

PUSHING DAISIES

"Corpsicle"


Episode #3T6508

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FINAL DRAFT 

November 4, 2007

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. PLAY-DOH VILLAGE - DAY (PILOT RE-USE)

A PLAY-DOH MAN walks into FRAME.

NARRATOR

It was like any day in Play-Doh Village...

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. The street begins to SHAKE. The Play-Doh man reacts to the strangeness -- what could it be? RUNS FOR THE HILLS. A GIANT REPTILIAN FOOT STOMPS INTO FRAME.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...except today was the day death came.

It's YOUNG NED and YOUNG CHUCK in their RODAN and GODZILLA costumes, respectively. They stomp through the village.

The Play-Doh man shoves an OLD WOMAN out of the way and is STOMPED. PLAY-DOH MAN #2 runs past, attempting to escape. But Young Ned reaches down and picks him up and PUNTS HIM.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Young Ned enjoyed bringing Play-Doh death to Play-Doh people. He did not yet realize he could bring real death to real people.

Play-Doh Man #2 flies INTO FRAME and IRISES US TO:

EXT. YOUNG CHUCK'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK (PILOT RE-USE)

Young Chuck, in full-on Godzilla gear, rushes around the yard as her FATHER hoses her off.

NARRATOR

Young Chuck was 8 years, 42 weeks, 3 hours and 2 minutes old... and about to become an orphan.

Chuck GIGGLES with delight, running in circles through the spray, amidst the Play-Doh carnage. Chuck, soaked, heads up the front stairs of her porch, through the door and into her house.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Her father washed off the grit from a hard day conquering villages...

Chuck's father goes back to watering the lawn.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...then turned his attention to an irksome dry patch in the lawn. Irsome because no amount of watering or fertilizer or...

Chuck's father drops dead in the grass.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...then the dry patch didn't matter anymore.

OMIT

INT. YOUNG CHUCK'S HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Ned sits opposite NED'S MOTHER, who has her arm around Chuck. Both Chuck and Ned are in states of shock. Chuck holds a pocket watch in her hand.

CLOSE ON THE POCKET WATCH

Chuck rubs her tiny thumb over the CC engraving.

NARRATOR

Chuck's father wasn't just a star in her life, he was a pocket universe full of stars.

ON NED AND NED'S MOTHER

She forces a smile while he can't be bothered to pretend he's anything but shell-shocked.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Ned and his mother waited with Chuck for her aunts Lily and Vivian to arrive. Chuck would later remember Ned being very quiet, staring at his mother as if staring at a ghost.

Ned stares at his mother, horrified.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Only Ned knew his mother had already been dead once that day.

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON Young Ned's mother, shaking her head:

NED'S MOTHER

There but for the grace of God.

NARRATOR

Only Ned knew that he had touched her back to life and one minute later, Chuck's father died.

Young Ned is deliberately avoiding eye contact with Chuck.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It had seemed to Ned a strange coincidence. A strange, troubling coincidence. Chuck would remember Ned didn't look at her.

LILY and VIVIAN, dressed in black from head to toe, drag steamer trunks on wheels into the house. Ned and Ned's mother stand. Vivian immediately embraces Chuck, who seems too tired to cry.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

She would remember Vivian, who didn't like to touch anyone, was the first to embrace her.

Lily stands back, as if behind a force field, staring at Chuck.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And she would remember Lily, who had no problem with touch at all, couldn't bring herself within reach... not right away.

EXT. YOUNG CHUCK'S HOUSE - PORCH - FLASHBACK

Young Ned rings the doorbell, still wearing his pajamas. The door opens to REVEAL Lily. Lily looks down at Young Ned, who is still in shock after witnessing his mother's death. She reacts and quickly pulls him into a hug. Vivian and Young Chuck come down the stairs, wondering what the commotion is about.

NARRATOR

Chuck would remember Ned ringing the doorbell just after bedtime. And Lily telling her:

LILY

Something happened.

VIVIAN

(gasps)

Another something happened?

Lily releases Ned from the hug and turns and holds Chuck, catching the young girl by surprise.

NARRATOR

It wasn't until Lily hugged Young Ned after learning of his mother's second and final passing, that she took Chuck in her arms.

As Lily continues to hold onto Chuck for dear life, Vivian gently pulls Ned inside.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And when she did... she wouldn't let go.

EXT. YOUNG CHUCK'S HOUSE - STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

Chuck steps outside just in time to hear the RUMBLE of a car engine. NED'S FATHER'S PLYMOUTH pulls out of the driveway.

NARRATOR

It was no less difficult for Chuck to let go of Ned when his father whisked him away to be abandoned at the Longborough School for Boys.

INT. PLYMOUTH - CONTINUOUS - FLASHBACK

POV THROUGH BACK WINDOW: Chuck runs after the car. Ned stares out the side window, so despondent he doesn't notice Chuck.

YOUNG CHUCK

Ned! Ned!

Chuck's figure vanishes into the horizon as the car pulls away.

NARRATOR

Chuck would never see him again... not for as long as she lived.

ON CHUCK

She stands in the middle of the road.

ADULT NED (O.S.)

Chuck?!

Young Chuck turns to see who called her name.

OMIT

TIME CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A SNOWFLAKE

It falls TOWARD AND PAST CAMERA...

NARRATOR

It's 20 years, 2 months, 3 weeks, 2 days, 5 hours and 54 minutes later... but this winter...

ADULT NED (O.S.)

Chuck?!

EXT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

SNOW FALLS, blanketing the city in a sheen of white. THE CAMERA DRIFTS through the street until:

NARRATOR

*...there's an unpleasant chill in the air.
After learning her father died because the Pie-
Maker brought his mother back to life...*

CAMERA FINDS NED, clad only in his pajamas, a robe and some winter boots, shivering in the cold. (NOTE: He should be wearing his pj's from the last scene of "Bitter Sweets.")

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...Chuck disappeared into the night.

A few flecks of snow melt on his cheeks, like tears.

NED

(calling out)

Chuck?!

No response. He continues to shuffle through the snow.

NED (CONT'D)

Chuck?!

ANGLE - A WINDOW

A window SLAMS OPEN and a burly ANGRY NEIGHBOR shouts:

ANGRY NEIGHBOR

Stop squawking for your boyfriend, you twit--

Before the burly angry neighbor can finish, WHACK -- he's hit in the face with a snowball.

ON NED

Ned is already packing another snowball. He swings back and throws. WHACK. It hits the side of the window and explodes into dust. The angry neighbor backs down and shuts his window.

Ned goes back to stomping through the street, calling for:

NED

Chuck?!

NARRATOR

*The Pie-Maker considered the places to find
Chuck... the places she'd roam...*

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT (STAGE)

Ned stands on the front porch and knocks on the door. Drifts of snow have collected on most surfaces.

NARRATOR

...the places she called home.

Finally, a shotgun barrel slides through the mail slot and levels itself at Ned's knee. Then:

VIVIAN (O.S.)

(clears her throat)

Who is it?

NED

It's um... Ned... the pie-maker.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Both Lily and Vivian are bundled in layers of winter coats.

VIVIAN

And all this fuss about global warming...

LILY

Can't happen soon enough, if you ask me.

NED

Why is it so cold in here?

LILY

Charlotte used to light the furnace. The thought of outliving her seemed so unlikely we never bothered to learn how to do it.

NED

So it hasn't mysteriously lit itself recently, because clearly it's very cold.

LILY

Clearly.

VIVIAN

Wouldn't it be lovely if Charlotte's ghost returned to light the furnace?

NED

Would you like me to light the furnace?

TIME CUT TO:

MINUTES LATER

Ned is slightly dirty from lighting the furnace and Lily and Vivian have taken off all their coats. Much better.

NED

On the subject of Charlotte's ghost... if you sense her presence in any way--

VIVIAN

When you say "presence"...?

NED

If you think you see her out of the corner of your eye or hear strange noises in her room or find suspicious footprints in the snow...

LILY

Should we be expecting this presence 'cause you're being kind of urgent over there?

