

Imaginary

by

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Image

Imaginary is the story of Scott Watterson, a college freshman whose greatest passion is doing nothing, and whose only friend is his high-school sweetheart Liz. When Liz abruptly dumps Scott over his lack of ambition, he finds himself with only one place to turn for comfort. Out from the depths of Scott's mind comes Bobo, an imaginary friend from Scott's childhood who conspires to reunite his creator with Liz at the final round of an interschool debate tournament. Along the way, Scott and Bobo must contend with difficult teammates, scheming opponents, a suspicious roommate, and Scott's own deep-seated apathy. In the end, Scott must decide just how much he is willing to change in order to keep things the same.

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FADE IN.

INT. THE WATTERSON HOME - EARLY MORNING

A small, inviting home in the sleepy post-dawn hours. A warm light fills the rooms, diffused by closed shades. We move slowly down a hallway, lined with framed old photographs.

In one, a young boy grins with a mouthful of missing teeth. His left arm is draped over the empty space next to him, as though around someone's shoulders.

The next frame holds a triptych.

1) The same boy, a year or two younger, sits at a picnic table with several other children, all of whom wear party hats. Before each of them is a piece of cake. There is an extra piece of cake to the boy's left, placed before an empty chair. The banner above the table reads: HAPPY BIRTHDAY SCOTT (AND BOBO)!!

2) The boy holds a forkful of cake out to the empty seat, as if to say 'Cheers.'

3) The boy struggles to defend the untouched cake from a chubby partygoer.

Beyond this frame is a Prom picture, in which the boy - now older - and his date pose in the traditional style.

We turn off this hallway into a room: the bedroom of the boy from the photos. It's messy, but with an order amidst the chaos. The walls are covered with Polaroids and other photos, all of the same couple from the Prom picture.

Only one picture in this room is of interest to us now: a self-portrait, hand drawn in crayon and yellowed with age. Despite being a self-portrait, there are two subjects present: one is a child, labeled "ME." The other is a small, monkey-like figure in an orange shirt and blue shorts, labeled "BOBO."

TITLE OVER: IMAGINARY

Beside this drawing is a bed, one that is unmade and - surprisingly for this hour - empty. It has clearly been used recently... so where is its occupant?

INT. EUGENE AIRPORT - DAY

Asleep on an airport bench lies SCOTT WATTERSON, age 18. SCOTT's the kind of guy that's easy to like, if only because there isn't enough to him to make anyone upset. His passion is endless -- so long as it never translates into actually doing anything.

SCOTT snores. A small but noticeable line of drool escapes from the corner of his mouth. Someone approaches him.

VOICE (O.S.)

Sir?

SCOTT doesn't respond. The GATE AGENT takes another tentative step towards him.

GATE AGENT

Sir?

She nudges SCOTT, who rolls over onto his other side.

SCOTT

(half-asleep)

Mmm? I don't wanna.

GATE AGENT

Sir, the flight you're waiting for from New Orleans? It's just landed.

Something about this fact worms its way into SCOTT's mushy gray matter. After a second, he springs up, alert as can be.

SCOTT

It's *what*? Oh my God. Oh my God. Why didn't you say something!?

SCOTT pats his hair. He's got quite the cowlick.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

How do I look? All right? Too eager? Is my breath okay?

He stops just short of breathing in the AGENT's face, instead smelling it himself. He gives it a pass. The AGENT gives SCOTT a curt smile and returns to her post.

SCOTT produces an elaborate sign from under the bench: "WELCOME HOME LIZ!!!" He steps up to the terminal, sets the sign at chest level, puts on a broad smile, and waits.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCOTT hasn't moved. He's still pert and perky, even as the edges of his sign slowly succumb to sweat stains. Behind him is a small crowd, which suddenly begins to grin and wave. The plane is deboarding.

Among the passengers is LIZ GORDON, who we recognize as the girl from SCOTT's photos. 19, self-assured, and beautiful, LIZ is up for anything, assuming she has the time. If she hasn't found her calling yet, it's not for lack of trying.

LIZ

Scott?

SCOTT

What it is, Lady Liz!

LIZ quickly trots forward to give him a hug. SCOTT responds by dropping his sign and twirling her around. She giggles.

LIZ

What are you doing here?

SCOTT

What kind of boyfriend doesn't meet his girl at the airport after her first semester of college?

LIZ

Most of them?

SCOTT

You should know by now that I am not most people.

MR. GORDON

Lizzie!

MRS. GORDON

Hi, sweetie!

LIZ pulls away from SCOTT to see her parents approaching. She rushes to embrace them as SCOTT waves happily.

MRS. GORDON

Scott beat us to the punch again.

SCOTT

I couldn't ask when you were landing, so I just showed up at the same time as the take-off.

(beat)

Time differences are not my strong suit.

LIZ
And I've got the 2 AM voicemails to
prove it.

The GORDONS chuckle as the group heads to baggage claim.

MR. GORDON
How'd your first semester treat
you, Scott?

SCOTT
Eh. Not much to it, is there? Go to
class, come back from class, watch
Netflix, sleep, and repeat, right?

LIZ
That's all?

SCOTT
Come back from class, *eat food*,
watch Netflix, sleep. Good call.

MRS. GORDON
Are you doing anything over break?

SCOTT
Like...?

MRS. GORDON
A job, an internship?

SCOTT dwells on this possibility.

INT. AN OFFICE - SCOTT'S IMAGINATION

SCOTT tugs at his oversized shirt collar as he types away in
a cubicle. His BOSS approaches, looking exactly like the
boss from OFFICE SPACE.

BOSS
Hey, Scott, I'm gonna need you to
give a presentation to the
shareholders six minutes from now.

SCOTT
Six minutes? But it's my first day!

He accidentally hits the space bar on his keyboard. A
COWORKER pops his head over the cubicle divider.

TOM
Scott, what did you just do!? You
just transferred all our corporate
funds to the Russian government!

SCOTT
I-

Another COWORKER enters SCOTT's cubicle.

JERRY
Scott, did you leave the copier on?

SCOTT
Maybe?

The copy room EXPLODES in a fireball, sending office drones
flying left and right.

JERRY
You idiot! Look what you did!

SCOTT
I-

A large piece of rubble falls from the ceiling and crushes
JERRY. SCOTT covers his mouth in horror. The BOSS calmly
takes a sip of coffee and checks his watch.

BOSS
Five minutes now.

INT. EUGENE AIRPORT - BACK WHERE WE WERE

SCOTT
I'm probably going to wait on that.

LIZ rolls her eyes.

MR. GORDON
You've got time. College is about
the journey, not the destination.

SCOTT
I'll take "Things My Father Will
Never Say" for \$300, Alex.

MRS. GORDON
Oh, Scott.

SCOTT
 But hey, I've got my Lady Liz back!
 (singing)
We're... To...gether again.

LIZ
 Yep.

SCOTT
 Come on, sing along! *Gee, it's good
 to be together again!*

LIZ
 That sure is a song you know.

SCOTT
*I just can't imagine that you've
 ever been gone-*

INT. A DINER - DAY

SCOTT plays absentmindedly with straw wrappers, pulling them off the straw and contorting them into shapes. This one is torn into pieces and folded together to become a little man.

He is alone in the booth.

The door opens, but SCOTT is disappointed to see an elderly man enter and sit at the counter. He returns to his work. Eventually, the door opens a second time, letting in LIZ.

LIZ
 (sitting down)
 Hi! Sorry, I hope I didn't keep you waiting.

SCOTT
 Not at all.

LIZ eyes the edge of the table, where a STRAW WRAPPER KING sits enthroned on the napkin dispenser, surrounded by dozens of his subjects.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 I knew you'd show up, anyway.

LIZ
 How's your break?

SCOTT
 It's good. I'm -- It's good. You?

LIZ
Good. Keeping busy.

SCOTT
Yeah you are. I never talk to you
at school, now I barely even see
you at home.

A WAITRESS brings over two hot dogs, one chili cheese, one
Chicago style.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
I hope you don't mind that I
ordered for you. Got the usual.

LIZ looks at her Chicago Dog, then up at SCOTT.

LIZ
Chicago Dog.

SCOTT
Extra peppers.

LIZ
I'm actually trying this thing
where I eat vegan now, so...

SCOTT
Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know that.
(beat)
Why didn't I know that?

LIZ
Must have slipped my mind.
(to the waitress)
Can I get a garden salad instead,
please? No dressing, no croutons?
Thank you so much.

The WAITRESS leaves. LIZ slides her dog over to SCOTT.

SCOTT
So what other deep dark secrets are
you hiding?

LIZ
Scottiebear, I'm still me. Are you
telling me your life hasn't changed
at all since August?

SCOTT
Not really.
(beat)
(MORE)

SCOTT (cont'd)
My homework gets done less. Which
is obviously your fault for going
to school out of state.

LIZ
Obviously.

SCOTT
But okay, what about you?
Journalism major, right?

LIZ
Starting it, yeah. I also joined
the cycling club, the Historical
Society, the debate team... and I'm
interning at the radio station.

SCOTT
Wow.

LIZ
Yeah, it's crazy sometimes, but --

SCOTT
How do you have that kind of
willpower that you can be a *vegan*
in *New Orleans*?

LIZ
What?

SCOTT
I'm just saying, if I'd gone over
there I would weigh, like, five
hundred pounds right now.

He takes a bite of his hot dog.

LIZ
I said to come visit, didn't I?

INT. NEW ORLEANS - SCOTT'S IMAGINATION

SCOTT emerges from a door on Bourbon Street, wearing pajamas. He yawns, stretching out his arms. Immediately, a GATOR leaps at him, biting his hand clean off. SCOTT looks at the bloody stump and screams.

He staggers backward and bumps into THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG'S DR. FACILIER, who blows powder into SCOTT's face. SCOTT's head begins to shrink. He screams again, the pitch rising as his cranium grows smaller and smaller.

INT. A DINER - BACK WHERE WE WERE

LIZ

Okay, first of all, there aren't voodoo shamans just walking around the streets of New Orleans, if that's what you were thinking -

SCOTT

Fine, so maybe they're not publicly identifiable.

LIZ

- and second, I thought you said standing in New Orleans' town square was one of your life dreams.

SCOTT

No, I said *New Orleans Square*. As in the part of Disneyland where the Haunted Mansion is located.

Beat.

LIZ

That actually makes a lot more sense.

SCOTT

That reminds me: what are your plans for spring break?

LIZ

Disneyland?

SCOTT

Yeah. I mean, hopefully. If it works out.

LIZ

Disneyland.

SCOTT

We can play it by ear. You pretty much buy the tickets day of anyway.

LIZ

I can't do this.

SCOTT

Hey, I just thought you'd want to ride Star Tours.

He points to her STAR WARS T-shirt. LIZ only glances at it before continuing with a sigh.

LIZ
I said I would give you one more chance, but...

SCOTT
Hang on. What's happening?

LIZ
There's no easy way to say this.

SCOTT
(stalling)
Why? Is it in Latin? You know what else is hard to say? Red leather yellow leather. Try it. Red leather yellow leather. You can't do it.

LIZ
Scott, please!
(beat)
I want to break up.

SCOTT
Why?

LIZ
I don't know. Yes I do. Lots of reasons.

SCOTT
Oh, good.

LIZ
No. That sounded wrong. Distance, mostly. It's just too hard to make time when I can't even see you in person. And then when we do talk...
(beat)
Look, college is the best thing that's ever happened to me. But everything I hear from you... it's like you don't really care.

SCOTT
You're dumping me because I don't care enough? Are you serious?

LIZ
No, you're right. That's not what it is. It's that you make me care
(MORE)

LIZ (cont'd)
for you. I used to think you were this breath of fresh air, because you didn't stress over stupid stuff. But you don't stress over *anything*. I have enough trouble keeping my own life on track without having to worry about yours. I need a guy with ambition. Someone who wants to do more with his life than go to Disneyland.

SCOTT
Well now you're just not making sense. I thought everyone knew that once you've been to Disneyland you have nowhere to go but down.

LIZ
Okay, see, this. This is exactly what I'm talking about. Problems don't go away just because you made a joke about them.

SCOTT
I'm not trying to be funny.

LIZ
You never *try* to do anything!
(beat)
Do you have anything to say?

SCOTT
What do you want me to say?

LIZ
That's not the question I asked.

SCOTT
You know I'd do anything for you. I love you.

LIZ
I know.

LIZ gets up and leaves. SCOTT runs after her. After a second, he comes back to throw money on the table. And then again to grab the two hot dogs.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

LIZ is getting into her car as SCOTT exits the diner.

SCOTT

Liz! Don't do this. I can change!

SCOTT is prevented from reaching out to his girlfriend by the hot dogs in his hands.

LIZ

Sure. Look me up when you do.

She shuts the door and drives off. SCOTT stands, mouth agape. He almost throws a hot dog in anger, but thinks better of it, taking a bite instead.

INT. DINING HALL - ONE WEEK LATER

SCOTT is still eating a chili dog, but time has passed, and he is now back at school.

RUSSELL

Hey, that's rough, man. I'm sorry.

Across the table from SCOTT sits his roommate, RUSSELL BAUMGARTNER. At 19, RUSSELL is the kind of easygoing that almost borders on judgmental. He looks like he should play a sport, but which one is anybody's guess.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

But at least you dodged that bullet, right?

SCOTT looks in disbelief at RUSSELL.

SCOTT

Seriously, Russ?

RUSSELL

Not the consensus?

SCOTT

No! I am decidedly crushed. Were you even listening?

RUSSELL

Honestly? I got a text right when you started. But she *sounds* like a bitch.

SCOTT

A bitch? In what universe does she sound like a bitch?

RUSSELL

This one? I mean, she dumped you out of the blue when all you wanted to do was go to Universal Studios.

SCOTT

Disneyland.

RUSSELL

Whatever.

SCOTT chews pensively on his hot dog.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

What was so great about her anyway?

SCOTT considers this, as if willing a dramatic monologue to burst forth. He swallows his mouthful of chili.

SCOTT

You know, I don't even really know. Out of everyone I'd ever met, she was the one I knew would be going places. I guess I wanted to go to those places with her.

(pause)

She called me a parasite, Russ. My whole life revolves around her, and that makes me a parasite?

RUSSELL

Of course not.

SCOTT

I mean, sure, I may have leaned on her a little hard now and then, but that's what a relationship is.

RUSSELL

Absolutely.

SCOTT

And I made her laugh -- we were symbiotic at best.

RUSSELL

Let it out, buddy.

SCOTT eyes his roommate.

SCOTT
You're still texting, aren't you?.

RUSSELL
No.

RUSSELL holds eye contact with SCOTT as his phone buzzes. It buzzes again. And again. Slowly, yet unapologetic, he looks down to check the messages.

INT. SCOTT'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

It's late.

