

THE GAME KEEPER

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD/HOUSE. NIGHT

It's the eve before Halloween. A jack-o'-lantern sits on the porch. The wind blows and lifts a single leaf into the air. It floats around the side of the house and lands next to a rope dangling from a second story window. The VOICE of an energetic young man is heard:

NICK (O.S.)

You enter into the black, forbidden forest... only your trusty steeds remain outside, because instinct tells them they dare not follow...

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

The wall clock in this teenager's atypical hideaway reads 1:12 A.M. A "Muncha Slice" pizza menu smeared in pepperoni lies beside a worn-out book covered with illustrations of dragons, warriors, and demons. It is the Game Master's Manual to Dragon's Lair.

NICK (O.S.)

Suddenly, a large hideous forest rodent scurries past you, sending a chill up your spine. You head deeper into the dark unknown until you realize you've suddenly passed the point of no return...

ANGLE ON: The most amazing miniature fantasy world imaginable.

NICK (O.S.)

And then, you see it. The "Cave of Ultimate Despair." Like a magnet, you are drawn inside. You hear the echoing sounds of dripping water. Plop. Plop. Plop. And then, silence.

A WALKIE-TALKIE sits on the highest hill surrounded by a moat overlooking this entire world.

NICK (O.S.)

A string of vampire bats fly out from the abyss and disappear above your head. Then, in the stillness, you hear the deep, rumbling, roar of...

STATIC blasts through the walkie-talkie.

BRIAN (O.S.)  
Hey, can I come over?

ANGLE ON NICK PHERSON, a bright fifteen-year-old who excels in almost every area of his life except for his height. Across from him sits, ALLEN O'MALLEY, his best friend of the same age.

ALLEN  
It's the twerp.

NICK  
Brian, how many times we gotta tell you not to interrupt the game!

BRIAN LIEBERMAN, a ten-year-old, who despite his difference in age, far exceeds the intellect of the preceding youths. Brian stares out his bedroom window from the house next door, holding a walkie-talkie.

BRIAN  
(through talkie)  
I just wanna come over.

NICK  
We told you, this game isn't for kids. Now if you interrupt the Game Master again, I'm going to disconnect your electrodes, and give you back your talkie.

BRIAN  
(defeated)  
Okay, I promise.

NICK  
(rolls dice)  
Now where was I? Oh, yeah... the snoring gets thunderous and deafening until...

Nick places a DRAGON in front of Allen's three figurines: GOR the Mighty Barbarian, HAR-DIN the Monk, and VEX the Wizard.

ALLEN  
A dragon! I knew it. I just knew it!

NICK  
 Not just any fire-breathing  
 manticore... Cintar, the one-eyed  
 Behemoth.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

BRIAN  
 (wild with excitement)  
 Cintar. No way!

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

ALLEN  
 (rustles through papers)  
 Okay. I got it! Vex the Wizard is  
 going to use his Wall of Stone  
 spell...

NICK  
 (continues rolling, voice  
 becomes more ominous)  
 The creature's back arches... Its  
 scales ripple in the darkness...  
 Its wings unwrap, spanning two,  
 maybe three hundred feet wide as...

ALLEN  
 Okay, I got it! Gor, the Barbarian,  
 is going to use his Magic Cloak of  
 Invisibility and...

BRIAN (O.S.)  
 No, dolt! Use your Magic Ring of  
 Fire Protection. If you don't,  
 you'll be toast!

ALLEN  
 That's it! I'm gonna exterminate  
 that amoebae.

Nick rolls the dice then flicks over Gor, the Barbarian.

ALLEN  
 Hey! That's not fair.

NICK  
 He's right. You should have used  
 the ring.

ALLEN  
That's it. I quit!

BRIAN (O.S.)  
I told you.

ALLEN  
Shut up, twerp!

NICK (O.S.)  
Chill, O'Malley. He's just a kid.

ALLEN (O.S.)  
Kid or no kid. If he stays, I'm  
outta here.

NICK  
Come on. Why not let him come over  
just this once? He's not that bad.

ALLEN  
Are you mentally lapsed? Ain't no  
twerp coming over here. Ever.

Allen stares across at Brian who smiles smugly. Nick rolls  
the dice.

ALLEN  
(to Nick)  
So, when you gonna ask Cecilia to  
Crowley's party?

NICK  
Are you trying to distract the  
mighty Game Master?

ALLEN  
I just think one of us should get a  
date before the end of the year.

Nick reaches over and turns down the talkie.

NICK  
That's why I'm gonna ask her  
tomorrow on the bus. I got it all  
planned out.  
(removes piece of paper)  
See.

ALLEN  
(grabs paper, reads)  
This is lame.

NICK

What?

ALLEN

(reads from paper)

"I think we'd make a congruous couple?"

(looks up)

Congruous?

NICK

Well, I think we would.

BRIAN (O.S.)

Hey, what's going on?

NICK

Shh!

(approaches window/yells softly)

Don't you know what time it is?

(glances back at his door)

Why don't you go to bed?

BRIAN

Go to bed yourself!

The two boys hear a pair of slippers tramping down the hallway. They panic.

NICK

The rope!

Nick tosses a sheet over the miniature world. Allen runs toward the window, but it's too late -- the doorknob turns.

NICK

Dive!

Allen scurries under the bed. Nick jumps under the covers and flicks off the light. The door opens. MR. PHERSON, mid-40's, extremely athletic, enters. Surprised to see that everything is in order, he moves to leave when STATIC blasts through the talkie.

BRIAN (O.S.)

Nick, Allen? You there? Over.

Mr. Pherson glares out the window to see Brian staring across at him. Brian hits the deck. Mr. Pherson rips the covers off Nick and sees him fully clothed.

MR. PHERSON

All right, mister. I should have known I couldn't trust you.

NICK

But Dad, I wasn't doing anything, honest.

Mr. Pherson looks under the bed and discovers Allen.

ALLEN

Hello, Mr. P.

MR. PHERSON

All right, Allen. Out of there.

Allen crawls out from under the bed.

NICK

But dad...

MR. PHERSON

Enough. I've tried to be reasonable, but this time you've gone too far. I'm getting rid of that game first thing tomorrow.

NICK

You can't be serious!

MR. PHERSON

You bet I am.

(eyes them both)

What is it with you two boys? Why can't you play sports like other kids your age instead of locking yourself up in this room with some silly board game?

ALLEN

Actually, Mr. P., it's a very complex game that requires a great deal of imagination and...

MR. PHERSON

Imagination isn't going to get you two through life!

(beat/to Nick)

I suppose you didn't make that team today, did you?

NICK

They didn't want me. I wasn't good enough.

MR. PHERSON

How do you expect to be good if you never try? When I was your age, I had my pick of any team. And you can't even make a fencing team.

ALLEN

They're very tough, Mr. P. Not many kids even get to try out for...

NICK

Don't lie, Allen. I don't fit in. I never fit in, okay?

MR. PHERSON

The Pherson men may be short, but we are athletic. I've made up my mind. Next year, you'll be going some place where you won't have time for children games.

NICK

You mean military school?

MR. PHERSON

It's the same school my dad sent me to become a man.

NICK

But I'll try harder. I promise!  
I'll get on a team.

MR. PHERSON

I'll expect a full report of your grades tomorrow. Lucky for you you're a still good enough student and won't have trouble getting accepted.

NICK

But dad...

Mr. Pherson approaches the door and pauses.

MR. PHERSON

Allen, get on home before I have the nerve to wake your mother.

Allen heads for the rope at once.

MR. PHERSON  
And use the front door.

Allen follows Mr. Pherson into the hall.

NICK  
Man, I swear, one of these days I'm  
taking off and never coming back.  
(kicks off sneakers)  
If only there was some place far  
enough, portentous enough, and  
dangerous enough that it didn't  
have school or parents.

Nick turns off the light. He closes his eyes as Brian  
whispers across the way.

BRIAN  
Nick, you there? Over.  
(frustrated)  
Man, I'm never gonna get to play.

INT. PHERSON KITCHEN. MORNING

MRS. PHERSON, attractive, late '30s, prepares oatmeal at the  
stove. ON TV: Captain James T. Kirk from the Starship  
Enterprise fights the Gorn, a dreaded green lizard monster.

SCOTTY (O.S.)  
Spock! Where are you?

SCOTTY PHERSON, 5, sits at the kitchen table, eyes glued to  
the TV. He is dressed as Captain Kirk, complete with toy  
phaser and communicator.

SCOTTY  
There, Spock! Behind the rock!  
Hurry!

MRS. PHERSON  
It's late, Scotty. Now finish your  
breakfast.

Mrs. Pherson turns off the TV and places a bowl of oatmeal in  
front of Scotty.

SCOTTY  
But Spock needs me. I gotta fight  
the Gorn.

MRS. PHERSON  
I'm sure Mr. Spock can manage just  
fine without you.

Mrs. Pherson takes his toy communicator away.

SCOTTY  
Klingon! Help, Lieutenant Uhura!

MRS. PHERSON  
That's enough Scotty. Now eat your  
oatmeal or you'll be late for your  
Halloween party.

SCOTTY  
(pokes oatmeal with spoon)  
Captain Kirk doesn't like oatmeal.  
He likes McDonalds.

GINA PHERSON, 14, enters wearing a Soccer outfit and an MP 3  
Player strapped to her waist. She opens the fridge, grabs the  
orange juice and drinks straight from the carton.

MRS. PHERSON  
Gina, for God sakes, use a glass.

Gina ignores her mother. She sits at the table, grabs a piece  
of toast and bites into it. Scotty dumps a handful of M&M's  
he stole from his Star Trek lunch box into his oatmeal.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. MORNING

An alarm clock BLASTS alive at 7:15 A.M. Nick's head shoots  
up from his pillow and hits the shelf above his bed. He gets  
up and pulls on his jeans. His eyes focus on his miniature  
world, now uncovered and empty of all its figurines.

NICK  
MOMMMMM!

Nick struggles toward the door with his pants wrapped around  
his ankles and falls SMACK on his face.

INT. SECOND FLOOR/FRONT HALLWAY. MORNING

Nick runs down the hallway hoisting up his jeans. He slides  
down the banister and lands in the front hall. He zips up his  
fly and runs into...

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Nick grabs his mother.

NICK  
Mom!

Scotty gives him the Vulcan sign as Nick quickly returns it.

NICK  
Yeah, yeah. Live long. Mom, my  
game, my figurines? Where are they?

MRS. PHERSON  
What do you mean? Aren't they in  
your room?

NICK  
(sudden realization)  
Where's dad?

MRS. PHERSON  
He was taking out the gar...

Nick flies out the back door.

MRS. PHERSON (O.S.)  
...bage.

EXT. DRIVEWAY. MORNING

Nick freezes. He sees his father carrying a box filled with his figurines and fantasy books toward the street.

NICK  
Dad! What are you doing?

A mysterious old man, known as DIRTY DEKES, 60s, rummages through the trash across the street. He has a long white beard and wears dirty overalls. He mumbles to himself in a strange language as

The garbage truck stops in front of Old Man Dekes house. Old Man Dekes waves the GARBAGE MEN off as he continues rummaging through the trash. The garbage truck stops in front of the Pherson's house as garbage men hop off and empty the Pherson's trash.

NICK  
Dad, don't do it. I'll do anything,  
I promise!

MR. PHERSON

It's too late, Nick. I've thought long and hard about this and there's just no other way.

Mr. Pherson tosses Nick's figurines into the truck.

NICK

But Dad, it isn't fair!

MR. PHERSON

It's for your own good. It's time you learn to face your fears head on, instead of avoiding them. And that, my son, you won't learn by playing a game.

Dekes looks up hearing this. Mr. Pherson returns to the house as Nick watches stunned. The truck's engine starts as the huge crane crushes Nick's figurines into a thousand pieces. The truck pulls away and drives down the street.

The truck turns the corner as Nick chases after it. Old Man Dekes watches as he strokes his beard.

INT. LOCAL DINER. DAY

Nick sits in a booth alone, looking like hell. A progress report full of A's sits before him, smeared in chocolate. DOLORES, a seasoned waitress, passes him. Nick shoves his empty glass toward her.

NICK

Hit me again, Dolores. And make it a double.

DOLORES

You sure you ain't driving?

Nick gives her a look as Allen ENTERS the diner. He spots Nick and passes by a group of older teenagers sporting that "new grunge" look. MCKENZIE, the meanest kid in the bunch, spots Allen.

MCKENZIE

Hey O'Malley. Dressed for Crowley's party already? Let me guess. Wal-Mart having another special on Howdy Doody costumes again?

The group of teenagers laugh.

ALLEN

Right, McKenzie. And I suppose you'll be going as The Man with No Brain again?

Everyone HUSHES as McKenzie rises, pissed. His GIRLFRIEND, 16, grabs him as Allen quickly moves along. Allen sits across from Nick as McKenzie leers at Allen. Allen slouches as Dolores serves Nick his milk shake. Allen reaches in his pocket gives her a crumpled dollars.

ALLEN

Dolores, I'll take three fries, two double doubles, a triple C shake, and one of those delicious pumpkin pies you're so famous for.... ala mode.

DOLORES

Will that be MasterCard or Visa?

ALLEN

All right. Just bring me a coke, will ya? And no crushed ice.

Dolores walks off. Allen grabs a straw and dips it into Nick's shake. He takes a good sip.

ALLEN

So, how's the congruous couple? Did you get a date or didn't you?

NICK

Are you kidding? You wouldn't believe what's been happening.

DING-A-LING-A-LING. CECILIA REYNOLDS, a beautiful girl of 15, enters with two girlfriends. Nick spots her.

NICK

God. Not now.

Nick hides behind a menu. Allen watches and smacks him.

ALLEN

You dick. You didn't ask her, did you?

NICK

I never even saw the damn bus. I've been tracking this garbage truck halfway around Hedgedale when...

ALLEN

Huh?

NICK

I swear, man. This is the worst day ever.

(beat/sinks further)

Is she coming?

ALLEN

Be cool. Be cool.

Cecilia sits at the counter. DING-A-LING-A-LING, a fencing mask enters. The mask is lifted to reveal MATT CARLSON, the coolest-looking seventeen-year-old in school. Matt sits next to McKenzie and his gang. McKenzie points out Cecilia. Matt smiles confidently as Nick hides behind his menu. Allen shakes his head, disgusted.

ALLEN

Thou letteth me down, man.

Matt rises as he eyes Cecilia. Allen catches sight of this.

ALLEN

Oh, oh. Matt Carlson is making his move. You'd better take your balls out now, or you ain't taking nobody to Crowley's party.

Nick peers up from his menu and sees Matt talking to Cecilia. Matt's jacket reads: Captain, Hedgedale High Fencing Team.

NICK

That pig. I swear, if he touches one hair on her head, I'll...I'll..

ALLEN

You'll what, puke? Not cool.

Matt sits beside Cecilia. Nick looks like he is going to hurl. Allen removes a small can of BREATH SPRAY and squirts some into his mouth.

ALLEN

Wanna squirt?

He hands the breath spray to Nick who grabs it and rises. Nick squirts some into his mouth and pockets it.

ALLEN

Tis not possible? Doth my eyes deceive me?

Nick heads for Cecilia.

ALLEN

That-a-way, squire! A duel to the death for thy fair maiden, and thouest potential wife.

Cecilia tries to ignore Matt, which is next to impossible. Matt removes a piece paper from his pocket and reads.

MATT

Ode to Cecilia, by Matt Carlson.  
(clears throat)  
Cecilia, Cecilia, how I long to feel ya. Your lips are like Cherry Coke. Each time I see ya, in the Cafeteria, I keep telling myself, this love stuff ain't no joke. Like it so far?

Cecilia looks stunned as her girlfriends gush.

GIRLFRIENDS

It's wonderful. So romantic.

MATT

Don't deny it, your pompoms can't hide it...  
(eyes her breasts)  
...you are a Queen in need of a King. So don't be late, I'll pick you up at eight, for Crowley's party this Hallow's Eve.  
(puts poem away)  
Cool, huh? I wrote it at lunch. So what do you say? Is it a...

Matt looks up and sees Nick sweats profusely while standing over them. Matt sees Nick's terrified face. Matt's jock friends laugh as Nick swallows hard.

MATT

Well, if it ain't the shrimp that couldn't make the fencing team?

NICK

Excuse me, but I...I don't think the lady appreciates your scurrilous advances.

MATT

Who says?

Matt rises, overshadowing Nick by at least a foot and a half. Nick stutters, unable to get another word out.

MATT

What's the matter, drip? Can't hold your sword straight?

(holds hand/shaking)

Too heavy for your widdle hand?

CECILIA

Stop it, Matt. Nick's a great fencer. Aren't you, Nick?

Nick melts.

MATT

Why he couldn't fence a one-armed dwarf. Can ya drip?

Matt shoves Nick as Nick eyes Cecilia, speechless. Allen slaps his head.

ALLEN

Hopeless, man. Hopeless.

NICK

Actually, I...

MATT

(snaps fingers to jocks)

That's it. Waste him!

The jocks grab Nick and lift him into the air. They carry him toward the door as Nick kicks and struggles. Cecilia moves to follow him but her girlfriends stop her.

GIRLFRIENDS

Let the drip go. He's useless.

EXT. NICK'S BACKYARD. DAY

CLOSE ON a catcher's mask, eyes mean and stern. A hockey mask, eyes full of threat. The masks butt heads as a broomstick rises into the air, followed by a ski pole. They CLINK, ready to duel to the death.

NICK

(with catcher's mask)

Thou hath disgraced my honor for the last time. Apologize or die, blackguard scum!

Nick and Allen fence. Allen pauses pissed.

ALLEN  
 Hold it! Hold it!  
 (raises hockey mask)  
 Why do I always have to be the  
 blackguard scum? Why can't you  
 disgrace me for once?

NICK  
 Cause I am Sir Nicholas Pherson,  
 Ruler of Hedgedale. And you mere  
 waif, are scum. Enguard!

The duel begins. Allen lunges, Nick parries. They weave around the jungle gym, nearing a clothesline. Nick is clearly the more skilled.

NICK  
 I shall finish thee swiftly, oh  
 lowly serf. For I must hurry and  
 annihilate thy wretched rogue,  
 Carlson.

ALLEN  
 Thou shall never kill thy rogue  
 Carlson, for thouest hath no BALLS!

NICK  
 AH-HAH! Take that, you pig-faced  
 swine!

Nick forces Allen into the small rugs hanging out to dry. Allen dodges the rugs as TWO EYES belonging to Brian Lieberman peer through a small hole in the wooden fence.

Nick coerces Allen through one of Mrs. Pherson's bras. Allen stumbles and catches himself. He SCREAMS and drops the bra into the mud. They pause, stare at it, then resume fencing.

