their black, oversized computer screens. A businessman, looking several decades out of place from a fashion perspective, is shaking hands with a trendy, Elon Musk-ish character when suddenly, just above his collar, the businessman's neck starts to bubble and boil. He covers the gurgling patch on his neck and hurries out of the room, leaving the confused Elon Musk-ish in his wake.

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP- AFTERNOON

A TECHNICIAN and his ASSISTANT are in the process of securing a large satellite receiver dish into place high above an unidentifiable cityscape.

ASSISTANT
So what's this thing for anyway?

TECHNICIAN
Do I care? "Plug it in, shut your mouth, collect your paycheck". There's your new motto. Career Development 101.

ASSISTANT
You're a great mentor.

TECHNICIAN
Right?

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM)- EVENING

Bruce is looking very stressed out, typing something into his phone, not enjoying a glass of white wine, and sort of half-playing the board game "Trouble" with Sam. Maggie is lying on the couch. Susan comes into the room with a bottle of wine.

SUSAN

Tough day?

BRUCE

Siegler is questioning my productivity assessment for his department. He dug in his heels on every one of my improvement recommendations.

SUSAN

Even the pine-scented laptops so people can work in the bathroom stalls?

BRUCE

That's not funny.

She smiles and fills his wine glass.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

But it's not bad.

Bruce dictates a note to himself into his phone.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

"Look into bathroom stall work stations."

The doorbell RINGS.

INT. HOUSE (FOYER)- CONTINUOUS

Susan opens the door to reveal Carlton Frick. Now, without his disguise, he is a scruffy man in his early-forties, wearing a beaten up leather jacket and a saddlebag over his right shoulder. A faint smile cracks open at least three days' beard growth. A full orange moon is blazing low in the sky behind him. Susan smiles warmly.

SUSAN

Carlton. It's been way too long.

CARLTON

Hello, Susan.

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM)- CONTINUOUS

Bruce throws up a casual glance from his phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
He looks a lot like you, Dad. Except for
your glasses.

BRUCE
(under his breath)
And affinity for personal hygiene.

CARLTON
Hello, Bruce.

BRUCE
Carlton.

Sam rushes over to him.

SAM
Hi, I'm Sam.

CARLTON
I remember.

SAM
Can I take your stuff up to your room?

CARLTON
You can take my jacket. How's that?

Carlton surrenders his jacket to Sam revealing a bandaged arm underneath.

SAM
What happened to your arm?

CARLTON
Yeti wrestling. In the Himalayans.

SAM
Whoa! I like your necklace.

Maggie, still splayed out on the couch, glances over at it too.

CARLTON
From the Gunung Tribe of Indonesia. They
used to live in Sumatra right on the rim
of an active volcano for extra protection
from their enemies. This is actually a
war pendant.

Sam is wide-eyed. Maggie is skeptical.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAGGIE

(defensive)

Oh so what? The men go out and fight while the women sit around making jewelry for them.

Carlton takes a beat to read her perfectly.

CARLTON

Other way around, actually. Very liberated, the Gunungs. Forward thinkers. You'd dig 'em.

Maggie smiles for the first time so far, warming up to her uncle a bit.

MAGGIE

Is that true? Dad said that we should only believe about forty percent of what comes out of your mouth.

Bruce only looks a little embarrassed. Maggie appears to be quite enjoying the growing tension between the two, but Susan pipes up to try to quell it.

SUSAN

Hope you like roasted eggplant. It's organic and locally-grown. I make it with a balsamic glaze. And kale salad with apple relish.

CARLTON

Uh, actually, you'd don't have to prepare any...

Maggie imitates her mother's perky tone.

MAGGIE

"Well, that's what's for dinner".

Susan's eyes go sad.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Welcome to our morgue of domestic perfection, Uncle Carlton.

CARLTON

Gee thanks, Niece Maggie.

SAM

(still staring at the pendant)
Can I wear it during dessert?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARLTON
Absolutely not.

MAGGIE
So why this visit out of the blue?

CARLTON
Well, I wanted to pay my respects even though I couldn't make the service.

MAGGIE
What service?

Carlton looks at Bruce who now avoids his eyes.

CARLTON
You didn't take them?

SAM
Take us where?

Carlton narrows his accusing stare.

CARLTON
You didn't even *tell* them.

MAGGIE
Tell us what?

Carlton continues to stare angrily at his brother. Susan finally explains things to the kids.

SUSAN
Their grandfather... your great-grandfather... passed away last week. Your dad didn't tell you because you only met him once... right after Sam was born. He was very old.

BRUCE
And he was very strange.

CARLTON
(defiantly)
He happened to be an astounding man.

BRUCE
I had no idea family started mattering so much to you, Carlton.

He and Bruce have a bit of a stare down which is interrupted by...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CARLTON

Ow.

He looks down to see Sam poking curiously at his bandaged arm.

SAM

Sorry.

INT. HOUSE (DINING ROOM)- A LITTLE LATER

The family and Carlton are seated around the table. Carlton's saddlebag is slung over the back of his chair. Susan is dishing out the eggplant mush, but before she can get to Carlton's plate, he pulls out a tube and squeezes some grey-looking paste onto his plate.

CARLTON

(to Susan)

Please don't take offense. I prepare my own meals.

SAM

That's a meal?

CARLTON

It is a fortified protein paste. Kind of like what astronauts eat.

Carlton retrieves a spoon from his bag and glides it over the flame of the nearby candle.

MAGGIE

Are you afraid of germs or something?

He looks at her, gravely serious.

CARLTON

I'm not afraid of anything.

Tension all around the table. Susan slides carefully into her chair.

MAGGIE

O-kaaaaay.

Carlton notices the awkwardness he has caused and tries to recover.

CARLTON

But I do have a healthy respect for germs of all kinds.

(casually)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLTON (CONT'D)

You tend to get that way after the first time you're poisoned.

They all look at him.

SAM

I had poison oak pretty bad this summer.

CARLTON

Did you want to rip yourself open, scoop out your insides, dunk them in boiling bleach, and then drain every drop of fluid from your veins, brain, organs, hair, and fingernails, scrape off the outer layer of your skin and then dive into a pool of rubbing alcohol?

SAM

... no.

MAGGIE

You went through that?

Carlton holds up two fingers to her.

BRUCE

Hey, was one of those times when "Big T" was after you for welching on a Stanley Cup bet?

CARLTON

Nope. And I didn't welch. I just couldn't cover. And I believe I paid you back for that loan.

BRUCE

Nearly.

SAM

(eyeing Carlton's saddlebag)
That sure is a beat up bag. It looks like it's a hundred years old.

CARLTON

Pretty close. Our grandfather made it when he was a young man and then handed it down to me about twenty years ago.

SAM

Would I have liked him, dad?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARLTON & BRUCE

(in unison)

Yes.

No.

SUSAN

Bruce and I cleared out your grandfather's room at the retirement home. He didn't leave much of a will, but there are some boxes in the basement. You're certainly welcome to anything you'd like.

CARLTON

I appreciate that, Susan.

MAGGIE

Did he ever make anything for you, dad?

BRUCE

No. I guess you could say that he always kind of gravitated to Carlton. He was... a bit of an eccentric.

SUSAN

I'll say. Remember what he had hidden behind his bookcase? That bizarre skull with the big fake gems.

Carlton's head shoots up and he drops his fork which CLANGS down on his plate. Conversation stops as the family looks at him.

CARLTON

(trying to act casual)

This... spoon is very slippery.

Sam seems particularly interested in his reaction.

BRUCE

It's probably the condensation from your water glass and switching back and forth from eating and drinking. What you could do, Carlton,...

CARLTON

(interrupting again)

Sometimes people just **drop** things, Bruce. Doesn't mean they need to re-evaluate their locomotor functions.

The uncomfortable silence is broken by "Flight of the Valkyries" again compliments of Sam's watch. He tries to muffle it with his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM

Sorry.

INT. HOUSE (BASEMENT)- NIGHT

Carlton is rummaging around among boxes of forgotten trinkets.

CARLTON

Come on. This thing should not be hard to find.

On the far wall and out of his sight, dark cracks begin to rupture a section of the concrete and a strange thick liquid begins to gurgle and ooze through them.

INT. HOUSE (PARENTS' BEDROOM)- CONTINUOUS

Bruce and Susan are getting ready for bed. Bruce is putting on a pair of impeccably-pressed, blue plaid pajamas and checking tomorrow's schedule on his phone. Susan has on an oversized t-shirt.

BRUCE

One meal and the kids are all over him.

SUSAN

You just don't know how to relate to them sometimes. You've got to loosen up.

BRUCE

I'm loose.

He suddenly realizes that he is putting on a tie. He rips it off before she notices.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

And it was like Maggie was trying to sabotage me at every turn.

SUSAN

Welcome to the club, Bruce. She's been treating me like some sellout traitor to womankind ever since she joined the Feminism Now Club. For 8th graders!

BRUCE

She'll come around to us again.

SUSAN

(cautiously)
You know... you could learn a thing or two from your brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUCE

Like what? How to mismanage my 401K?

He SNORTS appreciatively at his own joke.

SUSAN

Good one, sweetie.

Bruce clicks the dictation button on his phone.

BRUCE

(still chuckling)

"In response to Susan saying that I could learn a thing or two from my brother... I said..."

SUSAN

(interrupting)

There's no way you're recording that, right sweetheart?

Embarrassed, he clicks the phone off.

INT. HOUSE (BASEMENT)- CONTINUOUS

As Carlton continues to poke through the boxes a dark figure stands up in the background and grabs the darker of two bed sheets hanging from a laundry line.

Carlton picks up a can of lighter fluid from a shelf and places it on the ground. When he straightens back up again, the frightening face of Kreslor is staring at him with an evil grin through the other side of the shelf. Carlton spins around only to find himself face to face with his nemesis. Kreslor grabs him by the throat.

CARLTON

Keeping some fancy company lately, Kreslor.

KRESLOR

Your kind are astonishingly willing to sell out your own species. You're finally showing some appreciation for us helping your Neanderthalic brains evolve all those thousands of years ago.

CARLTON

Yeah. Thanks for that little leg up.

KRESLOR

And you returned the favor by banishing us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLTON

War is hell. Especially for the losers.
But you guys seem to really be moving up
in the world, eh?

KRESLOR

Up and out.

Carlton tries to surreptitiously reach for a wooden tent pole stake but Kreslor notices, tightens his grasp and whips his tail around, knocking the stake from Carlton's hand.

KRESLOR (CONT'D)

We should never have taught you all how
to use your thumbs.

CARLTON

They do come in handy. Ever play Chess,
Kres?

Kreslor ignores the question.

KRESLOR

Your kind is about to start seeing a lot
more of ours.

CARLTON

Only if we start sleeping longer. Your
real power has always been limited to our
nightmares.

KRESLOR

Soon there will be no escape. And no
mercy. It's almost a pity you won't be
around when we flip the switch and
reclaim our proper place on Earth. And
you return to your proper place. At our
feet.

Carlton, meanwhile, with his other hand is holding a lit zippo lighter.

CARLTON

Whose feet now?

Kreslor smells something. He looks down to see that Carlton has kicked over the can of lighter fluid, forming a good-sized pool and soaking the sheet he is wrapped in. Carlton drops the lighter onto Kreslor's feet, transforming him into a ball of flames. A panicked Kreslor twists around looking for the quickest escape route. Carlton rips the laundry line down and ensnares Kreslor in it, preventing his escape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARLTON (CONT'D)
Can't hang out a while?

Carlton holds up a board game from one of the shelves with his free hand.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
Ooh! Forget Chess. "Hungry Hippos"!

Kreslor composes himself long enough to hold a silver ring up to Carlton's face, which immediately becomes anguished. Kreslor sneers one last potent message to Carlton.

KRESLOR
Shall I send her your regards?

Carlton grabs the ring from Kreslor's burning hand, letting the laundry cord slip through his fingers. Kreslor emits an inhuman SCREAM as he knocks over a bookshelf and dives head first into the section of wall through which he seeped. He leaves a black, charred discoloration as the cracks reseal themselves.

Carlton starts to go over to examine the mark on the wall.

SAM (O.C.)
That, sir, was... excellent.

Carlton turns around to see Sam, sitting amazed on the stairs.

CARLTON
How long have you been there?

Bruce, Susan and Maggie rush to the doorway.

BRUCE
Sam!? What's going on down here?

SAM
You guys missed it! This guy...

CARLTON
(quickly interrupting)
This guy... Carlton... who's a big old klutz, knocked over your bookshelf.
(pause)
And accidentally incinerated some of your laundry.

Bruce and Susan are dumbfounded.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
I'll find a hotel for the night.

INT. HOUSE (SAM'S BEDROOM)- A LITTLE LATER

Bruce is tucking his son into bed. The walls are covered with posters and pictures of monsters from the golden and not-so-golden ages of Hollywood. Sam is looking at the strange chant that Carlton wrote out for him. He puts it down and applies a pre-sleep coating of Blistex to his lips.

SAM
Dad?

BRUCE
Yes, Sam?

SAM
You really don't believe in monsters,
huh?

BRUCE
Of course not. I mean... I believe in
nightmares, but those monsters come from
in here.

He taps Sam's head.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
And not from anywhere else.

Sam puts the piece of paper on his bedside table, propping it up against a cup of steaming hot cocoa so that the words face him.

SAM
I'm sorry that you and Uncle Carlton
don't get along.

BRUCE
Yeah. Sometimes I am too. Goodnight,
Sam.

Bruce exits.

FADE TO BLACK.

SOUND IN:

Scraping, tearing and heavy inhuman breathing.

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE (SAM'S BEDROOM)- NIGHT

The cup of cocoa is now half empty and cold, the marshmallows having long since disintegrated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A strange green mist is glowing around the seams of the closed bedroom door. The door opens and two monstrous figures are silhouetted. The CAMERA starts to SHAKE.

QUICK FADE TO BLACK.

We continue to hear the SOUNDS of the creatures leaving the room.

QUICK FADE IN:

CLOSE UP (SAM'S POV)- CONTINUOUS

CREATURE #3, a disgusting buglike thing, is staring directly INTO THE CAMERA. CREATURE #4, a forehead-marked demon like the ones we saw in Malta, steps into view.

CREATURE #4
This one's awake! I knew it!

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE (SAM'S BEDROOM) -CONTINUOUS

Creature #3 is hovered over Sam.

CREATURE #4
(to his partner)
Leave him. They're not our concern. We got what we came for.

Creature #3 digs his fingers into a little pouch tied to a string around his neck. He takes out a bit of colored powder and blows it into Sam's face.

The CAMERA FADES TO BLACK as Sam's head falls back to his pillow and the creatures exit the room.

INT. HOUSE (KITCHEN)- MORNING

A tired Susan is washing dishes. Sam is ignoring a big bowl of sogging cereal. His hair is messed up and he looks exhausted. Maggie enters looking even worse.

MAGGIE
I had the worst dreams ever last night.

SUSAN
Me too.

SAM
I dreamt that monsters came and took dad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Maggie stops mid chew. Susan drops a glass of orange juice. Something is very wrong. Maggie and Susan run from the table and out of the kitchen.

SAM (CONT'D)
(calling after them)
Hey!

INT. HOUSE (PARENTS' BEDROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

Susan rushes over to the bed and pulls the covers back. The sheets on the right side of the bed are ripped to shreds. Sam comes and Susan notices that he is playing with a ripped piece of blue plaid fabric.

SUSAN
Sam, what's that?