RUSSELL opens the door and makes his way inside, visibly tipsy. He is greeted by the sound of Adele's "SOMEONE LIKE YOU," playing loudly from SCOTT's laptop. SCOTT is seated in front of it, his head down on the desk.

A GIRL almost follows RUSSELL into the room, until RUSSELL shoos her away with an apologetic look. SCOTT turns his head to see his roommate, not lifting it off the desktop.

RUSSELL
How we doing, buddy?

SCOTT
Bad.

RUSSELL
Yeah, I can see that.

He glances at SCOTT's iTunes. The song is on repeat, its play count coming in at 96.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Hey, wanna give Adele a break? I'm sure her voice is getting tired.

SCOTT
Fair.

He enters a few keystrokes. Within a few seconds, Richard Cheese's cover of "YOU OUGHTA KNOW" begins playing.

RUSSELL
You've got some idea of a breakup playlist.

SCOTT
I've never had to make one before.

RUSSELL

(oh boy)

Well.

(beat)

There's gotta be a positive in there somewhere, right? First cut is the deepest or something?

SCOTT

That's a good pull.

He cues up the Sheryl Crow version on YouTube.

RUSSELL

Yeah. Tell you what: while you look for that silver lining, I'll get out of your hair. Sound good?

SCOTT

All right.

RUSSELL removes a small bottle and plastic bag from his desk drawer. He slips them into his pockets and leaves.

RUSSELL

(closing the door)

Night, buddy.

SCOTT raises his head and tries poking around different corners of the internet. He opens up Skype in an attempt to call LIZ, but a red icon dashes his hopes. He looks for other contacts, and discovers that he has none.

Next to SCOTT's laptop is a framed photo of himself and LIZ at a carnival. Angrily, he pulls it from the frame and throws it away, revealing an old photo underneath.

SCOTT, no more than 7 years old, sits at the dinner table next to an empty place setting. On both plates are halves of a grilled cheese. Little SCOTT is positively beaming.

SCOTT chuckles bitterly before throwing the frame down. He clonks his head back onto the desktop and pivots it to look at the clock. Something about the time registers with him.

He's got an idea.

A wonderful, awful idea.

INT. EUGENE AIRPORT - NIGHT

SCOTT tries his best to run dramatically through a pair of automatic doors. A soft *psssh* sound greets his efforts.

SCOTT

LIZ!!

A quick glance around reminds him that he is still at the main entrance. He approaches the nearest desk agent.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Hi, sorry, what gate is the flight
for New Orleans leaving from?

CUT TO:

SECURITY LINE

SCOTT

LIZ!!

LIZ, waiting in the line, turns at the sound of her name.

LIZ

Oh, God. What now?

SCOTT rushes to his ex-girlfriend's side. He catches his breath and begins the speech he now realizes he did not prepare.

SCOTT

Don't go.

LIZ

Really? This was your plan?

SCOTT

I'm sure John Cusack had better
options than standing in the rain
with an electrical appliance.

LIZ

Goodbye, Scott.

She walks through the metal detector and is met with a beep. In her hurry, she had forgotten the source of the beeping - a necklace - which she now pulls off and throws at SCOTT.

SCOTT picks up the necklace. It's a simple pendant in the shape of the Millennium Falcon. He pockets it.

LIZ is now through security and on her way to her gate. Desperate, SCOTT pulls out his cell phone and makes a call.

In the distance, LIZ stops. Her phone is ringing. She picks up and looks towards SCOTT.

LIZ (ON PHONE)
 Seriously?

SCOTT
 Take me with you?

LIZ doesn't answer.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 I can't see your face from here.
 Are you nodding? Hello?

Feebly, SCOTT sings as much as he can remember of the chorus to "IN YOUR EYES" into the mouthpiece.

LIZ hangs up and continues her walk out of SCOTT's life. As his emotional linchpin drifts farther and farther from view, SCOTT's surroundings fade from his perception. He is numb and completely alone in the middle of a crowd.

INT. EUGENE AIRPORT - MORNING

SCOTT lies asleep on an airport bench. He snores. A small but noticeable line of drool escapes from the corner of his mouth. Someone approaches him.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Scott. Hey, Scott...

SCOTT rolls over, tired after a bad night's sleep. Slowly, he opens his eyes. Standing over him is BOBO, the imaginary friend from Scott's drawing.

BOBO stands about two feet tall, and resembles a monkey - that is, a three year old's idea of a monkey - in an orange shirt and blue shorts. Despite this fanciful appearance, his demeanor is that of a grizzled beat cop, one who has been around the block a few too many times.

BOBO
 Rise and shine, Sleeping Beauty.

SCOTT takes a moment to process what he is looking at. Then he screams. Loudly. This startles BOBO, who screams back. The other people in the terminal take notice.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 Calm down, Scottie, you're making a scene.

SCOTT jumps up into an alert crouch, trying not to move.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 What are you doing now? Are you
 freezing? I can see you. I'm not a
 T-Rex.

Panicking, SCOTT takes off.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 (to the nearest person)
 Can you believe this guy?
 (beat)
 You can't hear me.

SCOTT shoves his way through the early morning crowds until he makes his way to an escalator. He steps onto it, looking over his shoulder for signs of his pursuer. Seeing none, he sighs with relief.

When SCOTT turns forward, he finds BOBO standing on the step just ahead of him.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 I think we lost him.

SCOTT recoils again and tries to run. This means ascending a down escalator, a task that SCOTT barely accomplishes after much effort, and even more shoving. At the top, he runs through the nearest door, into the --

WOMEN'S BATHROOM.

Slamming the door, SCOTT discovers BOBO yet again.

SCOTT
 NYAAGH!

BOBO
 Honestly, at this point you're only
 embarrassing yourself.

SCOTT sprints back out the door, desperate for an escape route. BOBO stands in his path. By now, people have gathered to try and see what is going on.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 Scottie, it's me! It's Bobo!

SCOTT stops. The name has rung a bell. Calmer, he takes a better look. The face is familiar, no doubt about it.

SCOTT
 (incredulous)
 Bobo?

BOBO
 Ta-da.

Before SCOTT has a chance to say anything else, a TSA AGENT tackles him to the ground.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - DAY

A dingy room, mostly featureless. SCOTT sits at a table opposite a chair that is currently empty. That is, it's empty if you choose not to count BOBO's presence.

SCOTT
 What are you?

BOBO
 You'd think a guy would recognize his own imaginary friend.

SCOTT
 I recognize you, all right. But that doesn't answer my question.

BOBO
 It's me. It's Bobo.

SCOTT
 Bobo wasn't *real*!

BOBO
 Webster's Dictionary defines "Imaginary" as...

SCOTT rolls his eyes.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 You're talking to me, aren't you? That makes me real enough. Right now, I'd worry more about making sure you don't get arrested.

SCOTT
 What?

At that moment, the door to the room opens. A TSA AGENT enters and takes the seat across from SCOTT. BOBO hops out to avoid being sat on.

TSA AGENT
Hey there, son.

SCOTT
Hello.

TSA AGENT
I'm gonna have to ask you a few questions, if that's okay.

SCOTT
Yeah, sure.

TSA AGENT
Let's start with name, age, and occupation.

SCOTT
Scott Watterson. Eighteen. I'm a student at Wyndham College.

TSA AGENT
You from out of state?

SCOTT
No, sir. Oregon born and raised.

The AGENT places his hands on the table, adapting a friendly demeanor.

TSA AGENT
All right. Now, you want to tell me why you decided to run screaming through my airport this fine morning?

SCOTT is at a loss for words. His eyes dart instinctively toward BOBO, an act that does not go unnoticed by the AGENT.

The AGENT follows SCOTT's eyes, and BOBO looks intently at the AGENT in return.

BOBO
Tell him your sister is sick.

SCOTT's eyebrows wrinkle slightly.

BOBO (CONT'D)
Don't hesitate. Hesitate and he'll know you're lying. Just trust me. Your sister is very sick. Say it.

SCOTT
It's my sister.

To SCOTT's surprise, the AGENT's face softens.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
She's - she's very sick.

BOBO
You were here dropping off your
girlfriend when you got a call...

SCOTT
...that she had collapsed. She's at
the hospital, and I was just trying
to get down to the street...

BOBO
...as fast as you could so you
could hop in a cab...

SCOTT
...and go see her.

SCOTT and the AGENT stare each other down. Finally:

TSA AGENT
I'm sorry to hear that. We lost my
sister a year ago. It can be awful.

SCOTT
(genuine)
Oh. I'm sorry.

TSA AGENT
Mmyeah.
(beat)
Well, you caused quite a ruckus
back there. But you didn't hurt
anybody - or try to, as far as I
can tell - so I'm gonna let you go.

SCOTT
Thank you. Thank you so much.

TSA AGENT
Send your sister my prayers.

SCOTT
I will. Thank you.

EXT. SCOTT'S CAR - DAY

SCOTT
WHAT. THE HELL. WAS THAT?

SCOTT is on his way back to school from the airport.

BOBO
What?

SCOTT
Using a man's dead sister to get me out of trouble? That has got to be the worst thing I've ever done.

BOBO
What were you supposed to do, tell him you were being chased by an invisible monkey? You'd have been booked on drug charges *at best*. You ought to be thanking me.

SCOTT looks at BOBO in the passenger's seat.

SCOTT
How'd you know to have me say that, anyway?

BOBO
Look, I only knew he was thinking about her, not that she was dead. If I had, I'd have come up with something else.

SCOTT
Fine, but how did you know *that*?

BOBO
The average person's subconscious is a lot bigger than they are. I should know, I live in one.

SCOTT
(barely treading water)
Okay.

BOBO
When someone's stressed or emotional, it can seep out a bit, and bing bang boom, Bob's my uncle. Ever read Jung's theory of the collective unconscious?

SCOTT

No.

BOBO

Yeah, me neither.

SCOTT

I'm sorry. None of this makes any sense at all.

BOBO

You're telling me. Only six years into my retirement and BOOM! Back on the job. You're a pretty needy kid, you know that?

SCOTT

Yeah, I've been getting that a lot lately. Not what I meant, though.

BOBO

Hey pal, none of this was my idea.

SCOTT

I sure as hell didn't ask for you.

BOBO

Maybe not on purpose.

SCOTT keeps his eyes on the road, trying hard not to think about how crazy this all is. He can't do it.

SCOTT

What do you mean, you *retired*?

BOBO

I mean you finally outgrew me. Or so I thought. Imagine a world where everything you've ever dreamed of lives together in perfect harmony. That's your brain. That was my playground for the last six years. And I gotta say, it's a pretty cushy gig compared to this one.

SCOTT

Oh.

BOBO

But now I'm back. Don't know why, don't really care. But nine years is a lot to ask from an imaginary friend, and whatever this is, I don't have another nine in me.

BOBO looks expectantly at SCOTT.

BOBO (CONT'D)
Any of this getting through, chief?

SCOTT
(slowly)
Just the fact that I have an
invisible - mind reading - *monkey*
sidekick!

BOBO sighs.

BOBO
Fan-friggin'-tastic.

INT. STUDENT CENTER - DAY

SCOTT slowly plays a game of pool against himself, engrossed in a hypothetical argument. BOBO takes a particular interest in the passerby.

BOBO
I guess I just don't understand why
you can't use Statler and Waldorf.

SCOTT
They're too mean to play Hamlet's
friends. And no Muppet production
would pass up a chance at
Rizzocrantz and Gonzostern.

BOBO
Whatever you say, chief.

SCOTT bristles.

SCOTT
What good is it having you around
if you aren't going to play along?

BOBO
I spent a decade playing along!
(beat)
Don't you have class or something?

SCOTT
Not on Thursdays.

SCOTT shoots, missing everything, including the cue ball.

BOBO

God, this is worse than I thought. You know how I used to spend my Thursdays? Sitting in a hot tub with the Sailor Moon girls and that woman from the AT&T commercials. She's new, but she makes good conversation. I think she has an improv background.

A particularly off-beat student passes the table.

BOBO (CONT'D)

Jeez, get a load of this guy. It's 25 degrees outside, hippie! Do you think he even owns pants?

SCOTT

When did you become so cynical?

BOBO

I'd say it was about a week ago? When I was abruptly dragged away from my eternal reward? Remember that? And there's no shame in people-watching. You might learn a thing or two about normal society.

SCOTT

Says the invisible ape.

BOBO

I am *not* an ape.

SCOTT

Whatever.

BOBO

Look, I figure it's like this: I'm here because you couldn't handle losing Liz. Right?

SCOTT

I was taking it reasonably well.

Beat.

BOBO

I'm here because you couldn't handle losing Liz.

SCOTT rolls his eyes. He shoots again.

BOBO (CONT'D)

But! If you get Liz *back*, then I don't need to stick around anymore. You two lovebirds walk off into the sunset, and I can get back to my all-you-can-eat banana splits with Betty and Veronica. Everybody wins.

SCOTT

What's wrong with this Two Caballeros thing we've got going?

He gestures from himself to BOBO.

BOBO

First of all, I'm not even going to answer that. And second of all, I feel okay overruling the guy whose cry for help manifests as an imaginary capuchin.

SCOTT

You are *not* a capuchin.

BOBO

And then trashes my self-image.

SCOTT

Chimp is your best bet. The ears.

BOBO

The tail, though.

SCOTT

True.

BOBO

(grabbing his tail)
Speaking of which, my tail is killing me. All these idiots keep stepping on it.

JOCK

(passing by with a friend)
Lisa keeps shutting me out. It's like she doesn't trust me anymore.

SCOTT

Well, maybe you should try keeping it in your pants.

The JOCK stops and gives SCOTT a look of silent rage. SCOTT looks back, uncomprehending, but with fear behind his eyes.

INT. SCOTT'S DORM ROOM - DAY

SCOTT sits at his desk, a bloody tissue pressed to his nose.
BOBO sits on SCOTT's bed.

BOBO

So. How do we show Liz the new and improved Scott Watterson?

He gives his friend a once over.

BOBO (CONT'D)

I guess we have to start by improving you.

SCOTT grimaces.

BOBO (CONT'D)

She said you don't take an interest in things. What interests you?

He gets no answer.

BOBO (CONT'D)

Come on. Anything at all. Just shout it out when you know.

SCOTT

Star Wars?

Beat.

BOBO

Okay, let's take a step back. What is *she* interested in?

SCOTT

Journalism... New Orleans history... also *Star Wars*...

BOBO

You're not going to win her back using *Star Wars*, so you can just drop that right now.

SCOTT

Fine.

BOBO

The other two could work. Maybe a blog about New Orleans history.

SCOTT considers this. It sounds like work.

SCOTT
Question.

BOBO
Yes.

SCOTT
Can the blog be about the Haunted
Mansion instead?

BOBO
Great question. No.

