

WITH MONSTERS

written by

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FADE IN:

On a man in a monster mask.

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He's uncomfortably close. His rotten plum of a face looms.

This is DENNIS DUBICKI, 36, and he's more high-grade horror latex than flesh and bone at the moment. His features offer only decay, warts, and exploded blood vessels.

And with his ugliness comes dead air: Dennis stares in complete silence.

Nothing moves or escapes.

Finally, a single, awkward vibration sputters into a full-blown tune: Dennis hums the odd, lilting score from some old Saturday night horror flick.

Loooo-luh-looo, the tune goes. Loo-Loo.

When Dennis finally stops, it offers not a shred of relief.

DENNIS

I'd like to meet you.

A slow breath.

DENNIS

One day.

The mask quivers. A slight shift in the heavy skin.

DENNIS

I'll warn you: This is my first  
time doing this. I'm in software.  
My name is Dennis and I work  
downtown. I own a home.  
(a sniff)  
I'm seeking a companion.

Nothing more.

A full view emerges: Dennis films himself with a small tripod camera set too close to his face.

The walls behind him are overrun with horror posters and hanging monster masks.

Dennis peels back his mask, ready or not.

The result: a stubbly, unremarkable fellow. Orange letters blaze across his black T-shirt. The letters spell "Greaser," but Dennis doesn't resemble one.

DENNIS

I never saw myself as an internet dater, but here I am.

Dennis weighs the freshly-removed mask in his hand.

DENNIS

If I wear this too long, I get internal condensation--so it gets foggy when I breathe.

He flips the mask inside out. Searches for moisture.

DENNIS

Masks are my thing, but I cook, too. I bought an airspeed oven.

He wipes interior spittle with his shirt.

DENNIS

I'm in an 1893 gray-stone with galvanized piping. I can hear it rattling at night.

He seems to be listening for the noise.

DENNIS

I should get it fixed, but--

Over his shoulder is the massive wall of horror.

DENNIS

They'll get in there and gouge you if you're not careful--and then you've got real problems.

That's it. He's flat-lined on words. A moment passes before he confides quietly to himself.

DENNIS

Some of that should get cut, maybe.

He kills the power on the camera. Watches the red light fade to nothing. This video is over.

INT. DENNIS'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dennis cooks eggs in a skillet. Sleek, modern appliances gleam. He places the eggs on plate, arranging them carefully.

He doesn't eat, just stares at the food.

The oven dings. Dennis removes a cookie sheet: Windmills.

INT. DENNIS'S WORKROOM - NIGHT

Loaded with machinery.

Dennis tools around with an old reel-to-reel projector: the kind teachers used in the 1960s and '70s.

An old muted TV on a shelf glows with dour network news.

He flicks the projector's switch. Reels roll. A flood of light projects onto the workroom wall. A movie starts.

Cheerful music throbs: a musical.

A couple happily sings, but their faces distort because they project onto a rough wall and not a screen. They're ghoulish.

Dennis reaches out, blotting their faces with shadow.

He tinkers. Snaps off the projector. Reels wheeze to a halt.

INT. DENNIS'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

A disaster area of horror paraphernalia.

Most prominent is a life-sized ghoul statue jammed into a cheap blue suit. No lips. Long fingers. A greeting sticker on its lapel reads, Hello My Name Is BERTRAM B. It's on rollers.

Just beyond Bertram B is the door leading to an old coal storage room. The door, slathered in green paint, is ajar.

Dennis turns to Bertram B.

DENNIS

Don't let the bed bugs bite.

Then Dennis flicks off the light. He bumbles to the stairs and goes up. Just the faintest outline of Bertram B. shows.

Something shifts slightly in the darkness, but it's hardly a noise at all.

INT. DARKENED ROOM - NIGHT

A light sparks in the darkness of a nondescript viewing room: no longer Dennis's basement. An old projector comes alive, flooding light onto a screen. Reels and gears roll.

A grainy, crackling color film shows. It looks like it survived from a '70s high school class. We feel its age.

SUPER: "Doom in the Room Starting Dennis Age 8."

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

YOUNG DENNIS, 8, holds a record. He's in pajamas.

As typical in such films, there's a narrator. His nerdy voice is occasionally warped by the projector's ancient machinery, speeding his words or slowing them.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)

This is Dennis in his eighth year.  
Helloooo, Dennis. He holds a gift  
from his auntie: Sounds of the  
Crypt, the preeminent effects  
recoooooording.

Young Dennis places a needle upon the record. The rotation brings horrible sounds: ghostly moans, footsteps, drips. Young Dennis's face shows both horror and fascination.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)

The boy was thankful. Thank you  
auntie, he said to her. A thousand  
thank yooooos.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Dennis sleeps, awakens from a floorboard creak.

Then the room crackles with sound: clanks, desperate breathing, rattling chains, howling winds. Young Dennis's little turntable spins. His record is alive.

The boy leaves bed and drags himself to the device. He's both desperate to turn it off and frightened to touch it.

His hand fumbles on a switch. The machine groans to a stop as he flies back to bed.

Moments later, the record resumes, and the air fills with similar noises. Averting his eyes, young Dennis stumbles to the record and rips it from the turntable.

A thud. He turns. Scans the room. Nothing.

He's quickly back to bed. Under the covers. Eyes closed.

Movement. Something looms. Young Dennis holds his breath. An unseen hand--or claw--atop the covers presses down, right onto Dennis's cheek. He barely contains a scream.

It gets worse when an unholy voice cracks the silence.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)  
Someone's--yum--not sleeping--yum.

Young Dennis's eyes widen. More footsteps. Multiple visitors.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)  
Come out and see.

No way. Young Dennis cowers. Churns in fear.

Long silence gives way to whispers among the visitors. Then the voice gets closer than ever. Right to Dennis's ear.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)  
Not tonight?...  
(shifts)  
...Then later...

Dennis winces as Rottenham sniffs him from the other side of the covers. Then the pressure on his cheek releases.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Young Dennis emerges from under the covers. His room is sunny, empty. The record back upon the turntable.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)  
There is a veeeery goood  
explanation for what was just  
observed here. A little history is  
in order...

The film warps into a noxious bubble. All sound sputters into nonsense, and the narrator's explanation is lost forever.

The projector floods the screen with ghastly light. The motor chokes and runs dead. All is black.

BACK TO PRESENT TIME.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

A door bursts open, letting in light. A silhouetted figure looms in the doorway.

The bedroom light snaps on, revealing SANDRA HAGEN, 34.

She's petite and pretty. Short dark hair. A satin blouse. Leather jacket. She carries a tall glass of wine. Topsy.

CARRIE LOGAN, 35, sleeps. Slightly chubby, long haired. A good face, but fatigued. A dozen teddy bears share her bed. She wears sweat pants and a faded Lobsterfest T-shirt.

SANDRA  
(whispers)  
Wakey, Wakey

Carrie opens her eyes. Sees Sandra. Closes them tightly.

SANDRA  
You gotta see this.

CARRIE  
Just go away.

Sandra grabs Carrie's hand, falls, spills wine. Resumes pulling.

SANDRA  
Get out of bed, you hag. I found us  
a man.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

The two women stare at a laptop. Dennis is on it, wearing the mask. It's his dating video. Carrie droops.

CARRIE  
You're out of your mind.

Sandra burps.

SANDRA  
Watch this.

Sandra spruces her hair and clicks around the laptop. In a moment, she's filming herself.

SANDRA  
Dennis. You're everything we've  
ever wanted in a man.  
(MORE)

SANDRA (CONT'D)  
(a spewing, drunken laugh)  
'cept you forgot the chainsaw.

She claps and sips wine.

SANDRA  
I'm Sandra and my friend is Carrie.  
We're highly intrigued. Maybe you'd  
like to meet us when you're done  
slaughtering teenagers.

She gulps remaining wine.

SANDRA  
OK. Here's the deal: Carrie and I  
operate as a team, meaning we go on  
dates together. I'm fun and she  
knows karate, in case there's  
funny business. Let me grab her.

She tries pull poor Carrie and drag her into the picture.

There's a scuffle.

SANDRA (O.S.)  
Dammit you're strong.

Finally, Carrie flashes into view.

CARRIE  
I'm so sorry about this.

Sandra nudges Carrie aside, addresses her.

SANDRA  
The thing to be sorry about is your  
embarrassing shirt. Lobsters aren't  
festive. They're no fuckin' fun.

Back to the video camera.

SANDRA  
Carrie likes to get sloshed on  
strawberry daiquiri and hit the  
lobster fests. If that's your idea  
of a fun time--and who doesn't go  
for that?--then get back to us  
immediately.

She laughs more. Adds one more closing remark.

SANDRA  
And don't kill any teenagers  
without us.



Sandra clicks the computer.

CARRIE  
I can't believe you said that.

SANDRA  
About lobsters or teenagers?

Carrie pokes her faded shirt and turns to the bedroom.

SANDRA  
Stay up for two minutes and talk.

Not happening. Carrie shuffles to her room. Shuts the door.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sandra knocks playfully from the other side and calls out.

SANDRA (O.S.)  
Good night little lobsters.

Carrie takes a prescription pill bottle from her nightstand, shakes out a couple, and swallows them down.

Then she takes a deep breath and holds it.

Her cheeks bulge and her torso goes rigid. She holds for uncomfortably long, and then falls onto the mattress.

Air whooshes out. Her unhappy eyes close for the night.

Sweet dreams ahead, no doubt.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Nine boxes of cake mix roll along a checkout conveyor. They're for Dennis. A female CASHIER, 30s, scans his stuff.

CASHIER  
Let me guess: You're having a party.

The scanner blips. Dennis looks at the conveyor.

DENNIS  
(eventually)  
No.

A moment. Another blip.

DENNIS  
I don't have parties. Typically.

CASHIER  
No? Huh.

She flicks a switch and the conveyor stops rolling.

DENNIS  
But I'm trying, at least. So  
somebody might come by...

She drops a box in a bag. It thuds.

DENNIS  
...someday.

The cashier looks up and smiles--much wider than she should.  
Wide and uncomfortable.

She's practically all teeth.

CASHIER  
Forty two oh eight is the total.

Her grin is a shield: it says please don't say any more.

So Dennis doesn't. He just pays his bill.

INT. DENNIS'S CAR - DAY

Dennis drives with nine boxes of cake mix at his side.

The radio drones. Bad news.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Dow, NASDAQ, S&P all down today in  
light of an unfavorable jobs  
report.

Dennis stops at a red light and glances to the side.

On the corner stands an unnaturally tall fellow. An open red  
umbrella--dirty and worn--obscures his face.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
(on to the next report)  
The terrorists had conspired over  
the last several months--

The umbrella tilts slightly, showing more: a greenish scalp.  
Stretched lips that barely conceal a huge set of teeth.

These are mere glimpses of ROTTENHAM.

He extends one freakishly long, bloodless finger toward Dennis and beckons: Come. Closer. Dennis.

Dennis doesn't. The light changes and he peels out, leaving behind a wisp of exhaust. It drifts off, but Rottenham stays.

He is still mostly concealed by his umbrella, but brings his finger to his tongue, licks it wetly, and marks the air in the direction where Dennis fled. See you soon, Dennis.

Then a BOY, 7, and his MOTHER walk around the corner and pass a few feet from Rottenham. The boy's eyes widen. He pushes close to his mom, points to Rottenham.

KID

Ma. That's the boogeyman.

The woman has no time for nonsense. She tugs him along.

KID

I saw him last night. The boogeyman.

She shushes him and pushes forward.

Once again, Rottenham licks his finger. This time he marks the air in the direction of the boy. See you soon, kid.

Then he stands quite still. Umbrella open, but no rain yet.

INT. DENNIS'S KITCHEN - DAY

Dennis's fills his cupboard with cake mix. He's got more mix than any single man could possibly eat.

EXT. DENNIS'S FRONT PORCH - DAY

The front stoop. Dennis waters plants. His house comes into view: An urban mansion past its heyday. Two imposing columns.

An archway. Overgrown vegetation. A pair of pondering chipped gargoyles. An iron gate.

The sun is low. On the verge of night.

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dennis is spread out on the floor like someone crushed by excess gravity. Above him: his giant wall of hanging masks.

Horrible faces fill the view: demons, devils, evil clowns, ghouls. Dennis's glum face fits right in.

The tiniest sound emerges from the wall: some sort of chewing or slurping. Barely audible. Dennis sits up.

Listens.

