

Alienation in Life and Film

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Contents

INT. DESK – NIGHT	3
On Aliens	3
Here They Come	5
For the Culture	5
On Normalcy	7
Symmetrical Dialogue in the Films of Wes Anderson	9
Abstract	9
Why Wes Anderson?	10
Symmetrical Dialogue	10
Hyper Dialogue	12
The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou	13
American Eccentricity in Film	16
The Grand Budapest Hotel	17
Intermission	19
Asteroid City	20
Curtains	22
HERE THEY COME	23
References	156

INT. DESK – NIGHT

What is the meaning of my work? Normalcy. In a damned and reckless age, normalcy. I began my screenplay with a basic axiom of G. K. Chesterton: fairy tales endure because they make “the hero a normal human boy; it is his adventures that are startling” (16). Modern heroes are too complicated, too fantastic. Beyond the politics, beyond the off-screen behavior, films like *Captain Marvel* and *Superman* have trouble taking off these days because modern stories are saturated with supernatural heroes. Shows like *The Boys* endure because the hero is a regular person contending with a great, immovable evil. The most successful of the supernatural heroes are normal, vulnerable human beings. Spiderman is a loser. Batman is a depressive. James Bond has PTSD. Harry Potter, despite his vague invulnerability to the evil force, is a regular boy. The audience experiences all the wonder of the wizarding world through his delight and his fear. The world is indeed frightening and magical to anyone with enough sense to see it, but why should Captain Marvel care to see it when she is from the first frame a master of the world and a certified boss-girl? Real life is dull to the odd, so if the main character is odder than life, wonder is not possible. This is why my protagonist, Evan, is a regular schmuck with a dead-end job and nothing particularly interesting going on in his life. That is until an alien steals his love interest.

On Aliens

Before getting into the impetus for Evan’s character, I must address the eight-foot-tall frog-demon in the woods—and of course, the little green one and the tall grey one. I was raised on aliens. My father introduced me to *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Alien*, *Invader Zim*, *Star Wars*, *The Fifth Element*, and C.S. Lewis’s *The Space Trilogy*. These later led me to Douglas Adams, Isaac Asimov, Frank Herbert, and Kurt Vonnegut. But despite my roots, I was never really interested in creating science

fiction. Not until the Pentagon began saying something like *okay, maybe the aliens are real* (Raymond). As disclosure became increasingly mainstream, I became more and more interested in wanting to believe. And what I am interested in, I write about.

I spent a long time thinking about what aliens might do on Earth, narratively. It was a difficult brainstorm. If a being could traverse space and maybe time, what would be so exciting about our planet? I didn't want to tell the tired old story of just studying the apes who made nukes and television. I wanted my aliens to reflect humanity in relevant ways, partly because I think our reports of them are products of our imagination anyway. Why would such advanced species be constantly crashing their ships anyway? I found the answer, as I usually do, in music. I saw in the opening twang of Primus's "Here Come the Bastards" a crashing UFO. As the song continued, it seemed to describe them. My aliens were not unknowable at all. They were sent here on a mission, and just like everyone else, they had no real idea of what they were doing. They just pretended, convincing themselves and others that they had it all figured out.

The music pointed me to a nonsensical comedy. I considered a comic, but it never got beyond a few scripts and preliminary sketches. The comic was set to detail the adventures of the sadistic Plixo and the idiotic Ben as they collected crystals from Earth. In the story, the crystals did everything hippies thought they did, but the humans just weren't holding them correctly. It was idiotic fun. Despite not going anywhere, it did lead me to landing my first commission.

A small-time director I met through some commercial art contacts liked the idea and asked me to take a few of his recurring characters and have them interact with my aliens. I came up with "Raccoon Hat," a thirty-minute feature about hunters encountering some aliens roasting marshmallows in the woods. Most of the short film was to be conversational. The hunters were looking to make raccoon hats to impress some girls at a line dance, but it wasn't the lack of hats

causing their problems with women. Talking around the fire with mind-reading aliens helped them to discover their real problems. The film was never made. But that's okay. I took that premise and made it into a feature-length idea named for the Primus song that inspired it all.

Here They Come

The script for "Here They Come" began in Professor Nelson's Creative Screenwriting class in the summer of 2023 and has been in revision since. The plot is standard hero's journey stuff. Evan begins in his normal world. He is an unsuccessful, thirty-year-old toy store manager with a crush on a coworker. She gives him a crystal, or as Joseph Campbell calls it, a "magic amulet" (60). But just as he gets the courage to ask her out, a monster kidnaps her. He follows them into the woods, leaving the normal world. He meets two wise yet reluctant helpers. He is challenged by this new world, and he fails multiple times to get it under control. Through his trials, he wins allies and gains character, and in the end, he saves the princess from the dragon with the help of his magic amulet and his hard-won friends. He returns to the normal world having mastered it.

The theme of "Here They Come" is best summed up by the firm hand of Vito Corleone: "You can act like a man!" (Puzo 16). Evan begins the story awkward and shy. He is so weakened by modernity that the woman he is interested in almost has to force him to ask her out. But what is he to do when the avatar of toxic masculinity (the Yaag) snatches her away, seeing her only as a source for its own pleasure? Evan must not then shirk masculinity in the face of its darker side, he must adopt a proper relation to his role as a man and learn to take responsibility, to lead, and to develop within himself a cautious, intelligent bravery.

For the Culture

This is an issue dear to me. No citations are needed for the observant individual. Western society is in decline, and something is deeply wrong with men. I believe that something is an improper view of manhood, and in many cases, a disregard of it at all. I also believe that if that course was corrected, we could see a reversal of the overall decline. There are many ways to affect culture, and my approach is through art.

I endeavor to contribute to correcting the course of men's social lives through narrative substructures. There is no need to preach. There is no need to hand-hold. People take in lessons without knowing they are taking in lessons. In fact, much of the damage has been done that way already. The chattering class of loafers-without-socks intellectuals have impregnated men's minds with the ever-reaching notions of toxic masculinity and replaced the fear of God with the fear of the HR department. That is not to say that there is not a toxic side to masculine behavior. My screenplay shows it in detail with the Yaag. The Yaag is sexually frustrated and domineering. The Yaag might as well be Andrew Tate, a popular pimp and men's activist. Both are evil manifestations of what not to be. The problem is that Tate is seen as the solution to the HR department when he is simply the equal and opposite reaction. My narrative shows the true solution through the development of Evan. He represents a form of toxic masculinity rarely discussed as such: the feminized nice guy. But through his trials, he learns that not being a nice guy does not mean being a *mean* guy. He learns balance. He learns to be a good man. And the best part is, the transmission of my ideas is subconscious, and anyone can experience it.

If Western culture is to be corrected from its evil course, then new cultural products must be made to replace those that we reject. Many have stated their commitment to this venture. The political commentator Tim Pool looks to create culture through conversation, business, and music. The Daily Wire now has a hand on everything from movies to shampoo. Well, I take

inspiration from their efforts and propose my own theory on the creation of new cultural products: just be normal!

On Normalcy

What is it to be normal? In the immortal words of Justice Potter Stewart, “I know it when I see it” (“*Jacobellis*”). Many strange cultural movements seem to have started about ten minutes ago and have somehow cemented themselves in the zeitgeist. Lots of lovely and inspiring culture warriors confront them head-on, and I applaud them in their struggles. But I choose a different approach. I choose to just walk around the new pillars and behave as if I can’t see them. This is not an approach that will cleanse the world of its ills, but it’s my approach, and I believe it is a necessary attitude for my work to breathe. All the stories that endure live on because they are quite normal at least in their framework and their overall message. *Star Wars* is a normal hero’s journey about a normal boy who grows up and contends against a standard imperial oppressor. He learns discipline, friendship, and forgiveness. He just happens to have a bigfoot on his crew and a laser sword. Weird things can happen, but the theme and the protagonist should point toward the normal world as much as possible for my brand of cultural content. I should not be misunderstood as ignoring the allusions to the conflicts of the day, but the fact is that the metaphor of the Ewoks is not essential to the ancient structure and long-term message of Lucas’s grand work.

My approach to shifting the cultural landscape is to affect the subconscious using the old myths as my framework. Many of those culture warriors I admire are in a constant battle of facts, relying only on their reason, appearing to be embarrassed by the fact that they claim to hold mystical beliefs. I side rather with Chesterton’s view that “a man cannot think himself out of a mental evil; for it is actually the organ of thought that has become diseased, ungovernable, and,

as it were, independent. He can only be saved by the will or faith” (23-4). So, I will give the people something to feel rather than to endlessly apply logic to. It is well known that the bad bacteria clogging the mental-social gut is a byproduct of the ultra-processed intellectual institutions. Well, it’s time for a nice, all-natural yogurt. I give you my screenplay, for your health.

Symmetrical Dialogue in the Films of Wes Anderson

Abstract

This paper endeavors to explore and explain how Wes Anderson utilizes dialogue to express multiple levels of meaning. The investigation will be split between the spoken content and the purpose of that content in each narrative discussed. The films and screenplays explored will be those widely considered as Anderson's most bold, complete, and individual works, namely, *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, and *Asteroid City*. The chief argument of the paper will show that much like his idealistic and perfectly symmetrical visuals, Wes Anderson's odd and quirky dialogue is essential to the meaning undergirding each film. This paper coins the term symmetrical dialogue to classify those moments when Anderson uses highly stylized speech to flatten reactions, deliver exposition, and undercut tragedy in ways that distance the viewer from the story to intellectualize emotions in favor of feeling them.

Symmetrical Dialogue in the Films of Wes Anderson

Why Wes Anderson?

Much fuss is made over gritty realism and relatability in modern film. Villains have become less like the devil and more like a recognizable neighbor during a hard week, and dialogue between characters has become so much like real life that it can be difficult to even see the point of conversations on the first or second viewing. In short: modern screenwriting is concerned with hiding the reality of the script as if the audience could be truly fooled into believing it was all natural. Shows like *The Office* and *Succession* and films like *District 9* and *The Hurt Locker* even utilize erratic, hand-held camera movements to impose a raw sense of movement in furtherance of the illusion. The films of Wes Anderson stand out so violently from the modern catalogue because they retain a sense of orderliness, decorum, and idealism which today exists only in the theatre.

Anderson's sets are painstakingly parallel and pastel. His shots are long and evenly weighted and often even resemble theatre stages. These characteristics have been talked to death. It is easy enough to find a YouTube video essay on Anderson's pallet or how the director uses authentic this or that or how he perfectly balances everything in the shot to focus the eye on the center of the frame. But little has been said about his style of dialogue beyond the surface-level irony that tinges much of the conflict in his filmography. A whole level of meaning has been ignored by critics too distracted by his odd symmetrical visuals to open their ears or to open a script. If they had, they would see that much like everything else in an Anderson film, the dialogue has a symmetrical nature.

Symmetrical Dialogue

Symmetrical dialogue meets the viewer halfway and then hits them over the head with what they already know. It behaves like theatre dialogue, setting the tone and presenting the audience with knowledge that otherwise would be unavailable to them due to the limitations of the medium. But in film these limitations do not exist. In fact, Wes Anderson uses this theatre-like dialogue to repeat what the audience sees, creating a balance much like the visual balance that saturates. This narrative balance between dialogue and visual storytelling creates a sense of emotional distance from the tragedies the characters experience. The presentation of the dialogue is typically ironic, making it appear unnecessary or, to borrow Roger Ebert's summation of *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, terminally whimsical.

Anderson's dialogue indeed tends towards irony and comedy in the face of tragedy, but if the repetitious and whimsical nature of the script was altered at all, the meaning would be entirely different. An early example of this type of writing comes at the end of *The Royal Tenenbaums* when Eli crashes his car through the window of a house of self-centered depressives and says, "I need help," to which Chas replies, "So do I" (Royal 111-2). The audience already knows the whole family is mentally ill, but by stating the thesis aloud, the audience is able to see that they all know it and perhaps it is no use feeling sorry for them. The point of Wes Anderson's symmetrical dialogue is to flatten reactions, deliver exposition, and undercut tragedy to distance the viewer from the narrative so that emotional moments may be intellectualized rather than felt.

The primary nature of a line of symmetrical dialogue is a self-conscious awareness that the script exists. What is addressed verbally was shown through nonverbal characterization or through the actions and events of the narrative, but the dialogue still behaves as if the screen has not shown them at all. Some of it even runs contrary to what a character has done but serves the same purpose of distancing the audience from the events on screen. Symmetrical dialogue results

in a metatextual opening of the script to the audience and, as Anderson's career progressed from *Bottle Rocket* to *Asteroid City*, the scripts opened wider and wider.

Hyper Dialogue

The theory of symmetrical dialogue owes a debt to Kim Wilkins' idea of hyper-dialogue as presented in her article for the *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, "The Sounds of Silence: Hyper-dialogue and American Eccentricity." Hyper-dialogue is, as Wilkins explains, ironic, uneven, and intense, meant to expose deep anxiety and self-consciousness in the character (403). She elaborates that

the self-conscious use of dialogue always acknowledges the presence, and performance, of a composed, formal script. In this, the constructed nature of the dialogue is consistent with their created cinematic milieus and characters, all of which recognize the presence of a world constructed by a screenplay. (409)

Much like Kim Wilkins' hyper-dialogue, symmetrical dialogue often feels ironic, feels tinged with anxiety or dread, and acknowledges the fact that it is not real. But Wilkins does not take the idea far enough and paints with too wide a brush to cover the specific use of dialogue in Wes Anderson's portfolio.

As discussed, Anderson's characters seem to say unnecessary things. Their dialogue feels ironic at best and needlessly quirky at not-so-best. It feels a lot like a comedic add-on to the center-framed shots, pastel colors, and symmetrical sets. In the shallow analysis, it feels like nothing more than an aesthetic choice. But once the laughter at the frank, existential, and sometimes character-exploding admissions has subsided, the thinking can begin—indeed, *only*

then can it begin. Symmetrical dialogue does not just pass on information, it passes *over* emotions. And Anderson's first real commitment to this form was a huge *sinker*.

The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou

The Life Aquatic is about a man adrift in his own script. Steve Zissou is an international star documentarian attempting to micromanage even his personal relationships for the good of his films in a vain attempt to regain his former (perhaps naturally occurring) glory. This filmmaker-within-a-film trope is a simple and no doubt overused meta device, but the template also gives the Wes Anderson an opportunity to experiment with symmetry not just as a visual device but also in the way that the characters communicate with the audience.

In a traditional screenplay, the feeling that Steve Zissou has lost his stature would be felt just as it is in *The Life Aquatic* through flash backs to his old successes, through the melancholy painted on his face and hung about his shoulders, and through his fading relationships with the public, his wife, and his crew. But asking the audience to read into the action is too far below the surface for Wes Anderson. In that version, the emotions are only felt and not confronted intellectually. This is the point of symmetrical dialogue. A feeling that the audience already has is given a voice so that it may be approached head-on. Using this method of dialogue allows emotions to be dampened and primed for an approach from a logical stance. Zissou, learning that Jane has decided to nix the story about him says, "Man, I just don't have any stature anymore" (101). But the audience has already felt this in Zissou's slumped posture. In the rolling power outages of the Belafonte. In the disillusioned glare of his own wife. By addressing all the things that the film primed the audience to feel, that gut feeling of sympathy is soothed into a general feeling that Zissou is right, and that it has been obviously true throughout the film; however, now that Zissou has recognized and given voice to the issue, the soft feelings are replaced by cold

hard thought. Now what is he going to do about it? If the following excerpt from Wes Anderson's screenplay for *The Life Aquatic* is telling, then the answer is that Zissou will just continue to alienate everyone in favor of following his own script:

NED. ...I'm just a character in your film.

ZISSOU. (hesitates) It's a documentary. It's all really happening.

NED. Well, damn you for that. (112)

Jesse Mayshark in *Post-pop Cinema* describes Wes Anderson's vision for *The Life Aquatic* as an attempt to "recreate not just the TV shows and movies of his youth, but the experience of watching them" (133). This distancing from the narrative as a narrative is a result of Anderson's symmetrical dialogue for intellectual interaction with the story. In the above excerpt, Ned confronts Zissou about the decades of neglect (which the audience is not exactly privy to) as well as the casual disregard Zissou has for a man who may well be his son (which the audience well knows). Zissou does not deny the claim; in fact, he supports it. The idea that "it's all really happening" is supported in the action preceding the excerpt when Zissou fights with the camera operator to avoid having a real moment filmed and in the following conflict when Zissou directs Ned on how to punch him (Anderson 112-3). The symmetrical dialogue contrasts Ned, who desires a real connection to his father, from Zissou, who can only accept relationships that are commodified or that serve to increase his reputation. These sorts of flat interactions happen all over the script, even across the sea, when Zissou's arch nemesis, Alistair Hennessy is introduced.

After learning that his sea lab was ransacked, Hennessy says, "I'm so pissed I want to spit." The stage directions following the exclamation read: "Hennessy crumples the document in his fist. He spits on the deck. He uncrumples the document and looks at it again" (77). First,

Hennessey announces that he is emotional and that he is about to have an outburst, thus cooling the audience (both his direct shipmates and indirect theatregoers) to his wholly tame reaction; next, he commits to his outburst, and, finally, he completely reverses the action in order to approach the situation a little more reasonably—i.e., by loading an elephant gun with buckshot (79). Even if the actions taken after an instance of symmetrical dialogue are illogical or even downright stupid, the purpose of dampening emotions in favor of intellectual order remains constant. At this point in the story, the audience believes Hennessey to be an antagonist.

Presenting him as an angry reactionary might have been an effective trick, but Anderson chooses instead to, among the laughs, show that there is no reason to be upset at him and it is better to think about what Zissou's hatred of him really means.