NED

Oh god, no. I'm just, uh, thawing. But if you were to see her or think you see her--

LILY

I saw Charlotte once. After she died. Then I blinked and she was gone. It was unpleasant. That trick my mind played on me. And it's unpleasant for you to come here picking scabs in the middle of the night.

NED

I didn't mean to pick.

Lily and Vivian both stand.

VIVIAN

Thank you very much for lighting our furnace so Charlotte's ghost wouldn't have to.

NED

Am I leaving?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Ned stands on the stoop as the door SLAMS shut behind him.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - MORNING

Ned knocks on Olive's door. The door swings open to REVEAL OLIVE, in pj's, brushing her teeth.

OLIVE

Hiya. Did you come to get Digby?

She spits toothpaste foam into a cup and wipes her mouth.

NED

No. Have you seen Chuck?

OLIVE

Not since your chorus of slamming doors last night that woke me from a dead sleep.

NED

Oh. Did we get loud?

OLIVE

You got very loud. After all the commotion, I peeped my peeper out the peephole, saw her getting in the elevator and you taking the stairs. Take it you didn't catch her.

NED

That elevator's fast and the stairs were slippery.

OLIVE

I heard you walking the streets moaning her name like someone out of a Tennessee Williams. It may be romantic, but it's not dignified.

NED

I don't know where she is, Olive.

OLIVE

Maybe she don't want you to know. Now go clean yourself up, you look like hell.

With that, Olive slowly shuts the door, keeping an eye on Ned's reaction until she's gone.

NARRATOR

It was hard for Olive Snook to close the door on the Pie-Maker's breaking heart.

OFF Ned, unsettled.

OMIT

INT. OLIVE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Olive enters to find CHUCK sitting on her bed, petting DIGBY.

OLIVE

Are you gonna tell me what he did?

Chuck only shakes her head.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
Did he beat you?

CHUCK
No.

OLIVE
Did he look like he wanted to beat you?

CHUCK
Olive.

A moment, then:

OLIVE
Is it over? You and... him.

CHUCK
No. I don't know. I'm still digesting.

OLIVE
Well, I guess you can stay here until you've passed whatever it is you're digesting.

CHUCK
Thank you. Please don't tell him where I am.
(then)
Did you shave Digby's bum?

Chuck has noticed that there's a bald patch on Digby's bum.

OLIVE
No. Maybe he got it caught in the vacuum.
(to Digby)
That vacuum cleaner take a bite out of you?

Digby stares and puts his head down. Olive sits down next to Chuck, moving in for the dirt.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
I know it's none of my business, but I have so many question tugging at my tongue as to why you faked your death. I just felt like I had to respect your privacy on that issue.

CHUCK
I appreciate that.

OLIVE
But I'm not gonna respect your privacy right now. Why did you fake your death? Is this an insurance scam? You and the pie-maker in some kind of cahoots together?

CHUCK

We're in cahoots. But not how you think.
(a long beat, then)
I died and he brought me back to life.
Cahoots enough for you?

OLIVE

If you don't wanna tell me, then say so. I was just curious if you're fighting over the cahoots or something more... personal.

CHUCK

More personal. And cahoots-related. Can we go back to respecting my privacy?

OLIVE

Sure. Going to your aunts' later, since you're avoiding Ned I guess you won't be making them a pie. Want me to grab one off the rack?

CHUCK

Would you mind terribly making one for them? From scratch? They like them a certain way.

OLIVE

Well, whatever way you been making 'em is doing the trick. The mermaids are swimming.

CHUCK

They're back in the water?

OLIVE

Vivian told me. Lily didn't want me to know. Thought I'd gloat. So I'm pretending not to. I'm pretending not to know a lot these days.
(then)
Pear with Gruyère baked into the crust?

CHUCK

Yes, please. And I add extra vanilla. It's my secret ingredient. Lily loves vanilla.

Chuck produces a dropper bottle of homeopathic antidepressants.

NARRATOR

But Chuck's secret ingredient wasn't vanilla.

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Olive uncaps the top of a dropper bottle and DRIP-DRIP-DRIPS it onto the pie. She starts to put the top crust over the filling.

NARRATOR

It was an herbal mood enhancer. Olive Snook had been delivering enhanced pies for weeks, not realizing she was a homeopathic drug mule.

Olive tastes the vanilla, curious.

OLIVE

Not very strong vanilla.

She considers, then pours a whole lot more on the filling before covering it with the top crust. Olive grates some cheese on the crust and slides the pie into the oven and shuts the oven doors.

DINING AREA - ON NED AND EMERSON

They sit across from each other in a booth.

NED

I told her I killed her father.

EMERSON

She ask you if you killed her father? She ask you that? Those words came outta her mouth?

NED

No. We were talking about phantom limbs, then I blurted it out. It was like word vomit.

EMERSON

Then you slipped in that word vomit and fell on your ass and now you covered in word vomit. Dead Girl could be out there all grudgey-grudge with a beef to pick. "Hello, Evening News, I'm 'Lonely Tourist' Charlotte Charles. I crawled outta my grave and here's how."

NED

Stop it. I'm having difficulty breathing.

EMERSON

What kind of state she in?

NED

A bad state. She just up and left. Now she's out there all alone in the cold, cold world.

EMERSON

Sound like she wants to be out there alone in the cold, cold world. Don't go tracking her down and reminding her why she's mad at you. Then she will go to the Evening News.

As Olive approaches:

OLIVE

That's what I said. Except the "Evening News" part, which I don't understand.

(then)

We're talking about Chuck, aren't we?

EMERSON

We're talking about Chuck. Him and me. I don't know what you're talking about because this chitchat doesn't concern you. Shoo.

They stare at Olive until she gets the hint and moves off.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

Dead Girl needs to sort out what she has to sort out. You can't go droppin' a "I killed your dad" bomb and expect happy-go-lightly. I have a "Here's what you should do:" Leave her be. And while you're leaving her be there's somebody I'd like you to talk to.

NARRATOR

The facts were these...

INT. ÜBER-LIFE LIFE INSURANCE - DAY - FLASHBACK

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON VICTOR NARRAMORE standing in front of the Über-Life Life Insurance logo.

NARRATOR

One Victor Narramore, an adjuster for Über-Life Life Insurance, was 46 years, 11 weeks, 5 days, 17 hours and 3 minutes old...

EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

CAMERA COMES OVER THE TOP OF A SNOWPLOW TO REVEAL: Victor's CORPSE is wedged in a pile of snow in front of it.

NARRATOR

...when his body, frozen near solid, was scooped up by a snowplow on the 200 block of Oak Street. Unsettled by this particular New Year's tidings...

The PLOW DRIVER approaches Victor's frozen body and hesitantly pokes it a few times in confusion.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...Oak Street Homeowner's Association offered a reward to find Victor Narramore's killer.

INT. MORGUE - OFFICE - DAY

The CORONER sits behind his desk wearing the ugliest Christmas sweater ever, like ever. Ned and Emerson stand across from him.

EMERSON

People ask you why you wear that sweater?

CORONER

My niece gave me this sweater for Christmas.

EMERSON

Thing's uglier than a chipmunk's ass.

NED

He means the sweater, not your niece.

EMERSON

Why give a person a Christmas sweater for Christmas? You can only wear it that day.

NED

He means "should" only wear it that day.

EMERSON

Yeah. You either take off what you're wearing and put it on right then and there or you wait a year for the next holiday season.

CORONER

Why you going toe-to-toe with me on fashion? Only thing I wanna hear out of you people is, "Happy New Year." And, "Here's your rent."

The coroner holds up his palm, waiting for it to be greased.

NED

Happy New Year.

EMERSON

Here's your rent.

Emerson greases it with a wad of cash. The coroner eyes him.

CORONER

Feels light.

EMERSON

You're just stronger than you think.

CORONER

Mmm-hmm.

INT. MORGUE - LAB - MOMENTS LATER

The FROZEN BODY OF VICTOR NARRAMORE slides out of the morgue drawer, still frozen in the shape he was found in the snowbank.