Nothing more. He leaves the room.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dennis stands before Bertram B. smoothing out his cheap blue suit. The ghoulish statue is just as tall as Dennis.

DENNIS  
I saw him on the way home.

Bertram B's face is frozen in menace.

DENNIS  
Again.

The awful face of Bertram B. looms.

DENNIS  
On the corner.

Dennis reaches to Bertram's side and pulls a string, the kind found on talking dolls. Bertram B's tinny voice echoes.

BERTRAM B.  
I'll eat your flesh.

Dennis doesn't flinch at all. He's familiar with this voice.

DENNIS  
What do I do?--

Dennis fidgets some more.

Bertram B's lip-less grin is in full view. Then his voice box springs to life, without any string pulls from Dennis.

BERTRAM B.  
--Coming for you.

Dennis steps back.

DENNIS  
Whoa.

He studies the ghoul. Approaches slowly. Reaches inside Bertram B's coat and investigates his battery pack.

DENNIS

Not good.

BERTRAM B.

(Independently)

Die, die, die.

DENNIS

Your batteries are almost dead,  
Bertram B.

The stuffed creature's face is awful.

DENNIS

We need some fresh ones. When was  
the last time we changed them?  
'Cause we're overdue.

INT. DENNIS'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Dennis checks his computer: the dating website.

The screen shows that he has one reply in his mailbox. He clicks it and up pops Sandra's image. Her video response.

Dennis's face lightens. A genuine, happy smile.

INT. DENNIS'S BASEMENT STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Ecstatic Dennis calls down the stairs to Bertram B.

DENNIS

I got a date!

The house is quiet.

DENNIS

Two women--together. How would that  
work?

Dennis nearly vibrates with joy. He has to share it.

DENNIS

Where should we go?

He moves away. A voice sounds from the basement.

BERTRAM B. (O.S.)

You won't survive.

Dennis back from another room.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
I got it. I know where we're going.

INSERT - BANNER "HORRORFEST"

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY

A horror convention, Horrorfest, is underway. Tables nearly overflow with masks, figures, drawings, and posters.

Dennis peruses.

He wears a sports jacket over a zombie T-shirt and clutches a plastic shopping bag of items.

He nervously flips through a book, then hurries away.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Dennis splashes water in his face. Nervous. Nobody else is around, so he speaks to himself in the mirror.

DENNIS  
Relax, okay. And don't say anything  
weird. Just make it through: Make.  
It. Through. This. Date.

He attempts a smile in the mirror: pathetic.

DENNIS  
What if this doesn't work out?

A high-pitched giggle sounds from one of the bathroom stalls.

The john isn't unoccupied after all. Dennis turns.

Another giggle from that spot. Almost inhuman.

A flush. The stall door opens with aching slowness.

Out steps a COSTUMED VISITOR, eight feet tall with his ridiculously large paper mache head. The face is yellow with uneven features. He's both corny and completely intimidating: a college football mascot gone evil.

This visitor stands, definitely overstaying his welcome.

Then he steps slowly in Dennis's direction and briefly dwarfs him. Dennis averts his eyes. Freezes. Hopes.

After a long wait, it works: the visitor plods to the exit.

He extends a finger and beckons Dennis to come closer, but Dennis doesn't. The door groans. The visitor is gone.

It's a while before Dennis finally exhales.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY

Dennis stands uncomfortably at a display when a hand touches his elbow. He recoils. It's Sandra.

SANDRA

You're Dennis, right?

She wears a motorcycle jacket and a skirt. Cool. Dennis nods in recognition, still shaken from the bathroom visit.

SANDRA

Dennis, I'm feeling the teeniest bit dizzy and I saw a bench back there. Wanna sit with me?

DENNIS

Yeah.

SANDRA

I got a small case of the wobbles.  
(a slow blink)  
Wanna wobble with me?

DENNIS

Yeah. Wobble. Okay.

She takes his elbow and they find the bench.

SANDRA

I'm feeling icky. I overindulged last night. On booze.

She scans the convention.

SANDRA

So is this zombie heaven?

DENNIS

(unsure, nervous)  
Well, they lack souls. So--

He reaches into his plastic bag, removes a green horror mask.

DENNIS

--It's for you.

SANDRA

Holy crap, Dennis, I love it. Is it  
the dude in the Dave Matthews Band?

She holds the mask to her face and looks out the eye holes.

SANDRA

Or the guy from Steely Dan?

Dennis pulls something else out of the bag: A single flower--  
some petals have fallen out. Sandra takes it, smiles  
slightly, and keeps talking.

SANDRA

We need to wait for Carrie. She's  
parking the car, but she'll come.

Dennis glances uneasily at each passersby.

SANDRA

Don't you worry about her.

INT. CARRIE'S CAR - DAY

Carrie sits alone in the vehicle in the convention parking  
lot. The car idles. She listens to loud rock. Her face is  
blank, this is the last place she wants to be.

She rummages a sugar packet from her purse, rips it open, and  
pours the contents into her mouth. Lets it dissolve.

Her open purse contains more sugar packets, lipstick, a  
mirror, prescription pills, a can of mace, and a box of  
blackboard chalk.

She removes one piece of chalk from the box, and, after a  
slight hesitation, eats it. She chases it with more sugar.

Rock blares as she swallows the mix.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

MONTAGE - DENNIS AND SANDRA AT THE CONVENTION

-- Dennis buys Sandra some onion rings and a Coke. She drowns  
them in ranch dressing.

-- They watch a MAKEUP ARTIST demonstrate a fake throat  
slitting. Corn starch blood oozes from a PARTICIPANT'S neck,  
but she laughs. Sandra chomps a ring and cheers: Hell yeah.



-- Sandra purchases a set of fake vampire teeth and happily shoves them into her mouth.

-- Dennis buys a two foot tall monster figure with wild hair.

-- Dennis points out features of a horror poster to Sandra. He looks slightly more at ease now. In his element.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. DISPLAY TABLE - DAY

Carrie shuffles over to Sandra and Dennis. Doesn't say a word. Sandra has fake fangs in her mouth.

SANDRA  
(words muffled by fangs)  
Well, look who came.

She removes the fake teeth. A long sting of drool comes out too. Then she flips a red horror mask to Carrie.

Carrie drops it.

SANDRA  
That one's for you from Dennis. You  
can wear it to work.

Carrie picks up the mask reluctantly. Holds it like it's a soiled diaper.

Carrie then snatches Sandra's arm and pulls her twenty feet.

CARRIE  
I'm not doing this. I'm going home.

SANDRA  
Ah, poo. Don't you dare.

CARRIE  
Everything stinks like rubber.

Sandra points to Dennis, standing alone, scanning nervously, holding the ridiculously large monster doll that he bought.

SANDRA  
He'll curl up and die if you go.

CARRIE  
Nobody would notice. Everything  
here is dead.

SANDRA

And you're so lively...

Carrie sticks out her jaw. Sandra smiles, but it doesn't linger. She softens her tone.

SANDRA

I'm sorry. I'm being a snot. I know this has been difficult for you. I'm trying to help.

Two costumed men pass them. Carrie frowns.

CARRIE

How does this make it better?

SANDRA

It probably doesn't, but we'll see.

Now it's Sandra's turn to pull Carrie. She tugs her back toward Dennis and then onward.

INT. DISPLAY TABLE - DAY

The trio stands at a table loaded with tiny skeleton heads, slightly larger than a quarter. Behind the table is the SKULL VENDOR, a grandfatherly man.

SKULL VENDOR

They're magnetic. They'll look great on your fridge.

SANDRA

And they stick good, right?

The vendor nods.

SANDRA

How many skulls would it take to cover our fridge? Just an estimate.

Sandra turns to Carrie.

SANDRA

'Cause now I wanna cover our fridge in magnetic skulls. All of it.  
(to Vendor)  
Our fridge is massive, so--

She whips back to the vendor and points to Dennis.

SANDRA  
 (to the vendor)  
 Did you know it's our first date?

SKULL VENDOR  
 Nope.

SANDRA  
 I was a teeny bit hung over at first, but now I think it's going rather well. If I marry this guy, we can come back here on our honeymoon. Or maybe Carrie will marry him instead. Anyway we'll come back for anniversaries. Maybe we'll both marry him.

SKULL VENDOR  
 Everyone's marryin' everyone. Yep.

SANDRA  
 I'm not really gonna get married. Once is enough.

SKULL VENDOR  
 (snatching something)  
 For Christmas you need this...

He pulls out a skull with a glued-on Santa's cap.

SANDRA  
 That thing is, oh God, so cute. I could eat that. E-A-T it.

Carrie nudges Dennis aside. Sandra doesn't even notice--she continues negotiations with vendor.

CARRIE  
 (to Dennis)  
 I'm gonna split. I'm sorry.

Dennis looks at her carefully.

CARRIE  
 I didn't want to come here. I tried to talk her out of it, but she's crazy, obviously. She drags me on these dead-end dates.

Before Dennis can respond--

CARRIE  
 You get divorced and this is what happens to you.  
 (MORE)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

You join the loser tag team and get crushed with sorrow.

Sandra continues to haggle with the Skull Vendor.

CARRIE

Just don't let her buy any of those magnets because then I've got to live with them. I want normal magnets--ones like everyone else has got: ones that aren't hostile.

Dennis is on the verge of words but--

CARRIE

She's not for real, you know. About you or any of this.

Dennis swallows.

CARRIE

Stick to reality, not fantasy. That's my advice to you.

DENNIS

(finally)

And what do you stick to? Yourself?

The directness of his response takes them both aback.

DENNIS

I mean, people here look like they're having fun, right?

CARRIE

(shifting)

I don't know. Fun is faked.

A costumed couple strolls by, caked in phony blood.

DENNIS

(nods)

It's hard to know what's what, sometimes.

She hands him back the red monster mask.

CARRIE

Sorry about this. I'm a drag.

He takes the mask, but slips her something in return: A flower--crumpled from being stashed in his pocket.

DENNIS

I was going to give this to you,  
but it got a little beat up.

She holds it. The stem juts at forty-five degrees.

DENNIS

It's beyond repair, unfortunately.

A quick nod. She turns away. Takes a few steps. Looks back.

But Dennis isn't watching her.

Instead he's gaping at an open red umbrella that has quietly brushed up against his shoulder.

It's Rottenham's umbrella, for sure. Rottenham holds it low to hide his features, but his menace is in the open.

Dennis's eyes widen. Caught in the headlights. The umbrella rubs lightly.

And then Dennis is grabbed...

...by Sandra and her bag of purchased magnetic skulls.

SANDRA

You're gettin' hijacked, Dennis.  
Right now. I'm hijackin' this date.

Sandra propels him toward Carrie.

Dennis looks back. Rottenham doesn't follow, thankfully.

SANDRA

(to Carrie)

You're not getting out of this so  
easy, girl. I'm taking us out for  
drinks. My call.

CARRIE

Not in a million years.

SANDRA

Aw, C'mon. We're all a little bit  
jittery now, and we could use a  
drink. One small drink.

Dennis keeps his eyes on the umbrella.

SANDRA

Everyone's so jittery these days.  
Why can't we have fun anymore?

Sandra gathers Dennis and Carrie by the arms, leading them toward the exit. She and Carrie argue, but it's drown out.

Dennis looks back at Rottenham's umbrella. Still there, but becoming more distant with each step.

But something else is ahead...

Standing nearby in the hallway is a feeble OLD MAN. He's definitely out of place among all these conventioners. There's a distorted smile on this fellow's face.

Something about this old guy and his odd grin makes Dennis tense up. A glimmer of recognition shows.

It lasts only an instant. Dennis is tugged away by Sandra. She and Carrie continue to argue.

The old man keeps smiling. The lights fade. The whirring of a projector drowns out everything.

INT. DARKENED ROOM - NIGHT

Another film emits from the old projector seen earlier.

SUPER: "The Potato Chip Man, starring Dennis Age 9."

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Young Dennis, 9, and a handful of other boys goof in a fenced playground. They all have green Hiawatha Day Camp T-shirts.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Here is the lad at the Hiawatha Day  
Camp. And coming doooooown the  
sidewalk is the Potato Chip Man.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

An old man in a trench coat shuffles with a cane. This is the POTATO CHIP MAN, ancient. A creepy grin is affixed on his face. It's the same old man from the convention hallway.

His lips glisten with saliva. Eyes gloss with cataracts.

There's something other-worldly about him as he gradually approaches the boys in the park.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

The boys cluster by the fence as the old man approaches and mercilessly taunt him. One boy is FRANK, 9.