Perhaps it was the emotional distancing that caused Roger Ebert to claim that *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* suffered from “terminal whimsy.” Far from putting the film in the trash, Ebert asks the question, “Can't it just exist?” Can't *The Life Aquatic* go on as a nostalgic recapturing of a lost generation of explorers, at least from the perspective of Wes Anderson? Steve Zissou is, after all, a famous ocean explorer lost at sea—along with the audience real and imagined.

This is not to argue with the accurate accusation that the plot of *The Life Aquatic* is ironic and whimsical; however, if the audience is to truly have that sinking feeling, then there must be a distance between the emotional world of Steve Zissou so that the full picture can be taken in and considered intellectually. It is as if Wes Anderson has approached the iceberg of literature and turned it upside-down. There is no questioning why a character does what he does when he tells you outright, and there is no bothering to wonder why a curtain is blue or a tent is yellow when Anderson himself simply says “I don't really have any color I like as much for this tent” (Film

4). Anderson understands the importance of following a feeling and an aesthetic, and while many of his films are full of emotional reality, the dismissal of his portfolio as simply whimsical and theatre-like ignores the accessibility of the inner lives of characters and his recognition that a film is not a real thing but rather a representation that allows the audience to think about real things. It is what it is, and *it* is a movie. Anderson is one of the few directors no longer pretending.

American Eccentricity in Film

The school of directors that Wes Anderson appears to fit best within is defined by critic Armond White in “American Soul, Aisle Five” as the “American Eccentrics.” Kim Wilkins elaborates on White’s new category, explaining that American Eccentric directors have an intense, strange, and usually ironic

“... use of dialogue in the place of action that stems from the presence of a deep, unspoken anxiety. American Eccentricity can be read through the ideological and cultural imprint of the New Hollywood due to their shared underlying thematic concerns of alienation and dislocation.” (403)

Much of Anderson’s work has a clear backdrop of anxiety. *The Life Aquatic* is about a man who is losing his stature in real time, aging out of his world, and rapidly losing his friends and family in various ways. Earlier works like *The Royal Tenenbaums* follow pretty much that exact line and the conversations between the characters within are clearly expressions of anxiety and dread. But of all Anderson’s works, none present a deeper and more immovable dread than does *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. The colorful story is set atop a lonely mountain in a dying hotel and is told by a dead writer who recounts the process of beginning his novel about a long dead

proprietor of a long defunct hotel run by a concierge who was the only thing keeping the world he valued from fading away. The brunt of the story is massively affected by war, an analogue for World War II, which none of the characters have the power to stop. History happens all around them and to them, and their powerlessness is shown in narrative beats. But their dialogue tells much of what is shown, too. With *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, Anderson seems to have perfected the art of symmetrical dialogue, as the film was a major success, despite sharing many of the narrative characteristics of *The Life Aquatic*, which Anderson believed would lead the latter to success (Frame).

The Grand Budapest Hotel

The narrative of *The Grand Budapest Hotel* is rife with dislocation and alienation. The extravagant hotel is alienated from the world, allowed to exist, for a while, transcendent of time, atop a snowy and isolated alp. The anxiety of the narrative is presented in both frames: the author presenting the story of the hotel as it was passed to him by Zero Mustafa as well as the actual presentation of Zero passing on the story. This creates a sense of distance, allowing the audience to feel the dislocation that many of the characters feel. Zero, despite still residing in the hotel, comments often on how the establishment has passed out of greatness and the author even admits in his initial description of the place that “it had already begun its descent into shabbiness and eventual demolition” (*Grand* 3).

The frame of *The Grand Budapest Hotel* being a novel is difficult to ignore. The dialogue is strange because it is not film dialogue, it is novel dialogue. The dialogue of *The Grand Budapest Hotel* behaves as if the audience cannot receive exposition visually and much of the comedy comes from this juxtaposition of expectations. The exposure of Anderson’s intentions from the very beginning with the girl visiting the author’s grave helps the film succeed with its

use of symmetrical dialogue where his previous works failed. Later works like *The French Dispatch* take the same cue, situating themselves as collections of stories from a magazine or parts from a play early in the narrative.

Prefacing the audience with the nature of the film helps the strange speech work. *The Life Aquatic* may have failed because the same symmetrical dialogue was used, but Steve Zissou wasn't writing a novel, he was filming a movie. In that case, a traditional screenplay dialogue would have been more effective. In *The Writer and the Screen*, Wolf Rilla describes the major difference between screenplay dialogue and novel/theatre dialogue:

Both the theatre and the novel base their use of speech on articulacy: and again, this is where film dialogue differs, for at its most effective it is based on inarticulacy. When two lovers part in a play, they give the fullest expression to their emotion by verbalizing it. In a film what they say to each other is likely to be as banal and inadequate as it would be in real life. (89)

Wes Anderson's use of novel dialogue in his films distances the audience from the banality of real-life emotions typically presented on screen and acknowledges the more-real-than-real aspect of emotions expressed through art. Instead of feeling the emotion through empathy, like watching an actor breakdown, the audience "reads" the emotion in the dialogue like they would in a novel or as they would experience expressions of emotions in a play where the faces of the actors are not always visible. In the case of stage plays, the script must compensate with overt and specific references to what the limitations of the medium prevent the company from showing.

The emotional expressions in Anderson's films, especially in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, are tinged with irony and often result in laughter due to the awkwardness of the delivery. It is the juxtaposition of symmetrical dialogue and the setting of a film that lends these qualities. When M. Gustave berates Zero for not bringing his cologne, the audience learns that Zero is a refugee (*Grand 73*). His explanation of his tragic life is, in a traditional film, needless exposition. But this film is not a film, it is a novel and using this flat dialogue moves the audience away from the sting of Zero's misfortunes, diffusing the tension as easily as it was infused, onto the next plot point.

Intermission

The prevailing analysis may seem to point to Wes Anderson having an inability to generate true emotional reactions. That is not the case. It would, in fact, be difficult to experience the climax of *The Life Aquatic* with dry eyes or to watch the brothers develop in *The Darjeeling Limited* and keep a stony face. It is the very dismissal of emotional moments throughout Anderson's films that strengthen the bigger, more important moments. Anderson is able to guide the emotional experience of the viewer to think where he doesn't want them to feel so that they can pour their full emotion into the tragedy that so often occurs in the climax. The viewer thus stays fresh and steeped in the irony of symmetrical dialogue, primed for sad surprises.

The commitment to symmetrical dialogue as a way of intellectualizing emotions and delivering exposition is a development of Anderson post *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*. *The Life Aquatic* was the writer/director's first fully *Wes Andersonized* world and was, as previously pointed out, a massive flop with a \$16 million deficit (Chow). It seems that Zissou's frank quips were a test of the waters, and that his next film *The Darjeeling Limited* was moored to a steadier hold, though some of that uniqueness shimmered through in moments of conflict between the

brothers. After the pullback from the flop, Anderson played the aesthetic long game, starting with *The Fantastic Mr. Fox*, which can be forgiven any quirkiness as a children's epic, next presenting *Moonrise Kingdom*, which centered on a pair of outcast children but was, on most accounts, a traditional narrative. Anderson's style matured with the previously discussed *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, the success of which no doubt led to the freedom of the highly stylized *Isle of Dogs*, the short-story collection of *The French Dispatch*, and finally to the strangest and most complicated of his films to date, *Asteroid City*.

Asteroid City centers, in typical fashion, around a star-studded cast of pastel oddballs, quacks, and wackadoos. It also features heavily symmetrical dialogue and marks a sea-change from the comparably tame usage of the device in *The Life Aquatic* and *Budapest*.

Asteroid City

Symmetrical dialogue is set apart from standard exposition because, though it conveys important character or plot details like basic exposition, symmetrical dialogue means to distance the character from their emotional reality and therefore the audience from a purely emotional reaction. A notable example in *Asteroid City* occurs when Midge Campbell says to Augie Steenbeck, "I'm not a good mother" (69). This unprovoked admission of guilt catches the audience off-guard because there has been no indication that Midge is any type of mother at all. Symmetrical dialogue results in a balanced, unemotional perspective free from the nuance of typical storytelling. But Midge's guilt is a little more complicated. Only ten pages before in the screenplay, the actress playing Midge, Mercedes Ford, is revealed to have emotional and relationship problems of her own. Having the context and being pushed away from the emotionality of the play, the audience can consider who is really having the trouble: Midge Campbell or Mercedes Ford? This flat admission by the character in the play (Midge Campbell)

and the further details of her life and her views of herself can be viewed as a preface to the coming calamity of the actor playing Augie Steenbeck, her opposite in the play “Asteroid City,” Jones Hall.

MIDGE. What’d you just do?

AUGIE. (frozen) I burned my hand on the Quicky-Griddle.

MIDGE. (confused) Why?

AUGIE. It’s not clear.

(...)

MIDGE. You really did it! That actually happened. (*Asteroid 96*)

The actor Jones Hall is perplexed about this scene from his first appearance when he asks the playwright Conrad Earp why the character Augie Steenbeck would do such a thing and, receiving an insufficient answer, offers his own reasoning (53). But even then, it is not clear. There is a perfect exchange of symmetrical dialogue in the Quicky-Griddle scene because the audience has no real reason for why Augie burned his hand because it has been deliberately obfuscated and exposed to be something that “he just sort of did” by Conrad Earp (53). This lack of clarity for Jones Hall leads him to question if he is performing the character correctly at all by the end of the film, distancing the audience from the real-life narrative of the wings and the play itself.

There is something to be said for the real-life appearance of the play titled “Asteroid City” in the film and the cheap theatre appearance of the supposedly real occurrences that intercede. The stark contrast between the text of the play as written by Conrad Earp and the dialogue presented in *Asteroid City* proper tips the scales towards the feeling that what is presented in the film is not Conrad Earp’s play “Asteroid City” but rather a representation of the

problems of its principal actors. This, in turn, means that the symmetrical dialogue does not lean the audience away from the emotionality of the characters and towards an interpretation of the play itself but rather towards an understanding of the actors through an examination of the context as provided by the black and white flashbacks, explanations, and fourth wall breaks. Wes Anderson's use of symmetrical dialogue in *Asteroid City* is thus unique among his works because it distances the audience two-fold and points more clearly than ever to the fact that a film is not reality but rather a hyper-real examination of reality.

Curtains

Wes Anderson's highly stylized visual language is widely and easily mocked, imitated, and discussed, but that's taking the easy route to understanding his style. Symmetry is in the bones of the scripts themselves. Whether it's the ironic stifling of emotions or the apparently needless exposition, Anderson's real depth comes from the reactions to his work. Anderson gives a flat, pastel canvas for the viewer to project their emotions onto and for critics to paint their pretty little ideas upon, but the meaning is in the often-dismissed interactions between the characters. And if the arc of his works is any guide, audiences should expect more of it as Wes Anderson matures.

HERE THEY COME

by

Chase Hawkins

FADE IN:

EXT. CLOUDY SKY/FOREST - NIGHT

A UFO bursts through the clouds. It is shaped like a wide onion. Evenly spaced, metallic ribs curve up from the bottom, leading to a finial that curls in at each point like Victorian architecture. Between the ribs, bulbous fleshy material, like a balloon trapped in a cage, presses outward. It glows orange, illuminated from the inside.

Something is wrong. The UFO spins out of control. A panel tears open, releasing the pressure inside. The other panels sag as the air escapes. The UFO descends over farmland. The smattering of houses sits dark. It passes over an old but well-kept farmhouse, a beautifully painted barn, and approaches a vast field of flowers.

Spinning, flinging blood-like liquid from its damaged hull across the flowers, the UFO descends towards a forest. The branches tear at the flesh and gore sprays in the darkness. The light inside fades.

An organic rumble echoes through the woods. A claw reaches from the darkness and grips one of the metallic ribs. In the darkness, the YAAG, an eight-foot-tall creature resembling an elongated frog covered in fur, slaps its long, prehensile tail against the ground. The creature breathes deeply and begins to screech-

INT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

A CHILD (7) screeches like a monster. A tiny hand holds a toy alien and smashes it into a row of products, throwing them to the ground. The aisle is a disaster. The child moves to the next aisle and continues.

INT. TOY BARN OFFICE - NIGHT

EVAN (35) hunches over to type at the computer on his too-small desk. He wears a buttoned Toy Barn vest, chinos, and oxfords. He talks with his hands. ADDY (30), covered in tattoos, piercings, and crystals, sits at another computer with her feet up on the desk, doodling on a clipboard, and smacking gum. She wears her vest open. Her shoes are ratty. She is blonde.

EVAN

So, wow. This paperwork,
huh? Never ends.

Addy looks him up and down and pops her gum.

EVAN

I mean it's a toy store,
ya know. It's not, ya
know...the Pentagon.

She sets down her doodle and looks at him.

EVAN

Ya know, I never told you
this-at least I don't
think-but I-if it is not
too forward or
inappropriate or some
such thing that would be
unprofessional-I think,
or rather, I like your
stuff.

ADDY

My stuff?

EVAN

Yeah, I-I-I-what I mean
to say is I like your
tattoos and stuff and I-
Well. It's very nice.
It's very fitting. You
wear it well.

ADDY

Thanks, man.

EVAN

No problem. Of course.
Anytime.

Evan fumbles with papers. His body is tense and sweaty. Addy watches him.

EVAN

Look. I just was
thinking, if it's not too
forward-well I guess it
has to be forward, in a
way, ya know, to happen-
uh, anyway. I was
wondering if you maybe
would like to go and
maybe sometime-

ADDY

Dude, are you asking me
out?

DAVID (40) opens the door and slides into the
office. His nametag says MANAGER. Evan straightens
papers.

EVAN

Uh-oh. Here comes the
boss man. Whatcha got for
us boss man? Any bossin'?
I'm just-I'm sorry.
What's up? David. Mr.
David.

DAVID

Hey, Evan. Addy. Look
some kid has absolutely
destroyed the five to
tween toy section. I mean
it is royally screwed.
It's like 9/11 over
there.

EVAN

Oh wow, yeah. Never
forget, huh? But that is-
so you want me to put
someone on it? Like make
a peon stay late or what?

DAVID

Well, Evan. It's looking like you are the only one still here from that department. So...

EVAN

So, I'm the peon?

DAVID

Yeah.

EVAN

Well, what about Marsha? She's, I mean, she's like my employee, right? I'm the supervisor over there so-

DAVID

Yeah. Marsha said no.

EVAN

Marsha said no. Okay. Well, that-I mean, well. David, I kinda had plans.

David looks at them both, pursing his lips.

DAVID

Yeah, well. The people on 9/11 had plans, too, Evan, but disasters happen to all of us.

EVAN

Wow, you're really-you are mentioning that a lot, David. But, I mean, can it not wait?

DAVID

Could Iraq wait?

EVAN

Well...I think...yeah no I think it could have. Looking back. Right?

DAVID

Evan, I really need this
done tonight. We can't
open on Monday like this.
Addy, you look
comfortable. Why don't
you hang out and you two
tackle this together.
Like a date. No. I didn't
say that. That's
inappropriate. Like two
soldiers dealing with the
aftermath of a car bomb.

ADDY

Uh-huh. What?

DAVID

I'll need you to stay.
And help Evan.

ADDY

Me? What the hell did I
do?

DAVID

Well, Addy. Not much of
anything, usually. So.
I'll see you guys Monday.
Lock up.

EVAN

Man. He's really been
hitting the war docs,
huh?

INT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Evan and Addy straighten the aisles, picking up
toys, rehanging peg-hangers, and resetting shelves.
Evan comes to a row of life-sized Barbies.

EVAN

(to Barbie)

So...Addy. Would you...would
you mind if I-or could I-

if you had time of
course, I understand if.
No. Will you like it to
go to with me to a place
that is not-here
but...elsewhere? I mean
would you-

Addy walks to where Evan works and leans on the
shelf unit.

ADDY
Are you talking to that
Barbie?

EVAN
Oh! Yeah. I mean no. I
mean, you do-I thought it
was you. Right? Wasn't, I
didn't look right dead
on. My contacts are...dry.
Not in. I didn't-I don't
wear contacts. Can't see
at all.

ADDY
Uh-huh. So, are you going
to finish asking me out
or should I see if David
is available?

EVAN
Oh, yeah. Wow, that guy.
Yeah, he's a total piece
of-total piece of work,
huh? Why was he so on the
Bush-era stuff? That was
weird, huh? Crazy. Just
crazy old stuff.

ADDY
Uh-huh. If you're going
to keep avoiding it, I
guess you can just get
you one of these for the
house.

Addy holds the hand of a life-sized Barbie. She takes the hollow, plastic Barbie from the shelf and stands it in front of her. They are about the same height.

ADDY

Is this better? Easier
maybe?

Addy uses the arm of the Barbie to poke Evan

Do it. Just do it. Like
you practiced, just now.

EVAN

I wasn't-I'm not; I-I
just-uh.

ADDY

Evan, I'm Barbie. Do you
have a message for my
friend Addison? Do you
wish she was Mrs. Evan
whatever your last name
is? Would you like to
have freakishly tall
babies? Are you too much
of a coward to seal the
deal?

EVAN

I'm not a-I mean really,
I'm just-I'm not a
coward. I just ya, know-

Addy sets the Barbie on the shelf and removes one
of her necklaces. It is a large ammolite on a
leather cord.

EVAN

We work together so-so-so
I'm just trying to see
what is the prudent thing
to-

ADDY

Wow, you're really
lighting me on fire right
now.

EVAN
Okay, would it be
appropriate if I-

Addy puts the necklace on Evan.

EVAN
What's uh-

ADDY
This is an ammolite. It
should harmonize your
feelings and bring
harmony to your life or
some crap like that.

EVAN
Some crap like that, huh?
It's heavy.

ADDY
Yeah, that's all the
magic. So, go on. Do it.
You have a witchy courage
stone so let's hear it.

