

SEESAW/MUSHROOM
"TARANTULA" EPISODE 1

Written by

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EXT. TARANTULA - DAY

The beautiful, decrepit Tierra Chula Resident Hotel. Early morning light.

Echo exits, scratching ribs and sipping coffee, and walks right up to FRANK, a homeless guy sitting on the corner with a "Will Work For Food" sign.

ECHO

So, uh, that sign. You serious about that or just looking to shake loose a few crumbs from the upper crust?

FRANK

I'm serious.

ECHO

You mind if I see you erect. You know, upright. Standing up.

The guy stands. He's remarkably tall and slim, especially beside five-foot-six Echo. Echo whistles through his teeth.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Yep. That'll do.

EXT. TARANTULA/BACK PATIO - DAY

Echo sits on Frank's shoulders, is deep in the big avocado tree. He plucks an avocado and smells it deeply.

ECHO

Oh, yeah, that is the bouquet we are looking for.

Echo places the avocado in his plastic grocery sack, reaches for another, and accidentally digs a knee into Frank's side.

FRANK

Ah God damn!

ECHO

Sorry man, I know this ain't exactly comfortable, but we gotta keep it down or my landlord is going to pop out of that window right there and shoot us with a pellet gun.

Echo points up high to the window of a penthouse.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Sir Dominic considers these avocados his sole property. Dude would charge us for each breath we took if he could.

Frank looks up at the window. There's a woman with graying hair sitting in a recliner, hooked up to oxygen.

FRANK

That her?

ECHO

Ah, no. That's his wife. She's Egyptian...and in a coma. Anyways, I gotta be on eggshells cause he's prone to call the cops.

FRANK

They ain't gonna arrest you for taking a few avocados.

ECHO

True, but, uh, I'll be frank with you, Frank. I'm a wanted man.

FRANK

You and me both, brother. So what'd you do?

ECHO

Well, started out innocent enough. I was up on the roof here practicing my trade...

EXT. ROOF OF THE TARANTULA - DAY

Echo tattoos a cluster of monsters on the back of a muscular HULK.

DOWN BELOW, tires squeal and horns honk.

Echo looks over the edge of the building to see a runty, cute little dog stepping in and out of traffic, totally oblivious.

ECHO

(responding to the dog)
Eeeee! Oh! Oooh! Hey!

The little dog ignores him. Echo can't stand it any longer.

ECHO (CONT'D)

'Scuse me, dude. Be right back.

Echo takes a shortcut down off of the roof and chases after the dog. It darts into traffic.

EXT. TARANTULA/BACK PATIO - DAY

Still on Frank's shoulders, Echo keeps plucking.

ECHO

And man, I chased that wily pup *all* through Los Palacios.

We see a QUICK MONTAGE of all the places Echo is describing.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Up into the rich neighborhood, down into the poor one, past Tin's junk shop, down a tube and *through* Los Compadres bar and grill, Finally got him cornered behind St. George's Buffet.

EXT. ST. GEORGE'S BUFFET - DAY

Echo creeps up on the cornered dog, much like he crept up on Dodger the skunk.

With nowhere to go, the pup turns around and bears it's little fangs, growling madly.

ECHO

Oh, you wanna get wild? Okay then.

Echo bares his teeth as well, starts growling as he advances. Echo leaps on the dog and starts kissing it's head and nose. It bites him in return. They exchange a half dozen kisses and nips.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Ow! Ow! Oh! Come on, look, fulla love. I'm fulla love for ya!

Quickly, the creature warms to him. It pants, licks his face.

ECHO (CONT'D)

See, that's better. You're my pup now. And your name is Seesaw.

EXT. TARANTULA BACK PATIO - DAY

Echo and Frank sit at a table taking turns selecting avocados from their humble bounty.

ECHO

So I took the rad-ass dog back to the Tarantula, right here to the, uh, Brass Dragon so I could show it to my best friends.

INT. BRASS DRAGON - NIGHT

Echo sits at a table with Booty, Bess, and Lucas. He proudly rotates the dog on a lazy Susan.

ECHO (V.O.)

Lucas Reed, sci-fi writer and bread truck driver, Booty deBeau, lead singer of Witch's Little Sister. And Bess Pearl a, uh... a lady.