Ned and Emerson exchange a look. Ned touches Victor's frozen body and we see him FLASH with life. But his eyes don't open. Finally, they pop open with a CRACKLE of ice.

Only Victor's mouth and eyes move, everything else is frozen.

VICTOR NARRAMORE

I can't move.

NED

You're frozen solid.

VICTOR NARRAMORE

So there is such a thing as a snowball's chance in hell? Or is this where the walls burst into flame and you rip off your flesh and reveal yourselves to be demons?

NED

You're not in hell, Mr. Narramore.

(then)

Should you be?

VICTOR NARRAMORE

No, no. Of course not. Well... it really depends on who you talk to.

(then)

Who am I talking to?

EMERSON

Angels of Justice.

VICTOR NARRAMORE

Oh. Then I am in hell, aren't I?

NED

Who killed you, Mr. Narramore?

VICTOR NARRAMORE

I don't know who killed me. But I do know how they killed me.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Victor Narramore walks to HIS CAR with a group of other MEN and WOMEN (Note: To include KEVIN VANDEN EYKEL and BILL RICHTER).

Victor waves goodbye to the group, then stops at his car as the others continue walking. CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM ON HIS BACK as he lifts up his key and clicks: BEEP-BEEP.

NARRATOR

After a long day at the office, Victor Narramore was walking to his car when he heard someone approaching rapidly from behind.

We HEAR the rush of footsteps running up behind Victor. He turns quickly, in time to see:

VICTOR'S POV - SLOW MOTION

A BASEBALL BAT with the word "KINDNESS" carved into it comes into FOCUS as it's being swung toward Victor's head.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Victor Narramore didn't see who killed him, but he did see how he was killed. And he was, in fact, killed with Kindness.

Right before impact, we CUT BACK TO:

INT. MORGUE - BACK TO SCENE

As before.

NED

You were killed with kindness?

VICTOR NARRAMORE

Not the sentiment, which would have been lovely, but the word, which was scratched into the business end of a baseball bat.

EMERSON

Somewhere between Kindness and the morgue, someone made you a corpsicle and you got scooped up by a snowplow.

VICTOR NARRAMORE

(feigning innocence)

I wonder why.

EMERSON

Really? You got to wonder? No idea why someone would wanna kill you?

VICTOR NARRAMORE

Well... I am an insurance adjuster. We're more hated than parking enforcement.

NED

How come?

VICTOR NARRAMORE

It's my job to quantify people's lives and decide if they deserve a new organ that'll allow them to live. Most people don't deserve a new organ, that tends to be upsetting. No one wants to be told if they should live or die.

(then)

Do I get to live now?

Ned checks his watch:

NED

No.

Ned touches Victor Narramore and he FLASHES dead, but remains in his near-frozen state like a citizen of Pompeii.

EMERSON

Need to get a list of folks who wanted a new organ and were rejected by Victor Narramore.

NARRATOR

But the Pie-Maker didn't care about Victor Narramore and his unattainable organs...

Emerson eyes a very distracted Ned.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

He only cared about his attainable-yet-unattainable Chuck...

EXT. LIBERTY APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - DAY

The roof is blanketed with snow.

NARRATOR

...out there alone in the cold, cold world.

CAMERA FINDS Chuck looking out over the city, at a loss. Her beehives are all covered to protect them from the cold.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But what he didn't know...

MYSTERIOUS POV

As it approaches Chuck from behind.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...was that she wasn't alone at all.

CONTINUED:

She HEARS a creak from the stairs behind her. She turns,
assuming it could only be:

CHUCK

Ned?

After a moment, OSCAR VIBENIUS steps onto the rooftop.

OSCAR

Not Ned.

OFF THAT...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. LIBERTY APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - DAY

As before. Chuck and Oscar face off.

OSCAR

In winter everything's dampened and hushed... sounds and smells... but not you. The girl who smells like honey and something like death but not death. Something else altogether.

CHUCK

Hello, Oscar.

OSCAR

I hope your bees are surviving the chill.

CHUCK

Seem to be.

OSCAR

That explains the honey. But not the something like death but not death.

CHUCK

It's cold. I'm going in.

He offers a familiar sweater (as seen in "Smell of Success"), holding it so she can put her arms through the sleeves.

OSCAR

This will keep you warm.

CHUCK

That's my sweater.

She stares at it.

OSCAR

It's clean, if that's what you're worrying about. In fact, it's very clean. I collected every last bit of anything that wasn't cashmere. Even a small sample of your hair.

CHUCK

This is all making me very uncomfortable.

OSCAR

You mean up on a rooftop with a near stranger who's waxing on about collecting your hair?

CHUCK

Yes. Wait. Did you shave Digby's bum?

OSCAR

What is with you and that dog? You both have that scent about you.

CHUCK

You did shave Digby's bum.

OSCAR

I suppose I should have asked first. Which reminds me: Could I bother you for a larger sample of your hair? I only got a few strands from the sweater. Can't do much with that.

CHUCK

What're you gonna do with it?

OSCAR

Stuff it in my pillow. Human hair is so much softer than down. I'm teasing you. I'm just curious why you and the dog aren't like everyone else. Hair can be very telling about so many things. Unless you already know what the hair knows and care to tell me yourself.

CHUCK

The hair doesn't know anything. Maybe it's you. People experience strange smells that aren't actually there all the time.

OSCAR

People with neurological disorders. Are you suggesting I have a neurological disorder that's affecting my olfactory glands?

CHUCK

You do spend a lot of time in the sewer.

OSCAR

Some of us belong underground. Sewer life has only honed my sense of smell. If you were in a white room, you'd only see white. But white is the presence of all color and that's what I see in the sewer. Or in this case, smell.

CHUCK

You can't have any of my hair.

OSCAR

Then the dog's ass shavings will have to do.

CONTINUED: (2)

He turns to leave, but stops at the covered beehives.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Bees. The Ancient Egyptians believed they were inexorably entwined with death. They used honey to mummify their dead and left jars of it in the tombs for food in the afterlife.

CHUCK

You know a lot about bees.

OSCAR

And I suspect you know a lot about death.

(then)

If you change your mind about the hair, I'm just a flush away.

And with that, he's gone...

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - DAY

Exhausted, Ned stands in the kitchen looking out to the front windows, waiting for Chuck to return. The back door opens and Olive enters...

OLIVE

Boy, it's cold. You could use a witch's bosom as a hot-water bottle on a day like today.

NED

Any sign of Chuck?

Olive gets to work around the room, enjoying the conversation with herself:

OLIVE

"And how are you, Olive?" *I'm fine, thanks for asking, Ned.* "That was a funny joke about the witch's bosom, Olive." *Thank you, Ned.* "And I appreciate you saying 'bosom.'" *Why, because it is less offensive than other words, Ned?* "No, because I simply like the word 'bosom,' Olive. I say it to myself all the time. Bosom. Bosom. Bosom. I can't help myself. I am a bosomahaulic."

A moment, then:

NED

Are you done?

OLIVE

Think so.

NED

You promise me you don't know where she is?

OLIVE

How would I know where she is?

NED

Because I keep going over this in my mind and Chuck doesn't know many people and you're not one of the many people she doesn't know.

OLIVE

Have you slept at all?

NED

Did you know you have a tell when you lie?

OLIVE

Do I?

NED

You answer questions with questions.

OLIVE

Maybe I know I have a tell and I know you know I have a tell and I'm doing it now to confuse you so you don't know what tell I'm telling.

NED

But why would you go to the trouble of answering questions with questions and pretending to lie if you really don't know where she is?

OLIVE

Can you tell me?

The bells on the door RING, rescuing Olive. Ned looks out hopefully, then sees it's Emerson.

INT. PIE HOLE - DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

As Ned joins Emerson in his booth.

EMERSON

Victor Narramore turned down fifteen folks for organ transplants and out of those fifteen folks, three are viable persons of interest.

NED

Why are only three viable?

EMERSON

Because twelve are not viable.

NED

Oh.
(getting it)
Oh.

EMERSON

One of those viable persons of interest lives on the two hundred block of Oak Street. Abner Newsome. Got turned down last year for a new heart. By Victor Narramore.