ALLEN  
 Thou hath humiliated me for the  
 last time. I shall have to kill thy  
 mother too!

Allen slices the clothes line in two. The rugs and under garments get drowned in the mud as Brian scurries behind the lawn furniture, watching. Allen gets the better of Nick. He forces Nick through the sandbox, dodging the swings. Nick stumbles on Scotty's Tonka truck. Allen strikes.

BRIAN (O.S.)  
 Nick, look out!

Nick turns toward the voice as Allen lunges and knocks Nick on his ass. Nick lands on his broomstick and snaps it. Allen pins Nick to the ground, his ski pole against Nick's throat.

ALLEN  
Does thou hath any last words, oh  
lowly ruler of Hedgedale?

NICK  
Yeah... Brian!

Nick shoves the pole aside as Brian sheepishly hides behind a tree.

NICK  
What are you doing here?

Brian cowers in shame, realizing he's caused Nick's defeat.

MR. PHERSON (O.S.)  
Nick?

Allen dives behind the tree as Mr. Pherson opens the back door. He catches sight of Nick standing alone.

NICK  
Yeah, Dad?

MR. PHERSON  
Don't you have something to show  
me?

NICK  
It's in my room. I'll get it in a  
minute.

MR. PHERSON  
You'll get it now.  
(turns towards tree)  
And Allen...

ALLEN (O.S.)  
(from behind tree)  
Yes, Mr. P?

MR. PHERSON  
Your mother phoned. I told her you  
were on your way home. Now.

ALLEN (O.S.)  
(still behind tree)  
Yes, Mr. P.

Mr. Pherson closes the back door. Allen steps out from behind the tree, holding the broken broom.

ALLEN

I swear, man. Thou hath the worst parents.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. DAY

Nick stares in the mirror dressed in a colorful, Musketeer-like costume, complete with feathered hat and plastic sword. He removes Allen's breath spray and squirts some in his mouth. He shoves it back in his pocket and raises his sword.

NICK

So, Sir Carlson, foul stench of Hedgedale, we meet again. Unhand thy fair maiden or prepare to suffer a long and a most invidious death!

He lunges toward the mirror as someone tries to open the locked door. KNOCKING pursues.

MR. PHERSON (O.S.)

Nick, open this door.

Nick unlocks the door as his father enters. Nick hands him the progress report and fidgets with his hat nervously.

MR. PHERSON

Excellent.  
(folds report)  
I'm sure with these grades, the Piedmont Academy will be more than help in your other shortcomings.

NICK

But Dad...

Mrs. Pherson appears in the doorway, dressed as a sailor.

MRS. PHERSON

Mrs. Rutler just phoned. She can't sit with Scotty tonight. She caught the flu from Jason.

MR. PHERSON

Well then. Looks like Nick will have to baby-sit Scotty instead.

NICK

But it's Halloween. Everyone's going to Crowley's. Why can't Gina stay home?

MR. PHERSON

Cause Gina just made Captain of her Soccer team, that's why. Now take your brother trick-or-treating while your mother and I finish getting dressed.

Mr. And Mrs. Pherson exit Nick's room. Nick pounds his fist against his headboard. He eyes the empty miniature world.

EXT. NICK'S NEIGHBORHOOD. DUSK

Nick and Scotty head down the street in their costumes. Several KIDS run past them. A group of MOMS stop and stare at Nick, thinking how cute he looks with his little brother. Nick yanks his hat off, embarrassed.

NICK

Man. I hate this stinkin' town.

Nick notices Scotty flicking his TINY FLASHLIGHT on and off. He shines it on Nick's face.

NICK

Quit it, will you? You're wasting dry cells.

Nick takes the flashlight from Scotty and shuts it off. He shoves it in his vest pocket.

SCOTTY

Look! Commander Data!

Scotty runs toward a kid dressed as COMMANDER DATA from Star Trek, The Next Generation. WIND CHIMES in the b.g. as Nick spots Old Man Dekes' house across the street. His yard filled with junk and litter. Nick is about to follow Scotty as his eye catches something. It's Nicks figurines from Dragon's Lair lying amongst the box of junk in Dekes' driveway.

EXT. OLD MAN DEKES' DRIVEWAY. SECONDS LATER

Nick enters the driveway and approaches the box with his figurines. He reaches for them as -- SWOOSH! An object comes hurling out of the garage, nearly hitting him. Nick ducks.

NICK  
Hey, what the...

Old Man Dekes emerges from the garage, holding a broken TV and a hammer.

OLD MAN DEKES  
Watch it! I don't take kindly to no thieves.

NICK  
Who you calling a thief? That stuff happens to be mine.

Nick reaches for the box but Dekes grabs it.

OLD MAN DEKES  
What's mine is mine, and what's yours is mine unless you wants to buy it, that is?

He smiles, revealing his yellow teeth. Nick backs off.

NICK  
Buy it? Why I'm not paying a dime for that stuff.

Dekes grabs the box away and places it out of Nick's reach.

NICK  
Don't you know they have laws against people who steal other people's garbage?

OLD MAN DEKES  
That's it, that's it! Let's go. Put 'em up!

Dekes jumps into a boxing position. He spits on his fists, then takes a right and left jab at Nick.

NICK  
(ducking)  
Stop it, will you? You wanna hurt someone?

OLD MAN DEKES  
What's wrong, boy? Too scared to fight, are you?

NICK  
I'm not scared. I'm just not gonna fight some old man.

OLD MAN DEKES

Old, am I? Why I'll have you know,  
I use to joust the king's finest  
knights in my day. Outsmarted the  
forests slyest thieves. Killed the  
land's fiercest rodents, and slayed  
thy meanest dragons, all before  
breakfast, I did. So take that, bug  
eyes! AIEY!

NICK

(ducks/backs off)

Quit that! Are you crazy or  
something?

OLD MAN DEKES

Afraid to fight with the old dukes,  
are ya? Take that!

Dekes tosses something to Nick. Nick catches it. It is a magnificent sword. The handle is carved in gold with a strange crest engraved on it. Dekes grabs another sword, and swings.

NICK

Wow! I've never seen anything like  
this. Where'd you get it?

OLD MAN DEKES

Let's go! Show your stuff, yella  
belly!

Nick is forced to defend himself by fending off Dekes' blows.

NICK

Hey! Someone could get killed with  
this thing!

OLD MAN DEKES

You fight like you look, boy!  
A soft-hearted, sweet smelling,  
good for nothing, Turkish meatball!

Nick gets angry. He swings hard, knocking Dekes over a pile of junk. Dekes sits up, impressed.

OLD MAN DEKES

Not bad for a coward.

Nick examines the sword.

NICK  
This isn't even a replica. It's a  
genuine eleventh century broad  
sword.

OLD MAN DEKES  
What'd you expect? A fake?

NICK  
How much you want for this?

OLD MAN DEKES  
(grabs it away)  
You can't have it. You're not  
ready.

NICK  
Ready for what?

SCOTTY (O.S.)  
Nick! Data's waiting.

NICK  
Go on. I'll be right there.

Dekes puts the sword down and polishes an elaborate figurine.

NICK  
Look, I'll pay whatever you want.  
Only I've gotta have that...

Nick pauses, spotting a huge crate filled with intricately  
carved figurines -- far more incredible than any he's ever  
owned. He eyes a gruesome evil Sorcerer that Old Man Dekes  
polishes.

NICK  
Whoa... who's that?

OLD MAN DEKES  
(suddenly mysterious)  
He's the demon of wickedness  
himself. The evil sorcerer Zorak.  
He cuts off children's fingers and  
uses them for his evil powers.

NICK  
(frantically searches his  
pockets)  
I'll take it. Everything. I'll even  
throw in all my other stuff.

Nick hands him his money. Dekes shoves it aside.

OLD MAN DEKES

Keep your money! Back in my day, boys learned about manhood by playing board games like Life and Monopoly. Now all you boys wanna do is play violent high-tech video games.

Dekes smashes an old hammer through a Video Arcade game then kicks it with his boot.

NICK

But you don't understand. I'm not like all the other boys. This game is my life. It's all I have.

OLD MAN DEKES

Your life, eh? That's what you said isn't it?

NICK

Well... yeah.

Dekes eyes twinkle.

SCOTTY (O.S.)

Nick, look! Data's leaving.

NICK

I'm coming.

(to Dekes)

That's every cent I have, I swear it. What do you say? Is it a deal?

Nick slams a crispy twenty dollar bill on the crate. Dekes eyes it. Finally, he hands Nick the crate and utters something in a strange low voice:

OLD MAN DEKES

"Beware of the Keeper, for he lurks within the imagination of all those who summon him."

Nick takes the crate, slightly spooked. He starts to walk off as...

OLD MAN DEKES (O.S.)

Wait!

(places an ancient RED BOOK inside the crate)

Can't play without the rules, now can ya?

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. AN HOUR LATER

A dark ominous castle, the only missing piece from his miniature world, is lifted from the crate and placed on top of the highest hill. It fits perfectly within the boundaries of the tiny moat, overlooking the now complete miniature world.

NICK

Man, wait till Allen sees this.  
I've been searching my whole life  
for an impenetrable twelfth century  
citadel like this.

He removes the figurines -- a PRINCESS, a KING, a DARK KNIGHT, and places them inside the village alongside some goats, peasants, and merchants. He reaches for the evil sorcerer as...

MR. PHERSON (O.S.)

Nick, we're leaving.

Nick stops. He places the evil sorcerer back inside the crate.

INT. FIRST FLOOR/SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY. NIGHT

Nick's parents stand in the front hall with Gina. Mr. Pherson is dressed as an admiral. Gina listens to MADONNA MUSIC on her MP3 Player. Scotty runs up the stairs, still in his costume and grabs Nick's leg.

MRS. PHERSON

We'll be dropping Gina off at  
Sheila's. Mrs. Freedman should have  
her back by eleven. Isn't that  
right, Gina?

(no response)

Gina?

GINA

(sings)

"Like a virrrrrrigin, let your heart  
beat next to mine."

Gina bops to her music, oblivious as Mrs. Pherson sighs, frustrated.

MR. PHERSON

And no guests, including Allen. You'll pass out the rest of the candy and make sure Scotty's in bed by eight. Now, do you think you can handle all that?

NICK

Yes.

MR. PHERSON

I didn't hear you.

NICK

Yes, sir.

Mr. Pherson exits with Gina.

MRS. PHERSON

I laid Scotty's pajamas on his bed. And no more candy. Don't worry, honey... they'll be other parties.

She smiles encouragingly and leaves. Scotty gives Nick the Vulcan sign and smiles up at him.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

A trail of candy wrappers lie sprawled across Nick's bed leading toward Scotty. Scotty shoves another candy bar in his mouth. The clock next to him reads 8:27 P.M. Nick blows dust off the cover of the ancient red book. He flips through the old crinkling pages written in ancient scripture.

NICK

Twenty bucks, what a jip. This thing isn't even in English.

Scotty zooms in on a walkie-talkie on the bed and picks it up. He turns it on and speaks into it.

SCOTTY

Spock? Spock, you there?

NICK

Hey! Quit that, will you? I just reprogrammed the frequency on that.

Nick takes the talkie away and clips it on his belt. Scotty frowns, upset. Nick watches feeling guilty.

NICK

Okay. I guess it's not your fault  
I'm stuck here. Tell you what? Why  
don't we contact Mr. Spock later  
and get Allen beamed up?

SCOTTY

But we gotta stop the Romulans  
before they enter the neutral zone.

Nick sighs and turns back to the book. He sees a brilliant illustration of the evil sorcerer identical to the figurine now in his crate. The sorcerer holds two cups in his hands, filled with bloody fingers that could easily belong to a child.

NICK

Man, this guy is utterly afflicted.  
Hey, what's this? It looks like  
some kind of spell.

INSERT: bizarre words written in red.

NICK

Eta manach...

SCOTTY (O.S.)

(softly)

Eta manach...

A LIGHT appears inside the dark castle.

NICK

Eta manach...

SCOTTY

Eta manach...

The castle begins to tremble.

NICK

Eti manal...

SCOTTY

Eti manal...

The castle grows brighter. Nick turns toward Scotty.

NICK

Hey, stop that. And lay off those  
Mars bars, will you? You wanna  
hurl?

Scotty shoves another candy bar into his mouth and swallows.

The doorbell RINGS. Nick glances at the clock and slams the book shut. The light inside the castle instantly dies.

NICK

Damn. Ten more milliseconds and it would have been a freebie.

(to Scotty)

Now, you stay right there. And don't touch anything, you hear?

Nick exits the room. A breeze blows into the room followed by WIND CHIMES. Scotty catches a glimpse of Brian's walkie-talkie next to the Dark Castle in the miniature world. He climbs off Nick's bed.

EXT. NICK'S STREET. NIGHT

Brian returns from trick-or-treating dressed as a mummy. He pauses, hearing CLANKING in b.g. He sees Allen coming down the street wearing a homemade suit of armor made out of tin cans and foil, complete with shield (garbage lid with a dragon painted on it) and broad sword (broom stick wrapped in tin foil).

BRIAN

(totally awed)

Wow! Where you going, Allen?

ALLEN

Away young serf, before I behead thee.

Allen heads up Nick's driveway.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Scotty reaches for Brian's walkie-talkie, positioned next to the dark castle. He grabs it as the white light reappears.

OMINOUS VOICE

Eta manach...

INT. BASEMENT ACROSS THE STREET. NIGHT

A bright light flickers from inside Old Man Dekes' basement window. Ominous voice continues:

VOICE

Eti manal...Bethrad anach...

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Allen grabs the rope dangling from Nick's open window and yanks on it hard.

ALLEN

Hey, Nick. They gone yet?

Allen climbs up the rope, clanking loudly. He clings desperately to his fake sword and shield, almost losing his talkie. He grabs it and quickly refastens it to his belt.

ALLEN

Christ! How did them knights ever scale them castle walls wearing all this crap?

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The light from inside the castle grows brighter. The dark castle shakes and trembles, surrounding Scotty. The light fills the entire room.

OMINOUS VOICE

Eta manach....

EXT. HOUSE. NIGHT

Allen inches closer toward Nick's window.

ALLEN

Christ, Nick. Give me a hand here, will you?

EXT. OLD MAN DEKES' HOUSE. NIGHT

The wind blows the litter around his yard as we make our way toward Old Man Dekes' basement window. A brilliant light flashes through the panes as...

OMINOUS VOICE

Eta manach, Eti-manal, Bethrad anath!

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE. NIGHT

The light fills the entire room, engulfing Scotty. Allen peers inside the window.

ALLEN  
Nick! What the...

Allen sees something incredible. The light shoots out the window, blinding him. Allen screams and lets go of the rope. He falls to the ground with a CRASH!

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

The light vanishes. Nick enters the room. The dark castle stops trembling.

NICK  
Scotty? Hey, where are you?

ANGLE ON  
SCOTTY'S TINY FIGURINE, standing  
inside the miniature world, still  
dressed as Captain Kirk.

ALLEN (O.S.)  
Nick! Nick!

Nick peers out the window and sees Allen jump off the garbage cans. Allen runs down the driveway, CLANKING.

NICK  
Allen, where you going? Hey! What's  
wrong?

Nick turns, suddenly spooked. He scans his room.

NICK  
All right now, Scotty. Quit playing  
games, will you? Where are you?

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Allen runs up to the front of Nick's house, BANGS on door.

ALLEN  
Nick, open up! Nick! Something  
weird's happening. Hurry!

He yanks Nick's door open and runs upstairs.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Nick surveys the room.

NICK  
Very funny, Captain Kirk. Only I  
don't think Spock is going to..

Nick freezes, spotting Scotty's figurine standing in the middle of the village square.

NICK  
Holy shit! Scotty?

Nick reaches for Scotty -- as the light reappears in the castle.

OMINOUS VOICE  
Eta manach, Eti manal...

A gush of wind fills Nick's room. The ancient book of rules flies open on Nick's desk, the pages rustle in the wind.

VOICE  
...Bethrad anath!!

NICK  
Scottttttty!

The brilliant light shoots out from the castle engulfing Nick, and in an incredible ILM effect, literally sucks him into the game. The light dies, the book slams shut, Allen bursts into the room.

ALLEN  
Nick! Nick, where are you?

EXT. OLD MAN DEKES' HOUSE. NIGHT

The light from the basement dies. A few autumn leaves fall silently from the tree. Complete silence as...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. PLACE UNKNOWN. DAY

A bright light flashes! Nick falls from the sky and lands on the back of a horse-drawn wagon filled with goats and chickens. The animals SQUAWK. Nick rises, stunned to find himself in the middle of a medieval world.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE. DAY

The wagon enters the marketplace. Peasants, merchants and blacksmiths swarm about the village. The wagon stops in front of a pen filled with animals. The FARMER hops off and catches sight of Nick.

FARMER

Aiey! Away from me livestock,  
squire. Away!

He pulls Nick out of his wagon. Nick watches in shock as the farmer unloads his livestock and hurdles them into the pen. Nick walks through the village, gawking at everything in sight. Stunned and amazed he approaches the marketplace. There are no children in this land anywhere.

NICK

Where am I? What's happened?

Nick passes several merchants selling things available only in the middle ages.

MERCHANT 1

Shields, swords, chain mail. Blades  
sharpened here!

MERCHANT 2

Bat wings, dragon tails, lizard  
tongue!

MERCHANT 3

Fresh fish, fresh serpent...  
everything fresh today!

Nick stumbles along, still dressed in his costume. Oddly enough he seems to fit in this strange world. He stops, tripping on something on the road. It's the WALKIE-TALKIE Scotty was playing with in his room. Nick picks it up as -- Scotty SCREAMS.

SCOTTY (O.S.)

Let go, you bad Klingon!

Nick turns and beholds a huge crowd gathering behind him. He rushes toward Scotty, pushing through the people and sees:

GUARDS, all wearing black helmets and red and grey uniforms, surrounding Scotty. Their shields bear the emblem of the land of FANTADOR. The townspeople watch in fear as Nick pushes closer.

SIR GRISWOLD, the black-masked knight, lifts Scotty onto his white stallion. The townspeople GASP in horror.

NICK

Scotty!

Griswold raises his black mask, and aside from the neatly trimmed mustache, reveals himself to be none other than Matt Carlson -- Nick's arch-rival from Hedgedale. Nick watches in bewilderment as Griswold examines Scotty's fingers, pleased.

GRISWOLD

Excellent...

HEAD GUARD

He is a demon, my Lord. We saw him fall from the sky.

Scotty raises his toy phaser: WHIR, WHIR, WHIR, red lights spark. The townspeople gasp. The guards back away. Griswold, however, remains calm.

THE GUARDS

He is a sorcerer. He will destroy us all!

GRISWOLD

There is no sorcerer greater than Zorak. To the castle with him, at once.