EVAN
(loud, with
sweaty
confidence)
Okay, Addison-uh-of the
Toy Barn- would you like
to go get a drink with me
tonight? If anything is
still open, that is.
Maybe? If you-if that is
okay.

ADDY
I'm disappointed that you
still had to qualify it,
but yes. Thank you.
Finally. Can we go?

EVAN

Indeed. Yes ma'am.
Absolutely. Let's-let's
get the heck out of this
heck-hole.

ADDY

That's the spirit. Take
charge, man.

Evan feigns a manly puffing up and walks away. Addy follows.

EXT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Addy sits on a register conveyor swinging her legs while Evan completes closing routines. Evan rushes.

While locking the door, the large, obscured figure of the Yaag moves through the parking lot behind them. It slinks quietly, hiding behind cars. Addy is searching through her phone.

ADDY

So, it's ten-thirty now.
Marty's closes at
midnight. That should be
good. If we still want to
stay up, we can always go
to my place.

EVAN

Your place?

ADDY

Yeah. Is that a problem?
I only live two blocks
from Marty's.

EVAN

Oh no-

A car moves, pushed by the Yaag, tires scraping across the concrete. Evan looks over Addy's head at the approaching monster.

ADDY

(mocking)
What is that
inappropriate?

Addy slowly turns. They stand in a huge shadow. The Yaag's breaths loudly. It growls. Addy shrieks. It snatches Addy up and walks away with her. Evan grabs for her, but the Yaag swings a huge arm at him, throwing him down by the door.

It swings its long tail above him, slamming through the glass front doors of the Toy Barn, destroying the entrance. Evan runs after the Yaag, but it swings its tail again and sends him flying into the store. He slides along the waxy floor, losing his cell phone and keys. Evan watches as the Yaag and Addy disappear into the woods.

Evan runs after them and then runs back into the store. The alarm on the wall finishes its deactivation countdown and begins blaring.

Evan emerges from the Toy Barn with a flashlight, and a wooden sword with a "Toy Barn" tag hanging on it. Police sirens sound from far up the street. Evan runs.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Evan crashes through the woods, swinging the sword at bramble, following the sounds of Addy yelling and the crunching trees. But the sound grows distant. Soon, the only sounds are the wind rustling the trees, owls hooting, and branches cracking now and then.

Evan continues through the woods. He travels cautiously. He goes on and on in the maze, crashing through the brush until landing on a path. A fire winks in the distance, and he jogs towards it.

When he reaches the fire, he is out of breath. Head hung, Evan asks the obscured campers if they saw or heard anything. When he raises his head, he stares, wide-eyed. His mouth falls slack. He is frozen.

Two aliens sit on a log, roasting marshmallows. One, BEN, wears an orange hunting hat that is too small for his bulbous head. It is duct taped at the back. He is small and green with large red eyes. He also wears a hunting vest. The other, PLIXO, is wrapped in a blanket but is otherwise nude with greyish skin. Plixo is much taller than Ben, his features long and intelligent.

Evan faints.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

STEVE BUSCEMI fades into view, fanning Evan with an orange hunting hat. His voice is airy as Evan regains consciousness.

STEVE BUSCEMI

Evan. Wake up, Evan. It's all okay.

EVAN

What...what?

STEVE BUSCEMI

You're good, brother. If they wanted to eat you, they'd do it by now. And they could if they wanted to, believe you me. You'd be a tasty snack. Roasted over a fire, maybe. Over this fire here, even. Like a crackling, juicy pink pig.

(laughs evilly)

EVAN

Steve Buscemi?

STEVE BUSCEMI

Yeah, exactly. That's who I am, Evan. Welcome to heaven, Evan. I, Steam Booshamy, am your guardian angel. You have

died and gone to the
moon.

EVAN
Steve Buscemi is dead?

Steve Buscemi looks off, and his head expands like
a balloon. Evan rubs his eyes.

PLIXO
(to Ben)
Do not continue.

STEVE BUSCEMI
(Voice fading to
Ben's voice)
Why?

PLIXO
It is upset.

STEVE BUSCEMI
Whatever.

Ben removes the Steve Buscemi mask, still close to
Evan.

EVAN
Oh no! Oh my. Please I
just-I'll leave! Oh man.
What? What? What? What?
What? What? What? What?

BEN
What!

EVAN
What? Oh man. Oh man. Oh
man. What?

Ben tosses the mask and walks back to the log,
sitting on the ground, leaning back on the log.
Evan continues to panic. Ben puts on his hat. He
takes up his marshmallow stick and continues
roasting. Evan gets up on shaky legs and starts
pacing.

EVAN

You're...uh, you're-no way.
Nope. Not happening.

BEN

Man. You're really not
taking this well. I
thought that guy's face
would ease the
transition. Soothe you.

PLIXO

No you did not.

BEN

Don't read me. We talked
about this.

EVAN

How would that soothe me?

BEN

Is full on little green
man better?

EVAN

I'm asleep. I'm sleeping,
and this is a dream.
What? I mean, really.
What! This is a dream.
Absolutely. A dream.

Plixo walks over to Evan and pinches him.

BEN

(Mouth full of
marshmallow)
Ha! He just learned that
one!

PLIXO

You can sit with us.

Plixo retrieves his bedroll and places it close to
the fire.

PLIXO

You are my first human
friend. Please sit by the

fire. I gathered the tree
arms for it.

BEN
You're the first human
he's ever seen, so don't
take it to heart.

EVAN
But I-I-my Addy she's-
I've got to go and-

BEN
Sit. Psst! Sit boy! Down!

Evan sits. He rocks back and forth, rubbing his
legs.

BEN
Good boy. Good human.
Treat? Want some
marshmallow?

Ben extends a stick with a flaming marshmallow to
Evan's face.

PLIXO
Evan is not hungry.

EVAN
How do you know my name?

BEN
Plixo-oh by the way, the
autistic one is Plixo,
and I'm Ben-but Plixo is
what you might call here
on Earth an empath. But,
like, for real. Not
selfies as phone
background or crop tops
and tantric sex empath.
But if you happen to know
any of those, I am
available for music
festivals.

Plixo attempts to smile normally.

BEN

I've found that I blend
in at raves. But sadly
human chicks think I'm a
kid or a-

EVAN

Are you gonna, do stuff
to me? Like do I have to
go with you or? Am I free
to leave? Or?

BEN

Oh you mean like to your
butt? Oh yeah we're gonna
probe you so hard. And
we're gonna open your
head and poke your brain
with sticks. Alien
sticks.

EVAN

Oh man. Oh my-I-I-I'm
just a toy guy ya know. I
don't have anything
special to teach you.

BEN

Toy boy, huh? Toy
like...probe? You ready to
play, boy toy?

PLIXO

He is worried about a
female.

BEN

P, tell him about the
stuff you saw in his head
about her while he was
out. The hidden stuff.

PLIXO

She was taken by an
alien.

BEN

There're aliens here? No way. Where! Let's kill them!

PLIXO
We are also looking for that alien.

EVAN
(hyperventilating)
I gotta say it makes sense, really.

BEN
Yeah, P here didn't check the restraints, so we kinda had a little escape situation.

Plixo takes a marshmallow from the bag and throws it at Ben.

BEN
P, buddy, no matter what else happened, who didn't check-

PLIXO
You are the pilot.

BEN
Oh, he never learned how to fly so he's blameless.

EVAN
Guys! Look, uh. Sirs. Or whatever. I am very alarmed at this-all of this. We should totally get to the bottom of whose fault this all is, but my girl-uh-friend-

PLIXO
But I read that she is not a girlfriend.

BEN

Ouchy.

EVAN

Okay, true. It just-it
was easier to explain.

BEN

Uh-huh.

EVAN

-but as freaked out as I
am by you and your, uh,
heads, I-I-

BEN

Okay, wow. Weird,
hairless water monkey.

EVAN

I really should get going
because that thing may be
getting ready to eat her
and that would
really...really be
inconvenient for me right
now. We were supposed to
go on a date, and you can
see that-you can read
that in my mind, yeah?

PLIXO

The Cave Yaag will not
eat the female.

BEN

(sarcastically)
Yeah Cave Yaags never eat
their females.

EVAN

Yeah? Okay, that sounds-
uh. That sounds not
promising from him. But,
yeah?

PLIXO

The Yaag seeks a mate.

Plixo smiles awkwardly.

BEN

So is she gonna pick the
super cool, strong, alien
or the loser that, what?
Wears...what are those?
Loafers? On a hike?

EVAN

I wasn't-ya know, I'm
starting to think, that,
well. Maybe you are
perhaps *not* a very nice
alien.

Ben sits back and roasts his marshmallow. Plixo
yawns and stretches. He crawls into his bedroll
despite Evan sitting on half of it.

PLIXO

It is time to sleep.
Goodnight, human friend
Evan.

EVAN

Are we...? Shouldn't we get
going? She's out there
with that thing.

BEN

Yaag. It's dark. It's
cold. It's been a long
day.

EVAN

A long day? A long day,
really? What-what-what
about Addy? It's a long
day for her!

BEN

Well, go get her then.

Ben whips out his own bedroll and crawls into it.
He exaggerates his yawns.

BEN

If you do find them, just
don't let it see you.

EVAN

What? Why?

BEN

They are very jealous,
Yaags.

EVAN

What? Where am I supposed
to sleep?

Ben snores. Evan hugs his legs.

INT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Police are gathered outside the Toy Barn as FBI
AGENT LUCA (55) gets out of his car. He approaches
the scene, commanding some of his peons to do this
or that. He is a broad-shouldered man with a narc
haircut. He wears his suit casually and shakes
hands professionally, introducing himself. His face
is stern and thick.

Luca walks into the Toy Barn office. A POLICE
OFFICER hurries out of Evan's chair. Luca sits and
lowers the chair from Evan's height. A surveillance
video of the Yaag attacking Evan and Addy plays on
the screen.

AGENT LUCA

Do we know who these
people are?

POLICE OFFICER

I believe they are Toy
Barn employees, sir.

AGENT LUCA

No crap? Gonna make
detective? Well? Names?

POLICE OFFICER

We'll get on it, sir.

AGENT LUCA

No. No. You guys get
outta here. Send in the
one dressed like me but
with a ponytail? Can you
do that?

POLICE OFFICER
Okay, yeah. Sir.

AGENT LUCA
And hey, Officer...Johnson.
You weren't here. We
aren't here. This isn't
real. It's a teenager's
prank.

The officer nods and leaves. AGENT HOUSE (35)
enters quickly.

AGENT HOUSE
What's up?

AGENT LUCA
You see this?

AGENT HOUSE
It's real?

AGENT LUCA
It's real. Get a copy.
Destroy the computer.
Make sure there's nothing
on the other ones.
Actually, destroy all
these computers. Get me
the names of the kids.
Contact store management.
Store's closed. Gas leak.
Set up a perimeter.

AGENT HOUSE
Should we start a sweep
of the woods?

AGENT LUCA
No. Absolutely not. Don't
want any of our guys
eaten, or worse, some

deputized morons blabbing
on about whatever he
sees. Besides. We don't
know how it got here.
Have we heard anything
from DOD?

AGENT HOUSE
Not a thing.

AGENT LUCA
Good. This might be all
ours. Any word on what we
caught on the satellite?

AGENT HOUSE
They said it looked like
a meteor.

AGENT LUCA
Mhmm. Your take?

AGENT HOUSE
Ship.

AGENT LUCA
Denied for so long we're
going blind.

AGENT HOUSE
But if we're right, it
could be worse. I mean,
if it's intelligent?

AGENT LUCA
This thing?

AGENT HOUSE
Or. Maybe it's not alone.

AGENT LUCA
Maybe. Look, get me all
that. One hour. I'm going
to set up shop...somewhere
else. It's a bit cramped
in here. And hey, I heard
the gas leak ruined all

the merch. So, free
snacks.

Agent House hurries out the door. She waves for some FBI peons. Luca replays the footage, watching Evan run into the woods with the flashlight and sword.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The Yaag carries Addy through the woods. She is hoarse from yelling and crying. The Yaag sets her gently on the ground and pets her head.

ADDY
(crying)
It's just a dream. This
is a dream. I'm dreaming.
Wake up. Wake up. Wake
up.

Addy stands with her eyes closed. When she opens them, she sees the huge UFO crashed in the trees before her. There is a metallic banging as the Yaag rummages. It attempts to take some of the tattered, skin-like walls and make a shelter, but the ship is too damaged. Addy pulls out her phone, but the screen is distorted. The alien ship is blocking signal. She runs, but the Yaag is too fast and catches her, hugging her tight, running again through the woods. Her Toy Barn vest is snagged on the trees and torn off, left to hang there.

They burst from the trees into a field of beautiful flowers. As they walk through, the Yaag takes up clumps of flowers and covers Addy in them.

ADDY
(sobbing)
Are you seasoning me?

Emerging from the flower field, the Yaag approaches a large barn. The door is ajar, and the two go in. A claw reaches out and shuts the door.

Not far off from the barn sits a farm house. In the window of the house, DANIEL (38), the owner of the

flower farm and the barn, sleeps sitting straight up on the couch, glowing in the light of a television. On his coffee table sits a tray with leftover fast food, a beer on a coaster, and a bong which also rests on a coaster.

The night stills.

EXT. TOY BARN - DAWN

The parking lot of the Toy Barn is full of white FBI tents and FBI agents in windbreakers. They scramble to set up hazmat areas and encircle the tents with their vans and 18-wheelers. Metal sheets are being welded onto a rhino cage. Agent Luca, no jacket, sleeves rolled up, talks on the phone standing at the store front. The glass has been swept away and the front of the store is now just open-air.

AGENT LUCA

No. No, I don't want our
helicopters okay? Are you
listening to me? Silent
operation.

Luca walks into the store to his "desk." He has refitted a checkout counter. It is strewn with papers and Toy Barn break room coffee cups and bags of chips he has stolen from the displays.

AGENT LUCA

I want you to commandeer
civilian helicopters.
Ours are big and black
and scary, okay? Ours
scream FBI emergency. We
get three of those big
bastards down here and
before you know it, we
have the local national
guard calling General I-
wanna-be-SECDEF, and we
lose this thing to DOD.
No. No. Don't shut down
the park. We've already
shut down a shopping

center. Are you
listening? Less
attention! Dammit.

Luca hangs up and stands at his desk looking out at
all the agents scurrying about and setting up
tents. Agent House brings him some papers.

AGENT LUCA
Back to the glory days,
House. We're back. Time
to re-open the X-files,
huh? You and me.

AGENT HOUSE
Yes sir.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Evan sleeps on his balled-up Toy Barn vest. There
is a stirring around him. Plixo tosses dirt onto
the smoldering fire, and Ben packs up a backpack.
Ben pulls out a different hat than before-a sunhat.
He stuffs the hunting vest into the backpack, so he
and Plixo are both nude. The Steve Buscemi mask
hangs from the pack.

Evan wakes and yells at the sight of the aliens and
then gathers himself.

EVAN
I'm sorry. It's not-
you're not. I'm just.
It's a lot to process.

BEN
Hey, you're no looker
either, kid.

EVAN
Right. It's just. I mean.
Is this a trick?

Ben stands on the log and helps Plixo put on his
backpack. Plixo uses a device that scans for
crystals.

PLIXO

Something incredible is nearby.

BEN
(to Evan)
Are you coming?

EVAN
Okay, yeah. Yes. Okay.
Here we go. Me and the
aliens. On a hike.

Evan puts on his toy barn vest and carries the toy sword.

BEN
(searching for
tracks)
It went this way. This
way team.

Ben leads them along a state park walking trail.

EVAN
So, guys, uh. So, Ya'll-
uh, what exactly is the
plan?

BEN
Typically, I just kill
it. Every day.

Plixo places a hand on Ben.

PLIXO
We must not harm the
Yaag. For the mission.

BEN
It's a figure of speech.
Pull the stick out of
your butt.

Plixo stops to check his rear for sticks. Evan passes him and catches up to Ben.

EVAN
Okay, but like, really?
What's the plan?

BEN
Capture the Yaag?

EVAN
Yeah, but...how? It's like,
really very big.

BEN
So is your mom, but I
caught her.

EVAN
Okay, I feel like you
aren't taking this
seriously. I mean, this
is your fault right?
She's in danger because
of you, right?

Ben stops and stares at Evan. Plixo, looking at his
device, bumps into Evan. The device beeps wildly.
Plixo goes around them and continues scanning.

EVAN
Okay. Not-maybe-not you
specifically, but if you
weren't here on Earth, it
wouldn't be here either,
right? I mean, am I-is
that too...

BEN
We caught it once didn't
we?

EVAN
I-I don't know? Yes?

Ben continues walking.

EVAN
But I just wonder,
respectfully, how it is
you plan to subdue such a
one-such a creature?
Monster?

Ben sets his backpack on the ground and searches it. He pulls out a thick, metallic circle. It is a collar, and he unlatches it. Ben motions for Evan to kneel to his level. Ben quickly snaps the collar around Evan's neck. Evan begins to walk forward and then runs. Evan runs chest first into a tree and falls.

Plixo removes the collar and hands it to Ben.

EVAN

What the heck, man?

BEN

This, my small-eyed monkey-boy friend, is a mind-control collar. Just snap it on and, using a chip installed in my huge, huge brain-compared to yours-I can make the wearer do whatever I want.

EVAN

Okay, but again-having tussled with this thing and being much larger than you, I mean, no offense-

BEN

Offense taken.

EVAN

I'm sorry, but how, exactly, do you plan to get this collar on the...

PLIXO

Yaag.

BEN

Well. It ain't easy, bub. Luckily we have a big strong human like you. You'll figure it out.

EVAN

Okay, I don't know if I
like this plan.