SCOTT
Why not? It has history. It's been
open since 1969.

BOBO
Why do you know *that* offhand?

SCOTT shrugs.

BOBO (CONT'D)
Write for the campus newspaper?

INT. NEWSROOM - SCOTT'S IMAGINATION

A newsroom straight out of HIS GIRL FRIDAY. J. JONAH JAMESON
barges in.

JAMESON
WATTERSON! You missed your
deadline, so we had to fill the
extra space with this picture of
you wearing women's underwear!

He slaps the paper down on SCOTT's desk. The entire newsroom
bursts into mocking laughter.

INT. SCOTT'S DORM ROOM - BACK WHERE WE WERE

SCOTT
Not gonna happen.

INT. STUDENT CENTER - NIGHT

SCOTT badgers BOBO with more hypotheticals. Having learned
his lesson earlier, SCOTT holds a cell phone to his ear.

SCOTT
Okay, who would win in a fight --

BOBO
Superman.

SCOTT
You didn't let me finish.

BOBO
Am I wrong?

They pass by a table with a banner reading WYNDHAM DEBATE. At it are seated ARMIN SOBCHAK and DINA VACARRO, the team's two members.

ARMIN is never happier than when correcting someone else's factual inaccuracies. He has trouble making friends, though he can't seem to figure out why.

DINA, on the other hand, knows exactly why she has no friends. They're a source of weakness, plain and simple.

BOBO takes notice of these two, remembering LIZ's words to SCOTT during their disastrous lunch.

LIZ (V.O.)
...the cycling club, the Historical Society, the debate team...

Ding.

At the table, DINA calls out to a passerby.

DINA
Hey! You! Join the debate team?

ARMIN
We're looking for new members.

DING.

The passerby seems uninterested. He leaves.

DINA
(to Armin)
Tell them about the finals. Who wouldn't want to go to New Orleans? Besides you, I mean.

ARMIN
Heat makes me sweat.

DINA
Heat makes everyone sweat, dingus.

DING DING DING DING DING.

Amidst all of this, SCOTT has been caught up in his own thoughts.

SCOTT
Superman... or the Incredible Hulk?

BOBO hops up on SCOTT's head and peers into his face.

BOBO
SCOTT!

SCOTT
Gah!

BOBO
See that guy over there?

He points towards ARMIN.

BOBO (CONT'D)
He said *The Princess Bride* sucks.

SCOTT
He what?

BOBO
Straight up called it the worst
movie ever made.

Angrily, SCOTT 'hangs up' his phone and marches to ARMIN's table. BOBO hops to the ground and rubs his hands in glee.

SCOTT
(to Armin)
I will have you know that *The Princess Bride* is a perfect film.

ARMIN
Oh... you want to do this here?

SCOTT
We can do this anywhere you want.

ARMIN looks at DINA, who shrugs.

ARMIN
Okay. Um... why do you think that?

SCOTT
Why would you *not* think that?

ARMIN
That's too rhetorical.

DINA
What specifically is good about it?

SCOTT's taken aback. This isn't what he was expecting.

SCOTT
Well... it's hilarious, for one thing. But it's got heart, too. It's on that razor's edge between sincerity and snark.

DINA
Too much sincerity for my taste.

SCOTT
Well, it's not for everyone --

DINA
Never concede. Gives your opponent an opening.

SCOTT
Okay... The hokeyness works because of how overblown it is. It's a stereotypical storybook that's commenting on itself.

ARMIN
Incessantly commenting on itself.

SCOTT
But that's how it operates. It makes fun of itself before we get the chance. Then, when our guard is down it slips in and makes us care.

ARMIN
That's all from the book, though.

SCOTT continues talking as we fade out and back in. Time has passed. DINA is half asleep, but ARMIN remains engrossed.

SCOTT
- so Samuel Beckett drove him to school!

DINA
 (waking herself)
 What does that have to do with the
 movie?

SCOTT
 Nothing, I guess.
 (beat)
 Yeah, I'm out of arguments.

ARMIN
 Well, then.

He turns to DINA once more. She shrugs again.

ARMIN (CONT'D)
 That was - unorthodox. But we'll
 take you!

He extends his hand. SCOTT shakes it instinctively. BOBO gives a triumphant fist pump.

SCOTT
 Darn right! Wait, what?

ARMIN
 I didn't catch your name.

SCOTT
 It's Scott, but --

ARMIN
 Hey, Scott. I'm Armin. This is
 Dina. As of now, the group meets on
 Wednesdays, but if that's no good
 for you, we can work it out.

SCOTT
 What's going on right now?

ARMIN
 I'm sorry, I know this is happening
 fast, but we actually have a match
 in a week, so we can't waste time.

For the first time, SCOTT sees the banner. At the word DEBATE, his heart skips a beat.

SCOTT
 Oh... oh, no. I'm sorry. I didn't
 -- this was a mistake. I'm not
 looking to join any team, or club,
 or anything.

DINA
(confused)
What did you think this was?

SCOTT
You know, I'm not sure. I just
really like *The Princess Bride*.

DINA
But we have a sign. It's right
there. *You debated us*.

SCOTT
I know. I didn't mean to. Which
sounds weird, but -- Goodbye.

He leaves DINA and ARMIN behind, looking confusedly at each other. BOBO rushes after his creator.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

SCOTT 'gets on his phone' as BOBO catches up with him.

BOBO
Scott! Scott, come on!

SCOTT
The debate team? That's your plan?

BOBO
One of us has to have one! Liz does
debate. And if you win, you get to
go to New Orleans. It's perfect!

SCOTT
It's a pipe dream.

BOBO
I'd be with you every step of the
way. How bad could it be?

INT. AUDITORIUM - SCOTT'S IMAGINATION

SCOTT stands at a podium ready to deliver his opening remarks. DENZEL WASHINGTON is there.

SCOTT opens his mouth, and --

EXT. CAMPUS - BACK WHERE WE WERE

BOBO

Oh, no no no. Don't give me that. I want a straight answer. What are you so afraid of?

SCOTT

I'm not afraid. I just don't feel like wasting my time.

BOBO

Because it's so valuable.

SCOTT keeps on walking.

BOBO (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna let this go, Scottie. You know I won't. Why are you just going to let her get away from you?

SCOTT

(bursting)

Because what if she's right!? What if I really am good for nothing?

BOBO

I promise you're not. But you'd rather be good for nothing on purpose. Flawless logic, there.

SCOTT

I don't need to listen to you.

BOBO

Maybe not, but I *am* caught up in this. Think of someone besides yourself for a change!

SCOTT

You are myself!

BOBO

I wouldn't be if I had any say in the matter!

SCOTT heads off. BOBO runs towards his creator, but SCOTT sends BOBO flying with a swat of his hand.

The imaginary friend lands roughly on the ground. SCOTT looks back in momentary regret before continuing onward.

BOBO brushes himself off and follows.

INT. DINING HALL - EVENING

A day has passed. An out-of-it SCOTT has dinner with RUSSELL, picking unenthusiastic at his food. RUSSELL is confused about something.

RUSSELL
Wait, back up a sec... who would
the Ghost be?

SCOTT
Yeah. I thought Sam the Eagle, but
he'd make a good Claudius.

RUSSELL
Where does that leave Fozzie?

SCOTT
Horatio.

RUSSELL
Got it.

RUSSELL looks at SCOTT with concern. This is well below his normal energy level, especially when Muppets are involved. RUSSELL decides to test something.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Speaking of ghosts, did you hear a
weird noise in the hallway last
night? Around three o'clock?

SCOTT shakes his head no.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Hmm. Okay. I'll have to remember to
put out a recorder tonight, see if
I can catch it on tape.

BOBO eyes RUSSELL with fascination. This revelation doesn't even register with SCOTT.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
How's the Liz situation?

SCOTT
Fine. Totally over it. In fact, I
saw that cute barista again today.

RUSSELL
But you didn't talk to her?

INT. A COFFEE SHOP - SCOTT'S IMAGINATION

SCOTT gets a face full of scalding hot coffee.

INT. DINING HALL - BACK WHERE WE WERE

SCOTT
These things take time.

RUSSELL
You just don't seem like yourself.

SCOTT
What do I usually seem like?

RUSSELL thinks for a minute. That's a decent question.

RUSSELL
Have you ever, like, left a TV on
while you were doing something
else? So the background noise is
just this stream of movie quotes?

This SCOTT *does* react to, before sinking back into his haze.

INT. STUDENT CENTER - NIGHT

SCOTT leaves the dining hall and walks through the main area. Across the room, he spies the Debate table, where DINA and ARMIN continue their unsuccessful recruiting.

INT. DORM LOUNGE - NIGHT

The glow of a television screen illuminates SCOTT's figure on the sofa of the dark common room.

On screen, PRINCESS LEIA declares her love for HAN SOLO, which he reciprocates, though in fewer words. SCOTT groans.

On the next channel, a bathrobe-clad STEVE MARTIN declares to the universe that he doesn't need anyone. Nothing except this ashtray. And this paddle game. And this remote control.

SCOTT's eyes turn uneasily towards the remote in his own hand. They travel slowly across his lap to his other hand, which holds a paddle ball.

Next to him, BOBO raises an eyebrow. He doesn't need to say anything. SCOTT knows full well what he's become.

SCOTT
Dammit.

INT. STUDENT CENTER - DAY

SCOTT stands before DINA and ARMIN at their table.

SCOTT
Do you guys still need that third
member?

INT. BACKSTAGE - EVENING

Wyndham debate waits for the first match with their new
lineup to begin. SCOTT trembles visibly.

SCOTT
I can't even remember the last time
I was this nervous.

ARMIN
You'll be fine. You've got us.

BOBO
(winking)
And a little something extra.

INT. AUDITORIUM - EVENING

The match is ongoing, and Wyndham's opponents are finishing
their opening argument.

NADIA
...acts of violence are committed
at such a rate that we are becoming
desensitized to them. The last
thing we need is a means for our
children to virtually commit those
same acts with no semblance of
consequence.

BOBO
(contemplative)
Press her on the research. It's
phony and she knows it.

SCOTT
Hmm?

BOBO
 (pointing to his own head)
 Spidey senses, remember?

SCOTT repeats the advice into DINA's ear. It's worth a shot.

DINA
 Point of information? Did you come
 across any *legitimate* statistical
 research linking video games to
 real world violence?

NADIA
 I don't understand the question.
 There are any number of studies -

DINA
 Carried out by anti-gaming lobbies.
 Did it ever cross your mind that
 there could be a conflict of
 interest at work here?

NADIA
 I suppose I'm just confused about
 what you're asking me to clarify.

DINA
 (flaring up)
 Mostly whether or not you meant to
 come across as a complete idiot.

The audience murmurs.

JUDGE
 Thank you, Miss Vacarro. This line
 of questioning is now over.

ARMIN pinches the bridge of his nose in frustration.

BOBO
 Well. I guess that's good to know
 moving forward.

LATER.

ARMIN is cross-examined by the opposition.

MINA
 ...claimed that video games build
 motor control and critical
 thinking. Do you suggest that *only*
 violent video games can do this?

ARMIN

Well... technically, a reflex-based puzzle game like Tetris would be ideal for both those categories.

SCOTT

(whispering to DINA)

What's he doing? He just agreed with them!

DINA shakes her head sadly. This is par for the course.

BOBO

Also -- Tetris? Did he drive here in a DeLorean?

MINA

So you don't consider violence a prerequisite for the positive properties of gaming?

ARMIN

Of course not. That'd be arbitrary.

BOBO

(to Scott)

You've got to help him, Scottie. We need this win. You need this win. Most importantly, *I* need this win.

MINA

So if a child were to sit down for a game of Hero's Call -

DINA

Do you mean Call of Duty?

MINA

Yes, thank you. A game of Call of Duty -

DINA

Which one?

MINA

I don't think it's relevant, but - let's say -- the most recent one. If this child sits down to try for a new high score --

From across the stage, BOBO stares intently at MINA.

BOBO

She's nervous. I don't think this girl has touched a video game in her life.

An idea begins to form in BOBO's mind. In the blink of an eye, his monkey head pops up at MINA's podium. He skims her notes, then the notes of her teammates.

BOBO (CONT'D)

None of them have! There's not a specific example in their whole argument! We can bluff these guys to hell and back.

SCOTT is a bit alarmed by BOBO's level of independence. But he can deal with that later. The match is in jeopardy.

SCOTT pulls a chain from his collar. On it hangs LIZ's Millennium Falcon pendant. SCOTT closes his fist around it, and gives BOBO a small nod.

SCOTT

(interrupting Mina)

I think what my teammate is trying to say...

All eyes turn to SCOTT. SCOTT immediately notices these eyes, and freezes in place.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Uh -- What he's trying to say -- is -- Tetris -- First of all, Call of Duty doesn't have high scores --

With that, he's out of ammo. All of a sudden, the room seems very dark. Darker than it was before. And yet, SCOTT is aware of every single person in it.

Watching him. Judging him. Drinking in his failure.

SCOTT takes a deep breath, but all this does is keep him on his feet for another second. Then one more. DINA and ARMIN exchange a glance. Is he broken? Should they do something?

Angrily, BOBO rolls his eyes.

BOBO

I've gotta do everything myself.

He jumps onto SCOTT's head. He begins to speak. SCOTT immediately snaps out of it and speaks along with him.

BOBO

The root of the human experience...

SCOTT

... is *conflict*. Conflict helps us grow. Put conflict into a video game, and it will, *on occasion*, manifest as violence. That's just how it works. Of course, you offered some counter-examples, and I'm sure no one here has anything *bad* to say about Tetris. You've played your fair share, I imagine?

MINA

(flustered)

Of course.

BOBO glances at her face. He shakes his head. She's lying.

SCOTT

Naturally. I have too. Hell, I've probably played ten people's fair share. But you know the thing about Tetris?

BOBO

It never ends.

SCOTT

It. Never. Ends. There is no finish line in Tetris. Or Frogger. Or Donkey Kong.

Behind SCOTT, ARMIN's brow wrinkles.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

There is no success. Only failure. Only the gradual realization of our own inadequacy, our inability...

BOBO

...to maintain the status quo. Games like Tetris push us to best ourselves time and time again, but the message they send is clear:

SCOTT

We will never, ever, be good enough. Is that what we want to teach our children? I for one would like to see a world where my sons and daughters can not only believe

(MORE)

SCOTT (cont'd)
 in good's ability to win the day,
 but live that belief firsthand.

BOBO
 And if they have to stomp some
 Goombas or shoot some terrorists to
 make that happen...

SCOTT
 Then so be it.

BOBO hops down, leaving SCOTT amazed at what he just did.
 SCOTT looks in awe at his imaginary friend. BOBO simply
 points to SCOTT's head before tapping his own.