SAM
I'm not sure. I found it sticking out of the wall in the basement.

SUSAN
It's a piece of his pajamas.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
(flabbergasted)
Just give me a second here.

SAM
We need Uncle Carlton.

SUSAN
Sam, we don't even know where to find him.

Sam smiles.

INT. OFFICE- EVENING

A modern office in a converted brownstone. The walls are filled with strange old weapons. Carlton has been away for quite a while as evidenced by the pile of bills on the desk behind which he is snoozing.

SUSAN FRICK (O.S.)
So, do you have a rate card or something?

Carlton looks up at his secretary, GLORIA, escorting Susan, Maggie and Sam into his office. They have luggage with them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLTON
How the hell did you fi...
(immediately piecing it
together)
The chant on the back of my...

Sam holds up his business card.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
Right.

Gloria scoots out.

SUSAN FRICK
Carlton, Bruce is gone.

SAM FRICK
Monsters took him.

SUSAN FRICK
Sam, that's not the story we're going
with just yet. Okay, honey?
(to Carlton)
We woke up and his glasses were on the
night table, his briefcase was in the
living room, his car was in the
driveway... but he's nowhere to be found.
I know it seem ridiculous, but... his
side of the bed was torn to ribbons.

SAM FRICK
Monsters.

SUSAN
(growing more and more jittery)
So now, after Sam's story about what
happened in the basement last night, it
all seems...

MAGGIE
... Plausible?

SUSAN
While I'm obviously not prepared to blame
Bruce's disappearance on monsters, I
admit that there's something going on
that's beyond the capabilities of our
local police force. So I want to retain
your services.

CARLTON
Keep your money, Susan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GLORIA
(shouting from the other room)
What!?

SAM
And we all had the same dream during the
night.

CARLTON
What dream?

SUSAN
We all dreamt that he was dragged off by
these... strange creatures.

SAM
Monsters.

Carlton turns to Sam.

CARLTON
What kind of monsters?

SAM
There were two of them. One was very
pale with glowing green eyes.

MAGGIE
And a weird symbol on his forehead.

Carlton scribbles something on a piece of paper. He shows it
to Maggie.

CARLTON
Like this?

Sam inserts himself to get a peek.

MAGGIE & SAM
(in unison)
Yeah!

Carlton fires up a Bunsen Burner in the midst of an
impressive chemistry setup and burns the piece of paper.

CARLTON
Okay... don't get too bent out of shape
here, but...
(he takes a breath)
... that was a demon. A drone
technically. They usually get sent out
to do the grunt work.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Carlton pulls out a couple of test tubes filled with various colored liquids.

SUSAN
Whose grunt work?

Carlton unlocks a cabinet, removes a dirty cloth and unwraps a very old piece of wooden plank.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Carlton, tell us what's going on.

Carlton looks at the anxious and worried faces of his brother's family. He SIGHS.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (ROYAL COURT)- NIGHT

The walls are formed out of the faces of hideous monsters of all shapes, sizes, varieties and breeds. KING VICHNED sits on his throne. His pasty complexion is a stark contrast to his glowing, unblinking red eyes. By his side is MEYRINK, a subservient monster coated with a powdery white substance right up to its stark green eyes. Creatures #3 & #4 enter with Bruce, still in his pajamas and with a hood over his head. Creature #4 pulls off the hood and presents their catch to their king.

KING VICHNED
Welcome, Frick.

Bruce squints.

BRUCE
Where am I?

KING VICHNED
You're in my world now. Enjoy it while you can.

BRUCE
Mr. Seigler?

King Vichned looks around, confused.

KING VICHNED
I am King Vichned. Ruler of the Netherdom.

BRUCE
(chuckling)
Are you now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another demon, #9, enters and bows before King Vichned. Meyrink clearly doesn't like #9 and they exchange competitive sneers.

DEMON #9

You wanted to see me, my lord?

KING VICHNED

You were overseeing the frost furnace earlier?

DEMON #9

Earlier... when exactly?

KING VICHNED

(losing patience immediately)
Well obviously I can't answer that question, can I?

DEMON #9

No, my lord.

BRUCE

"Frost furnace"?

Vichned ignores him and continues to chew out #9.

KING VICHNED

You let the temperature rise to nearly thirty degrees. We were this close to
....

King Vichned stops himself, glancing at Bruce. He turns back to the demon with a lower tone.

MEYRINK

If our frost furnace goes out you know what that means, don't you?

KING VICHNED

Meyrink! I will do the berating in my own NetherKingdom!

Meyrink shrinks back, but sneers again at #9.

DEMON #9

Please accept my apologies, my lord.

KING VICHNED

Accepted. Report to the punishment hall to be melted down for parts.

Demon #9 can't believe his fate. Meyrink is absolutely delighted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEMON #9
Wha... ? Geez!

The dejected monster slithers off.

BRUCE
Can I go home now?

KING VICHNED
Silence!!

BRUCE
Okay.

KING VICHNED
We finally got you. Didn't we, Carlton?
After all these years.

BRUCE
Ah. I think there's been a mistake here.
Carlton is my brother. My name is Bruce.

KING VICHNED
Oh, very clever. I should expect no less
from a man who has made a career out of
embarrassing my subjects above in the
Ether.

BRUCE
Look if he's in some kind of trouble...
again... just let me know how much and
I'll cut you a check.

Vichned glares at Creature #4.

KING VICHNED
Are you sure you got the right man here?

Creature #4 is obviously anything but sure.

INT. OFFICE- NIGHT

Susan is still seated with a completely dumbfounded look on
her face.

SUSAN
You're serious?

CARLTON
But that's absolute worst case scenario.
Where's Bruce's phone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN

Wherever he is, he's got it with him. He keeps it in his pajama pocket in case someone pages him during the night.

Carlton, Sam and Maggie give a collective "are you serious" look to Susan. She shrugs sheepishly. Carlton goes back to work as Sam studies his every move. He cuts several small slivers from an old piece of wood and then burns them into a black powder over his bunsen burner. He pours the powder into hollowed-out, pointed bullet tips, seals them and then pushes them into brass casings. Maggie is poking around in one of his cases and comes across a picture of Carlton with a young woman.

MAGGIE

Who's this with you here? Are we picking her up before we go?

CARLTON

Oh, that's "Miss None of Your Business". You'd like her. And please take notice how I ignored your double use of the word "we".

SUSAN

We're coming with you. This is my husband we're talking about here, Carlton.

CARLTON

This is... a mind-bending array of things that you have absolutely no capacity to understand, Susan. These are powers and forces outside the realm of anything you've ever experienced, heard of, or imagined on even your best day of imagining. This is danger and the purest, most unadulterated evil ever known to mankind... that we are talking about here, Susan. Do you ever play Chess?

SUSAN

Chess? Why?

He doesn't bother with an answer, returning to packing up his saddlebag.

SAM

Ahem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Sam holds up a skull with two huge rubies embedded in the eye sockets. Carlton stares as if the boy has just produced the Holy Grail. He walk over to Sam, as if in a trance.

CARLTON

This is going to make things so much easier for me.

He reaches for it, but Sam pulls it away. Susan arches her eyebrows tauntingly.

SUSAN

For *us*. Your grandfather willed that disgusting thing to Sam.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (ROYAL COURT)- NIGHT

Meyrink and Creatures #3 and #4 are breaking pieces of glass of all shapes and sizes and holding them in front of Bruce's eyes, trying to draw his near sighted attention away from his beloved phone which he has pressed to his nose. King Vichned looks angry and frustrated.

BRUCE

(exhausted from explaining)
Look... I'm an efficiency expert. I am not... in any way, shape, form or fashion... a hunter of monsters. Okay? Not my area of expertise. I'm actually supposed to be in a process review meeting right now.

Bruce's phone BEEPS.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

See!? I don't suppose you've got wifi in here?

Meyrink holds another piece of glass in front of Bruce's face. Bruce squints through it, shakes his head "no" and returns to his phone.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Look, if you want a corporate procedure streamlined, you call me.

Another piece of glass is offered and rejected.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

If you want a dragon slain or... whatever, I guess that's my brother's territory. I never believed it much myself, but I guess it's true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Vichned grabs Creature #3 and pulls him right up to his apoplectic face.

KING VICHNED

Where is Kreslor? He's the only one who can truly identify him.

CREATURE #3

No one's seen him for... I don't know how long.

Vichned throws #3 across the room. Meyrink GIGGLES.

KING VICHNED

Obviously you don't know how long! No one knows how long anything here. And his secrecy has grown most troubling.

Creature #3 pulls himself out of a pile of odd gems the he has landed in. Vichned tries to close his never-closing eyes and rubs his temples.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)

His obsession with the human realm has become distracting and dangerous. It's going to take half a day to get out there.

CREATURE #3

How long is that?

KING VICHNED

You wouldn't understand even if I tried to explain it to you. Dare I ask about any activity on the time box?

Creature #3 averts his eyes. Bruce's attention is diverted.

BRUCE

"Time box"?

KING VICHNED

Silence!!!

BRUCE

Okay. Geez. Not a very open culture here. Got it.

KING VICHNED

We face Second War. And I fear that our time is short.

Meyrink offers Bruce another piece of glass. Bruce's eyes finally focus on his surroundings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRUCE

Oh my gosh.

Bruce takes hold of the piece of glass and has a good long look around. He lands on Creature #4's face and SCREAMS, dropping the glass which shatters on the floor. Meyrink grudgingly starts looking for another match.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

EXT. HIGHWAY- NIGHT

An old station wagon is the only car on the road. It speeds along, occasionally illuminated by an overhanging highway street lamp.

INT. CAR- CONTINUOUS

Carlton looks very annoyed listening to Sam sing "100 Bottles of Beer on the Wall". Susan is nervously looking over their upcoming itinerary.

CARLTON

I bet it is WAY past your bedtime, guys.

Sam props his chin on the shoulder of Carlton's seat.

SAM

Do you still get scared of monsters?

CARLTON

I don't get scared of anything.

SAM

Oh, right. Why not?

CARLTON

Monsters are just schoolyard bullies with claws and teeth. They're both in the fear business. Monsters concentrate on children because it's easier to make an impression. Adults reach a point where they've convinced themselves that monsters don't exist simply because the content of our nightmares evolves to reflect other junk like life, career, family... the real scary stuff.

MAGGIE

So are you married?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLTON
 (restarts the tune)
 "A hundred bottles of beer on the
 wall..."

Sam falls for it and JOINS IN. Maggie, frustrated by her uncle's evasion, slinks back in her seat.

EXT. HIGHWAY- CONTINUOUS

A highway lamp. The SOUND of FLAPPING increases then stops as something dark and evil wraps itself around the top of the lamp pole. It quickly crawls out toward the light and smashes it several times with a long, winged arm. The lamp explodes and fades to darkness.

INT. CAR- CONTINUOUS

All of the highway lights in the distance start exploding and going dark. Sam and Carlton stop SINGING as a sharp jolt shakes the car. Carlton struggles with the steering wheel to straighten their path. Suddenly grey, scarred arms smash through the windows of the car grabbing for the passengers.

CARLTON
 My bag! Quick!

Sam scrambles out of the grip of the nearest arm and passes the saddlebag to the front. Maggie looks at her mother who is paralyzed with a combination of fear and stubborn disbelief.

MAGGIE
 Should somebody take the wheel?

CARLTON
 Oh, I don't think it really matters at
 this point.

Horrible creatures (half bat/half human) start poking their faces through the ripped holes in the car's roof, their sharp fangs snapping at anything and everything. Carlton wraps his jacket sleeve around his hand and grabs the old piece of wood from his bag.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
 Nobody breathe for like five minutes!

He holds his lighter up to the wood which immediately bursts into flames producing a cloud of silver smoke. He jabs the burning wood at the arms and faces of the creatures.

EXT. HIGHWAY- DAWN

Smoke rolls out of the broken holes in the car. The bat creatures SCREECH as they drop the car back onto the road and fly off into what is left of the night.

INT. CAR- CONTINUOUS

Carlton brakes and throws the burning piece of wood out the window.

CARLTON
Sam! Fetch!

Sam climbs out of the car.

MAGGIE
(coughing)
What was that thing?

CARLTON
That was a piece of original floor plank from the first church ever built. Super concentrated goodness. Comes in pretty handy in my line of work.

EXT. HIGHWAY- CONTINUOUS

The sun is starting to rise over the horizon. Carlton, Maggie and Susan get out of the car. Sam returns with the smouldering piece of wood.

SAM
Hey! We trapped one!

He points out one of the vampire creatures pinned underneath the vehicle.

SUSAN
Keep your distance, Sam.

The line of rising sunlight creeps slowly across the empty highway and towards the trapped creature. The creature panics as it sees the rolling wave of illumination about to hit.

Carlton crouches down beside the creature and takes its hand. The creature seems appreciative. As the light hits its face, the creature begins to boil from inside until its skin breaks open and fire consumes it from within. Carlton releases its hand just as it bursts into flames. Within seconds, it has burned away to dust which scatters in the morning breeze, leaving no trace of what once was. Susan looks at Carlton, astonished by what they've just gone through.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN (CONT'D)

It's all real. And Bruce never told us.

CARLTON

I'm not sure whether he doesn't know or just doesn't want to know. He has his suspicions, but I think he's more comfortable thinking I'm a bum.

Sam is confused.

SAM

Why'd you get all cozy with him?! I'd have rubbed some garlic on my shoes and stomped his ugly face in!

MAGGIE

Oh, big talk now that it's dust. You were screaming like a girl a minute ago.

Carlton pulls an electronic device from his bag. It's LCD screen lights up and Carlton hits a couple of buttons. He waves it in the air just over the spot on the road where the vampire was consumed then looks at the screen.

INSERT SHOT: LCD SCREEN

A message scrolls across reading: "DNA residue--- NEGATIVE MATCH".

BACK TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Carlton breathes a sigh of what seems to be relief, turns the gizmo off and returns it to the bag.

CARLTON

My methods are a little more humane, Sam. They have no control over what they are. Vichned has been building his army over centuries. Some he makes on his own... demons... those I can destroy outright. Some he recruits from our world. Those I try to bring back.

MAGGIE

How do you know the difference?

CARLTON

Anything with a mostly human foundation... vampires, zombies, werewolves...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLTON (CONT'D)
that means that there's a human
underneath. They're mine. Vichned uses
them mainly for defense.

SAM
What does he use the demons for?

CARLTON
Recruitment. And lately they've been up
to something very big. They're trying to
transmit some kind of signal into our
world. And now they've learned to
disguise themselves.

SUSAN
As what?

CARLTON
As us unfortunately. Misadvising our
religious, financial, and political
leaders. As if we need more reasons not
to trust each other. They've got us all
playing against each other.

Carlton pulls their luggage from his shmushed car.

MAGGIE
Why would King Vichned recruit my dad?

Carlton conspicuously ignores the question.

CARLTON
We should keep moving. Take advantage of
as much daylight as we can. Hopefully,
we'll be on a plane before they have time
to organize another attack.

Susan shoots him a curious look.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP

A STEREOTYPICAL BUSINESSMAN dressed in a clearly 80's style
suit with very wide shoulder and lapels and a thin leather
tie, is sweating profusely at the brow as he delivers an
impassioned speech.

STEREOTYPICAL BUSINESSMAN
And in conclusion, diverting all
corporate profits into blah blah-based
futures will boost dividends, increase
market share and, most of all, build a
firm foundation for tomorrow. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

His skin begins to bubble and then melts away, revealing a DEMON underneath.

