

EXT: BOEING 747- NIGHT

A double-decker plane glides through a navy night, the window belts glowing golden, and navigation lights winking on the tip of its wings.

INT: FIRST CLASS

Things are peaceful, save for the rumble and clinks of the dinner service. Artemis is contemplating the rolling sea of clouds outside the oval window. His face bears no emotion. Butler has reading glasses on, and is flicking through the monthly issue of Guns and Ammo in the yellow of the overhead lamp.

A nearby ping makes Artemis aware of his partial reflection in the window. He leans upright and pulls an eyedrop bottle from his breast pocket.

ARTEMIS

(tapping in eyedrops)

Did you check up on Nguyen?

Butler obediently tucks the magazine back into the seat pocket.

BUTLER

I did. He has a date with a nice woman called Tuyen. Divorced seven years, no kids. An accountant with VietinBank. Enjoys watching horse races, but doesn't gamble. Nguyen made reservations at The Garlik for 8. Non-smoking.

ARTEMIS

(distracted)

Good for him. Good for him.

(beat)

And I'd also like you to schedule a meeting with our family lawyers. I want to renegotiate their terms of service, keeping the future downsizing of our business interests in mind.

Butler stares at him with a mixture of affection and concern. Awed as he is by his ward's brilliance, he is also acutely aware of the weight Artemis is carrying- a boy forced to grow

up too soon. The reading glasses make his hulking frame look oddly paternal.

BUTLER  
(quietly)  
I'll do that, Artemis.

The dinner trolley has finally drawn level with their seats. The stewardess is blonde, curvaceous and cheerful.

STEWARDESS  
Dinner for you, sir?

BUTLER  
No, thank you.

STEWARDESS  
(to Artemis)  
And how about you, young man?

But Artemis has already returned to gazing contemplatively out the window.

ARTEMIS  
(absently)  
No, thank you.

STEWARDESS  
Are you sure?

ARTEMIS  
Extremely.

STEWARDESS  
(winks good-naturedly)  
It's roast beef stew, with a chicken-and-pine-nut salad. And ooh, look, strawberry parfait!

Artemis finally looks up, unable to believe this conversation is still going on.

ARTEMIS  
Listen... Nancy. If ever someone poisons me, and I require an instant emetic, I shall call for you. In the meantime, why don't you take your dog-and-pony show

someplace else?

Looking in equal parts hurt, unnerved and alarmed, Nancy the stewardess speeds the trolley away.

Butler pulls the magazine out again, and flips it open.

BUTLER

(deadpan, from behind the pages)

She seemed nice.

ARTEMIS

High-maintenance, Butler.

(pause)

And definitely a clinger.

Butler smiles to himself.

BUTLER

Will you meet your mother once you get back?

ARTEMIS

Not right now, Butler. There's work to do. A lot of work. In fact, I had better catch up on sleep right now.

He tucks a blue velvet travel pillow behind his neck and a matching sleep mask over his eyes. He plugs in earphones, and CLASSICAL MUSIC starts to play.

Tchaikovsky's Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy.

With the MUSIC STILL PLAYING, we CUT TO:

EXT: FOWL MANOR- DAY

A lingering establishing shot of a lavish, sprawling country estate. A Renaissance-Era mansion, surrounded by acres of forest and pond, gated by a stone wall, guarded by fences, wires and watchtowers. Fort Knox meets a Henry James novel.

SUPER: FOWL MANOR (22 kilometres from Dublin)

(appearing after a beat)

-*"A humble sanctuary to protect my children from the wolves and the winter's bite. And those blasted Tudors. God, I hate them."*

-Lord Hugh Fowl,

circa 1525.

A pleasant MUSICAL MONTAGE follows, as we glimpse Artemis and Butler hard at work in their own different ways. The MUSIC gradually SWELLS throughout the montage, building to a CRESCENDO towards the end.

INTERCUT ARTEMIS/ BUTLER

Artemis throws open the door to his study, once a traditional oak-and-leather affair, but recently refurbished with 21<sup>st</sup> century tech...

Butler presents his younger sister, JULIET (16, ditzy, pretty) with a present wrapped in red silk. She unwraps it, and is delighted to find a Dao Vua knife...

Artemis clamps the Book of the People onto a table, beneath three bright spotlights, as though about to conduct an autopsy...

Butler trains Juliet in the dojo. Both are black belts, though Butler is several Dans higher. He isn't going easy on her, and has her in a headlock...

Artemis wears an eyepiece, manipulating images on floating screens in front of him with gloved hands, almost like a conductor...

Butler in the greenhouse, watering a row of potted plants with one hand, reading a recipe book with another...

Artemis studies an old, leather-bound book with a magnifying glass. He looks annoyed as he slams the book onto the floor with a dusty thud...