FRANK  
Yo, Potato Chip Man!

BOY 1  
Suck it, Potato Chip Man!

BOY 2  
Go back to your grave.

Young Dennis watches quietly. No taunts from him.

The old man grins at the boys and takes the onslaught of jeers. His smile stretches back so far that it's almost a hiss. The kids flick wood chips at him.

Young Dennis takes two steps back.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Dennis didn't know why they called him the Potato Chip Man. He didn't care to know. But they soon would become rather unhappily acquainted.

INT. FIELD HOUSE BATHROOM - DAY

A bathroom break with Dennis and Frank.

Frank flings wet toilet paper onto the walls.

Then he takes aim at Dennis, but the door creaks open.

In steps the Potato Chip Man. The two boys freeze.

The door slams shut. There's no way out.

The old man laughs and slowly pulls a nail clipper from his trousers. He flips out the semi-sharp tool used to dig out toe jam. He's absurdly ready to kill the boys with it.

They scream. The Potato Chip Man's smile widens and he steps toward them. Frank tries to slip by him and the old man grabs his arm and bites it with his dull teeth.

The skin instantly becomes rotten, septic. Frank screams, wriggles free, and dashes out the door.

Now Dennis alone with this old boogeyman.

Something happens to the Potato Chip Man's face. His weird grin splits along the sides to reveal razor teeth. A lizard's tongue flicks out. Saliva oozes.

Dennis screams and screams.

The door swings. A PARK SUPERVISOR rushes inside.

PARK SUPERVISOR  
Hey! Who's screaming?

Dennis can't speak. He's gulping for air. The Potato Chip Man turns to the supervisor. He's now just a poor old man.

PARK SUPERVISOR  
How many times have I told you kids  
to leave the flippin' old guy  
alone. Now come on out of there.

Dennis must walk past the old man to the door, and closes his eyes to do it. His fear is palpable. He lunges the final distance to the door and is gone.

PARK SUPERVISOR  
Sir, are you okay? Can I help you  
out of there?

The old man gives a wave and the supervisor closes the door.

Alone, we see the old man's sharp teeth again.

INT. FIELD HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

The supervisor pulls Dennis aside.

PARK SUPERVISOR  
Listen kid, if that old piece of  
crap ever comes near you again, you  
run your ass off. Stay away from  
people like that. Got it?

Dennis nods.

PARK SUPERVISOR  
Where did your friend go?

INSERT - PAPER MACHE DOLL OF FRANK.

The doll is an imitation of Frank. His skinny paper mache arm has a bite mark in it. It droops low, hangs, and falls off completely.



INT. DARKENED ROOM - NIGHT

The projector grinds to a halt and the film ends. The sound of clinking glasses and boisterous voices emits.

BACK TO PRESENT TIME.

INT. SMITTY'S BAR - NIGHT

Dennis, Carrie, and Sandra huddle at a video bowling machine.

Their nearby table is cluttered with beer bottles, Dennis's two-foot creepy doll, many skeleton magnets, and two masks.

The bar is rough around the edges and full of obnoxious pool players and a few sloppy girls.

Dennis rolls the video ball down the video lane and it arcs sadly to the gutter. Game over for him.

SANDRA

You sure like gutters, dude.

DENNIS

I'm no good. I'm cursed, I think.

SANDRA

Me too. You know what my curse is called?...

She steps up to bowl her last frame and steamrolls the pins.

SANDRA

It's called Rumble Minze. Now you gotta start drinking. Our plan was to get you sloshed and take advantage, but you're way behind.

Dennis lifts his beer glass and takes the smallest sip. Both women boo his pathetic effort.

Carrie takes a much larger gulp of her drink and then gingerly pokes Dennis's creepy doll in its stomach.

DENNIS

Maybe we should have left that in the car.

He glances over at the pool players. Loud. Rough.

SANDRA

Nobody's lookin', sweetie.

DENNIS

No. You're wrong. They're always watching.

Sandra glances at the pool players.

SANDRA

Watchin' me. And jealous of you: A stud on a date with two hot chicks.

She laughs too loudly. She drinks and sways to the jukebox tune, but there's something forced to her lightheartedness.

SANDRA

Anyway, we all have our problems. Did you know that Carrie hates to touch wrapping paper?

Carrie sips her beer and smiles. She's moderately drunk, certainly mellower than she was at the convention.

CARRIE

It's true.

SANDRA

Christmas sucks for her.

CARRIE

And birthdays.

SANDRA

Yeah. They're bad too. Did you know that Carrie eats chalk? Or that she divorced her husband because he knocked up another chick.

Now Carrie isn't smiling.

CARRIE

Is that something you should share?

SANDRA

Is it helpful to hide it?

CARRIE

Who's hiding? I'm not hiding.

Sandra takes a big swig of beer as Carrie glares.

CARRIE

You're the one trying to be 21 again. And it's so sad.

SANDRA  
I'm not sad at all...

She fluffs her hair.

SANDRA  
...I'm fuckin' fabulous.

She storms to the pool table and lightly touches one of the players on the arm. It's JIMMY MCDONALD, 25, thickly muscled.

They soon disappear into the back of the bar.

INT. SMITTY'S STOCKROOM - NIGHT

Sandra looks seductively at Jimmy.

SANDRA  
I've missed you.

Jimmy smiles. She touches his collar.

SANDRA  
Whatcha doing later?  
(smiles)  
Wanna meet up in a bit?

INT. SMITTY'S BAR - NIGHT

CARRIE  
Oh no. She's talking to him.

DENNIS  
Who?

CARRIE  
They know each other. I gotta break this up.

She's off to retrieve Sandra, leaving Dennis alone. Carrie returns quickly, tugging Sandra by the arm. They argue, but it's hard to decipher. Then they sweep to Dennis's table.

SANDRA  
You're a pain in the ass.

They zoom right past Dennis without the least bit of acknowledgment and go right out the front door.

Now Dennis is accompanied only by a creepy zombie doll, two masks, and a bag of magnetic skulls.

He looks at the door expectantly. It stays closed.

We view the digital clock on the bar. Nine o'clock dissolves into 10:30. Dennis still sits alone. He's absolutely rigid and out of place. Pool players glance over.

Nervously, tentatively, Dennis grabs his creature and walks to the restroom.

INT. SMITTY'S RESTROOM - NIGHT

Dennis is at a urinal. His creepy doll is perched atop it.

Dennis flushes, but right before he zips up...an unholy voice cracks from behind the adjacent bathroom stall.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)  
Join us...

Dennis's shoulders drop.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)  
...for dinner.

Dennis stands dumbly by the urinal.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)  
For the carnage.

Now someone else enters the bathroom and stands directly behind Dennis. Way too close. Breathing down his neck.

Dennis stares directly ahead. Now what?

A voice booms:

JIMMY  
Someone in here's takin'...

It's Jimmy McDonald, an inch away. He points to the doll.

JIMMY  
...a monster piss. God damn.

Dennis looks at his doll and glances back at Jimmy, not sure how to answer. He can't turn to face Jimmy directly.

JIMMY  
He's bigger 'n half of any guy in  
this place. And that's saying  
something.

Dennis keeps standing at the urinal, his back to Jimmy.

JIMMY  
You got stage fright or somethin'?  
Let's drain that vein, brother. I  
gotta go.

Dennis steps away. Looks nervously to the stall. No words.

JIMMY  
You two always wiz together?

Slowly Dennis shakes his head.

JIMMY  
My name's Jimmy. Give me a sec.  
I'll give ya a tour.

INT. SMITTY'S BAR - NIGHT

So much for the tour. Dennis and Jimmy sit at a table. The  
creepy doll is there. Jimmy chews tobacco and spits in a cup.

JIMMY  
I think you got ditched by the  
ladies.

DENNIS  
And time for me to go, too.

JIMMY  
Naw, stay. They ain't worth it. I  
know one from experience.

Jimmy moves his finger in and out to indicate sex. Dennis  
struggles for a response. Finally...

DENNIS  
So, you like pool?

JIMMY  
You're acting nervous: Did your dog  
die or somethin'?

DENNIS  
I'm not sure what I'm doing here.

JIMMY  
Amen to that. Too many dicks with  
sticks in here. That's it.

Dennis looks to the pool players. They glare like hyenas.

JIMMY

People here ain't very welcoming  
right now, but they'll warm up.  
Just act regular. Not nervous.  
(points to creepy doll)  
How much you have to pay to get  
this big whopper?

He pokes the doll with a thick finger.

DENNIS

Too much.

JIMMY

Ripped you off on Count Fuck-you-  
la, did they?

DENNIS

Maybe. Think I should go.

JIMMY

But you haven't told me what you  
paid...

Jimmy presses his thumb on Dennis's hand.

JIMMY

...and that's fuckin' rude.

Dennis doesn't look up at all. He speaks carefully.

DENNIS

I'm all alone here.

He shakes his hand away.

DENNIS

I paid two hundred bucks.

Jimmy lifts his palms: no harm no foul.

JIMMY

Now we're getting somewhere,  
brother.

Jimmy takes his dip cup and spits sloppily into it. Residue  
hangs from his chin, which he wipes with his hand...

...and dries using the hair on Dennis's doll.

Sticky dip is all over it.

Dennis's eyes widen. Jimmy snatches the doll.

JIMMY

Give me a minute to look 'em over.  
I wanna see what ya get for two  
hundred these days.

Jimmy swings his hand and knocks the entire spit cup onto the creature. His intent is obvious. The doll's slimed with spit.

DENNIS

What the hell?

JIMMY

(insincerely)  
Ah shit, man. I spoojed your  
creepy.

Jimmy hands over the dripping statue.

JIMMY

Sorry, dude. I made a damn mess.

Dennis fumes, but Jimmy raises his hands again in innocence.

JIMMY

Relax brother. That's what we do  
around here. Sit down and I'll make  
it up to you. It's just a joke.

Everyone is looking at Dennis. Hyenas and jackals. Dennis reddens and sputters, but in the end, all he can do is grab the creature and storm out of the bar.

Jimmy shrugs when the door slams.

JIMMY

Seemed a little sensitive.

Jimmy takes the two masks from the table and drops them on the floor. He sends a stream of dip spit down with them. The bag of skull magnets drops next.

The items sit among discarded beer caps, spilled suds and floor grime.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Dennis fumes, walks briskly, hands shoved into pockets, the doll in his arm crook. He stops, brushes the doll a few times, and throws it as far as he can. It's gone forever.

Dennis screams after it. Not just an ordinary yell, but one that comes from the bottom of the soul. It endures for an impossibly long period, until his lungs can offer no more.

Then he storms down the sidewalk. After a quarter block, a car horn sounds. Someone calls.

CARRIE  
Hey, Dennis. Over here.

He sees Carrie on the street in her car, but he walks away.  
She sounds the horn again.

CARRIE  
I'm sorry. Please come here.

DENNIS  
I'd prefer not.

She grabs her head in distress. Dennis watches. He looks several ways, considering options. Then he moves to the car.

INT. CARRIE'S CAR - NIGHT

They sit in the front seat, Carrie at the wheel.

CARRIE  
I'm so, so sorry. We got into a crazy fight. And boom: it blew up.

DENNIS  
So you left me with those dicks.

CARRIE  
I'm sorry. We're horrible. Two little trolls.

A tear falls onto her cheek.

CARRIE  
I just broke up with my only friend tonight.

She starts sobbing. Dennis stares, completely caught off guard by this emotional outburst.

Reluctantly, awkwardly, he places a hand on her shoulder, looking as if his hand will spontaneously combust.

CARRIE  
It was so ugly.

DENNIS  
I'm sorry.



CARRIE

I'm gruesome. Look at me. Fat as an elephant.

She wipes tears.

CARRIE

I used to look so much better than this, believe me.

Her chest heaves.

CARRIE

And I'm hungry. Big surprise there, right? I'm dying for some food. Like a rhinoceros.

She starts giggle-crying.

CARRIE

Do you wanna go to a restaurant?

She snorts. Dennis is still.

DENNIS

I cook. We could go to my place.

CARRIE

Absolutely not. Out of the question...Are you trying to lure me with food?

DENNIS

No. But I don't want to go anywhere else. I don't like being out. I just wanna stay in.

She wipes some tears and leans close.

CARRIE

Me too, but...

(she straightens)

Ah crap. What do you cook?

INT. DENNIS'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

An omelet sizzles. Dennis scoops it and puts it carefully on a plate. It goes to Carrie, who's at the table. She tries it.