Booty pets its head, a bit too hard. PAJA JIMENEZ approaches.

ECHO (V.O.)

All's well, right? Sure. Then here comes my pain-in-the-ass neighbor, Paja Jimenez.

PAJA

Hey Echo, let me borrow your dog for like two seconds. Those two girls over there are like, very excited to meet him, dude.

ECHO

Oh yeah? Maybe I'll bring the dog over then.

PAJA

Naw, man. That's my idea. I been working on those girls for like two weeks. Come on, just let me borrow the dog for like two minutes.

ECHO

You're not borrowing the dog, dude.

PAJA

Really, cause I don't know, dude. It'd be a shame if Dominic found out you had it, dude. He's got a pretty strict no pets policy.

ECHO

You're gonna rat me out, huh? That's how it's gonna be?

PAJA

Not if you quit being all stingy
and let me borrow the dog, dude.

ECHO

Fine. Two minutes. And Lucas is
wearing a watch so we ain't fucking
around here.

Lucas raises his wrist, shows the watch as Echo hands the dog
to Paja.

PAJA

(under his breath)

Yeah, whatever, dude. I'll fucking
stab you in the heart, dude.

Paja approaches the girls, Seesaw in his arms.

PAJA (CONT'D)

Check it out, a little puppy. Get
intimate with him. He's got the
cute face, huh? You should give him
a little kiss on the lips. Dogs got
clean mouths.

He sits, the girls ooh and aw and start to pet Seesaw.

PAJA (CONT'D)

Yeah, see, I know all kinds of dog
facts. Yeah. Like you can squeeze
his ears as hard as you want.

Paja squeezes his ear hard.

PAJA (CONT'D)

See, they don't got no nerves in
their ears. Cool, huh? Also, check
this out. They don't have nerves in
their kidneys either.

Paja puts his thumbs under Paja's ribs and squeezes hard.
Seesaw squeals in pain and lunges for his face.

We can't tell how much damage, has been done, but Paja's
scream echoes over to Echo and his friends.

ECHO

Ah, Jesus, man. What the...

Echo hops up, runs over to where Paja is clutching his face
and freaking out.

PAJA
Oh no. Oh no. Oh fucking shit, man.

ECHO
What's going on over here, man?

PAJA
(crying)
He bit me bad, man. He bit me
really fucking bad. Ohhh fuck.

ECHO
Just, calm down and let me look.

Paja moves his hands away. His bottom lip has been torn half off his face and is hanging loose, gushing blood and gore. Echo's eyes widen, Paja notices this.

PAJA
(crying)
Is it bad, dude?

ECHO
Ah, no, dude. It's fine man. I'm
just gonna real quick get a phone
here and call nine-one-one.

SIRENS WAIL!

EXT. TARANTULA - NIGHT

A bawling Paja is loaded into an ambulance, watched by a dozen Tarantula residents.

PAJA
Someone's gotta call my grandma,
man. Who's got my grandma's phone
number?

Close on Seesaw, a pair of hands pick him up. Who they belong to is UNSEEN.

An EMT closes the doors to the ambulance and it speeds away.

ECHO
Hey, wait a second. Has anyone seen
Seesaw?

Echo moves through the small crowd, asking everyone the same thing.

ECHO (CONT'D)
 (to several folks)
 You seen Seesaw? Have you seen
 Seesaw? Did you see Seesaw?

Everyone shakes their head no or answers "No."

Just then, an ANIMAL CONTROL truck turns onto the street and starts driving down Foothill Blvd.

Oblivious Seesaw stares happily out the back window.

Echo chases after the truck.

ECHO (CONT'D)
 Stop! Stop! That's my dog!
 Seeeesaw!

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Paja lies in a hospital bed, an IV in his arm, a bandage on his face.

Echo approaches carrying a small tree branch.

ECHO
 My wounded friend, I bring these
 flowers for you.

PAJA
 Those are just leaves.

ECHO
 (laying it on thick)
 Yeah, that's correct. The, uh,
 florist told me that flowers are
 out of style, so instead I
 purchased these. Paja...I love you.
 You are one of the coolest dudes I
 know. And I come to you with a
 humble request, sir.

PAJA
 What the fuck do you want, dude?