Standing in a boat, Butler throws a spear into a pond with remarkable ease, presumably impaling his target...

The pile of unhelpful books has grown much larger. Artemis rubs his face, looking frustrated and challenged, but not defeated...

Butler in the kitchen, drizzling olive oil onto a saucepan over a medium flame...

Artemis shuffles runes in Sanskrit, Gaelic, Zulu and Arabic. He finally frowns at a set of Egyptian hieroglyphics with an "I wonder..." look...

Butler chops onions over a cutting board at jackhammer speed..

Artemis bins a crumpled sheet of paper at the same time as-

Butler bins a fish head..

A couple of Gnommish pictograms turn to English, Artemis's eyes widen...

Butler decorates the cooked carp with raspberry sauce, and tips braised arrocina beans on the side of the plate, accompanied by a few slices of blood orange...

A spiral processor reads the pages of the Book from the centre outwards..

Butler climbs upstairs with a laden tray..

The remaining Gnommish pictograms turn to English... and... THE TRANSLATION IS COMPLETE!

Butler knocks on the door of the study, abruptly KILLING THE MUSIC.

He opens the door to find Artemis collapsed in an armchair, surrounded by stacks of books and sheets of paper. He looks exhausted, but satisfied.

ARTEMIS

Meeting, Butler. Drawing room,  
Thirty minutes. Get Juliet.

CUT TO:

INT: DRAWING ROOM- DAY

A sumptuous living room. Juliet is relaxed on the sofa, applying glitter nail paint. Butler is standing- even in this domestic setting he will not lower his guard. Artemis has freshened up, and is going over his notes.

ARTEMIS

So I've gone over the whole thing,  
and I've come to the conclusion that

most fairies refrain from coming up to the Earth's surface if they can help it, except in one unavoidable situation.

BUTLER

Which is?

ARTEMIS

According to the Book, there's a ritual they must complete every few years, to renew their powers. Which, though we are yet to have seen them, are considerable.

BUTLER

(frowning)

What's the ritual?

ARTEMIS

They need to pluck and bury an acorn from a 100-year-old oak tree by a riverbend. Oh, and on a full moon night. Needless to say, this cannot to performed underground. At this time, they are both exposed and depleted of magic. It is in this moment of vulnerability, that we will act.

BUTLER

(nodding)

There'll be quite a few oaks that make the cut. I'll scope out the most inaccessible ones. I bet those are the ones they go for.

Artemis is visibly pleased that Butler is keeping up.

ARTEMIS

Good man.

Juliet, on the other hand..

JULIET

I'm sorry, Arty. What are we doing?

ARTEMIS

(with a touch of exasperation)  
We're going to capture a fairy.

JULIET

(shocked)  
You can't talk like that, Arty. This  
isn't the '60s.

ARTEMIS

(annoyed, to Butler)  
You didn't brief her?

BUTLER

I didn't know she was to be told, too.

JULIET

(looking from Artemis to Butler)  
I was to be told what?

Artemis sighs.

ARTEMIS

That fairies are real, Juliet. Fairies,  
goblins, pixies, gnomes, elves, dwarves...  
the lot. All real.  
And we are going to capture one alive.

There is a hushed silence. Juliet's mouth is hanging open in  
childlike wonder.

JULIET

(hushed tones)  
Even the Tooth Fairy is real?

ARTEMIS

Probably not. Doubtless the legend  
has some real-life equivalent with a  
far less impressive story.

JULIET

And the Blue Fairy, from Pinocchio?

ARTEMIS

(clearing his throat)  
That is, as you yourself pointed out  
just now, a character from a children's  
story by Carlo Collodi.

JULIET  
OOOH! What about Santa Claus?

ARTEMIS  
(interrupting)  
No, Juliet, no. Fairies are not like that. They don't inhabit edible, gluten-rich houses covered in refined sugar. They don't go about distributing presents to sleeping children. They don't give two hoots whether you're naughty or nice. Fairies are not like that.

JULIET  
Sooo... what are they like, Arty?

CUT TO:

INT: HOLLY SHORT'S BEDROOM

A messy one-bedroom flat.  
An ALARM is RINGING on a bedside table.  
A slim hand smacks over it.

With a grunt and a sigh, HOLLY SHORT kicks off the covers. Holly is slim and attractive, with shoulder-length hair, bright green eyes, coffee-coloured skin and traditionally elfin features. She is wearing a cotton tank top and shorts. Holly fumbles around the bedside table for her phone. She has messages.

As the messages play in V.O., we see Holly getting ready for her day.

CUT TO:

INT: BATHROOM

Holly brushing her teeth.

FOALY (V.O)  
Hey Short, it's Foaly. You haven't seen my tinfoil hat, have you? I know for a fact you used my last one to spit your chewing gum out in. Just let me know, and I promise I won't get mad.