(nods)

You getting on the trolley?

NED

Is Abner Newsome still alive?

EMERSON

Hence viable.

NED

I should wait here for Chuck. Just in case.

EMERSON

You just don't wanna talk to a sick child. I understand. It's a hard, sad life.

NED

Are you really trying to make me feel guilty when I am this depressed?

EMERSON

I'm trying to get you out of your depression.

NED

You don't need me to talk to the living.

EMERSON

Suit yourself. But Dead Girl don't need you either. You the last person she needs to see right now which is why she ain't here.

Emerson scoots out of the booth, leaving Ned to gaze absently out the window. CAMERA PUSHES IN ON Olive, who has clocked this last exchange from afar...

OMIT

INT. OLIVE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Chuck is looking out the window as Olive pulls on her coat and grabs Digby's leash and places it around his collar. She picks up a pie box, getting ready to head out.

OLIVE

Before I head out I want you to take a mental picture of me, your friend Olive, here with Digby on my way to deliver your aunts a delicious pie, which I do as your friend.

CHUCK

Thank you.

OLIVE

Did you take your picture?

CHUCK

Yes.

Olive unlocks the front door. Ned is standing there.

OLIVE

Look. It's Ned.

Chuck sees him. Olive grabs her coat and a big fur hat and heads out with Digby on his leash, hiding the pie box from Ned.

NED

Did you shave Digby's--

OLIVE

We don't know how that happened.

(then)

Okay. See ya.

Olive exits, shuts the door. Ned stares at Chuck, but she averts her eyes.

NED

Been looking.

CHUCK

Been hiding.

NED

How much does Olive know?

CHUCK

Don't worry about Olive. Even if I did tell her I died and you brought me back to life, she wouldn't believe me.

NED

You don't know that.

CONTINUED: (2)

CHUCK

Yes, I do. Because I told her and she didn't believe me.

NED

Why would you do that?

CHUCK

Because I needed to tell somebody the truth. Even if they didn't believe me. I just wanted to tell the truth about who I am. And what happened to me and what you did to my dad.

NED

Can't we keep the truth between you and me?

CHUCK

It's hard to keep the truth between you and me when it's so hard to look at you now.

Ned's heart is breaking.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I remember when you came over that night after my dad died. You wouldn't look at me either.

NED

If I looked at you, I felt... too much.

CHUCK

You knew you killed him. That's why you couldn't look at me and that's why I can't look at you now.

Ned nods, trying to keep his emotion in check.

NED

Chuck... please.

CHUCK

No one could tell me how my dad died. I thought it was the fickle finger of fate. But it wasn't the fickle finger of fate. It was your fickle finger. That one, right there.

NED

I didn't mean my finger to be fickle. I didn't know what it would do.

CHUCK

I know. I rationalized the whole thing. It was like you were playing with a gun and it accidentally went off and killed my dad.

CONTINUED: (3)

NED

Like that. Except there's no gun and I wasn't playing. My mother died. But yeah, I'm the kid who killed your dad. And I hate that.

CHUCK

I hate that, too.

NED

Do you hate... me?

She's silent for a long beat, then:

CHUCK

I have to hate you a little for just a little while... and I can't hate you if you're here.

NED

I don't want you to hate me. I should stay.

CHUCK

If you stay I'll just end up hating you more.

(then)

Just go.

Ned stares at her, dumbfounded. Then walks out the door. After a beat, Chuck sighs, exhausted from the whole exchange.

NARRATOR

Chuck considered how much easier circumstances would be if she had someone to talk to who wasn't the Pie-Maker... someone who might believe her secrets if she told them...

CLOSE ON - A NOTE

It reads: "Meet me on the roof." REVEAL WE ARE--

INT. OLIVE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Chuck stands over the toilet. She wads up the note and throws it in the bowl, flushing.

NARRATOR

...someone else who belonged underground.

EXT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE - DAY

Emerson walks from HIS CAR up the path to a modest suburban home, past a big snowman on the snow-covered lawn.

NARRATOR

Hot on the trail of an ice-cold killer, Mr. Cod paid a visit to the third of his 3 persons of interest in the murder of Über-Life Life Insurance adjuster Victor Narramore.

INT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Emerson sits at a kitchen table across from ABNER NEWSOME (14), a scowling, wheelchair-bound curmudgeon with a heart condition.

NARRATOR

The facts were these...

CLOSE ON ABNER'S SCOWL.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY - FLASHBACK (ONE WALL)

A DOCTOR holds up a smiling, fresh-from-the-baby-maker BABY.

NARRATOR

Abner Newsome was a happy child...

The doctors SLAPS the baby's ass to start it breathing. It opens its mouth and WAILS.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...for the first 34 seconds of his life...

CLOSE IN on the darkness of its mouth. CUT TO:

INT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

PULL BACK from the black glint of Abner's scowl. We're in Abner Newsome's living room that has been decorated with a ridiculous amount of SPORTS MEMORABILIA and ARCADE-STYLE VIDEO GAMES. He sits in his WHEELCHAIR.

NARRATOR

...whereupon it was discovered that he suffered from a debilitating heart condition... that left him sad, sick and very, very surly.

EMMA NEWSOME peels potatoes into a bucket as she sits in an easy chair next to her son's HOSPITAL BED that's set up in the living room in front of a BIG-SCREEN TELEVISION that's playing the 1938 Warner Brothers classic, "Adventures of Robin Hood."

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

As the single mother of a sickly, surly child -- Emma Newsome was a raw nerve her son would often peel like a potato.

PULL BACK: As Emma viciously peels, Emerson crosses his legs.

EMMA NEWSOME

When I saw you coming up the block I thought you might be from the Wish-a-Wish Foundation. Or another charity. Or a celebrity. Or a celebrity representing a charity.

EMERSON

That's nice. Must be nice for your son to know there's people that care.

ABNER NEWSOME

Yeah, caring is great. Love the caring. Know what would be even better? Not dying.

EMMA NEWSOME

Abner, this is Emerson Cod. He's investigating a crime.

ABNER NEWSOME

I heard on the news that that Narramore guy got whacked. He turned me down for a good heart once, so he can pretty much suck it, I think.

EMERSON

You don't seem too... bereft at his passing.

ABNER NEWSOME

I'm not. Not at all. In fact, when he's done sucking it he can eat my dump.

EMMA NEWSOME

Abner.

ABNER NEWSOME

(catching on)

Oh, please tell me I'm a suspect. Awesome. 'Cause first I took a magic potion that made the tissue-paper sack I call my heart work. Then I stepped on his neck with the soggy, atrophied breadsticks that used to be my legs.

EMMA NEWSOME

My son is very sick, Mr. Cod.

EMERSON

I can see that.

EMMA NEWSOME

If you're not here to grant a wish or give us free merchandise, then I think you should leave.

CONTINUED: (2)

Emerson stands.

ABNER NEWSOME

Don't let the door hit you on your big oxygenated blood-filled ass on the way out.

EMERSON

You're pushing it.

ABNER NEWSOME

If I piss you off, are you gonna sneeze and kill me?

EMMA NEWSOME

Have a nice day.

ABNER NEWSOME

If you have any more questions, I'll be right here. Or slumped in a pile on the floor.

Emerson exits--

EXT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE

The door SLAMS as Emerson walks back down the path, his angry thoughts distracted by--

ANGLE - A SNOWMAN

A STRAY DOG is peeing on the snowman's base...

EMERSON

(smiles)

Good dog. Good dog. Why don't you leave a little present there for 'em, too.

(off the dog)

Don't be lookin' at me like I'm evil.

Something catches Emerson's attention. He approaches the yellow snow as the dog runs off. The yellow snow has melted away REVEALING A FOOT. Emerson starts brushing the rest of the snow off, REVEALING A LEG...

EMERSON (CONT'D)

Mmm-mmm.

CUT TO BLACK.

OMIT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

OMIT

INT. MORGUE - LAB - DAY

Emerson and Ned stand in front of a gurney. A pair of ICY FEET stick out from the bottom of the sheet covering the body.