CARRIE

Good omelet. No, not good. Incredible.

DENNIS  
Not so bad?

She sips a huge glass of red wine. They eat quietly.

CARRIE  
This is a nice kitchen. A really  
nice kitchen.

Dennis smiles. Carrie sips more wine, pleased.

INT. DENNIS'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Carrie adjusts her hair while looking into the bathroom mirror. Opens her purse. Plucks out the prescription pill bottle. Pops one pill into her mouth and sips water.

She re-checks the mirror, makes more adjustments. Smiles.

She re-opens her pills and takes one more for good measure.

Carrie places the pill bottle back in her purse, right next to the broken flower that Dennis gave her.

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dennis sits, waits for Carrie. Mask faces glare.

There are faint sounds, as heard before: chewing, smacking.

Dennis rubs his ears.

Then there is a slight knock at the front door. Hardly perceptible.

Dennis approaches.

Another knock. A little louder. Open up, please.

The doorknob turns. Back and forth. Someone tries to get in the house.

Dennis slowly approaches the small window at the top of the door. He peers out.

And then he backs away.

INT. BASEMENT STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Dennis whispers down the steps in the direction of Bertram B. He doesn't want Carrie to hear.

DENNIS

He's at the front door, Bertram.  
Right now.  
(a beat)  
What should I do?

His tone isn't necessarily crazy, but confiding.

No reply comes.

INT. JIMMY'S MUSTANG - NIGHT

A roaring engine.

Jimmy speeds through the night. After a moment, his front seat passenger comes into view: Sandra. They're hooking up.

Her shoes are off. One foot is atop the dashboard.

She twirls her hair with one finger and makes a cell phone call with the other.

SANDRA

Here goes nothin'.

INT. DENNIS'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Carrie's cell phone rings. She sighs when she views the caller, Sandra, but she answers.

CARRIE

Don't call me.

She hangs up. Leaves the bathroom with her wine.

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carrie and Dennis arrive in the room at the same time. He checks the window. Her phone rings again. She groans.

Answers. Doesn't even listen, just blurts into the phone.

CARRIE

Listen, I'm at Dennis's house. If he cuts off my head, he'd be doing me a favor. Got it?

INT. JIMMY'S MUSTANG - NIGHT

SANDRA

Who told you to go over there?  
That's dumb as shit, Carrie. You  
can hang out with him, but you  
can't go back to his place. So stay  
tight and I'll be there in two  
seconds. It's code blue...

A few angry, indecipherable words from Carrie emit from the phone and then the conversation ends. The phone goes dark.

SANDRA

She hung up! Can you believe...

JIMMY

What's code blue?

SANDRA

It basically means utter disaster.  
We color code these things.

JIMMY

Mmmm. So what now, Sugar?

For a while she says nothing. Then she leans in and licks the side of Jimmy's face.

SANDRA

Well, you're going to drive as fast  
as shit to my place because that  
part of the plan hasn't changed.

She plays seductively with his hair. He smiles.

SANDRA

After that we're going to find  
them. I've got a pretty good sense  
of where Dennis lives from our  
chit-chat. Shouldn't be too hard.

Jimmy grins. Hits the accelerator. They zoom into the night.

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Still flustered from Sandra's call, Carrie stares straight into a horrible mask hanging from Dennis's wall. An ogre.

Carrie steps back. Takes a swig of wine. Regains perspective.

After a while, she sweeps her hand over the wall's entirety.

CARRIE  
What's behind all that?

Dennis looks nervously out the window. It's a while before he registers Carrie's question.

DENNIS  
I hardly remember. Chipped plaster.  
Not very nice.

CARRIE  
That's no sweat. What else?

What else? About the room? Dennis eventually points to a hanging 1950s era horror movie poster for "I Eat Your Skin."

DENNIS  
Well, here's something: that movie is called "I Eat Your Skin," but if you actually watch it, no skin is ever eaten.

Carrie's eyes narrow.

CARRIE  
If you tell me one more thing like that, I'm gonna kick you in the gonads.

DENNIS  
Oh.

CARRIE  
Women being attacked by gross, creepy men: How does that get us anywhere?

He takes a slight step back, but she comes forward.

CARRIE  
I'm going to tell you this for your own good: You're missing an opportunity with this house. It's incredible. Forget about the awful posters and look around. There's so much potential.

DENNIS  
Potential?

The word floats in the air as Carrie scans the room, placing invisible sofas and shelving. Dennis glances to the window.

CARRIE  
I'd die to fix this place up. We'd  
truck out all of your icky hoarding  
and get some great stuff.

DENNIS  
I like this place, too, but there  
here are problems here like you  
wouldn't believe. Like the noises.

Carrie hardly registers that as she assesses the room.

CARRIE  
Noises?

DENNIS  
(hesitantly)  
Slurps. Chewing. You know. Noises.

CARRIE  
Seepage, you think?

DENNIS  
No. Not like that.

She studies him for a moment. Glances back to his mask wall.

CARRIE  
Are you going to kill me?

Dennis is taken aback.

DENNIS  
No. What? What does that mean? Who  
do you think I am?

CARRIE  
I'm drunk, so I'll ask what I want.  
You said no, so...  
(she congratulates herself  
on her cleverness with a  
sip of wine)  
Let's shake on it.

DENNIS  
Shake on it? Like a business deal?

CARRIE  
Like you mean it.

She moves close and extends her hand. Dennis takes it. Little  
hesitation. A pact is made. A partnership.

Their fingers linger together for just a moment longer than needed before breaking apart.

CARRIE  
I'm drunk.

DENNIS  
Okay.

CARRIE  
Now, tell me about the foundation.

DENNIS  
The foundation here?

CARRIE  
Where's your basement?

He looks at her. Points down. Down there. Just follow along.

INT. JIMMY'S MUSTANG - NIGHT

Jimmy's not racing anymore. Stalled traffic. Some sort of holdup. Sandra frets. Time is wasting.

SANDRA  
Okay, this is taking too long. Time for Plan B.

JIMMY  
Plan B?

SANDRA  
Pull down this side road. Find someplace where people won't see.

Jimmy arches his eyebrow. Veers down the road.

EXT. FACTORY LOT - NIGHT

The Mustang rolls into an empty factory lot. Parks.

INT. JIMMY'S MUSTANG - NIGHT

Sandra looks around to make sure the coast is clear and then crawls on top of Jimmy, kissing passionately.

SANDRA  
We'll do it here. Just this once.

Jimmy smiles. Right on.

INT. DENNIS'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dennis and Carrie--with her fresh glass of wine--stand alongside Bertram B. Dennis pulls his cord.

BERTRAM B.  
Die. Die. Die.

CARRIE  
Oh mother fuck. That's awful.

She laughs a little too long, obviously loopy.

CARRIE  
That's the first thing you should  
throw out. Right now, I'd say.

DENNIS  
But he's gotta stay. I made Bertram  
B. About fifteen years ago. He's a  
little rough around the edges now,  
but he's like de-facto family. I  
molded his face myself.

CARRIE  
So you just...

She watches Dennis bush Bertram B's coat.

CARRIE  
...molded your own family, huh?

A gulp of wine.

CARRIE  
So is Bertram your brother or your  
father?

DENNIS  
He's not Bertram. He's Bertram B.  
The B's important. And he's more  
like a scary, murderous black-sheep  
uncle, but one that you like.

Dennis thinks.

DENNIS  
Bertram B is all that I've got,  
basically.

The room goes quiet, but mischievousness takes hold.



DENNIS

And he does something else: He sings.

CARRIE

Mmm?

DENNIS

Want to see for yourself?

She considers. She's buzzed.

CARRIE

This is surreal, you know.

She waves: Let it rip. Dennis clears his throat and sings.

DENNIS

*Baa Baa Blacksheep, have you any wool?*

Dennis pulls Bertram B's. cord.

BERTRAM B.

I'll eat your guts.

Dennis resumes.

DENNIS

*Yes Sir! Yes Sir! Three bags full.  
One for my master, one for my dame.*

He pulls the cord.

BERTRAM B.

Die. Die. Die.

DENNIS

*And one for the little boy who  
lives down the lane.*

One more pull.

BERTRAM B.

I'll drag you to hell.

That's it. Carrie smiles a little, not entirely sure.

DENNIS

I'm sorry. I just made this worse,  
didn't I?

CARRIE  
Oh God. Completely.  
(she sips)  
A hundred percent worse.

They look around the basement.

DENNIS  
And it was bad to begin with.

She nods emphatically. For sure.

CARRIE  
Seems to me that you're pretty good at sabotaging yourself, dude. You join online dating and wear a monster mask: It was over for you before it began. You lost me at hello--and everyone else, too, 'cause of that damn mask.

DENNIS  
It was the only thing that felt comfortable.

CARRIE  
You should have said something positive about yourself. Something like this: Hi, I'm Dennis. I can make you a yummy omelet, which is more than most guys will do.

DENNIS  
Maybe next time--there's something else I want to tell you.

He pats Bertram B's shoulder.

DENNIS  
I ordered his string activated voice box from a company in Cincinnati, Ohio. His voice is actually my voice...

CARRIE  
What's wrong with you Dennis?

DENNIS  
Umm. What?

CARRIE  
I'll tell you what's wrong with me: I eat chalk. And I'm beyond drunk right now. And I'm a loser.  
(MORE)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. So what's wrong with you?

Dennis looks at Bertram B. and the coal bin door. Where to start? He picks words carefully. Finally...

DENNIS

What's wrong with me? Just one or two things, really...

Carrie cocks her head. Okay. Denial.

But Dennis isn't done.

DENNIS

I let things accumulate. That's obvious.

Carrie nods.

DENNIS

I've gone overboard on the horror items. But all this fake stuff helps me deal with the real problem in my life.

CARRIE

And what's that?

DENNIS

Getting swallowed up.

CARRIE

(swigs her wine)

I'm with you on that one.

DENNIS

I mean, literally swallowed up. I think right now that there's a tall man at my front door who has...fangs. And he's trying to get inside. I know that sounds crazy.

CARRIE

Yeah.

Carrie sways. Even booze and pills can't make this rational.

CARRIE

Not cool.

DENNIS

He's got long fingers. He's huge.

Dennis eyes the door leading to the coal storage room.

DENNIS

There's something else: I think that he--that tall man--could actually be in that room right now, listening to us. He's everywhere...I don't think he's like you and me. And he'll attack you at random. And there are others that are with him. Just as bad. I've seen them. You know what I'm talking about right? You never know what direction it's coming from anymore, but you know it's gonna hurt. What do you have to say about that?

Carrie swallows her wine deeply. Polishes it off.

CARRIE

I say that you need to talk to somebody about that, Dennis.

DENNIS

I'd tell them that I just want to bake stuff in my kitchen and collect a few masks. Be nerdy.

But she moves closer to the coal storage room. Point to door.

CARRIE

What if I checked that out for you?  
I'll go in and let you know.  
(Examines her empty glass)  
'Cause what's there to lose?

She plunges into the dark room before Dennis answers.

Disappears into the darkness.

Dennis is frozen. He listens to Carrie's soft footsteps. She's in there forever. Then her alarmed voice sounds.

CARRIE

Jesus, Dennis. Come in here.

Dennis gulps. With supreme effort, he takes one step...

...toward the unexpected...

INT. JIMMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Sandra and Jimmy are passionate in the back seat.

The plastic vampire teeth are in her mouth, and she nips Jimmy seductively with them.

He tries to take them, but she refuses and "bites" his neck.

When she straightens up, it's clear that someone is outside the car watching them. His face is pressed against the glass, distorted and ugly. Can't make out the features from here.

Sandra and Jimmy don't notice.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Now it's clear: Rottenham gets an eyeful of Sandra and Jimmy. Beyond all reason he is here. Materialized.

A moment passes. Then Sandra screams from inside the car: She's spotted the watcher.

Rottenham takes one step back. And then Jimmy rushes from the Mustang like a freight train. He's only partially clothed.

Jimmy tackles Rottenham with linebacker force and pulverizes him with blows. Rottenham absorbs the shower of vicious, angry shots to his face.

Sandra, semi-dressed, is out of the car, yelling.

All punched out, Jimmy finally turns to her. Grunts. His nose drips with fury-snot.

JIMMY

This cocksucker's dead.

That's when Rottenham shoots up. He snatches Jimmy's hand, bites the meaty thumb base. A chunk rips out. Blood flows.