Holly, still brushing, grins into the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT: BEDROOM

Holly exercising with a resistance band.

CHIX VERBIL (V.O)

Yo Hol, it's Chix. You mind switchin' shifts with me this weekend? I got front row tickets to the Limestone Breezers concert, and there's this little sprite in Forensics I need to impress. Knew I could count on you. Cheers!

Holly groans.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN

Holly pours out a measure of hot espresso, just as two pieces of toast pop out of the toaster.

LILI FROND (V.O)

Oh-mer-garsh, Short. Is it true you turned Trouble Kelp down? You are such a loo-hoo-hoo-zer, Short! He's totally out of your league anyway. You will die alone.

Holly takes a nonchalant, crunchy bite of toast and a noisy slurp of espresso.

CUT TO:

INT: BATHROOM

Holly in the shower, massaging shampoo into her hair, modestly covered from the upper chest down in very colourful bubbles and steam.

MR. GROUCH (V.O)

Hello, Holly. It's Mr. Grouch. I don't think you got my last message. Um, I just wanted to remind you it's the fifth... so... rent's due... so if you could... actually, scratch that. You're a good kid, Holly, and I hate having to do this. Just pay me back whenever you can. Thanks.

CUT TO:

INT: BEDROOM

Holly zipping up a parsley-coloured jumpsuit and sliding on a helmet.

FOALY (V.O)

Never mind. I found it in the girls' toilet. Must've been Caballine. Little gunk. I don't think we'll ever get along.

CUT TO:

INT: HAVEN CITY TUNNELS

Holly rides her GLIDING ZOOMER through an immense, crowded tunnel, overtaking a flying mini occupied by a family of toads, a hang-gliding gremlin, and other such oddities. The traffic flows on multiple levels, from a subway train system at the bottom, to air channels for flying sprites at the very top.

Up ahead, the end of the tunnel arrives... ORCHESTRAL MUSIC SWELLS... giving us our first look at...

HAVEN CITY.

An incredible underground metropolis, a veritable subterranean Manhattan, that has worked with, as opposed to against nature. TECH-NOIRISH elements are comically juxtaposed against classical FANTASY flourishes. Eight-lane highways weaving between skyscrapers carved out of stalactites. Nightclubs shaped like giant, glowing toadstools. Grimy graffiti proclaiming GOBLIN POWER! Neon signs advertising magic wands on sale. Algae parks full of joggers. Flying blimps and political billboards canvassing species-based votes. Fairy children in a winged yellow school-bus cheer at Holly out their windows, and she, fun-loving elf that she is, smiles and replies with a mock-stern salute.

Though this is all mundane to Holly, we take our time with these scenes to showcase a living, breathing world inhabiting the vast grotto.

Holly finally stops outside an impressive building labelled LEP POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

The HQ façade has a giant projected motion poster, bearing the simpering image of LILI FROND, and a citizen-friendly outreach message.

Holly removes her helmet and grimaces.

INT: LEP POLICE HQ LOBBY

Holly shoves her through the crowded lobby. In spite of the otherworldly setting, the scene remains remarkably familiar. Warty gnomes being mugshotted or fingerprinted, wanted lists being pinned to a notice board, a framed picture of the Officer-of-the-Month, long queues, cells filled with snarling goblins, waiting benches, arguing families, the usual.

At the help desk is LILI FROND- a valley-girl equivalent of a pixie, a sleek-haired brunette with sharp features and a bad case of resting bitchface. She is surrounded by three or four admirers- former jock types, now uniformed- all vying for her attention.

Fronnd perks up when she notices Holly. Holly pretends not to see her, and picks up the pace. But...

FROND

Oooh, Short! You're in for it now!  
You were supposed to report to OPs  
an hour ago. Beetroot's gonna blow a  
gasket! Excellent!

HOLLY

(unimpressed)

I'm sure the tunnels can survive  
litterers for another hour, Fronnd.

FROND

Litterers? Nah-uh! You're back on  
the front lines!

HOLLY  
(stunned)

What?

FROND  
I said you've been reassigned back  
to the field!

HOLLY  
You're a liar.

FROND  
(with faux innocence)  
Have I ever lied to you?

HOLLY  
Yes. Routinely.

FronD smacks a copy of Holly's transfer order on the table.  
Holly picks it up and begins to read-

QUICK FLASH CUTS to the words- CAPTAIN HOLLY SHORT... TUNNEL  
SECURITY... HEREBY RELIEVED... TRANSFERRED... SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
BRANCH.

Holly's eyes WIDEN IN HORROR.

FROND  
Turns out Beetroot lobbied for you  
with the Council. Said the Hamburg  
thing wasn't your fault. Said they  
could lay their entire faith in you.  
That you would give your one hundred  
percent, and would never let them  
down. Way to repay him, right, coming  
in so late?  
(she scoffs)

HOLLY  
(in a mutter, still staring at the order)  
D'Arvit.