Griswold gallops off with Scotty. The guards follow.

NICK

Stop! Scotty!

Nick runs after them. Two of the rear guards block his way.

NICK

My brother! Where are they taking him?

GUARD

Away, peasant. He is property of the Lord Zorak now.

NICK

They can't do that. That's my brother!

Nick pushes past them. The guards draw their swords.

GUARD

Seize him!

Nick stops then runs back into the marketplace. The guards chase him, knocking over a cart filled with fruit and baskets. Nick pauses near the horse stables, frantic. He sees a horse trough filled with water and dives into it. The guards charge right by him. Nick springs up from the trough, gasping for air. He witnesses the guards disappear. Nick climbs out of the trough, dumbstruck.

NICK

What's happening? Where is this place?

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

A strange OLD METER materializes on the corner of the miniature world. The meter has two dials. The top dial ranges from 0 to 1,000, the bottom ranges from 0 to 10. Both needles are set to zero. Allen closes Nick's closet and turns.

ALLEN

Nick?

For the first time, he becomes aware of the dark castle.

ALLEN

Hey. Where'd that come from?

He eyes the castle and sees Nick's figurine standing in the middle of the village square.

ALLEN

Great balls of... Nick?

Allen reaches for it as...

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE. DAY

Nick is lifted into the air, pulled upward by some invisible force.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Allen stares at Nick's figurine, held in his hand.

ALLEN

Whoa. What the...

ZAP! An electric shock singes Allen's hand. Allen drops Nick back into the game with a scream... OUCH!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. DAY

Nick falls from the sky and lands on top of a royal carriage being led down a country road by Griswold and his guards. Nick glances up, dazed. He spots Griswold up ahead leading the way, holding Scotty. Nick crouches onto the roof, freaked. He is surrounded by guards to the left and right on horseback.

NICK  
(to himself)  
Okay, Pherson. Get a grip. There's got to be a logical explanation for all this.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Allen backs away from the game, trembling. He stares at Nick's figurine now lying on top of the royal carriage.

ALLEN  
Chill, O'Malley. Just... chill.

The book of rules flies open on Nick's desk behind him. Allen turns and notices the pages rustle in the wind.

EXT. ROYAL CARRIAGE. DAY

Nick clings to the carriage, totally freaked. The FOOTMAN, a few feet in front of his face holds the reigns to the horses.

NICK  
You fell asleep. That's it. You fell asleep watching Scotty and this is just some dream.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Help! Thief! Help!

Nick peeks over the edge of the carriage and makes out an open window. A woman hides behind a fan, seated inside. Nick crouches as the guards on horses ride closer to the royal carriage.

NICK  
Christ. It's too dangerous out here. Hey, I'm coming in.

Nick inches his way toward the open carriage window.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Allen opens the pizza box on Nick's bed.

ALLEN  
Pepperoni and anchovies. Nick's  
favorite. And it's still hot.

He sniffs a slice and bites into it. Then he eyes the ancient BOOK OF RULES. Allen quickly zooms in on the illustration of Nick and Scotty.

ALLEN  
What the... Holy Christmas!

SPLAT, the slice of pizza drops on Allen's shoe. Static BLASTS through the walkie-talkie on his belt.

BRIAN (O.S.)  
Nick, Allen? You there? Over.

Allen fumbles with his talkie and screams into it...

ALLEN  
Not now, twerp. Later!

He tosses the talkie aside and stares back at the book, dumbstruck.

INT. ROYAL CARRIAGE. DAY

The footman swats a fly on his face as Nick attempts to inch his way inside the carriage window. Several baskets are hurled at him. He clings to the carriage door and nearly falls off. The WOMAN screams, covering her face with a fan.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Away, vile creature! Away!

NICK  
I swear, I'm not going to hurt you.  
I just wanna come in, okay?

The YOUNG WOMAN keeps her face hidden.

WOMAN  
Stop, thief! Help!

She hurls another basket. It hits Nick's head!

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The book is poked with Allen's fake sword. Allen lowers his sword and gapes at the two pictures. Static BLASTS.

BRIAN (O.S.)  
Come on guys. I just wanna watch.  
I'll be quiet. Over.

ALLEN  
(into talkie)  
I said buzz off, squirt! Not now!

Allen turns off the talkie and tosses it onto Nick's bed. It lands on top of Nick's opened pizza with a SQUISH.

INT. BRIAN'S ROOM. NIGHT

Brian gasps as Allen yanks down Nick's shade. Brian tosses his talkie aside, hopping mad.

BRIAN  
That's it. I pay them six bucks a week to listen to that game. This means war.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The dark castle remains completely still.

ALLEN  
Ablene... Ableno... Ablena-otha?

Allen struggles to read the ancient scripture.

ALLEN (CONT)  
Damn, I knew I should have stayed  
in French class.

EXT. BRIAN'S BACKYARD. NIGHT

Brian Lieberman bursts through his back door dressed as RAMBO.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S)  
Brian? Is that you taking out the  
trash?

BRIAN  
(meanest Stallone  
impersonation)  
Where I'm going, there is no  
trash... only mutilated bodies and  
disfigured guts.

He heads in the direction of -- Nick's backyard.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Allen lowers book, gaping at the ominous dark castle,  
spooked.

ALLEN  
Man, something weird tells me that  
wherever Nick is... he's not in  
Hedgedale anymore.

INT. ROYAL CARRIAGE. DAY

YOUNG WOMAN  
Away, wretched thief, away!

Nick finally makes it inside the carriage. The woman's face  
remains hidden. She hurls another basket. Nick ducks.

NICK  
Look, I told you, I'm no thief. Now  
will you chill?

YOUNG WOMAN  
Thou are not here to steal thy  
royal jewels?

NICK  
Jesus! Of course not!

She eyes Nick's cheap costume in comparison to her royal  
gown. She lies back on the seat, exposing herself.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Then quickly, have thy way with me  
and be gone.

NICK  
What?

YOUNG WOMAN

Pray, I have no time for your  
wicked ways. Take me now and be  
done with it!

Nick stares, flabbergasted. She clutches onto a small dagger hidden under her garment. She lowers her fan revealing herself to be none other than Cecilia -- Nick's dream girl from Hedgedale, only now, she is PRINCESS BLOSSOM.

BLOSSOM

Thou are not a vile rapist from the  
Forgotten Forest?

NICK

Hell no! What do I look like?

She turns away, fanning herself. Nick moves closer, struggling to get a closer look. Blossom shoves him, shifting away.

BLOSSOM

Surely thou art not a knight.  
Thouest bear the sword of a mere  
child.

Nick ogles his fake sword, slightly embarrassed.

NICK

Who... who are you?

BLOSSOM

Surely thou jest. I am Princess  
Blossom, niece of the King of  
Fantador. Tis you sir, who are in  
question.

The carriage rocks violently back and forth. Nick and Blossom are tossed to the floor. Royal luggage crashes down upon them. Blossom SCREAMS.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Allen pokes the carriage with his sword. Sparks fly around it.

ALLEN

Nick, speak to me, pal. It's me,  
Allen.

Allen lowers his sword and looks inside. He discerns two tiny FIGURINES of Nick and Blossom. He rises, awed.

ALLEN

Man, what a way to go.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. DAY

The carriage rocks to and fro. The horses NEIGH then charge across the open fields. Nick and Blossom hang on for dear life. The footman tries to control the horses. The guards watch in horror.

GUARDS

The carriage! It is possessed by demons!

Tarkus, the head guard, charges off to summon Sir Griswold.

The carriage bounces over hills and valleys, heading directly toward the Forgotten Forest. The wheel hits a huge rock, throwing the footman into the air. The axle snaps in two. The carriage separates from the horses. It thrusts forward and dashes into...

THE FORGOTTEN FOREST

...and smashes into a huge tree. Nick and Blossom are hurled out of its compartment. Blossom rises and grabs a large rock.

BLOSSOM

Thou art not a knight! Thou art an evil sorcerer! Away!

She hurls the stone at him. Nick lurches.

NICK

Hey, wait up, will you?

She dashes into the forest. Nick rises and goes after her.

NICK

Look, I'm no wizard. I'm Nick. Nick Pherson from Hedgedale. I'm just trying to find my brother, Scotty.

BLOSSOM

I do not have time for thy lies. I must find the Magician of the Forgotten Forest by sunset, or thy Uncle's kingdom shall perish.

Nick trips over a log and falls flat on his face. He rises, and continues on.

NICK

Look lady. Right now, I got my own problems. Just tell me what that guard back there wants with my kid brother and I'll be happy to get lost right now.

BLOSSOM

(freezes)

Kid? Does thou mean... a child?

NICK

Yeah. The one in the black helmet took him. On the white horse.

BLOSSOM

(gasps)

The evil sorcerer's son, Sir Griswold!

She turns and frantically hurries off.

NICK

Hey, wait up! Hey! What's wrong?

Nick heads deeper into the dark forest. A huge, hideous five foot-long CENTIPEDE suddenly appears behind them. It rises on his hind legs, licks it's fangs and follows in their direction.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Allen eyes the strange looking meter hidden in the corner of the game. He reaches for it as -- Nick's door abruptly bursts open followed by -- DA-DA-DA-DA-DA! Brian dives into Nick's room, shooting at everything in sight, including Allen.

BRIAN

All right, that's it! I want my six bucks and I want it now!

ALLEN

What the hell's wrong with you?  
Can't you see we're having a crisis here?

BRIAN

Yeah? Where?

ALLEN

There lunk-head, look!

Allen points at the game. Brian keeps his machine gun pointed up at Allen and eyes game.

BRIAN

So? It's just some figurines.

ALLEN

It's Nick, you moron. He's stuck in the game!

BRIAN

Don't try and weasel out of my money.

(opens closet)

Nick? Nick, where are you?

ALLEN

I'm telling you butt-brain, he's in the damn game!

BRIAN

What, do I look, stupid?

Brian turns and catches a glimpse of NICK'S FIGURINE. He approaches it, curious.

ALLEN

Go on, then. Touch it.

Brian reaches for Nick's figurine as -- ZAP! An electric shock shoots up his hand.

BRIAN

Whoa! What was that?

ALLEN

See. It won't even let you get near the damn thing.

BRIAN

Nick in the game? No way!

ALLEN

That's not all. Take a gander at this.

Allen shows him the book of rules lying open on Nick's desk. Brian views the illustration of Nick and Scotty.

BRIAN

Whoa! Where'd you find that?

ALLEN  
It was lying here, open. Creepy,  
huh?

BRIAN  
Yeah, creepy.

ALLEN  
I've been trying to figure it out,  
only it's written in some weird  
ancient gibberish that...

BRIAN  
Arasimic.

ALLEN  
Huh?

BRIAN  
Arasimic. It's an ancient phonetic  
language spoken by a group of  
mystical prophets in Babylon around  
2500 B.C. You know, before Moses  
and all that.

Brian takes the book and starts reading it.

ALLEN  
Sure. I knew that.

EXT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

Blossom continues through the woods. Nick stops behind her,  
exhausted.

NICK  
Wait! You didn't tell me what they  
want with Scotty, and where they're  
taking him.

Nick struggles to keep up. Blossom uses her dagger to cut  
away at the thick.

BLOSSOM  
Surely thou hath heard of the evil  
sorcerer, Zorak? He is the demon of  
wickedness himself. He cuts off thy  
fingers of small children and uses  
them for his evil brew. It is what  
gives him his evil powers.

NICK  
 Evil sorcerer? Wait a minute. I  
 think I heard of this guy. Sure.  
 He's the guy in that crate who...  
 (stops/sudden realization)  
 No! No, it can't be.

Nick glances up and beholds the DARK CASTLE looming high  
 above the forest trees sitting on the highest hill. The exact  
 same tower in his game.

NICK  
 It is! I'm stuck in my own game!

BLOSSOM  
 We must hurry. The Magician is the  
 only one who can stop the evil  
 sorcerer and save thy brother.

Nick sits on a log, overwhelmed.

NICK  
 But how? How could it have...  
 (sudden realization)  
 That spell. It must have been that  
 damn spell!

Nick rises, staring up at the sky. He clutches his vest,  
 remembering his walkie-talkie.

NICK  
 (speaks into walkie-  
 talkie)  
 Allen! Allen, do you read me? Are  
 ya there?

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

ANGLE ON WALKIE-TALKIE

smothered with anchovies and pepperoni, turned off.

EXT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

A WISP is heard in the b.g. Nick turns and gets a load of the  
 huge centipede behind him. He jumps to his feet, terrified.  
 The centipede shifts closer. Saliva drips from its fangs, as  
 SWATH! A knife is pierced through its head. The centipede  
 falls to the ground, dead. Nick turns to find Blossom behind  
 him.

NICK  
Holy Moses! Where'd the hell you  
learn to do that?

BLOSSOM  
One does not learn, one simply  
does. Does no one teach you these  
things from where thy come?

Blossom removes her dagger from the beast's head as Nick  
steps around it.

NICK  
We just usually call 911.

They continue on as Nick stares back at the giant dead  
insect.

BLOSSOM  
Pray, what does that do?

NICK  
Nothing if you live in L.A. But in  
Hedgedale, it's like calling the  
Royal Guards. They come and save  
you.

BLOSSOM  
Why should someone save thee, if  
you do not wish to save thine own  
self?

NICK  
They have to. That's what we pay  
them taxes for. It's their job.

BLOSSOM  
Only a coward would allow someone  
else to fight thine own battles. I  
am glad I do not come from this  
place called Hilldale. It is a land  
surely made of fools.

NICK  
That's Hedgedale. And it is not.  
It's just civilized, that's all.

She pauses, standing directly next to Nick. For the first  
time she notices how short he is. Nick notices her staring at  
him and quickly straightens up.

NICK  
What?

BLOSSOM

Thou art awfully short to be a wizard.

NICK

I am not short! And I told you, I'm not a wizard. I'm Nick Pherson from Hedgedale!

Blossom hands Nick her dagger with the royal crest of Fantador carved on it's gold handle.

BLOSSOM

Thou are not in Hedgedale now.

Blossom presses on. Nick eyes the dagger, uneasy.

EXT. FIELDS/FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

TARKUS (O.S.)

Here, my Lord!

Griswold and his guards enter the Forgotten Forest and spot the royal carriage. Griswold hands Scotty to Tarkus and examines the empty compartment. Tarkus raises his mask, revealing himself to be McKenzie, Matt Carlson's friend from Hedgedale.

SCOTTY

You don't smell so good.

Tarkus leers at him. Scotty opens his toy communicator. Tarkus snatches it away and crushes it. He hands it back to Scotty who frowns.

GRISWOLD

She cannot be far. Find her.

Griswold grabs Scotty. Tarkus and the guards gallop off. Scotty points his toy phaser at Griswold.

SCOTTY

Captain Kirk doesn't like you.

Griswold charges off into the open fields with Scotty.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Allen paces before the game as Brian reads the book of rules.

BRIAN

Wow. Listen to this. "Battles of wit thou must attain, Though easily lost as easily gained. To earn the blade which bears thy crest, Thou must first complete thy quest." The rules, they're all written in riddles.

ALLEN

Enough with the nursery rhymes. Read what it says about Nick quickly.

Brian flashes him a nasty look and continues to read beside Nick's picture.

BRIAN

Speak these words and your quest has begun.

ALLEN

Quest? No way.

BRIAN

Once you have entered the world of Fantador your goal is to become the "Fearless Knight".

Brian and Allen exchange spooked glances. Brian continues.

BRIAN

To attain this honor you must accomplish the following feats. You must save the last child of Fantador from the evil sorcerer, and restore the Kingdom to its rightful ruler, the King.

Brian anxiously adjusts his glasses and turns the pages.

BRIAN

Wow, look at this.

INSERT PICTURE of ZORAK holding two cups dripping in blood.

ALLEN

Who's that?

BRIAN

It's the evil sorcerer, Zorak.

ALLEN

What's that in his hands?

It looks like worms.

BRIAN

It's fingers. Child fingers.

Brian turns the page and identifies a picture of Scotty.

ALLEN

It's Scotty. That's what must have happened to him! He must be in the game with Nick!

BRIAN

Only now he's the last child of Fantador. The one the Fearless Knight has to save from the Evil Sorcerer.

ALLEN

No way! Nick, do all that? Why he can't even get a date.

BRIAN

(continues reading)

Beware. If you attempt to leave the world of Fantador before your quest is won, you shall remain forever locked in the Land of The Lost Boys. What do you suppose that means?

ALLEN

Holy shit. Nick on a quest? Man, this is getting way too...

(thinks of the right word)

...existential.

BRIAN

Maybe we should call someone, like the police.

ALLEN

Are you crazy? They don't know the first thing about this stuff.

(approaches game)

What we need here is the best damn Game Master who ever lived. Me.

BRIAN

You?

ALLEN

Yeah. You got a problem with that?

EXT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

Nick and Blossom continue through the forest. Blossom's dress catches on a branch. She rips it off, leaving a piece of the cloth behind. Nick glances around, completely lost.

NICK

Jesus. Where the hell are we?

A dark and ominous looking CAVE stands before them.

BLOSSOM

There. We have found it. We must pass through this cave to reach the forest where the Magician lives.

Nick turns and spots the cave. He instantly recognizes it.

NICK

Are you crazy? We can't go in there. That's the Cave of Ultimate Despair!

BLOSSOM

Thouest know of this cave?

NICK

Trust me. If you enter that cave, you'll be fried food sustenance. That's where Cintar, the one-eyed dragon lives.

BLOSSOM

There are no dragons in Fantador. They have all been killed many years ago by a great knight. Only Xanthar Moths reside in the cave now.

NICK

Xanthar Moths? What the hell is a Xanthar Moth? I've been playing this game for years, and I've never heard of any kind of...

Blossom removes her jacket, pulls up her skirt, revealing her legs. Nick pauses mid-sentence, stunned.

NICK  
What are you doing?

BLOSSOM  
Quickly, remove thy clothes.

NICK  
Excuse me?

Blossom reaches into a nearby creek and scoops up some mud. She smears it over her face and arms, covering her skin with it.

BLOSSOM  
The Xanthar Moths have been known to feed off the flesh of humans. The mud repels them with its foul odor.

NICK  
(covers nose)  
That's not all it repels. There's no way I'm putting on...

SPLAT! Blossom slaps some mud on Nick's face.

NICK  
Hey! What'd you do that for?

Blossom eyes him, slightly annoyed.

BLOSSOM  
Do all men in your land fear death such as you do?

NICK  
Of course. Doesn't everybody?

BLOSSOM  
In Fantador, we do not have time for such fears. And you should not either, if you wish to save thy brother.

She enters the cave, leaving Nick alone. He feels incredibly unnerved by this. Nick grabs a few small rocks from the ground and shoves them into his pockets. Shortly after he enters the cave behind her.