NARRATOR

Having followed the frozen stiff from Abner Newsome's house to the morgue, Emerson Cod grew concerned...

EMERSON

I'm concerned.

NED

About Chuck?

EMERSON

About you and your moonin' over Dead Girl. You gotta pull yourself together. We got a corpsicle to question!

Reluctant, Ned pulls back the sheet revealing:

ANOTHER FROZEN MAN in his underwear, covered in a thin lair of frost and ice.

Ned starts his watch and touches the corpse. Nothing happens. He shoots Emerson a concerned look and tries again. Nothing.

NED

Wha--?

Emerson sighs. Takes out his knitting needles. And chisels a HOLE in the layer of ice revealing bare skin.

EMERSON

Freezer burn... try again.

Ned starts his watch and with the FAMILIAR POP OF ELECTRICITY, our dead man, BILL, sits up, ice cracking around his limbs.

BILL RICHTER

Bill Richter, Über-Life Life Insurance. If you've got big problems, we've got bigger solutions. That's life. Über-Life.

NED

Another Über-Life insurance agent.

BILL RICHTER

Actually, I prefer "insurance adjuster." It's my job to assess damage.

NED

Maybe it's time for a self-assessment.

Bill looks down at his frozen, beaten body.

BILL RICHTER

(looks down)

Oh, this? Guess that's what happens when you're smacked with a bat.

EMERSON

Any idea who smacked you?

BILL RICHTER

No. But you might want to ask Kevin.

NED / EMERSON

Kevin?

BILL RICHTER

Kevin Vanden Eykel. We carpool. We'd just left the others and headed for my car where I was fumbling for my keys, when all of a sudden I hear him scream, "Watch out!"

(then)

Next thing you know, here I am.

(then)

Where am I?

NED

You're, um... in the morgue.

BILL RICHTER

Oh. If I'm dead...

(clocks Ned's sad expression)

...then why are you the one with the long face?

Ned is taken aback. Emerson is annoyed.

BILL RICHTER (CONT'D)

Lemme guess. Girl problems?

EMERSON

Hell no.

BILL RICHTER

Hell yes. I can see it in his eyes. What's her name?

NED

Well, I call her Chuck, but that's not her real name. It's sort of a funny story--

EMERSON

Ask the fool how he got in that snowman!

Snapping out of it, Ned turns to Emerson.

NED

Sorry...

(sadly, to Bill)

I can't talk about this right now.

BILL RICHTER

Oh, that's okay. It'll come when you're ready. Till then...

Bill reaches sympathetically toward Ned and:

BILL RICHTER (CONT'D)

Chin up, big guy.

ZAP! Before Ned can react, Bill touches Ned's chin and re-deads in an instant. Emerson scowls.

NED

I'm sorry. I thought I was pulled together... then I... came apart.

EMERSON

Well you coming apart took apart our case. We still don't know a damn thing about this killer.

NED

We don't. But Kevin Vanden Eykel might...

OFF HIS LOOK...

OMIT

INT. ÜBER-LIFE LIFE INSURANCE OFFICE

CLOSE ON: An "Über-Life Life Insurance" pamphlet with the tagline "Debt or Death? Why Health Insurance Is a Good Bet." PULL BACK TO REVEAL Ned and Emerson are sitting across a desk covered in mountainous stacks of client files.

An overworked, bespectacled pencil-pusher type enters. This is STEVE KAISER.

EMERSON
You Kevin Vanden Eykel?

He drops another stack of files on his desk and takes a seat.

STEVE KAISER
Nope, Steve Kaiser. I've been covering some of Kevin's cases since he went missing.

Emerson shoots Ned a look before turning back to Steve.

EMERSON
When'd he go missing?

STEVE KAISER
Same night as Bill Richter and Victor Narramore.
(sadly)
In all probability, he's dead like them.
'Course the company won't pay off on his policy until the police find a body so his wife's struggling to keep her head above water. Now I hear their youngest just broke his arm. When it rains, it pours. I'm surprised they don't just cancel her insurance and put the final nail in her coffin.

NED
Doesn't sound like you approve of how things are done around here.

STEVE KAISER
(suddenly paranoid)
Who'd you say you worked for again?

EMERSON
We didn't... I'm a private investigator and this is my associate.

Steve stands.

STEVE KAISER
Then I think I've said enough. If you gentlemen will excuse me--

Ned stands to block him.

NED
Hold on. Bill Richter's body ended up on the front yard of a boy named Abner Newsome. All we're trying to do is find out why.

CONTINUED: (2)

EMERSON

From what we've gathered, Abner had applied to Über-Life several times. Did Bill work on Abner's case?

Steve eyes them for a moment, then returns to his desk.

He types rapidly, then stares at the computer screen. Suddenly, his face goes grim. He swings the screen around for them to see.

STEVE KAISER

Bill, Victor and Kevin all rejected Abner for a heart transplant.

EMERSON

That's a little something we in the private detective business like to call a pattern.

(nodding to Ned)

Let's go...

STEVE KAISER

Asses.

NED

Excuse me?

Steve Kaiser appears agitated.

STEVE KAISER

I'm talking about the suits who run this company... Good god, how many people have to pay the price before that boy finally gets a heart?

NED

Then why don't you just approve his application?

STEVE KAISER

Because I'll lose my job. Besides, it's not up to me. It's up to the numbers. And his number's almost up. Low survival odds plus exorbitant transplant costs equals bad business and that's the bottom line around here... Hell, if this place has taught me anything, it's people are expendable.

OFF OF Emerson and Ned, we go...

OMIT

EXT. LIBERTY APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - DAY

Chuck looks out over the snow-covered city.

OSCAR (O.S.)
I got your invitation.

REVEAL Oscar has arrived behind her with the soaked note.

CHUCK
I'm glad you came. And scared. A little bit.

A small smile flashes across her lips...

NARRATOR
Chuck felt alive holding the dark secret of her death so close to the light of day.

OSCAR
The mystery of your scent is hardly solvable with only the hair of a dog. But I have a hypothesis.

CHUCK
Hypothesize.

He moves closer. There's a Hannibal/Clarice air to all this...

OSCAR
We are made up of our cells. The sum of our parts. The cells I've smelled tell a story. A cell starved for oxygen, as in death, will reorganize its electrochemistry. Even after life returns, the signature of the shock to the system remains.

CHUCK
How?

OSCAR
There is always the slightest whiff of ozone, like the fading memory of a dream.

CHUCK
Do I smell of ozone?

OSCAR
Your dog does. His hair contained one part per million, but one part nonetheless. Did he die and come back?

CHUCK
That would be impossible.

CONTINUED: (2)

OSCAR

People die and come back all the time. They fall in frozen lakes, have heart attacks, their lungs collapse. Then someone pulls them back from the edge.

CHUCK

I would know if Digby fell into a frozen lake.

OSCAR

Perhaps you didn't notice because you were dying with him.

He watches her face a moment, then:

OSCAR (CONT'D)

It's pure conjecture, of course. Based on nothing but the hair of a dog's behind...

NARRATOR

Chuck could feel her truth stepping out of the shadows, warming its toes in the sunshine. And the man from the sewer could sense it...

OSCAR

It can be so exhausting to carry a secret.

CHUCK

I need a pair of scissors.

Oscar holds up a pair of scissors. She takes them, holds up a section of her own hair and -- SNIP -- cuts it off...

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Tell me my secret.

She hands the hair to Oscar, who looks at her like he were holding diamonds.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

OMIT

INT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

NARRATOR

*Anticipating the arrival of a third body,
Emerson Cod and the Pie-Maker returned to the
house of the heartless boy...*

Emma talks to Ned and Emerson by the doorway. Behind her:

Abner Newsome is sulking in his wheelchair at MADELINE McLEAN (late 30s), a matronly headband-and-cardigans type woman with an overeager smile to match her overly-sunny disposition. Strangely enough, she's holding a CUTE LITTLE MONKEY.

EMERSON

(ignoring the monkey)

Ma'am. The two insurance adjusters that died were linked to Abner Newsome. We have reason to believe a third one's going to appear on your lawn sometime soon.