Jimmy screams. For good measure, Rottenham slams his head into Jimmy's cheekbone, cracking it.

Rottenham looks dead-on at Sandra. He hiss-spits at her like a venomous lizard. Completely inhuman.

Then he's off. With a few steps he disappears into the night as quickly as he came.

Sandra tends to Jimmy, but he's up on his feet, searching.

SANDRA

Oh God. What. Was. That?

He's clearly in pain. Presses his hand against his shirt. Sandra tries to help, but he pushes her away.

JIMMY

Get in th' car.

SANDRA

We're going to the hospital.

JIMMY

Get in the car. Now.

INT. COAL STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Awful crunching and chewing sounds emerge from the room. No telling what it could be.

The old storage room is cramped and dank with peeling paint, crumbling brick and roots growing through the moldy walls. There are scorching and char marks. The embodiment of dread.

One dim overhead light bulb protects from complete dark, but not very well. Some slight flickering.

Carrie is crunching and chewing a stick of blackboard chalk.

Dennis is alongside. His fears were unfounded: No old boogeymen were lurking in the room.

They sit on the floor together. Carrie points to the roots.

CARRIE

It's not the end of the world. You can fix this.

DENNIS

I could probably get someone.

Carrie holds up her gnawed chalk.

CARRIE

Is it grossing you out that I'm eating this? Because it makes me feel better.

She waves the stick at Dennis.

DENNIS

No. Takes a lot to gross me out.

Carrie sits down on the ground in the middle of the room.

CARRIE  
I think I've reached rock bottom. I  
don't think I can get any lower.

Dennis sits with her.

DENNIS  
It's pretty low, I guess.  
(watches her)  
Let me try some of that.

He gestures to the chalk. Carrie frowns, pulls a stick from the box, and hands it hesitantly to him.

CARRIE  
Go on.

He crunches down.

DENNIS  
Um...good?

CARRIE  
I know. Yum-Yum. Right?

Dennis flinches a little at those words, but Carrie laughs and it's okay.

They sit for a moment chewing chalk together.

Dennis wipes his teeth with his finger.

DENNIS  
Best I've ever...  
(chews)  
Best chalk I've ever had on a date.

A voice sounds from outside the storage area: Bertram B.

BERTRAM B.(O.S.)  
...Coming!

Dennis frowns. Another malfunction. He leaves the storage room to fix Bertram B.

INT. DENNIS'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

BERTRAM B.  
Beware! Beware!

DENNIS  
C'mon, Bertram B. Shut up.

He whacks the doll's chest and it shuts up.

DENNIS  
Just be quiet.

He looks around the basement. It's very quiet.

INT. JIMMY'S MUSTANG - NIGHT

The car flies through the night. Jimmy is pure rage.

SANDRA  
This isn't the way to the hospital.

JIMMY  
I got it.

SANDRA  
You're hurt.

JIMMY  
This is the way, right?

He snarls and shifts.

INT. COAL STORAGE AREA - NIGHT

Carrie is pale. Dennis enters after tending to Bertram B.

CARRIE  
I don't feel so hot.

DENNIS  
We should go upstairs. I'll make  
you some coffee.

CARRIE  
I have a question.

DENNIS  
Ask me on the way up.

CARRIE  
Who do you think is prettier,  
Sandra or me?

DENNIS  
I don't know. How do you answer  
that?



CARRIE  
You just do. Don't be a politician.  
She's attractive, right?

DENNIS  
Yes.

CARRIE  
More than me? When you first saw  
us. Just tell the truth.

DENNIS  
Well. Yes. I considered her more  
attractive. But...

CARRIE  
I can't believe you said that.

DENNIS  
I didn't.

CARRIE  
I was going to be so nice to you.

Dennis looks straight at her. So nice to you...Wow.

CARRIE  
What Sandra said is true: My  
husband had a baby with another  
woman. Now he's my ex-husband.

Dennis is still hung up on something else she said.

DENNIS  
Nice. To me. Really?

CARRIE  
I was the one who wanted a family.  
That sounds so lame, right? But I  
wanted one. And look where I am  
now.

She leans onto Dennis.

CARRIE  
I got no family. No nothing.

She clutches Dennis's arm.

CARRIE  
I'm gonna be sick.

BERTRAM B. (O.S.)  
I'll see you in hell!

A hush falls over Carrie. She coughs. Hugs Dennis's arm. Tries to stand and then spits up a slightly purple substance. She collapses onto the ground. Dennis lifts her head.

DENNIS

Carrie!

She's out. Dennis turns her to the side. More goo oozes out of her mouth. He clutches her jaw.

DENNIS

Hey.

He opens her mouth and pounds her back awkwardly. He tries to lift her. No luck. All color deserts her face.

DENNIS

Hey? What's happening here? Carrie?

He rushes out of the room.

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dennis scrambles for his phone. When he finds it, it's completely dead.

DENNIS

Don't do this to me. 9-1-1.

From the basement is Bertram B's voice:

BERTRAM B. (O.S.)

They're coming. They're coming.

Hinges creak in the basement. A loud bang. Dennis scrambles.

INT. DENNIS'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dennis swipes a towel and douses it with water.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

He flies down the stairs with the dripping towel.

BERTRAM B.

...eat your face.

He bounds to the storage area and smacks into the green door. It's closed. He pushes and pulls. Locked. Carrie's in there.

DENNIS  
Carrie, open up the door.

Nothing. No sound. Dennis pounds. Slams his shoulder.

DENNIS  
Carrie. C'mon. Open up. It's  
locked.

BERTRAM B.  
You'll never get out alive.

Dennis takes one step back from the door. Shock.

Then he crouches and tries to peek under the door. The space is tiny, but he sees a bit of Carrie's form on the floor.

DENNIS  
I can see you. Can you hear me?

Something moves. Not Carrie. A shadow. Dennis jerks back.

DENNIS  
Who's in there?

Whispers from inside. Barely audible, then louder.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)  
Yum-Yum. Den-Den.

DENNIS  
Ah. God.

Dennis is frozen by indecision and fear. Wasted time.

From above: Dennis's doorbell rings three times. Urgent. Someone pounds the front door.

Dennis looks up. Now what?

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dennis hustles past the wall of masks on his way to the front door. The masks glower as he passes. Demons. Evil clowns...

INT. DENNIS'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

He reaches the door. Two shadows are visible through the glass. He opens to find Sandra and Jimmy.

Sandra's hair is mussed and her shirt is on backwards. The tag touches her chin.

Jimmy's eye and cheek are monstrously swollen. A bloody shirt is wrapped around his bitten hand.

SANDRA

We have a little problem here. Can we come in and straighten this out?

Dennis lets them in.

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sandra explains before the wall of masks.

SANDRA

Some crazy man bit Jimmy 'n he needs help. Where's Carrie?

She pushes the tag out of her face.

SANDRA

He won't go to the doctor until....Where's Carrie?

Jimmy snorts and spits blood on the floor.

SANDRA

Where's Carrie, Dennis?

Dennis's silence is heavy. What's there to say?

DENNIS

She's in the basement.

INT. COAL STORAGE ROOM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Sandra pounds on the green door.

SANDRA

Carrie, honey, open the mutherfuckin' door.

No response. She turns.

SANDRA

Dennis? What's going on?

Dennis stammers. Jimmy comes nose to nose with Dennis.

JIMMY

Get this open, or I'll put you through it, shithead.

SANDRA

What's happening, Dennis? Tell me.

DENNIS

She blacked out. She was drinking.

SANDRA

Blacked out? Blacked out?

These words are like an alarm. Jimmy thrusts a forearm, pins Dennis against the door. Dennis gasps out his explanation.

DENNIS

I went upstairs for help. Then I came down and it was locked.

Jimmy scoops Dennis's jaw and shoves it violently into the green wood. The bones near the shattering point.

JIMMY

Open it, or go through it.

Dennis fumbles a hand on the knob and turns hopelessly. But this time, it releases. And so does Jimmy. The door opens.

They peer in. Carrie is knocked out in her own vomit. She's bluish. Sandra rushes to her. Jimmy shoves Dennis inside.

Sandra cradles the moaning Carrie.

SANDRA

I'm so sorry, baby. So sorry. I shouldn't have left. But I'm here.

Dennis hunkers down next to the women, but Sandra recoils.

SANDRA

Get back.

Jimmy grabs him. Dennis speaks rapidly.

DENNIS

I don't know how it locked. I don't know what's going on.

JIMMY

Don't know? Think we can't see?

Jimmy unwraps his hand, which is greenish with infection.

DENNIS

Listen, Bertram's voice box was out of control. He wouldn't shut up.

(MORE)

DENNIS (CONT'D)  
Then she blacked out. Someone was  
in here with her, I think.

This is crazy babble to Sandra and Jimmy.

DENNIS  
It wasn't me in here with her.  
(a nervous glance)  
It was him.

JIMMY  
I'm gonna beat you to shit.

DENNIS  
But I wouldn't hurt Carrie. I want  
to get to know her.

Get to know her? She's knocked cold. Sandra sneers. Jimmy intervenes.

He punches Dennis squarely on the nose. A crisp snap. Down goes Dennis. The world goes blurry.

Sounds. Sandra shouting something indecipherable.

Bertram B's statue goes flying into the room, shoved inside by an enraged Jimmy.

Dennis's eyes roll back into his head.

The door slams, like the shutting of a tomb.

Bertram's voice sounds:

BERTRAM B.  
You won't survive.

Everything goes dark.

INT. DENNIS'S KNOCKED OUT DREAMWORLD - NIGHT

An acid-trip of a nightmare unfolds. Bad memories galore.

Monster masks float through the dark. They snarl and snap-- alive and angry. No longer attached to the living room wall.

Strange reflections materialize: fun house mirror images.

Rottenham grows long and thin in this mirrored view. The Potato Chip Man plumps out. The Costumed Visitor blurs.

A voice echoes.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)  
Join us, Den-Den.

Carrie's image also shows. She oddly sprouts tufts of blue fur. Her face is blue too, with dark circles around her eyes.

CARRIE  
Why didn't you help me, Dennis? We  
could have been so good...

Then Carrie's head falls off, but it's attached to a spring--like a jack-in-the-box. Her head bounces and sways.

She disappears and the void is filled by a blank screen. A projector whirs. Dennis's dream meshes with a memory.

A movie shows.

SUPER: "The Fun House, starring Dennis Age 10."

INT. FUN HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK IN KNOCKED OUT DREAMWORLD)

Young Dennis moves through narrow, dark fun house corridors.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Watch the young man as he meets his  
fun house friend. A few steps  
ahead.

At the corridor's end stands the FUN HOUSE BUTCHER, waxy face, bloody smock, cleaver in hand. He resembles a statue.

Scrawled in red on his smock is a single word: boogeyman.

Two boys pass the Fun House Butcher with no incident. Young Dennis is next. Steps cautiously to the motionless butcher.

The Fun House Butcher comes alive. His cleaver slams into the wall, a half inch from Dennis's nose. It splinters the plywood.

The cleaver is real, not a prop.

The Fun House Butcher pulls back the cleaver and beckons young Dennis to pass again. No way. Dennis won't move.

Customers gather behind him, grow impatient, push.

CUSTOMER 1  
C'mon kid. Go.

The crowd forces young Dennis towards the Fun House Butcher, who delights in every inch of Dennis's progression. He's pushed right before the horrible figure.

The Butcher brings his face to Dennis's. The man is horribly waxen. He brings the cleaver close.

A razor sharp edge.

Then the Butcher pulls back and waves his hand for Dennis to go through. The crowd pushes. Young Dennis moves along with the flow, away from the Butcher...at least for now.

INT. FUN HOUSE STROBE ROOM - NIGHT

Light pulsates. At first young Dennis is alone here, but the Funhouse Butcher steps into the room. With every flash, he's closer to Dennis, who turns to run...

He goes directly into the arms of...the Funhouse Butcher.

He's everywhere.

Rottenham materializes. Grabs hold too. A scream.

...And then a mechanical hiss...

...the film freezes. Goes in reverse. Speeds up...

Goes completely off-track.

The nerdy Film Narrator's voice sputters in for a moment.

FILM NARRATOR (V.O.)  
For centuries they have roamed.  
Conjured from amassed fears.

The images are out of whack. Dennis's face merges with the Fun House butcher.

FILM NARRATOR  
Swiping children in the night.

Dennis walks backwards in the fun house.

FILM NARRATOR  
Behind your back. Under your bed.  
In your window. Under your closet.  
Somewhere close.