Slowly, gradually, the audience applauds.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The curtains part to make way for SCOTT's triumphant
 entrance. His teammates follow.

SCOTT
 One down, four to go!

BOBO hops onto SCOTT's head and gives him a noogie.

DINA
 Nice job, rookie.

ARMIN sits down sullenly in a corner.

ARMIN
 Good match.
 (beat)
 Although I suppose if you want to
 be nitpicky --

DINA
 Oh, here we go.

ARMIN
 Donkey Kong -- you know -- *does*
 have an ending. Tetris, too.

SCOTT
 Kill screens don't count.

ARMIN
 Maybe. Maybe not.

SCOTT

They picked the topic. If I knew more about it than them, that's their fault. Or at least not mine.

ARMIN

I just think a good team wouldn't need moral ambiguity to win.

DINA

At least we *did* win for once.

ARMIN gets up.

ARMIN

Ah, yes. And thank you for all *your* help with that, Dina.

DINA

Armin -

He starts closing in on her.

ARMIN

I counted six ad hominems tonight. Almost broke your record. Maybe you did. After a point, I lost track.

DINA

(bristling)

Armin, that's not -

ARMIN

Frankly, I'm shocked the judge let you get away with it. How much did you have to pay him off?

DINA

YOUR MOTHER!!

DINA tackles ARMIN to the ground and grapples with him. ARMIN tries feebly to slap her away.

SCOTT and BOBO watch with a mixture of fear and fascination.

BOBO

Kinda makes you wonder what happened to their last guy.

INT. DINING HALL - EVENING

SCOTT's appetite has returned, though RUSSELL's towering plate still dwarfs SCOTT's. BOBO hangs by SCOTT's side.

RUSSELL
Debate, eh?

SCOTT
Yep.

RUSSELL
What do you debate? Like, politics?

SCOTT
I don't know. It's always different. Social policies. Prayer in schools. That kind of thing.

RUSSELL
What about Bigfoot?

SCOTT
I don't think you can debate the existence of Bigfoot.

RUSSELL
Why not?

SCOTT
Say you go out looking for Bigfoot and you don't find him. All you've actually proven is that you couldn't find Bigfoot. I think.

RUSSELL
So he *could* exist.

SCOTT
Sure.

RUSSELL
You know, over sixty percent of all Bigfoot sightings occur here in the Pacific Northwest.

SCOTT squints his eyes in vague suspicion. He seeks insight from BOBO with a silent look, but gets only a shrug.

SCOTT
I did not know that. Thanks, Spooky Mulder.

Some of RUSSELL's other friends make their way past the table. RUSSELL shifts topics abruptly.

RUSSELL
And, man, she had the sweetest ass
I've ever seen! We're talking all
night long on this thing.

He greets his friends with bravado, giving one an elaborate handshake. They move along to another table. After RUSSELL is sure they've gone, he resumes the conversation.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Sorry about that.

SCOTT and BOBO take a beat to recover.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
I'm just surprised you're doing
this. Debate doesn't seem like your
thing.

SCOTT
Why's that?

RUSSELL
I don't know. When you think of
debaters, you think confident,
assertive, someone with conviction.
And you're -- well --

He waves a hand noncommittally in SCOTT's direction.

SCOTT
How very articulate.

RUSSELL
Yeah. You're none of that stuff.

SCOTT rolls his eyes.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
What's the prize?

SCOTT
It's not a prize. But the finals
are being hosted in New Orleans.

RUSSELL
Ah! Now I get it. It's Liz.

SCOTT
Whaaaat? No.

RUSSELL
Dude, spend as much time looking at UFO photos as I do, and you learn to spot bullshit pretty quick.

BOBO
Who are you?

RUSSELL
She dumped you over some perceived flaw, and now you're going out of your way to prove her wrong. I've seen it a million times.

SCOTT
Come on, man, you should know me better than that.

BOBO
Yeah. If there's one thing Scott never does, it's go out of his way.

SCOTT does a double take in BOBO's direction, but recovers.

SCOTT
Believe me. The absolute last thing on my mind-

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

SCOTT stands at a podium. From his clenched fist hangs the Millennium Falcon necklace.

BOBO
-- is legality. They can argue ethics forever and a day, but if they're gonna zag, we're gonna zig.

SCOTT
(to his opponents)
Suppose your clone stole your driver's license and used it to buy alcohol. It would technically be underage. Liquor laws all over the country would need to be rewritten.

This prospect concerns the red-nosed JUDGE. He hiccups with apprehension. ARMIN rolls his eyes.

BOBO
And don't get me started on --

INT. CRAMPED AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

SCOTT
-- time travel.

SCOTT finishes his explanation of a complex diagram set up on a tripod. The other team cranes their necks to see it.

BOBO
Which, thanks to the Grandfather Paradox...

SCOTT
...carries no real risk of damage to the past.

That's a claim that ARMIN doesn't like at all.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
At worst --

BOBO
(to Scott)
Eh eh eh! They're not thinking of parallel timelines. Don't bother.

SCOTT
-- we're looking at a new, lucrative form of tourism. Who wouldn't want that?

INT. DINGY AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

SCOTT
Richard M. Nixon, that's who!

SCOTT slams his hand down on the poor quality folding table that the team is seated around. It collapses.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Sorry.

ARMIN
Oh, for God's sake...

SCOTT
As I was saying, if Frank Wills hadn't called the police on June
(MORE)

SCOTT (cont'd)
 17th, 1972, the Watergate scandal
 may never have broken, and Nixon
 would've gotten off scot-free.

OLIVER
 I'm sorry... what does this have to
 do with social media in journalism?

SCOTT looks as if the question had never occurred to him.

BOBO
 Today's world...

SCOTT
 ...is full of Frank Wills...es. Men
 and women there on the scene, cell
 phones in hand, ready to document
 the story at the expense of their
 own experience. It may be killing
 journalism, but with so many
 firsthand accounts available, it's
 a pretty good trade.

BOBO
 Or would you rather still have a
 Nixon in the White House?

SCOTT
 (under his breath)
 Really?

BOBO
 Trust me.

SCOTT repeats BOBO's question and sits down. After a long
 moment, the JUDGE stands up to render his decision.

When the JUDGE speaks, it is with an exaggerated,
 unmistakable Kennedy accent.

JUDGE
 I think we can awll agree... that
 the winnahs of this debate are...

The screen SPLITS THREE WAYS as the JUDGES from all three
 past debates cry out, in unison:

JUDGE(S)
 Wyndham College!

In all three scenarios, SCOTT and BOBO break into wild
 celebration. DINA grows more excited with each win. ARMIN
 consistently displays begrudging acceptance.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

In a huddle, DINA and ARMIN go over the facts of the case.

DINA
So wait... who would Ophelia be?

ARMIN
(without much conviction)
Janice?

SCOTT rushes in with BOBO on his shoulder. RUSSELL follows.

ARMIN (CONT'D)
You're late.

SCOTT
I know. I'm sorry.

DINA
We need to go over this again. You said Kermit *isn't* Hamlet?

ARMIN
Not now! We need one more win to make the finals, and these guys have a perfect record against us. We have to focus.

DINA
(indicating Russell)
Who's this?

RUSSELL gives DINA a nod and raises a foam-finger clad hand.

RUSSELL
Hi. I'm Russell.

SCOTT
He hunts monsters.

A twinkle of wonder appears behind ARMIN's eyes. He quickly shakes it off.

ARMIN
We need a topic before --

FRED (O.S.)
Well, well, well.

ARMIN grimaces. Two members of the other team, FRED and GINGER, have spotted them. They strut their way over.

GINGER
If it isn't the Pathetic Fallacies.

ARMIN
Yes, that's very funny. Joke's on you, though, because the pathetic fallacy is *not* a logical fallacy. It's a literary device. One that's actually responsible for a lot of beautiful poetic language.

GINGER
Yeah, whatever.

FRED
We just wanted to wish you good luck. Not that it would help. Hey Armin, remember that time in high school I beat you and made you cry?

ARMIN
(restrained)
It rings a bell.

FRED
That was great.

GINGER
Look, let's all just have a good, clean match out there, all right? No showboating for the judges. A straight battle of wits.

ARMIN
All I could ask for.

He and GINGER shake hands.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The teams are in place. FRED steps away from his podium into the spotlight.

FRED
Before we begin, I want to dedicate this match to my big brother Chuck. Chuck is -- was -- a cop who died keeping our streets safe.
(he pretends to choke up)
And on days like this... I really wish he was here.

The audience bursts into applause.

ARMIN
Goddammit.

BOBO
Yeah, you probably should have
shaken hands with both of them.

SCOTT
It's fine. We've got this.

BOBO
I wouldn't be so sure, actually.
They're not giving me much to work
with over there. Mentally.

SCOTT
We'll stick to what we do best.

ARMIN
That's what I'm afraid of.

LATER.

SCOTT and BOBO are monologuing as best as they can, but
neither the JUDGE nor their opponents seem very impressed.

SCOTT
If you want proof of why armed
policemen are unnecessary, just
look at the most successful law
enforcement in the world:

ARMIN	SCOTT
Switzerland.	Batman.

The face ARMIN gives SCOTT is the face of sheer terror.

SCOTT
Batman always gets his man, and
never carries a gun.

ARMIN
Um, actually...

SCOTT
He knows that taking a life is a
step you can never come back from.

FRED and GINGER snicker to each other across the room.
ARMIN's cheeks grow red with embarrassment.

ARMIN
Scott, if I can just...

SCOTT
If Batman kills the Joker, who's to say he should stop there? Why not Hush? Or Victor Zsasz? Next thing you know, poor Harvey Dent is dead.

ARMIN
That is a blatant slippery slope argument and you know it!

A murmur runs through the crowd as SCOTT turns to ARMIN.

FRED
Um...

ARMIN
And secondly, Batman *has* carried guns in the past, *has* killed in the past, and will both of those things again if he deems it necessary!

DINA
Guys, now is not the time.

SCOTT
He is more than disciplined enough to use non-lethal force!

GINGER
Should we be...

ARMIN
Detective Comics No. 404! Batman shoots a pod of dolphins with an assault rifle!

SCOTT
That is so obscure!

ARMIN
IT'S CANON!!

ARMIN charges SCOTT. DINA steps up to hold him back, but ARMIN is crazed, seething with bloodlust. DINA sighs.

Effortlessly, she knocks ARMIN unconscious with a quick elbow to the head. The crowd GASPS.

Slowly, RUSSELL lowers his foam finger.

DINA
We concede.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

ARMIN staggers through the curtains in shock. He falls to his knees, then face-first onto the floor.

FRED comes backstage, stepping over ARMIN to greet someone as he heads down the stairs.

FRED
(descending)
Hey, Chuck! Thanks for coming, bro!

SCOTT and DINA peer through the curtains and move towards ARMIN. SCOTT takes a knee next to him.

SCOTT
It's okay, man. We had a freebie in the tank. We'll win the next one.

ARMIN rolls over as aggressively as one can perform such an action.

ARMIN
Does *anything* bother you? Anything at all?

SCOTT
You know, I've never been able to wear tighty-whities.

ARMIN
I'm a five year debater! I know the rules, I've done my time - *I* should be winning these matches. I should have won *this* match! But I guess facts are worthless as long as you have stupid pop culture references!

SCOTT
Look, you may not like my style, but don't act like I'm not trying.

DINA
He's right, Armin. Say what you will, his ideas worked.

ARMIN
OH! His ideas worked? That changes everything! You know who else had ideas that worked?

BOBO
Don't say it -

ARMIN
HITLER!

BOBO
There it is.

DINA motions for SCOTT to step back. She kneels down.

DINA
(oddly tender)
You've had a rough day. But the
Armin I know would know better than
to run around calling people Hitler
all willy-nilly.

ARMIN sits up slowly, fixing his vengeful gaze on SCOTT.

ARMIN
You... are off this team. I never
want to see you again!

SCOTT
What!?

DINA
Armin, that's not your
decision to make.

ARMIN
I don't care. He goes, or I do.

SCOTT
You can't even compete without me!

ARMIN
I would rather be *disqualified* than
win because of you.

He points to the stairs.

SCOTT looks from ARMIN to DINA. Sadly, she inclines her head
towards the exit.

SCOTT trudges out. BOBO climbs onto his back as he goes.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Exiting the building, SCOTT passes by RUSSELL, still wearing
his foam finger.

RUSSELL
How'd they take it?

SCOTT continues on without a word.

INT. SCOTT'S DORM ROOM - DAY

SCOTT flips through a comic book. On the page, a character needlessly exposit's well-established information: "WHATEVER KNOWS FEAR BURNS AT THE MAN-THING'S TOUCH!"

Something about this reminds SCOTT of BOBO's stress-reading ability. He looks across the room from the page to BOBO, who is struggling to lift SCOTT's paddle ball. SCOTT smirks.

By degrees, this smirk fades into a more pensive look, and finally grows to a slow smile.

He's got another idea.

INT. DORM LOUNGE - NIGHT

DINA and ARMIN have gathered for the team's weekly meeting. Neither looks particularly happy. SCOTT and BOBO poke their heads around the door.

SCOTT
Hey guys.

ARMIN
Well, look who it is. Mr.
I'm-Better-Than-You... At...

He trails off.

DINA
Good try.

SCOTT gives BOBO a look: 'Do I have to do this?'

BOBO eyes him in return: 'Do you want Liz back or not?'

SCOTT
Listen, Armin, I'm sorry. You were right. I came in here and disrespected your sport. And that's not okay. I guess there is some merit to -- *factual accuracy*.

Dina snorts. ARMIN nods appreciatively.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 (a prompt)
 Anything you'd like to say?

ARMIN
 No.

SCOTT
 Fair enough. So. Who're we up
 against next?

This time it's ARMIN who snorts.

ARMIN
 Nobody. We're done.

SCOTT
 What? We can't be! We had such a
 good streak going - we only need
 one more win!

ARMIN
 We're as terrible as ever. Why
 waste any more of our time?

SCOTT
 Because it's so valuable.

His eyes flit to BOBO, who nods in approval.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Deny it if you want, but the three
 of us make a great team. We were
 meant for this! I mean, Dina - you
 joined for a reason, right? Why
 debate and not... a capella?

DINA
 A capella's stupid. Debate lets me
 yell at people.

SCOTT
 There you go! A born
 argument--ator. Is that a word?

ARMIN
 (instinctive)
 It is.

SCOTT
 And right there! Armin, you've got
 to be the smartest guy I know.
 You've got a mind like a sieve!

ARMIN
That is absolutely not the word you
meant to use.

SCOTT
I rest my case.

ARMIN
And you?

SCOTT's eyes travel to BOBO.

SCOTT
I know what the people want to
hear.

He puts on his best Harold Hill smile.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
What do you say? One more try? It's
the only one we've got left as is.