ECHO
 I need you to come to the dog pound
 with me and tell them that you
 squeezed the dog right before it
 bit you. That it was just reacting.

PAJA

Naw man, I'm not going to do it.
That dog's a menace, man.

ECHO

But you did squeeze it, did you
not?

PAJA

Yeah, man. But dogs don't have
nerves in their kidneys. They like
that.

ECHO

Dude, I don't know what kind of
science biology books you've been
reading, but that's not true.

PAJA

I read the modern ones, dude. And
that's what they say.

ECHO

I'm sorry, but you're dead wrong.
All dogs have nerves in all their
kidneys. Period.

Paja turns his back to Echo.

PAJA

Get out of here, dude, I'm done
with this. I need to heal.

Echo closes his eyes, takes a deep breath.

ECHO

Okay, dude. You're right, most dogs
don't have nerves in their kidneys.
Seesaw must just be some kind of a
special mutant who just happens to.
Okay?

PAJA

That's what I've been saying, man.
He's mutated. And extra-vicious
too.

ECHO

Okay. You're absolutely correct. On
all fronts. Now will you come to
the pound with me?

PAJA

Fine, dude. But I want a free
tattoo...and a twenty-four pack of
Big Star Lite.

EXT. ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

Like everything else in SoCal, it's in a strip mall. Between
a Little Daddy's Donuts and Sub-Hub sandwich shop.

LADY CLERK (O.S.)

It looks like we did take in a
small dog in front of the Tierra
Chula last night.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

Echo stands with Bess and Paja. Echo and Bess are all dressed
up, and Echo is being ultra-polite.

ECHO

Great, uh, well my lawyer here and
the guilty party, we're all just
here to give a deposition on behalf
of the dog and what actually went
down. Y'know. Set the record
straight.

LADY CLERK

Deposition?

ECHO

Yes. For the, uh, trial or what
have you?

LADY CLERK

Um, I'm sorry there's not going to
be any kind of trial.

With this new info, Bess slumps. Her hairdo collapses and her
breasts fall.

ECHO

No trial? But this is America,
everybody gets a free trial.

LADY CLERK

Yeah. That only applies to humans.

Echo lets this sink in for a second.

ECHO
Well that's fucked up.

LADY CLERK
In fact, it looks like the dog will actually need to be put down so that it's brain can be dissected.

ECHO
Okay, well in that case we're just gonna have to... CHARGE BACK THERE!

Echo leaps past the deck and dashes down a hallway deeper into the building.

He's immediately blocked by a SECURITY GUARD.

EXT. ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

Echo is wrestled outside by the guard and tossed onto the ground.

ECHO
(growling)
You son of bitch!

Bess and Paja exits. Bess helps Echo to his feet.

PAJA
Damn, dude. Shoulda done some research, man. These are complicated matters.

Echo gets right in his face.

ECHO
These complicated matters are still your fault, wiener. And don't think you're done helping me get my dog back.

PAJA
How, man? You saw how much red tape was in there.

ECHO
One word. Jail break!

BEAT

PAJA
That's two words.

EXT. TARANTULA/BACK PATIO - DAY

Echo cuts into an avocado with his room-key.

ECHO

Now, the downside to having a bunch of ne'er-do-well friends is that you order a pizza, time comes to chip in, everybody's gone. However, the upside is that you need to organize something like a jailbreak, and boom, everybody's in. No questions asked.

INT. ECHO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Echo swirls his hand over a quickly drawn map of the Animal Shelter. Bess, Paja, Booty and Lucas sit looking at him.

ECHO

All right, now I'm going to go in and bust the dog out of its cage with bolt cutters while you all function as look-outs. Strategically placed, of course. Cool?

LUCAS

That's it?

ECHO

That's it, man. Would love to, uh, do some reconnaissance but we don't know when they're going to be slicing up the pup. Could've already done it, but we're not going to entertain those thoughts right now. All right, now if everybody's in appropriate footwear, let's go.

Booty clears his throat.

BOOTY

May I discuss strategy?

ECHO

Please.

Booty takes a big "Party Store" shopping bag out from behind his chair and holds it in his lap.

BOOTY

Cameras. Security cameras. They capture the image. And said images are used to arrest us, and when put on trial, they show these images to the jury and. And the jury--

ECHO

(interrupting)

Dude, can you cut to the chase here?