INT. CAVE. DAY

The cave is dark and damp. The sound of dripping water echoes in the b.g. Nick catches up to Blossom, slightly alarmed by his surroundings. Nevertheless he continues deeper into the dark passageways.

NICK

(voice echoes)

And I am not afraid of death. In fact, I've killed lots of things before. In Dragon's Lair, I happen to be a mighty warrior.

BLOSSOM

What you fear is not your strength, but your size. Only with imagination, can even the smallest of creatures be strong.

Nick pauses, confused by this. A fluttering sound is heard above them. Nick looks up and makes out two huge PIERCING EYES staring down at him.

NICK

What the...

BLOSSOM

Shhh. It is the Mother Moth. She sleeps with her eyes open to ward off intruders. Thou would be wise not to wake her.

A huge twelve foot-long MOTH hangs upside down surrounded by hundreds of BABY MOTHS.

Nick presses on, terrified. They come across a large clearing with a huge lake at the bottom. Nick continues around the ledge, following Blossom. He glances down at the lake below as -- a rock falls from the ledge. It plops into the muddy waters below, followed by an echo. Nick keeps on struggling to find his footing on the tiny path which leads to the other side of the dark cavern.

NICK

Look, I may be small for my age, but I'm no coward. I would gladly risk my life for my brother, just like you're risking your life right now to save your Uncle.

BLOSSOM

It is not my Uncle I risk my life  
for... it is my Kingdom.

NICK

You mean you care more about your  
Kingdom than your own Uncle?

BLOSSOM

The people of Fantador have been  
far more loyal to me. To him, I am  
merely the next heir to his throne.  
His only interest is to make me  
strong, so that one day I shall  
rule as he does. He cares not what  
I want.

Nick feels sorry for her.

NICK

Man, I know how that is. What is it  
with parents that makes them think  
their kids need to be exactly like  
them?

Nick stumbles on a rock. The rock plummets downward and lands  
in the black muddy waters below.

BLOSSOM

Careful, the lake is filled with  
giant snails. If they attach  
themselves to thy body, they will  
crush thy bones.

Nick forges along the ledge, blinded by darkness. He fishes  
into his pockets and removes the small flashlight he took  
from Scotty while trick-or-treating.

NICK

How the hell can you see where  
you're going?

Nick turns the flashlight ON. He shines it against the cavern  
walls. Suddenly a SQUEAL is heard. Blossom notices the  
strange light and gasps in horror. The squeal fills the  
cavern as the baby moths stir. They take to the air, swooping  
down at them.

BLOSSOM

The fire. Put out the fire!

Moths -- thousands of them! Their eyes gleaming in the darkness, their wings fluttering against each other, swoop down at Nick, striking him and pushing him back. Blossom tries to swat them away, but there are too many. Nick drops the flashlight. Then, the most horrifying sight of all: the MOTHER MOTH spreads her enormous wings. She takes off into the air, shrieking as she swarms down upon them.

NICK  
Holy mothballs!

BLOSSOM  
Quickly! Into the water.

Nick and Blossom leap off the ledge, diving into the black lake below. The Mother Moth hovers above the lake, searching for its prey. It soon gives up and swarms in the direction of her offspring. Nick and Blossom surface in the water, gasping for air.

Just as all seems safe, there is movement in the water in front of them. A pair of ANTENNAS pop up and like a radar, turn and head toward Nick. A second later another pair pops up and so on, until Nick and Blossom are completely surrounded by dozens of antennas.

BLOSSOM  
The snails!

Blossom and Nick frantically swim to the edge. The antennas glide along the surface, directly behind them. Blossom reaches the edge and climbs out of the lake. She reaches to grab Nick just as one of the giant snails attaches its slimy body around Nick's leg. It sucks him into the water with incredible force.

Blossom screams as she scans the waters, but Nick is no where in sight. The water calms as the last snail descends into the depths of the lake. Then, just as all seems lost, Nick is thrust to the surface, gasping for air. Blossom grabs Nick's hand and pulls him out of the water as the GIANT SNAIL remains attached to his body. Blossom grabs a rock and SMASHES it, crushing its hard shell. The snail slides back in the water, dead. Nick shivers as he watches in shock.

NICK  
What happened?

BLOSSOM  
Art thou mad? Thou could have had us killed.

NICK  
I was just trying to help.

BLOSSOM  
I have no need for such help.

NICK  
It was just a flashlight.  
(rises/drenched)  
How was I suppose to know they were  
going to react like that?

BLOSSOM  
(walks on)  
Once we find the Magician, we will  
go our separate ways. Till then,  
you shall do as you are told.

She approaches the cave entrance at the end of the long cavern. Nick watches, upset.

NICK  
You're not so perfect either you  
know. Just take a look at that  
hair.

EXT. CAVERN. DAY

Blossom exits the cavern and stares back at Nick.

BLOSSOM  
What is wrong with my hair?

NICK  
(emerges behind her)  
Frankly, I've seen more subtle buns  
on a Big Mac.

She feels her Princess Leah buns, obviously perturbed by his remark.

NICK  
Is that what guy's here like? Ear  
muffs the size of flying saucers?

She looks at him, annoyed. She heads back into the Forgotten Forest. Nick trails closely behind her.

EXT. DARK CASTLE. DAY

A RAM'S HORN is sounded by a guard from the castle keep. The drawbridge lowers. Griswold and Scotty gallop across it, entering the castle grounds. The drawbridge is raised.

INT. DARK CASTLE CORRIDORS. DAY

Griswold carries Scotty down the dark corridors. Scotty kicks and struggles the whole time while the Guards follow closely behind.

INT. ZORAK'S CHAMBERS. DAY

Dozens of magic potions are steaming and bubbling in a dark, solemn room. The chamber is filled with live animals in cages: spiders, rats, lizards. Glass jars carefully labeled: bat wings, monkey tails, buzzard claws, including a jar with a single child's finger are clearly visible.

Two hideous hands belonging to ZORAK, the evil sorcerer reach for the jar. He twists the jar open and removes the last finger, dripping in blood. The hands move to drop it into a huge pot of boiling brew as:

Griswold bursts through the door holding Scotty. Startled, Zorak drops the finger to the floor. A RAT instantly scurries by, snatches it up, and disappears into a dark hole. Consumed with rage, Zorak turns to reveal his hideous face. His rage instantly turns into evil pleasure as he sees Scotty.

ZORAK  
(hissing)  
Ah... a child.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Brian examines the strange looking meter in the corner of the game. Both dials are still at zero. He waves his hand over it. Electrical currents appear.

BRIAN  
It looks like some kind of ancient  
measuring device. Only what's it  
measuring?

ALLEN

Forget that. Right now we gotta figure out a way to help Nick finish that quest before it finishes him.

BRIAN

But we can't. The book says we can't interfere with the game. If we do, something horrible might happen.

ALLEN

And what do you think is going to happen if we don't interfere?  
(grabs book from Brian)  
Let me see that. You don't know shit about this stuff.

BRIAN

And you do?

ALLEN

That's it. You're dog-meat!

He grabs Brian as -- GARBAGE CANS RATTLE in b.g. They both freeze. The two boys approach Nick's window and peer out. A cat jumps off the garbage can below, MEOWS, and runs off.

KIDS

Dirty Dekes! Dirty Dekes! Cheats us out of Trick-or-Treats!

Kids across the street throw eggs at Old Man Dekes' house.

ALLEN

Twerps. They're wasting their time on Old Man Dekes. He never gives out candy.

BRIAN

Why not? Doesn't he like kids?

ALLEN

Like 'em? The guy eats them for breakfast, especially those who like to play video games. Two years ago some kids went over there for Trick-or-Treats, Spike Peterson and his kid brother. Nobody's seen either of them ever since.

BRIAN

Spike Peterson? The video champ of Vampire Death?

ALLEN

That's him. Only Spike and his brother decided they had enough of Old Man Dekes pinching out on candy every year. So they planted a stink bomb in his basement. Only nobody's ever seen Dekes' basement. Not even the meter man. That's where he hid their bodies, in a freezer chest, like two frozen popsicles.

A light flickers from Old Man Dekes' basement. Brian ducks.

ALLEN

He's probably frying them up right now for a midnight snack. The carnivorous pervert.

Brian moves away from the window, scared stiff. Allen smirks.

EXT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

Nick and Blossom pause in a clearing, clearly lost. Nick stares up at the sky which is now completely covered by trees.

NICK

Man. We'll never find our way back now.

A huge oak tree stands behind them, unlike any other seen in the forest.

BLOSSOM

It's too late. We shall never find him. My Uncle shall perish and I shall be forced to wed the sorcerer's evil son.

NICK

Wed? You mean... marry?

Blossom sits on a log, distraught.

BLOSSOM

What's worse, he writes horrible words and reads them out loud for all to hear.

NICK  
You mean like... poetry?

Nick sits beside her. A small opening on the tree slides open. Two beady eyes peer out, listening to their conversation.

BLOSSOM  
Oh, I cannot bear it. If he speaks another, I shall die a thousand times with each breath.

NICK  
I don't mean to pry, but aren't you kind of young to be getting married?

BLOSSOM  
I am fifteen. If a woman does not marry by her sixteenth birthday, she is considered too old. What man would want her?

NICK  
Man. And I can't even get a date.

BLOSSOM  
Date? Pray, what is that?

NICK  
A date? You know... movies, fries, poignant moments of face sucking. That sort of thing.

She stares at him, perplexed.

BLOSSOM  
Have thou dated many girls in this land of yours?

NICK  
I wish. Only what girl wants to date a short kid? The girls still think I'm a Freshman. I'm not a kid anymore. I'm almost a man.

MAGICIAN (O.S.)  
What's this? Did someone say man?

A door opens. Old Man Dekes steps out of the huge oak tree. He wears a long satin robe and a metal helmet. He has the same white beard, only now much longer.

NICK

It's you!

Nick rises, instantly recognizing him.

BLOSSOM

The Magician of the Forgotten  
Forest. We have found him!

Blossom embraces the Magician. Nick watches, awestruck.

NICK

It is you! Old Man Dekes.

BLOSSOM

You have met the Magician before?

NICK

He's no Magician. He's the one who  
sold me that damn game!

BLOSSOM

(to Magician)

Pay no heed to him. He has been mad  
since we met. He speaks of nothing  
but of some land called Hedgedill,  
when all knows there is no land but  
Fantador.

NICK

That's Hedgedale! And there is so  
such a place. Ask him.

Nick sits down pissed and glares at them.

BLOSSOM

I beg thee, you must help us. The  
evil sorcerer Zorak has taken over  
my Uncle's castle and has found a  
child. You must destroy him, or  
Fantador will be no more.

Nick glances up, concerned about Scotty.

OLD MAN

But I cannot destroy Zorak. He is  
too powerful... and I am but an old  
man.

The Old Man bends over suddenly revealing a hunch on his back  
which was clearly not there before. He produces a cane from  
under his robes, hunched before them.

BLOSSOM

But you are the Magician of the  
Forgotten Forest. Surely you will  
not see my Uncle die?

OLD MAN

What you need is a man of valor.  
Someone strong... and brave.

He looks over at Nick. Nick rises, floored.

NICK

Look, old man. You're not fooling  
me with this stuff. I know who you  
are. So you can forget it.

Nick sits back down, boiling.

BLOSSOM

Surely he is no match for the great  
and powerful Zorak. He bears the  
sword of a child.

Embarrassed, Nick clutches his plastic sword.

NICK

Well I would have had a real one.  
If I had made the team.

OLD MAN

Team? What team do you speak of?

NICK

The fencing team at Hedgedale High.  
You remember Hedgedale? California?  
Garbage?

The Old Man's eyes twinkle. Nick backs off, frightened.

OLD MAN

Perhaps you would care to  
demonstrate your skill?

He produces the same sword from his garage. Blossom sees the  
crest on its handle.

BLOSSOM

The Sword of the Fearless Knight!

NICK

Knight? What knight?

OLD MAN

There once lived a knight in the Forgotten Forest. The bravest knight Fantador has ever known. He would defend entire castles single-handedly against the mightiest warriors, and slay the most feared dragons in the land. During his most triumphant battle he was betrayed and killed by a powerful sorcerer, who's name to this day remains unknown. But his spirit remains, engraved in his sword for all to see.

Nick eyes the magnificent crest engraved on its golden handle.

OLD MAN

A symbol of his strength and valor, unmatched for a thousand years.

BLOSSOM

It is said to hold great powers for those who wield it. Griswold would surely die for it.

The Old Man hands it to Nick. Nick backs off.

NICK

No way. I know what you're up to. You trying to get me to play this game! Only it won't work. I'm staying right where I am.

BLOSSOM

(to the Magician)

Surely, thou would not waste such a sword on him? He is a mere boy.

NICK

Boy! I'll show you who's a boy?

Insulted, Nick takes hold of the sword and swings it confidently.

OLD MAN

Come, we shall find thee a worthy opponent.

He waves his hands as -- an eight foot GIANT steps out from behind a tree wielding a sword. Blossom sits on a log, deeply skeptical.

She shakes her head, disapproving of this useless task. The giant approaches Nick and raises his sword. Nick recognizes him as none other than GOR, THE MIGHTY BARBARIAN, Allen's character from Dragon's Lair. Nick backs off, moving around the tree.

NICK

Christ. It's Gor, the Mighty!

OLD MAN

You are mistaken. He is Gus, my trusty assistant.

The barbarian continues to strike at Nick, forcing him back around the tree.

NICK

He's a barbarian! I should know, Allen's been playing his character in Dragon's Lair for years.

OLD MAN

This, my friend, is not a game.

Gor lands a mighty blow. Nick stumbles backward and falls over log. Nick stands up, trembling. Blossom watches expecting as much. She feels the buns in her hair, concerned about their appearance. The barbarian strikes again, forcing Nick to his knees.

NICK

Hey, call him off, will you? He's going to massacre someone. Namely me...

OLD MAN

Do not fear him. His size is no match for your brain. You must use your imagination.

NICK

Imagination? What the hell's that gonna do? He's ten times the size of me!

Nick rolls under his legs and lands on the other side of Gor. The barbarian turns, forcing Nick back around the tree.

OLD MAN

Through battles of wit, thou must attain, though easily lost as easily gained. To earn the blade that bears thy crest, thou must first complete thy quest.

NICK

This isn't any quest. It's real!

The barbarian lunges at Nick's heart -- as he SCREAMS, and tumbles out of the way.

BLOSSOM

What did I tell you? He does not deserve such a sword.

Nick listens, infuriated. He gets to his feet and strikes harder, landing his first blow. Then he lands another. He forces the barbarian back as he stumbles. Blossom watches slightly impressed. The barbarian growls and retaliates by swinging harder.

OLD MAN

Tis not enough to prove thy best,  
only through imagination shall thou  
win thy quest.

Nick uses his footwork, awkwardly, confusing the barbarian. He lands a blow on the barbarian's sword, pushing him back. The barbarian growls enraged and lunges forward. Nick grabs onto a branch and lands on the other side of it. The barbarian turns as Nick raises his sword, ready to strike. The barbarian suddenly lowers his sword and retreats behind the tree.

NICK

What happened? Where's he going?

OLD MAN

He sees that he is no match for  
you, so he leaves for fear he will  
perish.

NICK

Perish? From me?

The barbarian disappears behind the tree. Nick watches, totally blown away. Blossom rises, fazed.

BLOSSOM

Not bad, for a coward.

OLD MAN

Quickly. You have much to  
accomplish. You must reach the  
castle before the sun sets.

The Old Man retreats to the oak tree and magically steps inside.

NICK  
Wait! You didn't tell me how to get  
back to Hedgedale! Stop!

OLD MAN (O.S.)  
(his voice fading)  
Beware of the Keeper, for he lurks  
within the imagination of all those  
who summon him.

NICK  
Wait! Come back!

Nick bangs on the tree, but the door vanishes. Blossom  
glances at the sky as it grows darker.

BLOSSOM  
Hurry. We must reach the castle  
before the sun vanishes beyond.

NICK  
Why? Why does everybody keep saying  
that?

BLOSSOM  
It is when the ritual is performed.

She hurries back into the forest. Nick stares back at the oak  
tree, confused. He clutches his sword and scurries after the  
princess.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The meter rises to 200 and Level 2.

BRIAN  
It keeps talking about something  
called ability drodes. Listen...  
(reads)  
"For braver souls and valor deeds,  
One thousand drodes thou must  
succeed." Only what's a drode?

Brian sits on the bed, frustrated. Allen watches the game  
uneasy, then stares at Brian who is holding the book.

ALLEN  
Where'd you learn to read all that  
crap anyway?

BRIAN  
(beat/calmer)  
My Dad's an archaeologist. He knows  
lots of ancient languages. Our  
house is filled with books on 'em.

ALLEN  
So where is he now?

BRIAN  
(beat/tense pause)  
Traveling, I suppose. He's always  
visiting some new place no one's  
ever been to.

ALLEN  
Does he call you much?

BRIAN  
I haven't heard from him in a year.  
My mom and him don't talk much  
anymore.

ALLEN  
That sucks.

Brian seems upset.

BRIAN  
He's gonna be famous someday. He's  
always digging up something great.  
Once he even uncovered a mummy in  
Africa.

ALLEN  
Who cares, if he doesn't bother to  
call and tell you about it. It'd be  
like it didn't happen at all.

Brian is even more hurt. Allen perceives something in the  
game.

ALLEN  
It's Nick. And he's with someone.

BRIAN  
(approaches game)  
That's not someone. That's a girl!

ALLEN  
(looks closer)  
Great balls of Gor. It is a girl.

Nick and Blossom's figurines stand on the outskirts of the Forgotten Forest. The guards on horses are close behind them.

ALLEN

Look! They're surrounded by guards.  
We've gotta do something!

BRIAN

We can't. We don't even know the  
rules yet.

ALLEN

Forget that crap! There's gotta be  
something in that book that can get  
him out of there. And now!

BRIAN

But where?  
(flips through pages)  
There isn't anything in here but a  
bunch of stupid old spells.

ALLEN

That's it! We'll use a spell. Let  
me see that.

Allen grabs the book from Brian.

BRIAN

Are you crazy? What do we know  
about casting a spell?

ALLEN

Who do we know? Who you think's  
been playing Dragon's Lair for the  
last five years? Nick and I cast  
hundreds of them, thousands even.

Allen flips through the pages. CLOSE ON hundreds of  
illustrations of magic weapons and spells.

BRIAN

But what if it fails? You could get  
Nick killed!

ALLEN

Quit worrying! You're with a pro,  
remember? Nick will know what to  
do. So chill.

Brian eyes miniature world, deeply worried.