INT. NETHERDOM (CLOCK TOWER)- CONTINUOUS

The businessman/demon is standing in front of RILLIAN, Kreslor's right hand demon. Markings of black and gold bleed into each other on Rillian's snake-like skin based on where his internal energy is focused. Behind them is a massive clockface and an equally substantial pendulum which hangs dormant. The face of the giant clock is also missing it's minute hand. Rillian's colors swirl up to his throat as he YELLS.

RILLIAN

(furious)

Again! Why can't we fix this problem, Mr. Richards!?

DICK RICHARDS, a man in his mid-sixties stirs a bucket of slop with disdain. Behind him is a row of rubber masks of human faces. Occupying a massive space behind them is a huge spectral antenna that looks as if it's been painstakingly cobbled together over many years (and through many eras of technology).

High above everything is an undulating ceiling of swirling, sickly colors that occasionally drip either upwards or downwards (sort of like a massive, flattened out lava lamp). The top of the antenna sits just below the dancing, multi-colored sky.

RILLIAN (CONT'D)

When we recruited you from Hollywood, you went on and on about how excited you were and what a challenge it was going to be to turn monsters into people instead of the other way around.

DICK RICHARDS

The real challenge is what you've given me to work with. I've been on some low budget, B minus pictures in my time, but I've never been forced to produce under such adverse conditions. This latex is terrible quality. The slightest increase in body temperature is going to melt it like butter on a hot griddle. You can't get even the least bit frazzled or nervous.

The demonic businessman impersonator picks at his itchy collar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEMON

Are you sure these clothes are right?

DICK RICHARDS

No! I'm not. You guys brought me down here in the early eighties. That's the last I remember in terms of cutting edge fashion.

A disgusting purplish-green blob starts to cascade downward from the right towards Dick's head. He ducks and covers, but the glop dissipates and reintegrates upwards back into the swirling mess.

DICK RICHARDS (CONT'D)

Not the best working conditions!

Dick starts fitting another mask onto the frustrated demon.

DICK RICHARDS (CONT'D)

And I'm running low on spirit gum just in case anyone cares!

RILLIAN

(annoyed)

I'll see what I can do!

Rillian's markings move from his head downward towards his back... his relaxed state.

DICK RICHARDS

You're not even thinking about how to get me more spirit gum, are you?

The black and gold patterns shoot back up to Rillian's head.

RILLIAN

Yes! Fine! Yes, I am!

Dick smiles, happy to have pestered his chief pesterer just a little bit. Vichned and Meyrink float in with Meyrink leaving a trail of white powder drifting in the air behind him.

RILLIAN (CONT'D)

(with obvious disrespect to Vichned)

"My lord".

Meyrink glares at Rillian. No love lost between these two. Rillain HISSES at Meyrink, startling him a bit. Vichned picks up one of Dick Richards masks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DICK RICHARDS
Please be caref..

The mask liquefies in Vichned's hands.

DICK RICHARDS (CONT'D)
Oh, thank you!

KING VICHNED
(to Rillian)
Still wasting time playing human,
Rillian?

RILLIAN
Gaining access. Establishing positions
of power... and partnerships.

Vichned walks over to the spectral antenna.

KING VICHNED
And your latest monstrosity?

RILLIAN
Will transmit a new era of fear upwards
and outwards to the human realm... my
lord.

They are interrupted by Bruce who wanders in, completely engrossed with a large ledger that he is paging through.

BRUCE
Just trying to keep myself busy here...
I've been looking over the past hundred
and forty years' worth of performance
reviews and there's not too much to be
bragging about.

Vichned turns to Meyrink.

KING VICHNED
He and his family have been killing us
for four hundred years! You don't maybe
stick him in some manacles?

Meyrink looks a little embarrassed.

BRUCE
To be fair, I haven't been the one
stirring the pot. So f I can help you
guys out at all... and I can... then just
return the favor and send me back to my
family.

Bruce directs his attention to the strange clock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Your "time box" there to be in some rather severe disrepair. How do you measure anything down here if not by time?

KING VICHNED

The time box's purpose is not to provide continuous linear reference. It was constructed by beings from a world beyond ours or yours. Before time even existed.

MEYRINK

(menacingly)

The "UnderDwellers".

Vichned notices the disbelieving creatures around him, flashing skeptical faces to each other. Bruce notices too.

KING VICHNED

We managed to defeat them and freeze them into the unyielding permafrost of the NetherKingdom floor. The clock froze the very moment of our glorious victory. And has remained dormant for the centuries since. But their defeat was always to be temporary. When the time comes... and it will come... that The UnderDwellers are steadied for a Second War... the clock will start again. And it will give us exactly one hour to prepare, and amass.

Rillian rolls his eyes and mouths along with Vichned.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)

And fight. For the last time.

MEYRINK turns angrily to Rillian.

MEYRINK

We see what you're doing!

Rillian stops his mocking and Vichned turns back to Bruce, almost whispering to him.

KING VICHNED

I can feel their energy pulsating underneath me. Growing stronger. More defined. At times it drives me... quite mad.

BRUCE

I'm getting that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Lightning flashes erupt in the evil rainbow sky above them as a thick, dark rain starts to fall. Before the drops hit the ground they materialize into Kreslor, taking form through a rain of sludge. He points to Bruce.

KRESLOR

THEY are our enemies! For centuries! We helped their kind adapt to their punishing environment. Then, once they mastered the use of their thumbs they turned on us. Banished us here. While you've been quaking on your throne, still subservient to your extinct threat, we have been inciting wars, shaking economies, and weakening faiths. Our noble purpose.

KING VICHNED

I grow tired of explaining this to you and your mutinous army.

KRESLOR

Growing mutinous army.

Kreslor holds up one of a collection of dark cubes housed in a glass container on the antenna base.

KRESLOR (CONT'D)

We've crystallized four hundred years worth of everything that has psychologically immobilized the human race. And soon we will be able to use their own technology against them. Phones, computers, televisions, PermaScreens. Anything that transmits a signal will bring their darkest, most primal subconscious nightmares into their every waking moment. Their minds will disassemble under the strain of their own customized, personalized phobias, anxieties, dark fetishes, and deepest fears. They will be entombed in a catatonic fear state for us to take full advantage of.

Vichned takes all this in. He is clearly torn. Impressed, but still needing to focus on what he perceives to be the true danger. Vichned blasts Kreslor and all of his insolence into the air by an invisible hold on his demon throat, suspending him just above his own face.

KING VICHNED

I will decide the direction in which we aim our threat. Is that clear?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Kreslor remains defiant and angry.

KRESLOR

No. Because you haven't made anything clear to any of us. You simply expect our loyalty.

He releases Kreslor, who quickly recovers and picks himself up from the icy floor.

KING VICHNED

Our noble purpose has changed! And our time is short! We're lucky to have Carlton here to help.

Kreslor makes a confused face and floats up to Bruce. He grabs his head and stares into his eyes. After a beat, Kreslor releases Bruce and wipes his hand on his chest.

KRESLOR

(disgusted)

That's not Carlton.

King Vichned cannot believe the incompetence.

BRUCE

What I've been telling you. I'm his brother. Somehow.

KRESLOR

And this oaf... what does he know about his brother's latest scheme?

KING VICHNED

That doesn't matter now!

KRESLOR

Doesn't matter?! That could very well be our undoing! All of us!

KING VICHNED

He doesn't seem to know anything. Apparently the real Carlton is at least smart enough to keep his family out of his business.

DISSOLVE TO:

A MAP OF THE WORLD

A red line covers their journey from the north east corner of the United States, across the Atlantic and into the Balkans area of Europe.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAIN- EVENING

Carlton, Susan, Sam and Maggie are in the cabin of a very old train. Susan pulls the blanket tighter around Sam and Maggie, who are now soundly asleep. Carlton looks up from one of his books.

SUSAN

So this is a family business? Monster hunting?

CARLTON

"Creature Correction Specialization" technically. Our grandfather was one of the best. Legendary. He's was the one who taught me.

SUSAN

What about your father?

CARLTON

It skipped a generation there. He just sort of convinced himself that it was all nonsense.

SUSAN

I guess he convinced Bruce as well.

CARLTON

Our dad never let us around our grandfather much, but one Christmas... I was around ten... he had me sneak him a couple of gin and tonics and told me our whole history which goes all the way back to this town... where the first of King Vichned's monsters was destroyed.

Carlton pulls the necklace out from inside his shirt. At its center point is a sharp, slightly curved tooth about three inches long with tiny serrated spikes sticking out of each side.

SUSAN

My god. Destroyed by your great, great, etcetera grandfather.

CARLTON

After that, the district church secretly hired him to fight the forces of evil on an "as needed" contract basis. And so on and so on. Down the line.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN

They were trying to get you, weren't they? They took Bruce by mistake.

Carlton closes the book and looks at her in silent assent.

CARLTON

Over the past fifteen years I've been piecing together a formula that will actually diminish a monster's scaring capacity almost entirely. Imagine that. It robs them of the one thing they have. Without our fear, they're powerless.

Sam perks up. He's been listening.

SAM

Can I try some?

SUSAN

No.

CARLTON

It's perfectly safe. One hundred percent natural ingredients. Relatively pleasant tasting... at least it is now. I'm still one ingredient away. That's why they've been getting so nervous... and so desperate. Unfortunately Bruce got caught in the crossfire.

SUSAN

So, this formula is just for kids?

CARLTON

Not at all. Most grown-ups can't pick out the disguised demons operating among us. We may get weird feelings about someone from time to time, but that'll be it. This is going to let anyone and everyone see through the disguises. So, if my formula works, Vichned has a very serious problem on his hands. I could set his efforts back hundreds of years. And then... no more nightmares ever again.

Sam is looking at him in wide-eyed awe.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

The only problem is that I've never been able to get to the last missing piece. A dark rose. Black as the dead of midnight. And completely unattainable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He glances at the skull peeking out of Sam's bag.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

Until now.

MAGGIE

So what is that thing anyway? And why are you so fascinated by it?

CARLTON

This is the most important piece of the earthly remains of Prince Andreas Teodor Vichned the Third. His crypt is the first stop on tomorrow's tour. Rumor was that he was building a passage to the Netherworld. Problem was that once he connected he opened a gate for evil to come and go as it pleased.

He taps the skull.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

This is the key that's going to get us through that gate. And, if we can shut it, we can hopefully turn off the antenna that powers King Vichned's army of monsters all over the world. That, Maggie, is why I am so fascinated by this.

MAGGIE

Justified.

INT. HOTEL ROOM- LATER

Susan and Sam are asleep, tucked into one of the beds. Maggie is asleep in the other. Carlton is still awake and taking notes on one of his big old books. He turns a page to find the photograph of him and the woman that Maggie was looking at before. He stares at it sadly and takes out the silver rings he grabbed from Kreslor. Behind him, a muffled "Flight of the Valyries" is barely audible under Sam's pillow. The annoying tune finishes and Sam wakes up with a start. He is sweating.

CARLTON

Bad dream?

SAM

(sarcastic but embarrassed)
No. It was delightful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLTON

You know, when I was your age, I used to have the same nightmare over and over. I was in this cave with the most horrible creature biting and scratching at my back as I was running away from it as fast as I could... too terrified to even look over my shoulder.

SAM

Sounds a little like my dream.

CARLTON

I'd wake up out of breath and with my sheets twisted up tight around my legs. But then one night I felt that I was suddenly in complete control of my dream... and that I had actual conscious influence over its direction. I made myself turn and look over my shoulder... and you know what I suddenly realized?

SAM

(smiles)

That the monster wasn't so scary afterall.

CARLTON

Oh no. Huge horns. Bulging yellow eyes, snapping fangs dripping its dark stinking drool, huge claws with strands of flesh still dangling from the tips.

SAM

(troubled)

Can we maybe get this pep talk back on track please?

CARLTON

I realized that, despite the circumstances, there was a definite limit to their powers and that made them vulnerable. My life changed forever that night and the next morning I finally knew what I needed to be.

SAM

I think I'd like to be like you when I grow up.

CARLTON

I could definitely use the help.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Carlton plucks the strange tooth that hangs from the pendant around his neck and hands it to Sam.

SAM

Whoa!

Sam smiles and lies back down, studying his new fascinating new possession.

SAM (CONT'D)

We're going to get him back, right Uncle Carlton?

CARLTON

Yeah, Sam. We are.

Sam tucks the tooth under his watch band and rolls over. Carlton returns to his photograph.

INT. GRAVEYARD- LATE AFTERNOON

The setting sun behind them stretches the shadows of the trees and tombstones as Carlton and his cohorts make their way through the graveyard. The sun disappears behind clouds as a light, cold rain starts to fall. Sam puts another coat of Blistex on his lips.

CARLTON

You're addicted to that stuff.

SAM

I get chapped lips real bad in the winter.

Carlton is loading the color coded bullets into cylinders which he then pushes into little clips on the strap of his saddlebag for easy access. He takes out an old Army Colt from his saddlebag and loads a cylinder full of blue-tipped bullets into it.

CARLTON

You need the speed loader, see? These bullets won't fit in an automatic. And you're frequently up against more than you can handle with six shots.

SAM

Got it!

MAGGIE

Can we all just catch our breath for a minute?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

You seem to be the only one out of breath, Muffin Butt. No wonder you got kicked off the gymnastics team.

MAGGIE

I quit because it was stupid and degrading to women. And shut up!

Maggie slams her fist into Sam's arm.

SAM

Ow! Uncle Carlton, Maggie hit me.

CARLTON

(nodding)
Caught that.

Susan and Carlton steal a moment as she catches him staring at her.

SUSAN

I know I should be freaking out, but I can't help feeling a little... charged.

They don't see Maggie trailing a few steps behind and listening in on their conversation.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I know this is business as usual for you, but I guess I just haven't had much adventure in my life.

MAGGIE

(muttering sarcastically to herself)
Gee, you don't say?

CARLTON

I seem to remember you're having quite an interesting past. When Bruce first mentioned meeting you at school, he said you were one of those cool hippy chicks protesting the war and fighting for societal good.

Behind them, Maggie is very surprised to learn this.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

And that you even addressed Congress in support of additional funding for the EPA.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUSAN

Bruce told you about that?

CARLTON

He was awestruck by you.

SUSAN

Well, that was a long time ago. Don't get me wrong though, Bruce and the kids are the best thing that ever happened to me. I love being a mom.

Maggie takes in her mother's words. Sam walks past her and catches up to Carlton and Susan.

SAM

So with vampires, we can just drive a stake through their heart during the daytime while they're asleep in their coffins, right?

MAGGIE

(scoffing)

Get your head out of Bela Lugosi's butt.

Carlton smiles.

CARLTON

Where we're going there is no daytime. Also real vampires always keep one eye open in their coffins. So they're never an easy target.

Carlton pulls three wooden stakes from his saddlebag.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

Don't touch the tips. They're coated with a special serum. It takes a minute, but it usually works well enough.

Carlton points out a plastic ring fastened one inch from the stake's tip.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

The disc prevents the stake from going more than three quarters of an inch into the target's chest... thus *correcting* not *killing*.

Carlton, Susan and the children have reached the far end of the cemetery and now stand in front of a thick, dark forest. The sun is beginning to set.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARLTON (CONT'D)

Vichned didn't want to be buried among the mortals so he built further in. Everyone stay close. This forest has a nasty reputation.

SAM

What kind of nasty reputation?

The trees are positioned so closely together that Carlton and the others can barely squeeze in between them.