The Film Narrator's voice warps and falters. The film comes to an end.



A bit of silence and darkness, but a familiar voice breaks in.

BERTRAM B.  
You won't survive.

INT. COAL STORAGE AREA - NIGHT (DENNIS'S KNOCKED OUT DREAM)

Dennis's strange dream brings him here--with Bertram B.

BERTRAM B.  
Beware. Beware. Beware.

Someone sits next to Dennis, who is back in his adult form. Dennis looks over.

Staring back is LIVING BERTRAM B., the ghoulish statue in human form. He wears the same blue suit as statue Bertram, but is of the flesh and fully mobile.

Living Bertram B grins. There's makeup on his face to match his namesake statue.

He resembles a cheesy host of a Saturday afternoon TV creature feature.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
(Still speaking in tinny  
voice)  
Beware, Beware, Beware.

He coughs. The tinny voice morphs into a human one. A little rusty at first, but then deep and engaging with practice.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
Baa...Black Sheep...Da...Dennis.

Dennis's eyes widen. Living Bertram smiles at him.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
You're dreaming, my boy, 'cause you  
got whomped in the head. You got  
nearly kill'd.

Dennis's face struggles for comprehension. Finally...

DENNIS  
I'm dead?

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
Better off if you was, but no.

Dennis is stunned.

LIVING BERTAM B.  
 I'm not gonna to lie to you,  
 friend, you're gonna be dead by  
 'bout half-past. Good 'n bloody.

Dennis is quite still.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 And if you ain't dead, you gonna  
 wish you was. 'Cause the  
 alternative is even worse.

DENNIS  
 What's that?

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 Too terrible to mention, boy. Best  
 you can hope from them boogies is a  
 quick death.

Dennis squirms.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 I'd kill you myself, just to get ya  
 out of it, but it ain't allowed.  
 I'd kill you nice and gentle.

DENNIS  
 Wake me up.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 I tried to warn you, but yuh give  
 me a piece-a-shit voice box with  
 just eleven words. I been repeatin'  
 and repeatin' 'em. Seems nobody  
 listens if ya got my ugly puss.

Dennis isn't amused.

DENNIS  
 I'm crazy.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 Not yet, but better off if you was.  
 There's nothin' loony 'bout you,  
 but nothin' lucky neither.

Bertram stands up and stretches out his legs.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 Christ almighty, I can't tell you  
 how great that feels. I been stuck  
 all them years.

Dennis tries to get up but slumps.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 They're a damn nasty crew.  
 Terrorizin'. Stirrin' up fear.  
 Sewin' confusion 'n distortions.  
 They sniffed you out as a kid. Them  
 boogies was gonna eat ya on the  
 spot, but they smelled somethin' in  
 ya which they 'specially liked.  
 They got the greatest plans for  
 you, kid.

Dennis leans close.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 It ain't your fault. They came  
 outta the woodwork, so to speak.  
 You're one in a million that way.

Living Bertram does a little tap dance, enjoying his new sense of movement. Dennis glares.

DENNIS  
 So tell me what to do. How do I get  
 out of this? How do they go back in  
 the woodwork?

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 You can't get outta this. Them  
 devils been toying with you. Can't  
 hide. You could try and fight 'em,  
 but it never worked out for nobody.  
 Ya need to be cunning. Try that.

DENNIS  
 But I'm not. I'm not cunning.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 So you die even earlier: not even  
 half-past. Maybe in five minutes.  
 Life's gettin' shorter 'n shorter.

Dennis shifts his weight.

DENNIS  
 Where's Carrie? Is she okay?

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
 Can't say for sure. Probably happy  
 to be away from the likes o' you.

Dennis thinks long and hard. And then...

DENNIS  
We didn't finish our date.

Living Bertram chuckles and does a jig.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
Ain't it finished already?

DENNIS  
No. It'll be over when I say it is.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
That's the spunk you need, my boy,  
but this is a nightmare, not a  
dream. Keep them dreams outta this.

DENNIS  
I need to make sure she's okay.

There is stirring outside the storage room door.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
Time to wake up soon. Time ta die.

Living Bertram leans close and puts a comforting hand on  
Dennis's shoulder.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
You been a good friend to me: my  
only family. Odd family o' course,  
but my one an' only. So I'll tell  
you a few things a fore ya get  
slaughtered. First, ya need a  
weapon to get in a few last licks.  
Hit 'em good and hard for me. Maybe  
buy yourself a little time.

Dennis stares.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
Ya nailed me together, so I'd start  
there. Break them boards and find  
one with some sharp nails.

Dennis nods. More sounds come from outside the door.  
Something's coming.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
I can't say where they got that  
girl, but they probably didn't let  
her get far. Same with the others.  
She'll be in danger, no doubt. Look  
for an opening, that's all I can  
tell ya. Be cunning.

Dennis takes hold of Bertram B's forearm. Grateful.

LIVING BERTRAM B.

I wish you the best, my boy. I'd help you if I could. 'Cause you 'n me is one in the same.

(He smiles.)

Now wake up because it'll be the last time ya can.

The dream ends.

BACK TO PRESENT TIME

INT. COAL STORAGE AREA - NIGHT

Dennis wakes. Living Bertram is gone, but the statue remains. Dennis approaches and, after a moment, kicks the wooden base.

DENNIS

I'm sorry about this.

More hard kicks. Wood cracks. Bertram B topples. Dennis pulls up a board from his base with protruding nails: a weapon.

Dennis looks at toppled Bertram B.

DENNIS

Can't leave you like this.

He lifts Bertram B and props him against the wall. Better, but Bertram still sags sadly.

Dennis moves to the door. Something rustles outside it.

Dennis stares for a long time. Then he pushes ahead. Out the door. No other choice.

But a few seconds after going out, Dennis returns to the room with an old backpack. He stuffs Bertram B.'s broken body into the sack.

Bertram's head and arms stick out crazily as Dennis slings him across his back. Bertram's blue suit is ruffled.

DENNIS

You're coming with me, B. Because I can't do this without you.

Dennis resembles a demented first grader going off to some godforsaken school.

He gives the board a few practice swings: Not intimidating in the least.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Dennis and Bertram climb the steps. Dennis holds his board ahead of him. Nails first.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Each step Dennis takes creates loud floor creaks.

DENNIS  
Carrie? You here? Anyone?

A small sound from somewhere in the house.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dennis takes many cautious steps.

Bertram B sputters to life.

BERTRAM B.  
Be-w...Kurrchzsplll....

Dying batteries. Dennis knocks hard at the voice box.

DENNIS  
Don't die now.

The front door is within sight. Dennis moves toward it. Stretches out his hand. Turns the knob. Opens the door slightly.

He could leave right now. Run away. Try to live.

BERTRAM B.  
Fuzzshhhh...pplg.

No leaving. Dennis turns back to the room. Holds out his board. Calls out to any hidden listeners.

DENNIS  
You've played your games, but it's  
all over tonight.  
(he searches)  
Because we're coming for you.  
Bertram B and me.

He moves to another room and hears a soft hum.

DENNIS  
Things are gonna change.

INT. DENNIS'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dennis enters, finds the once-gleaming room destroyed. Shattered dishes, strewn pots, smashed jars, splattered food.

Someone or something had a field day in here.

Even worse is the oven. Something's cooking, emitting a vile steam.

Sitting atop the burners are a half dozen of Dennis's monster masks.

Each flame reaches its height, intense blue, humming. The masks are scorched and melting. Horrible faces wither.

DENNIS  
Oh no.

Dennis flings open the oven door: six more masks roast in the highest heat like tenderloins. Latex and paint bubble, coagulate into a hot paste.

The entire room is in a bizarre state of meltdown.

And Dennis is on the verge of it too.

DENNIS  
Those were mine.

BERTRAM B.  
Krrrlkkzz.

Dennis turns off the burners and oven. Looks over the ruins.

DENNIS  
How can this...

A voice from the other room interrupts.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)  
(Sing-song tone)  
Yoo-hoo.  
(A beat)  
Yoo-hoo. Yum-Yum.

Dennis can hardly turn his head. He just croaks glumly.

Goo drips from a mask onto the oven's bottom and sizzles. A question forms on Dennis's lips. It's all he can say.

DENNIS  
Where's Carrie?

Foosh!

Something flies in and smacks the wall in a steaming clump: A melted mask. From the other room.

It sticks there a second before smearing its way down. The streak is red, almost like blood.

Dennis's jaw drops as he steps near the mess.

DENNIS  
Carrie!

Slap! Now something else flies up against the wall.

It's not molten mask this time...but warm guts.

They streak down the wall. Ugly red viscera.

Dennis cries out.

Another bloody ball of innards follows. Christ almighty. Whose are those?

Dennis snatches his board with nails and turns to the doorway, trying to figure it out.

That's when a piece of melting mask skin zooms into range and hits his brow.

It sticks for a moment. Dennis wipes off the gooey strand. A painful cry.

Then something is upon Dennis. It happens in quick flashes.

A clawed hand over his mouth. Long fingers. A greenish tint of skin. Fangs. Rottenham. A shadow. The Potato Chip Man. Drooling. The Butcher.

Dennis's childhood boogeymen have returned in full force.

One holds Dennis down. Bertram B gets trampled.

Someone lifts a mask from the oven and brings it close to Dennis.

...To put onto his face.

DENNIS  
Help! Somebody help!



He reaches for his fallen board of nails, but it's far away, just like his hopes of escape.

ROTTENHAM

Join us.

The mask goes over Dennis's face, but half of it falls apart and slops hotly to the floor.

...No matter. The second half hits the mark. One side of Dennis's face gets covered. Mask and skin meld painfully into one.

Dennis is now half man, half monster mask. Grossly divided.

He screams.

The Potato Chip Man bites Dennis's shoulder. Teeth sink deeply into his skin.

The pain is too much. Dennis blacks out.

The Butcher grabs his feet and drags him.

Bertram B.'s head has been kicked in, but he's still strapped to Dennis. He offers one last sad blurb:

BERTRAM B.

Nruffkllpg.

INT. WORKROOM - NIGHT

Lit by flickering candlelight.

The three boogeymen hover over Dennis's passed-out body. They are engaged in a ceremony. Strange religion.

A few incomprehensible chants fill the air. Ancient. Weird.

The trio is not seen directly, but through the shadows they cast on the wall via candlelight. Dark shadows on grim walls.

The old boogeymen seem even more horrible from this vantage.

ROTTENHAM

Dennn-nnis, Yes. Yum.

Rottenham's shadow spreads. His voice is an unholy sneer.

ROTTENHAM

Your soul has been taken--

The candle flickers.

ROTTENHAM

--by us.

A convergence of darkness.

ROTTENHAM

To ride with us on the night winds.

A few slurps.

ROTTENHAM

To be one in the same.

New shadows tremble. A story plays out in dark silhouette on the wall. A sinister, otherworldly shadow play.

The outline of a small boy. He carries a teddy bear.

The candlelight wavers. Out come the dark outlines of Rottenham, the Potato Chip Man and The Fun House Butcher.

And after a long moment comes a fourth shadow onto the wall. It belongs to Dennis.

Then Dennis's shadow morphs into something monstrous and terrible. Just as twisted and mean as the rest of the trio.

Now Dennis's silhouette stands with the horrible crew.

Together they reach out dark elongated fingers to the poor boy.

And converge upon him.

Chewing sounds from every direction.

Rottenham blows out the candle. It's pitch black in the room.

ROTTENHAM (O.S.)

(in the dark)

Every twenty blood moons we add one  
to our kind.

One last thought.

ROTTENHAM

We have chosen you.

(a beat)

Welcome, Dennis.

Silence.

After several moments, sleeping Dennis stirs.

He stumbles to his feet in the dark. He falls into his projector and inadvertently turns it on.

Cheerful music fills the air. It's from the same musical that Dennis watched earlier.

The happy music is totally out of place as Dennis sways in a painful stupor.

His boogeymen are nowhere in sight.

Dennis fumbles some more. Flips over an old workroom TV. It hits the ground and turns on. Green screen. An upside-down newscaster blurts the day's bad news.

Dennis looks at the musical shown on the wall. One of the singers is wearing old-fashioned dress. She's blurry, out of focus. Dennis reaches out a hand.

DENNIS  
(through swollen lips)  
Carrie...

For an instant, the singer comes into focus. She certainly does look a lot like Carrie.

Now other characters start to converge upon her. Their blurry faces are grotesque...They stick out their greedy hands...