EXT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

The guards charge through the forest searching for Blossom. Tarkus pauses and scouts something in the brush. He grabs a piece of cloth from a branch. He recognizes it as a piece from Blossom's gown.

ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST

Nick follows closely behind Blossom.

NICK

I don't get it. If you hate your uncle so much, why are you risking your life to save him?

BLOSSOM

It is expected to overcome such fears. Is it not expected of you to overcome your fears as well?

NICK

Sure. It's not easy, though. Only when I play the game do I feel I can really be who I am.

BLOSSOM

And who might that be?

NICK

I don't know. I guess, what I'd really like to be is one of those guys who's always standing first in line at the Black Widow ride at Magic World.

BLOSSOM

Pray, what is this Black Widow?

NICK

It's a high-speed, turbulent roller coaster ride which turns your stomach inside out and makes you wanna hurl. And that's just by looking at it.

BLOSSOM

Why would someone want to ride such a thing?

NICK

I suppose so other kids won't call you a nerd, mostly. At least not to your face.

BLOSSOM

Is it so important for your friends not to think you are different? There is nothing wrong with that.

NICK

I just want to fit in, is all. Don't you ever feel like that?

They stop. For the first time, Blossom looks at him differently. The moment is awkward. Nick can't help but stare at her. She slowly removes the pins from her hair, letting her hair drop down around her shoulders then continues on.

NICK

What'd you do that for?

BLOSSOM

What?

NICK

(follows after her)  
Let your hair down?

BLOSSOM

Does one need a reason?  
(turns/smooths hair)  
Is this not the way women from Hedgedale wear their hair?

NICK

Sort of. Only...

She stops and glances back at him. Nick ogles her, then pushes her long hair away from her eyes. He smiles at her.

NICK

There. That's better.

Their eyes linger. Nick moves closer, wanting to kiss her. The moment is interrupted by -- the sound of horses in the b.g. Blossom turns and distinguishes Tarkus and the guards behind them.

BLOSSOM

The guards. They have found us!

NICK  
Come on. This way.

Nick grabs Blossom's hand and quickly leads her through the forest.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

ANGLE NICK AND BLOSSOM'S FIGURINES

ALLEN  
Hurry! They're right behind them!

BRIAN  
But I told you, we need the exact dimensions and parameters before we can calculate the precise...

ALLEN  
Big, okay? Just read it, shrimp-wad!

BRIAN  
I can't.

ALLEN  
What?

BRIAN  
It's not written in Arasimic. None of these spells are.

ALLEN  
Of course not, moron! It's spell talk! All these spells are written like that. Just read it, now!

Brian struggles to pronounce the words.

BRIAN  
Tichmana fazh-bethrad...

INT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

Tarkus appears in the clearing directly behind Nick and Blossom. They hurry through the brush. Blossom stumbles to her knees, exhausted. Nick helps her get up. They continue on their way.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

ALLEN  
Hey! What's wrong? Nothing's  
happening.

BRIAN  
Una-zaffena kilominey...

ALLEN  
You're not reading it right.  
Faster. Louder!

BRIAN  
(slightly peeved/but  
louder)  
Tichmana fazh-bethrad...

EXT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

The ground begins to shake and tremble. Blossom stops and  
glances behind her.

BLOSSOM  
Look! Behind us. The sorcerer has  
found us.

The ground QUAKES as a stone wall suddenly emerges from the  
dirt, pushing away the rocks and trees.

NICK  
That's no sorcerer! It's a wall. A  
Wall of Stone!

BLOSSOM  
But the earth, it moves beneath us.  
It could only be...

NICK  
Trust me. There's only one person  
who uses that spell. And it isn't  
Zorak. Come on.

Nick grabs her hand and leads them toward a cave in the  
clearing. The guards head straight for the wall.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

BRIAN (O.S.)  
Una-zaffena kilominey...

ALLEN  
(sees something)  
Look! It's working. It's actually  
working!

Brian rushes over to the game. He continues reciting the  
spell.

BRIAN  
Una-zaffena kilominey...

EXT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

The stone wall continues to pour out of the ground, one  
hundred feet long, six inches tall and climbing. The guards  
charge directly toward it.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

ALLEN (O.S.)  
There! I see it!

The tiny stone wall appears in the Forgotten Forest.

INT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

The guards continue charging toward Nick and Blossom. The  
ground THUNDERS beneath them. The wall continues to push its  
way out of the ground, and then it stops. The guards halt  
before it. Their horses NEIGH, confused. Nick and Blossom  
stare back to see the entire stone wall: a hundred feet long  
and two feet tall! The guards stare at the spectacle in  
bewilderment. Tarkus SHOUTS!

TARKUS  
The Princess! Seize her!

Their horses leap right over the measly wall and straight for  
Nick and Blossom. Blossom SCREAMS. Nick grabs her hand and  
pulls her ahead.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

ALLEN  
What happened? What's wrong?

The guards are now on the other side of the wall, directly  
behind Nick and Blossom.

BRIAN

They jumped over it, that's what.

ALLEN

What? But that's impossible? I said big, didn't I?

BRIAN

It's big all right. One hundred feet wide and two feet tall.

ALLEN

Two feet? How the hell did that happen?

BRIAN

I told you, we needed more time. We didn't have all the exact dimensions.

ALLEN

You moron! You're the one with the book. Why the hell didn't you figure it out?

BRIAN

You wouldn't let me, remember? You just said read it, shrimp-wad!

EXT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

Our two heroes continue deeper into the forest. Blossom falls to her knees, too exhausted to go any further.

BLOSSOM

It's no use. I can go no further.

NICK

Come on. There's a cave up ahead.

BLOSSOM

Save thyself. Go without me.

The guards gain on them. Nick gets an idea. He feels his pockets and removes his walkie-talkie. He wedges it into one of the branches of a tree. He grabs Blossom, helps her to a safe distance behind another tree. Nick turns on the other talkie as Blossom watches, confused by this strange instrument.

BLOSSOM

What are you doing?

NICK  
Using my imagination.

Nick waits for the guards to enter the clearing near the tree with the other talkie.

BLOSSOM  
(sees walkie-talkie)  
Pray, what is that strange box?

NICK  
The Modulator Communicator 3000. It detects police radar, sends and receives signals within a 200 kilometer radius, and on a clear day can pick up 976 numbers. \$29.95 at Radio Shack.

Griswold and the guards pause near the tree, losing sight of them. A strange voice BLASTS out of no where:

OMINOUS VOICE  
Who dares enter my forest?

GRISWOLD  
(eyes the trees)  
Who goes there?

OMINOUS VOICE  
I am the great and powerful OZ!

Griswold and his guards look around the forest, but see no one.

TARKUS  
The trees, they speak!

Blossom watches Nick as he speaks into the strange box, astonished.

NICK  
I am the trees of Munchkinland.  
Stand back or my branches will apprehend thee and feed thee to the Wicked Witch of the West!

BLOSSOM  
You know of such a witch?

NICK  
Shh!  
(into talkie)  
(MORE)

NICK(cont'd)

If you leave my forest now, no  
detriment will come to thee, foul  
scum.

The guards stir, frightened and confused. Tarkus sees the walkie-talkie in the tree and approaches it. He motions for Griswold. Griswold views the strange box himself.

OMINOUS VOICE

Go now, before I release Toto the  
mad dog upon thee, to rip thee to  
shreds!

Griswold hesitates, then strikes his sword against the strange box as it fizzles and smokes.

NOT-SO-OMINOUS VOICE

(a garbled, dying voice)  
The Great Oz has spoken...

Tarkus spies them hiding behind a tree.

TARKUS

Here my lord! I have found them.

Tarkus grabs Blossom. She screams. Nick throws the talkie, hitting Tarkus in the head. He grabs Blossom and runs.

Griswold and the guards charge after them. Blossom trips over a log. Nick hurries back and helps her to her feet.

BLOSSOM

It's no use. You must leave me.

NICK

No way! Come on.

BLOSSOM

Griswold shall not rest till he  
finds me. If he finds us both, he  
shall surely kill thee.

Griswold and the guards appear behind them.

NICK

I can't just leave you here.

BLOSSOM

Hide in the clearing till we are  
gone. You shall be no use to your  
brother dead.

He looks at her, tormented by this.

NICK

But how will I find you?

Griswold appears behind them. Blossom turns and kisses Nick full on the mouth. His eyes widen, stunned. As the kiss ends she whispers:

BLOSSOM

Come quickly for us brave knight.  
For I know, you shall not let us  
down.

Nick watches as Blossom rushes toward Griswold. Nick's heart sinks.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING. DAY

Griswold spots Blossom. He gallops toward her and lifts her onto his horse. Nick watches from behind a tree as Tarkus and the guards surround them.

Griswold raises his mask and removes a piece of papyrus from his clothing. He holds Blossom tightly and reads:

GRISWOLD

Blossom, Blossom, how thou art like  
a possum wandering through thy  
woods. And I the hunter, set to  
pounce on thee like thunder, if  
thou shalt dare to repeat this  
blunder once more.

Blossom turns away, repulsed as a guard snickers. Griswold leers at him and continues on.

GRISWOLD

So come my bride, to the castle we  
ride. Where soon we shall wed, and  
in our bed, I shall read you my  
verses forever.

He gallops off with Blossom as Nick watches helplessly.

INT. ZORAK'S CHAMBER. DAY

Scotty sits locked inside a large animal cage, hanging from the ceiling. Zorak mumbles strange incantations as he tosses hideous ingredients into his brew. A huge hourglass sits on the table beside Scotty's cage. Scotty watches it as sand rapidly empties.

SCOTTY  
Beam me up now, Spock. Okay?

He sits down, truly scared.

INT. FORGOTTEN FOREST. DAY

Nick heads through the forest, alone. Sounds of bizarre creatures fill the darkness. He clutches the sword of the Fearless Knight and presses on.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

ON METER still positioned at 200 and level 2. Allen and Brian continue arguing.

ALLEN  
I knew I shouldn't have let you in here. You're going to get Nick killed!

BRIAN  
What about you?

ALLEN  
I know what I'm doing. I'm the Game Master, aren't I?

EXT. CASTLE WALL. DAY

ANGLE ON  
Nick's SNEAKERS as they pause outside the dark castle. He scouts a large open window at the top with something inside. It's a cage hanging in the window with Scotty.

NICK  
Scotty!

Nick watches his brother, feeling helpless. He sees the huge moat surrounding the entire castle. Nick spots a large stick nearby and grabs it. He tosses it into the moat. Hideous SQUEALING is heard. A slimy SEA SERPENT surfaces. It instantly devours the branch and disappears back into the murky water. Nick leans against tree, terrified.

NICK  
Think Pherson, think. There must be some way inside. But how?

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Allen and Brian stop bickering long enough to notice Nick has made a bold move.

ALLEN

It's Nick. He's at the castle. Only why would he go there? It's too dangerous.

BRIAN

Look. It's Scotty! He's locked in the tower.

ALLEN

We've got to help Nick get in there before it's too late!

BRIAN

No way. Look what happened when we tried the last time.

ALLEN

But the place is swarming with guards. He'll never make it in there alone!

BRIAN

We can't help him. He has to do it himself. The book says so!

ALLEN

God, no wonder you don't have any friends.

Allen grabs the book and flips through the pages. Brian turns away, hurt. Allen sees something in the book.

ALLEN

That's it! I don't know why I didn't think of it before. The Cloak of the Invisible.

BRIAN

(approaches him)

Are you crazy? That's a level twelve spell.

INSERT BOOK: a magnificent illustration of a magic cloak.

BRIAN

You and Nick never used a spell  
that advanced. Not ever!

ALLEN

Shut up, twerp. This is an  
emergency!

EXT. CASTLE WALL. DAY

Nick stares at the castle from behind a tree. ANGLE ON a  
cloak as it begins to materialize on the ground behind him.  
Nick turns and distinguishes it.

NICK

Where did that come from?

He grabs a branch, struggles to reach it, but it's too far.  
He glances up at the guards. In one swift move, he darts out  
from behind the tree and grabs the cloak. A guard catches  
sight of him. He moves closer to the edge of the wall as Nick  
jumps back behind the tree. The guard squints, sees nothing,  
dismisses it. He returns to his keep as Nick studies the  
magnificent robe.

NICK

It's a cloak.

He places his hand inside the lining as it DISAPPEARS.

NICK

Holy shit! It's The Cloak of the  
Invisible!

(sudden realization)

Allen! Allen, it is you!

Nick steps out from behind the tree, completely forgetting  
about the guards. He stares up at the sky, shouting...

NICK

Allen? It's me, Nick! Where are  
you?

The same guard clearly sees Nick now.

GUARD

Halt! Who goes there?

Tarkus stops on the castle keep, hears the guard shouting. He  
quickly approaches him.

TARKUS

Where?

GUARD

There, Lord. An intruder below.

Tarkus searches the grounds. Stupefied, Nick recognizes Tarkus as McKenzie, Matt Carlson's bullying best friend.

NICK

Craps it's McKenzie!

Nick instantly tosses the magic cloak over himself and DISAPPEARS. Tarkus sees nothing and turns toward the guard.

TARKUS

You see nothing but thine own shadow, fool. Return to thy post before I feed thee to the serpent.

Tarkus returns to his keep. The guard stares below, confused.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

ANGLE ON MINIATURE CASTLE

ALLEN

Look! It's working.

BRIAN

How do you know?

ALLEN

There, stupid! Nick's footprints. They're heading toward the castle.

ALLEN AND BRIAN

We did it. We really did it!

They jump up and down, holding each other. The moment passes as Allen lets go of Brian, slightly embarrassed. He approaches game, uneasy.

ALLEN

Not bad, for a twerp.

BRIAN

Yeah, not bad.

EXT. CASTLE. DAY

Tarkus paces the castle keep, keeping an eye on the guards. Nick's sneaker-prints stop before the moat.

NICK (V.O.)  
And now, for the Giant fans.

A ROCK suddenly rises from the ground and hangs in mid-air.

NICK (V.O.)  
Pherson looks over his shoulder,  
all clear on first. He adjusts his  
visor, winds up the pitch and...

The rock is hurled into the air, hitting Tarkus' helmet. Tarkus turns and raises his helmet. He confronts the guards, enraged.

TARKUS  
Who dares strike me?

The guards back off, terrified.

NICK (V.O.)  
Hey, burger-breath! Yeah, you in  
the helmet. Lower the bridge.

TARKUS  
(stares down at the empty  
grounds)  
Who goes there? Show yourself!

NICK (V.O.)  
Come on, open up! I hear your  
mother wears knight's underwear.  
(beat/to himself)  
I don't believe I said that.

Tarkus explodes and draws his sword.

TARKUS  
(to the guards)  
Lower the bridge! I shall cut out  
his tongue.

The bridge lowers as Tarkus hurries down the stairs. He charges across it, wielding his sword. He stops midway, searching for his victim.

TARKUS  
Show your face, coward!

Nick's footprints approach the drawbridge. He steps across it as -- SWOOSH! Tarkus is shoved into the moat.

NICK (V.O.)

Have a dunk on me, fish-bait. How do you like it for a change?

Tarkus surfaces in the water. The serpent SQUEALS as it swims straight for him. The guards rush to help him as -- Nick enters the castle grounds, evident by his footprints.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR. DAY

Griswold storms down the castle corridor. He approaches two GUARDS posted outside Blossom's chamber. They bow.

INT. BLOSSOM'S CHAMBER. DAY

Blossom stares out the window, wearing a robe. Her two FEMALE SERVANTS, pour her a bath -- the same two girlfriends Cecilia had in Hedgedale. The doors burst open as Griswold enters. Blossom sees him. The servants bow as Griswold removes a poem.

GRISWOLD

Ode to Princess Blossom, by Sir  
Griswold.

He clears his throat as Blossom cringes.

EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS. DAY

The guards pull Tarkus out of the moat just before the serpent devours him. Nick's FOOTPRINTS continue across the courtyard, undetected.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The meter rises to 350 and level 3. Brian and Allen scan the courtyard.

BRIAN

There! He's inside the castle wall.

ALLEN

Wait a minute. Something's not right.

BRIAN

What?

ALLEN

We can see him, that's what!

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DAY

Nick's footprints continue in direction of the castle as the magic cloak begins to dematerialize, revealing Nick. Tarkus turns, eyeing Nick as clear as day heading toward the castle.

TARKUS

There! Seize him!

The guards go after Nick. Nick stops and sees them coming at him. He glances down at his hands, then torso as the cloak completely vanishes.

NICK

Allen? What's wrong? What's happening?

The guards mount their horses and charge toward him. Nick runs.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBER. DAY

GRISWOLD

Oh how your gardens grow and grow.  
 (eyes her breasts)  
 So fly to me, my little Queen bee,  
 and let me pluck thy pedals, as  
 they bloom in thy meadows and I  
 shall drink from thy honey-suckle  
 tree.

Griswold lowers the poem, gloating. The female servants applaud. Blossom turns away, repulsed as Griswold fills two goblets with wine. He removes a small pouch, pours some mixture into Blossom's goblet without her seeing.

GRISWOLD

A toast to our kingdom which  
 together, we shall rule.

Blossom knocks the goblet from his hand.

BLOSSOM

I shall sooner wed a foul pig than  
 wed thee!

(MORE)

BLOSSOM(cont'd)

(stares out window)  
My knight will come and destroy  
both you and your evil father.

GRISWOLD

What knight does thou speak of?

BLOSSOM

A knight more brave and loyal than  
you! One who deserves the Sword of  
the Fearless Knight.

GRISWOLD

You have seen the Sword?

He grabs her arm tightly. Blossom remains silent. Griswold  
lets her go.

GRISWOLD

I am the greatest knight in  
Fantador! There is no knight  
greater than I.

Blossom sees Nick running through the castle courtyard.

BLOSSOM

There. He hath come!

Griswold shoves her aside. He focuses on Tarkus chasing Nick  
across the castle grounds.

TARKUS (O.S.)

The bridge! Raise it quickly,  
before he escapes.

Griswold draws his sword and approaches the door.

BLOSSOM

My Knight. I knew he would not fail  
me.

Griswold pauses, enraged by her words. He exits the chamber  
at once.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DAY

Nick runs through a herd of goats, nearing the horse stables.  
Griswold exits the castle and detains Tarkus on his horse.

GRISWOLD

The intruder? Where is he?

Tarkus points to the stables. Nick ducks inside.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The meter teeters back and forth, uncertain of where to go.

BRIAN

I told you we don't know enough!  
You're going to get Nick caught!

ALLEN

You didn't read it right. You're  
nothing but a useless twerp!

BRIAN

Stop calling me that.

ALLEN

What?

BRIAN

Twerp! Stop calling me that.

ALLEN

(leers down at him)  
And what are you going to do about  
it, twerp?