INT. GRAVEYARD FOREST- CONTINUOUS

The black trees pulse like veins surging with the evil energy of the cursed ground.

SAM

(repeating his question)

What *kind* of nasty reputation?

CARLTON

How about I give you a dollar for every question you don't ask me?

SAM

I make a comfortable allowance.

MAGGIE

Over comfortable.

CARLTON

Legend has it that these trees move, shifting their position so that nothing ever seems familiar and you can't mark a trail to follow back out again. King Vichned had the forest cursed to protect the secret location of his tomb.

Carlton grabs another device from his bag.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

I had this compass specially made by a electronics guy at NASA. It doesn't need to rely on magnetic fields.

He shows the screen to Sam.

SUSAN

It'd be nice to see you pay this much attention to your science homework, Sam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Mom, this isn't science. This is real life.

Maggie seems a little resentful of all the attention her uncle is showing her brother.

CARLTON

Here. We're the red blip. And you keep that in the middle of this little rectangle. Then you're good. For some reason, this place trips out traditional compasses; drives them all haywire. But you've got to be really quiet for a while now, okay? Sound waves, approximating the frequency of your voice oddly enough, have been known to interfere with the compass' signal. So the more you talk... the more lost we could get.

SAM

(whispers)

Can I whisper?

Carlton looks at the compass and shakes it.

CARLTON

Oh no! I lost the signal!

Sam, looking very worried, shuts his mouth tight. Maggie recognizes the joke Carlton is playing to get a bit of peace and quiet.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

Ah! Got it back.

Carlton walks onward, locked in on the signal. They follow.

SUSAN

Sam is really in his element with all this stuff. Should I be worried?

CARLTON

Everyone needs a calling.

Carlton shoots a quick glance at Maggie, who meets it but, at the same time, seems somewhat surprised by it. Through a clearing in the forest, they see a cold stone mausoleum. Even Carlton seems a bit amazed that it actually exists.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

Wow. There it is. The gate to King Vichned's NetherKingdom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

So I can talk now?

CARLTON

Wouldn't risk it if I were you.

Sam, frustrated, closes his mouth again. Carlton is mesmerized as he runs his hand over the stone wall.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

He planned on dying inside and purposely designed it without a traditional entrance.

Slabs of stone surround the crypt like the petals of a huge grey flower. Carlton wedges a crowbar under one of the slabs and pulls back with all his might. The slab lifts up from the ground. Carlton lets it back down. He tries the next slab with the same result. Carlton's crowbar lifts the third slab and this time, as the slab rises, a vacuum of air is released from underneath. As mist from the ground seeps in, Susan suddenly begins to sink into the dark mud... almost up to her knees.

SUSAN

I'm stuck!

Maggie tries to go over to help her mother. Susan grabs her right leg and pulls. Her legs slowly starts coming out of the thick mud, but there is a hand clasped around it. She GASPS as the head of a ZOMBIE rises out of the mud right in front of her.

SAM

Do something, Carlton! Hurry!

Carlton rummages around in his saddlebag.

MAGGIE

He's got Vampire Bullets in there, Sam!
I doubt you can just go around shooting
zombies with the wrong ammo!

Carlton looks at Maggie impressed as he pops a new cylinder of grey-tipped bullets into his revolver.

CARLTON

Good instinct, Maggie. Yes, there are rules.

He quickly takes aims and fires at the zombie which is now halfway emerged in front of Susan. It stops its attack and sinks back down into the thick mud.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Carlton jumps over to Susan and sticks something yellow into the zombie's outstretched stiff hand. He closes its fingers around whatever it is that he put into its palm just as the hand disappears under the mud.

SUSAN

What was that?

Before Carlton can answer, the muddy dirt in a hill directly behind them starts to move and three zombies squish out, advancing toward Carlton and Susan. Maggie and Sam SCREAM. Carlton and Susan whip around just in time to move out of the way.

CARLTON

Don't let them bite you!

Carlton shoots one of the zombies then grabs a plastic bit from his bag and jams it into the mouth of another one right before it bites down on Susan's arm. Susan winces and prepares for pain that never comes. She opens one eye and then the other. The zombie stops its biting and looks up. It's jaw is stuck open by the mouthpiece which covers all of its dangerous teeth. The zombie looks very frustrated as it slobbers and gums away on Susan but to no effect.

SUSAN

Yuck! Would you stop, please!?

As Carlton fights off the third undead assailant, a dozen more rise up from the mud and another five crawl out from the hill. Carlton fires off the remaining four zombie bullets and swaps out the empty barrel for a full one. They help Carlton pull the slab away from the mausoleum wall. He shines the flashlight inside the hole, fires another couple of shots at the approaching zombies and gets Susan and the kids lowered into the hole.

INT. CRYPT HOLE- CONTINUOUS

Carlton climbs down and joins Susan, Maggie and Sam. They are crouched down just out of reach of the zombies grabbing for them from the hole opening. Carlton shines his flashlight around and spies something on the far wall.

SUSAN

Looks like there's some writing.

Before Carlton can stop her, she brushes away the grime to uncover the writing. Her sweeping hand hits a hidden lever and a trap door starts to open under their feet. Before they fall through, Carlton grabs a section of rope looped over his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLTON

Grab hold quick!

He lassoes the other end of the rope up through the hole opening and over one of the watchful gargoyles atop the mausoleum. His flashlight falls between his dangling legs and down about twenty feet, illuminating iron spikes sticking up from the floor below.

They are now all dangling in the dark hole. Sam's watch SOUNDS OFF again. He lets out an annoyed SIGH.

INT. NETHERWORLD (CAVE OF THE FROST FURNACE)- NIGHT

At the center of a huge icy cave an immense furnace burns with ice blue and purple flames in the background. The glow of the furnace dies down a bit and eight worker demons (spider-faced creatures) work an assembly line chopping large chunks of ice from the walls around them and shoveling the glistening chunks into the furnace.

As the blue flames crackle and expand, a trail of glowing blue slush starts to trail slowly outward from the furnace, cutting a swirling path across the ground, simultaneously lighting the cavernous room and bringing its temperature down to frigid levels (indicated on a nearby thermostat).

KING VICHNED

This is what keeps the UnderDwellers at bay. Glacial lava, icy gas and cold flame. As long as we're in the blue, and this lava stays frozen, we're safe. Even a slight increase in temperature, if not immediately corrected and overcompensated for, places us in great jeopardy. And our dying frost furnace has had to struggle all the harder recently to protect this kingdom we conquered.

BRUCE

You must be terribly worried about this Second War.

KING VICHNED

If the NetherKingdom is reclaimed by the UnderDwellers, your human race will suffer a fate far worse than anything Kreslor could design for you. An eternal torture past the point of anything you could possibly imagine in your darkest nightmares.

Vichned motions to the frozen floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)

This is where they are buried. And this is from where they will rise again.

As the glowing blue glacial lava traces a trail under their feet it illuminates about a dozen or so creatures frozen in the icy floor. They are just shadowy statues. No real detail can be seen, but their dark outlines are gigantic and horrible.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)

And this will be where my perfect monster army, will resume our battle.

BRUCE

Perfect monster army?

KING VICHNED

Yes. Hand selected...

MEYRINK

... by Lord Vichned...

Vichned turns to his underling.

KING VICHNED

Of course by me!

MEYRINK

I'm just explaining, my lord.

KING VICHNED

(exasperated)

Not required.

Vichned gets back to the story.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)

Selected from thousands of years of our history and anointed... by me... to wage Second War against our greatest foes.

BRUCE

So... once that clock starts...

KING VICHNED

Yes?

BRUCE

I guess I'm a little confused. What's the value of having an hour to prepare? That's not much time at all. Why not have your perfect army staked out and ready to knock heads at all times.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Meyrink rolls his eyes.

KING VICHNED

Unfortunately my perfect army will have a short lifespan. My behemoths, when they were finally defeated in your Upper Ether, were returned here. Once I resurrect them, they will have only one hour of their original glory restored to them. One hour with me to fight the UnderDwellers. One hour before they fade for the final time.

Bruce contemplates this new complication for a beat.

MEYRINK

So they've only got one hour of life left in them.

KING VICHNED

He's got it!

MEYRINK

Does he?

Bruce makes a face at Meyrink, who returns it.

KING VICHNED

Once the clock starts, we've got a lot of work to do.

BRUCE

You've been using that word "we" an awful lot.

KING VICHNED

Your fate is in the balance as well as ours. You may not be your brother, but you are still connected to a very impressive monster fighting pedigree. You will have to embrace the way of your family.

INT. CRYPT (SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER)- NIGHT

Carlton has lit a couple of torches hanging on the walls. Sam's watch finishes up "... Valkyries".

SUSAN

Let's get you a new watch as soon as we get back home, okay honey?

SAM

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Maggie is the last to climb down the rope and into the crypt. She is having trouble swinging over to a foothold to avoid the floor spikes. Carlton grabs the rope and pulls her over to it. She jumps off and climbs down to join them.

MAGGIE

I could have done it myself!

CARLTON

Sorry. I know you could have. It's okay to take a little help now and again.

He grabs a torch and leads them to a vast section of floor which dips downward at a slant of about thirty degrees and is covered with all sorts of geometric shapes carved into it.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

This looks familiar.

He grabs an old leather book from his bag and references a marked page.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

The only worker lucky enough to get out of here alive was committed to a mental asylum shortly afterwards. A doctor recorded some of his rantings about the work he had been instructed to do while he was in here.

He hands the book to Maggie.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

Check the pages I marked. It's some good reading. Most of it either doesn't make sense or was lost in translations over the years or whatever... but this part I can make out...

He point to a spot on the page for her.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

He said that there was "safety in circles".

SAM

So what? We all join hands?

Carlton kneels down and studies one of the round shapes on the floor. He grabs a nearby wooden plank and taps on the circle. Then he taps on the square next to it. The square shatters away like thin ice on a frozen pond.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The broken pieces clatter down and are absorbed into a dark sludge about ten feet below. Carlton starts making his way using the circles as his stepping stones. The others follow carefully in his footsteps. Maggie looks at her brother.

MAGGIE
(scoffing)
"All join hands".

Sam slips off of his circle and slides down a couple of feet. He is lying on his stomach, but can plainly see that he is now on a triangle and a square. He tries to crawl back to his circle, but the floor starts to crack underneath him.

SUSAN
Sam! Are you okay?

SAM
Next dumb question.

The floor underneath Sam cracks some more. A couple of pieces fall out and downward. The next circle is far away and Carlton can see that he's running out of time. With a limited running start, he jumps to the circle, landing half on/half off as the floor under his heel breaks away. In one fell swoop, he straightens up onto the circle, falls to his stomach and swings the plank of wood over to Sam just as the floor under him shatters. Sam grabs hold of the plank which has caught the edges of two nearby circles leaving him hanging between. Carlton jumps over and pulls Sam up onto the circle.

SAM (CONT'D)
Thanks, Uncle Carlton.

CARLTON
(very out of breath)
Don't mention it.

Carlton grabs the plank and bridges the gap back to safety. As they reach the circle, the plank snaps in half and both pieces shatter through the floor, disappearing into the sludge underneath.

INT. CRYPT (THIN ROOM)- CONTINUOUS
Sam, undaunted, leads the way as they creep into a room with very high ceilings but only about twenty feet deep. There is absolutely nothing in the room but cold stone walls. Carlton is impressed with the boy's courage.

SAM
Dead end?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLTON

Not likely. Stay here.

Susan and the children wait in the room's entrance archway while Carlton slowly enters.

SAM

(noticing something)

Hey, what's that?

Sam runs past Carlton to the opposite end of the long, skinny room.

SUSAN

Sam Frick, you get back here right now!

CARLTON

What is it?

SAM

I don't know. It looks like some kind of foot pedal.

Maggie looks up from the book.

CARLTON & MAGGIE

(in unison)

Don't...

Don't...

Sam taps it with his foot. Suddenly the floor of the room tilts like a seesaw, Sam's end rising and Carlton's dipping down sharply. They both struggle to keep their balance.

CARLTON

Atta boy!

SAM

Sorry!

Like a slow propeller blade, the floor starts to spin around on its axis. As Carlton's half of the floor tilts further and further downward, a hole in the wall behind it comes into view. Carlton makes a jump for the hole. He grabs a half of a skeleton (its upper torso) pulls it out of the hole and then crawls up into it, disappearing inside.

Sam's section of floor is now angled upwards at around sixty degrees and still rising. Sam stares down into the dark abyss below. He loses his grip and slides down the floor, SCREAMING. Carlton pops out of the hole and grabs Sam's arm as he slides down the floor. He drags him up into the hole just as the spinning floor crashes downward like a guillotine blade.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

INT. CRYPT (BURIAL CHAMBER)- CONTINUOUS

Carlton and Sam crawl through a small opening leading to a large stone room with strange faces and symbols carved into the walls. Carlton looks around, delicately feeling the walls. He finds a stone that is sticking slightly out from the wall and pushes it. There is a loud GRINDING sound just outside the opening.

INT. CRYPT (THIN ROOM)- CONTINUOUS

Susan and Maggie watch as the spinning section of floor slows to a stop, providing easy access to the hole that Carlton and Sam escaped through.

INT. CRYPT (BURIAL CHAMBER)- MOMENTS LATER

Susan and Maggie climb through to join Carlton and Sam. Carlton lights some more torches so that they can check out their new surroundings.

CARLTON

That worker was able to get out of here via a secret escape hatch that he took it upon himself to build into one of the rooms. I guess he figured halfway through the job that Vichned wasn't planning on letting anyone back out. It doesn't say where it is though.

MAGGIE

Well, we're running out of rooms. Where is this jerk?

Sam drops his tube of Blistex and bends down to retrieve it.

SUSAN

Don't even think of putting that near your lips now.

He picks it off of the floor. His hand is covered in dust. He SNEEZES. The force of his sneeze blows the dust away from a portion of the ground. A face is staring up at him from underneath the floor. Sam jumps up and SCREAMS.

SAM

Um... I think I found him.

He points downward. Carlton brushes the dust off of Prince Vichned's glass casket which has been built into the floor. A lifelike portrait of his face has been painted on a stone and placed where his head should be.

Maggie references another page.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE
Vichned's burial chamber.

Carlton stands up and raises his boot above the glass.

CARLTON
Stand back. And hold your breath.

He smashes the glass, releasing a cloud of vapor from the chamber. The body inside undergoes 600 years of decomposition in six seconds. Carlton rolls the pictured face aside and delicately eases the skull into place back atop the shoulders of Prince Vichned's skeleton. A round hole irises open high up on the wall in front of them; the entrance to a dark tunnel.

Suddenly another hole opens in the middle of the ceiling and sand begins to pour into the room, filling it like an hourglass. Maggie taps the page she's on.

MAGGIE
I was just about to mention that.

SUSAN
I hate this guy so much.

CARLTON
Okay, we've got about...

He tries to gauge the rate of the falling sand and the size of the room.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
... two hours tops to get in, get the last ingredient to my potion...

CUT TO:

INSERT SHOT: SAM'S WATCH

Sam sets the stopwatch feature for ninety minutes and counting.

CARLTON (V.O.)
... and get back out again.

BACK TO:

INT. CRYPT (BURIAL CHAMBER) -CONTINUOUS

Maggie looks at Carlton.

MAGGIE
And find my dad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLTON

(beat)

Oh, right. Wow, we should really get going. Lots to do.

Carlton starts hoisting everyone up towards the irised tunnel.