Nowhere for the singer/Carrie to run.

The TV newscaster gabs phrases from the floor:

TV NEWSCASTER  
...properties underwater...lost his  
insurance...lost everything. Will  
be watching the vote uneasily...

Dennis shoves down the projector.

Light swirls crazily around the room. The music goes off tune.

TV NEWSCASTER  
...trying tonight to avert a  
doomsday scenario.

Then everything--the projector and the TV--flickers and dies.

Dennis staggers out of the room. And into darkness.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The lights are cut out. Dennis flips a switch, but it's dead. He sways. Only his barest outline is visible.

The light from the streetlamps outside provide the occasional square of light.

Bertram B is still on Dennis's back, but more battered than ever.

One side of Dennis's face bulges with melted mask, but it's too dark to get a good look, thankfully.

Dennis makes his way to one of the monster masks left hanging on the wall. It's one of the few that haven't been melted.

Dennis shudders. He slurps in pain.

He reaches out and touches the mask. Then, slowly, he touches his own face.

Not much difference at all.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dennis lurches to the mirror to assess the damage.

No light, but even in the darkness he can see a grim outline of his face. His bite wound is jagged. Seeping. Monstrous.

Dennis pulls off bits of melted mask from his face, but shouts in pain.

DENNIS  
(gravelly)  
Ah, no.

He lowers his head.

DENNIS  
No.

He feels around his face. Puts a finger in his mouth.

DENNIS  
God damn.

Dennis wets a towel in the sink and throws it over his head.

He drips his way to another part of the house.

INT. DENNIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carrie sleeps on a bed. Somehow she is here. Someone even took the time to tuck her in.

She's surprisingly restful, given the circumstances.

Dennis trudges toward her.

He stops dead in his tracks after spotting her on the bed. Then he shuffles over.

He tentatively touches her forehead and she stirs. The shadow he casts over her is long and threatening.

Her eyes are closed, but she speaks in a groggy state. Half-asleep.

CARRIE  
(A tired croak)  
Dennis? That you?

His shadow gets closer--he puts out a shaky hand.

--and then he wraps his arms around her midsection. He gives a giant, affectionate, reuniting hug.

Carrie opens one eye. Surprised, but still groggy.

Dennis has his head low, buried into the mattress. The towel is over the back of his head.

Still slung over his shoulder is the backpack with Bertram B's remains.

Bertram's head almost touches Carrie's at this angle.

A tuft of Bertram's ghoul hair falls on her cheek.

Carrie tries to sit up, but is stuck, so she rolls with it, remains in place.

She frees an arm and reluctantly sets it on Dennis's back. Reciprocating Dennis's hug. Sort of.

It's uncomfortable...and...somehow...warm.

As they hug--more or less--Bertram's voice sputters back to life.

BERTRAM B.  
I'll eat your flesh.

Now both of Carrie's eyes are open. She looks up to the ceiling. Complete puzzlement. What has become of her life?

Then she utters one small chuckle at the absurdity of it all and closes her eyes. Keeps them that way as she speaks.

CARRIE

I think I'm dreaming, Dennis.

DENNIS

(face still buried in the  
mattress)

You're okay. How did you get--

CARRIE

Shit. I overdid it. I don't know.

Dennis doesn't move.

CARRIE

Dennis, I'm so sorry. I was so  
stupid. So, so stupid.

DENNIS

Doesn't matter.

CARRIE

I'm gonna get my act together one  
day 'n make it up to you.

DENNIS

I gotta get you out. Now.

CARRIE

Gimme a minute. Please. Still a  
lil' sick.

DENNIS

It's not safe here.

CARRIE

I got to tell you something.

(coughs)

But I need to sleep a little more.

A moment goes by. Carrie breathes deeply. She has fallen back asleep.

Dennis lifts his battered face off the pillow. He's shrouded in darkness. He speaks to her even though she's sleeping.

DENNIS

Something bad is happening to me.

He watches her sleep. Gingerly feels his own face.

DENNIS  
Really bad. We need to go.

He is about to scoop her off the bed, but there's a crash from somewhere in the house.

Then comes a furious banging.

Dennis steps away from Carrie to listen. Then he's back before her.

DENNIS  
(to Carrie)  
Whatever happens to me, I just want to say...

He thinks.

DENNIS  
This has meant--

The loud knocking continues. Dennis restarts.

DENNIS  
I hardly know you, but I wish--  
(it's no use)  
Hang in there, please.

More noises. Dennis leaves.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dennis scoops his board of nails from the floor. Gives it a tiny swing.

He heads in the direction of the banging.

INT. COAL STORAGE ROOM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The noise comes from the coal storage room. The door is shut.

SANDRA (O.S.)  
Hey. Le'me out.

Dennis leans against it as Sandra pounds.

SANDRA (O.S.)  
Goddamn it.

Dennis slumps. Drops the nail board.

He sits at the base of the door for several moments as Sandra pounds away.

He stares, definitely not himself. He mutters to himself:

DENNIS  
I'm a goner.

He trembles, looks to the door and speaks.

DENNIS  
(Gravelly voice. Towards  
the door)  
Hey.

SANDRA (O.S.)  
Dennis? Dennis? Yeah?

DENNIS  
It's me.  
(softly)  
I think.

SANDRA (O.S.)  
You're in some motherfucking cult,  
aren't you? Get me outta here, you  
crazy son of a bitch.

DENNIS  
No. You got it wrong.

SANDRA (O.S.)  
You got those kidnapping  
cocksuckers to put me in here.  
Those freaks.

Dennis touches his bite wound, festering with poison.

DENNIS  
More than freaks.

SANDRA (O.S.)  
Lemme out, Dennis. I get wild  
sometimes, but not this wild.  
Things have gotten crazy, but now  
it's time go home. Call it a night.

DENNIS  
I was never bad, hear me?

Dennis oddly sniffs the edge of the door. Animalistic.

DENNIS  
But that's changing.



SANDRA (O.S.)

Open up.

DENNIS

Not what I wanted. But they pull people in sometimes. Change 'em.

Harsh breathing. Random thoughts:

DENNIS

See, my record player started going on its own. And then they started following me.

SANDRA (O.S.)

Dennis?

DENNIS

Goin' 'round and 'round.

Sandra is silent.

DENNIS

I liked that record. Liked all the masks. Practically lived in 'em.

(sniffs)

So maybe that's why they picked me: Was evil half the time already.

Dennis spasms a bit.

DENNIS

And now... What am I now?

He gets close to the door and starts humming, loud and unnerving. A tune from an old horror soundtrack.

Loo-luh-loo.

The weird humming makes Sandra go silent.

Then Dennis speaks.

DENNIS

You don't want me--

He gurgles.

SANDRA (O.S.)

Dennis?

Dennis shudders. Transforming.

DENNIS  
--to open this door.

Sandra goes stone quiet in the room.

Some drool falls from Dennis's lips. He clicks his teeth.  
They sound oddly sharp.

He's hardly Dennis at all anymore.

He licks his lips sloppily.

DENNIS  
But I'm gonna open it.

He licks his lips again.

DENNIS  
And you need to run.

Dennis reaches out.

DENNIS  
Outta this house.

Sandra is quiet.

DENNIS  
Outta this town.

Sandra is silent from the other side of the door.

DENNIS  
'Fore I sink my teeth...into you.

Sandra makes a small noise from the other side.

Dennis turns the knob.

Sandra comes flying out. Smacks into Dennis. Comes face to face.

She doesn't like what she sees. Dennis's warped face is straight out of a horror flick.

Sandra screams. Completely repulsed.

Dennis grumbles back at her. Guttural.

A new impulse takes over Dennis: he licks Sandra squarely in the face. An animalistic lick. Big, sloppy, sticky saliva.

Sandra's hair turns instantly white. Like an old woman's.

Dennis slurps and gurgles. His mouth full of infectious spit.

DENNIS

Yum.

She runs. Screaming. Knocking over things. She crashes her way out the room and up the stairs.

White-haired and whirling with fear.

Rottenham materializes over Dennis. Smiling with savage teeth.

Proud.

His face is sharp edged and greenish. Bulging eyes. Something straight out of a nightmare.

He opens his battered red umbrella and guides Dennis under it. It covers both of them.

Dennis grabs his board of nails.

Bertram B still hangs from his back by a thread, but he's an afterthought now.

ROTTENHAM

Eat.

He moves Dennis along.

INT. DENNIS'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

On the table is Jimmy McDonald, bloody, bitten. Severe pain. Completely at the mercy of his supernatural captors.

Rottenham shoves Dennis toward Jimmy.

ROTTENHAM

Eat.

Jimmy reaches out to Dennis for help.

Dennis gurgles and drools.

ROTTENHAM

Eat.

Dennis trembles.

Then Rottenham pulls a chunk out of Jimmy's flesh and shoves it into Dennis's mouth.

He whispers harshly in Dennis's ear.

ROTTENHAM

Chew.

Dennis gags, but Rottenham forces it back in with his long fingers.

ROTTENHAM

Fresh. Yes? Yum.

Dennis chokes it down. Slumps over.

A moment passes. Dennis licks his lips.

DENNIS

Ah.

He licks his lips again. Hungrily this time. He wants...

DENNIS

More.

Dennis reaches a greedy hand out toward Jimmy.

Rottenham pushes down Dennis's arm.

ROTTENHAM

More awaits.

He waves his hand. The Potato Chip Man and the Fun House Butcher emerge from the shadows.

The Butcher whirls his cleaver.

ROTTENHAM

Off with him.

The Potato Chip Man and the Fun House Butcher pull Jimmy away by the ankles.

Jimmy reaches a hand out for help, but he gets none.

He's pulled out of the room. A goner.

ROTTENHAM

(to Dennis)

Come. One last sacrifice.

He pulls Dennis to his feet. Whispers hotly in his ear.

ROTTENHAM

This is what you've always desired.

They walk. Rottenham hisses his words. Dennis still holds his board of nails.

ROTTENHAM  
To lose your soul.

Dennis gurgles.

ROTTENHAM  
To be free. Unburdened.

They move out of the room.

ROTTENHAM  
To ride the night winds.

INT. DENNIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ROTTENHAM  
With us.

They now stand over Carrie's sleeping body.

There is candlelight in the room now. Flickering. Casting shadows along Carrie's features.

ROTTENHAM  
Carnage, boy. Yum, yum.

Rottenham moves close to Carrie and sniffs her. Sniffs her from top to bottom.

After a moment, Dennis does the same. He's drooling, hungry. Bertram sags on his back.

ROTTENHAM  
Join us for dinner.

Dennis vibrates with terrible eagerness. What he wants is...

DENNIS  
More.

ROTTENHAM  
Very well then.

Dennis gets so close to Carrie.

Appearing the room are the Potato Chip Man and the Fun House butcher.

They bear witness to this ritual, this sacrifice.

The Fun House Butcher twirls his cleaver. Ready to take a chunk out of poor Carrie.

ROTTENHAM  
(to Dennis)  
Now we finish.

Dennis looks hungrily at Carrie's leg.

And then she sits up. A most inopportune time.

Her eyes are wide open. She takes in every horrible detail.

Then she looks directly at Dennis.

CARRIE  
I'm dreaming, Dennis. Having a  
nightmare.  
(dazed)  
An' you're in it.

She turns her gaze to Rottenham.

CARRIE  
We're gonna start by throwing that  
thing out.

Then she falls back in bed.

ROTTENHAM  
(to Dennis)  
Eat.

Carrie has one more thing to say in her sleepy delirium.

CARRIE  
Still got the flower, Dennis.  
Really sweet.

A familiar crackle sounds: Words from Bertram B's voice box.

There's hardly anything left to the poor statue. His words make no sense:

BERTRAM B.  
No...fu..chur..zup..ove

The sound makes Dennis step back. He's been snapped out of a trance. He looks surprised to be here.

Rottenham rips broken Bertram B from the pack and flings him across the room.

The old statue smashes to many pieces as he hits the floor. The Potato Chip Man and the Fun House Butcher converge upon what's left and start stomping Bertram to bits.

But the sight of Carrie and the final words from Bertram have brought back Dennis, at least for a moment.

He grabs his board of nails and swings it hard at Rottenham.

There is a sharp, satisfying crack.

Then Dennis does it again and again. Wild, angry, savage hits at his boogeyman tormentor.

A lifetime of fury unleashed. Satisfying blows, but ultimately ineffective.

Crack!