BRIAN

That's it! Figure it out yourself.

Brian tosses the book aside and makes a beeline for Nick's door.

ALLEN

What's the matter? The game getting  
too hard for you? Gotta run home to  
Momma?

BRIAN

I know more than you do!  
(opens the door)  
Before tonight, you couldn't even  
make Game Master. Not once! It  
always had to be Nick.

Allen is aghast. Brian's right. He's not good enough.

ALLEN

Go on. Get out of here, you baby!

BRIAN

Drop dead, asshole.

Brian walks out and slams the door. Allen looks back at the game, worried.

INT. ROYAL HORSE STABLES. DAY

Nick ducks into a horse stall. He hides behind a white stallion. The guards gather at the entrance.

SENIOR GUARD

You, search the stalls. You, guard the entrance.

The guards split up. Griswold enters and scans the stables. He approaches the stall Nick is in. Nick crouches behind the stallion. He moves back as the stallion stirs and whinnies. Griswold pats his horse, calms it. Whispers...

GRISWOLD

Fear not my Buttercup. He shall not escape me.

Griswold moves to leave as the horse NEIGHS, kicking the stall. Griswold sees Nick hiding behind it.

GRISWOLD

You!

Nick dives into the next stall. He scrambles across the stable and climbs a ladder leading to a hay loft.

GRISWOLD

Halt!

Griswold climbs the ladder after him.

Nick stands in the loft and sees Griswold below him. He turns, not knowing where to run. He plunges into the HAYSTACK as Griswold steps onto the loft. Griswold scans the empty area and removes his sword.

GRISWOLD

The princess has been greatly fooled by thee. She thinks thou art a great knight.

He pokes the haystack with his sword. Nick stares helplessly at the Fearless Sword now beside him. Still too afraid to use it, Nick sees an open chute behind him. It leads down to a pigsty below. A WHEELBARREL is beside Nick. Griswold's sword lands in the haystack again, next to Nick's leg. Nick rises and grabs the wheelbarrel.

GRISWOLD

You are no knight. You are not even  
a man!

Nick charges him with the barrel and knocks him out the open chute.

EXT. HORSE STABLES. DAY

Griswold lands in the PIGSTY below. Pigs trample him, SQUEALING. He rises, enraged, covered in mud and pig shit.

GRISWOLD

Swine! I shall kill thee with my  
bare hands!

He trips and slides back into the mud.

INT. HAY LOFT. DAY

Nick stares below as the other guards join him on the loft. They run toward him, ready to grab him as Nick -- jumps out the open chute and lands on top of...

EXT. PIGSTY. DAY

... Griswold, forcing him back into the pig shit. Nick scrambles to his feet and jumps out of the pigsty.

GRISWOLD

(yells to guards above)  
Bring him here. Alive!

The guards jump down the chute, again landing on Griswold!

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DAY

Nick runs into the servants' work area. He stops, cornered by the castle wall. He scopes out the area with nowhere to run. The guards climb out of the pigsty and rush at him.

Nick sees a group of MAIDENS crushing grapes in a large vat beside him. Dozens of WINE BARRELS are stacked against the wall. He runs toward the maidens, passing by a huge working WINDMILL. He climbs on top of the barrels and starts to roll them toward the guards.

EXT. NICK'S FRONT YARD. NIGHT

Brian exits the house and storms across Nick's front yard.

BRIAN

Let them keep their stupid game!  
 What do I care?  
 (beat/on second thought)  
 Gee, I sure hope Nick's okay.

Brian pauses. He sees a light coming from Old Man Dekes' basement across the street. He watches, amazed, as electrical SOUNDS emanate from inside. Brian moves closer as ...

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DAY

Barrels come rolling down the courtyard straight toward the guards. They are knocked on their asses, left and right, as they stumble about struggling to remain on their feet.

NICK

That'll teach you to mess with Yar-  
 Khon the All-Powerful. Take that,  
 you antediluvian meatballs!

Nick tosses another barrel, knocking Tarkus into the air. He lands before Griswold who is still covered in mud. Nick runs out of barrels. Griswold raises his sword and points it at him. The guards scramble to their feet.

GRISWOLD

Seize him!

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The meter rises to 400 and level 5.

ALLEN

Dwarf-shit. Who needs him anyway?  
 (eyes game)  
 Hang on Nick, I'll save you.

Allen grabs the book off Nick's bed and struggles to read it.

ALLEN

Sallapuni... sallapini... salla...

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DAY

The guards charge Nick. Nick turns and runs as -- KONK! He runs smack into the arm of the windmill, knocking him out cold. The guards gather around him. Tarkus approaches, raising his helmet. He points at Nick's sword.

TARKUS

Look! Tis the Sword of the Fearless Knight.

Griswold shoves them aside and sees the crest on the sword. His eyes widen.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBER. DAY

Blossom gasps as she witnesses Griswold remove the Sword from Nick. Suddenly, she is terrified for Nick's life.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The meter dramatically plummets down to zero and level one.

ALLEN (O.S.)

Sassapalis...Sassa... Man, this is hopeless.

Allen slams the book shut and tosses it on Nick's bed. He approaches the game, panic-stricken.

ALLEN

Nick? Nick, where are you?

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Brian enters his bedroom. He frantically searches through his bookshelf until he finds a book. It's the "Ancient Prophecies of the Arasimics". He flips through its pages.

INT. DUNGEON. DAY

Griswold splashes water onto Nick's face. Nick comes to and finds himself surrounded by Griswold and his guards, chained to the dungeon wall.

GRISWOLD

Peasant. Where did you get this blade?

Nick stares at Griswold's face, awed by his resemblance to Matt Carlson.

GRISWOLD

Speak, before I cut out thy tongue.

Nick remains silent. Griswold raises his own sword, ready to strike.

TARKUS

He is a coward, my Lord. Surely the sword is not his.

Nick eyes the Sword of the Fearless Knight, held at Griswold's side.

GRISWOLD

You speak the truth, Tarkus. The sword is mine.

Griswold tosses his old sword aside and sheaths the Sword of the Fearless Knight.

GRISWOLD

I shall deal with him later. It is time for the ritual. Come, to my father's chamber.

Griswold and his guards leave the dungeon. Nick pulls on his hand chains, terrified for Scotty. He hears mumbling nearby.

ANGLE ON THE KING OF FANTADOR

Blossom's uncle, the King, is also in the dungeon. He too is chained to the wall, worn and exhausted. He sports a long beard and resembles -- Nick's father Mr. Pherson!

NICK

Dad?

KING

I shall never rule again... I shall never rule again...

The king appears drugged as rats crawl over the skeletal remains of others left behind.

INT. NICK'S WINDOW. NIGHT

ANGLE ON the castle. Nick's figurine is nowhere in sight.

ALLEN  
 Nick, don't do this to me, man.  
 You've got to be okay. You've just  
 got to. You're my only friend.

INT. BRIAN'S ROOM. NIGHT

Brian searches his book till he finds something.

BRIAN  
 I knew it. It is him. The Game  
 Keeper.

INSERT PICTURE: of an OLD MAN surrounded by a group of boys  
 in ancient times. The Game Keeper holds a key as the boys  
 struggle to reach for it. STATIC blasts through the walkie  
 talkie.

ALLEN (O.S.)  
 Leiberman, you there? You awake  
 still?

Brian grabs his talkie off the night stand and goes to the  
 window.

INTERCUT SCENE.

BRIAN  
 (still upset)  
 Yeah. What of it?

ALLEN  
 I ah...  
 (gulp)  
 ...need your help. Can you come  
 over?

BRIAN  
 No way. You had your chance.

ALLEN  
 Okay, so I goofed up. But what  
 about Nick?

BRIAN  
 Why don't you help him yourself?

ALLEN  
 You know why.  
 (holds up book)  
 I can't read Arab.

BRIAN  
That's Arasimic, dolt!

ALLEN  
See? That's why I need you!  
(lowers book)  
I can't find Nick anywhere.

Allen stares back at the game, desperate.

BRIAN  
What about calling me, you know.

ALLEN  
Fine! I promise, no more twerp! Now  
cut me a break here, will you?

BRIAN  
Okay. But only if we do things my  
way. Meet me over at Old Man Dekes  
house, pronto.

ALLEN  
Now? What the hell for?

BRIAN  
I got a feeling I know where Nick  
really is. Only it isn't where you  
think.

Brian holds up the book in his hands. Allen watches,  
dumbstruck.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS. DAY

Griswold enters Blossom's chamber. He tosses Nick's FEATHERED  
HAT on the table next to the filled goblet.

GRISWOLD  
There is your Fearless Knight.  
Locked in the dungeon where he  
shall soon perish.

Blossom sees the Sword of the Fearless Knight strapped to  
Griswold's belt. Griswold grabs the goblet filled with wine  
and draws near to Blossom.

INT. ZORAK'S CHAMBER. DAY

Zorak grows much weaker. The brew still boils beside him. He  
approaches Scotty, still locked in his cage and hisses:

ZORAK

I detest all that is innocent and pure. And nothing is more pure than a child.

He stares at Scotty's hands, sits in his chair, weakened. He eyes the hourglass which is nearly empty and closes his eyes. Scotty opens his broken toy communicator and whispers.

SCOTTY

Spock. Where are you? I'll give you all my candy.

Scotty sits in the cage, exhausted. He falls asleep. His toy communicator falls from his small fingers and lands in the cage below. A small monkey opens it and tries to mimic Scotty.

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Allen and Brian sneak into Old Man Dekes' backyard which is filled with junk.

BRIAN

Old Man Dekes isn't just collecting junk. Take a look.

They kneel beside a basement window and peer inside. Lights fill the entire basement.

INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT

Strange electrical currents hover above dozens of games sprawled out on huge tables, each with its own theme. Everything is hand-made from old junk. Old Man Dekes shuffles between each game, examining each of the meters used to register the level of skill of each player.

Brian and Allen make out Nick's miniature world smack in the middle of the floor with the same exact meter attached to it.

EXT. BASEMENT. NIGHT

Allen and Brian crouch beside the basement window, watching.

ALLEN

He's got Nick and Scotty down there. Only what's he doing to them?

BRIAN

He's the Game Keeper. My Dad use to read me this story about him when I was a kid. At first, I thought he was making it up, but look.

ALLEN

What's that?

INSERT: ILLUSTRATION IN BOOK OF ARASIMICS

of what looks like an old PROPHET playing ancient games, surrounded by dozens of small boys.

BRIAN

He's an ancient Arasimic Prophet who used games to seduce young boys. He'd send them on dangerous journeys in order to help initiate them into manhood, by testing their skills in bravery.

ALLEN

That's what must have happened to Spike and his kid brother. They must be trapped inside one of those games, just like Nick and Scotty!

BRIAN

Only according to this, not all the kids survive.

ALLEN

(stares back into window)  
Come on. We've got to stop him before it's too late!

Brian and Allen sneak down the bulkhead, leading to the basement door.

EXT. BASEMENT DOOR. NIGHT

Allen puts his ear to the door and listens. The glimmer of light flashes through the cracks of the wooden door.

BRIAN

What's he saying? Can you hear him?

Allen presses harder as -- the door crashes open.

INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT

Brian and Allen tumble into the basement. Dekes turns and gets a load of his two intruders.

OLD MAN DEKES

Ah! And what game do you prefer?

He gestures toward the many games. Brian and Allen scramble to their feet, terrified.

ALLEN

To hell with that! We know you've got our friend Nick trapped inside one of those games there!

OLD MAN DEKES

(adjusts game)

It is he who brought it upon himself. And it is he who shall find his way back... if he survives.

Electrical currents engulf Nick's game directly in front of them. Old Man Dekes eyes the meter and makes notes.

BRIAN

But Nick didn't do anything. You're the one who gave him that game.

OLD MAN DEKES

I do not seek boys. It is they who seek me. I merely provide the means for the challenge. It is they who choose the game.

Electrical currents emanate from one of the games. Dekes approaches one, makes adjustments, manipulating the players.

ALLEN

But that's not fair! Nick could get killed down there.

OLD MAN DEKES

You think the world is fair? How else do you expect to have them prove themselves worthy? By playing video games or visiting theme parks? Only such a journey as this, will test their bravery, and make them men!

(adjust games/pissed)

(MORE)

OLD MAN DEKES(cont'd)

But you have interfered! You've caused him penalties on many counts. If your friend fails, it will be the result of your misjudgment!

ALLEN AND BRIAN

Ours?

Electrical currents surround the dark castle. The meter goes haywire. Dekes makes adjustments. Steam pours out of it. He presses several buttons on a console board attached to the game.

OLD MAN DEKES

It is you who landed your friend in the dungeon where he now sits. If he fails to fulfill his quest by midnight, he will take his place amongst the others in the "Land of the Lost Boys". Lost forever.

He points to another GAME hidden in the corner of the room. It is dark, without any currents or meter. Dozens of tiny figurines roam about in the darkness. Allen recognizes one of the figurines.

ALLEN

It's Spike Peterson and his kid brother!

OLD MAN DEKES

If your friend wins his quest, he will have one last chance to correct your misdeeds. There is only one spell that will provide your friend with the means to return to this world.

BRIAN

But how will we find it?

OLD MAN DEKES

Search your imagination, and ye shall find all. Now go, before I find a game for your cowardliness as well!

A burst of energy causes the basement door to open. Allen and Brian run outside. The door slams shut behind them. The basement trembles as sparks fly about it's drawn windows.

EXT. DEKES' YARD. NIGHT

Brian and Allen bolt across Dekes' lawn like two bats outta hell. They run for Nick's house, tearing up the front porch.

INT. NICK'S FRONT HALL. NIGHT

Allen and Brian rush into the front hall and SLAM the door shut. They stand trembling in the hall.

BRIAN  
Trash hoarder I knew there was  
something weird about him.

ALLEN  
Now what do we do?

BRIAN  
We gotta find that spell he's  
talking about. And fast!

ALLEN  
But how? We don't know if Nick is  
close to finishing the quest yet.

BRIAN  
You're right. But if we don't know,  
how does Dekes know?

CLOSE ON their faces as they finally get it.

BRIAN AND ALLEN  
The meter!

ALLEN  
It's keeping Nick's score!

They both run for the stairs.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY. NIGHT

Brian and Allen hurry past Gina's bedroom door. They dart into Nick's room quietly and close the door.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

They approach the meter, both dials are still at zero.

ALLEN

Nothing. And he's been down there for hours now.

BRIAN

Wait a minute, I think I've got it.  
(opens book on bed)  
"Tis not enough to prove thy best,  
only through imagination shall thou  
win thy quest."

ALLEN

So?

BRIAN

That's the drodes the book was talking about! That's what the meters doing. It's measuring Nick's imagination and skills to see how well he accomplishes each task he's given.

ALLEN

Great. Only it's still at zero. Nick hasn't even made a single point yet.

BRIAN

That's 'cause Nick doesn't know the rules. Which is why we've got to help. And I just might know how.

ALLEN

What are you talking about?

BRIAN

The most powerful spell of all, that's what. The Spell of the Disenchanted.

Brian approaches Nick's desk and searches through his drawers.

ALLEN

But that from Dragon's Lair?

BRIAN

Which is exactly why it'll work. Dekes said himself, we can't interfere with the game. Only he didn't say anything about us using our own game, did he?

ALLEN

You're right. The Spell of the Disenchanted negates all elements of magic, no matter what game it is! If it can't help Nick get out of this, then nothing can!

BRIAN

(searches room)

But where the hell is it? I can't find Nick's Dragon's Lair book anywhere!

Nick's phone suddenly RINGS. Brian and Allen freeze. The phone continues RINGING. Allen finally musters up enough nerve and answers it.

ALLEN

(disguises voice)

Hello? May I help you?

MR. PHERSON (O.S.)

Nick? Nick, is that you?

ALLEN

Cripes! It's Mr. P!

Allen freaks and hangs up the phone.

BRIAN

What'd you do that for?

The phone RINGS again.

ALLEN

What are we gonna do?

BRIAN

You screwed it up, now fix it.

Allen gives him a look. He musters up enough courage and answers it again.

ALLEN

(woman's voice)

I'm sorry, but your call cannot be completed as dialed. Please don't try again. Have a nice day.

Allen hangs up. Brian gapes, dumbstruck.

BRIAN

Is that what you call fixing it?

Allen rips Nick's phone cord out of the wall and tosses it aside.

ALLEN  
Nobody ever calls Nick much anyway.

INT. HALLWAY OF THE WILSON HOUSE. NIGHT

Fifties Music plays in b.g. Mr. Pherson hangs up the phone, disturbed.

MRS. PHERSON  
What is it, honey?

MR. PHERSON  
I could have sworn that was Allen on the phone.

MRS. PHERSON  
It couldn't have been. Not after today. Nick wouldn't dare.

They both exchange concerned looks. Nick would dare. Mr. Pherson puts down his cocktail and grabs their coats. They head for the door.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

Brian and Allen continue to search Nick's room for the Dragon's Lair manual.

BRIAN  
(tearing apart Nick's bed)  
It's gone. I can't find it anywhere!

ALLEN  
It's gotta be here. Nick wouldn't throw it out! That book is his life.

They continue to search Nick's room, ripping it to shreds.

INT. DUNGEON. DAY

Nick and the King remain chained to the wall. A guard enters and serves them both water. The King refuses.

GUARD  
Drink. I said drink, fool!

The guard splashes water on the King's face and takes his leave. Nick stares at the King, amazed at the resemblance to his father. The King observes Nick in his strange clothes, his similar short appearance.

KING

I do not recognize you. Are you one of my subjects... or one of his?

NICK

I'm no one's subject. I'm just trying to save my brother.

The King eyes him closer, sensing something more.

KING

What is your crime? Surely, you do not appear dangerous enough to belong here.

NICK

(suddenly riled)

You don't look so harmful yourself right now. I suppose you don't even realize your niece is out there trying to save your life.

KING

Yes. She is well-trained, this girl. She is most brave, for a woman, is she not?

NICK

Brave? Is that all you care about? What about what she wants? She doesn't think you care about her. Or if she dies.

KING

Of course I care. Why else would I go to such lengths to teach her the ways of this cruel world.

NICK

And how do you think you're going to do that? By making her feel small, like she doesn't even matter?

KING

The world is not kind to those with such weakness.

(MORE)

KING(cont'd)

She will have many responsibilities as Queen, and many obstacles. I only wish to prepare her for these hardships, so that she will live long and prosper. Would not thine own parents do the same for you, if they knew you had such obstacles to overcome?

Nick is taken back. He finally realizes why his own father has been so hard on him.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BLOSSOM'S CHAMBER. DAY

Two guards, PYTHIUS and TANIS, keep watch outside Blossom's Chamber. FURNITURE CRASHES inside.

GRISWOLD (O.S.)