INT. NETHERDOM (CLOCK TOWER)- CONTINUOUS

Rillian, out of breath, is updating Kreslor with some important information. His markings concentrated around his legs.

RILLIAN

Someone has just entered our dimension, Lord Kreslor.

Kreslor's face contorts into a drippingly dark smile.

KRESLOR

He took the bait.

Kreslor smiles and pulls a beautiful crystal key from a chain bolted into the side of his neck.

KRESLOR (CONT'D)

Good thing I have a little more to keep his attention.

EXT. NETHERWORLD- NIGHT

A huge mountain is pockmarked with hundreds of tiny holes. Carlton, Susan and Maggie tumble out of one of them and roll down the mountain about thirty feet. Susan looks around.

SUSAN

Where's Sam!?

Above them, Sam pokes her head out of the hole from which they rolled.

CARLTON

Sam! Mark the entrance so we know which hole to climb back through on our way out of here.

He starts to rip a long piece off of his sleeve.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NETHERWORLD (DARK FOREST)- A LITTLE LATER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They slow to a somewhat more relaxed pace to catch their breath as the clouds lighten and separate away from a strange full moon.

SAM
It smells like rotten brussel sprouts here.

Susan spots some wild flowers growing off to the side of the path.

SUSAN
I've never seen this kind of flower before. I wonder what it is.

Carlton rushes over to her, sees the flower she's looking at, and then loses all apparent interest.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Not the flower you're looking for, huh?

CARLTON
Nope. Just "wolfbane".

Off in the distance a HOWL is heard.

SAM
Did you guys hear that?

MAGGIE
(trying to convince herself)
No!

CARLTON
Well, you'll get another chance. Only next time it'll probably ...

Another louder HOWL.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
... be a lot closer.

He pops another barrel (lilac tips) into his revolver.

SAM
Silver bullets?

CARLTON
What?

SAM
You've got silver bullets in there now, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARLTON

Boy, do you watch too many movies.

SUSAN

That's what I tell him.

Carlton cocks the pistol in preparation.

CARLTON

These little babies pack a nice wallop though. Distilled cider vinegar, cardamon, powdered Ugandan wolf whisker, crystallized ginger root, in a rare cactus oil base.

He grabs a piece of paper from his pocket and hands it to Sam.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

I took the liberty of writing down the recipe. Fill the casings halfway. That's just enough to start counteracting the infection, but not quite enough to kill them.

SUSAN

So you're shooting them full of salad dressing?

CARLTON

Don't worry. The best thing about werewolves is that they're pretty much homogeneously stupid. I remember one time in Scotland...

He is interrupted by a GROWLING something or other that leaps into FRAME and knocks him to the ground. His bag lands several feet away and completely out of reach. The pistol GOES OFF as it is knocked from his hand. A snarling werewolf is on top of him and it takes all the strength Carlton can muster through his arms and legs just to keep it inches away from ripping him apart.

Sam runs over and retrieves the gun, but before he can throw it back to Carlton another werewolf steps in and cuts him off. Sam is frozen.

MAGGIE

Shoot, Sam!

Sam can only seem to move his shaking legs, but he manages to pull the trigger even though the gun is pointed at the ground. The loud BANG rattles him even further but does nothing to frighten off the monster in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Several feet away from Sam, Carlton, with his free hand takes his Indonesian war pendant and, with lightning speed, wraps it around the snout of the werewolf that is pinning him down. He tucks a small yellow card under the string of the pendant as he pulls it tight; effectively muzzling the frustrated beast who unsuccessfully claws at the constricting pendant, then slinks away rubbing its snout along the ground.

Carlton jumps up and taps the shoulder of the werewolf holding Sam at bay. The werewolf spins to one side as Carlton darts around behind it and rushes over to Sam. Carlton retrieves his pistol and fires a shot into the confused werewolf as it turns back around. Meanwhile, four glowing eyes burn out of the darkness directly in back of him as another pair of werewolves creeps into view.

SAM
(tugging on Carlton's jacket)
Uncle Carlton!

Carlton follows Sam's pointing finger and manages to get off two shots which hit one of the creatures as it is in mid pounce. It falls heavily to the ground and stays there. The remaining werewolf watches Carlton's every move as he slowly reaches into his bag and pulls out a large bone.

CARLTON
(throwing it to the werewolf)
There you go, boy!

The bone bounces over to the werewolf. The werewolf sniffs it and, without a great deal of interest, picks it up with its mouth. Carlton breathes a sigh of relief and uncocks the pistol. The werewolf clamps down on the treat, snaps it in half and spits it back out at Carlton's feet.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
So much for peaceful resolution.

Carlton shoots the werewolf and it keels over. Carlton notices that Sam is visibly shaken and ruffles the boy's hair reassuringly.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
See? Not the brightest of creatures.

Sam remains fixed to his spot.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

SAM
I am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Sam looks away to hide the tears filling his eyes.

SAM (CONT'D)

You're the bravest person I ever met.
And I let you down... because I was
really scared.

Carlton shoots Susan an uncomfortable look. He is out of his element here. She smiles and leaves them alone.

CARLTON

Hey, Sam... you didn't let me down.
Look, I'm going to tell you something and
I want to listen carefully, okay?

Sam looks at him. Carlton wipes his tears away.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

It's a lot easier to be brave when you
don't feel like you've got very much to
lose. That's where I am. See, you have
your family and your little league team
and your friends at school. You've got
more to risk than I do. A lot more.

Carlton pats Sam and then walks over to the first downed werewolf. He pokes one of the yellow cards onto one of its fangs.

MAGGIE

What **are** those things?

CARLTON

Every monster I correct has the option to
revert back into who they were before
Vichned got a hold of them. That's Path
One. If they feel that fitting back in
will be too much for them, they can take
the Path Two.

SAM

What's Path Two?

As Carlton walks away from the silent beast, there is a bright flash of light behind him. He turns around and the werewolf is gone. Only the little yellow card remains.

CARLTON

They can die.

Carlton retrieves the rejected card and hands it to Maggie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CARLTON (CONT'D)

These are for a little transitional aid
back to polite society.

He walks Maggie over to the second fallen werewolf and helps her put the card between two digits of its front paw. The paw is slowly starting to turn back into a human hand. The werewolf starts to GROAN. He rubs its head just short of affectionately.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

Good luck, pal.

Carlton dips into his bag and retrieves the DNA residue device. He waves it over the spot where the first werewolf died. He is happy to see another negative match message.

MAGGIE

So what does that thing do?

CARLTON

It analyzes traces of DNA from corrected monsters who choose Path Two. That way I can know whether they were a match.

SAM

A match for who?

CARLTON

Someone I've been looking for. Someone who was taken from me.

(pause)

A long time ago.

MAGGIE

Little Miss None of My Business?

CARLTON

"Jessica". Kreslor took her from me to recruit into Vichned's army.

SUSAN

I'm so sorry, Carlton.

Off in the distance, more HOWLING is heard. This time it is clearly coming from a lot more creatures.

CARLTON

And now we run away.

MAGGIE

That's your plan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

CARLTON

Chime in if you've got me beat.

They take off as fast as they can, leaving the rest of the werewolves behind.

EXT. NETHERWORLD (CLEARING)- A LITTLE LATER

Carlton and company break out of the wood and into a small clearing, making their way toward a steep hill with a strange glow emanating from the other side.

They stop. Sam checks his watch.

CUT TO:

INSERT SHOT- SAM'S WATCH

The stopwatch reads "01:23:34".

BACK TO:

EXT. NETHERWORLD (CLEARING)- CONTINUOUS

Susan wraps her arms around herself. Black snow is falling from the night sky. Sam tries to catch a flake on his tongue. Carlton catches the flake before it connects.

CARLTON

Remember your poison oak?

Sam lays down on his back and starts to make a snow angel. As soon as his gets up to look, his handiwork is covered back up, brushed over by some unseen force.

SAM

Hey!

Carlton walks up the hill towards the glow. They others follow.

EXT. NETHERWORLD (HILLTOP)- CONTINUOUS

They climb over the top of the hill and see a huge grey castle (The NetherKingdom) on the other side. A good portion of the castle looks to be buried under the ground as if it sunk after construction was completed. Although magnificently evil, it is also very noticeably lopsided.

CARLTON

I'm thinking this might be a relatively safe place for you guys to hide out while I go inside and try to find Bruce.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN

We're in this with you, Carlton.

CARLTON

Susan, there's no reason for you to risk it. That's my area. Okay?

SUSAN

No. Now you listen to me, okay? What you told Sam about being brave because you had nothing to lose? Well, I don't know if you've noticed or not or whether you like it or not, but you've got plenty to lose now. You've got three people right here who think the world of you. I know you and Bruce aren't very close, but we're your family too, Carlton.

Carlton is genuinely touched.

SAM

Like it or not.

CARLTON

Oh, I guess I like it okay. You guys, at least.

MAGGIE

I think you've kept yourself lonely long enough.

CARLTON

You guys picked a really bad time to give me something to lose.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (CRYSTAL TOMB)- CONTINUOUS

Kreslor glides into the glistening purple shrine. Long jagged crystals extend from every possible angle. A pristine white coffin is suspended from a cocoon-like contraption in the middle of the ceiling. The coffin has a large keyhole in the center. Kreslor looks at the coffin with eager eyes and taps the crystal key attached to his neck with his long, horrible fingernails.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (MAIN HALL)- CONTINUOUS

The palace of the Netherworld is far from splendid. In fact, it's pretty rundown and in quite a state of disrepair. Huge, grotesque trees have grown through the castle over the centuries. Twisted trunks, limbs and roots have ripped fissures in the walls. Water drips from cracks in the ceiling. Carlton and his whole something to lose walk inside ready for traps. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN

That was easy?

Suddenly, one of the twisted tree limbs comes to life, turning into a large snake and unfurling itself downwards. Susan starts to SCREAM, but catches herself and stifles it. Carlton punches the snake's head and sends it spiraling back upwards. Several more snakes uncoil themselves, slithering down to them. Susan, Maggie and Sam crouch down, but before Carlton can join them, a snake cascades down, wraps itself around his throat and lifts him from the ground. His saddlebag slides off his shoulder. Susan, Sam and Maggie grab him by the waist and legs and try to pull him back down.

CARLTON

(strangled)

Not helping!

They let go of him and Sam starts rummaging around in his bag for something useful. He manages to procure a large knife and tosses it upwards. Carlton grabs it and slashes it up over his head, cutting the snake in half. He crashes back down to the ground.

SAM

Are you okay?

He gets up, looks down at the dead half a snake still wrapped around his neck and straightens the two ends like a scarf.

CARLTON

What do you think? Pretty tasty actually.

Susan sees something off in the distance.

SUSAN

(whispering)

Carlton, look.

She points their attention to several dark figures coming their way. Carlton looks around and spots a large hollow hole in a nearby tree trunk sticking out from one of the walls.

CARLTON

In here. Quick.

They crawl into the tree and out of sight. The demons approach, sniffing at footprints on the ground. Suddenly, the annoying high pitched "Flight of the Valkyries" starts PLAYING out of Sam's watch giving up their hiding place. The demons cock their heads like confused animals.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM (O.C.)

Crap!

The nearest demon breaks a big branch off of the hollow tree trunk, revealing Sam smacking at his watch. Sam and Maggie are now very scared. Rillian slithers into view, his black and gold markings shoot up to his face as he confronts Carlton.

RILLIAN

Well, well. It appears that the war is over.

CARLTON

Well, well. If it isn't the lowly Number Two's lowly Number Two. And I mean that in the most scatological way possible. Just so the imagery isn't lost on you.

SAM

"Number Two" means poop.

Rillian bends down to Sam and makes his demonic face even more terrifying. He GROWLS menacingly at the boy. Carlton kicks Rillian in the head and the creature's markings swirl from his head to his gut as he whips back up to Carlton.

CARLTON

What a two's two move! Can't scare me so you take it down as low as you can.

SUSAN

No need to provoke! Let's all just try to stay calm here.

Carlton is distracted by something: a flower extending out just next to his head. It's a glorious rose, as black as the dead of midnight! And dripping with thick oil. As the demons twist his arms behind him, Carlton bites off the head of the rose storing it in his mouth. Only Maggie & Sam notice.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (GREENHOUSE)- A LITTLE LATER

Our heroes are now in a holding room amongst a multitude of the most horrible and sickly looking flora imaginable. Their arms and legs are stretched outwards by rotting, putrid, dripping orange vines emanating from the Greenhouse walls. They are stretched out and suspended about five feet above the frozen floor, which has a slow spiraling swirl of blue glacial lava keeping it cool underneath. They look like defeated scarecrows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RILLIAN

That should hold you for roughly...
forever.

Carlton stares him down, silent. The heel of Carlton's boot is starting to glow purple underneath the tangle of vine that secures his leg. Sam and Maggie notice. Rillian turns to leave, but then glides up to Carlton.

RILLIAN (CONT'D)

This quieter, more humble side of you...
I quite prefer it.

Carlton's glowing foot starts to attract Rillian's attention, but Maggie supplies a quick diversion.

MAGGIE

You must really scare him a lot.

Carlton makes a surprised, annoyed face at her. Rillian turns to her.

SAM

Yeah, I've never seen him scared
speechless before!

Carlton shoots the same look to his nephew. Rillian, sufficiently distracted from Carlton's boot, smiles. Then he catches Carlton surreptitiously peeking out of the room's only window.

RILLIAN

Oh... almost forgot this.

His black and gold spots pulsate to his raised lizardy claws as he turns to a massive keg of water on the other side of the room. It SLIDES nosily across the floor until it comes to rest in front of the window, blocking any possible escape to the drawbridge below.

RILLIAN (CONT'D)

Just in case you were contemplating any
daring, last minute, escapist
acrobatics...

Rillian floats off. Susan pleads with Carlton.

SUSAN

Now would be a great time to go into
those finer details of your plan,
Carlton.

Carlton remains silent, looking around the Greenhouse, getting a better sense of their immediate environment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Nothing to say now? Now's when I need
you to talk to us!

Sam waits until Rillian is completely out of sight and then snaps his left hand free of the disgusting vine which slithers away from him back to the safety of the overgrown walls. The acidic juice that leaks forth from the slashed tendrils steams as it leaves a trail on the icy floor. Carlton smiles at him and a thin streak of black goo leaks from the corner of his mouth.

MAGGIE

(to Sam)

How did you do that?

Sam displays the silver tooth before starting to cut into the vine tethering his other hand.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Maybe not that one, genius.

The vine tears free and Sam topples upside down, still suspended by the vines holding his feet.

SAM

Oh yeah.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NETHERDOM (GREENHOUSE)- MOMENTS LATER

Susan and Sam are freed and trying to keep warm. Above them, Maggie has climbed up onto her uncle to cut him down. The second his feet hit the slippery floor, which has started to really steam up as the fluids from the slit vines melt through the ice. Carlton reaches down, twists his boot heel to the side and pulls his vial from a secret hiding place in the hollowed out heel. He spits a black ooze from his mouth into it which brightens the thick fluid to a near-blinding purple glow.

CARLTON

And that's it!

(to himself)

Fifteen years.

Maggie swings down on the last retreating vine with an impressive dismount.

SUSAN

Wow! That was impressive, Maggie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE
(genuinely appreciative)
Thanks!

SAM
It was okay.

Maggie makes a face to Sam and then addresses Uncle Carlton.

MAGGIE
Final ingredient delivered?