FROND  
And as it turns out, there's an Op for  
you right now. They've been announcing  
your name over the intercom for the past  
half-hour.

HOLLY  
D'Arvit, D'Arvit, D'Arvit.

FROND  
Looks like you've blown your chance again.  
Prepare for permanent Holly-day, Short!  
Get it? Holly-Day?

A couple of the suitors laugh sycophantically. Panicking, Holly begins to RUN.  
One shy fellow raises a couple of timid, hopeful fingers at her as she leaves.

TIMID COP  
(in a small voice)  
Hey, Holly..  
(The others stare at him)  
What?

CUT TO:

INT: OPS ROOM

A futuristic looking weapons laboratory. Holly is being decked out by her friend FOALY, a bespectacled, lab-suited centaur. He has his beloved tin-foil hat back on.

HOLLY  
Rogue troll, you say?

Foaly is choosing a helmet for her from a triple-decked rack.

FOALY.  
Yup. Blasted to the surface near Mount Etna. Italy. Headed straight for the Sicilian town of Catania.

He fits the helmet over her head, covering her eyes.

FOALY (CONT'D)  
You're very lucky, Holly. Fairies don't get to see the Mediterranean too often. It's usually one-off jobs further up North.

Holly nods, patting around the helmet for the visor toggle. Foaly smacks her hand off.

FOALY

Don't fidget. I bet you're worried, right? Your first Op back and Root sends you after a sun-crazed troll.

HOLLY

(shrugs)

Not really. I'm just glad to be back on the field.

Foaly is now choosing a set of wings for her. He looks at butterfly wings, reptilian wings, Pegasus wings... and eventually choose dragonfly wings. He slips them around her shoulders, fastening them onto her back.

FOALY

If you're not worried, you're not prepared. Trolls are mean brutes, Holly, really mean. Tear you apart soon as they look at you.

HOLLY

Good to know, Foaly. Anything else I should be aware of?

FOALY

Yes, it's a reconnaissance mission only. You do not, in any circumstance, engage the troll. Is that clear? That's for the special team we'll send in after your report.

HOLLY

Got it.

Foaly finally picks out a fancy tri-barrelled platinum blaster from a locked cupboard. He charges it up musically and tests the level settings. There are three- the first shows a red-faced smiley CRYING and SWEATING, the second shows the cartoon ON FIRE, and the third shows a PILE of ASH. Foaly almost hands the weapon over to Holly, but then stops.

FOALY

(severely)

This is the LEPrecon, Short. This isn't the LEPreduceEverythingToRubble. This isn't Hamburg.

HOLLY  
(grumbling)  
I got it, horse-man.

Foaly hands her the gun.  
Holly twirls the gun and slides it into her hip holster. She looks very happy.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
What next?

JUMP CUT TO:

Holly strapped inside a tiny beetle-shaped pod, riding a railroad track through a dark, narrow chute.

Foaly is on the HEADSET.

FOALY (V.O)  
I'm glad you're seeing this as an opportunity, Holly, because Root really wants to show the Committee you've got stuff.

HOLLY  
Right now, I'm not seeing anything at all.

Foaly taps some buttons on his control panel. In the pod, Holly's visor comes ALIVE, glowing a BRIGHT GREEN. For a moment, we see the cramped inside of the pod as she sees it, through a night-vision filter, covered in knobs and doodads.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
Much better. Thanks, Foaly.

The track begins to RISE like a ROLLERCOASTER RAIL. Up ahead is a bright yellow source of light.

The magma chute.

FOALY  
You're like Clarice Starling from *The Silence of the Lambs*, basically. Root's your Jack Crawford.

HOLLY  
I'm who? From what?

FOALY  
Not important. Anyway, I've uploaded  
the coordinates to your visor.

Holly grabs a rubber cylinder from the dashboard, and sticks  
it in between her teeth.

HOLLY  
Fanks.

FOALY (V.O)  
Good luck, Captain Short. I'll see you  
on the other side.

There is RADIO silence.

The railroad track planes away, dipping very slightly at its  
very edge. It stops at the lip, offering Holly a terrifying  
glimpse of the bottomless drop to the centre of the earth.

With a teasing hesitation, the POD DROPS.

There are a few seconds of tense silence as we see the pod  
shrink into the distance... and then...

THE POD BOOMS UPWARD out of the Earth, borne on a MAGMA FLARE!

CUT TO:

EXT: SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE- NIGHT

The door of the pod, now on a barren mountainside, pops open  
with a hiss.

Holly unclips herself from the harness, emerges from a tangle  
of wires and fried circuits, and dusts herself down.

Kicking her dragonfly wings into action, she hops up and takes  
off into the Italian night..