Booty rummages around in the party bag for a beat, pulls out a Halloween mask.

BOOTY

I got us disguises.

EXT. STRIP MALL/ANIMAL CONTROL - NIGHT

With their monster masks on, everyone approaches the Animal Shelter, Echo with bolt cutters.

ECHO

Lucas, you know how to pick locks, right?

LUCAS

No. Where the hell did you get that idea?

ECHO

Just your gnarly vibe I guess. No problem. Onto plan B.

CRASH! Echo rams his bolt cutters right through the glass door.

CRASH!

EXT. TARANTULA/BACK PATIO - DAY

Echo and Frank eat avocados.

ECHO

Paja takes off running, being like, "You're crazy! You're crazy!" Me and Lucas get in there, but the locks on the cages are like fully hi-tech.

(MORE)

ECHO (CONT'D)

So while I'm trying to get it open with the bolt cutters, Lucas finds the switches. But there's a million of them!

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - NIGHT

Lucas stares at a panel of dozens of glowing buttons.

LUCAS

What's the cage number!

ECHO

There's no numbers. We're gonna have to just Battleship this shit! Uh, try B-seven!

Lucas hits a button and a cage opens. A funny little boggle-eyed dog steps out.

ECHO (V.O.)

So you know, I'm counting off from every direction, being like, C-eight! J-ten! B-sixteen! You know, on and on like that. Lucas is pushing every damn button there is. No Seesaw. Every damn dog in the world 'cept for Seesaw.

A variety of funny looking strays step, dash, and leap out of their cages.

ECHO (V.O.)

So finally I'm just like... Hit 'em all, man! Just hit 'em all!

Lucas just hits them all.

A HUGE BUZZ! All the cages clank open. All the dogs come leaping out, including Seesaw. Echo snags him.

He starts towards the door when a huge growling, gooey-jawed Rottweiler steps up and stands between Echo and the exit.

Echo skids to a stop as the dog bears down.

ECHO

Easy there, big boy. Easy there. Look into my eyes. I'm on the dog side of things. Now I'm just gonna walk right past you, and you're not going to--

The Rottweiler lunges at Echo, bites down on his Frankenstein mask. Echo twists and turns but can't get away. The big dog snarls and pulls, the rubber stretching tauter and tauter til it rips, pops, and CRACK-WHIPS the dog in the face.

The dogs squeals and goes and whimpers in a corner.

Echo, his mask torn, jogs around the corner into the hall where Lucas is standing with his hands up.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Aye, dude. Why are you assuming the position?

Lucas steps aside to reveal the cop from before. He's standing there with a taser aimed at them.

SECURITY GUARD

Drop the dog!

ECHO

Sir, sure. But first, let me ask you a question. Did you have a pet as a boy? A dog or a cat or a lizard or a lowly little fish?

SECURITY GUARD

The authorities are on their way.

ECHO

What I'm asking of you right now is to imagine the face of that dog, cat, lizard or fish. Now try to repossess the child mind and remember how much--

SECURITY GUARD

Shut up! You're ass is going to--

Suddenly, CLUNK. The guard falls. He's been hit, and Bess stands behind him holding a ceramic half-dog with exposed organs.

BESS

How peculiar. Looks like somebody slipped.

EXT. TARANTULA - NIGHT

They pull up to the curb, park, and hop out. Bess carries the ceramic dog-model.

A bunch of cop cars fly past.

As Echo checks this out, Seesaw leaps from his arms and runs away.

ECHO
Seesaw!

Echo goes chasing after him, exactly as he did when he first encountered the pup.

INT. BRASS DRAGON - DAY

Echo and Frank are finishing up their avocado breakfast,

ECHO
So yeah, I eventually caught up with him again. I mean, he still spends the majority of his time out in the streets, but I still consider him my dog. Anyways, what makes you a wanted man?

FRANK
Me?

Frank sucks a pit out of an avocado, spits it into a bush.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I stabbed a dude in the butt.

CUT TO BLACK/QUICK COUPLE OF CREDITS TO SEPARATE THE STORIES.

INT. TARANTULA/ECHO'S ROOM - DAY

Echo tattoos "L.S.D." big and bold across the chest of a collegiate DOOFUS.