EMMA NEWSOME

That's not good.

EMERSON

No -- it's real good. 'Cause this time, we're gonna be waitin' outside to catch our iceman when he cometh.

Suddenly, Madeline McLean approaches, still clutching her monkey.

MADELINE MCLEAN

Thank goodness. A boy with a heart like Abner's doesn't need any more stress.

EMMA NEWSOME

Mr. Cod. This is Madeline McLean, she's a Wish-a-Wisher from the Wish-a-Wish Foundation.

MADELINE MCLEAN

And this is Bobo.

NED

A bonobo?

MADELINE MCLEAN

(pleased)

I love a man who knows his monkeys. The bonobo is the gentlest of primates. They're great with sick children. That's why I'm giving him to Abner.

Madeline holds up the monkey to Abner.

MADELINE MCLEAN (CONT'D)

Were you wishing for a cuddle?

ABNER NEWSOME

Actually, I was wishing for a butter knife so I could pop out its heart and use it as my own.

MADELINE MCLEAN

Okay then... No monkey.

(suddenly brightening)

I know -- how about tickets to Medieval Times?

ABNER NEWSOME

On the list of things I'd like -- cuddling a monkey and going to Medieval Times are right next to constipation and diphtheria...

Madeline looks dejected. Ned and Emerson are uncomfortable.

MADELINE MCLEAN

But there must be some Wish-a-Wish wish you wish for.

Suddenly, Abner looks tired. Defeated. You see him for the sad, sickly, vulnerable boy he really is.

ABNER NEWSOME

I wish you'd all just go away.

MADELINE MCLEAN

(swallows her disappointment)

Alrighty then.

EMMA NEWSOME

I apologize for Abner. He's been so sick lately. I think he just needs some time alone...

Emma shows Emerson, Ned, Madeline and the monkey to the door.

EMERSON

We'll be outside watching over you guys tonight.

NARRATOR

As Emerson followed his instincts...

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - PORCH

Holding a pie box, Olive rings the doorbell, Digby at her side.

NARRATOR

...Olive followed a familiar path to Chuck's aunts' house.

CAMERA PUSHES INTO THE PIE BOX--

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The Darling Mermaid Darlings overcame their incapacitating social phobias with the help of Chuck's mood-enhancing pies.

CAMERA PULLS OUT OF THE PIE BOX...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But unbeknownst to all, this latest pie wasn't just dosed... it was over-dosed. It contained a wallop of mood enhancers whose effects no one could predict.

...REVEALING WE ARE NOW--

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Olive stands in the middle of the room with Digby. Vivian sits at a sewing machine, sewing MERMAID FINS. Lily stands nearby, testing.

VIVIAN

We're making costumes for our next tour.

LILY

If we have a next tour. Is that pie? I have been craving that pie all day.

NARRATOR

The aunts had begun to hope again. Which left Olive with one simple wish...

OLIVE

I sure wish Charlotte could see you like this.

Lily takes the pie box and opens it, pulling out a knife.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

None for me, thanks. I don't like vanilla.

VIVIAN

I'm in training.

LILY

I didn't ask either of you if you wanted pie.

VIVIAN

Maybe Charlotte can see us like this.

LILY

Evidently her ghost is about.

OLIVE

Really? Someone's seen her ghost?

OMIT

INT. NED'S CAR - NIGHT

Ned and Emerson on a stakeout. The wipers quietly SWISH, wiping snow away from the windshield. Ned looks worried.

NED

There's a killer out there. Shouldn't we be doing something instead of just sitting here?

EMERSON

We're not just sitting here. We're following a lead. Or in this case, a dead end. 'Cause we know that Kevin Vanden Eykel's dead body's gonna end up here.

NED

Shouldn't we be investigating suspects?

EMERSON

Who? Only person with real motive right now is Abner's mom. But that's just cold stupid.

NED

Right. What kind of killer would leave her victims on her own lawn?

EMERSON

We sit here long enough -- we'll find out.

Ned begins fidgeting in his seat. Emerson's annoyed.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

Stop wiggle-worting. You're steaming the windows and giving the neighbors the wrong idea.

NED

Sorry. I just hate sitting around and waiting. But that's all anyone seems to want from me right now.

EMERSON

I know you're not gonna start talkin' 'bout Dead Girl at our stakeout.

NED

I don't want to. But I can't help it. My body's staked-out here and my mind is staked-out where she is. Wherever that is.

(then)

What do you think my chances are of getting her back?

EMERSON

I look like a Ouija board to you?

NED

What if Steve Kaiser was right and life works like some big calculation where we take all the good we've ever done and subtract the bad. After what I've done--

(then)

What if Chuck and I don't add up?

EMERSON

You add up.

(then)

To zero.

NED

"Zero"? As in no hope?

EMERSON

Zero. As in zero dignity in dwelling on it. And zero interest in discussing it.

NED

You don't understand.

Ned looks away, dejected. Emerson's stung.

EMERSON

I understand more than you think. You feel like you messed up. Lost the one person that meant something to you. Part of you feels like it's for the best. Maybe you didn't deserve her anyway.

(haunted)

Still -- you want her back.

CONTINUED: (2)

NED

(weirded out)

Okay. Maybe you do understand.

(then)

But there is something I can do to get Chuck back. I could give her back her father. If only to say goodbye.

EMERSON

You can't go raisin' Dead Girl's dead dad.

NED

It'll give her peace of mind.

EMERSON

Oh, yeah? Well, I'm gonna give you a piece of my mind. 'Cause maybe you're the one who don't understand this situation.

(then)

The relationship between a father and his daughter... it's tenuous. Fragile. It can take a lifetime to work out all the issues there. And you gonna try to "happily ever after it" in a minute? You're a dreamer.

NED

And you're a cynic.

EMERSON

(snaps)

I'm a father.

Ned's mouth drops.

NED

As in a priest?

EMERSON

As in a man with a daughter.

Ned's mouth drops even wider.

NED

You have a daughter? Where is she? Why don't you ever--

EMERSON

Uh-uh. Scratchin' an itch just makes it itchier. This is my itch and I sure as hell don't want you scratchin' at it. Understood?

NED
(surrendering)
Understood. No scratching. My itches or yours.

The conversation over -- Emerson turns on the RADIO and stares out the windshield.

EMERSON
Good. Now stay alert and look alive. We got a killer to catch...

NARRATOR
Emerson Cod focused back on the case...

OFF THE SADNESS IN HIS EYES...

EXT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE - STREET - NIGHT

NARRATOR
...little knowing... someone else was focused on Emerson and the Pie-Maker.

A PRESENCE creeps slowly toward the back of Ned's car.

Emerson and Ned stare straight ahead -- focused on Abner Newsome's house. Unaware as:

The PRESENCE crouches below the car -- toward the tailpipe. We see a gloved-hand reach out with a POTATO.

The hand PLUGS the tailpipe with the potato.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
And their chances of staying alert... or alive... were growing increasingly slim.

CUT TO BLACK.

OMIT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. NED'S CAR - EARLY MORNING

CLOSE ON Ned, as he opens his eyes from a very deep sleep. Coughs. PULL OUT TO REVEAL the air in the car is smoky with EXHAUST.

THROUGH THE DIVIDING GLASS

Emerson, also in a deep, poisoned sleep, the side of his face SMOOSHED against the Plexi. Ned bangs on the glass.

NED

Emerson! Wake up!

Emerson twitches, but does not wake. Ned opens his own door, slides out onto the snowy ground, fighting grogginess, sucking in air.

EXT. NED'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ned stumbles around to the back of the car, leans down and PULLS A POTATO out of the tailpipe. EXHAUST SPEWS OUT.

Ned stumbles around to the passenger side, opens the door and pulls Emerson out onto the ground. Emerson takes a deep breath, opens his eyes...

EMERSON

My head feels like it's splitting in two.

NED

It's carbon monoxide poisoning. Someone put a potato in our exhaust pipe.

Emerson looks at Ned, a thought occurring--

EMERSON

Tell me I'm not dead.