That noise didn't come from one of Dennis's blows. He looks down.

The Fun House Butcher's cleaver sticks out of Dennis's foot. His toes are now separated from the base of his foot.

The Butcher pulls it back. Toes tumble lightly along the floor.

The Potato Chip Man greedily snatches one. Crunches it between his molars. A long, delighted tongue extends.

Dennis's eyes roll back in disgust.

Now Rottenham hisses. And in an instant he is upon Dennis. Has him by the throat. Strangling.

ROTTENHAM

Rude. Rude. Very rude.

Dennis gurgles. Rottenham leans in close. Shushes hotly into his face: Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

ROTTENHAM

For that, you get pain.

Dennis continues to struggle.

ROTTENHAM

Rude. Rude. Very rude.

Massive fangs flare out from Rottenham's mouth.

ROTTENHAM

Very well.

The Butcher takes measure with his cleaver.

Zing. A splash of blood.

Dennis is cut, but the exact location isn't seen. Doesn't matter. The pain flares into his eyes.

He looks over to sleeping Carrie. And just beyond her on the floor is the crushed remains of Bertram B.

They start to fade. Dennis's face pales. Life drains away.

The trio of monsters commence some ghoulish business with Dennis's body, but that isn't the focus.

INT. CORNER OF DENNIS'S ROOM - NIGHT

Faraway shadows project onto the wall. New ones.

A rough outline of Living Bertram B and Dennis. So faint that they hardly show up. Thrown off from the candle.

Their conversation is hushed. Hardly from this world.

LIVING BERTRAM B. (O.S.)  
Good 'n bloody. Didn't I tell ya?

DENNIS (O.S.)  
It can't be.

LIVING BERTRAM B.(O.S.)  
Stinks to high hell. A massacre.  
It's a story as old as they come.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
So I'm gone.

LIVING BERTRAM B. (O.S.)  
Off to Eden with you, boy. Don't  
linger for this.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Is she next?

LIVING BERTRAM B. (O.S.)  
Those devils like their bellies  
full and she'll do her part.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
Do something.

A short silence.



LIVING BERTRAM B. (O.S.)  
 There is something maybe. Something cunning. The sort of thing from all them old stories.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
 Tell me.

LIVING BERTRAM B. (O.S.)  
 I couldn't help you in life, but this is the afterlife now. And that changes things. You just have to say the words.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
 Tell me how. What should I say?

LIVING BERTRAM B. (O.S.)  
 You have to say it just right.

DENNIS (O.S.)  
 I will.

LIVING BERTRAM B. (O.S.)  
 Then here we go, my boy...

INT. DENNIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carrie stirs. Coming out of her sleep.

The Potato Chip Man, mouth bloody from eating shuffles over to her. Sniffs greedily. The second course!

Sharp teeth protrude. Slobber. He's ready to bite her gut.

But a shadow slowly falls over him. A huge one.

As he looks upon it...

Swoosh. Squish.

The Potato Chip Man's detached head rolls on the floor. His torso remains in place a second before dead-falling. Sand pours out of the freshly cut opening.

His executioner: Living Bertram B. Still a little cheesy, but his blue suit is packed with muscle. A full-strength creature. All due to Dennis's dying oath-curse.

He holds a blade and whirls it. Who's next?

The Fun-House Butcher rushes toward him. Living Bertram B tosses him and they roll on the ground.

The Butcher tries to choke Bertram B but Bertram squeezes the Butcher's forearms until the devil cries out in pain.

They roll.

Now Living Bertram B is on top, choking the Butcher. Making his eyes protrude from his head. Such incredible rage-power.

Living Bertram B reaches out to find a cleaver...

And buries it into the Butcher's face. He sags into sand.

A jolt. Squish--

Rottenham's red umbrella protrudes from Living Bertram B's chest. Rottenham shoved it completely through.

Living Bertram staggers.

Then he roars full blast. Incredible force.

The two entities stare at each other. A standoff.

Living Bertram retrieves Dennis's board from the floor and thumps it over Rottenham's head.

Rottenham staggers. Then hisses. Then smiles. He pulls his umbrella out of Bertram. Rotten fluid is all over it.

Rottenham vanishes. Gone back into the night.

Living Bertram B is left alone with the two humans.

He turns to Dennis, who is dead and gone.

Living Bertram pushes down on his Dennis's chest. Grabs his bite mark. Grumbles some words.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
Come back, boy.

Living Bertram crumbles to the ground.

Terrible fluid flows from his wound.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
Life's over 'fore it began.

He crawls a few feet. Struggles to his feet.

EXT. DENNIS'S YARD - BREAK OF DAWN

Living Bertram B has made it out here. He slumps in the grass and peers off into the distance.

A ribbon of sunlight stretches across the pink morning sky.

Living Bertram B takes slow breaths and watches. Dying but strangely content.

His cheeks glisten.

Certainly first sunrise he's ever seen after a lifetime spent in an old basement.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
(struggling)  
Well would you look at...

His face starts to harden and crack and fall away.

LIVING BERTRAM B.  
...that.

Now he falls to pieces. His short life ended.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dennis is lifeless. Carrie is knocked out.

Then all goes black.

The whirring of a projector. Light shines onto a screen. One final film.

SUPER - "The Afterlife, starring Dennis and Associates"

Streaky images. Bizarre and without much context.

In the darkness are odd voices. A flashing red light.

Something takes shape.

INT. DARKENED ROOM - NIGHT

An woman sways oddly back and forth. Long white hair. A large wine goblet in her hand.

She swings back her hair. It's Sandra.

Crazy, spastic movements. Something spills sloppily out of her goblet, but she doesn't care.

She laughs and continues.

And then she fades away.

INT. PARKWAY - DAY

A bloodied man lies alongside a gnarled old tree. Completely chewed up. Two PASSERSBY approach this poor soul.

One of the passersby pokes the gruesome victim with a stick.

PASSERBY 1

He alive?

The bloodied man reaches out a hand. The onlookers jump back. They didn't realize that he was alive.

He gurgles something. It's Jimmy McDonald.

The two fellows run away.

Now the little film comes into sharper focus. Sunnier. Things look a little cleaner.

INT. HEALTH CLUB - DAY

A treadmill whirls. The runner is extra healthy. It takes a second to recognize her: Carrie. Sweat pours. A great pace.

Time expires. She stops the machine and towels down.

INT. STORE - DAY

Looking resplendent in a sun dress and long locks, Carrie looks over tasteful fabric patterns and throw pillows.

She's so happy.

And then comes a dark blur.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The images of happy Carrie are replaced by that of a man in a monster mask.

It's Dennis. He looks just like he did when he made his dating video.

He hums a few sporadic bars of a horror soundtrack. Then:

DENNIS  
I didn't make it.

Dennis tugs at the monster mask, but he can't take it off.  
It's stuck.

DENNIS  
I can't get this off.

He pulls.

DENNIS  
Take it off!

Dennis pulls. Skin rips. He shrieks. But the mask is off.

He turns away for a second, and then looks back.

Strangely, the face behind the mask isn't Dennis: it's exactly the same horrible mask face that he just removed.

Dennis's face and the disgusting mask are one in the same.

The film crackles to an end.

BACK TO PRESENT TIME

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dennis screams on his sofa. Awakened from a nightmare.

He clutches his face. Scans the room. It's tastefully furnished. A stuffed chair. Nice artwork. No masks.

Sunlight flows into the room. It has been painted a tasteful shade of blue.

It hardly looks like Dennis's living room at all.

Dennis looks to his bare foot. A few toes are gone--chopped off and eaten. But he's alive. Somehow he didn't die.

He looks thin, like a guy who has been through an ordeal.

A door opens elsewhere in the house. Dennis sits up.  
Footsteps approach.

Carrie walks into the room--still resplendent. Glowing from her workout. She hardly looks like the same woman.

CARRIE  
Hey. It's me.

Dennis looks shocked to see her. Disoriented.

She looks him over.

CARRIE

You okay?

Dennis feels his face. One side is scarred badly, but not monstrously--not like before, at least.

He's had a full year of grafting and healing.

DENNIS

Think I had a nightmare.

CARRIE

Another one? I'm sorry Dennis. The doctor said there would be. It's just going to take time.

DENNIS

Is it me?

CARRIE

What?

DENNIS

My face? Is it me? I was dreaming that my face. I pulled it off...

CARRIE

That one again. I'm sorry. You want me to get you some water?

DENNIS

Yeah. Maybe some water.

CARRIE

You're getting over a trauma. I know what you went through. I didn't see it directly, but I sense it, and I believe it. Nightmares are going to be part of the deal.

She gets closer.

CARRIE

I believe what you've told me, Dennis. Don't forget that.

DENNIS

And you've helped me.  
(looks at her closely)  
You've been there for me.

CARRIE

Probably have done more harm than good, but I know that you'd do the same for me.

He looks dreamily for a while at Carrie. And then he smiles.

The smile is genuine, connected, in touch.

Dennis from this perspective is pretty much a regular human being.

CARRIE

Woke up and found you just in the nick of time. You'd have been gone for good. Ambulance came just in time. A miracle.

Then she shifts gears.

CARRIE

Guess what. I brought some color swatches for the upholstery.

She holds it against the sofa. Dennis nods.

DENNIS

Yeah. I like that.

CARRIE

See. What did I tell you?

DENNIS

Yeah. Just like you said.

CARRIE

Got some refrigerator magnets, too.

She holds them out: watermelons.

CARRIE

Why don't you come out back with me?

EXT. DENNIS'S YARD - DAY

Dennis and Carrie dig in the dirt. Planting. Growing things.

The yard is brimming with colorful flowers. Dennis walks with a cane, but gets around pretty well.

Carrie trudges a bag of soil to another part of the yard. Dennis scoops dirt and finds something...

Two old remains. A plastic voice box belonging to Bertram B and a portion of his face.

Dennis holds the voice box for a long time. Weighing it in his hand.

Carrie calls to him.

CARRIE

Think we need some more tulips.

Dennis looks at the device, then back at Carrie.

DENNIS

Yeah. More.

He buries the scrap of Bertram B's face back in the dirt. A more proper burial. He whispers down to it.

DENNIS

Thank you, B.

He grabs the voice box and holds it for a while. Reflective.

Then a clod of dirt sails in and hits him in the cheek.

Carrie laughs from the other side of the yard.

CARRIE

Got-cha.

Dennis grunts, then smiles and flings soil playfully back at her.

Carrie dodges it and points to a spot on the ground.

CARRIE

I'm going to build a gazebo out here. I need four twelve-foot beams and a post-hole digger. Maybe we could make a stone walkway leading up to it. I'll draw up some plans.

Dennis nods.

CARRIE

Good thing I'm so nice to you, right?

DENNIS

Love every minute of it.



CARRIE

What are you cooking tonight? I'm  
starving.

INT. DENNIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carrie and Dennis are asleep on the sofa. Worn out after a busy day in the sun. They are alongside each other.

A muted TV plays an old game show. There are plates on the table. A meal enjoyed.

An air conditioner kicks in with a thud and Dennis opens an eye. The TV casts a light glow on his face.

He looks over room. Listening. Something's not quite right.

He gently separates himself from Carrie's side. Oh so carefully. He quietly leaves the room.

The silent game show audience cheers.

Noises from elsewhere: light banging, something rolls.

In an instant Dennis reappears in the room. Next to him is a rehabilitated Bertram B statue. Well constructed. Dapper. Better than ever.

Dennis sets Bertram B in place, but he's not done. He exits the room again. More banging. Rolling.

Into the room comes Dennis and someone new: a female ghoulish statue. A long-haired wig. Nice dress. A true companion. A name-tag on her dress reads: BEATRICE B.

He positions the two statues near the sofa and intertwines their wiry hands. They lock fingers like a happy old couple.

Then Dennis takes the voice box that he discovered in the yard and places it carefully into the new version of Bertram B.

All now is as it should be.

DENNIS

(quietly)

Don't let the bed bugs bite, okay.

Satisfied, Dennis squeezes back onto the sofa with Carrie. He kisses her forehead lightly and snaps off the TV.

The statues loom in the darkness, but it's not necessarily terrible. A sense of strange contentment exists in the air.

After a moment, there's a tiny knock from somewhere in the house. The tiniest noise.

Dennis shifts slightly on the sofa. For an instant, it seems like he's going to rise and investigate. Things are always out there.

But it's time to let it go. Dennis settles. Lets himself drift. The noise can wait for another time.

Anyway, it's probably nothing at all...

THE END