CARLTON
Well, a lot of that was vomit so the
intended effect may be a little diluted.
But... I think, kind of yes.

A gentle wisp of smoke twists up from the vial and the fluid
inside turns bright green.

SAM
The end of all nightmares?

Carlton smiles.

SUSAN
And the end of all monsters.

Carlton nods, but then his smile fades a bit and he seems
almost a bit wistful.

CARLTON
Yeah. I guess so.

Sam holds up the strange tooth and walks over to the room's
entrance, which is walled off by a thick, meshed of vines.
As if they have learned the power of the tooth, the vines
slither apart uncovering the exit.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
That thing has never needed sharpening.

Suddenly a fount of blue glacial lava erupts through the ice
floor behind them, melted into by the vine juice. Then
another, spouting up to the high ceiling and forming instant
razor icicles that descend down perfectly to just around face
level.

SUSAN
Time to go?

CARLTON
Oh... almost forgot this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUSAN

What are you doing?

CARLTON

A little Chess move.

Carlton grabs his saddlebag and retrieves a small electronic gizmo and a big lump of mushy clay wrapped in cellophane. As another couple of glacial lava veins violently explode up from the melting ice floor, he dodges the flaring lava spurts and ducks around the stabbing icicles, making his way over to the barred window barricaded by the gigantic water keg. He looks down to the drawbridge some fifty feet below then reaches around out through the window via a slight opening left by the keg and smushes the clay onto the back of the keg. Narrowly avoiding another shooting frozen lava icicle, he pulls a small antennae out of the top of the electronic gizmo, reaches back and inserts the device into the fresh clay. Diving out of the way of the icicles and lava bursts which are exploding up and raining down with increasing frequency, Carlton rejoins his family just as the vines are starting to close off the exit way again.

SUSAN

All done?

CARLTON

Nope. Hey Mag, what's the trick to stopping the wall spikes back in the entrance to Vichned's burial chamber?

MAGGIE

Lever built into the middle scabbard on the south wall.

CARLTON

Good girl.

MAGGIE

Boy, you weren't kidding about that test, huh?

They duck through the encroaching vines and out of the evil greenhouse which is now completely engulfed in steam.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (ROYAL COURT)- MOMENTS LATER

Vichned is trying his best to quickly train Bruce how to fight monsters. Bruce is padded up as he squares off against a reluctant Meyrink. A collection of about a dozen other monsters are also armored up and awaiting orders. Bruce is struggling to hold a seven pronged sword with a glow red stone in the center, providing its power.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KING VICHNED

The sword should be doing most of the work for you.

BRUCE

It's not.

KING VICHNED

Strike now!

Bruce topples towards Meyrink who swats him away like a bug. A cloud of his white powder temporarily obscures Bruce flying backwards over himself. His phone skids across the slippery floor.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)

Go easy on him, Meyrink!

MEYRINK

I'm trying!

KING VICHNED

How are you going to square off against the Unders if you can't even lift the Sword of Pernath?

BRUCE

Great question.

Vichned assesses the air in his court.

KING VICHNED

Does it feel warm to you?

BRUCE

No. Still freezing.

Bruce retrieves his phone. He sees the family picture staring back up at him. He hits a button and some dictation from the past starts playing back for him.

BRUCE FRICK (V.O.)

"In response to Susan saying that I could learn a thing or two from my brother... I said..."

SUSAN FRICK (V.O.)

(interrupting)

"You're not recording that are you, sweetheart?"

BRUCE FRICK (V.O.)

"No."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Bruce smiles sadly to himself.

KING VICHNED
Okay, back on your feet!

BRUCE
Vichned, this is not going to work! We
need my brother.

CARLTON (O.S.)
You can say that a few more times.

Carlton leads his brother's family into Vichned's Court.
Susan and the kids run over to Bruce who turns angrily to his
brother.

BRUCE
You brought my family down here?!

CARLTON
They're doing better than you from what I
can see. Check this out... Sam, my man,
what color bullets for zombies?

SAM
Grey.

CARLTON
Vampires?

SAM
Blue.

CARLTON
Werewo...

SAM
(interrupting the question with
his answer)
Lilac.

CARLTON
See that?

SUSAN
And we didn't exactly give him a vote in
the matter.

Vichned floats up to Carlton, who steadies himself for a
fight that doesn't come.

KING VICHNED
It's an honor to finally meet you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARLTON
(genuinely, but cautiously)
Likewise.

KING VICHNED
You and your ancestors have succeeded in
making things most difficult for me over
the years.

CARLTON
Yes.

KING VICHNED
Your grandfather was...

Carlton offers a rendition of the word Vichned is searching
his brain for.

CARLTON
Astounding.

Bruce looks at Carlton respectfully and Vichned smiles.

KING VICHNED
The very word. And you in particular
have made solid habit of thwarting my
operatives at almost every turn.

CARLTON
Shucks.

KING VICHNED
What's that on your jacket?

Carlton looks and, sure enough, a trail of weird bluish smoke
is dancing up from the back of one of his sleeves.

MAGGIE
You probably got splashed by the blue
gunk under the floor.

Vichned, alarmed, motions to the enormous, macabre rug
covering the floor of his court. It flips up revealing the
frozen floor underneath with the submerged stream of glacial
lava rolling underneath.

SAM
Yeah, that stuff.

KING VICHNED
Impossible. The glacial lava is
contained. It must be. Frozen and
contained.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MAGGIE

Well, it's up and out in your creepy greenhouse.

Vichned realizes the worst.

KING VICHNED

Then they will be too.

SUSAN

Who?

Vichned is lost deep in frightened thought.

BRUCE

Ancient creatures. Dating back to the beginning of Earth.

Carlton seems amused.

CARLTON

The Asmophenites? I happen to have it on good authority that The Asmophenites are a pretty solid myth.

KING VICHNED

No! The Asmophenites existed only long enough to defy them. Once. And once only. These are the slayers of The Asmophenites! They have no name.

MAGGIE

Seems a bit lazy.

KING VICHNED

They are unnameable! They are unfathomable! And unimaginable to humans. Just seeing one of them would kill your kind instantly!

CARLTON

Great. Now we're smack in the middle of two wars down here.

KING VICHNED

Three, I'm afraid.

SAM

I'm afraid too.

KING VICHNED

No. I didn't mean it like, "Three. *I'm afraid!*" I meant there are three wars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SAM
It was a joke. Sorry.

KING VICHNED
Oh, what a perfect time for humor!

He zones in on Carlton.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)
You must help us fight them. Your mind,
that a true hunter, might resist their
effect.

CARLTON
And you'll ensure safe passage back?

KING VICHNED
Yes.

Vichned hold up his hand to Carlton.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)
I cannot lie in my own court.

CARLTON
Where are they?

BRUCE
Right under our feet.

Sam jumps back and tries to look into the ice. Susan pulls
him back upwards.

SUSAN
You don't need any more nightmares,
sweetie.

SAM
No big deal anymore. I'll just take some
of Uncle Carlton's potion.

KING VICHNED
Potion?

KRESLOR (O.S.)
His life's work!

Kreslor is attached to a pretty WOMAN via a shimmering
crystal chain. They step into the cathedral-like court.

KRELSOR
The end of their nightmares forever. I
wonder... has the great Carlton found his
missing ingredient?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Carlton's eyes focus on the woman. He seems to recognize her.

CARLTON

Jessica?

Kreslor sneers and releases her to Carlton, allowing her crystal chain to stretch out to full length. She is glowingly beautiful as she walks towards Carlton and they embrace. Carlton's saddlebag slides off his shoulder and drops to the ground. He starts to weep.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

You have no idea how much I've missed you.

She smiles sadly and sweetly.

JESSICA

I know.

A tear tracks down from her eye... leaving a grey sizzling trail of seared flesh. Carlton is confused.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I just needed to see you one last time... to say goodbye.

CARLTON

No. Not goodbye. Ever again.

He takes out the silver ring and returns it to her finger. She smiles sadly.

KRESLOR

Might you be up for a trade?

MAGGIE

Not on your life, iguana face!

SAM

Yeah, nice try! Right, Uncle Carlton?

Carlton is a beaten man. He takes out the vial with his now-complete potion. Kreslor LAUGHS horribly. Carlton looks at Sam and Maggie.

CARLTON

I'm sorry.

Carlton throws the vial to Kreslor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

JESSICA
(to Carlton)
I'm sorry too, Carlton.

Jessica's angelic face and rosy pallor begin to fade and her skin starts to bubble. The mask she is wearing burns away, revealing an evil Jessica underneath. Her eyes turn black and two fangs grow from her mouth. She struggles against the evil that is trying to overtake her. Her features transition back and forth. During a moment where her monstrous features fade back away, she smiles at Carlton and kisses him lightly and lovingly on the lips.

CARLTON
Wait! Jessica! Just wait one second!
Okay? I can help you.

As he fumbles around in his bag, Kreslor pulls her back to him. Carlton runs to her but can't quite reach before Kreslor floats up hundreds of feet. In the glow of the blue lava, Jessica manages to secure her true self back again for a few seconds. She grabs the vial from Kreslor.

JESSICA
Carlton!

She drops the vial down towards him, but Kreslor catches it with a clawed foot. He lets out a horrific LAUGH then disappears with Jessica, liquefying in the air above them. Sam and Maggie shake Carlton back to business. Sam points to his watch.

SAM
We've got to go, Uncle Carlton! The hole
closes in forty minutes!

Bruce's phone BEEPS.

BRUCE
Definitely not the time.

But he glances quickly at the dead screen anyway. Susan gives him an "are you serious" stare.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Habit. Sorry.

KING VICHNED
I know where he took her.

They all turn to him.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)
But it will be a trap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

MAGGIE

We've gotten pretty used to those.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (CLOCK TOWER)- A LITTLE LATER

Rillian is making some final adjustments to the spectral antenna. Another demon is helping him. Kreslor, no longer chained to Jessica, is staring at the vial and very proud of himself. Their helper demon is suddenly hit with a dart between the eyes and explodes in a cloud of ancient dust. Kreslor whips around to find himself in another showdown with Carlton.

CARLTON

Where is she?

Kreslor holds up the key chained to his neck.

KRESLOR

Safe and snug. And now that I possess your life's work, Carlton, let me introduce you to mine.

Rillian POWERS ON the antenna.

KRESLOR (CONT'D)

This will be what feeds those satellites we've been throwing into your Ether space. And with the signals generated from here, we will awaken dormant terrors that reconnect you to your darkest nightmares... every time you close your eyes.

CARLTON

I think the human race can adapt to slightly stronger nightmares every now and again.

SUSAN

We're a pretty resilient species.

KRESLOR

Shall we see?

A flash of energy surges its way across the room and into Bruce's phone.

BRUCE

Hey! What's the...

He looks down at his phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE UP: BRUCE'S CELL PHONE SCREEN

In the space of two seconds, a thousand terrifying images flash across the display.

BACK TO:

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (CLOCK TOWER)- CONTINUOUS

Bruce SCREAMS and drops his phone. He moves his hands up over his eyes in a late attempt to block what his brain has just been fed. He eyes shut and he SCREAMS again. His eyes shoot open and he breathes a quick SIGH of relief. Then he blinks and SCREAMS again! Carlton rolls his eyes.

SUSAN

What is it, sweetheart?

BRUCE

It's horrible! The most horrible things
I've ...

He blinks and SCREAMS again.

CARLTON

Knock it off, Bruce.

Sam pieces it together.

SAM

"Every time we close our eyes". Hey,
that's not fair! Even when we blink?!

Kreslor is impressed.

KRESLOR

Finally, someone here is getting the
bigger picture.

Bruce tries to keep his eyes open, but blinks again after a few seconds. Another terrified SCREAM. Kreslor floats over to Carlton.

KRESLOR (CONT'D)

And now we shall transmit up to your
world, causing all humans to fall to us
in a quivering, helpless heap of
worthless, subspecies nothingness.

Bruce SCREAMS again and tries to hold his eyes open. The strategy only works for a couple of seconds. He blinks and SCREAMS again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRESLOR (CONT'D)
You will beg to be...

Bruce interrupts him, SCREAMING again. Carlton motions to him.

CARLTON
Bet you dum dums didn't realize how annoying that was going to get.

KRESLOR
(continuing)
... beg to be freed from your constant, self-generated torture. But there will be no release.

Bruce SCREAMS again. Carlton walks over to him.

CARLTON
Hold still and don't take this personally.

He spits into Bruce's eyes, giving him a break from blinking to keep them moist.

BRUCE
I cannot believe that you just did that. Of all the disgusting, insulting, uh... uh ...

CARLTON
You need it again, don't you?

BRUCE
There's got to be another...

Carlton spits into his brother's eyes again.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Okay. It's better than the alternative. Slightly.

KRESLOR
Rillian, direct the signal to the Ether realm. And finish them.

The pendulum starts to move. Carlton notices. He spits into Bruce's eyes again.

CARLTON
Can someone please take over for me here?

Sam eagerly steps up, PREPARING a nice loogie in his mouth. Maggie is disgusted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUSAN

Not you.

Susan turns Sam away and then steps in front of Bruce. But she hesitates.

BRUCE

Please, Susan! I can't close them again!
You have no idea what's waiting for me!

She kisses him, closes her eyes and then spits into his. As Sam's watch SOUNDS OFF again with Wagner's iconic masterpiece, the great pendulum CREAKS into motion and swings downward. Kreslor jumps out of the way just in time, but the sharp edge of the pendulum slices Rillian clean in half. Each of his two sides turns to dust as the pendulum blade passes through him. Kreslor is furious, but jumps out of the way of the pendulum as it swings back towards him.

Carlton leaps onto Kreslor like a panther, knocking him down and freeing the vial of anti-nightmare potion from his hand. It rolls across the now uneven ice floor. The pendulum blade descends back downward again as Carlton fights Kreslor. Carlton grabs Kreslor's chain and flings it up just as the pendulum passes over them. The chain catches onto the edge of the pendulum and rips Kreslor up into the air with it.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (CLOCK TOWER PENDULUM BLADE)- CONTINUOUS

Carlton holds onto his nemesis and they continue their fight, lifted up onto the swinging pendulum. The ground below, the ceiling above and the walls surrounding are swirling around them in a dizzying blur.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (CLOCK TOWER)- CONTINUOUS

Maggie manages to grab Carlton's vial of anti-nightmare potion just before it falls into a hole that opens up in the ice, spouting a blue explosion of glacial lava forty feet into the air.

SAM

The antenna!

He directs his family to the spectral antenna base and they start pushing it across the slippery floor towards the massive pendulum.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (CLOCK TOWER PENDULUM BLADE)- CONTINUOUS

A desperate Kreslor slashes at Carlton, but is too blinded with rage to land any real damage. In his assault, Kreslor exposes the crystal key that holds Jessica.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carlton notices the sleeve of his jacket which is still smoking from the dangerous, glacial lava burning its way into the fabric. Carlton grabs the key and rubs his blue glowing jacket sleeve against the chain that secures it. As the lava freezes the chain solid, Carlton smashes it against the arm of the pendulum, freeing the key. Below them, the Fricks push the spectral antenna into the path of the pendulum.

Kreslor ROARS as the pendulum blade slices through his life's work, shattering the antenna into irreparable shards and pieces. Carlton takes the opportunity of Kreslor's distracted attention to wrap the rest of the chain that is still attached to Kreslor's neck to a notch in the pendulum, attaching his nemesis there very solidly.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (CLOCK TOWER)- CONTINUOUS

The blue glacial lava underneath the ice floor glows to a blinding glare. Bruce and his family cover their eyes as Bruce SCREAMS (having closed his eyes again). The frozen floor shatters as a massive, tentacled creature bursts forth from underneath. Its back is to Vichned, Bruce and his family, but its terrifying impact is undeniable.