ECHO
Ay, I got an idea. If uh, if yer mom gets mad about this tattoo just be like, "But mama, I have a big crush on a girl named, uh, Lisa Sarah Dominguez."

DOOFUS
Who's that?

ECHO
Lisa Sarah Dominguez. L.S.D. The initials. Get it?

DOOFUS
She lives here at the Tarantula,
or?

Echo sighs.

ECHO
Nevermind, dude. So you like the
psychedelics, do you?

DOOFUS
Yeah, I'm a certified psycho-naut
of the highest order.

ECHO
Well in that case, I got a hell of
a story for ya.

INT. BRASS DRAGON - DAY

Echo and Booty play pool.

Echo is lining up a shot, about to sink the eight ball when
Booty takes a big bite of apple. Echo scratches as Booty
coughs and spits.

BOOTY
I swallowed the sticker! I
swallowed the sticker.

ECHO
Ah dude, don't even worry about it.
Those stickers are printed on soy
paper with special all natural
inks.

Over at the bar, curly-haired CRISPIN harumphs.

CRISPIN
Those stickers are printed with
regular inks on regular plastic.
Highly toxic.

ECHO
Dude, that just ain't the case. I
read an article on the subject.

CRISPIN
Oh really?

Crispin takes out his iPhone and starts typing on it.

CRISPIN (CONT'D)
Let's find said article, shall we?

Echo walks towards him, cue in hand.

ECHO
Whoa, easy there, buddy. We use our
brains to resolve issues in the
Tarantula, not our phones. This
ain't a motherfucking wifi hot
spot, man.

Crispin turns his phone towards Echo and Booty. In big bold
letters, under a NEW YORK NEWS header, it reads: "FRUIT
LABELS TOXIC."

CRISPIN
Knowledge reigns.

Booty sees it too, and begins to spit and cough.

INT. ECHO'S ROOM - DAY

Echo keeps gilding the letters.

ECHO
Just constant correction from this
guy. *Constant*. Like I'm talking
about little frogs being my
favorite bug, and he's like, only
insects are bugs. I'm like, dude,
no. All small creatures are bugs.
Then another day he's telling me
that magnets aren't alive, when
everyone knows that's what makes
magnets so cool. I mean, it was
only a matter of time before things
came to a head.

INT. BRASS DRAGON - MORNING

Echo stands talking on the pay phone and waiting for a cake
to come out of the Ribbon Cake maker. Crispin sits at the bar
while Lucas writes in a booth where Bess is sitting, snoring.
A couple other oddballs sit around eating ribbon-cake and
drinking coffee.

ECHO

Look Chester, I'm telling you, you walk into the clubhouse with a plain-old, regular-ass skull tattoo, and you're just going to look like every other bad boy in there. The thing *needs* some kind of adornment, dude. (BEAT) Yeah. All right, fine. No, it's okay. Bye.

Echo hangs up the phone, grabs his plate of Ribbon Cake.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Shit.

LUCAS

Client cancel on you?

ECHO

Indeed he did. And I ain't exactly flush right now neither.

Lucas holds up a letter.

LUCAS

Well look what the gatekeepers in New York City just sent me.

Lucas clears his throat, starts to read.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Not only did we here at Schribner and Sons find your novella, "Onyx and Snow" un-publishable, but racist and sophomoric. Please submit no further work. Thank you.

Lucas wads up the letter, tosses it and sips his red wine.

ECHO

Ah, screw Schribner *and* his sons. They wouldn't know a good post-apocalyptic ultra-erotic racially-charged sci-fi story if it bit them on the ass.

Echo slides into the booth with Lucas, starts eating his ribbon cakes.

ECHO (CONT'D)

(mouth-full)

You know what you and me need to remedy this shit-week? A night up in Mushroom Valley.

LUCAS
What's that?

ECHO
(swallows)
Wh-?! I ain't ever told you about
Mushroom Valley before?

LUCAS
No.

ECHO
Dude, it is *the* coolest place in
the Los Palacios. There's mushrooms
up there big as you are. At night,
you sleep on them and--

OFF-SCREEN, the familiar HARUMPH of Crispin interrupts Echo.
Echo turns and looks at him.