His teammates are reluctant. BOBO whispers something in
SCOTT's ear.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
I'll take to dinner after.

DINA
Deal.

ARMIN
Somewhere nice.

SCOTT nods.

SCOTT
Now, we -- I -- had an idea for a
topic, if you're up for it. I think
it would play to all our strengths.

DINA and ARMIN confer wordlessly with each other.

DINA
Let's hear it.

From out of his backpack, SCOTT produces a huge stack of
comic books, bound together with twine. He tosses it at his
teammates' feet.

SCOTT
You're gonna have to do some light
reading.

INT. AUDITORIUM - EVENING

SCOTT

Wyndham College would like to offer up the motion that Superman would be unable to defeat the Incredible Hulk in single combat.

Across the stage, Wyndham's opponents smile broadly.

LATER.

RUSSELL cheers his friend and his team on from the audience.

RUSSELL

WOO! Go Pathetic Fallacies!

He waves his foam finger in glee. SCOTT and ARMIN can't help but smile. DINA rolls her eyes in an agreeable way.

The match itself is not going as well as SCOTT had hoped, with the teams locked in a stalemate.

ARMIN

Now... Superman has quite a lot of different abilities, but he's not actually that -- well, except for All-Star Superman, where --

BOBO, for the first time, turns his extrasensory abilities on SCOTT's teammates, rather than his opponents.

BOBO

(to Scott)

Not even Armin can track all this continuity. You've got to narrow the playing field for him.

SCOTT nudges DINA and requests a point of information.

DINA

(to their opponent)

Can we take a moment to decide which *versions* of Superman and the Hulk we're talking about? There have been - well, lots.

CLARK

Is the difference that significant?

DINA glares at CLARK, on the verge of Hulking out herself. BOBO whistles, an alert of the impending crisis.

SCOTT
 (intervening)
 Don't make her angry. You wouldn't
 like her when she's angry.

The crowd laughs. Even CLARK smirks. Tension diffused. CLARK consults with his teammates, PERRY and JIMMY.

PERRY
 We'll stick to Post-Crisis Superman
 and 616 Hulk.

SCOTT
 (to his team)
 They know their stuff.

BOBO
 Good thing we do, too.

Now able to safely flex his pedant muscles, ARMIN kicks into high gear.

ARMIN
 It's true that Superman is almost
 unthinkable strong and resilient,
 but the Hulk is, for all intents
 and purposes, indestructible. An
 offensive from Superman would only
 make him angrier. And as we all
 know: the angrier Hulk gets, the
 stronger Hulk gets.

JIMMY
 And yet, the angrier Hulk gets, the
 less *intelligent* he gets.

ARMIN
 That *is* true. And before you ask
 your next question, it's entirely
 possible that the Hulk would be
 unable to defeat Superman because
 of it. In fact, Superman could
 easily flee the fight at any point.

SCOTT looks worried. Back to his old tricks so soon?

ARMIN (CONT'D)
 Luckily, we're only here to argue
 that *Superman* can't beat the *Hulk*.
 The converse is irrelevant.

He gives SCOTT a wink. SCOTT's relief is palpable.

DINA

(checking her notes)

In addition to that, Superman's power comes from an external source: Earth's yellow sun. If these two fight long enough, guess what that sun's going to do?

BOBO

It's gonna set.

DINA

It's gonna set. Not so great for Supes, is it Pee-Wee?

JIMMY looks self-consciously down at his bow tie.

SCOTT

Finally, let's not forget our most damning piece of evidence: Superman's death at the hands of Doomsday - who killed him in a fistfight, of all things.

The other team sees where this is going.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

If you're going to have a being of infinite strength - and enormous hands - fight another being with extreme yet *finite* strength, and *then* consider that the second guy once got *punched* to death... I know how I'd call it. Don't you?

He drops the mic, which makes an awful feedback noise. Embarrassed, he picks it back up and replaces it.

LATER.

The team sits nervously while the judges deliberate. Each holds the hands of the others, while BOBO supportively hugs the back of SCOTT's head. Finally, the JUDGE steps up.

JUDGE

After a well-argued and -- surprisingly thoughtful debate, this panel has determined that in the case of Superman v. Hulk, the Man of Steel...

For a split second, the team is heartbroken.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
 ... would crumple like so much
 aluminum. Match to Wyndham!

All four cheer, jumping up and down in a group hug. In the stands, RUSSELL goes crazy.

SCOTT breaks away from the hug, while ARMIN continues hugging DINA and jumping. She tolerates this for a few seconds, then forces him off of her. ARMIN, still jumping, pulls SCOTT in for a second hug, which SCOTT also rejects.

INT. SCOTT'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

It's the start of Spring Break, and SCOTT is packing in preparation for his weekend in New Orleans.

RUSSELL
 Congrats, man. I really, genuinely
 did not think you had it in you.

SCOTT
 Thanks, buddy. That means a lot.

BOBO
 I'm proud of you, Scottie. You'll
 have Liz back in no time, and I'll
 be back on the beach sharing banana
 cream pies with Princess Peach.

SCOTT starts an eye roll that shifts to a look of vague sadness. It's been a real comfort having BOBO around.

RUSSELL
 So now that it's over, tell the
 truth. This *has* all been for Liz.

SCOTT
 Yeah, pretty much. But it's been
 more fun than I expected.

RUSSELL
 Guess that's something. Just
 promise you'll think before you go
 crazy trying to get her back?

SCOTT
 Russ. I'm insulted. Don't I always
 know what I'm doing?

RUSSELL
Almost never, actually.

SCOTT
Exactly. Why start now?

He sits on his suitcase in an attempt to close it. It makes a crunching sound.

Beat.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
That's probably fine.

BOBO
It's probably fine.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

DINA
What do you mean, you don't have any rooms!?

The Pathetic Fallacies are crowded around the check-in desk at their hotel in New Orleans, understandably distraught by the news from the effete desk clerk.

CLIVE
I'm sorry. Perhaps I misspoke. We have plenty of rooms. This is a hotel, you see. What we don't have are rooms to *offer* you.

DINA
Our school was supposed to have taken care of it.

CLIVE
Oh, the rooms were booked. But you missed your check-in, and they went to another group.

DINA
Who!?

CLIVE
As it happens, a trio of young men and women who are also competing in this tournament.

ARMIN

The other team? They live twenty minutes from here, they don't need those rooms!

CLIVE

Regardless, they now have them. And with that, we are full.

BOBO gives the CLERK a once-over.

BOBO

Ask him about Room 33.

SCOTT

What about Room 33?

DINA and ARMIN give SCOTT a surprised look. The CLERK's stern façade cracks slightly.

CLIVE

I don't know who told you about Room 33, sir, but having heard of it, you should be aware that it is for VIP guests only.

SCOTT

Sounds good. We'll take it.

CLIVE

Am I to understand that one or more of you are dignitaries, celebrities, or entrepreneurs?

Their last hope is deflated. And yet -- after a beat, BOBO turns to his teammates, his eyes betraying an unexpected discovery.

SCOTT prepares to tell a gloriously unconvincing lie, but before he can speak, he is interrupted.

DINA

(with a heavy sigh)

Yes.

It's SCOTT's turn to be surprised. ARMIN's puzzlement simply continues unabated.

DINA (CONT'D)

My name is Dina Vacarro. Silva Vacarro is my father.

Even the CLERK is impressed by this.

CLIVE
You are Silva Vacarro's daughter?

DINA hands over a gold credit card.

DINA
This should cover it.

Suspicious, the CLERK swipes the card. He regards the information it calls up with some embarrassment.

CLIVE
My apologies, Miss Delilah. Glad to have you and your friends with us.

He retrieves the key to Room 33 - an actual, metal key rather than a card - and hands it to DINA.

DINA
We are *not* discussing this.

DINA grabs her luggage and heads for the elevators.

SCOTT
That either explains everything, or confuses me even more, and I'll be damned if I know which one it is.

ARMIN
Delilah?

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

ARMIN opens a large double-door to reveal Room 33: a three-bedroom suite done up in elegant New Orleans style - high ceilings, elaborate crown moldings, and even a chandelier. They stagger inside, mouths agape.

ARMIN
Ho-lee smokes!

SCOTT
Can we live here? Like, for keeps?
'Cause I kind of want to live here.

DINA
Yeah, I'm gonna be on the hook for this one.

She grabs a small vase and throws it into her backpack.

ARMIN
This is literally the nicest room
I've ever been in.

DINA wanders into the bathroom.

DINA (O.S.)
You should see the bathroom.
(beat)
Seriously, look at this bathroom
before I steal everything in it.

ARMIN plops down on a sofa. BOBO follows DINA.

ARMIN
So what are we doing tonight?

SCOTT
I'll tell you what I'm doing: Po'
Boys, red beans and rice, and so
many hushpuppies that my heart's
gonna want to kill me preemptively.

BOBO (O.S.)
Dina's right, Scottie, this
bathroom is amazing!

SCOTT
Dina, any dinner preferences?

DINA (O.S.)
Anything spicy.

SCOTT
In half an hour?

DINA (O.S.)
Sounds good.

SCOTT
Who's your dad?

Slight pause.

DINA (O.S.)
Nice try.

SCOTT is interrupted by a knock at the door.

DINA (O.S.)
I'm not here! Wait, yes I am. But
my pockets are empty. Just if
anyone asks.

ARMIN opens the door and greets TODD DeWITT, a member of Loyola's novice team. He is tall, handsome, dressed to the height of current fashion, and absolutely bursting with confidence. The bad kind. His teammates stand behind him.

TODD

Hey there, champ. Heard there was a bit of a mix-up with the rooms. Glad to see you worked something out. We're not imposing, are we?

TODD glances past ARMIN into the room. His eyes widen, but he re-assumes his poker face with some difficulty.

DINA emerges from the bathroom. BOBO perches on SCOTT's shoulder.

DINA

Not at all. They comped us this room for our trouble. Just think - we could have been stuck in crappy old normal rooms. Lucky, huh?

TODD

Yeah. Lucky.
(beat)
The name's Todd. Nice to meet you.

He holds out a hand, which ARMIN shakes uncomfortably.

ARMIN

I'm Armin. This is Dina, and-

LIZ

Scott?

Standing behind TODD, off to one side, is none other than LIZ GORDON. Everyone is shocked by LIZ's recognition of her opponent, including LIZ herself.

SCOTT

Oh. Hi, Liz!

TODD turns slowly to LIZ and looks back at SCOTT.

TODD

Hold up -- Gordon, you two *know* each other?

LIZ

You could say that.

TODD gives LIZ another look.

TODD
No kidding?

He eyes SCOTT's Aquaman T-shirt pointedly. BOBO snarls.

TODD (CONT'D)
How 'bout that.

LIZ is mortified. The Fallacies stare daggers at TODD.

TODD (CONT'D)
Well. I guess you can't judge a
book and all that, am I right?

DINA
You really can't.

A small smile crosses TODD's lips.

TODD
See you at the match tomorrow...
amigos.

He and his teammate walk off. LIZ and SCOTT share a few more seconds of intense eye contact. Neither says anything. Finally, LIZ follows TODD down the hall.

SCOTT shuts the door, and the team lingers in the silence.

DINA
We have to destroy them.

BOBO
Destruction is too good for their
kind.

SCOTT
You're telling me.

ARMIN
Who was that girl?

SCOTT
That would be Liz.

He hesitates.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
My ex.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

SCOTT spots LIZ across the lobby, outside the ballroom where the debates will be held. He approaches her, doffing an invisible cap.

SCOTT
Gooood morning, Lady Liz!

LIZ
(all business)
What are you doing here?

SCOTT
Alrighty then. I just thought you should know that I have changed. And now I'm looking you up. That's what you told me, remember?

LIZ
I do remember. What I didn't expect was that you'd actually do it.

SCOTT
That makes two of us. But I did do it. And now I'm here to win you back. By debating you. Which sounds so *stupid* when I say it out loud.

LIZ rolls her eyes and heads into the ballroom.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
I'll be seeing you, then?

BOBO
She'll come around.

SCOTT
(as if in a trance)
Hmmm? Oh, yeah. Sorry, what?

INT. BALLROOM - MORNING

Both teams have taken their positions for the debate. TODD and SCOTT are the first to step up to their podiums.

JUDGE
Loyola won the coin toss, so they will be given the choice of topic.

TODD

Thank you. We would like to argue against the notion that television deserves to be called an art form.

SCOTT

(whispering)

He's just *trying* to make me mad.

TODD

The moon landing. President Nixon's resignation. The Miracle on Ice. Moments like these will go down in history, and television allowed us all to experience them together. But moments like these are rare. And what fills the airwaves in the meantime? Dating Naked. Jerry Springer. A man getting eaten by a giant snake. Families at the dinner table would rather watch reruns of a show about *nothing* than talk to each other about their lives. The rare television show that does have some artistic merit inevitably squanders that goodwill by continuing far past its prime. *Eleven years of Cheers?* No thanks.

BOBO

Them's fightin' words!

He runs at TODD, but SCOTT holds him back by the tail.

TODD

Television is a shamelessly commercial industry that exists solely to sell products to the already disengaged, consumerist masses. We will move to demonstrate that life in general would be vastly improved if the 24-hour broadcast schedule was simply done away with. Thank you.

Beat.

DINA

We might lose.

SCOTT

Shush.

BOBO

This guy is way too self-assured for his own good, Scottie. Play to the judge. He didn't like that *Cheers* remark either.

SCOTT nods subtly and moves to address the crowd.

SCOTT

I'll admit that I'm going to be biased on this one, folks. Television has long been near and dear to my heart.

TODD

Appeal to emotion? Really?

SCOTT

Yes?

TODD

If you say so.

The JUDGE marks something down in his notes.

SCOTT

Um... right. I love television. Always have. And what our opponents overlook is the fact that it *does* provide a valuable service. Not everyone is lucky enough to be showered with affection every minute of every day. Some people have lives that they feel like they need to escape from. Television helps them do that. It's a unique bond that comes in many forms.

LIZ is surprised to see SCOTT doing so well. Perhaps she's even a little concerned. Perhaps more than a little.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

The news? Those are my work friends. Maybe you're channel surfing and come across a show you used to love. That's catching up with an old pal. And reruns? Well, reruns are practically like family. Always there when you need them, but easy to ignore when you don't.

The crowd chuckles.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 TV isn't the first method humanity
 has come up with to waste time. Old
 radio shows, serialized novels,
 golf... Television just has the
 distinction of being the best one.
 Just think -- if there was no
 television... what else would we
 even do with ourselves? Right?

TODD raises his eyebrow smugly.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 (less confident)
 Right?

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NOON

Both teams are mingling amongst the crowd of spectators.
 Wyndham is trying its best to keep their spirits up.