You will not refuse me again. When I return, you will be mine!

Griswold storms out of Blossom's Chamber and advances down the hall in a tizzy.

INT. BLOSSOM'S CHAMBER. DAY

Blossom watches as the sun continues to set above the dark castle. Worried, she notices the wine goblet still left on the table, untouched. She reaches for it, getting an idea.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR. SECONDS LATER

Blossom opens her chamber door. Pythius and Tanis stir.

BLOSSOM

Pythius, Tanis, how you must be thirsty. Here, some drink to quench your thirst. It is a rare, sweet wine.

Blossom hands them the goblet and closes the door. Pythius looks at the liquid and drinks from it. He hands it to Tanis who also drinks. A strange look sweeps across Tanis's face.

TANIS

Pythius, how I have longed for thee. Ever since we first met in guard training, I knew I must have you. Say you'll be mine.

PYTHIUS

Fool! Thou art drunk with wine.

Pythius finishes the wine and tosses the goblet aside. Tanis kneels at Pythius' feet, clutches his garment.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBER. DAY

Blossom listens through door.

TANIS (O.S.)

Say you shall be mine, or I shall  
perish by my own hand.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR. DAY

Tanis raises his sword. Pythius shoves him aside.

PYTHIUS

Thou art mad! Away, before I...

The same look suddenly sweeps over Pythius's face. He lowers his sword and helps Tanis to his feet.

PYTHIUS

Come. We shall walk in the garden  
of pleasure, for our hearts shall  
be denied no more.

They walk off, leaving their post. Blossom opens her door to see them disappear. She hurries in the opposite direction.

INT. DUNGEON STAIRWELL. DAY

A huge 200 pound TURNKEY stands outside the dungeon door. He leans his halberd against the wall and sits down on a stoop. He yawns, rubs his stomach as -- BAM! The halberd SMASHES down against his head. He slumps to the floor. A woman's hand removes the dungeon key from his waist and grabs a torch from the wall.

INT. DUNGEON. DAY

Blossom enters the dungeon. Nick and the King distinguish her as she quickly approaches.

KING

Blossom. Thou have come!

She unlocks Nick's chains first, as he stares at her.

NICK

What are you doing here? It's too dangerous.

BLOSSOM

I could not bare to leave you here to die, for I would surely die with you.

KING

What is this? Blossom, do you love this boy?

BLOSSOM

(unlocks her uncles chains)

He is not a boy, he is a man. And why should you be concerned, uncle? I am here. Is that not enough?

The chains fall from the King's hands. He takes Blossoms hand.

KING

I fear you did not come here from your heart, my dear one. And for that, I am only to blame.

BLOSSOM

What do you mean?

KING

I have been blind to your needs, my child. And though I have not shown it... I do love you. Very much, my child.

He touches her face. Blossom melts in his arms.

BLOSSOM

Oh, uncle. How long I have waited to hear you say that.

They embrace. Nick watches, moved. The moment ends as the turnkey moans.

KING

The guard. He has awakened.

Nick picks up Griswold's old sword off the dungeon floor, ready to defend himself.

INT. DUNGEON CORRIDOR. DAY

Griswold and Tarkus rush down the castle stairs. They see the turnkey as he rises, still dazed.

TARKUS

His key, Lord! It is gone.

GRISWOLD

The prisoner. He has escaped!

INT. DUNGEON. DAY

Griswold and the guards enter the dungeon as Nick, Blossom and the King are cornered. Griswold raises his sword, ready to fight.

GRISWOLD

Seize them!

Nick pinpoints a huge torture rack hanging before him. He grabs it, swings it around and wheels it directly toward Griswold and his guards. They pummel their swords into it. The swords pierce the dry wood, sticking to it like glue, unable to free them.

NICK

Run!

Nick grabs Blossom and runs into the castle corridor, followed by the King.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Nick's room is turned completely upside down.

ALLEN

I'm telling you, it's not here!

BRIAN

(keeps searching)

It's got to be. It's just gotta!

Allen stops, exhausted. He wipes sweat from his brow and turns on Nick's FAN. He shoves his face into it and sucks up the air.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR. DAY

Nick, Blossom, and the King run through the dark castle corridors. They pause, lost in the darkness, hearing the Guards in the b.g. searching for them.

NICK

We've got to find a way to the tower. That's where Scotty is!

KING

There is a secret passageway through here. It was built many years ago if ever the castle was under siege.

They hurry up a dark staircase, leading up into the castle. Griswold and the guards follow closely behind them.

EXT. CASTLE KEEP. DAY

Nick, Blossom and the King exit a door leading out onto the castle keep. They hurry along the wall. Griswold and the guards come out of the door behind them.

TARKUS

There! They are moving toward the Dark Tower.

GRISWOLD

(to guards)

You, take the right side. You, the left. We shall surround them.

The guards split up, heading in different directions. Griswold and Tarkus follow after Nick, Blossom, and the King.

THE GUARDS ... close in on our heroes, just as they reach the door that leads up to the Dark Tower. Nick grabs the handle, pulls frantically.

NICK

It's locked! What are we going to do?

The guards close in on them, surrounding our heroes from both sides. Nick clutches Griswold's sword, petrified.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Allen sighs with relief from the cool fan air. He removes his face from the fan as -- a huge GUSH OF WIND sails directly past him and heads straight for the miniature world.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DAY

The castle workers and guards SCREAM as high speed WINDS gush across the courtyard, sending them flying into the air. The wind swoops up everything in it's path, including animals and baskets, as they are hurled into a whirlwind of flying debris.

EXT. CASTLE KEEP. DAY

Griswold and his guards surround our three heroes. Griswold leers at Nick, his eyes filled with rage.

GRISWOLD

So, we meet again, peasant! Only  
this time shall be the last.

Griswold removes the Fearless Knight's sword -- A BLAST OF WIND sends Griswold and his guards FLYING BACKWARD. The guards crash against the castle wall, clinging for dear life. Several are swept over the edge, falling to their deaths. Blossom SCREAMS as she is hurled against the wall. She falls over the castle edge, hanging on to the ledge with all her might. Nick struggles toward her, trying to remain grounded in the fierce winds.

NICK

Hold on!

Nick reaches for Blossom's hand. She struggles to reach it, but it's too far.

NICK

Hurry! Take my hand!

BLOSSOM

I cannot!

NICK

Yes, you can! Try!

Griswold and Tarkus and the King remain forced against the castle wall, unable to pull themselves free of the torrent winds.

GRISWOLD  
What curse is this?

TARKUS  
One greater than thy own father's!

KING  
My child! Save her!

Nick reaches for Blossom's hand. Blossom's strength weakens, her fingers let go of the ledge -- just as Nick swoops down and grabs her hand in the nick of time! He pulls her back onto the castle wall and to safety. They embrace as...

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Brian finally finds an old copy of the Dragon's Lair manual hidden in Nick's closet.

BRIAN  
I found it!

Brian turns, spotting the miniature world behind him. Tiny trees are being up-rooted from the Forgotten Forest, peasants and animals are blown through the marketplace, debris flying everywhere. He turns and notices Nick's FAN TURNED ON -- and blowing directly at the GAME as Allen sits on Nick's bed, munching on a slice of cold pizza, completely oblivious to the game.

BRIAN  
Are you crazy? You're gonna get  
Nick killed!

Brian turns the fan OFF. Allen rises and approaches game.

ALLEN  
Whoa! What was that all about?

BRIAN  
You dolt! You turned the fan on.  
You could have caused a tornado  
down there.

ALLEN  
Man! Did I do all that?

Allen sees all of the destruction he's caused.

EXT. CASTLE WALL. DAY

The wind quickly dies down restoring the land back to normal. Blossom clings to Nick, thankful to be alive.

NICK  
Are you okay?

She looks into his eyes, filled with love for him.

BLOSSOM  
You are truly a great knight.

She kisses his cheek. Nick realizes he's in love. The King approaches. Griswold and Tarkus rise to their feet, regaining their balance.

GRISWOLD  
Stop them. Before they reach the Tower!

NICK  
What are we gonna do?

KING  
There. The hidden entrance.

The King leads Nick and Blossom around the Tower. He moves a stone as a secret passageway is revealed. They enter as -- the stone wall seals behind them, blocking the entrance from the Griswold and his guards. Enraged, Griswold slams the Sword of the Fearless Knight against the wall, unable to make a dent in it.

GRISWOLD  
Fools! They have escaped us! We must find them before they reach thy father's chamber. They must not take the child.

INT. DARK TOWER. DAY

The secret passageway is covered with cobwebs everywhere. The King guides Blossom and Nick up the stairs toward the Tower. They pause before a set of stairs, leading to Zorak's Chamber.

KING  
There is the entrance. Inside, you will find what you seek.

Nick reacts, uneasy. He clutches Griswold's sword and draws near Zorak's chamber. Blossom stops him, frightened.

BLOSSOM

No. It is too dangerous. I cannot let you.

NICK

I have to. He's my brother. It's because of me, he's there.

Nick pulls away and proceeds up the dark staircase, alone.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DAY

Griswold exits the castle. The guards rush toward the main entrance to the Dark Tower located at the base of the castle.

GRISWOLD

(shouts to the guards)  
Find them or you shall all hang from the gallows!

The guards file into the Tower. Griswold and Tarkus stay behind.

TARKUS

It is not wise to let the peasants see this stranger steal your bride from you. Especially one so cowardly and young.

GRISWOLD

(outraged)  
No one shall take her from me! If she chooses another, she shall die!

Griswold enters the Tower. Tarkus watches, pleased by this. He follows along.

INT. ZORAK'S CHAMBER. DAY

Zorak sits in the chair, asleep. A dagger hangs in his hand as the hourglass beside him continues to empty. The door opens. Nick beholds Scotty in the cage. Scotty sees his brother and rises.

SCOTTY

Nick!

NICK

Shhh.

Scotty bravely gives Nick the Vulcan sign. Nick returns it, relieved to see his brother alive. Nick discerns a key hanging on the wall behind Scotty. He points to it as Scotty struggles to reach it, but it is too far. The monkey in the cage beneath pushes Scotty's cage. It rocks back and forth. Scotty grabs the key. The monkey SQUEALS in delight. Zorak stirs, mumbles...

ZORAK

Senihanma thalmin...

He falls back asleep. Scotty unlocks his cage and jumps to the floor. He hands the key to the monkey and hurries toward Nick. The monkey unlocks his own cage, then all the other animals'. Scotty runs into Nick's arms.

NICK

Scotty!

Animals crawl everywhere. Scotty points his toy phaser at Zorak.

SCOTTY

Should I give him the Vulcan mind meld?

NICK

Later, Captain. Right now, I've got to get you home.

(beat/rises)

Home? I forgot. I don't know how to get us back to Hedgedale.

A rat crawls up Zorak's leg. The monkey SQUEALS. Zorak awakes to see all the animals freed -- including Scotty. He clutches the dagger. The hourglass is nearly empty.

ZORAK

The child!

Nick and Scotty run down the stairwell. Zorak struggles toward the door, but he's too weak to follow. He turns and notices the sun slowly setting. He screams in rage and proceeds to the tower window.

INT. TOWER STAIRWELL. DUSK

Nick and Scotty run down the stairs, joining Blossom and the King.

NICK

Come on! Let's get out of here!

Our four heroes hurry down the stairs as... Griswold and his guards head up. They pause on a landing, hiding.

BLOSSOM

What shall we do? We shall never make it to the castle bridge.

INT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DUSK

The guards search the courtyard for Nick and our heroes. Zorak appears at the tower window.

ZORAK

The child! The child has escaped.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR. DUSK

Griswold and the guards hurry to Zorak's chamber. Nick spots a RAM'S HORN hanging on the wall beside them and removes it.

BLOSSOM

What are you going to do?

NICK

Stand back. I've got an idea.

Nick rips a piece of cloth from his shirt and lights it on fire with a torch. He removes his can of BREATH SPRAY, the one Allen gave him in the diner, and raises it toward the blaze as -- POOF! Flames burst into the corridor. Griswold freezes, spotting the flames, stunned. The King and Blossom watch, awestruck.

Nick blows on the RAM'S HORN, making strange RUMBLING sounds. The smoke fills the entire corridor. Another blast of flames bursts toward Griswold and the guards.

GUARDS

A dragon! A dragon in the castle!

The guards instantly abandon post, running back down the stairs. Griswold looks on, enraged. He also turns and hurries after them. Blossom hugs Nick, relieved. Our four heroes continue on down to the castle courtyard, unharmed.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

The meter registers 750 and level 5.

ALLEN

The meter. It's rising!

Brian takes a gander at Nick's figurine.

BRIAN

Look, it's Nick. He's got Scotty!

Our four heroes (Nick, Blossom, Scotty and the King) appear in the courtyard at the entrance to the main castle.

BRIAN

The guards. They're everywhere.  
They'll never make it to the  
bridge. It's too far.

The drawbridge is surrounded by guards. Allen watches, incensed.

ALLEN

That's it. I'm getting tired of  
this stupid game. I'll teach that  
Game Keeper to mess with my best  
friend!

Allen opens Nick's closet. He rips a blanket off a tiny hidden refrigerator and opens it to reveal two six-packs of Classic Coke.

BRIAN

What are you doing?

Allen removes a six-pack and walks over to the game.

ALLEN

Stand back, this could get messy.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DUSK

Our four heroes stand at the castle entrance. The courtyard is swarming with guards. The drawbridge is over a hundred yards away, raised, and heavily guarded.

BLOSSOM

The guards are too many. We shall  
never make it alive.

Zorak appears in the castle tower entrance. He spots Scotty.

ZORAK (O.S.)  
The child! Seize him.

Griswold turns, identifying Nick and Scotty.

GRISWOLD  
Stop the child!

He charges at them as -- Scotty looks up and perceives something in the sky.

SCOTTY  
Look!

A flood of DARK LIQUID suddenly pours from the sky filling the entire courtyard. The guards and horses are swept up into the flood, causing them to be carried toward the drawbridge. The liquid heads straight for Griswold. Both he and his white stallion sweep into the current and head straight for the raised drawbridge.

GRISWOLD  
The bridge! Guard the bridge,  
before they escape!

Our heroes hang on for dear life as the flood sweeps past them, drenching them with the sticky, dark substance. Scotty tastes it. He yanks Nick's arm and holds up his finger.

SCOTTY  
Look, Rootbeer.

Nick tastes the liquid, stunned.

NICK  
That's not Rootbeer. It's Coke.  
Classic Coke. Allen? Allen, where  
are you? Is that you?

Nick stares up into the sky.

SCOTTY AND NICK  
Allen? Allen!

Blossom tastes the liquid and turns to face her uncle.

PRINCESS  
Look, uncle. A strange new wine.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The castle area is flooded with Classic Coke. Allen dumps the last can into the courtyard, forcing the drawbridge down.

BRIAN

You did it. It's open!

Allen finishes dumping the last can of Coke and smiles triumphantly.

EXT. COURTYARD. DUSK

The drawbridge bursts open. Griswold and his guards sweep out of the castle gates, sucked into the flood. The liquid finally recedes.

EXT. OUTSIDE CASTLE DAY

Our four heroes rush toward the open drawbridge. Griswold rises to his feet outside the castle grounds. He clutches the Sword of the Fearless Knight and yells to the guards surrounding him.

GRISWOLD

On your feet, swine!

The guards groan as they struggle to their feet. They shake their heads, as if awakening from some dark spell.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DAY

Our heroes move toward the lowered drawbridge. The sun has almost fully set behind the dark tower. Zorak stumbles after them, losing his power.

ZORAK

The child! Bring me the child!

The King pauses before the lowered bridge.

KING

No, I must remain here. I cannot abandon my Kingdom.

BLOSSOM

Uncle, you must. Zorak will kill you!

Griswold and the guards stumble to their feet outside the castle bridge.

KING  
Go without me, child.

NICK  
Hurry! We have to get across now!

BLOSSOM  
I cannot. I must stay with my uncle  
and fight for our kingdom. You must  
go on without us.

NICK  
No! I won't leave you!

Nick is torn. Unable to leave Blossom as...

GRISWOLD (O.S.)  
So, we meet again, coward.

Griswold comes into view on the drawbridge behind our heroes, blocking their way across the lowered bridge. Nick finally realizes what he must do and unsheathes his sword.

BLOSSOM  
You mustn't. He is the finest  
swordsmen in all of Fantador.

Griswold laughs.

GRISWOLD  
You dare to challenge the Dark  
Knight?

NICK  
You bet I do!

Nick hands Scotty to Blossom and confronts Griswold. With all the vengeance that has been building up inside him for so long, Nick raises his sword.

THE DUEL BEGINS.

Griswold is an excellent swordsman, handling the sword with ease. He plows into Nick's sword again and again, forcing him back across the bridge.

Zorak approaches Blossom, reaching for Scotty.

ZORAK

The child. Bring me the child.

NICK

Scotty. Run!

Scotty dashes across the courtyard. Zorak stumbles after him, sweat beading from his brow as he grows weaker and weaker.

Griswold lands a powerful blow, sending Nick to his knees.

GRISWOLD

Perhaps you would prefer the princess fight thy battles? At least she fights like a man!

Nick rises, maddened. He swings harder as Griswold forces him back. The guards cross the bridge and enter the castle grounds, still confused. Zorak shouts to them.

ZORAK

Fools! Stop the child before he escapes!

The guards stumble about, unable to do anything.

Scotty runs toward a wagon and crawls underneath. He holds his toy phaser, ready to fight as Zorak reaches for him. His hideous fingers inch closer to Scotty's small hands as...

ZORAK

Come here child. Come to me.

Scotty shoots at Zorak, WHIR, WHIR, WHIR, as Zorak shields his eyes in pain. Scotty crawls out from under the wagon and scurries across the courtyard.

The duel continues. Griswold lunges at Nick again and again. Nick stumbles, falling into a horse trough. He rises, drenched.

GRISWOLD

You duel like a maiden nine months in waiting about to give birth to a goat!

Nick struggles to fend off Griswold's powerful blows as Blossom and the king helplessly look on.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The meter drops 200 drodes... tottering back and forth. Allen eyes the two figurines dueling to their death.

ALLEN

Hang in there, Nick. You can do it!  
Don't letteth me down, man.

BRIAN

Come on. There isn't much time. We  
have to start The Spell of the  
Disenchanted before Nick's parents  
get home.

Brian rips the page out of the Dragon's Lair manual that  
contains the list of ingredients for the spell.

ALLEN

But Nick hasn't won the quest yet.  
He's still dueling the Dark Knight.

BRIAN

We can't help him. He has to do it  
alone.

(eyes piece of paper)

Besides, we got enough problems.  
Listen to these ingredients:  
Gargoyle eggs, witches brew, bat  
tongues...where are we going to  
find all that?