PLIXO

It is best to approach
the beast while it sleeps
or offer it food.

BEN

Yeah, ask Deepo. How did
he like the 'luring it
with food' strat?

EVAN

Deepo?

PLIXO

Our first pilot. He gave
his life for the mission.

BEN

Eaten by the Yaag.

EVAN

Oh, man. Okay, I don't
know about this.

BEN

Yeah, man. Just give up
on your lady. She'll be
so hot about you giving
up. They love when you
give up.

Evan stops and looks around. He sighs and follows
the two down the trail.

INT. BARN - DAY

Addy is curled up in the Yaag's tail. She tries to
wiggle out, but it grips her tighter in its sleep.
There is a heavy chain attached to a beam and
wrapped loosely on a peg very close. Addy strains
but can only get her finger-tips on it.

Closer.

Closer.

Closer.

She wraps a finger around a link. She pulls at it, and the chain unravels, banging around and causing lots of noise.

The Yaag awakens. It gets close to her face with a horrible lipless mouth of jagged teeth. It begins to lick her like a grooming cat. It purrs.

EXT. PETTING ZOO - DAY

Ben, Plixo, and Evan continue along the trail.

BEN

Oh, yeah. You smell that?
We're getting close.

EVAN

Ya know, I'm kinda
freaking out about this
back here. I mean-can we
work out a real plan?
Didn't you say we can't
get too close? Does it
sleep during the day? How
do we get close and also
put a collar on it?

BEN

Alright! Not many people!

Ben jogs down a trail. The trail exits into a huge open air space. There is a parking lot in the distance by a road that runs through the state park. A barn sits in a large field enclosed with a fence. Ben has brought them to a petting zoo. Plixo follows, but Evan hesitates.

EVAN

This is where the monster
is?

Ben stops to pet a chicken. There are a few families in the distance and some children

wandering around. A YOKEL worker looks at them funny.

EVAN

Hey, guys. Guys. I don't know if you know this-and I mean this in the nicest way possible-but your...faces might be shocking to people. People are not really used to seeing...such a face-so much face.

BEN

(puts on Steve Buscemi mask)
Is this better?

EVAN

Kinda...horrifying.

BEN

You're the one carrying a sword.

Evan looks around and tosses the sword into some hay. Ben runs into an open petting barn. A child stands alone in the barn petting a pig that is behind a fence. Ben stands in the door in the Steve Buscemi mask. The child sees him. He lets the mask slowly fall off his face, and the child screams and runs away. Ben happily climbs a fence to pet a goat. Evan and Plixo jog in.

EVAN

Okay. I think people are starting to notice something. Like it's- there is a kid, like screaming and such.

Ben runs from enclosure to enclosure. Plixo takes off his backpack and removes a cataloging device. He tags the ears of several pigs with plastic-looking research tags. They squeal.

EVAN

Oh my.

Ben jumps onto a fence and pets several goats.

BEN

Goats are the best. They
are tiny attack horses.

(to Plixo)

Can we keep it?

PLIXO

What values might the
creature bring to the
mission?

BEN

They scream and pass out.
And they have horns and
sideways eyes and some
humans consider them an
ill omen.

EVAN

Well. I for one am sold.
Can we please go?

The yokel petting zoo worker enters the barn.

YOKEL

s'goin' on in here?

EVAN

Oh, nothing officer, man.
Man. Friend. Just some
friends petting a goat,
my man.

YOKEL

s'wrong with 'em?

EVAN

Fire-uh. Me and my-burn
victim friends are-I'm
their caretaker and-

PLIXO

We are from California.

BEN

(whispering)
Good job, just like we
practiced.

PLIXO
Thank you.

YOKEL
Huh. Alright, jus keep it
to ya-selves.
(spits)

Plixo attempts to spit, copying the yokel.

EVAN
Can we go?

Ben reaches over and snaps the mind control collar
on a long-haired goat and it leaps the fence. He
mounts the goat and leads them out of the barn.

The worker and several groups of people watch them
leave. Evan tries to make himself big to cover up
the aliens.

EVAN
Hey. How's it going,
everyone. Did you hear
those pigs, wow. Woah.
Huh? Must be getting
hungry.

While Evan is turned, Plixo climbs into a pasture
with horses. Evan turns to see him about to tag a
horse's ear. Evan runs to stop him. As Plixo tags
the horse, it kicks at Evan. Evan ducks, slamming
his own head into the fence. He is unconscious.

EXT. PETTING ZOO - AFTERNOON

Luca and House ride through the state park in an
SUV. Luca is on the phone and hangs up. He wears
his sunglasses and his sleeves rolled up.

AGENT LUCA
So, what are we doing?
They didn't see the
thing?

AGENT HOUSE

No.

AGENT LUCA

So, what? The kids?

AGENT HOUSE

Apparently, the workers
saw little green men.

AGENT LUCA

Don't jerk me around.

The SUV parks outside the petting zoo and Luca and House make their way in. The yokel is leaning on the barn. He holds the Steve Buscemi mask.

AGENT LUCA

How ya doin'? This is
Agent House. I'm Luca.
So, we heard you saw
something a little...weird
earlier.

YOKEL

Yup.

(spits)

AGENT LUCA

Well? Would you mind
telling us a bit about
the situation?

YOKEL

Theys three of 'em. A big
one, well, two of 'ems
kindly big, one real
tall. And a little green
one. Sick maybe. Stole my
goat. Done rode off on
it.

AGENT HOUSE

And did you talk to them?

YOKEL

Yup.

AGENT LUCA

Well?

YOKEL

Says theys Californians.

AGENT LUCA

Typical Californian
behavior, sir. We'll get
right on it and see if we
can't get that goat.

YOKEL

They left this.
(hands over the
mask)

Luca checks out the mask. While looking down, he
sees the sword with the Toy Barn tag in the hay.

Luca and House get back into the SUV.

AGENT LUCA

The boy is with them.

AGENT HOUSE

Why?

AGENT LUCA

What? How would I know? I
have as much information
as you do.

AGENT HOUSE

Maybe we should prepare
for a hostage situation.

AGENT LUCA

Send some plainclothes to
wander around the park.
Not too many! We can't
afford a panic. Give them
a picture of the kid.
He's ten-feet-tall. Where
could he hide? And ya
know. He's with some
aliens. Maybe. Am I
crazy?

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Flower farmer Daniel hangs up tools on the wall inside the barn, facing the rafters where the Yaag and Addy sit.

Addy is being held silent by a giant claw in the rafters.

Daniel exits the barn, shutting the door behind him. His eyes are wide with fear.

Daniel jogs, clenched, to the house.

He emerges from the house holding a gun and walks towards the barn. Then he turns and runs back into the house, stiffly.

He reemerges with the gun, now wearing tactical gear including night vision goggles. He makes it halfway to the barn and then turns around and runs back into the house.

Inside, Daniel dials 911.

DANIEL

Hello. Yeah. There is
a...bad thing in my barn.

(listening)

Well...maybe...send a few...I
need the police here at
my house. Soon.

Daniel watches through the window as the police approach the barn. They go inside. There is a terrible roar and the police run away, get in their car, and speed off.

LATER

An animal control van pulls up. Two workers get out and approach the barn. The police from earlier have parked further down the street. The animal control workers disappear into the barn. There is a rumbling. One runs out, dropping his equipment and running past his van, never stopping. The barn door bursts open as the other is flung through it, landing on the hood of the cop car.

LATER

Daniel sits on his couch with a beer as military Humvees pull up outside and surround his house. Helicopters are heard. There is a muffled shouting of orders. Daniel drinks.

INT. TOY BARN - MORNING

Agent Luca sits at a checkout counter. His things are spread across the conveyor belt and scanner. He reads from a laptop through small glasses perched on his nose. Empty bags of candy and chips and empty Styrofoam coffee cups litter the belt. One Styrofoam cup is full of coffee.

He reaches for a bag of Cheetos on the belt, never looking away from the computer. He hits the belt-advance button. The coffee spills on the belt, laptop, and Luca.

AGENT LUCA

Damnit!

An FBI agent, PEON 1, walks into the toy store from the camp outside. He holds a Manila folder.

PEON 1

Sir.

AGENT LUCA

What!

Luca sops up coffee with napkins. He takes the folder and opens it and then closes it and tosses it onto the belt.

AGENT LUCA

Just tell me what it says.

PEON 1

Sir. We received notification at o-two hundred that National Guard Humvees entered the county yesterday evening.

AGENT LUCA
Why the hell am I just
now hearing about it?

The peon gestures to the report.

AGENT LUCA
Get out.

Agent House walks into the store, texting.

AGENT HOUSE
They're here. Since last
night.

Luca shrugs.

AGENT HOUSE
They've been here at
least ten hours.

AGENT LUCA
Okay, write me a report
and get back to me; get
the car! What the hell?

The two walk out, but Luca jogs back and takes up
the report.

EXT. STATE PARK - MORNING

Evan wakes. Ben picks up camp. Plixo crouches over
him, smiling awkwardly. Evan shouts, then rubs his
head.

Addy's ammolite necklace hangs outside Evan's
shirt.

PLIXO
That is an ammolite.

EVAN
Oh, is it?
(stuffs necklace
in shirt)
What happened?

PLIXO

Biogenic gemstones are
very powerful. This one
is spectral.

As Evan stands and brushes his clothes, Plixo
mimics him, never breaking eye contact.

PLIXO
This one was likely found
in your Rocky Mountains.
That gemstone was once an
ancient cephalopod.

Ben takes up Plixo's backpack and forces it onto
Plixo.

BEN
You always slam your head
against stuff?

Ben pulls a captain's hat from his backpack and
puts on the hat and backpack. He duct tapes the hat
to his bulbous head.

EVAN
Why does my head hurt?

PLIXO
I checked you for injury.
You appear to be fine.
Minor fracturing. May I
have that crystal?

BEN
P, that's not gonna work.
Monkeys like to trade.

PLIXO
Right. Would you trade
for it?

EVAN
Well...Addy gave it to me
and- how minor is the
fracturing?

BEN

Forget it, P. We're here
anyway. Remember? Plenty
of crystals here. Trust
me. We'll have the ship
going in no time.

The trio walk out of the woods. A sign reads: RV
PARK, AUTHENTIC ICE CREAM, AND GENERAL STORE.

As they enter the RV Park, they pass an RV with a
wind chime made of crystals. Plixo begins to steal
the crystals from their wires, but Evan stops him.

An old man stands at table in front of a camper
cooking bacon on a griddle and watching them.

Evan puts himself between the camper and the
aliens.

EVAN

Hey-hey. How's it going?
Love the smell of bacon
in the morning.

Evan races up to Ben.

EVAN

Are you crazy? What are
we doing here? You're
being seen and-and-people
aren't like- You realize
you're weird looking
right? To us, I mean.
Them.

BEN

You have dirt all over
you.

EVAN

Someone!-*someone* dragged
me through the woods
after getting me knocked
out. And now they're
about to get me-I don't
know, do I get arrested
for being with you?

BEN
We aren't illegal aliens.

EVAN
That's-okay, well. Do you
have an ID?

BEN
Do I have an ID?

PLIXO
Identification.

BEN
Yeah, thanks.

EVAN
Just, stop! Why Don't you
guys-uh you two just go
wait in the woods, and
I'll get whatever we
need.

PLIXO
I...D...

BEN
Why?

EVAN
Are you kidding? I just-
so people don't see you?
This-all of you, it
doesn't work here. You
stand out.

PLIXO
...I...

BEN
Am I wearing the wrong
hat? I have others. I can
change hats.

PLIXO
...Dentification...

EVAN

No. It's not the hat.
It's that you kinda..to
be honest..you look a bit
like a demon. Kinda. And
people are-

Ben and Evan stop in front of a log cabin ice cream
parlor.

BEN

A demon?

EVAN

Yeah, and that freaks
people out. Demons.

Plixo continues to walk through them. Ben stops him
from walking into the parlor.

PLIXO

I.D. I.

(points to self)
Dentification. What is
dentification?

BEN

Plixo. Buddy. That was a
Norm Macdonald joke,
remember? The human
orientation videos?

PLIXO

Norm McDonald's. Thank
you, Benjamin.

BEN

He's like a copy machine,
really. I can't stop it.

EVAN

You watched Norm
Macdonald to introduce
him to Earth?

BEN

How many years are you?
Earth years.

EVAN

Well, I don't know any
other years...thirty-one.

PLIXO

You have approximately
forty-seven years left.

BEN

Look. This might be his
first time here on Earth,
but it's not mine. I have
learned that humans tend
to not really see me.
They are too afraid that
I'm a cripple or
something or that I have
cancer.

PLIXO

Humans still have cancer?
You have approximately
twenty-four years left.

EVAN

Well, I just don't see
how this is a good idea.
Ya know, taking-this is a
big risk you are putting
on all of us.

Ben whistles for the goat and it sits just outside
the parlor.

BEN

This conversation is
going nowhere that I want
to go, and where I want
to go is into this human
box and eat ice cream. So
why don't you just be a
good boy and take P and
buy him all the crystals
we need to rescue the
female that probably
doesn't like you back.

EVAN

You know, you're
kinda...horrible.

BEN
Yeah. And I'm gonna get
ice cream, too. It's a
perfect day.

Ben goes inside. Plixo stares at Evan. Evan wipes
dirt off himself, and Plixo mimics the behavior.

EVAN
Well...

PLIXO
Well.

EVAN
Maybe just let me do the
talking. And try not to-
just hide your...don't look
in anyone's eyes with
your...whole body.

They walk to the general store.

PLIXO
I can sneak. I can steal.

EVAN
What? No. Why-

PLIXO
Ben taught me.

EVAN
Of course, he did.

A sign outside the store reads: PAN FOR GEMS

Evan and Plixo go inside.

A black car pulls into the RV park and stops. Two
PLAINCLOTHES FBI agents get out. They have cop
haircuts, they wear Hawaiian shirts, and their
earpieces are clearly visible.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Plixo ducks behind an endcap, rattling things on the shelf. He pulls out his scanning device, and it beeps wildly.

The CASHIER stands on tiptoes, looking around.

Evan shops for food: chips, sodas, candy bars, etc.

The scanner beeps louder as Plixo sneaks around the side of the aisle. There is a shelf full of gemstones and geodes. He stuffs several in his backpack.

Crossing to another aisle, Plixo finds the trough of running water that glitters with gemstones.

Evan drops his snacks at the checkout counter. The cashier stares over his shoulder. Evan holds out cash.

Plixo drags his entire backpack through the water, scooping up gemstones. He hefts it out, splashing and dripping water. He does not zip it before putting it on.

EVAN

He hasn't been the same
since the fire.

CASHIER

Uh-huh.

Evan takes more cash from his wallet.

EXT. STATE PARK

Evan walks away from Plixo towards the parlor.
Plixo follows in step.

EVAN

That was like a hundred
dollars! Just--just wait
here! Okay? I've had
enough trouble today.

PLIXO

Enough trouble. You are
welcome.

EVAN
Trouble is not good!

Evan goes into the parlor.

The crystal wind chime hanging from the RV by the woods dings. Plixo walks towards it.

The PLAINCLOTHES FBI agents stand in the road as Plixo walks across the path.

PLAINCLOTHES 1
Uh...command. I think we
got 'em.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

Ben sits at the bar in front of three empty bowls and chugs a steaming coffee. He wears a paper hat.

ICE CREAM MAN
Sir, that's just come out
of the pot!

BEN
More!

Evan enters the parlor.

ICE CREAM MAN
May I help you?

BEN
Oh, Dad! That's my dad.
He'll pay for me.

Ben hops down from the bar stool. He twitches and fidgets.

Evan pays.

BEN
Where's P?

EVAN
I don't know. He's
outside.

BEN
You left him alone?

EVAN
He...he tried to steal. And
this is the last of my
money.

BEN
He has been a difficult
pupil, but I am proud of
him. Pay the man, Daddy.

EVAN
(to ice cream
man)
Californians.

ICE CREAM MAN
Ah.

Evan and Ben leave the parlor.

EXT. STATE PARK - DAY

Ben and Evan step onto the parlor porch. Ben
twitches.

EVAN
Are you tweaking?

Plixo stuffs the wind chime into his backpack. A
LITTLE GIRL (6) emerges from the camper he stole it
from. He approaches her and pats her head but
swiftly tags her ear with the same device he used
to tag petting zoo animals. Her ear bleeds. She
screams.

People begin opening camper doors.

The plainclothes FBI agents run to Plixo. One
tackles him, gemstones scatter the ground.

Ben tears off his paper hat and bites it.

BEN
Mr. Hornberger!

The goat charges the plainclothes agent that tackled Plixo and headbutts him. The goat then kicks the other agent to the ground.

Evan and Ben run to Plixo. Ben mounts the goat and Evan helps Plixo up.

EVAN

I'm so sorry guys! Please
don't put me on a list!

The trio run into the woods.

INT. FBI SUV - DAY

Agent House types on a cell phone. Luca bites his knuckle.

AGENT LUCA

Anything?

AGENT HOUSE

Reports of two green men-
well, one grey,
apparently-in the state
park. Accompanied by a
tall man.

AGENT LUCA

Okay. Anything new?

AGENT HOUSE

Well, that's the new
part. We had eyes on.

AGENT LUCA

Then you should be
telling me 'Oh Agent
Luca, great news! We are
escorting the package to
central command!'

AGENT HOUSE

There was a problem... A
goat-

AGENT LUCA

A goat what? A goat?

AGENT HOUSE
It attacked our guys.
They said the...*beings*...were
controlling it.

AGENT LUCA
Do we not give them guns
anymore?

AGENT HOUSE
There were civilians.

AGENT LUCA
There were aliens! It's a
goat!

Luca loosens his tie. He finds a bag of chips in
his coat pocket.