KING VICHNED

What??!! That wasn't an hour!!!

BRUCE

That wasn't even close!! They rigged it!!

He blinks and SCREAMS yet again, continued to be tortured by what the now dead antenna put into his head.

SAM

Cheaters!

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (CLOCK TOWER PENDULUM BLADE)- CONTINUOUS

Carlton and Kreslor are both equally astonished at the sight of the leviathanic beast rising before them. The pendulum swings just past the monster's hideous, drooling mouth (hungry after centuries of frozen exile) and then reaches its apex. Carlton turns to his old foe.

CARLTON

One less of you to worry about now!
Kres, it's been... a ride!

As the pendulum descends, Carlton jumps off and out of the way just as the titanic, mythic creature chomps down, devouring the pendulum and its affixed, SCREAMING Kreslor in one massive gulp.

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (CLOCK TOWER)- CONTINUOUS

Carlton slams down onto the floor, which caves underneath his impact (clearly softening and giving signal to the already started Second War). Bruce, Susan, Sam, and Maggie rush over to him. They pull Carlton to safety out of the glacial lava before it burns through him. But a gigantic tongue slithers out from the hole he just made and wraps around his legs. It's attached to the mouth of another ancient UnderDwelling beast that tears up through the floor.

CARLTON

Don't look at it!! Eyes closed!! Now!!!

They all turn away and close their eyes. Bruce, of course SCREAMS again. Carlton wrenches free from the creature, gathers up his family and runs everyone, included Vichned and Meyrink, out of the Clock Tower room which is now overrun with spouting blue lava, snapping jaws, eyes, and tentacles.

NETHERKINGDOM (CORRIDOR)- CONTINUOUS

As they are all running as fast as they can. Bruce is still SCREAMING every couple of seconds.

KING VICHNED

We were supposed to have an hour to prepare!

CARLTON

Well, what've you got ready right now?

NETHERKINGDOM (HALL OF WARRIORS)- MOMENTS LATER

They all round a corner and enter a long tunnel marked on either side by various outlets holding breathless, motionless, lifeless monsters, floating inside suspended in a sort of bright golden fluid. Bruce SCREAMS again, but only because he needed to blink. Susan, Carlton, Sam, and Maggie all turn and spit into his eyes.

BRUCE

Wow. Thanks, family.

MAGGIE

Carlton...

She hands him the vial. He takes it from her, clearly amazed that she was able to save it. He dips his finger into the tube and then shoves his finger into Bruce's mouth. Bruce is stunned by what hits his taste buds. He blinks. Then he blinks again. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUCE
That stuff really works!

CARLTON
I'd say now we're even.

Bruce blinks multiple times, testing his newly restored consciousness.

BRUCE
No. I'd say I owe you. Big time.

CARLTON
I'll take that.

Sam tries to apply some of his Blistex, but the tube is spent.

SAM
I'd say that this is not a good time to be out of lip balm.

Bruce bends down to his son.

BRUCE
What you could do is just make use of your body's natural supply.

SAM
What?

Bruce takes Sam's index finger, sticks it into his earlobe, rubs it around and then smears the deposit on his lips.

BRUCE
Ear wax. Just as good as Blistex and you'll never run out.

Sam starts to make a grossed-out face, but catches himself as his father looks at him lovingly.

SAM
(smacking his lips)
Wow. It actually works. Thanks, dad.

Bruce absorbs the first time he has truly felt appreciated by his son. Susan looks at Carlton and Vichned and shrugs.

SUSAN
We're a gross family.

Vichned gets down to business.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KING VICHNED

This is my hall of warriors.
Consecrating my perfect army.

Carlton surveys a couple of the creatures floating in their golden suspended animation. He's less than impressed.

CARLTON

We're going to fight those things... with these things?

KING VICHNED

Do you have a better plan?

Carlton holds up the vial.

CARLTON

Yeah. This.

KING VICHNED

Your life's work. You would just give that to me willingly?

CARLTON

We're going to need it more than they will.

He motions to his family.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

Especially if we need to stop these things down here.

SUSAN

Wait. What's with all this "we" talk?

Bruce starts smiling.

MEYRINK

Something amusing about all this, Frick?

KING VICHNED

What is so funny?

CARLTON

I think my life's work may be working a little too well.

Bruce starts to GIGGLE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SUSAN

You're going to want to stop that,
sweetie. Preferably right now.

CUT TO:

BRUCE'S POV

Bruce's brain is now processing Meyrink and King Vichned as extremely silly looking, lighthearted versions of themselves. Cheery neon pinks, yellows, and flashing polka dots abound. Meyrink is dancing a little jig as creatures that look like sea monkeys slide in and out of Vichned's ears and nostrils, singing a ridiculous SONG about being scary. It all resembles a vetoed Disney musical number.

BACK TO:

NETHERKINGDOM (HALL OF WARRIORS)- CONTINUOUS

A furious Vichned is in the process of YELLING at Bruce who is full blown LAUGHING in his face.

KING VICHNED

... will rip the throat out of your neck!
I will set you ablaze from the inside
out, slow roasting you to mouthwatering
perfection!

CARLTON

Give me a crack at this.

Carlton SLAPS his brother back to reality.

CARLTON (CONT'D)

Boy, you are irritating at both ends of
the extreme. Aren't you?

Bruce rubs his cheek and smiles again.

BRUCE

He's still funny looking.

CARLTON

(to Vichned)
And that's how your UnderDwellers are
going to look to us. Get it?

Carlton hands Vichned the vial. The evil emperor is genuinely touched by his sacrifice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KING VICHNED

Thank you, Carlton. Now get your family out. While you still can. Before the entire Netherdom freezes over.

King Vichned raises his arms and red currents of evil energy course from his hands and into the walls that contain his monster warriors from throughout the ages.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)

Quickly. It's about to get ugly down here.

Carlton and company start running down the long corridor as the hideous heads begin to awaken and move, some letting out menacing GROWLS and SNARLS as they come to life. In their wake, a couple of beasts begin to emerge from their holding cells, stretching their long dormant bodies, wings, tails, and claws.

Sam stops in front of a horrible, frightening animal skull hanging on one of the walls.

MAGGIE

Whoa! I'd hate to meet up with the thing that used to have this on top of its shoulders.

Carlton, Bruce, and Maggie stop in front of the skull as well. They seem hypnotized by it. Susan tries to interrupt.

SUSAN

(motioning to the monstrous skull)
It's lovely and all, but can we maybe keep moving, please?

BRUCE

It's just like this nightmare that I used to have when we were kids.

Carlton looks at him.

CARLTON

That *you* used to have?

BRUCE

Yeah. I was in a cave just like this with this awful creature chasing me and...

SAM & MAGGIE

(in unison)
... biting and scratching at my back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They all look at each other. Sam notices that the skull is missing its top right tooth. He pulls out the long silver tooth and holds it up to the skull.

SAM
Perfect fit.

Suddenly a section of the wall under the skull slides open and a ton of glowing, golden fluid spills forth into the corridor. A LOW GROWL is heard inside the shadowy crevice. Then two eyes reflect out of the darkness and a monstrous creature pulls itself out of the dark hole. It has the body of a scorpion and the snorting head of a bull with a mouth full of the strange spiked teeth. The creature gets up close and sniffs Carlton's face... then Bruce's. Bruce SNICKERS.

MAGGIE
Bad time for that, dad.

CUT TO:

INSERT SHOT: BRUCE'S POV

The monster's appearance is relatively unaltered save for the fact that it has a cow's head instead of a bull's and is wearing a big puffy tutu and ballet slippers.

BACK TO:

INT. NETHERDOM- CONTINUOUS

Carlton is petrified, but manages to kick a rock through the monster's legs. The monster twists one of its ears around to follow the sound, but doesn't take its burning eyes off of its catch. It lets out a terrible ROAR and Bruce LAUGHS.

Sam pops out from behind Carlton and Bruce. He is scared but steady. He places the missing tooth back into the mouth of his greatest nightmare. It magically sets back into place. The creature looks confused for a beat, then calms down a notch.

KING VICHNED (O.S.)
You!

The beast turns to see Vichned summoning him from the far end of the long corridor.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)
Bigger fish!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Scorpion turns to the Fricks one final time. It zones in on Sam, offering him what could be construed as a show of respect. It SNORTS, then turns and gallops off down the corridor.

Carlton takes advantage of the moment and grabs the skull from the wall. Vichned, still at the opposite end of the corridor, calls out to them.

KING VICHNED (CONT'D)

Oh, Carlton?! I don't suppose you happen to have *my* head with you?!

CARLTON

Propping open our door out of here!
Sorry!

KING VICHNED

Worth a shot!

INT. NETHERKINGDOM (MAIN HALL)- MOMENTS LATER

The glacial lava is starting to pour through cracks in the walls and floors. Demons are scattering as chunks of the ceiling begin to fall. Carlton and family round the corner. He's still holding onto the monstrous skull which is tied over his shoulder and bouncing behind him. The blue glowing lava freezes solid everything that it touches, including a few of the retreating demons.

SUSAN

So when all this freezes over...

CARLTON

They're all stuck here. No way into our world anymore. The gateway will be sealed over.

SAM

Does that mean you're out of a job?

Carlton smiles.

CARLTON

Most likely. Hey Mag, which tunnel past the crypt leads up and out to the graveyard?

MAGGIE

Second from the right.

CARLTON

Good girl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Susan looks at Carlton.

SUSAN
I know what you're doing!

CARLTON
Just a little quiz. Don't worry. It's pass/fail. Easy. Can you keep moving please?

SUSAN
You've been teaching the kids everything they need to know to get us out of here.

CARLTON
I'm just sharing a little Uncle-y knowledge with them.

She notices that Sam is now carrying Carlton's precious saddlebag.

SUSAN
And lightening your load a little, I'd say.

Carlton doesn't reply.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Because you're not coming. Are you?

CARLTON
I'm going to find her, Susan.

SUSAN
Carlton, of course you are. But you don't even know where to start looking.

BRUCE
And, hey just to remind you, there is a Second War with Vichned's UnderDwellers going on as we speak.

CARLTON
You guys will be fine. Sam knows the digital compass. Maggie's got the tomb layout down.

SUSAN
Carlton, give yourself a better chance than this. Figure out where to start first. Figure out what you're going to be up against. And figure out who might be able to help you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Sam and Maggie come up to him.

SAM
We'll help you.

A low RUMBLING is heard and it's getting nothing but louder. They turn around to see the hundreds of monsters rushing down the main hall towards them. Bruce starts LAUGHING. Carlton rolls his eyes.

SUSAN
(to Carlton)
We've got to get to the crypt before all these things do, right?

SAM
I don't want to be bumping into them back in our world.

Carlton is won over.

CARLTON
Come on.

EXT. NETHERKINGDOM - MOMENTS LATER

They run out of the castle and get across the bridge. Carlton stops and turns around. Sam checks his watch.

CARLTON
Don't tell me, Sam.

SAM
Sorry... it's just... you know, nine minutes to go here.
(he checks again)
Eight.

Carlton gets a homemade remote control out of his pocket.

BRUCE
What's the hold up?

CARLTON
Still play Chess, Bruce?

SUSAN, SAM, & MAGGIE
Why?!

CARLTON
Because you've always got to be thinking a couple of moves ahead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He points the remote up towards the Greenhouse window blocked by the huge keg of water.

CUT TO:

INSERT SHOT

A little red light starts flashing on the electronic gizmo stuck into the clay mushed into the back of the water keg. Then it goes dark.

BACK TO:

EXT. NETHERKINGDOM (ENTRANCE)- CONTINUOUS

Carlton, clearly expecting something impressive, taps the remote control again.

SUSAN

Have you ever won a game of Chess?

CARLTON

The receiver must've burned out.

BRUCE

You don't change the batteries in your gear?

CARLTON

I do! Usually! I've got a whole pack in here!

He grabs a battery from his bag. Maggie grabs it and takes off back across the drawbridge towards the NetherKingdom and towards the approaching monster stampede.

BRUCE

Maggie!!!

EXT. NETHERKINGDOM OUTER WALL- CONTINUOUS

With the battery between her clenched teeth, she hoists herself up onto a crossbeam and starts scaling the outer wall of the castle up towards the Greenhouse window.

EXT. NETHERKINGDOM (ENTRANCE)- CONTINUOUS

They alternate between watching Maggie and keeping their eyes on the charging monster army which is now only seconds away from hitting the drawbridge.

CARLTON

Come on, kid.

EXT. NETHERKINGDOM OUTER WALL- CONTINUOUS

Maggie makes an incredible leap up and over to the ledge, swings up and grabs hold of one of the window bars. She swaps out the battery, perches herself above the window and calls down to her uncle.

MAGGIE

Hit it!

EXT. NETHERKINGDOM (ENTRANCE)- CONTINUOUS

Carlton slams the remote and an impressive explosion bursts forth from the high castle window. Water cascades down onto the bridge, soaking it and many of the charging monsters who stop and look up in confusion. The water connects with the trail of glacial lava and immediately freezes everything into a solid, terrifying, ice wall.

SAM

Whoa!!!!

Maggie jumps off the window perch and rides down the frozen wall of trapped brutes. She glides right up to Susan who catches her.

SUSAN

I think you should really reconsider your spot on the gymnastics team.

MAGGIE

Yeah, maybe I will.

Bruce is genuinely impressed with both his daughter and his brother.

BRUCE

Bravo.

CARLTON

That'll give us a head start at least.

They take off back towards the cliffside. A few monsters who were frozen into the wall of ice that now closes off the entrance to the NetherKingdom start to chip their way out.

EXT. NETHERWORLD (CLIFFSIDE)- NIGHT

The Fricks approach the cliff to find that the entrance Sam had marked is blocked off with a huge boulder. Sam's piece of shirt sleeve is flapping limply over their anticipated escape hatch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN

Oh no!

BRUCE

What? There's got to be another way out of here.

CARLTON

That's the only tunnel that leads back home. Trust me, we don't want to poke around in any of the other ones. We wouldn't last ten seconds.

MAGGIE

So we're trapped? After all that!

In the distance, a few monsters start making their way over the hill towards the cliff.

SUSAN

They're coming.

BRUCE

Fast.

SAM

'scuse me, guys.

Sam breezes past Carlton and Bruce, jumps up and starts climbing the cliff.

CARLTON

I've got to hand it to them... tricky damn monsters.

SAM

(calling down to them)

I know! That's why I decided to mark the hole directly to the *left* of the one we came out of!

SUSAN

Come again?

SAM

They blocked the wrong exit!

(to himself)

Geez, grown-ups give up so easily.

CARLTON

I love that kid.

Carlton snaps back into action and starts pushing Maggie, Susan and Bruce up the side of the cliff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Sam scrambles into the hole directly to the right of the one blocked off by the boulder. His family follows. Carlton gets Bruce into the hole but doesn't follow. Bruce pops his head back out.

BRUCE

What are you waiting for? Come on!

CARLTON

We can't risk them any of them getting through. Take Susan and the kids. I'll fight off as many as I can.

BRUCE

(telling more than asking)
And then we'll see you back out there?

CARLTON

Yes.