SCOTT
 Think of it as a strategic loss:
 we've seen how *they* win, but they
 still haven't seen how *we* win.

DINA
 Sometimes I can't tell if you're a
 genius or an idiot.

SCOTT responds with a thumbs up. Across the room, LIZ
 catches his attention.

LIZ
 Scott!

SCOTT leaves DINA and ARMIN and makes his way through the
 crowd. BOBO is left to commiserate with his teammates.

SCOTT meets LIZ halfway through the crowd. There's a
 different look in her eye now, one that resembles her
 earlier interactions with her now-ex-boyfriend.

LIZ
 About before...

SCOTT
 Don't.

LIZ
 I was just -- really surprised to
 see you.

SCOTT
It makes sense. It's okay.

LIZ nods.

LIZ
Credit where it's due. You guys
earned your spot here.

SCOTT
Hey, thanks.
(beat)
That Todd is a character.

LIZ
Yeah, he's very -- driven.

SCOTT
One word for it.

LIZ
The other being mega-douche.

SCOTT laughs. We've rarely seen him this content.

SCOTT
So you two aren't...?

LIZ
No! No.

SCOTT
Ah. Well, that's probably good. I'd
hate to have come all this way for
nothing.

This catches LIZ off-guard. She smiles at him. BOBO emerges from the crowd to check up on SCOTT's progress.

LIZ
Do you have any plans for today?

SCOTT
None that matter.

LIZ
Want me to show you around? Get the
local experience, avoid the tourist
traps?

SCOTT
Liz. Come on. What are you doing?

LIZ
(flustered)
What do you mean?

SCOTT
You know I live for tourist traps.

He grins at her, and she grins back. Together, they head out to the street.

BOBO
'Atta boy, Scottie!

BOBO moves to follow them, but staggers, feeling faint.

BOBO (CONT'D)
Woah. I'm okay. Just hang on a sec?

He holds his head and looks up at the spot where he expects SCOTT to be, only to find it vacant.

BOBO (CONT'D)
Scott? Hey, Scottie, where'd you-

This time BOBO falls to the ground, weakening fast. The world spins around him as the pounding of his imaginary heart drowns out all other noise.

BOBO (CONT'D)
(out of breath)
Scott? SCOTT!

Everything comes to a sudden calm as DINA and ARMIN step into BOBO's immediate vicinity. They look out the doors after SCOTT and LIZ. BOBO perks up almost immediately.

BOBO (CONT'D)
That was weird.
(beat)
Wait, no, *this* is weird.

ARMIN
Where's Scott going?

BOBO
Taking a ride on a streetcar named Desire.

DINA
A streetcar named Desire, by the looks of it.

BOBO's head snaps in DINA's direction.

ARMIN

Huh. That's funny. I just had that same thought.

BOBO's world is crashing down around him. His career as an imaginary friend has not prepared him for this. He sits there, stunned, until his teammates start to move. Frantically, the little monkey man scrambles after them.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

LIZ guides an out-of-his-element SCOTT through the busy streets. Overwhelmed as he is, SCOTT is clearly having a great time.

SCOTT

So where's the voodoo shop?

LIZ

For the last time, Scott, there are no voodoo shops.

SCOTT looks at her knowingly.

LIZ (CONT'D)

The most popular one is on Bourbon Street. But I'm not taking you.

SCOTT

Good. I like my head this size.

LIZ

The cool thing about the French Quarter is that this is actually mostly Spanish architecture.

She gestures up at the ironwork galleries. Even Scott's practiced disinterest can't hold up to such a sight.

LIZ (CONT'D)

A lot of the original area had to be rebuilt after the Great Fires.

SCOTT realizes the significance of the moment being shared, but has nothing to bring to the conversation. He makes the only contribution available to him.

SCOTT

They've got this at Disneyland, too, you know.

LIZ

Yes, I know.

SCOTT

But the buildings could only be two stories tall, so they used forced perspective to fit in the second level of galleries.

LIZ

That I did not know. Did you know that Louisiana's capital building is actually the tallest in the country? Four hundred fifty feet.

SCOTT

Well, did you know that the Tower of Terror is 199 feet, because if it was any taller it would need a flashing signal light on top?

LIZ

Yes, actually. You told me. Twice.

SCOTT

Well, it's still true. Just FYI.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

DINA, ARMIN, and BOBO hop off a streetcar on their way to lunch. Before exiting, BOBO looks back and notices ARMIN's backpack still sitting on their seat. He jumps up and down in a futile attempt to be noticed.

BOBO

Hey Armin! ARMIN!

ARMIN is already off the streetcar. BOBO looks back one last time with apprehension. In a last-ditch effort, he leaps off the streetcar and kicks ARMIN in the back.

As if in response, ARMIN pats himself where he was kicked. Not feeling the backpack, he spins around, but is too late. The streetcar doors close and the car takes off.

ARMIN

No no no no NO!

ARMIN briefly gives chase, but the streetcar outpaces him.

DINA
What gives?

ARMIN
(panting)
Our backpack! I left it! It had our
wallets -- the room key --

DINA
You *what!*?

ARMIN
I thought I had it.

DINA
Okay. First of all, don't panic.
And secondly, WHY WOULD YOU EVER
THINK THAT WAS A GOOD IDEA!?

ARMIN
It's easier to keep track of one
thing than a dozen!

DINA
Brilliant.

BOBO jumps in between them.

BOBO
Heckle, Jeckle! Fighting's not
gonna fix this.

Miraculously, both calm down.

BOBO (CONT'D)
(to himself)
God, that's weird. Now come on,
eyes on me!

He positions himself between the pair and the streetcar,
still visible a few blocks away. DINA and ARMIN turn in
BOBO's direction and spot it.

ARMIN
It's still there!

DINA clocks a portly HOT DOG VENDOR at the end of the block,
dressed vaguely like a pirate and pushing a hotdog-shaped
cart mounted on top of a bicycle. She runs to him.

DINA (CONT'D)
Excuse me!

IGNATIUS

And what, dare I ask, do you want?

DINA is a bit taken aback.

DINA

Well, not a hot dog anymore, so nice job on that one, jackass.

IGNATIUS

Excuse me?

She takes a second to regain her composure.

DINA

This is going to sound weird, but you see that streetcar down there? There's a backpack on it with just about everything we own inside, and we really need to catch up to it.

She thinks hard about how to sell this next bit.

DINA (CONT'D)

I couldn't help but notice that your cart has wheels, and if you'd just lend it to us for one second-

IGNATIUS

Young lady, I don't know what your objective is here, but if it was to frustrate me, you have succeeded. If you would like a weenie, it is my duty to reluctantly offer you one, but otherwise-

ARMIN

(sprinting by)

We-need-this-more-than-you
thank-you-so-much!

DINA

What?

IGNATIUS

What!?

ARMIN snatches the cart out of the pirate's grasp and takes off. DINA and BOBO run after ARMIN as all three jump onto the moving hot dog.

IGNATIUS

(receding)

Why, I never!

DINA
That was incredible!

ARMIN
I know! What a rush!

Beat.

DINA
In hindsight, this may have been
overkill.

ARMIN
Who cares? THIS IS AMAZING!

All three cheer as they zip down the street on their stolen conveyance.

INT. HOTEL - EVENING

SCOTT and LIZ enter through the main doors. SCOTT is talking LIZ's ear off, but she doesn't seem to mind. Much.

SCOTT
...generally called a joint effort
of Marc Davis and Claude Coats -
plus X Atencio. But everyone
overlooks Ken Anderson's work in
the 50s, which isn't fair at all.

Across the lobby sits RUSSELL, of all people, making conversation with a stranger.

RUSSELL
...and of course there are gonna be
those who'll try to tell you the
proportions are wrong. But I've
seen a lot of photoshops, and this
one is either real, or the best
I've ever seen. Even the shadows
are perfect. No one ever gets those
right.

The two roommates spot each other.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Scott! Hey, Scott!

SCOTT
Russell?

SCOTT runs to his friend, leaving LIZ to follow behind.

RUSSELL
Glad I found you. The front desk
was very strict about not giving me
a copy of your room key.

SCOTT
Yeah, there's an interesting story
to that. What are you doing here?
Is it Bigfoot?

RUSSELL
(sarcastically)
Yes, Scott, that's exactly what I'm
doing. Because Bigfoot is going to
jump at the chance to migrate into
a subtropical zone. Come on.
(he stands up)
I just thought you'd want to have
your good luck charm with you.

RUSSELL holds out the Millennium Falcon necklace.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
And also this necklace you forgot.

LIZ's eyes widen as she recognizes the necklace. SCOTT takes
and hastily pockets it, but not before making awkward eye
contact with its former owner.

LIZ
(to Russell)
I'm sorry, who are you?

SCOTT
Sorry. This is my friend Russell.
Russ, you know Liz.

They shake hands. RUSSELL studies LIZ intently until she
starts to grow uncomfortable. Finally:

RUSSELL
Huh.

LIZ
What?

RUSSELL
No, it's just -- I would have
thought -- never mind.

An indignant look crosses LIZ's face.

DINA (O.S.)

Scott!

SCOTT's teammates come tearing through the lobby to reunite with their lost member. BOBO clings tightly to SCOTT's leg.

BOBO

Oh God. That was the scariest five hours of my life. *Never* do that again, do you hear me? *Never again.*

DINA

You are not going to believe the day we had.

ARMIN

We stole a giant hot dog! From a pirate!

DINA

See what I mean?

BOBO

I wouldn't have believed it myself if I hadn't been there. Which reminds me, why the hell was I there and not with you?

(beat)

Oh, hey, Russ.

DINA, ARMIN, BOBO, and RUSSELL all crowd around SCOTT until LIZ is pushed aside. SCOTT tries vainly to pull her back in.

SCOTT

Have you guys met...?

ARMIN

Russell!

DINA

What are you doing here?

ARMIN

Wait, let me guess: Mothman!

RUSSELL

Mothman is pretty localized to West Virginia, actually.

ARMIN

(almost disappointed)

So what, just ghosts then?

LIZ is steadily pushed away, as is SCOTT, who clings to her.

SCOTT
 (nearly shouting)
 I want to introduce you to Liz!

DINA
 Ghosts can be cool. I'm pretty sure
 my house was haunted once.

ARMIN's attention shifts from RUSSELL back to DINA.

ARMIN
 Seriously - who are you?

SCOTT
 GUYS!

LIZ
 Scott, it's fine. I'll just go.

She starts to leave, with no one in the group paying her any mind. RUSSELL suddenly reaches out to her.

RUSSELL
 Hey, wait a second!

LIZ
 (slightly eager)
 Yeah?

RUSSELL edges up close.

RUSSELL
 Before you go... Have you been
 party to any strange occurrences in
 the middle of the night? Any
 neighborhoods I might want to -

LIZ
 Go to hell.

She storms off. SCOTT moves to go after her, but she holds up a hand telling him to stay. He does, against his will.

SCOTT turns to his friends, angry.

SCOTT
 That was pretty --

ARMIN
 Rude, I know. Telling Russ to go to
 hell like that.
 (to Scott)
 Now I can see why you dumped her.

SCOTT

That's not what I... I mean, yeah.

RUSSELL raises a leery eyebrow in SCOTT's direction. SCOTT smiles uneasily.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

The Fallacies and RUSSELL lounge around, sharing laughs.

DINA

...and Armin practically wrestled his way back on!

SCOTT

Could you really not pay the fare? It's a buck twenty-five.

DINA

All our money was in the backpack. You should have seen him.

RUSSELL

That's a story for the grandkids. If you have them. Which is a stretch, to be fair.

DINA

Is it all right if I'm confused about what Russell is doing here?

RUSSELL

Come on. I gotta support my Pathetic Fallacies. All for weird and weird for all, right? Plus, I had to make sure Scott didn't do anything stupid with Liz around.

DINA

What?

ARMIN

Aren't you two done?

SCOTT's caught, or is about to be.

SCOTT

(awkwardly)

We are. Russell just means -- we all regress a little bit around our high school friends, right?

DINA and ARMIN don't know how to answer this.

ARMIN
One assumes.

SCOTT
Right. Exactly.
(beat)
Well, I might hit the hay. Russell,
you bunking with me?

RUSSELL
Oh, I was gonna sleep on the couch-

SCOTT
(forcefully)
You bunking with me?

RUSSELL
Sure thing.

BOBO stays with the team while SCOTT and RUSSELL move into
SCOTT'S ROOM.

RUSSELL
I take it they don't know?

SCOTT
They think it's a coincidence.

RUSSELL
Well. Lucky you and I know better.
What did the two of you do all day?

SCOTT
She just showed me around. Talked.

RUSSELL sighs.

RUSSELL
Scott, you're my friend. So I'm
giving you a chance to explain
this.

SCOTT
Explain what?

RUSSELL
Do you really think I flew myself
across the country on my own dime
to give you a stupid necklace?

SCOTT
 (knowing)
 It was Bigfoot?

RUSSELL removes a tape recorder from his pocket.

RUSSELL
 I left this out in our room the week you joined the team. I was trying to catch evidence of an EVP I'd heard floating around. Before you ask - no, I didn't find any. But what I did catch was almost as interesting.

He hits 'Play.'

SCOTT (ON TAPE)
 Me? I just joined! Now I'm supposed to coach them? Oh, no you don't. This was your idea. I only agreed because you said there was no other way... .. Look, I'll take care of it. You worry about your part and I'll do mine.

RUSSELL stops the tape.

RUSSELL
 What does that sound like to you?

SCOTT
 A guy running lines for an independent theater production?

RUSSELL
 Try a guy scheming with his ex-girlfriend to fix the debate finals.

SCOTT
 Oh, come on! That's crazy, even for you!

RUSSELL
 Is it? Mr. Liz-is-my-world and-I'd-do-whatever-it-takes-to-win-her-back?

SCOTT
 I never thought I'd say this - but damn you and your cryptozoology!
 (beat)

(MORE)

SCOTT (cont'd)
 Seriously, that's a weird sentence.

RUSSELL
 I know this isn't my thing. I'm the aloof guy. I'm not supposed to give a crap about my crazy roommate and his crazy friends. But damn it, these are good people we're talking about. They're trusting. They don't pass judgment like my -- like everyone else.

SCOTT
 I promise, that tape is not what it sounds like.

RUSSELL
 I hope so. If it is, you'll be answering to me.

RUSSELL heads back out to the main room and sits down with BOBO, DINA, and ARMIN, all of whom look like they're having the time of their lives.

For a minute, SCOTT stays inside, leaving himself in the dark. Finally, he edges his way out to the main room.

ARMIN
 Well, it's not what made me join debate specifically... but I remember when I was eight years old, I saw *Revenge of the Sith*. The next day, I was telling my class about the part where Obi-Wan kills Grievous, and I said he used force lightning on Grievous' heart.