AGENT LUCA
Send out an order to
shoot all goats on sight.

AGENT HOUSE
Good news from our
contacts at DOD. No UFO
chatter.

AGENT LUCA
Hot damn! Classic
military incompetence.
So, the general doesn't
know about the aliens,
just the big damn-
whatever it is?

AGENT HOUSE
Major. And nope.

AGENT LUCA
They didn't send a
general for this?

EXT. DANIEL'S FARM/MILITARY CAMP - DAY

The blacked-out SUV parks on the dirt road just in
front of Daniel's House.

Luca and House step out. Large tents litter the field of flowers. It is muddy in places from the sprinkler system and the foot traffic, and most tents are flanked with tall flower bushes. The largest tent is nestled in a crowd of flowers off by itself.

Daniel stands outside the barricade that borders his house, yelling at the guards.

DANIEL

This is my job! This is
how I keep the lights on!
You are literally
stepping on my money!
Right now. Yes! That's-
wow, nice. Why would you
kick-I really. This is
insane!

Luca and House flash their badges and pass through.

Men in hazmat suits set up a decontamination tent.

As they approach the Major's tent, Luca leans into House, straightening his tie.

AGENT LUCA

Talk to our guys about
hazmat procedure.

AGENT HOUSE

Got it.

AGENT LUCA

And don't say a word
about little green men in
here. Or the missing kid.
That's ours.

INT. MAJOR'S TENT - DAY

MAJOR ARMSTROM leans back in a chair, smoking a cigar, with his feet propped up on a folding-table desk. The desk is clear except for a guillotine used for cigar cutting.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Was wondering when
y'all'd show up.

AGENT LUCA
Major, uh-

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Armstrom.

AGENT LUCA
Major Armstrom. This is
Agent-

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Forgot my desk placard.
But I guess you could've
read my name tag,
Supervisory Special Agent
Luca.

AGENT LUCA
Well, sir. I suppose we
can dispense with the
opening statements.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Know anything about it?
Have a seat.

Luca takes a chair from a stack in the corner and
places it near Armstrom's desk. House stands.

AGENT LUCA
We know it's big.

Armstrom smokes.

AGENT LUCA
What do you know about
it?

MAJOR ARMSTROM
It's big.

Awkward silence.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Are we gonna play this
game all day? I've been

around for too long to do this. We gotta a big damn...thing's got a girl in there. We got your fellas tromping through the woods asking questions and freaking everybody out. It's a big stink, and it needs to be flushed outta this crap-hole.

AGENT LUCA

So, you've found a girl's body?

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Body? Hell, she's in there screaming right now.

AGENT LUCA

She's alive?

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Not for long, I'm afraid.

AGENT LUCA

Is she hurt?

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Couldn't say. But when we get close, seems our big fella doesn't like it too much, so we gotta smoke 'em out.

AGENT LUCA

Smoke them out?

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Gas it. Blow it up if that doesn't work. That's the order, anyway.

AGENT LUCA

I-can't abide by that.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Well, me neither. That thing is a primo, A-plus military asset. But we can't have it running around town. Sad thing. I'd drop it right smack dab into Shee-Gin-Pigs chimney for Christmas, I had my way.

AGENT LUCA

And the girl? Sir, this is essentially a hostage situation.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

You wanna go in there and talk to it? Send in a pizza?

AGENT LUCA

This is our operation. DOJ specifically-

MAJOR ARMSTROM

DOJ? DOJ! This is the battlefield, son! To hell with Washington. Welcome to the trenches, boy. What I say goes, and I say it goes kablooey.

AGENT LUCA

You're just going to let that girl die? Does DOD know about the girl?

MAJOR ARMSTROM

What girl! There was never a girl or a monster! That's crazy talk. Have you gone nutty, Supervisory Special Agent Luca? Do we have to remove you from your post?

AGENT LUCA

Pretty political for a
guy that just said, "to
hell with Washington."

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Now we're talkin' trash.
Not very compelling, but
it's a start. But as cute
as you and your little
girlfriend here are-hey
honey how you doin'-we
don't have time to
piddle-fart around with
your men-in-black
shenanigans. I've got
orders to contain this
here situation, and them's
the rules, Supervisory
Special Agent Luca.

AGENT HOUSE

What about a deal?

MAJOR ARMSTROM

...Go on, sweetheart.

AGENT HOUSE

A battlefield deal. No
brass.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Well? Don't make me beg.

AGENT HOUSE

You give us time to catch
it, and then you can have
it.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

So, I just sit back and
relax while you do all
the work? Muddy up your
nice suits?

AGENT HOUSE

Essentially. You get a
living trophy. But we

present it to brass. At
our base.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
And deny me the glory?

AGENT HOUSE
Just optics. You're
welcome to be there.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
I don't know. Sounds like
a disaster in progress.
Sounds like I'm going to
be shoveling up red-
blooded American guts to
send home with "training
accident" letters. No,
the girl, I'm afraid, has
been dead for hours. In
fact, she was never here.

AGENT LUCA
Sir, that is just-
nihilistic!

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Nihilistic! Coming from
the F-B-I! You are just a
bunch of-

AGENT HOUSE
We have tapes. We can
prove that it took the
girl alive.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
A leak. Is that all you
people know how to do?
Well. I admire your
moxie, agent-

AGENT HOUSE
House.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
House. Well. Well. Agent
House. My orders were 48

hours. So, I'll give you
that by default. A leak.
Ha! Sure, people will
believe your cryptid
video! I'm sure that will
be a big hit on the
YouTubes!

Luca and House leave the tent.

AGENT LUCA
Any ideas?

AGENT HOUSE
I just used all my ideas.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Ben dismounts the goat. He takes off his backpack
and straps it to the goat. He takes a beer and a
telescope from the backpack.

Evan and Plixo appear from the woods. Evan catches
his breath.

Plixo removes the scanning device from his
backpack. He scans the ground.

BEN
Sup.

Ben looks through the trees with the telescope.
Electronic indicators signal water nearby.

EVAN
So-like, what was that?

BEN
What was what?

EVAN
You were out there with
like, a bunch of people
everywhere and he
was...assaulting little
girls, I think. I don't
know. But-you almost got
us arrested. I can't-I

mean, they probably know
who I am!

BEN

And? Here we are safe.
Plus, check it. I
snatched a case from the
ice cream place.

Ben opens the beer, drinks, and burps.

EVAN

I can't believe-I mean,
you don't care at all.
If-if-if we get arrested,
we'll be stuck!

BEN

So what? The mission
shall go on.

EVAN

What mission?

PLIXO

The great mission.

BEN

See? P agrees. No big
deal. We, and especially
you, are replaceable.

Ben chugs.

EVAN

Oh, well-I don't think
so. Addy is not
replaceable! To me!

Ben tosses the empty beer can into the woods.

BEN

Lots of fish, dude.

EVAN

What?

Plixo takes a rod from his backpack. He presses a
button, and it extends into an ethereal pickaxe.

PLIXO
Approximately four
billion females.

BEN
Four? Wow. What did I
tell you? No. Big. Deal.

EVAN
No big deal? Oh, okay. No
big deal! Just some,
like, giant evil monster
has my-my-my possible
girlfriend and, well. No
big deal if we get
caught! Can't get her
then! Oh well. No like,
biggie!

BEN
Come on, man. She's not
your girlfriend.

Evan lunges at Ben. They roll.

Plixo pickaxes the ground.

EVAN
Why are you sticky?

BEN
I had ice cream!

Ben whistles, and the goat headbutts Evan off him.

Evan stares at the treetops.

Plixo stands over him with a lump of gold. Evan's
ammolite necklace hangs outside his shirt, and
Plixo holds it next to the gold in front of Evan.

PLIXO
Gold! Trade?

Evan smacks the gold from Plixo's hand. Plixo falls
backward.

BEN
Hey!

EVAN

I said no!

Ben kicks dirt on Evan.

EVAN

Why are you like this?

Plixo gets up, picks up the gold, and grabs Ben's shoulder, stopping him.

EVAN

You said you would help
me find her and instead
you just send us on a-
you-you just take us
everywhere you wanna go!
It's like not cool.
People are probably out
there being eaten maybe
Addy is being eaten-

BEN

You attacked Plixo!

EVAN

You attacked me!

BEN

That was Mr. Hornberger!

EVAN

That's a stupid name!

BEN

You're a stupid name!

PLIXO

Please stop! You have
good names. The Yaag will
not eat the female. It
only wishes to mate.

EVAN

That doesn't make me feel
better!

Plixo holds up the gold.

EVAN

I don't want gold! I want
you to take me to Addy
and-and use your alien
magic to save her.

Ben takes another beer from the backpack.

BEN

We aren't magic.
(chugs beer)
We're just incredibly
advanced.

EVAN

I-I'm just worried about
her and you people-you
two seem to not care.

BEN

That's because we don't.

PLIXO

That is not true; Ben
feels-

BEN

However! I admire your
stupid bravery and how
you tried to fight me
even though you know I am
much stronger. We will
save your useless female.

Ben offers Evan a beer.

EVAN

I don't want a beer.

BEN

Good. It was just a
gesture.
(opens beer)
I have a plan.

INT. BARN - DAY

The Yaag sleeps. Addy toes the chain that is nearly out of reach. She pulls it up with her foot and takes hold of it.

The barn door creaks open. An FBI agent in a hazmat suit inches in. He breathes heavily. His helmet is coated in fog.

The Yaag awakens, its prehensile tail slides down from the rafters and wraps around a support pole.

The agent raises a tranquilizer gun.

The Yaag digs a claw into Addy's shoulder, and she cries out and drops the chain.

Agent Luca stands outside watching, eating a bag of candy. He is surrounded by peons. Agent House types on her phone.

The tail unwraps from the post in a snap, slapping the agent through the doors and into the field. The tail closes the doors. Agent House and FBI peons run to the injured agent.

Major Armstrong sits with his feet propped up on the desk, watching through the tent flap. He smokes a cigar.

Agent Luca throws down the candy and walks off.

EXT. BOAT LAUNCH - SUNSET

Evan, Ben (riding the goat), and Plixo arrive at a dock. Ben dismounts. Plixo scans the ground with his mineral scanner.

Two yellow paddle boats are moored to a post.

A brightly dressed family of campers stand on the dock with a park GUIDE. The guide tugs on their life vests.

Ben steps onto the dock.

GUIDE
Can-can I help you?

BEN
We need a vessel.

CHILD
(loudly)
Like a soul?

The MOTHER covers the child's mouth.

BEN
What? How do you know
about the soul facility
on...?

Ben looks at the sky. The moon hangs faintly in the clouds.

BEN
Uh...no. Nevermind. I need
that yellow thing...uh, P?
What's the word? P!

EVAN
Boat?

BEN
Shut up! No-the uh-the
yellow thing.

EVAN
That's a boat.

PLIXO
(looking at
scanner)
Gold!

BEN
It's yellow! You're
all...so shut up!

GUIDE
You-want our boats? You-
you-uh. You have to sign
up at the front desk-are
you-uh...do you have life
vests?

Ben throws his backpack on the dock and rummages, tossing alien machinery on the boards.

BEN

Shhh!

Ben finds and attaches a round machine with three finger holes to his hand. A barrel extends from the front of it.

CHILD

Are you an alien?

Ben snaps a crystal from the backpack into the orb. He points it at a cliffside across the river.

BEN

Leave!

A beam of orange light blasts from the orb and into the cliffside. Rocks cascade into the water.

The guide and the family run down the dock, past Ben screaming. They disappear down the trail.

EVAN

Are you crazy?

BEN

No!

Ben points the weapon at Evan. He shoots at the ground, throwing dirt everywhere. The recoil knocks Ben back, and the beam cuts through the trees.

Plixo rushes Ben and takes the weapon from him. He runs down the dock and throws it in the water.

BEN

Are you crazy?

PLIXO

No?

EVAN

You're drunk! You-you-you pointed a-a thing at me and you're drunk.

BEN
I'm normal. Now get in
the thing!

EVAN
It's a boat!

BEN
Get in it!

EVAN
I'm not riding with you!

BEN
Fine! Get in the other
one. You ride with your
girlfriend. Oh, wait? Is
that another made up
girlfriend? Try not to
let Plixo get taken by an
alien monster!

Ben and the goat load up in the forward paddle
boat. Evan and Plixo get in the other.

The goat sits in the seat like a human. Ben waves
forward and the goat paddles. Ben stretches out. He
cracks a beer.

BEN
Try to keep up!

EVAN
(to Plixo)
Just put your feet on the
pedals and rotate them
like this.

PLIXO
If I do it backwards,
will it-

The paddle boat begins to turn in a circle.

EVAN
No wait, you go forward
and I'll-

The paddle boat begins to right.

PLIXO
We have solved it. As
friends.

The sun begins to set behind the trees. Plixo looks
up with wonder.

PLIXO
This is a nice planet.

EVAN
Sometimes. Why did you
come here?

PLIXO
It is my first time, but
my people come here all
the time.

EVAN
For these?

Evan removes Addy's crystal from his shirt.

PLIXO
Sometimes. Why do you
stay here?

EVAN
I can't leave. We don't
really- We don't really
leave. Much.

PLIXO
Would you want to?

EVAN
I don't know.

They paddle for a time. Evan looks at the clouds.
Plixo looks at Evan.

PLIXO
But she is not your mate.
Why would you stay on
Earth for her?

EVAN

What? I know. I mean, I
don't know. What?

PLIXO
(tapping head)
I could hear it.

EVAN
If you can read my mind,
why even ask questions?

PLIXO
I do not know.

Ben throws an empty beer can onto the bank and
fishes for another beer in his bag.

BEN
Aw, come on. There's
gotta be-

The goat's collar beeps.

BEN
Oh crap!

Ben frantically searches the bag, throwing things
into the paddle boat.

The collar begins to fizzle out, and the goat
returns to goat behavior: it panics and jumps out
of the boat.

BEN
No! Wait!

Ben jumps out of the boat with a crystal in his
hand. He swims to the goat and wrestles with it.
Ben removes the crystal in the collar battery slot
and replaces it with the new one. The goat is calm
and still.

Plixo and Evan paddle past them.

PLIXO
The water is cold. Ben is
sobering. He is also
hungry.

Evan turns to see Ben and the goat climbing into their paddle boat.

EVAN
Shouldn't we wait and
follow Ben?

PLIXO
I know where he was
taking us.

EVAN
Ah, right. Right. Of
course. Whe-

PLIXO
To get our marshmallows
from the first camp.

EVAN
What!

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Daniel sits on the couch in his pajamas smoking a bong. The climax of *Aliens* plays on the television. Ripley fights the Alien queen, emerging in her mech-suit. Ripley delivers the famous line-

DANIEL
(copying Ripley)
Get away from her-

Outside, a large military truck beeps. It is reversing into Daniel's field of flowers. The heavy truck sinks into the dirt. The tires whirl.

Daniel looks out the window.

The truck tires spin. It digs itself into the dirt until digging up a sprinkler line, twisting the tubes around the tires, and snapping them. Water sprays over the soldiers and tents. The soldiers leap into action to move the truck and to stop the water and to protect electronics.

Luca, soaked, walks around the house to the street and gets into his car.

Major Armstrong shouts orders and helps move equipment.

Daniel stands at the window, dazed. The soldiers manning the barricades have gone to help.

DANIEL

Holy crap.

Daniel runs up the stairs to the second floor of his house, sliding on his socks.

He takes surplus military fatigues from a closet and puts them on over his pajamas. He pulls out a gun, looks at it, and then puts it back. He runs back downstairs, trips, and sits at the bottom landing. He puts on his farm boots.

EXT. DANIEL'S FARM/MILITARY CAMP - NIGHT

Daniel looks at his empty hands and runs back inside, reemerging with a toolbox.

DANIEL

(to himself)

This is my farm. No.
Dumb. No. Stay away from
her you...my...flowers.
Money.

Daniel fast walks through the barricade, past the chaos of the soldiers. He approaches a row of parked Humvees. Daniel looks around. He approaches the first one and begins to twist off the valve cover and then stops. He searches his bag and pulls out a long screwdriver and jams it into the tire.

A rifle leans against the back of the Humvee. Daniel ejects the mag and thumbs out all the rounds. He buries them in the dirt and packs dirt into the barrel.

Soldiers find the valve for the sprinkler, and the water stops spraying.

Daniel rushes into the field of flowers behind the line of Humvees and finds a box mounted to the

ground. He flips the lid and turns a valve. More sprinklers. More soldiers panic.

Daniel runs out of the flower field, ducking the water. He passes a Humvee and then runs back and jams the screwdriver into a rear tire.

A group of soldiers run past Daniel. Daniel leans on the Humvee nonchalantly, covering the tire. The soldiers disappear into the flowers. Daniel snatches the screwdriver from the tire and runs to the next Humvee. He throws his toolbox underneath and dives below the engine. Several sets of boots pass by where he hides. He searches the bag and pulls out a pair of thick clippers and begins snipping at lines and wires.

Daniel crawls out from under the Humvee as the second sprinkler system turns off. He ducks in the flower field. He is lost but trips over another metal box and turns the valve. More sprinklers.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Damn this! The pressure's
cooked out! Shut 'em all
down!

Daniel ducks as a row of soldiers pass through the field. He runs out of the field and emerges in a group of tents. He ducks in the first one. He stands in the armory tent, surrounded by rifles. He opens his tool bag.

Soldiers shove boards under the trucks tires and it begins to move.

Major Armstrong is soaking wet and attempts to light his cigar. It is too wet. He throws it on the ground.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

I want that truck
blocking that house! We
don't need that pest of a
farmer taking any
pictures for his Inst-er-
grams!