Bruce looks at him for a beat, then disappears into the hole. A grotesque flying demon catches up to Carlton. Carlton grabs the Scorpbull skull and smashes it across the face with just enough effect to send it careening into another beast who has almost made its way to the tunnel.

INT. NETHERKINGDDOM (ROYAL COURT)- NIGHT

King Vichned and his impressive warrior army are all LAUGHING as they battle with the gigantic UnderDwellers (who we only ever see from the back because otherwise we would be driven mad). Vichned and company look to be making some progress when the walls around them begin to crystallize and freeze. One by one, both the UnderDwellers and the warriors freeze solid as they make contact with the now unavoidable death ice. Vichhned looks around with a satisfied nod, then reaches for his beautiful silver goblet. He raises it to his lips, freezing solid as he enjoys his final sip.

EXT. NETHERKINGDOM -NIGHT

The entire palace freezes over, glistening in the moonlight as the black snow begins to fall once again.

EXT. NETHERWORLD (CLIFFSIDE)- NIGHT

The monsters at the foot of the cliff succumb to the death frost now rolling fast over the land and freezing everything in its path. The remaining monsters who are higher up on the cliff continue the chase.

INT. CRYPT (BURIAL CHAMBER)- MOMENTS LATER

Bruce scurries out of the irised hole in the wall of the crypt. The room has almost completely filled up with the sand falling from the hole in the ceiling. There is only about two and a half feet of space left.

SUSAN (O.C.)
Bruce! Carlton! We're all in here!

Her voice is coming from the top of the room's exit corridor which is still barely visible over the level of sand.

INT. CRYPT (CORRIDOR)- CONTINUOUS

Bruce tumbles through the burial chamber's exit hole and lands in a heap next to Susan and the kids. They help him up and Sam checks his watch.

MAGGIE
Where's Uncle Carlton?

Bruce looks up to the hole.

DICK RICHARDS (O.C.)
I don't suppose you have room for one more in this escape party, do you?

Dick Richards steps out of the shadows.

DICK RICHARDS (CONT'D)
I'm never going to find my way out of here on my own.

Then a second Dick Richards rounds the corner and bumps into the first.

DICK RICHARDS #1
Wha-?! Oh, that's very clever.

DICK RICHARDS #2
You've been into my make-up kit!

DICK RICHARDS #1
Your make-up kit! That's rich!

SAM
I knew I recognized him. That's Dick Richards. He was a monster make-up legend in Hollywood until he mysteriously disappeared.

SUSAN
Okay, but why are there two of him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUCE

Because one is a demon in disguise.

SAM

(to the two Dick Richards)

What movie did you earn a PhantasmaGore Award for in 1977?

DICK RICHARDS #2

"The Curse of Bigfoot II".

DICK RICHARDS #1

"... of Bigfoot II". Right.

SAM

Wrong, actually. It was...

DICK RICHARDS #2

"The Thing Beneath the Beach". Best Creature Effects 1977 presented to me by the delightful Peter Cushing.

SAM

Bing and go!

Susan rolls her eyes. Dick Richards #2 looks at his counterpart and smirks. Dick Richards #1 scowls and starts to shake with anger. Suddenly his skin bubbles and melts away from his face, revealing Meyrink.

MEYRINK

Okay, let me explain...

BRUCE

Beyond time to go, guys. Come on.

He and Susan start pushing their family down the corridor towards the subterranean chamber.

MEYRINK

Please! I don't belong down here! I never have!

The ground shakes as a giant crack rips across the floor, spurting forth the creeping blue frost. Meyrink is separated from them and trapped behind the spreading ice.

MEYRINK (CONT'D)

Help! Take me with you! Couldn't you use a loyal subordinate?

SAM

I could.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Susan keeps things moving.

SUSAN
Get you a hamster.

SAM
Dog.

SUSAN
Done.

SAM
Big dog.

SUSAN
Sam! Move!

SAM
But what about Uncle Carlton?

Susan looks at Bruce.

INT. CRYPT TUNNEL- CONTINUOUS

Carlton is hastily crawling through the dark passageway, kicking back monsters who are following right at his feet. Carlton flips around and pushes the ScorpBull skull into the walls of the tunnel, blocking the monsters' progress behind him. He looks at the struggling creatures and starts SINGING to them as he secures the massive skull in place with a conveniently handy support beam that is lying nearby.

CARLTON
"We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny
day..."

He looks at the skull one last time.

CARLTON (CONT'D)
Too bad. That was going to look great in
my office.

INT. CRYPT (SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER)- NIGHT

The deadly frost begins to ooze and CRACK into the corridor through the stone blocks in the walls and up through the outlines of the non-circular geometric shapes in the floor. Bruce and Susan pause for a moment then grab Sam and Maggie. Dick Richards follows close behind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
 (looking back down the
 corridor)
 No! We can't leave him behind!

BRUCE
 Sam, listen to me. I have to you all out
 of here. If I know your Uncle Carlton
 he's already up there waiting for us.

MAGGIE
 And if he isn't?

He looks at his children with the most sincerity they've ever
 seen.

BRUCE
 Then I will go back in and find him.

EXT. CRYPT- DAWN

Maggie and Sam are pushed up out of the entrance to the
 crypt, followed closely by Susan, Bruce and the real Dick
 Richards. They turn back towards the hole in the ground,
 hoping to see Carlton.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP: SAM

Tears are streaming down his dirt-cakes face. The CAMERA
 PULLS BACK.

BACK TO:

EXT. CRYPT- CONTINUOUS

Bruce steadies himself and then starts walking back towards
 the crypt. Susan puts her arms around her children.
 Carlton's saddlebag starts to slide off of Sam's shoulder.
 Before it hits the ground, a filthy hand REACHES INTO FRAME
 and grabs it. Sam looks up and smiles.

CARLTON
 (continuing his song)
 "...So will you please say hello
 To the folks that I know
 Tell them I won't be long
 They'll be happy to know..."

SAM
 I knew it.

Carlton, covered in dirt and frost, slings the bag back over

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

his shoulder.

CARLTON

Yeah, I can tell. You think I'd leave
you all alone to be raised by this guy?

He juts out his thumb to his brother. Sam checks his watch.

SAM

You actually had another four seconds.

CARLTON

Life's easier when you underestimate.
Always remember that.

BRUCE

No. Forget that immediately.

Carlton kicks the wall of the mausoleum, cracking through the
layer of ice that coated his boots.

SUSAN

Can we go home now?

CARLTON

Not me. The gateway may be destroyed,
but there are still a lot of Vichned's
gang trapped up here. I still have some
work to do.

He holds up a handful of his yellow cards.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM- DAY

Sam has been relating the tale to his fourth grade class.

SAM

And the glacial lava pretty much froze
off the passageway so we're reasonably
sure that the UnderDwellers are trapped;
frozen in the dark Netherworld forever.

(pause)

And that's how I spent my winter break.
Thank you.

The mouths of his classmates are all agape as Sam makes his
way back to his seat. He is quite pleased with himself.

TEACHER

(long pause)

Thank you, Sam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
Don't mention it.

EXT. CITY STREET- DAY

A dirty, tattered clothed man is coming out of a subway station. He seems dazed as a large crowd of commuters and pedestrians breeze by with their papers and briefcases, barely even noticing him. He occasionally glances down at a small yellow business card he is holding and then back up at the buildings.

INT. CLINIC (WAITING ROOM)- MOMENTS LATER

Still holding the card, the tattered clothed man enters a waiting room where dozens of other tattered clothed MEN and WOMEN are seated. They all turn and look at him.

A SOCIAL WORKER is standing behind a counter getting things organized. She addresses the man.

SOCIAL WORKER
Sir? Hi there. Welcome. Please take yourself a seat and we'll be with you as soon as we can. Thank you.

The man sits in the nearest unoccupied chair.

SOCIAL WORKER (CONT'D)
Okay, former werewolves... those of you who've had your flea & tick dip may now report to Room Three for skills counseling.

A group of the men and women stand up and start to make their way down the hallway.

SOCIAL WORKER (CONT'D)
Single file, people, okay? I know you've got a lot of questions... but let's try to keep this orderly. We're here for all of you, alright? Now, those of you who can remember your name, please file into this line here.

The CAMERA TRUCKS RIGHT past the social worker to a small line of people standing in front of a large computer being operated by Carlton's secretary, Gloria. He clicks some buttons and then addresses the next person in line.

GLORIA
Name?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN

Uh... "Michael... Gordon".

PROGRAMMER

Okay, Mr. Gordon. Press your thumb against the scanner, please.

The man places his thumb down on a complicated gadget next the monitor. The device emits a flash of green light as Gloria punches up a screen displaying the man's name, social security number, last known address, relatives, education, job history, credit cards, bank account and current status which is listed as "MISSING".

GLORIA

Yay, you're in luck. We've got a match.

She hits a button and Michael Gordon's entire existence is encapsulated in a convenient printout. She tears the paper from the printer and a USB drive with the "Creature Correction Specialist Group" logo on it from the hard drive and hands them to Michael.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Okay, Michael Gordon. There's your life back. Report to room 4J for social services' procedural review.

MAN

(confused)

Thank you.

GLORIA

You're welcome.

(points to the next in line)

You're next.

A WOMAN steps up as Michael walks away. Gloria inserts a fresh USB into her computer.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Name?

WOMAN

"Rebecca Mary Prescott".

GLORIA

Okay, Rebecca, thumb on the scanner, please.

Rebecca presses her thumb to the scanner. Gloria taps some keys and waits for the results.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Ah, yeah. No info. That means that whatever got a hold of you did so prior to 1897 when fingerprinting ID methods were implemented. You're going to take some work. But that's okay. You don't happen to remember where you were born or what year, do you?

Rebecca shakes her head "no". She is clearly upset.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

It's okay, Rebecca. We'll figure something out for you. That's what we do here.

The CAMERA continues to TRUCK DOWN THE HALL to a room filled with people in their tattered clothing sitting in a classroom atmosphere, listening to their counselor.

INT. CLINIC (NUTRITIONAL COUNSELING ROOM) -CONTINUOUS

The COUNSELOR addresses her group.

COUNSELOR

Now you're probably going to still have a taste for human flesh for a while. This is perfectly normal considering what you all have been through and your previous diet.

She holds up what looks like a powerbar, but is labelled "Zom-Bar".

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

We have these all natural, soy-based nutritional supplements specifically designed to ween you off your cannibalistic urges. It's a gradual, tiered program, but it really does work. And, unlike most people, these are low in fat.

The former zombies CHUCKLE appreciatively as the CAMERA continues TRUCKING past this room and on to another.

The sign on this door reads "Vocational Training". The seats are filled with more dirty men and women in ripped clothes. A well-dressed trainer is addressing the group. As the CAMERA brings the room into full view, we see that the trainer is none other than Bruce Frick, who seems very happy with his new job.

INT. CLINIC (VOCATIONAL COUNSELING ROOM)- CONTINUOUS

One of Bruce's clients, CHARLES, is sitting across the desk from a PRACTICE INTERVIEWER. For some reason, Charles is wearing a neatly-pressed white oxford cloth shirt and a red tie.

BRUCE

As former werewolves, you will have to re-acclimate to certain professional norms as you find yourselves returning to the work force. Now, you've all gotten your resumes in order, the next step is the job interview. Charles, let's try one.

The Practice Interviewer glances over Charles' resume.

PRACTICE INTERVIEWER

Well, Charles, what would you list as your professional objectives?

Charles nervously picks at his tie.

BRUCE

Charles... that's a power tie. Don't fidget with your power tie.

CHARLES

Sorry.

BRUCE

Remember...

Bruce points to some words written in big letters up on the blackboard.

BRUCE & CLASS

(in unison)

"Always Exude Confidence".

BRUCE

Excellent.

(to Charles)

Continue.

Charles is very nervous and now has begun to sweat.

PRACTICE INTERVIEWER

Do you have computer skills of any kind?

After an uncomfortable beat, Charles rips off his shirt and leaps across the desk, GROWLING as he tries to attack the SHRIEKING interviewer. It quickly becomes evident that Charles is attached to a chain via a collar around his neck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Two MEN dressed in white lab coats are holding the other end of the chain. They struggle to pull Charles off the dazed interviewer as Bruce addresses the rest of the class.

BRUCE

Okay, everyone, this is an important lesson; "Aggression Management". You're not werewolves anymore so when you experience anxiety you're going to have to find a more socially acceptable solution than biting and scratching. Okay?

Bruce helps the interviewer back into his chair.

PRACTICE INTERVIEWER

(to Bruce)

I'm not being paid enough.

BRUCE

I know, Ken. We're working on it.

EXT. HOUSE- EVENING

The windows of the Frick home radiate with a warm glow through the beautiful falling snow and cozy smoke rises from the chimney.

CUT TO:

INSERT SHOT: TELEVISION SCREEN

Susan Frick, dressed in a business suit, is addressing the U.S. Congress. A graphic identifies her as "Susan Frick: Corrected Creature Rights Advocate". Maggie is seated next to her looking very serious.

SUSAN (ON T.V.)

"The time is now. The Frick Bill provides transitional aid funding so that recovering victims of creature recruitment can reclaim their lives."

BACK TO:

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM)- CONTINUOUS

Maggie smiles and turns off the television.

INT. HOUSE (DINING ROOM)- CONTINUOUS

Bruce, Susan and Sam are seated around the dinner table. Maggie enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

Mom, we were on CNN again.

BRUCE

The Congressional address?

SUSAN

Putty in our hands.

She and Maggie high five. They hear a door OPEN and CLOSE.

CARLTON (O.S.)

Hello?

SAM

Uncle Carlton!

Carlton walks into the room.

CARLTON

Sorry I'm late. Sorry I didn't call.
Sorry I didn't shave. Sorry I forgot to
bring a pie.

Bruce waits for him to finish.

BRUCE

Any luck finding Jessica? Did she check
in at any of the clinics?

Carlton is a bit solemn for a moment.

CARLTON

Not today.

SUSAN

She'll turn up.

He slings his saddlebag over his chair and sits.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Do you really need that at the table,
Carlton? Especially now that all the
antennae is shut off?

CARLTON

Well, yeah. I brought some Burger King
along just in case, but something smells
amazing.

Dick Richards, wearing an apron, comes out of the kitchen
carrying a beautiful roasted turkey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRUCE

Wow! Mr. Richards you are full of surprises aren't you?

DICK RICHARDS

I'm not only a maestro of monster make-up, but I used to be quite the culinary crackerjack as well.

Everyone starts helping themselves to the food.

SAM

Uncle Carlton, *Dracula Meets the Cosmic Wolfman* is on after dinner. Wanna watch it with me? You can point out all the plot loopholes.

CARLTON

Count me in.

DICK RICHARDS

Me too. I did the make up for that. Oh, by the way... I do have one last little surprise for all of you tonight.

BRUCE

What's that?

Suddenly Dick Richard's skin begins to bubble and melt away from his face. It's Kreslor underneath!

KRELSOR

Ta da!

Maggie SCREAMS, Bruce and Susan jump up from the table and grab the children. Carlton retrieves the blowgun from his saddlebag.

KRESLOR

Whoa! Whoa! Wait a second there!

Kreslor holds up a small switchbox with wires connecting it to his face. Then he reaches up and peels off the mask covering his head. It's Dick Richards afterall. Everyone breathes a relieved collective exhale.

SUSAN

Geez McGreeze!

BRUCE

Thanks for the coronary, Mr. Richards.

SAM

That, sir,... was excellent!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DICK RICHARDS
(chuckling to himself)
Still got it.

THE END