BOBO
 Actually-

ARMIN
 'Actually', says one kid, 'only the Sith use force lightning. Obi-Wan used a blaster.' 'Wow, Armin,' says another one, 'You're the last person I ever thought would be wrong about Star Wars.'

SCOTT
 Low blow.

ARMIN turns. He hadn't seen SCOTT come in. He nods.

ARMIN

Right? And what's messed up is that I didn't even care about Star Wars back then. But somehow I'd gotten this reputation as the guy who knew stuff about stuff. I guess I just ran with it.

RUSSELL

Good share, man.

ARMIN

(disproportionately flattered)
Really?

RUSSELL

Uh, yeah. How 'bout you, Deen?
First debate you ever won.

DINA thinks.

DINA

Does it count as a win if I punched the guy?

ARMIN

I don't think it counts as a *debate* if you punched the guy.

She smiles, a rarity for her.

DINA

I don't know. I was the baby of the family -- we didn't exactly need for anything --

She gestures at the suite.

DINA (CONT'D)

I could have gone soft real easy.
So I made sure I didn't.

RUSSELL looks at SCOTT, standing in the doorway to his room.

RUSSELL

And you, Scott? What started you off on your march to greatness?

He eyes SCOTT meaningfully. SCOTT sits down, looking at his teammates. After a moment, he answers.

SCOTT

Someone once told me that I was good for nothing. That I didn't care about stuff. They were right.

His eyes shift to RUSSELL, then BOBO.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I just thought if I won this tournament, I could make them a little less right.

DINA

You have.

ARMIN

We couldn't have done this without you, Scott.

SCOTT

Please.

DINA

No, he means it. We *literally* couldn't have done this without you. You were the only person who tried out.

SCOTT soaks this information in for a moment. Finally, he bursts out laughing. His laugh makes DINA laugh as well. One by one, BOBO, ARMIN, and RUSSELL all join in.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NOON

The Wyndham team meets outside the ballroom to celebrate their second-round victory.

DINA

Now *that* is what I'm talking about!

ARMIN

Best we've ever been!

BOBO

I could swear you two could hear what I was saying.

Neither responds.

BOBO (CONT'D)

I mean, obviously you can't now.

DINA

Great cross, Scott. That dick Todd didn't know what hit him.

(beat)

Scott?

SCOTT is staring across the lobby at LIZ, who parts ways with her own teammates. She waves at SCOTT, who takes off in her direction without a word.

BOBO tries to follow SCOTT, but weakens after a few steps as before. He stays put with DINA and ARMIN.

BOBO

SCOTT! You know, when someone tells you to never do something again, the least you can do is not do it again the *next freaking day!!*

(beat)

Can you believe this guy?

ARMIN

I can't believe this guy.

BOBO

Thank you.

Behind DINA and ARMIN, RUSSELL emerges from the crowd. He pokes his head between theirs.

RUSSELL

Want to find out where he's going?

RUSSELL holds up his phone. The display shows a beeping radar screen. He grins.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

The Fallacies, sans SCOTT, parade through the streets of New Orleans. RUSSELL is at the head of the group, eyes fixed on his phone screen. BOBO perches on his shoulder.

DINA

You implanted Scott with a tracking device?

RUSSELL

Not *implanted*. Just planted. It's for his own good. Mostly.

DINA
That is --

ARMIN
So cool!

BOBO
Bless you and your cryptozoology!

DINA
I was going to say 'messed up.'

ARMIN
Will you adopt me?

DINA
How do you know it's still on him?

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

SCOTT' Millennium Falcon necklace swings freely from his neck as he and LIZ stroll through the French Quarter. SCOTT munches on a recently obtained alligator sausage.

SCOTT
You know, I probably shouldn't trust a hot dog salesman dressed like a pirate, but darn it all, this is delicious.

LIZ rolls her eyes. SCOTT scarfs down the rest of the dog.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
So. All tied up. One match all. Isn't that exciting?

LIZ
Don't think I'm going to go easy on you tomorrow, because I won't.

SCOTT
Yeah, well don't think I'm going to go easy on you.

LIZ laughs, until she realizes he means it.

LIZ
I was wrong about you, wasn't I?

SCOTT
No, late April *is* Taurus. I feel like I should have known that.

She elbows him good-naturedly.

LIZ

I'm serious. You're a natural. I don't know why I'm surprised. If there's one thing you could always do, it's overthink things.

SCOTT

Thank you.

He glances to the side, unsure if that was a compliment.

LIZ

Don't get me wrong, I was right to dump you when I did. But there's more to you than meets the eye.

SCOTT

(singing)

Transformers...

LIZ puts a finger to his lips. Don't ruin this.

After a minute, SCOTT stops walking, then stops LIZ by taking her hand. He draws her close to him.

SCOTT

Listen.

He removes the Millennium Falcon necklace and holds it out.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I think this belongs to you.

LIZ

Scott, I-

SCOTT

I gave it to you once already. Now I want you to have it back.

He places it over her head. Liz grasps the pendant.

LIZ

Russell said it was your good luck charm.

SCOTT

I've got more where that came from. And this one already did its job.

A coy smile crosses LIZ's lips. She looks away.

LIZ

Scott. I know that I probably don't
deserve it -- but if you're willing
to give me another chance --

Before LIZ can finish, SCOTT picks her up and twirls her
around. She laughs.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Oh! All right then!

SCOTT puts his ex-ex-girlfriend down and holds her close.

SCOTT

Babe. If you thought for a *second*
that I would let you get away,
you're even dumber than you thought
I was.

It's LIZ's turn to look for an insult in that sentence. She
can't seem to find one, so she kisses him instead.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

RUSSELL and the gang are closing in on SCOTT's location.
BOBO is the first to round the next corner, where, to his
shock, he finds SCOTT and LIZ *in flagrante delicto*.

At the moment their lips touch, BOBO is sent flying away
from SCOTT as if by an explosion. He lands in a heap in the
middle of the street as the rest of the team approaches.

BOBO climbs to his feet and straightens his clothes, only
for his stomach to sink as he becomes aware of the fact that
RUSSELL is staring directly at him.

RUSSELL

(thrilled)

What the hell is that!?

BOBO flees. In seconds, he scales a wall and ducks into the
first hiding place he can find, in the direction opposite
SCOTT and LIZ. RUSSELL gives chase, followed by the others.

DINA

What is what?

Down a new street, BOBO hides in one of the iron galleries.

ARMIN

I didn't see anything.

RUSSELL
Looked like some sort of - ape man.

BOBO
(to himself)
I am *not* an ape.

RUSSELL hears this and looks up. BOBO takes flight again.

Rounding a corner, DINA bumps into a MUSTACHIOED MAN in an expensive suit. The MAN's eyes widen in recognition.

MUSTACHIO
Lilah?

DINA
(panicked frustration)
Aw, jeez.

She takes off down another side street, the MAN in pursuit.

On the heels of RUSSELL, who is in turn tailing BOBO, ARMIN looks over his shoulder.

ARMIN
Wait! We lost Dina!

RUSSELL glances back. ARMIN is right.

RUSSELL
Aw, jeez.

Reluctantly, he stops. He looks in BOBO's direction, just in time to see the monkey round another corner.

ARMIN
Dina! Dee-na!

DINA is nowhere to be found. RUSSELL stomps his feet in silent rage.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

SCOTT and LIZ are still in the middle of their embrace. When they pull away, LIZ seems genuinely concerned.

LIZ
Wait. This isn't going to work.

SCOTT
What do you mean?

LIZ
We're competing against each other
in the morning. Our whole year has
gone into this.

SCOTT
I won't hold a grudge if you won't.

LIZ
It's not me - it's Todd and Remy.
If we lose, and they find out that
we're back together, they'd think I
threw the match. I'd never be
allowed to stay on the team.

SCOTT
What about me? It's not like I
don't have anything riding on this.

LIZ
But that's the thing. You don't.
Not anymore. You just said so.

SCOTT
Well -- yeah. But Dina and Armin --

LIZ
Will be thrilled to have made it
this far. I've seen your school's
win record, Scott. They're going to
be heroes either way.

LIZ drapes her arms around SCOTT's neck and looks deeply
into his eyes.

LIZ (CONT'D)
You know how much this means to me.

SCOTT meets her gaze.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

RUSSELL and ARMIN are now all that remains of the debate
team. They wander aimlessly through the streets. BOBO
watches from a rooftop.

RUSSELL checks his radar screen. It's silent.

RUSSELL
No Scott.

ARMIN
No Dina.

RUSSELL
No ape man.

ARMIN puts a comforting hand on RUSSELL's shoulder.

ARMIN
You've still got me.

A beep comes from RUSSELL's phone. Then another. He looks.

RUSSELL
Oh, thank God.

RUSSELL takes off after the signal, ARMIN in tow.

The device leads them to a café. Sitting alone at a table is TODD. RUSSELL hangs back, keeping ARMIN out of sight with an arm across his chest.

After a moment, LIZ comes onto the scene and sits at TODD's table. As she nears, RUSSELL's tracking app beeps faster and faster. He shuts it off to quiet the noise.

TODD
Well?

LIZ
Candy from a baby. He'll tank it.

TODD
Two days ago you were sure there
wouldn't even be a third match.

LIZ
I underestimated him. But he'll
trade a win for me. No doubt about
it. You *will* have to keep on
treating me like crap, though.

TODD
(pouting)
You know I hate that.

LIZ
I know you do.

She pecks him on the lips. Behind the corner, RUSSELL gasps.

RUSSELL
I knew it! Sort of.

ARMIN
We have to tell Scott!
(beat)
Although I guess he'd already know.

RUSSELL
Come on!

They make a beeline for the hotel. BOBO moves to follow them, but hangs back after he hears TODD begin to speak.

TODD
Just to be safe, I thought I'd stir up some extra trouble for our pals.

LIZ
Oh yes?

TODD
An anonymous tip concerning an ongoing petty theft investigation.

LIZ
Don't you think that's a bit much?

TODD
What? I'm just trying to keep our fair city free of crime.

From his rooftop perch, BOBO's eyes widen.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS SQUARE - BOBO'S IMAGINATION

DINA and ARMIN are savagely beaten by OLD TIMEY MONKEY COPS armed with banana nightsticks.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

BOBO watches from above as ARMIN and RUSSELL arrive at the hotel, where they are stopped by a POLICE OFFICER standing watch outside. He wears a clearly fake beard.

OFFICER MANCUSO
(to Armin)
Is your name Armin Sobchak?

ARMIN

Uh -- yes.

OFFICER MANCUSO

Do you know a Miss Dina Vacarro?

ARMIN

Yes?

OFFICER MANCUSO

I'm afraid you're under arrest.
You'll have to come with me.

ARMIN

What!

RUSSELL

What?

INT. A POLICE STATION - DAY

BOBO sneaks through a waiting room, past a distraught RUSSELL, and into the main area of the station. There, ARMIN is seated at OFFICER MANCUSO's desk.

Next to him is DINA. She looks more annoyed than worried.

DINA

This is ridiculous.

Across from the pair sits the HOT DOG VENDOR.

IGNATIUS

Ridiculous? On the contrary, this is extremely serious. That hot dog cart is my livelihood, and you expect me to sit back and let you take it away from me?

DINA

We left it on a corner *two blocks* from where we took it.

IGNATIUS

Which allowed ample time for scroungers and vagabonds to rob me of my weenie supply before I could recover it!

DINA

Missing hot dogs, eh?

She eyes the VENDOR's bowl-full-of-jelly stomach.

DINA (CONT'D)
I wonder where those could have
gotten off to.

The VENDOR gurgles in rage. He stops to quell an oncoming
belch.

DINA (CONT'D)
(to the Officer)
Look, there's no way that hunk of
junk was worth more than two
hundred dollars, so we'll just pay
the fine, whatever it is.

OFFICER MANCUSO
That would be fine. However, this
gentleman says that you took his
cart through intimidation, which
ups the charge to robbery.

What? DINA What! ARMIN

DINA
We did *not* intimidate him. I *asked*.
Politely.

IGNATIUS
I certainly felt unsafe.

DINA
(rising)
Yeah, well how'd you like to feel
my fist down your throat, asshole?

IGNATIUS
See? See!?

DINA calms down.

VOICE (O.S.)
Lilah? Delilah!

Making his way through the station is the MUSTACHIOED MAN
from before.

OFFICER MANCUSO
I'm sorry, sir, I'll have to ask
you to wait --

VACARRO

You don't understand. I'm her father.

ARMIN

Wait, you're her father? *What are you famous for?*

The OFFICER signals VACARRO to approach.

VACARRO

Lilah, darling, where have you been? I go a year without hearing from you, and then I find a fifteen thousand dollar charge on your credit card to some New Orleans hotel? I never should have let you go off to that third-rate college.

DINA

Daddy, it's fine.

VACARRO

It doesn't *look* fine.

ARMIN

Let me guess... you own a circus.

VACARRO removes a checkbook from his inside pocket.

VACARRO

(to Ignatius)

How much to make this go away?

DINA

Daddy, *no*. I don't need you to handle every little thing for me.

VACARRO

Little thing? Lilah, you're *under arrest!*

He attaches a look that clearly suggests the word 'Again.'

ARMIN

Hat manufacturing.

IGNATIUS

Your money is no good here, sir. I do have my honor to think of.

This pushes DINA farther than she is willing to go.

DINA

Honor. This is about honor? Tell me again what company you sell for?

IGNATIUS

Paradise Hot Dogs.

DINA pulls it up on her phone.

DINA

And this is the number? I wonder what would happen if I were to call and say that both the hot dog *and* change compartments of your cart were empty when I found it. At three in the afternoon. Does that say honor to you?

IGNATIUS

This is a farce! Clearly you stole the money as well.

DINA

Did I? I don't think your 'weenies' are the only thing in hot water, given how badly you want to pin your losses on us. But maybe you're right. Should I call up and see? I get one phone call, don't I?

OFFICER MANCUSO

(fully engrossed in this)

Oh, that's just a myth. You can basically make as many as you want.

DINA raises her eyebrows in the VENDOR's direction. A challenge. He knows he's beat, though he won't admit it.

IGNATIUS

I suppose - if they are willing to pay the fine - I will let it slide.

VACARRO steps forward with his checkbook. DINA stops him, pulling two bills from her own wallet. She hands them to the OFFICER, who in turn hands one to the VENDOR. The VENDOR pockets it, then huffs and puffs his way out the door.

DINA

(to Vacarro)

Now go home.

VACARRO
Please, darling. I just want to
know that you're all right.

DINA
I'm fine. Really. Stop worrying.
Look! I actually have friends now.

ARMIN
Bareknuckle boxing. Final answer.

VACARRO eyes ARMIN with interest.

VACARRO
Are they all like that one?