Daniel leaves the tent with the bulge of a rifle in his shirt and pants. He shuffles towards his house, ducking behind Humvees. He walks past and then returns to a cup of coffee. He looks around and then spits into it and fast walks back to his house.

At the door, Daniel looks around again and goes inside.

Daniel peeks out the window and closes the curtain.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The trio are at the camp where they met. Evan paces. Plixo scans the ground for crystals. Ben sits on a log before a fire and toasts a marshmallow.

EVAN

Oh no. Oh no. I can't believe this. She's gonna die. She's gonna die. I'm gonna be-she's gonna die. I don't know what to do. What can I do? I don't know-

BEN

(mouth full of marshmallow)
What are you freaking out about?

EVAN

You! You brought us all the way back here for your freaking marshmallows!

BEN

I also wanted to fly a water car because I never have!

EVAN

It's a boat! And in the boat, you could have taken us-us-us to the-to wherever Addy is. You could have tracked the thing!-

BEN

It's your planet! Why don't you know how to get there?

EVAN

It's your monster! Why aren't you finding it instead of-of stuffing your face with marshmallows?

BEN

I was hungry!

EVAN

Then why did you leave them?

BEN

I didn't know we'd be gone so long!

EVAN

You-you didn't even try to track the thing!

BEN

Yaag!

EVAN

You're just selfish. You lied. You said you'd track it and that we'd find her and-and

BEN

And how are we supposed to do that when he threw my only weapon in the ocean?

PLIXO
(happily)
That was a river.

Ben yells. He rummages through his backpack and pulls out an orb that is like his weapon from before. This is the socializer. It connects the mood and physical sensation of two targets. It can be adjusted to go either way.

Ben threads his fingers through the orb. A barrel protrudes. He aims it at Plixo and fires. A beam of yellow light hits Plixo in the head and he falls.

EVAN
Woah! Woah! Woah! What?
No. No. No.

BEN
Shut up!

Ben points the orb at his own head and fires. He falls backwards off the log.

Evan stands with his hands out looking back and forth at the two (apparently dead) aliens.

Plixo stands and punches the air wildly. He stomps his feet. His face is screwed in anger. He points at Ben.

PLIXO
You!

Ben crawls over the log, rubbing his head.

BEN
What did I do?

PLIXO
You promised to never do
that again!

BEN
Well, I was sick of you
never having my back!

PLIXO

Never have your back? You are here to keep my back safe. You have failed! It is your job, and you have failed it.

BEN

You're supposed to be upset with him.

Ben fiddles with the socializer gun.

PLIXO

Why would I be upset with the human? He did not do anything to me. You! You crashed our ship! He did not crash our ship. He is a victim of yours. And so is our ship. And so am I! It is sometimes so difficult to be around you knowing that I will never have any friends because of you.

Ben absently plays with the weapon. He does not look at Plixo.

BEN

(quietly)
I'm your friend...

PLIXO

Something is wrong with you! In so many ways. You are bad. You stranded us here. You take us all around for what? Beer? Ice cream? Or to avoid having to think about your mistakes? Then you try to make me attack the human so you can once again sit there while everyone else works and worries. I do not think

that I can stand to be
around you anymore.

Plixo stomps into the woods.

Evan follows.

EVAN
Where are you going?

PLIXO
(yelling and
crying)
To the ship!

EVAN
Sorry.

PLIXO
It is okay. It will wear
off.

They walk.

EVAN
So...what-

PLIXO
Ben wanted me to be angry
at you, but it is not
truly you with whom he is
angry...

EVAN
Should we go back and get
him?

PLIXO
You are nice. Sometimes
it is not okay to be
nice.

EVAN
Sorr-uh. Well. Sorry.

Ben stares into the campfire. The goat nuzzles up
to him. Ben sinks off the log. He tosses
marshmallows into the fire one by one and watches
them melt.

Evan and Plixo arrive at the SHIP. Fleshy red goop hangs from the trees surrounding the crash and stains the ground. The skeleton of the onion-shaped craft is dug into the ground. The bulbous, fleshy material that served as its outer walls hangs in tatters. The interior is littered with dirt and limbs. The floor, supports, and central tubular wall are ornate, black, and oily in appearance. A console with three chairs sits facing out of one of the separations between ribs.

Evan carefully steps around the goop.

Plixo walks into the ship. He touches a finger to the inner wall that circulates the interior. A humanoid female face appears to be carved into the wall. The face comes alive at Plixo's touch.

SHIP

Descent unstable. Manual
override. Plixovaridium.
Crash. I-I-I. Power
failure in cell two.
Three. Plixova-Plix-Pli...
Unauthorized Manual.
Control lost. Escape-

Plixo removes his backpack and rummages to find several crystals. He feeds them one by one to the face. He caresses the cheek of the woman as she eats the crystals.

Lights begin to blink on along the central wall. Buzzing. Lasers beam from the top of the inner wall to the destroyed outer skin. The damaged flaps are cut away. The ship begins its slow process of regrowing the outer skin.

PLIXO

It will take some time.

SHIP

Contact with Father
pending. Contact failure.
Impossible.

EVAN

Will we be able to...use
it? Do you have weapons
or something?

PLIXO
In time. But...
(to Ship)
Sister. Is the forge
operational?

SHIP
Damage minimal. Power
insufficient.

PLIXO
The power is
insufficient.
(to Ship)
Prioritize Forge
restoration.

Plixo sits on the edge of the ship.

Evan stands facing away from Plixo playing with the
ammolite necklace. He walks to Plixo and holds it
up.

EVAN
What about this? You
wanted it for the ship,
right?

Plixo reaches for it. Evan snatches it away.

EVAN
You're my friend, right?
My alien friend?

PLIXO
Friends. You are my alien
friend.

EVAN
Then as my friend, you
know this means a lot to
me. So, you have to use
it to help find Addy. I

mean...if-if-if she's been
eaten or whatever-

PLIXO
It only wishes to mate.

EVAN
Stop-that's not better!
But...this is all I have of
her.

PLIXO
I...understand?

Plixo pulls a lump of gold out of his backpack and
holds it up.

EVAN
No-that's not-well-

Evan takes the gold.

EVAN
Okay. Yeah. I'll-I'll
definitely-I need this.

Evan holds the crystal up. Plixo stares at it.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

An FBI agent in a hazmat suit sprinkles sleeping
pills onto a pizza and tapes it to a long pole. The
agent slowly goes into the barn, holding the pizza
in front.

Screams echo from inside the barn. The FBI agent is
launched out of a window on the side of the barn.
The end of the stick has been ripped off.

Major Armstrong walks up to Luca, who stands with
his arms folded a good ways away from the barn
doors.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Well, Supervisory Special
Agent Luca. Time is a
tickin'. Your men are
takin' a lickin'.

AGENT LUCA
Is that an official
statement?

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Ha! I was kidding about
the pizza by the way.

AGENT LUCA
Why? Pizza is on the
first page of the FBI
hostage negotiator's
playbook.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
So is drugging, I
suppose. You didn't
happen to order just the
one?

AGENT LUCA
Sir, with all due
respect, I'm a
professional.

Agent House appears eating pizza.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Ben wakes up and packs up his camp. He drags
himself along. He checks the goat's collar. The
battery is low. He checks his bag. He is getting
low on crystals.

He makes his way through the woods, slump-
shouldered, leading the goat.

As the day brightens, he finds some broken trees.
Then more. Then he finds a tunnel cutting straight
through the woods where the Yaag smashed itself
through.

He makes it to the crash site but does not
approach.

In the distance, Plixo steps out of the ship and
stretches. He wakes Evan, who is sleeping in

Plixo's bedroll by the fire, and hands him a strange cup.

Ben turns away and continues following the destroyed trees.

He reaches the end of the woods and sees below, beyond Daniel's fields of flowers, the military and FBI vehicles surrounding Daniel's barn. Daniel's house is only sparsely guarded.

Ben searches his backpack and retrieves a crumpled military beret and tapes it to his head. He mounts the goat and enters the field.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Evan sits on the bedroll and drinks what Plixo handed him. He gags and runs towards the woods.

He retches up the drink. Wiping his mouth, he sees Addy's Toy Barn vest hanging from a tree and takes it.

Evan smells the vest walking back to Plixo.

Plixo sits at a console at the helm of the ship, fidgeting with a keyboard in the shape of a ball with keys all around it.

EVAN

They were here.

PLIXO

Yes.

EVAN

You knew?

PLIXO

No.

Evan sits on the floor below the ship's face.

PLIXO

It knew this place. It
might have come right
back to us, having found

a mate. It was safe with
us before.

EVAN

So, then we just get it
back here and take her
back, right?

Plixo stares at Evan. He turns back to his work.

EVAN

Hey! What's going on?

Plixo turns to Evan. Plixo cringes.

PLIXO

Please remove the
ammolite from sister.

Evan yanks the ammolite from the ship's mouth by
the chord.

SHIP

Forge power 31%. Systems
28%. Hull 10%. Light
drive 0%. Thrust 22%.
Life support-

PLIXO

Sister, please explain
the mating season of the
cave Yaag.

Plixo turns back to his work.

SHIP

The Yaag is a primitive
mammal common on
Forshuurin Four. The cave
Yaag shares many
characteristics with the
open field Yaag and the
tree Yaag, the main
differences being their
nocturnal hunting and
their preference for
lighter colored mates due

to their need to absorb
as much light nutrients
as possible. The cave
Yaag, like all Yaag,
produces only males,
relying on a hybrid
mating tactic called
implantation. The Yaag is
territorial, and this
includes over its mate
choices. When threatened,
the Yaag prefers to kill
its prospective mate
rather than allow any
other species, especially
other Yaag, to mate. It
is believed this is a
self-preservation tactic,
as Yaag of the same
bloodline often remain
peaceful. Most native
species frequently
quarrel with the
predator, which is far
from the apex of the lush
planet.

Evan gets up holding the ammolite. He paces.

EVAN

So...this whole time! This
whole time, there was
nothing we could do!

PLIXO

Can you replace the
ammoli-

EVAN

No! Are you freaking
kidding me! It will kill
her if we even get close!

PLIXO

If we fix my ship, then
maybe-

EVAN

You fix it then! I'm
done.

Evan walks outside the ship and sits on the ground.
He puts the ammolite around his neck. It has only
partially been consumed by the ship.

PLIXO
Are you mad at me?

EVAN
Is that a joke? Like,
yeah! I'm very mad at
you. You couldn't tell me
this? Like at any point?
You just kept-you lied!
You said, 'the cave Yaag
will not eat the female.'

SHIP
Yaags are not known to
eat their prospective
mates once they have
killed them under threat.
Most Yaags-

Plixo shoves crystals into the ship's mouth.

EVAN
Oh, good! So, we'll-we'll
still have her body then!

PLIXO
We will try. Because...you
are my human friend?

EVAN
What? No! Friends don't-
forget it! You won't get
it anyway. You're both
selfish. All you think
about is your stupid
mission!

Evan folds Addy's Toy Barn vest and stuffs it into
the pocket of his own vest. He walks away.

Plixo slumps onto the edge of the open ship while the lasers slowly repair the skin that once covered the sides.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Ben rides the goat down the empty dirt road that leads to Daniel's house.

Trucks block the military and FBI's view of the road.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell rings. Daniel is smoking a bong. He gets up, disheveled, wearing pajamas and a robe.

DANIEL
Alright. Alright. Keep
your pants-

Daniel opens the door. Ben stands next to the goat.

BEN
Hey.

DANIEL
Hey.

BEN
What's up?

DANIEL
Not a whole lot. Yeah,
not much. Uh, do I know
you?

BEN
Nope. Can I come in?

DANIEL
Mi casa is a you casa mi
friendo. But I gotta tell
you, I'm super high right
now, and you look insane.

BEN

Is it the hat?

DANIEL

No, man. It's for sure
just me.

Ben sits on the couch.

BEN

Oh, bingo. Can I hit
this?

DANIEL

Yeah, yeah. Sharing is
caring. Not like my
livelihood is being
destroyed right now or
anything.

BEN

Rad.

Ben smokes. Daniel pets the goat.

DANIEL

What kinda dog is this?

BEN

What's going on out
there?

DANIEL

Oh, yeah. That. There's
like a bigfoot or
something in my barn.
It's got some hot goth
chick in there with it. I
think. I don't know what
that's all about.
But...they did just order a
lot of pizza, and they
refused to share it with
me.

BEN

What? No way.

DANIEL

Right? Totally not cool.
But that's okay. I got
'em good. Slashed their
tires. And wait 'til you
see this.

Daniel sits on the couch next to Ben and takes from
his pocket a handful of firing pins.

Ben shrugs.

DANIEL
Firing pins. From a bunch
of their guns.

BEN
I think we're gonna be
friends.

DANIEL
Nice.

Daniel gets up and pets the goat.

DANIEL
So, are you like a midg-
sorry bro, a dwarf? I'm
gonna be honest, I'm out
of my mind right now
because you are totally
one hundred percent
green.

BEN
I'm green, yeah.

DANIEL
Ah, man. I'm so sorry. Is
it like a condition?

The collar on the goat beeps as the crystal-battery
is dying.

BEN
Do you have any crystals?

DANIEL
(whispering)

You want crystal? Dude,
I'm not really into that,
but I know a guy.

BEN

No, like-uh...

Ben scans the room.

The battery stops beeping and the goat screams and
kicks Daniel in the thigh. The goat goes nuts,
wrecking the room.

DANIEL

What is happening!

BEN

The battery is dead!

DANIEL

He looks fully charged to
me!

Ben runs through the house. In the kitchen, the
counter is granite. Daniel chases the goat through
the house. Ben takes a tube from his backpack and
presses a button. It becomes an ethereal pickaxe.
Ben smacks a piece out of the counter and chases
down the goat, replacing the crystal.

BEN

I don't think that will
last very long.

DANIEL

What the hell is going
on?

Ben groans. He rummages through his backpack for
the socializer gun. He changes the settings to
shared memories and shoots Daniel, who falls over
hard onto the ground. Ben lays comfortably on the
couch and shoots himself.

INT. TENT - DAY

Agent Luca sits at a folding table, looking over
documents. His sleeves are rolled. His tie is

loose. He is surrounded by empty snacks. Agent House enters.

AGENT HOUSE
We're getting close.

AGENT LUCA
Yeah?

AGENT HOUSE
No. To the deadline.

AGENT LUCA
Oh, yeah. Well, if you've got any bold ideas, let's hear it.

AGENT HOUSE
I mean. We can get that thing out of there for sure.

AGENT LUCA
And the girl?

AGENT HOUSE
Forget the girl. Armstrong is right. She's already dead. No way she's-

AGENT LUCA
Where is this coming from? What are we, the CIA?

AGENT HOUSE
We deserve this win. It's been too long. You said it yourself. Reopen all those closed cases, take the lead. Do some real work. Not chasing down cocaine mules.

AGENT LUCA
I'm not hearing this.

AGENT HOUSE

You're not hearing
reason. She's dead. We've
tried a million things.
It's time we thought
about ourselves. This is
our chance to get some
recognition. Take the
thing alive.

AGENT LUCA

It was never really about
keeping it alive. Hell,
Armstrom was going to
blow it up. We bought
time to get the girl!

AGENT HOUSE

No, my deal was to take
it to our base at the Toy
Store and put it in that
stupid rhino cage you put
out there and show it off
and get you a big
promotion and me a big
promotion and maybe a
'thank you, Agent House.'

AGENT LUCA

Well, thank you, Agent
House. Don't you need to
get back to base camp and
prepare for the arrival
of DOJ and DOD brass?
Thank you.

House leaves.

EXT. FARM - DAY

House walks into Major Armstrom's tent. Armstrom
laughs heartily.

EXT. FARM/BARN - DAY

Agent Luca puts his coat on and walks to the barn
where FBI peons stand around in hazmat suits.

AGENT LUCA
Any progress?

PEON 2
If you call three broken
arms progress, then yes.

AGENT LUCA
Well, I don't. Get your
yellow, rubber butt back
in there and get that
girl out.

PEON 2
Sir. We've tried
everything. It seemed to
take the bait with the
trangs, but as soon as it
sees one of us, it hurts
the girl or swings that
tail.

AGENT LUCA
So, it's hungry?

PEON 2
Gotta be by now.

AGENT LUCA
Where's the rest of the
tranquilizers?

The peons show him where they are, and Luca puts
them in his pockets.

Luca walks back to his SUV and opens the trunk. He
takes out a box full of tiny chip bags and candy.
He opens them one by one, dropping tranquilizers in
them. He opens the door and tosses all the open
bags inside.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Daniel sits up, rubbing his head.

DANIEL
So that's why English is
the common language?

BEN

Yup.

DANIEL

And the moon is...?

BEN

Yeah, but that started a long time ago, so don't blame me. I mean, I totally would have done it, but I didn't so...

DANIEL

Holy crap. We gotta save the hot goth chick in my barn!

BEN

I kinda figured she was made up.

DANIEL

So that Evan guy thinks she's his, huh. Think about it Plixo-

BEN

Ben. I don't think she thinks that though.

DANIEL

Ben! If I'm the one that rescues her, then she'll want to be with me. Duh.

BEN

Whatever, man.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Evan walks, kicking at sticks. He looks up to see the same path that Ben found earlier which the Yaag had made through the woods.

He follows it to the edge of the forest and sees the military camp.

Evan runs back to the ship.

EVAN
I think I found them.

INT. BARN - DAY

The Yaag sniffs the air. It holds itself onto the rafters with its tail like a monkey and begins scooping up the snacks and eating them by the handful.

Addy slowly wraps the chain around the tail.

The Yaag is fumbling, its eyes drooping. It fights sleep.

Addy jumps down, and carefully steps around the giant monster. It jumps at her, but it is stuck on the chain, and it is having trouble moving. She exits the barn.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Addy steps out of the barn and is surrounded by military men with guns. Major Armstrong stands among them.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
So sorry darlin'. But
your country needs you
just a teensy bit longer.