NED

You're not dead.

EMERSON

And I can be not-dead for more than a minute?

NED

There are no minutes involved. You will continue to be not-dead. Until you are dead. But I have not undeaded you at any point.

EMERSON

Good.

NED

You may be dying from breathing a poisonous gas. But dead, no.

EMERSON

(notices)
Oh, hell...

Ned looks--

NARRATOR

Realizing their lives were still lives...

ANGLE - ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE

Down the street, the POLICEMAN on patrol is also exiting his smoke-filled car, coughing. On the pristine, snow-covered lawn in front of Abner's house stands ANOTHER SNOWMAN.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...the Pie-Maker and the Private Investigator could not say the same for the body surely frozen in the freshly-made snowman.

EMERSON

I used to love snowmen. Now I don't.

EXT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE - LATER

A CRIME SCENE has been set up. Two POLICE CARS and the CORONER'S VAN are all parked at the curb. The Newsome front lawn has been crime-taped off. Ned and Emerson stand to the side watching a plastic-gloved POLICE DETECTIVE yell at a sleepy-looking policeman. The detective waves the snowman's carrot nose to make his point...

NARRATOR

Watching the third insurance adjuster removed from the front lawn of the Newsome house, Emerson Cod, Private Investigator, drew an intriguing conclusion:

EMERSON

We are giant, enormous idiots. And don't say "gi-normous" because it's not a word.

NED

Whoever plugged our tailpipe waited for us to pass out and then put the body on the lawn.

TWO CORONER ATTENDANTS

Lift the FROZEN BODY of VICTIM #3 onto a rolling gurney, cover it with a sheet...

NED (CONT'D)

Wasn't Mrs. Newsome peeling potatoes yesterday?
Maybe we were wrong about her.

EMERSON

Maybe she *has* gone blood simple. Stickin' her victims all up in snowmen.

Ned points to the icy body as the attendants walk past with it.

NED

Kevin would know.

EMERSON

Let's ask him--

The attendants hit a bump as they pass Ned and Emerson, and the gurney tips, spilling Kevin Vanden Eykel's body to the pavement where we hear a SHATTERING SOUND. The attendants look down at the body, STILL UNDER THE SHEET. One PULLS BACK the sheet exposing the legs and feet, which are in several frozen pieces now.

NED

("not pleasant to see")
--or not.
(off Emerson's look)
I'm not touching that.

EMERSON

("moving on")
And I'm fine with that. Let's go talk to Mrs. Newsome.

The meat wagon attendants sheepishly gather the frozen human remains as Emerson and Ned walk toward the front door. Then, a FRUSTRATED YELL (from Abner) from inside the house freezes everyone in their tracks.

INT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Emerson and Ned follow the cops inside to find Mrs. Newsome with her head in her hands. Behind her, Abner is repeatedly running into the wall in his motorized wheelchair.

EMERSON

What happened?

EMMA NEWSOME

The insurance company rejected Abner again.

ABNER NEWSOME

Nice meeting everyone! Come the holidays, I'll be sucking puréed turkey through a straw while my organs putrefy, but you enjoy yourselves.

NED

Do you know who it was who called from the insurance company?

EMMA NEWSOME

Why? Do you want to send him a card, too?

EMERSON

Send who a card?

EMMA NEWSOME

Mr. Kaiser. The Wish-a-Wish lady called. When I told her about Abner, she said she wanted to let Mr. Kaiser know about her foundation.

EMERSON

The Wish-a-Wish lady...

NED

She's a Killer-a-Killer!

EMERSON

And Kaiser's a dead man if we don't get to him first.

OFF THEIR EXIT...

OMIT

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

START ON THE MOSTLY-EATEN PIE, PULL OUT as Lily puts another slice on her plate and eats while Olive and Vivian speak:

VIVIAN

In Bulgaria, we were en route to a competition and a band of gypsies stopped the train. They came through the cabin and stole one woman's watch. And her soul.

LILY

They didn't take her soul.

VIVIAN

She was ornery and vacant after they left.

LILY
Because they took her watch.

OLIVE
I can't imagine the adventures you've been on.

VIVIAN
Perhaps those adventures were just the beginning.
Vivian notices half the pie is missing.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Oh, my. Lily, did you eat half a pie?
Lily stares into middle distance.

OLIVE
Are you feeling all right?

LILY'S POV - VIVIAN AND OLIVE

Looking back at her, curious and concerned. Something moves on the coffee table. TILT DOWN:

A WEDGE OF CHEESE on the cheese plate is rocking back-and-forth. Then, some hermit crab legs fold out and the cheese walks to the edge of the table and scurries toward the hall.

ON LILY

She blinks, trying to understand what she just saw.

LILY
What did you put in that pie?

OLIVE
Just vanilla.

LILY
There wasn't any vanilla in that pie.

NARRATOR
As Olive wondered what exactly she did put in Lily and Vivian's pie...

OMIT

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - DAY

Closed, empty of customers.

NARRATOR

...Chuck considered the risk she'd taken by sharing her secret with the man from below the ground.

Chuck rolls out dough on the table.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

She wondered what he would discover in the swath of brunette truth she had given up.

The front doorbells JINGLE.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And then...

OSCAR (O.S.)

Hello, Chuck.

ANGLE - OSCAR

Stands right beside her. She startles.

CHUCK

You sneak up on people, which could get you inadvertently bludgeoned with a rolling pin in a place like this.

OSCAR

I find a bludgeoning to be a unique sensory experience. I taste pennies and smell burnt toast. I'm here to return the hair.

He holds up a small envelope, not yet handing it over.

CHUCK

My hair?

OSCAR

It's a gesture. Of trust. I could treat it like the dog's hair. Test it. Reduce its secrets to the numbers on a periodic chart.

CHUCK

Then why don't you?

OSCAR

Because numbers won't tell the whole story. You know everything the hair has to tell. I'd rather hear it from you.

She grabs the envelope. He doesn't yet let go--

OSCAR (CONT'D)

And I think you want to tell me.

She smiles. He lets go and she takes the envelope.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Well?

CHUCK

You should have asked the hair when you had the chance.

Oscar reacts to the change of heart...

NARRATOR

In that moment, Chuck realized her hate and sadness had begun to thaw. There was only one person with whom she wished to share the burden of an impossible secret: the Pie-Maker.

INT. NED'S CAR/PARKING STRUCTURE - MOMENTS LATER

Driving up and around, one level at a time.

NARRATOR

Who had just arrived at the Über-Life Life Insurance parking structure with Emerson Cod, in an attempt to find Steve Kaiser...

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - HIGHER FLOOR - SAME TIME

Steve Kaiser tries to open his door, but it's frozen shut.

NARRATOR

...before and act of kindness found him.

STEVE KAISER

(frustrated)

What are the chances of that?

He fails to notice the WISH-A-WISH FOUNDATION VAN creeping to a stop behind him. OFF STONE-COLD KILLER Madeline McLean...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE

Ned wheels around a corner, TIRES SQUEALING, as he and Emerson head up the ramp.

NARRATOR

As Emerson and Ned closed in on the killer wish-maker...

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - HIGHER FLOOR

Steve Kaiser still tries to get into his car. He's crouched down, using his BREATH to try to WARM THE DOORJAMB.

NARRATOR

...the wish-maker had already found her next snowman.

STEVE KAISER

Stupid frozen door...

Behind him, Madeline slides out of the van, and stealthily approaches, bat in hand. Steve gives the door a serious jerk. It flies open, SLAMMING into the car next to it.

STEVE KAISER (CONT'D)

Ooh, shoot. A ding.

He turns back as she swings Kindness toward him, but he dives out of the way. CRASH! The bat slams into the car door. As he scrambles to avoid her next crack of the bat...

INT. NED'S CAR - DAY

They continue driving up the ramps, through the structure...

EMERSON

Odds are we're close. We're almost at the top.

NED

What are the odds of you having a daughter?
Because you've never actually mentioned it before--

EMERSON

First off, you're like my grandfather and you slow down when you talk, so you need to stop talking. Second off, what I said to you wasn't said in the "We should talk more about this later" way. It was said in the "I regret saying this, there must be a potato in the tailpipe" way. So stop talking.