DINA smiles.

DINA
I'm in this debate club. And our
final match is tomorrow. I guess
you could come. If you wanted.

VACARRO
I wouldn't miss it.

He hugs his daughter close.

VACARRO (CONT'D)
You do debate?

DINA
Yeah. We'll have to go over that.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

SCOTT sits alone in the main room, playing absentmindedly
with a paddle ball.

DINA, ARMIN, and RUSSELL barge in through the door,
practically collapsing in a heap.

SCOTT
Whoa! Where have you all been?

DINA
In prison.

ARMIN
Well --

DINA

Almost.

ARMIN

We were arrested.

Beat.

SCOTT

Why does it sound like all the cool stuff happens when I'm not around?

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

It's dark.

SCOTT and the others are spread around the main room. They don't speak. None of them are doing anything. SCOTT sits with his knees up, his head resting on them.

When they do finally begin to talk, the conversation is stilted, with long pauses between almost every sentence.

ARMIN

This whole time?

SCOTT

I should have told you.

DINA

Yeah. You should've. But you *did* get us here. One way or another.

SCOTT nods. He's not sure how much that's worth.

ARMIN

I guess I have a question.

SCOTT's head comes up from its fetal position.

ARMIN (CONT'D)

Are you going to do it?

SCOTT looks at his teammates. Their faces show fear, but not fear of losing the match. SCOTT gets up and leaves, entering

HIS ROOM.

As the door closes behind SCOTT, BOBO emerges from the shadows.

BOBO
Russ around?

SCOTT shakes his head no. He staggers to the bed and flops face down onto it.

SCOTT
She tried to use me, Bobo. All that talk about how much *I* needed *her*, and then she does this.

BOBO hoists himself onto the bed and sits on SCOTT's back.

BOBO
Kind of a crappy feeling, isn't it?

SCOTT says nothing.

BOBO (CONT'D)
Probably something that they'd know a thing or two about out there.

SCOTT raises his head ever-so-slightly off the comforter. A groan escapes his lips. LIZ was wrong to use him, but she wasn't wrong *about* him.

BOBO waits for SCOTT to say something, but he has no words. The monkey gets up and pats his friend on the head.

BOBO (CONT'D)
G'night, Scott.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - MORNING

Light streams through the window onto SCOTT's bed.

BOBO groggily awakens to find himself alone. Confused, he sits up and searches the immediate area.

BOBO
Scott?

He wanders through the suite, checking every room.

BOBO catches a glimpse of the clock. 10:56. The final match is due to start in just four minutes.

BOBO (CONT'D)
Dammit, Scott, what did you do!?

BOBO runs to the door and tries his hardest to open it. Naturally, being a metaphysical being, he can't.

A toilet flushes. BOBO stops, alert.

RUSSELL wanders through the main room of the suite, catching sight of BOBO out of the corner of his eye. He freezes, turns, and stares at the creature before him. To RUSSELL's mind, it is, for all intents and purposes, BIGFOOT.

BOBO/BIGFOOT

Russell! I need to get to Scott and
I can't open this door by myself.
Please? Russ?

RUSSELL stands stock still. A manic look forms in his eyes.

BOBO (CONT'D)

Russ?

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

The teams meet outside the ballroom.

TODD

(to Dina)

Dinah! How nice to see you're not
in prison.

DINA

And what a shame to see that you
still have all your teeth. Don't
worry - I'll fix that.

TODD grins an infuriating grin.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - MORNING

BOBO hides under a table as RUSSELL stalks through the suite, searching for what is definitely some sort of cryptid, if not necessarily his favorite, large-footed one.

RUSSELL

I know you're in here. You might as
well come out!

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

Off to the side, SCOTT greets LIZ with a wink.

LIZ

You're sure about this?

SCOTT nods. They shake hands and part.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - MORNING

At the door, BOBO pauses, whistles, and takes cover.

RUSSELL cautiously approaches the only exit. He cracks the door slowly, slowly, until he can poke his head out.

In one fluid movement, BOBO leaps from his hiding place, bounding off RUSSELL's head and into the hall.

BOBO

Thank you!

RUSSELL gives frantic chase, but loses sight of the monkey around a corner. Rounding it at speed, he slips and crashes into a vending machine. BOBO's free and clear.

RUSSELL groans and rubs his face.

RUSSELL

The Internet is not gonna like this.

INT. BALLROOM - MORNING

SCOTT takes his place with DINA and ARMIN. The match is due to begin any second. As the doors close, BOBO slips through.

BOBO

Scott!

SCOTT does not respond. BOBO jumps onto his podium.

BOBO (CONT'D)

Scott. Come on, look at me buddy.

He snaps his fingers in SCOTT's face. The JUDGE begins addressing the crowd.

BOBO (CONT'D)

Just tell me you're not gonna throw the match, okay? I know what I've been telling you this whole time, but you don't have to do it on my account. I'll stick around if I have to. I don't mind that much.

SCOTT

(under his breath)
I'm not throwing the match.

Beat.

BOBO
Oh. Well, that's good then.

SCOTT
(under his breath)
I'd just like to win this one with
my real - *non-imaginary* - friends.

BOBO smiles slowly.

BOBO
Good man.

BOBO is gone. SCOTT looks around, but can't find his friend anywhere. Across the room, a frazzled RUSSELL barges through the doors with a butterfly net. Hastily, he takes a seat.

SCOTT composes himself with a deep breath. DINA and ARMIN pull him to the side.

ARMIN
Come on, hands in.

They put their hands together in the center of their huddle.

ARMIN (CONT'D)
Pathetic Fallacies on three. One,
two, three --

SCOTT
PATHETIC FALLACIES!

DINA
PATHETIC FALLACIES!

ARMIN
PATHETIC FALLACIES!

They return to their podiums. TODD makes no effort to hide his judgmental smirk.

JUDGE
Wyndham, you may begin.

SCOTT
Thank you. We would like to make the case that Han Solo, of *Star Wars* fame, would have been better off keeping his job as a smuggler than joining the Rebel Alliance.

The audience laughs.

TODD

(whispering to Liz)

This is him throwing the match?

LIZ

(whispering back)

Star Wars is our favorite movie. He knows exactly what he's doing.

SCOTT

There are any number of reasons why being a smuggler is better than being a hero of the Rebellion. Job security, for one -- people will always want stuff that they can't legally have. It's safer -- Han may have to drop his cargo once in a while and get chewed out by Jabba, but as long as the Empire doesn't find anything, he's free to go on his way. And yet it's Han's ship that's the real smoking gun - or lack thereof. The Millennium Falcon is iconic, but take a real look at it, and what do you notice? It's a freighter. No one wants to be part of a dogfight in that hunk of junk. All it has to defend itself are a few quad cannons and two concussion missiles. The Falcon's only claim to fame is its speed, which makes it much better suited to smuggling than combat. This is, after all, the ship that made the Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs.

LIZ winks to TODD.

LIZ

Funny that you should mention the Kessel Run, Scott, because I find something about that a little suspect. 12 parsecs. That's Han's claim, correct?

SCOTT confirms this.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Then tell me, if you can, what exactly that's supposed to mean when a parsec is a unit of *distance*, and not of time.

The crowd murmurs. RUSSELL nods in a contemplative manner.

LIZ (CONT'D)

The Kessel Run has to be a standardized distance, or else any records set there would be meaningless. Han is obviously spouting nonsense to convince Luke and Ben - a couple of space yokels - to hire him. That begs the question of why Han needs their business that badly. They surely can't pay him much. No, at the time of *A New Hope*, smuggling just isn't making ends meet for poor Han. Certainly not in comparison to the hefty ransom that comes with the rescue of one Princess Leia Organa.

SCOTT

Yes, the parsec. Got me there.

TODD and LIZ exchange a sly smile.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Unless -- Armin, do you have anything to say about that?

LIZ

What?

ARMIN

Thank you, Scott. I do.

ARMIN steps to the podium.

TODD

Is this part of it?

LIZ

Shh!

ARMIN

The parsec is indeed a unit of space rather than time, but when discussing the Kessel Run, space is actually the key factor. You see, the stretch of space known as the Kessel Run is home to a high density black hole cluster. Safely navigating this region requires skirting back and forth to avoid the event horizons, artificially inflating the distance traveled. A faster ship - like the *Millennium*

(MORE)

ARMIN (cont'd)
 Falcon - is able to skirt these
 event horizons, resulting in both a
 straighter course and a shorter
 distance traveled.

LIZ
 But that's -- is that Expanded
 Universe? The Disney acquisition
 raises questions of canonicity.

DINA
 Expanded Universe remains canon
 until directly contradicted by the
 films. I think you know that.

LIZ snarls to herself.

TODD
 (frazzled)
 Okay, fine! That's peachy. But how
 about your other points? Safer? I
 seem to recall that Han barely
 avoided being shot by that -- alien
 guy in the -- bar place. It's lucky
 he was even alive to meet Luke.

A beat passes as everyone processes this. TODD has just
 sprung a trap that Wyndham didn't even need to set up.

On the Loyola side, REMY, who has never spoken before this
 point, looks pointedly at his teammate.

REMY
 (sadly)
 Bro...

SCOTT
 Actually, Todd, you'll find that in
 the original cut, Han clearly
 shoots first. He's more than
 capable of handling Jabba's goons.

TODD
 Well, I didn't know that!

The crowd murmurs again. RUSSELL nods, a stern look on his
 face.

LIZ
 (whispering)
 Todd, let it go.
 (aloud)
 (MORE)

LIZ (cont'd)

The fact remains that Han wouldn't be dealing with Jabba's goons at all if not for Empire blockades. By helping to defeat them, he opens up more business for himself.

SCOTT

Or does he cut it off completely? Without the Empire to create the blockades, there's no need for a smugglers at all, is there?

LIZ

Indeed. It's a good thing he gave up smuggling after joining the Rebellion.

She's got SCOTT there.

ARMIN

Only to spend the rest of his life fighting numerous armed conflicts that resulted in the death of his lifelong partner and the loss of a child to the dark side.

SCOTT gives ARMIN a smirk, which he returns. Chewbacca's death is no longer canon and they both know it. LIZ, luckily, is too distraught to pick up on this.

DINA

Personally, I'd rather stick to the shipping business, even if it meant dealing with Empire bureaucracy.

TODD

(whispered)

Gordon, I don't think this is going your way.

LIZ

(whispered)

Shut up, Todd!

LATER.

The teams await the result of the debate. The Pathetic Fallacies hold hands, while Loyola tries its best to avoid eye contact with itself.

DINA
What do we think?

SCOTT
Never tell me the odds.

ARMIN
Never tell me the odds.

They high-five each other without even looking.

JUDGE
After careful deliberation, we have determined that the match, and the title of Novice League champions, go to the scruffy-looking nerfherders of... Wyndham College!

The room goes crazy. SCOTT, DINA, and ARMIN jump up and down in a group hug. This time, no one breaks away.

TODD
DAMN IT!

He flips his podium violently.

REMY
Bro...

In the back of the room, BOBO looks on proudly.

BOBO
(grinning ear to ear)
I can't believe it. The son of a bitch won with *Star Wars*.

RUSSELL, seated nearby, turns his head in BOBO's direction. BOBO ducks behind the nearest person.

DINA
Unbelievable.

SCOTT
You guys killed it out there. But Armin, I thought Chewie's death wasn't canon anymore.

ARMIN
Hey. If I know more about the topic than they do, that's not my fault.

VACARRO approaches the trio, beaming with pride.

VACARRO
Lilah, that was incredible!

DINA
Thanks, Daddy.

She hugs her father.

ARMIN
Banana farming! Is it legal? Is it
bigger than a breadbox?

DINA drags ARMIN away by the collar.

ARMIN (CONT'D)
JUST TELL ME!!

RUSSELL approaches SCOTT with his net.

RUSSELL
Scott! You are not going to *believe*
what I just saw.
(beat)
Also, congrats. That was great.

SCOTT
Thanks, man.

RUSSELL
I know you must think I'm crazy,
but... It was real. It was in our
room. It *asked* for you.

SCOTT
Yeah. He'll do that.

RUSSELL
I don't -- Wait. You believe me?

SCOTT
Oh, I believe you all right. But
maybe keep that between us.

SCOTT walks away with a wink.

RUSSELL turns away in disbelief. His eyeline skirts right over BOBO, who fades from his view. All he had needed was for someone to believe - a good thing, too. The last thing BOBO needs is another assignment.

Before RUSSELL can dwell on this life-affirming revelation, he gets a two-man tackle hug from ARMIN and DINA.

BOBO
 (musing)
 The truth is out there, buddy.

BOBO looks at his newly invisible self and follows SCOTT.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 Well, Scottie, I guess my work here
 is finally done, eh?

BOBO gets no answer. He calls SCOTT's name again. After a third try, BOBO gets it.

SCOTT can't see him either.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 (sadly)
 Oh. I guess it really is.

As ARMIN and DINA hoot and holler with RUSSELL, SCOTT's attention turns to the other side of the room.

Alone in the middle of the crowd stands LIZ, defeated and forlorn. SCOTT approaches her.

LIZ
 And what was all that, I wonder?

SCOTT
 You won't have to worry about
 caring for me anymore...

He looks back at his celebrating teammates.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Apparently, I now care too much.

LIZ nods, smiling a smile that is half bitter, half genuine. She's created a monster.

LIZ
 The best man won.

After a beat, he holds his arms open for a hug, which LIZ gives him. They let each other go and part ways. After a few steps, LIZ looks over her shoulder.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 Hey.

SCOTT turns back around. LIZ reaches into her collar to show the Millennium Falcon necklace she is once again wearing. She gives him a half smile. He smiles back and nods.

SCOTT

I know.

LIZ disappears into the crowd, all but gone for good.

SCOTT returns to the welcoming arms of his team.

ARMIN

Man, I cannot wait for next year!

SCOTT

(absentmindedly)

Yeah. Wait, next year?

DINA

We'll talk.

SCOTT scans the room one last time for BOBO. RUSSELL emerges from the crowd empty-handed and empty-netted.

In the end, SCOTT looks up, simply addressing the sky.

SCOTT

(quietly)

Thanks, Bobo.

EXT. A BEACH - SCOTT'S IMAGINATION

Splayed out on a bright yellow beach chair, wearing bright yellow beach garb, is BOBO. All around him, fictional females frolic in the rays of the sunglass-clad sun.

BOBO picks up his umbrella-filled banana smoothie and raises it to the sky in a toast.

BOBO

Anytime, Scottie. Anytime.

He takes a sip through an exceptionally long crazy straw and lowers the glass. He surveys the world of fantasy that surrounds him, but nothing grabs his interest. Slowly, ever so slowly, he comes to a horrifying realization.

He's bored.

BOBO (CONT'D)

Aw, crap.

THE END