INT. ECHO'S ROOM - DAY

ECHO
Now Crispin says that those types
of mushrooms don't exist, can't
exist. I mean, he's straight up
calling me a liar this time. So...
things got heated.

INT. BRASS DRAGON - MORNING

Echo stands face to face with Crispin, his hand up to shake.

ECHO
How 'bout this, Mr. Endless
Knowledge. I will bet you cold hard
cash that these mushrooms do indeed
exist.

CRISPIN
Fine. You produce a specimen to me
in this very bar, you win. You fail
to do so, I win.

They shake on it.

INT. BOOTY'S ROOM -DAY

Booty sits on the edge of his bed, holding an unplugged electric guitar (he can't afford an amp).

BOOTY

I don't know if I have time to go on a full-on journey. Silver gets back from Tucson later and I wanted to be here to greet her.

ECHO

Sure you could stay here and say hi to one fully-clothed lady. Or you could come hiking with me and see several. In... the... nude.

BOOTY

Continue.

ECHO

Ooh, don't mind if I do.

Echo gets in close to Booty, all whispery and seductive.

ECHO (CONT'D)

You see, one of the many wonders on the way to Mushroom Valley is a place called Naked Falls where the hiking hippy girls like to get au natural. And *frolic*.

BOOTY

They frolic?

ECHO

Oh yes. They frolic.

BOOTY

Let me ask you something. The water... Does it caress their breasts?

ECHO

Oh Yes, Booty. The water caresses their breasts.

Echo raises his eyebrows. Booty swallow hard.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTHILLS - DAY

Echo and Booty, both with big backpacks, start up the trail.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

--Echo and Booty hike up a set of crooked stone steps

--They pass "Lorena's Rope Swing."

ECHO (V.O.)

I ain't goint to lie to you, man.
It was not easy-going. I mean,
Booty is a big old boy and
perserverance ain't one of his
strong suits. However, the kid is
ruled by the rising sap, so I just
kept reminding him of the impending
nudity and that kept his chugging
along. That and other more
practical techniques.

--With his hands on Booty's waist, Echo literally pushes
Booty up through "'Bino Berry Bramble." Booty eats a "TUFF
STUFF" energy bar with one hand, and plucks/eats pale yellow
berries with the other. Suddenly, Booty gasps and points.

A sign planted in the ground reads, "Naked Falls."

Booty runs around the corner.

BOOTY (O.S.)

Nooooooo!

ECHO

What's wrong? Creature encounter?

Exhausted Echo runs around the corner to REVEAL a murky pool
of water under a huge rock that juts out of the side of the
mountain. Fat flies buzz.

Booty is down on his knees, his body slumped.

BOOTY

What the shit is this?

ECHO

Ah, man, sorry. Forgot about the
drought. Guess you can't expect
nubile young woman to just come and
get naked under some dusty rock
formation. Shit, I just hope the
mushrooms aren't all dried up.

(MORE)

ECHO (CONT'D)

I mean, they need at least a modicum of moisture, you know?

BOOTY

Just my luck. Why'd I expect any different? My whole life is a drag.

ECHO

Dude, don't be a baby about boobies, buddy. Come on, we are so close.

Echo and Booty head off. "Los Palacios Rag" starts, carrying them...

--past "Devil's Paw"

--past the "Old Tree"

--Through the "Oblong Arch."

--Along a "Mellow Trail."

--Booty chews a "TUFF STUFF" and stares off into the woods where a chubby-cheeked squirrel also chews.

--Booty gives Echo a boost up onto a little cliff. Echo throws down a rope. Booty grabs ahold of it, takes a deep breath, and pulls Echo right down on top of him.

--Echo and Booty crawl through a cavern full of stalactites, beer bottles, and graffiti.

Echo leads the way, crests a ridge. He smiles.

BOOTY (O.S.)

That's it, I give up. I can't go any further.

ECHO

Hey. Whoa. There's some naked lady up here just waggin' her fanny around for some reason. You gotta see this.

BOOTY

You say that again and again. And again and again there's no naked...

Booty crests the ridge. His eyes widen, his jaw drops.

PAST THEIR SILHOUETTES we see The huge, sun-dappled Mushroom Valley in all its glory.

EXT. DEEP IN MUSHROOM VALLEY - NIGHT

Echo and Booty spread out tarps over the mushrooms.