AGENT LUCA
What are you doing?

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Supervisory Special Agent
Luca! I almost forgot!
We'll be commandeering
your base of operations,
if you don't mind. I have
just discovered something
incredible.

Agent House sneaks away into an FBI truck.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

It seems you've been
withholding! I hear
you've got some little
green friends been
wandering around looking
for their pet! Well! I
think we'll let them come
and find it!

Armstrom points to a few soldiers.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Get in there and tie that
thing up like a baby cow!

The men shuffle into the barn with rope.

AGENT LUCA

This is insane! You need
to kill that thing before
this gets out of hand.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

I was so sorry to hear
about the girl! Wherever
did she end up? Eaten
whole maybe?

Armstrom snatches Addy's arm, and she screams.

There is a commotion in the barn, and the Yaag
roars.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Plixo and Evan stand at the edge of the woods
watching the commotion. Plixo looks through a
telescope and sees Addy being held by Major
Armstrom. The door to the barn bursts open, the
Yaag, stumbling, comes out throwing soldiers
around.

The telescope follows a soldier being thrown over
Daniel's house. Ben and Daniel come out of the back
door. Ben wears a military helmet and an ill-
fitting camo shirt. Daniel wears wrinkly fatigues.

Plixo drops the telescope and runs into the field towards Daniel's house. Evan follows.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

DANIEL

Okay, so how do we stop that thing, exactly?

BEN

Distract it with the goat, use the collar to control the Yaag. Easy.

DANIEL

Okay. But how does the goat distract it?

BEN

Duh. It eats the goat.

Ben walks towards the commotion with the goat walking in step.

DANIEL

That's freaking awful!

BEN

Thanks, I came up with it myself.

Ben walks into the middle of the scene, unnoticed by the panicking soldiers and FBI as they run around him and the goat, tossing ropes around the Yaag.

Soldiers aim weapons at the half-asleep half-raging creature, but their guns will not fire. The Yaag knocks them into the fields and woods.

Armstrom ducks away from a flying soldier and Addy gets away. The Yaag reaches for her, but Luca pulls her away. Luca and Addy run through the chaos and dive into an FBI SUV. The vehicle speeds off down the road. FBI personnel flee the scene.

The goat runs circles around the Yaag. The monster sleepily swipes at it. Daniel waves his arms.

DANIEL

Nice, delicious goat!
Sweet, sweet goat meat!

Soldiers throw their guns at the creature and attempt to rope its arms. The Yaag swipes away a line of soldiers into the field.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Get in there you namby-pambies! Take that thing for your country! Do you want to sit around and wait for the Chinese to come and grab it?

A soldier pulls out his sidearm and shoots the Yaag in the arm.

The Yaag screeches, its eyes are bloodshot. It takes the soldier and eats him whole.

Daniel backs away and falls into Ben.

The Yaag tears through a group of soldiers and leaps into the fields. It disappears into the woods.

Daniel and Ben, still on the ground, are surrounded by soldiers holding sidearms. Armstrom approaches.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle.

BEN

Yeah, that's what we always said.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Sassy little guy. Tie it up. Both of 'em.

Plixo shoves his way out of the flowers.

PLIXO

No!

Plixo holds one hand up before him and touches the other to his temple.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
What in the world-welcome
to the party, big fella.
Take that one too.

BEN
Woah, woah, woah. You
better think twice,
Sergeant mustache. He can
flay you with his mind.
We have abilities your
little monkey brains
couldn't begin to
comprehend.

PLIXO
My mind!

BEN
Right! Our technology is
so crazy- all the chips
in our heads! All we
gotta do is think dead
and you're done!

PLIXO
Dead!

The soldiers surrounding them look nervously at
Armstrom and begin to shuffle backwards.

Armstrom snatches a pistol from a soldier and
points it at Plixo's head.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Alright then bad boy. Can
you be certain your
psycho-magic nonsense
will stop me from pulling
this here trigger when
you blow up my beautiful,
pink monkey brain?

Plixo looks back at Ben and at Evan, who peeks from
the flowers.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Waiting for your friend
to explain the rules?

Ben gets up and stands next to Plixo.

BEN
Here's the rules! You're
gonna back off, we're
gonna leave, and he's not
going to make your
pathetic thoughts leak
from your ears!

MAJOR ARMSTROM
No can do, son. Either
way, he and I are going
to the same place. He
decides if that's greener
pastures!

BEN
He's bluffing. Come on,
P. Prime asset! That's
what we are! You wanna
start an intergalactic
conflict? P, come on.
Let's go. Farmer boy, go
warm your truck up.

Daniel scurries away. Evan starts to follow him but
turns to wait for Ben and Plixo.

Ben tugs on Plixo's arm, but Plixo does not move.

BEN
P? What are you doing?

Plixo and Armstrom stare into each other's eyes.

PLIXO
He will do it.

BEN
No, he won't.

Plixo touches Ben's arm.

PLIXO

Yes, he will. Then he
will have us all. Go. For
the mission.

BEN

P-

Evan takes Ben's arm and pulls him away. They run to Daniel's beat up old truck. With Daniel driving, they pile in. Evan sits in the front passenger. Ben and the goat sit in the backseat. They speed down the dirt road.

Plixo and Armstrong stare at each other. Armstrong with the gun and Plixo with his hand out.

Armstrong leans in. Plixo looks around. His hand begins to fall.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Had me going there. Well,
I gotta say that is a
teensy bit disappointing!
It ain't got magical
powers boys, so go on and
tie it up. And somebody
go stop that truck. Do I
have to work you boys
like puppets! Dance!
Dance! Dance!

Soldiers tie Plixo's arms together with zip ties.

Soldiers attempt to start a Humvee, but it will not turn. Others have flat tires.

Armstrong kicks at a Humvee and dials Agent House.

INT. DANIEL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The truck drives down dusty country roads.

DANIEL

Where am I even going?
What do I do? They
literally know where I
live! Oh man! Why did I
even come with you?

BEN
Shut up and drive!

EVAN
So, what's the plan?

BEN
What's the plan! What's
the plan! You say that
every five minutes!

EVAN
Okay, yeah. Maybe I do!
But that's, like, because
there's never a plan!

Ben reaches into the front seat and slaps Evan.
Evan slaps Ben back. They begin a slap fight.

DANIEL
Guys! Or...guy and...please!
I need to know where I'm
going!

Evan and Ben finish their slapping and brood.

Agent House passes in an FBI truck on the way to
the farm.

They continue into the small highway town and
eventually pass the Toy Barn. The parking lot is
surrounded by semis, obstructing the view, but
white tents show through the gaps.

In front of the Toy Barn is a road that leads to
the state park and to the left of that road is a
hill.

EVAN
Go...there! Up there so we
can see.

Daniel drives up the hill with the lights off.

The parking lot is buzzing with FBI agents. The
tents are set in a wide row leading to the
destroyed main entrance of the Toy Barn. A rhino
cage sits near the entrance.

DANIEL
So. What's the plan?

INT. TOY BARN - AFTERNOON

Agent Luca leads Addy into the stockroom. They sit on boxes across from one another.

An agent brings them coffee and snacks.

AGENT LUCA
Eat. You're gonna be
alright. We're gonna
catch that thing and kill
it.

Addy laughs and then pukes.

Luca takes out his phone and dials House.

AGENT HOUSE
What?

AGENT LUCA
Good to hear you made it.
Though we will have some
serious things to talk
about regarding your
future in this program.

AGENT HOUSE
Yeah, well. I'm headed
back to the farm.

AGENT LUCA
Why?

AGENT HOUSE
Armstrom got an alien. He
wants to bring it base.

AGENT LUCA
Tell him to screw off and
go find that thing before
it kills us all!

Addy laughs and gags. Luca pats her shoulder.

AGENT HOUSE

Is that the girl? Are you
an idiot?

AGENT LUCA

What did you say? You are
fired, do you hear-

AGENT HOUSE

Whatever. Die a hero, I
guess. Either way, this
is your disaster, Luca.
I'll be sure to tell the
brass you died bravely
when they pin a medal on
me.

House hangs up.

ADDY

I hope you're over there
talking about a plan to
get me the hell out of
here!

The Yaag roars in the distance.

AGENT LUCA

Stay here! Stay with her!

Luca runs from the stockroom into the store. The
agent draws his weapon.

ADDY

No! At least give me a
gun!

The agent hides behind a storage unit. Addy runs
back and forth, hiding behind boxes. She empties a
box and gets inside it.

Luca runs to the entrance of the store. The Yaag
bursts through a tent, throwing agents into the
air. There is a short fight. It sniffs the air. It
runs full bore through the Toy Barn. Luca dives out
of the way as the Yaag crashes through shelves.

Luca runs after it.

In the stockroom, Addy hides in the box. The Yaag gently opens the box and strokes her hair.

The FBI agent watching Addy opens fire on the Yaag. It roars.

Luca opens the stockroom doors as the agent is pulled in half by the Yaag. The Yaag takes Addy and crawls atop storage shelving.

Luca walks back through the store. He unties his tie and drops it. He untucks his shirt.

At the checkout counter, he takes a handful of snacks and lays down on the counter, dumping chips into his mouth.

INT. DANIEL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Daniel looks around the camp with a pair of binoculars. FBI agents limp away from the wreckage. Some lie on the ground motionless. A few tents and vehicles are destroyed. Agents spray retardant on a fire.

DANIEL

This would be cool to
watch if I wasn't certain
that I'm going to federal
prison sometime tonight.

Evan turns in the seat to face Ben. Ben rocks back and forth with his hands on his neck.

BEN

He's never coming back.
Once they get 'em, they
never come back. Never
once have we gotten one
of our own back.

EVAN

What about the ship?

Ben bangs his fists against his head.

BEN

By the time the ship is
fixed they'll have him
underground and in a
million pieces! This is
all my fault! I should
have listened to him! I
let the Yaag's collar die
in the ship! It was my
fault we crashed!

Ben cries and hits the truck seats.

DANIEL
Watch the leather!

EVAN
We fixed it a little! I
mean, I think it said
there was power. I think.
He fed the face some
crystals.

BEN
Probably not enough to go
far. They'll have him
miles underground by now!

DANIEL
Fed the face?

Evan pats Ben's shoulder.

Daniel scans the camp with the binoculars.

DANIEL
Hey, your friends big and
grey, right?

Ben snatches the binoculars. Plixo is pulled out of
the FBI truck by House. He is led to a big tent. A
soldier kicks him.

BEN
Take me to my ship!

DANIEL
I don't have a clue
where-

Ben takes the collar off the goat and snaps it on Daniel. Daniel drives them into the state park, cutting through the woods. Ben and Evan try to calm down the goat, which is jumping around and kicking everyone and screaming.

EXT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Luca sits up on the conveyor belt.

A soldier kicks Plixo, and Plixo, House, and Armstrong disappear into a tent.

House unhooks her car battery and takes it into the tent.

AGENT LUCA

Hey! No!

Luca jogs to the tent.

Inside, Armstrong smokes a cigar. House shocks Plixo.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

You gotta understand that
I got a whole mess going
on out there! I need to
know where your little
spaceship is, and we can
put this all behind us.
That sounds like a fair
trade for my trouble,
doesn't it?

PLIXO

Enough trouble. You're
welcome.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Do it.

House shocks Plixo.

Luca watches in horror over the shoulders of guards standing in the doorway. He walks back to the Toy Barn and lies on the conveyor belt.

FBI agents run around picking up injured agents and resetting tents. Military personnel set up a perimeter.

INT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Addy sits inside a storage bay. The Yaag tosses boxes around a few bays down. It comes to her holding up a teddy bear.

ADDY

Thanks.

The Yaag purrs and cuddles up to her.

ADDY

Could you just freaking
eat me already! Are you
trying to soften me up?

Addy throws the bear.

The Yaag howls and looks at her sadly. It runs off and rummages in more boxes.

Addy lies back flat on the shelf.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Daniel's truck speeds through the woods and smashes into a tree near the crashed spaceship.

Ben runs into the ship.

Evan takes the collar off of Daniel and wrestles it onto the goat.

DANIEL

What the hell was that!

Evan gets out and runs to the ship.

EVAN

So, uh-

BEN

What's the plan?

EVAN

Yeah.

Ben types on a console. The forge, a 3D printer, starts to print collars like the one on the goat. He takes Plixo's backpack of crystals and starts breaking them to fit in the collars' battery slots.

EVAN

For the-uh-Yaag?

The goat jumps into the ship. Ben pets it.

BEN

Ship! Take me to the
petting zoo.

The ship rises.

Daniel cries over his truck.

The ship starts away and then turns around. A beam of yellow light lifts Daniel into the sky.

INT. SHIP - NIGHT

Ben starts filling his arms with the printed collars.

SHIP

Forge power depleted.
Total power 12%.

EVAN

Okay, yeah. Uh. I think I
get the plan, but how is
that supposed to work?

DANIEL

What in the-is this-are
the walls made out of
skin?

BEN

It only has to work long
enough to make them
scramble. Then we get
Plixo, and we get out.

EVAN

Okay yeah, but I mean,
hello! Addy! What about
my part!

BEN

There's not enough power
for all that. Our mission
is to-

EVAN

What about my mission!
You talk about failing
your duty, well I'm going
to fail mine!

BEN

The ship will not make
it!

EVAN

She won't make it! You
are so selfish and-

BEN

Fine!

EVAN

You only think about
yourself-

BEN

I said fine! Okay? You're
right! We'll do it.

EVAN

Wait-really?

BEN

Yeah. Get over it!

EVAN

Well thanks but, well.
How do we...?

BEN

What I gotta plan your
rescue too? We're here.

You drop me off at the
zoo, the farmer drives,
you two pick up the girl
and me and Plixo, and we
scram! Forget the Yaag,
forget the mission.

EVAN

And what if the ship
doesn't make it?

DANIEL

I drive?

BEN

Then we die.

EVAN

Well. That's not great,
but...

BEN

None of it's great! None
of it! None! But we don't
have any time left! If we
wait, they'll take him
somewhere, and we will
never be able to find
him. You think because I
have this crazy living
ship that I'm some sort
of magical being? Well
guess what: I'm not! I'm
a selfish, emotional
idiot! But he sacrificed
himself for me. For us!
For the stupid mission.
So, I have to go back. I
have to get him. I have
to try now. You can stay
behind and figure out
something else, but-look
at me! This is it for
both of us. This is the
easiest it's gonna get.

DANIEL

So, wait...I drive?

The ship stops above the petting zoo.

BEN

Yes, you drive. Look.
It's just a stupid ball
and all these arrows do
exactly what you think
they do. Even you-a
monkey-can do it. This is
the make-things-float
ray. You pull this handle
for power, this one for
how far up. Bring me and
Plixo all the way up,
okay?

DANIEL

Yeah. Monkey. Arrows. Up
is up, right? Is it
inverted?

BEN

No!

DANIEL

Drive. Fly. Beam. Okay.
Nice. Let's do this. What
are we doing?

The center wall opens like an elevator, and Ben and
the goat step in and are lowered to the ground on a
yellow beam. Evan leans over the side of the ship
where a section is still torn out.

EVAN

(shouting to
Ben)

Any ideas would be
appreciated!

BEN

Be quiet! You want to
wake up the whole park?
Figure something out!
It's not my girlfriend!

DANIEL

The goth chick? He said
she was single.

EVAN
She's not goth. And I
mean, I guess she's
technically single.

Ben waves them away.

Daniel drives the ship away.

DANIEL
So, she's free game? I
mean not to step all over
your thing, but I am an
independent business
owner, and I can operate
heavy machinery, such as
a horrific UFO made of
skin. Do you think-no. Do
you think that's people's
skin?

Evan rolls over and pulls Addy's folded up vest
from his pocket. He smells it. He stands and holds
it up to Daniel.

EVAN
Smell this.

DANIEL
Uh? Yeah, okay. Smells
like a chick. Hey, is
that her?

EVAN
I think I know what to
do.

Evan pukes over the side of the ship.

DANIEL
Dude, if you think she
smells that bad, why
can't I take a swing at
her?

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Armstrom and House torture Plixo.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
I am mighty surprised at
your tenacity my lanky
friend. You and I may yet
have something in common!
You must be a soldier on
your world. Maybe we have
gotten off on the wrong
foot. What should I call
you? Identify yourself,
soldier!

PLIXO
Dentitfication.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
What was that?

PLIXO
I. D.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Yes.

PLIXO
I. Dentification. I. Norm
Macdonald!

MAJOR ARMSTROM
Are you screwing with me?
Hit him again.

House shocks Plixo.

INT. SHIP - NIGHT

The ship arrives over the Toy Barn.

The entrance to the Toy Barn is surrounded by tents
and military and agents.

EVAN
There's no way I'm
getting in there.

DANIEL

I could put you on the
roof. I think.

EVAN

There's no way inside.
What if we-

DANIEL

No, no, no. Stop. Just
let it happen. I know
what you're going to say,
and I'm on it. This is
going to be so freaking
cool.

Daniel drives the ship to the center of the Toy
Barn roof. He activates the tractor beam and shifts
it to full throttle. The roof lifts, pieces tearing
off and flying into the air.

INT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Luca hears the commotion of the roof being torn off
and walks to the hole.

The UFO is directly above. A beam of yellow light
shines on Luca and he steps out of the way. Evan
slowly lowers to him. He holds Addy's vest.

EVAN

Uh, h-hey. How's, uh.
Have you seen a big alien
thing? Big, furry. Kinda
like a frog but not at
all. It has a girl. Had.
Maybe.

Luca points to the stockroom.

EVAN

Sweet. Okay. Is she...?

AGENT LUCA

Last I saw she was
alright.