ALLEN

I know. We'll improvise.

BRIAN

What?

ALLEN

Why not? My mother does it every  
time she makes beef stew. Come on!

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE. NIGHT

The Pherson station wagon heads across the bridge,  
approaching the tranquil suburb of Hedgedale.

MRS. PHERSON (O.S.)

Go easy on him, honey. After all,  
he is just a boy.

MR. PHERSON (O.S.)  
That's his whole problem.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DUSK

Nick forces Griswold back onto the drawbridge. Griswold swings, knocking Nick's sword out of his hand. Nick falls to the ground.

GRISWOLD (O.S.)  
With one quick stroke, I shall slit  
thy throat, and feed thee to thy  
serpent!

Griswold laughs, standing over Nick. He raises the Sword of the Fearless Knight, ready to strike him down -- as Nick squirts breath spray into Griswold's eyes. Griswold screams. Nick jumps to his feet and grabs his sword.

NICK  
Take that, Carlson! It's about time  
somebody teaches you a thing about  
effective poetry.

The fight continues, more fierce than before.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The meter rises another 200 drodes to level 7. Nick finally stands his ground and forces Griswold back over the drawbridge.

EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS. DUSK

Scotty climbs inside an empty barrel and pulls lid over his head. He crouches inside, terrified as -- Zorak lifts the lid off the barrel, reaching inside.

SCOTTY  
Nick!

Zorak grabs Scotty out of the barrel. Scotty kicks and screams.

NICK  
(spotting Zorak)  
No, Scotty!

Griswold strikes, cutting Nick's cheek. Nick touches his face, sees blood. Griswold lunges at him as Nick ducks then tumbles across the lowered bridge.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM. NIGHT

Allen searches through the Pherson's medicine cabinet. He pulls out hair cream, talcum powder, toothpaste, and shaving cream.

ALLEN

Where the hell is the Witch Hazel?

He searches under the sink, finds it, and hightails it out of the bathroom.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

Allen shoots down the hall, then downstairs.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY. NIGHT

The Pherson station wagon turns off the expressway, entering Hedgedale.

EXT. CASTLE DRAWBRIDGE. DUSK

Griswold YELLS as he knocks Nick off the drawbridge and into the moat. The serpents SQUEAL and go for Nick. Nick clings to the drawbridge. Griswold steps on his fingers, crushing them. Griswold's voice suddenly changes to...

MATT CARLSON

What's wrong, drip? Can't hold your sword straight? Too heavy for your widdle hand?

Nick grabs Griswold's boot and knocks him down -- as The Sword of the Fearless Knight flies into the air. Nick jumps to his feet as the Fearless Sword -- lands in his hand. Griswold watches, outraged. He rises.

NICK

Let's see you rhyme your way out of that one, Shakespeare

Griswold grabs his old sword. They fence like never before. Nick forces Griswold back across the drawbridge into the castle yard.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DUSK

Zorak approaches the dark tower holding Scotty. He raises his dagger, grabs Scotty's hand, and eyes his fingers.

ZORAK

And now my child... you have  
something I need.

He moves to strike as -- BAM! a stone knocks the dagger from Zorak's hand.

BLOSSOM

Let the child go!

Zorak turns and zooms in on Blossom behind him. He raises his hand, enraged, as a stream of PURE ENERGY shoots toward her, forcing Blossom against the castle wall. She falls to the ground. The King quickly goes to her rescue.

The dagger instantly shoots back into Zorak's hand. He turns toward Scotty again as WHIR, WHIR, WHIR! Scotty shoots him in the eyes with his toy phaser. Zorak stumbles backward blinded.

Scotty runs for his life. He joins the King and Blossom. The sun finally disappears beyond the dark tower. Zorak watches as he SCREAMS in pain. He falls to his knees, powerless.

THE KING

Stop the sorcerer and his evil son!

The guards rush toward Zorak.

Griswold lunges at Nick with all his might. He misses as -- Nick strikes with a powerful blow, forcing Griswold to his knees for the first time. Nick grabs onto a branch, lands behind him as Griswold rises and swings. Nick turns full circle and strikes with all his strength. Griswold stumbles back, falling over a pig and -- lands flat on his ass. Nick places the Sword of the Fearless Knight against his throat. Griswold cowers.

NICK

Ode to Sir Griswold. Drop dead,  
asshole!

The guards surround Griswold and pull him to his feet. Scotty runs toward Nick. They embrace heartily.

The guards surround Zorak as he begins to chant and spin.

ZORAK  
Fathande habathde zafeera!

Zorak suddenly transforms into a huge, thirty foot tall, fire-breathing DRAGON, Cintar, the one-eyed Behemoth. The creature arches its back and glares down at Nick and Scotty with its huge hideous eye.

INT. PHERSON KITCHEN. NIGHT

Brian frantically searches under the kitchen sink and yanks out Comet, floor wax and Lemon Pledge. He pauses to check the list.

BRIAN  
Leg of Black Widow?

Brian empties a Roach Motel. A single dead cockroach falls out. Brian picks it up, grossed out.

BRIAN  
This had better work.

Allen bursts into the kitchen. He opens refrigerator and grabs eggs, a can of sardines, and a jar of cow tongues.

ALLEN  
Okay, what else? What else?

BRIAN  
(looks at list)  
Oh no...

ALLEN  
What?

CLOSE ON Allen's shocked face.

ALLEN  
Bird turd? Are you shitting me?

BRIAN  
Feces of a Two-Headed Buzzard.  
That's the last item. What are we gonna do?

Allen thinks for a second.

ALLEN  
Come on. Hurry!

Allen opens the back door. They dart into Nick's backyard.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DUSK

The dragon stalks Nick and Scotty. Flames burst from its mouth.

GRISWOLD

You shall never defeat Zorak. It is  
he who killed the Fearless Knight!

The dragon spreads its huge wings. Flames shoot out at our heroes. Nick grabs a rock and runs across the courtyard.

NICK

Hey, near-sighted! Over here!

He throws the rock -- it hits the creature's head. The dragon SNORTS in rage. Nick grabs a shield from the guard's station and runs up the stairs to the top of castle wall. The dragon follows, GROWLING and SNORTING. Nick climbs onto the castle keep and stands before the huge beast -- eye to eye. Scotty, Blossom and the King watch helplessly below.

EXT. NICK'S BACKYARD. NIGHT

Allen inches up a tree. He shines a flashlight into the nest of a black crow.

ALLEN

Later, worm-breath.

He shoos the crow away. It SQUAWKS then leaves its nest. Allen reaches into the nest, scoops up some bird turd, disgusted.

ALLEN

Man, what a guy won't do for his  
best friend.

BRIAN (O.S.)

Hurry up!

ALLEN

Hold your nuts, will ya?

CREAKING in the b.g. Allen places the bird turd into his pocket as, SNAP! The tree branch breaks. Allen falls to the ground and lands smack in front of Brian.

BRIAN

Will you quit clowning around? We  
got work to do!

INT. NICK'S HALLWAY. NIGHT

Brian and Allen rush up the stairs, arms full of ingredients for the spell. They race down the hallway passing by Gina's bedroom. She bolts up in bed, spotting them in the hall. Allen freezes when he sees her staring directly at him. He drops everything. Brian stops and helps him scoop up everything from the floor.

BRIAN

Go! Go!

They run into Nick's room, slam the door and LOCK IT.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The meter teeters back and forth on the game, as if waiting for the outcome of the battle.

EXT. HEDGEDALE. NIGHT

The Pherson station wagon drives through the center of town, passing by the town fountain and local diner.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. DUSK

The creature GROWLS. Flames shoot out of its mouth. Nick ducks behind his shield, clinging onto the Sword of the Fearless Knight. He crouches against the wall as -- flames ignite Nick's pants and Reeboks. He grabs a bucket of water and puts out the flames. The dragon moves closer, snorting deeper and meaner. A cloud of black smoke completely engulfs him, blinding his view. He chokes on the smoke. The dragon GROWLS. Nick drops to his knees, trembles in fear, engulfed in blackness.

NICK

Think, Pherson, think.

He suddenly remembers what Blossom and Old Man Dekes said.

BLOSSOM (O.S.)

"With imagination even the smallest of creatures can be strong."

MAGICIAN (O.S.)

"Tis not enough to prove thy best, only through imagination shall thy win thy quest."

NICK

That's it!

(rises/clutching his  
sword)

I don't need the game. I can be  
fearless on my own!

The growling stops. The beast's head swoops down through the black smoke, and lunges at Nick. Nick raises the Sword of the Fearless Knight and shoves it into the beast's one eye.

The dragon yelps in pain, stumbles back, and falls to the ground. The smoke lifts. The crowd watches in awe as -- the huge dragon suddenly shrivels up and transforms back into Zorak, the Sword of the Fearless Knight through his heart.

GRISWOLD

No!

Zorak's body turns into black ashes. A strong breeze sweeps him up into the wind, leaving only the Fearless Sword behind. Nick climbs down to the courtyard, amazed. He joins his friends as the crowd cheers him. The King hands Nick the sword. Blossom kisses him. Nick kneels and hugs Scotty.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The meter shoots up to 1000 drodes and level 10!

ALLEN

He did it! He won!

Brian grabs the hot air popcorn machine and turns it on. The clock reads 11:58 P.M.

BRIAN

Come on, it's almost midnight.

They dump the ingredients into the machine. It slowly begins to spit and bubble. POUNDING in the b.g.

GINA (O.S.)

Nick, what's going on in there?

ALLEN

The spell! Hurry!

Brian grabs the book and reads the Spell of the Disenchanted.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS. SUNSET

Nick and Scotty kneel before the King. The King dubs Nick with the Sword of the Fearless Knight.

KING

I dub thee, Fearless Knight of  
Fantador.

The king hands Nick the sword then dubs Scotty with a smaller sword.

KING

I dub thee Littlest Knight, brother  
of Sir Fearless Knight.

He hands Scotty his sword. Scotty stares at it and tosses his toy phaser and communicator aside. The patrons of Fantador cheer. Nick raises his sword into the air and suddenly notices something written on its blade. The spell that got him and Scotty into the game is carved into its steel blade.

NICK

The spell! It was there the whole  
time.

Scotty tugs on Nick's sleeve and rubs his eyes.

SCOTTY

Nick? Can we go home now?

Scotty yawns. Nick hugs him, greatly relieved.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBER. SUNSET

Scotty sits on the King's lap, holding the royal crown. Nick and Blossom stand off alone. The people of Fantador behind them.

NICK

We have to go now. We have to get  
back to Hedgedale.

BLOSSOM

But why? I thought you were unhappy  
there with your father?

NICK

I was. At least I thought I was.  
Only now... that's changed.

(MORE)

NICK(cont'd)

I've changed. I'm not afraid of him anymore. Don't you see?

BLOSSOM

Then I shall go with you. I shall tell my uncle at once.

NICK

No, you can't. You belong here. This is your home.

BLOSSOM

(turns away, hurt)

There is someone else you care for in this land, Hedgedale?

NICK

Yes. There is.

A tear falls from Blossom's eye.

NICK

No, don't you see? She is you. This whole place, it's all a part of me. Only I didn't see it before. I was too afraid. Only I'm not now. You've helped change that. That's why I have to go back.

Blossom listens, confused. The castle begins to tremble. The patrons of Fantador SCREAM. The castle walls shake around them. The King and Scotty rise.

EXT. THE PHERSON HOUSE. NIGHT

POUNDING continues in b.g. as Allen and Brian continue their gibberish chanting.

GINA (O.S.)

Nick, open this door! Nick!

Allen stares out the window. The Pherson station wagon pulls into the driveway.

ALLEN

Mr. and Mrs. P! They're here!

Still chanting, Brian dumps the last of the spell ingredients into Nick's popcorn machine. The popcorn machine spits and sputters. A strange pasty-like substance spits out of the machine...

The miniature castle trembles. The white light abruptly appears.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD. SUNSET

The dark castle quakes and shudders. Everyone SCREAMS and runs outside. The white light appears in the sky, blinding them.

THE KING

What's wrong? What have we done?

NICK

It's all right. If I go, you'll be fine, I promise.

Nick turns toward Blossom and kisses her good-bye.

NICK

I'll never forget you. Ever.

Tears swell in Blossom's eyes. Nick takes Scotty's hand, raises the Sword toward the sky and reads the spell from its blade.

NICK

Eta manach, Eti manal, Bethrad  
anach...

Scotty joins in, repeating Nick. The white light engulfs them. They disappear! The castle stops trembling, the light vanishes. Blossom takes her uncle's hand. They both stare up into the sky, awed. The King embraces Blossom, comforting her.

INT. PHERSON HALLWAY. NIGHT

Gina pounds on Nick's bedroom door.

GINA

Nick, what's going on in there?  
Where is Scotty? Nick!

A white light shoots through the cracks of Nick's door, almost blinding her. Gina backs off, blown away. The front door opens. Gina peers down at the front hallway and sees her parents entering the house.

GINA

Mom, Dad!

She scrambles downstairs toward them.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

The popcorn machine explodes! The light fills the entire room. Nick and Scotty are sucked out of the game, covered in white paste. Nick holds the Sword of the Fearless Knight, dumbfounded.

INT. FRONT HALLWAY. NIGHT

The Pherson's close the front door. Gina rushes toward them.

GINA  
Mom, Dad. Something weird's going  
on in Nick's room.

Expecting as much, Mr. Pherson takes off his coat and heads upstairs.

INT. NICK'S ROOM. NIGHT

NICK  
Allen, it was you! You did it!

ALLEN  
No, man. We both did. Me and Brian.

Allen puts his arm around Brian. Brian smiles. KNOCKING in b.g.

MR. PHERSON (O.S.)  
Nick? Nick, open this door!

SCOTTY  
Daddy!

Scotty rushes toward the door. Allen freaks.

ALLEN  
Quick! The rope.

Allen and Brian make a mad dash for the open window. Nick follows.

NICK  
Wait. Where are you going?

ALLEN  
(climbs outside)  
Are you crazy? It's Mr. P!

EXT. PHERSON HOUSE. NIGHT

Brian and Allen shimmy down the rope.

NICK  
Don't you see? We don't have to  
hide anymore. It's over, man. The  
game is over.

BRIAN  
(to Allen)  
What's he talking about?

ALLEN  
Beats me.

Allen and Brian jump to the ground and bolt down Nick's  
driveway.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Scotty unlocks Nick's door. Mr. Pherson enters and sees the  
room in complete shambles. White paste covering everything,  
including Nick and Scotty.

SCOTTY  
Daddy.

Scotty hugs Mr. Pherson, followed by Nick.

NICK  
Dad. It sure is great to be home.

Mr. Pherson stares at them both, confused.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT

Allen and Brian run into the street, catching their breath.

BRIAN  
You think Nick's going to be okay?  
He sounded kinda weird back there.

ALLEN  
Nah. He's still buzzing from the  
game, that's all.

BRIAN

I guess.

They both stare at each other. An awkward moment.

ALLEN

Hey, that was some great stuff back there.

BRIAN

Yeah, but that Coke stuff. Now that was cool.

ALLEN

Hey, what do you say we play Dragon's Lair tomorrow at my place? You, me and Nick?

BRIAN

You kidding? After tonight, I think I'll stick to Yahtzee.

They both stare across the street at Old Man Dekes' house. The basement window is completely dark.

Brian approaches his house next door. He peers inside the living room window from his porch. His MOTHER lies asleep on the couch with the TV on. Brian grabs the key from under the mat and unlocks the front door.

ALLEN

Hey. I'm sorry about your Dad.

BRIAN

Yeah, me too.

ALLEN

(walks off/pauses)

If you ever need anything, you know, big brother stuff, let me know. I know what it's like being on your own. I'm sort of an orphan myself almost, being an only kid.

BRIAN

Gee, thanks.

Allen walks off, making a hand signal. Brian watches, amazed by this new friendship. He smiles and goes into his house.

EXT. PHERSON HOUSE. DAYS LATER

Nick carries the miniature world down his driveway. Allen follows behind, holding up the back end, upset. They both bear new fencing foils, masks, and bibs while lugging the entire game, including the figurines and ancient book of rules.

ALLEN

Nick, you can't do this. You're talking about our whole lives here!

NICK

I told you, it's over, man. We don't need it anymore. Now will you snap out of it?

Nick tosses the game into the trash. Allen stares at it.

ALLEN

I don't think I'm ready.

NICK

Don't you see? We got a whole world of excitement right here in Hedgedale. We don't need any game! Now get a grip, will you?  
(slaps his back)  
Come on, we'll be late.

Nick heads toward the bus stop. Allen eyes the miniature world, not entirely convinced. He yells next door.

ALLEN

Hey, Lieberman. You coming or what? We're gonna miss practice.

Brian steps out onto his front porch -- wearing a fencing mask and bib. He is totally psyched, but not because of Allen, or Nick.

BRIAN

I can't. My dad's home!

His FATHER, 40's, steps onto the porch. He puts his arm around Brian.

BRIAN

We're going to the museum. My Dad's getting honored.

Brian steps back inside with his Dad. The door closes as Allen frowns, disappointed. He turns and sees Cecilia and Nick kissing at the bus stop behind him. He groans, disturbed.

ALLEN

Man, life's a jip.

Allen approaches the bus as -- Matt Carlson drives by in his Wrangler Jeep wearing his fencing mask. He sees Nick and Cecilia kissing and raises his mask, revealing two bandages across each cheek. He lowers his mask, livid and drives off as -- Nick and Cecilia climb onto the bus. The back of Nick's jacket reads: Captain; Hedgedale High Fencing Team. Nick pauses and calls to Allen.

NICK

Hey O'Malley, you coming or what?

INT. HEDGEDALE SCHOOL BUS. MORNING

Allen climbs onto the bus. He scopes out Nick and Cecilia sitting together. He searches for a seat alone as -- he spots the only seat available, beside the NEW GIRL, 15, a redhead with French braids. The girl smiles at him. Allen turns away, embarrassed.

GIRL

How was your Halloween?

Allen turns, amazed that she's speaking to him. He smiles, thrilled.

ALLEN

Are you kidding? You wouldn't believe what happened. It all started when Nick, he's my best friend in the whole world, got this strange game...

EXT. STREET. MORNING

The bus pulls away from the curb, heads down Nick's street.

ANGLE ON BUS WINDOW

--as Nick glances out at his neighborhood, confident, he sees Old Man Dekes going through his trash.

Old Man Dekes removes the miniature world from Nick's garbage. He blows the dust off his book of rules and places it inside his shopping cart along with the castle and figurines. He wheels it down the street -- as Nick watches in awe. Their eyes meet for a brief moment. Dekes eyes twinkle. Nick smiles as the school bus disappears into the horizon.

FADE OUT