BOOTY

This is just amazing. Amazing. I'm flummoxed.

ECHO

I think you mean, uh, flabbergasted. Flummoxed implies some degree of frustration. Now make sure that you get the tarp covering the whole cap there. You get any bare skin on the thing and you'll go way too far out.

Booty flops down on the spongy mushroom. Echo does the same.

BOOTY

This *is* flabbergasting. Truly.

ECHO

Yep. That it is. Now get ready to... Dreammmmm.

Echo closes his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK. FROM the BLACKNESS there emerges pink mist.

Echo wears his "dream suit." Something titters in the mists.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Hello?

Slowly, a pink mushroom creature emerges.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Hello, mushroom. Care to dance?

Echo bows in a knightly manner. The mushroom spins away.

Echo pursues the mushroom, but it spins away.

ECHO (V.O.)

Now, the mushroom was clearly feminine, and I was trying to make love to it. But she continued alluding my grasp. Had I not been all clouded by ego, I probably would've interpreted this thing as the omen that it so clearly was.

Echo leaps for the mushroom, falls flat on his face.

DISSOLVE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK - The sound of sawing.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUSHROOM VALLEY - DAY

Booty is down on his knees, sawing through the stalk of the mushroom as Echo lays out the tarp beside him.

BOOTY

So then I pull out *another* froggy little thing. And this one's got an oboe. Then one by one I pull an entire reptile orchestra out of my belly button. And it's playing the coolest song I've ever heard.

Booty saws through the mushroom's stalk and it falls onto the tarp with a dull thud.

EXT. LOS PALICIOS - DAY

Echo and Booty hike down the side of the mountain.

ECHO

Man, we are making great time. I cannot wait to see that scientist eatin' crow.

BOOTY

Ah, yes that reminds me. Due to my assistance, I think it's only fair that I receive thirty-seven percent of your winnings. Final offer.

ECHO

Uh, yeah... seven bucks forty cents. Sure thing, man. I mean, we only bet a twenty.

BOOTY

We hiked all the way up here for twenty bucks?

ECHO

No, Booty. We hiked up here for something else. Something called dignity.

Booty stops hiking. He points with his chin.

BOOTY

Look. I think that's a woman. It is! It is a woman.

A buff and handsome woman hikes along a ridge, going the same direction as them.

ECHO

Well, dude. See if she wants to hike along with us. You can regale her with tales of our adventure.

BOOTY

Hey Miss would yoooo--

Booty's foot slips on a rock and he drops his side of the mushroom.

The tarp flies up and kites off into the sky.

INT. ECHO'S ROOM - DAY

Still tattooing.

ECHO

So the tarp was long gone, which meant we had to carry the mushroom bare-handed. Yeah. I thought we'd be okay, being fairly close to trail-head. Right? No big deal.

EXT. LOS PALICIOS - DAY

Echo and Booty walk along, the hue of all the colors warping, humming.

ECHO (V.O.)

However, soon the whole world's dial turned to funk.

Weird, taffy like birds twist and fly through the sky.

ECHO (V.O.)

Overhead flew the world's weirdest birds.

Echo and Booty stumble over rocks that make guttural sounds as they step on them.

ECHO

Under foot...rocks talked and stones moaned.

The sun drops from the sky and cracks on a mountain top. Yolk drips.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Then the sun became an egg...
cracked! And a variety of beasts
were born.

Creatures long and feral ooze out of the cracked sun-egg.

ECHO (V.O.)

And if all that wasn't freaky
enough, Booty's face became...
outer space.

Booty's face fades away and is replaced by stars twinkling in a black void.

EXT. LOS PALICIOS - DUSK

Echo and Booty hike along sluggishly, clearly confused. Both of them have their shirts off.

ECHO

I don't know how much farther I can
carry this. I'm losing it.

BOOTY

What, George? I can't hear you,
George.

ECHO

Shit. My name is George?

Suddenly, the entire scene goes black and the mushroom morphs into a card table.

Gasping in awe, Echo splits into two. A black-haired, blue eyed doppelganger of himself floats to the other side of the card table as a chess board rises up out of it.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Who are you?

DOPPELGANGER

I'm Ech. And you must beat me in a
game of chess to retain any sense
of self. Ready?

ECHO

Uh...