Evan leaves Luca, heading to the Barbie area.

Luca freezes and watches him walk away and then follows.

EXT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Soldiers and FBI agents gather to look at the UFO.

A pig wearing one of Ben's collars runs from the woods and rams a soldier to the ground.

More petting zoo animals appear and attack the men. Chickens, goats, pigs, cows, etc.

Ben emerges from the woods, riding the goat, flanked by horses and cows. They charge the camp.

INT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Luca catches up to Evan. Evan finds the giant Barbies.

AGENT LUCA

Kid, we gotta get out of here!

EVAN

Yeah, I know.

AGENT LUCA

No. I mean right now. We need to get you out of here.

EVAN

No?

Evan grabs one of the giant Barbies and walks towards the stockroom.

AGENT LUCA

Hey! Stop! You're going to get yourself killed.

EVAN

Uh... Well, yeah. Maybe. But I guess it's try this and get

mauled...horrifically...or
eaten or something or-or
just give up and let her
die and maybe get
promoted to general
manager one day or
district manager and die
of a heart attack at
like, I don't know,
fifty. I mean, what's the
difference?

Evan walks away and then turns around.

EVAN

No! No. There is a
difference. We were
supposed to go on a date.
I'm going to get my date.
And if it doesn't work
out, then maybe I'll do
the manager thing. But if
it does, I'm going to
quit! I hate toys!

Evan buttons Addy's vest onto the Barbie.

EVAN

I'm not a kid anymore!
I'm a grown man, and I'm
taking this Barbie that
smells like a girl I like
into that back room, and
you can come and help, or
you can go back outside
and do whatever you all
have been doing all this
time instead of rescuing
my girl-my friend that is
a girl!

Gunshots, animal noises, and shouts echo through
the Toy Barn from the FBI camp.

EXT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

The animals chase military and agents around and tear down tents. Ben dismounts the goat and begins checking tents with the goat following him.

Ben opens the flap of a tent and finds the armory.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

MAJOR ARMSTROM

(to House)

Go watch the door! We are blowing this popsicle stand. Too fruity around here for me! How about you buddy?

Plixo is nearly unconscious. Armstrong begins to undo his restraints.

House, just outside the tent, shouts and fires her weapon. The goat headbutts her back into the tent and she flies across the room and lands unconscious against the wall.

Ben walks into the room with a grenade launcher and points it at Armstrong.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

Well! I figured I'd not seen the last of you! I gotta say you boys have moxie! How'd you like a job with the U.S. Army!

Ben cocks the launcher.

MAJOR ARMSTROM

You silly little moron!
That's just a smoke gun.
You ain't gonna do much of-

Ben shoots the gun and the canister hits Armstrong in the head. He falls unconscious. Ben flies backwards with the recoil.

Ben and Plixo hold onto each other, leaving the smoking tent.

Ben waves at the ship that floats just above the Toy Barn. It does not move.

BEN
Hey! You idiot! We're
ready to be picked up!

Ben fires the smoke gun at the ship.

INT. SHIP - NIGHT

The smoke grenade lands in the ship and Daniel kicks it out. Ben and Plixo wave from the ground.

SHIP
Low power.

Daniel drives the ship to hover over them.

EXT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

The yellow beam appears before Ben and Plixo. Plixo walks towards it. Ben does not.

PLIXO
Are there crystals for
the ship?

BEN
That was it, buddy. We're
all played out.

PLIXO
Then we will find a place
in the woods and repair.

BEN
You go ahead. I'll catch
up. Maybe. I gotta-

PLIXO
I know. You are a good
friend.

BEN
Shut up.

Plixo steps into the beam and floats into the ship.

Ben runs to the store. He whistles and a pig runs to him. He takes its collar off.

INT. SHIP - NIGHT

Plixo steps into the ship and touches the face.

SHIP

Total power five percent.

Plixo takes control of the ship at the helm and lands it on the roof of the Toy Barn near the hole.

He pulls open a storage compartment built into the floor and pulls out an orb like the one Ben used to shoot lasers. He collapses into the chair at the helm.

PLIXO

They need this. And tell them there is only power left for a short flight.

DANIEL

We can't pick them up with the orange light thing?

PLIXO

No.

INT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Daniel lies on the edge of the hole, yelling. His yelling echoes through the store.

Evan and Luca run to it.

DANIEL

Hey!

EVAN

Hey?

DANIEL

The tall one landed the ship on the roof. He said the light thing is dead?

EVAN
So, we're stuck?

DANIEL
I mean, you're stuck.

EVAN
Do you have a way to get us out?

AGENT LUCA
If I take you out of here, you understand where I have to take you, right?

EVAN
Okay. Then why are you even helping?

AGENT LUCA
I don't know. I'm excited, I guess.

EVAN
Okay then. There's a scissor lift by the bikes. Can you drive it?

AGENT LUCA
Is it fast?

EVAN
No.

Ben runs to them. He aims the launcher at Luca.

Evan, holding the giant Barbie wearing Addy's vest, jumps in front of him.

EVAN
No! Wait!

BEN

You didn't see what they
did to Plixo!

AGENT LUCA
I didn't do anything! I
just tried to-

BEN
Shut up!

EVAN
This is my part,
remember? It's, like, you
follow me now. Right? I
say he helps. He seems-
cool?

AGENT LUCA
Thank you.

Ben growls and bares his teeth.

DANIEL
I hate to interrupt, but
I was told to give you
this.

Daniel drops the orb down to them. It falls on the
ground and shatters.

AGENT LUCA
I think I'm gonna die
here.

BEN
If everything goes right!

DANIEL
Sorry! Please don't tell
the goth chick about
that!

Ben points the launcher at Daniel, and Daniel
leaves.

BEN
So. What's the plan?

Evan takes the collar from Ben and wears it on his arm.

INT. TOY BARN STOCKROOM - NIGHT

The Yaag gives Addy a toy car and she plays with the wheels. She throws it. The Yaag whines and scurries away.

Evan peeks through the door and sees her, sitting atop the storage racks.

EVAN
Psst. Psst! Psst!

ADDY
Evan?

EVAN
Shh!

ADDY
Do you have a gun or something?

Evan moves into the room with the Barbie.

ADDY
Are you kidding?

The Yaag crawls back up to Addy with a doll. She throws it. The Yaag slams its arms against the racks and runs off.

EVAN
Look! You have to be quick. This thing smells like you!

ADDY
What? How do you know what I smell like?

EVAN
Just take it!

Evan hands up the Barbie. He touches Addy's hand.

EVAN
Will you go out with me?

ADDY
What? Get me out of here!

The Yaag makes its way back across the racks, and Evan runs and hides behind another rack.

INT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

Luca finds the scissor lift. He enters it and begins driving it to the hole. It is extremely slow.

INT. TOY BARN STOCKROOM - NIGHT

Addy tosses the toy the Yaag brought her, and it takes off again.

EVAN
You have to distract it
and leave the Barbie!

The Yaag comes back with a toy frog.

ADDY
I hate frogs!

Addy throws the frog, and the Yaag runs off. Addy leaves the Barbie in her place and climbs down from the racks. Evan helps her down.

EVAN
Is this like, the part
where we...I dunno. Kiss or
something? I mean that
would be crazy, huh. That
would feel right, right?

ADDY
Get me out of here.

EVAN
Okay, yeah.

Ben steps through the door. Addy screams at the sight of him.

The Yaag sits up from rummaging and climbs the racks. The Yaag sees Ben and roars.

Ben fires a smoke grenade. Smoke envelopes the Yaag.

Addy and Evan run to the hole.

Luca chugs down the isles in the scissor lift.

AGENT LUCA
It won't go any faster!

The Yaag roars.

Ben catches up to Addy and Evan. Addy recoils from him.

BEN
Ah, okay. I think I'm
into this rescue now. I'm
Ben.

Evan slaps Ben.

BEN
I'll kill you!

EVAN
Shut up! We have to get
out of here!

Evan and Ben get behind the scissor lift and push.

The Yaag waves away the smoke and gives the Barbie a toy train. It caresses the Barbie's head. It licks the Barbie's face and recoils. After sniffing and poking the plastic doll, it picks it up and screams.

The torso of the Barbie, wearing the vest, is thrown by the Yaag and it lands just before the scissor lift.

EVAN

Okay, okay! Addy Uh...give
me your clothes!

ADDY
What no!

EVAN
Okay...uh...

He takes her hand and drags her to the Playdoh
aisle. Evan tears open Playdoh boxes and begins
smearing it on Addy's hair. Ben follows and watches
for the Yaag, holding the gun.

ADDY
Why!

BEN
She stills smells too
hot, bro.

EVAN
Give me something-uh
your-something that
smells like you!

ADDY
It stinks so bad.

Ben pulls off her shoes. Addy sobs. Ben takes the
shoes and runs off. Evan drags Addy to the girl's
toys.

The Yaag stalks through toy isles towards Ben. Ben
throws a shoe, and the Yaag goes for it. Ben shoots
it with the smoke launcher and runs away with the
other shoe.

Luca arrives at the hole.

Evan runs with Addy to the lift. Luca and Evan put
Addy in the lift. The Yaag roars.

Evan runs to the Barbie torso and puts on the vest.
He takes the collar from his arm.

EVAN
Okay. Okay. Okay. I'm a
hero. I'm-going on a

date. I'm going on a date
with a girl.

The Yaag stalks after Ben, sniffing out the other shoe. It comes around a corner and Ben aims the launcher at it. The gun is empty. Ben runs.

Ben runs into the main aisle in front of Evan and Addy and Luca, who are lifting into the air.

Ben tosses the gun and shoe and climbs into the lift. The lift is halfway to the hole. The Yaag turns to it.

Evan lets out a high-pitched scream. The Yaag turns to him. Evan runs.

Ben, Addy, and Luca arrive at the roof and Daniel pulls them up.

They all run to the ship, except Ben who looks down into the store.

INT. SHIP - NIGHT

Ben runs to the ship and frantically looks around. Addy sits on the floor. There are many crystal bracelets on Addy's arms. Ben tears them off.

ADDY
What are you doing? Stop
it! Where's Evan? Those
are mine!

He feeds them to the ship.

BEN
Oh, no! I'm sorry! He
only sacrificed his life
for you! Sorry you lost a
few rocks!

SHIP
Power nine percent.

Ben takes the helm of the ship.

Daniel sits next to Addy.

DANIEL

So. How ya doing? I kinda
led this operation. Drove
the ship.

ADDY

Where's Evan?

Addy pukes on him.

INT. TOY BARN - NIGHT

The Yaag stalks the isles. Evan hides among the Barbies. The Yaag sniffs the Barbies and begins knocking them over with an arm. As it gets to Evan, he snaps the collar on the arm. The Yaag freezes, but the collar beeps, dying.

EVAN

Oh man.

Evan runs.

Evan reaches the roof-hole. The ship hovers above it. The yellow beam shines on him and begins to lift him into the air.

As he slowly floats, the battery on the Yaag's collar dies. It runs. The Yaag catches up to him and jumps, snatching him from the air.

Evan lies on the ground while the Yaag sniffs the vest. The necklace Addy gave him with the ammolite crystal hangs outside his shirt.

INT. SHIP - NIGHT

Ben looks over the edge of the ship into the store.

SHIP

Power four percent.

Plixo touches Ben's shoulder.

PLIXO

We must leave.

BEN
Put me down there!

ADDY
Is Evan okay?

BEN
Send me down there! I
can-I don't know! I'll
distract it! We can meet
later-I-

PLIXO
He was my first human
friend, but he is gone.

ADDY
Where is Evan!

Plixo sits at the helm and begins to drive away.
Ben wrestles him off of it.

BEN
This is my fault! Leave
me! Get him and leave me!

The ship lurches. The Yaag is on top of the ship.
Luca pulls his sidearm. Daniel hides. Addy curls up
into a ball. Plixo flies the ship away.

SHIP
Power two percent.

The arm of the Yaag reaches down into the ship
through the tattered side. It wears the collar. The
ammolite crystal is jammed in the battery slot, the
necklace dangling from it. The Yaag crawls into the
ship with Evan on its back. Evan falls off, and the
Yaag sits.

Ben rushes to Evan and hugs him. Addy crawls to
Evan and recoils from Ben.

Evan sits up and pats Ben's head. Evan embraces
Addy.

EVAN
So, do you think we
could-

ADDY

Can I get a shower before
you ask?

DANIEL

You don't have to shower
for me, I wouldn't mind.

SHIP

Power zero percent.

PLIXO

We are going to crash.

The ship falls from the sky, into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Ben sits at a campfire roasting marshmallows. Luca
pets the Yaag. Evan and Addy sit next to each other
on a log. Daniel scoots close to Addy.

AGENT LUCA

So. I think I may be out
of a job now.

EVAN

Do you-do you think
they'll come for us?

BEN

Yeah, duh. Are you
kidding? They are going
to take you and shock you
until you tell them
everything you know about
me.

AGENT LUCA

That's pretty accurate.

DANIEL

Can I go home? I mean-

AGENT LUCA

Your land will most
likely be seized for at
least a year.

EVAN

Is there anything we can
do to get back to normal?
What if you told them we
helped stop the thing
and-

ADDY

That military guy was
going to kill me!

AGENT LUCA

I have no proof. All I
have is this huge wreck
of an operation and a
bunch of dead agents.
They'll be talking to DOD
in, I don't know, a few
hours maybe. And then
that's it. They'll blame
me.

Plixo appears from the woods with crystal scanner,
pickaxe, and a backpack full of crystals.

PLIXO

This will take us from
the woods, but it will
not fix the ship.

BEN

(to Luca)
What if we told them?

AGENT LUCA

What?

PLIXO

We are not to directly
communicate with
leadership without-

BEN

I don't mean literally.
P, will those get us to
Washington D.C.?

PLIXO

Yes. But that area has
very few crystal
deposits-

EVAN
That's like, the worst
place for us to go!

BEN
Yes, it is. P, feed the
ship.

EXT. THE PENTAGON COURTYARD - MORNING

Agent House, wearing a sling on her arm, and Major
Armstrom, with a huge knot on his head walk through
the courtyard. A group of GENERALS with four stars
on their shoulders greet them.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
One helluva show you all
missed down there. FBI
wrecked it! Shame, too.
If this little girly here
were in charge, I think
we'd have us a few little
guys to talk to, but that
Luca-

AGENT HOUSE
He seems to have
defected, sirs.

GENERAL 1
With the-uh. Others?

The general nervously points to the sky.

MAJOR ARMSTROM
None of it makes any
sense, does it? But we'll
explain it all. I would
like to state first that
I recommend Agent House
here for a command role
in future-

The ship appears over the Pentagon and casts a shadow over everyone. A crowd forms as people watch the sky.

Agent Luca descends on the yellow beam. About ten feet from the ground, the beam disappears, and he falls.

INT. SHIP - MORNING

Ben laughs. Evan shoves him.

BEN
Just saving power.

The ship flies away.

EXT. THE PENTAGON COURTYARD - MORNING

The generals run to Agent Luca, leaving Armstrong and House.

GENERAL 1
Agent Luca?

AGENT LUCA
General.

GENERAL 1
Would you come with us?

They lead Luca into the Pentagon. Luca waves to House and Armstrong.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The ship pokes out from inside the barn.

Daniel, Plixo, and Ben get into Daniel's truck. Ben and Plixo awkwardly wear Daniel's clothes. Ben has a trucker hat taped to his head. Plixo wears a mop as a wig.

INT. MARTY'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Evan and Addy sit in a booth over drinks. Addy laughs and Evan hunches.

Ben, Plixo, and Daniel enter the bar and are stopped by a BOUNCER.

BOUNCER

I.D.?

Daniel shows his.

PLIXO

Dentification!

DANIEL

Uh, yes. These are my-uh-retarded brothers. They were in a fire, and they are uh-

BOUNCER

I can't let the kid in.

Ben takes the bouncer by the arm and yanks him down.

BEN

I will skin you and eat you.

Addy runs up and takes Ben by the arm.

ADDY

Sorry about him. He's just a little-he's normally really nice.

BEN

Don't listen to her, bud. I will-

Addy drags Ben and Plixo to the table. They all sit in the booth. Daniel drags over a chair and sits at the end.

EVAN

It was more of a-I was being nice when I invited

you, but this is kind of
a date, right?

PLIXO

Thank you. It is a nice
date.

DANIEL

Every time I turn around,
they are chipping pieces
off my kitchen counter.

BEN

With enough granite, we
can get to Arizona.

EVAN

Why?

PLIXO

There is a turquoise
deposit.

ADDY

I love turquoise.
Turquoise promotes
positive energy and-

BEN

That's not true, but it
is delicious.

EVAN

So-you guys are heading
home?

PLIXO

We have failed our
mission. We will not
likely be welcome.

BEN

He means we'll be
liquefied, and our
remains repurposed into
new children for the sake
of our race. So, we'll be

hanging around for a while.

DANIEL

I was kinda hoping for the E.T. ending where you leave and stop destroying my house.

Ben pats Daniel's arm.

BEN

Thanks, pal.

EVAN

Well, I think we might be out of a job, too. We did kind of destroy the store.

DANIEL

I'm not going to be able to sell any of this year's crop.

PLIXO

Perhaps we should-

BEN

I agree. Waitress! Shots all around, on this guy's tab.

DANIEL

Aw, come on.

Ben gets up and walks to the jukebox and plays techno rock. He dances. Plixo joins, holding onto his mop-wig.

Evan takes Addy's hand and leads her to the floor.

The waitress brings them their round.

Daniel reluctantly joins them.

EXT. MARTY'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

A couple walks to their car past Daniel's truck.
The Yaag sleeps in the bed. They walk up to it and
look.

The Yaag growls, and they run away. It curls up and
goes to sleep.

FADE OUT

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