NED

I just didn't want you to think--

EMERSON

(looking forward)

Stop.

NED

I've been so focused on myself lately--

EMERSON

STOP THE CAR!

THEIR POV

Ned hits the breaks as they round the corner. The Wish-a-Wish van is parked on the ramp, facing them, headlights on. Madeline is between them and her van, SMASHING THE BAT down, nearly missing Kaiser.

Ned and Emerson hop out. Emerson pulls a gun from his belt. Madeline pauses as Kaiser cowers. A standoff:

EMERSON (CONT'D)

You need to stop wildin' on the insurance adjustor, ma'am.

MADELINE MCLEAN

What if I have a gun, too?

Madeline pulls an even bigger gun out of her pocket. Points it at Emerson. Emerson drops his gun.

NED

You don't need to do this, Madeline. Please put the gun and the bat down. Or definitely the gun.

MADELINE MCLEAN

Is that your wish?

NED

I'm sorry?

CONTINUED: (2)

MADELINE MCLEAN

Because granting wishes is my job. And I'll grant yours and put this gun down. Right after I knock one more thing off my wish list...

Still pointing the gun at Emerson with one hand... she gets ready to swing at Kaiser with her free, bat-wielding hand.

NARRATOR

As Madeline McLean prepared to grant one last deadly desire...

INT. WISH-A-WISH VAN

POV - OUT THE FRONT WINDSHIELD AT the scene from behind Madeline's back. A SMALL MONKEY jumps up on the dash, looking out at Madeline.

NARRATOR

...Bobo, the bonobo monkey previously purchased as a Wish-a-Wish gift for Abner Newsome...

PUSH IN ON THE MONKEY covetously eyeing the shifter.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...had a wish of its own. Its wish was to play with the ball on a stick called "the shifter."

The monkey jumps down onto the shifter, knocking it out of gear. The van begins to roll.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE

Ned and Emerson await their fate -- hands in the air. CAMERA PUSHES IN CLOSE ON Madeline as she cocks her weapon, her eyes mad.

NARRATOR

And so its wish was granted.

All of a sudden, the van rolls INTO FRAME behind the unsuspecting Madeline. WHAM! With the monkey leaping about on the dashboard, the van RUNS HER DOWN.

OMIT

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - MOMENTS LATER

The van has come to a rest against the parking structure wall.

NARRATOR

As was the wish of Madeline McLean...

As Emerson and Ned rush up to it, we REVEAL Madeline's legs sticking out from under the rear of the van.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
...for though her sanity was torn asunder by a boy named Abner Newsome...

And with that, CAMERA RISES UP OVER THE VAN and races over the top of it to REVEAL Madeline's head sticking out from under the front bumper -- her body obviously (and tastefully) severed.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
...and her body was torn apart by a bonobo named Bobo -- her heart was still intact, which allowed her to grant one final wish.

CAMERA PUSHES IN on her smiling face -- even in death.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
The facts were these: Madeline McLean had a predilection for people pleasing.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK (ONE WALL)

PULL OUT from the white cast of a CHILD with a broken arm.

PULL BACK FURTHER TO REVEAL Madeline McLean is dressed as Santa's elf and dancing in front of the child.

NARRATOR
She was a dream come true at the Wish-a-Wish Foundation, where she provided succor with suckers, coaxed chuckles from colics.

The child smiles. Madeline's face beams with pride.

OMIT

INT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Madeline, perky, puts a GIFT BASKET on Abner's bedside table. He scowls.

NARRATOR
But she met her match in Abner Newsome... the little boy who lacked a heart.

MADELINE MCLEAN
Hi. I'm Maddy. Why don't you tell me about your super-special-self, sweetheart?

ABNER NEWSOME
This basket smells like ass.

Madeline's face falls...

OMIT

POP OF: MADELINE TAP-DANCING

In the traditional top hat and tails.

NARRATOR

And though she tried and tried...

She finales with jazz hands, out of breath--

ABNER NEWSOME

I said "lap dance," not "tap dance"!

NARRATOR

...she couldn't make him happy.

MADELINE MCLEAN

There must be something you wish for.

ABNER NEWSOME

I wish all those insurance company jerks who keep rejecting me would drop dead.

NARRATOR

Until she realized the boy without a heart wanted revenge.

OFF MADELINE'S FACE: Something snaps. Her eyes fill with crazy.

BACK TO SCENE

Madeline lies motionless and severed under the van.

NARRATOR

And in life, Madeline McLean had nearly made that wish come true. But in death...

CLOSE ON the expression on Madeline's dead (but not gory) face. Glazed eyes. But something like a smile playing on her lips.

OMIT

INT. ABNER NEWSOME'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Abner sits propped up in his hospice bed, scowling at the world.

NARRATOR

...she granted a far greater gift.

Emerson enters.

EMERSON

Heard you got a new heart?

ABNER NEWSOME

It's awesome. Now my bedsores are engorged.

EMERSON

Pretty amazing coincidence. That Madeline's heart would be a match. Almost like it was meant to be.

Abner shrugs, looks away.

NARRATOR

Emerson Cod thought of his own child and what he would do if she were heartless in spite of a new heart...

EMERSON

I brought you some cash.

(tosses a bag on the bed)

Two grand. The reward from the case. We thought you and your mom should have it.

Despite himself, Abner smiles. Emerson clocks the smile--

ABNER NEWSOME

This isn't a smile. Probably just a tumor pinching my facial nerve.

Emerson smiles...

NARRATOR

While Emerson Cod bid a fond farewell to Abner Newsome...

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Ned walks through a cemetery. He sees a forlorn figure, seated on the snow.

NARRATOR

...the Pie-Maker came upon another heart in need of repair...

He approaches, gingerly.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

His own.

NED

Chuck?

Chuck looks up, takes him in, no longer needs to escape. She brushes the snow off the grave--

CHUCK

There's no headstone for me yet. We wait a year.

(then)

How did you know I was here?

NED

Because I have been everywhere else first.

He gets a little smile.

NED (CONT'D)

Is "a little while" over yet? Because I can't bear the thought of you hating me still.

CHUCK

I'm feeling better. And I had an idea.

She brushes some snow off of an adjacent tombstone. It reads: "CHARLES CHARLES." Ned catches on:

NED

No.

CHUCK

I thought for one minute...

NED

I'm not going to bring him back just so you can watch me kill him again.

(resolved)

I can't do that to you. I won't.

Tears roll down Chuck's cheek, but she doesn't push the issue. She knows he's right about this.

NARRATOR

Chuck wished things were different. She wished she knew her father. She wished she knew her mother. She wished the Pie-Maker could comfort her by holding her close.

Ned kneels with her, carefully puts his coat around her shoulders.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Not all those wishes were meant to be. But one of them was...

OMIT

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Lily, speaking with someone OFF CAMERA.

LILY

I love the quiet on a snowy night.

A FEMALE VOICE responds in dulcet tones. It almost sounds like air bubbles are escaping as she talks.

VOICE (O.S.)

Blurbur.

LILY

No, I feel fine. Much better now.

VOICE (O.S.)

Blubee blura?

LILY

Stop it. You're the one who should be cold.

POP OUT WIDE TO REVEAL Lily is talking to a MERMAID that's floating in the air before her.

MERMAID

Bru bllur blur.

LILY

It was good pie.

(then)

When Charlotte was young, after we'd moved in, she used to stand, right there where you're floating -- and watch the snow with me.

MERMAID

Blur bur bur.

LILY

At night, while she slept, I would sneak into the backyard and make two snow angels. She never said anything and I'd always play dumb. She thought they were her parents.

MERMAID

Blurp?

LILY

One was her father... the other one was me.

REVEAL OLIVE is standing where the mermaid is, having this conversation with a still-tripping Lily.

OLIVE
You?

LILY
I'm Chuck's mother.

ANGLE - OLIVE: As she recovers from this revelation.

CUT TO BLACK.

OMIT

END OF SHOW