The Doppelganger's arm whirs around, moving all the black pieces.

DOPPELGANGER

Check mate!

Echo looks utterly terrified as the cackling Doppelganger's flesh and muscle melt away to reveal a freakish skull. A red creature emerges... and strikes!

BACK in the mountains Echo yells, and drops the mushroom.

INT. ECHO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Echo is finishing up the L.S.D. tattoo. It looks awesome.

ECHO (V.O.)

Now at this point we were maybe a quarter mile from the trail head, tops. But while the flesh was willing the mind, well...

EXT. LOS PALICIOS - DUSK

ECHO (V.O.)

...the mind was fully untethered.

Echo and Booty are walking in circles carrying one quarter of the mushroom. Both are humming a weird little song.

BOOTY

Are we insane now? Like for good?

ECHO

Yes. But after we shut down that know-it-all scientist we will ask the whisper beings to return our sanity. If they do not acquiesce, we'll simply make penitance to the Black King.

BOOTY

Let's stop. Please. Who cares about the scientist?

ECHO

I do! He's impinged my pride!

BOOTY

But you don't have any pride.

ECHO
What makes you think that?

BOOTY
That T-shirt you're always wearing.

CUT AWAY - Out behind the Tarantula, Echo swings a lasso while wearing a shirt that reads "No Pride." He lassos OREO, a big fat skunk, and laughs.

BACK TO SCENE:

ECHO
That's just some free T-shirt, man.

BOOTY
Oh. Maybe I was wrong about you then. Echo, are you a prideful man?

Echo and Booty stop walking. Echo stares at Booty's innocent face for a moment.

He drops his side of the mushroom. Booty does the same.

ECHO
Come on, Booty. Let's fly home.

Echo turns, puts his arms out like Superman and starts to strain. Booty does the same. They do not fly.

INT. ECHO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Echo dabs blood from the tattoo.

DOOFUS
So you lost the bet?

ECHO
Well, technically, yes. However...

INT. THE BRASS DRAGON - NIGHT

A small chunk of the mushroom sits on the bar. Crispin nudges it with the back of a pen and returns the pen to his pocket.

ECHO
Check out the size of those ridges and gills. Just extrapolate on that for a second, okay?

CRISPIN

Hmmm. Looks more like a store-
variety chanterelle to me. Pay up.

Echo takes a twenty from his pocket hands it to Crispin.

ECHO

Fine. Here.

CRISPIN

You do realize I took many courses
in mycology? If you ever care to be
enlightened on the matter of fungi--

ECHO

Yeah, dude, you can save your
enlightenment, thanks.

CRISPIN

To each his own.

Echo starts to walk away, then turns back.

ECHO

Actually, I am a *little* bit
curious. How big *is* the world's
largest mushroom?

CRISPIN

Well, funny you should ask. The
Lepiota Procera--

ECHO

(interrupting)

Oh, sorry I hate to interrupt you,
but I'm both broke and beer-less
right now. Gonna go see if I can't
borrow a couple bucks.

CRISPIN

Oh that's fine, I got you.

Crispin signals to the bar tender.

CRISPIN (CONT'D)

One Big Star for my curious friend
here.

The bar tender pours Echo a beer, slides it to him.

ECHO

Thank you kindly, now you were
saying?

CRISPIN

Ah yes, the lepotia procera is
larger than a dinner plate. However
the bovista aestivalis also known
as the puff ball...

Crispin's voice fades away as Echo watches him talk, sipping
his beer and blinking languidly.

ECHO (V.O.)

It was at that point I realized,
you just ease back and pretend to
listen and he'll buy you beer after
beer.

INT. ECHO'S ROOM - DAY

Echo walks the kid towards the door.

ECHO

And after enough of those beers the
fool actually starts to make sense.
As does everything else in this
damn world.

The Doofus hands Echo some money.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Ah. Cool. Much obliged.

The Doofus starts to exit.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Oh, hey. And tell your friend Lisa
Sarah Dominguez that I say hi.

DOOFUS

Huh?

The Doofus just looks at Echo and blinks dumbly. Echo gently
shuts the door in his face, starts counting his cash.

ECHO

(laughing to himself)
What a silly little psycho-naut.

CUT TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS to the tune of "Your TV Doesn't Love You."