

OPEN EXT. BACKYARD - NOON

AERIAL PAN over an unkempt backyard, but not unkempt in the ugly sense. Rather the grass has clearly gotten taller, and desperately needs lawn maintenance. It is mid-day, and the sun is shining brightly.

TITLE CARD

Cut to a dandelion, appearing large in the foreground. The wind blows just gently enough to have one seed fly off.

TRANS. EXT. GRASSLAND FOREST - NOON

The grass is still, save for the occasional breeze blowing it. Suddenly, a head pops out, belonging to a tall cricket with abnormally long feelers. This is MARNIE. Her head pops up in the distance, then disappears. She pops up a bit closer now, and disappears again. She pops up much closer now, and perches on the top of a blade of grass. She squints in order to get a better view. She is doing her best to look very noble, like a medieval hero.

MARNIE

Hm... Twenty leagues to the border
at the very least, and daylight is
fading fast.

(shouting down)

Squire! Fetch me my far-seer!

Marnie extends her arm outward, back towards the ground, without diverting her gaze. She waits. And waits.

MARNIE (CONT'D)

(still shouting)

Squire?

(irritated)

Squire!!

(quietly to herself)

What is he doing...?

She looks down and sees Owen leaning against the stalk of the grass tree, tuning his dulcimer and strumming it intermittently. He doesn't seem to be stressed about how out of tune it is. Marnie lands elegantly in front of him.

MARNIE (CONT'D)

Squire! I was calling for you!

OWEN

(innocently, not
aggressively)

(MORE)

OWEN (CONT'D)

You were? My name's Owen, not squire.

MARNIE

Squire is a position.

OWEN

Slouching is a position too.

MARNIE

Yes, but you didn't sign up to slouch, you signed up to be my squire!

OWEN

I thought you made me come?

MARNIE

The details aren't important. What is important, is that daylight is fading, and we still haven't cleared this forest!

(sigh)

I'm starting to think we're going in circles.

Owen strums his dulcimer once more, and a string breaks, causing Marnie's feelers to tense up.

OWEN

Oh yeah, there's no doubt about that.

(distracted)

Do you know where we can get a new string?

MARNIE

What?!

OWEN

Yeah, look, there's that worm who keeps saying cryptic doomsday junk!

QUICK PAN over to the left where a CRAZED WORM is staring at them.

WORM

The water from the heavens are a lie! The sun feeds on foolish worms!

OWEN

Ha, what a silly fella.

Owen looks down.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Oh, and there's my slime. I guess I should have mentioned that.

Marnie looks down and sees a trail of thick SLIME. The camera pans to show it going forward a good distance. Marnie's eyes widen.

MARNIE

ACK! We've literally been following our own trail this entire time?! Squire, why didn't you tell me?!

OWEN

(laid-back)

Oh, I thought you knew... It's such a lovely evening, I was just enjoying taking a stroll with you, my lady!

Marnie's face gets incredibly red. She has a huge crush on Owen, and has for a very long time.

MARNIE

(embarrassed)

W-W-W-We can't lollygag! If we lollygag, we die! You should have told me!

OWEN

I've lollygagged most of my life, and I don't think I've died yet. What's the rush?

Marnie takes a deep breath and regains her composure. She motions north, the direction the Garden supposedly is.

MARNIE

The Great Devourer?! The mechanical monstrosity that will consume our world?

She closes her eyes and regains her look of determination. She turns around.

MARNIE (CONT'D)

All of bugkind is counting on us! ...Even if they don't act like it.

OWEN

Well, they'll understand that even great heroes need a break sometimes! We've been walking for 8 hours. Do you know what 8 hours are to a bug?

MARNIE

...8 hours?

OWEN

A lifetime! Look around you...

Cut to PAN showcasing the beauty of the grass forest around them. Sunlight beams through the grass trees and reflects off a small stream of water.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Isn't the world beautiful?

MARNIE

(under her breath)

There won't be much of a world left if we don't keep moving...

Owen slides to the side in a very cool manner.

OWEN

My lady, my lady! You need to just let yourself 'be'!

Marnie raises an eyebrow.

MARNIE

'Be'...?

OWEN

Yeah! Like... Like... Ah, I know!

He pulls out his dulcimer again, as if to get ready for a big musical number.

MARNIE

I'm really not in the mood for a song right now. Can we just-

Faint dulcimer music is heard. Marnie turns around, looking angry that Owen would immediately disrespect what she just said.

MARNIE (CONT'D)

(upset)

Squire! I just asked you to not play any music!

OWEN
But I'm not...
(gasp)
Have I gotten so good that I can
play with my mind? What a
milestone!

Marnie's feelers stand straight up.

MARNIE
Well, I'm picking up something...

OWEN
Hm? Your feelers?

TRANS. EXT. GRASSLAND FOREST - FESTIVAL SQUARE

Marnie and Owen look at each as they pull back a large clump of grass. The music immediately gets louder, as they see a large FESTIVAL. Bugs of all kinds are dancing to various jigs, and are generally having a great time. There is a band of bugs playing tin whistles, crumhorns, dulcimers and various other medieval instruments made from small items. Marnie looks dumbfounded.

OWEN
The Lily-pad festival!

MARNIE
Huh...?

OWEN
The Lily-pad Festival!

MARNIE
The what...?

OWEN
The Lily-pad Festival!

MARNIE
Squire!

OWEN
You know, celebrating the migration
of Croakers?

MARNIE
(standoff-ish)
Why would anybody want to celebrate
that? Croakers are horrid beasts.
Didn't one of them eat your uncle?

OWEN

One time!!

Marnie starts pacing around and worrying.

MARNIE

I didn't calculate our trip around this!

OWEN

You didn't account for the hours we spent going in circles either! The days already ruined, let's just have fun!

Owen grabs Marnie's hand and drags her into the heart of the festival.

MARNIE

N-No! We don't have time!

TRANS. EXT. GRASSLAND FOREST- FESTIVAL FOOD COURT

Marnie and Owen walk by a bunch of various stands with bugs enjoying themselves with the food and music. Owen is completely enamored, and subtly dances as he squirms through the festival. Marnie looks visibly uncomfortable. A pair of dancing mantises cuts in-between Marnie and Owen. She stops in her tracks as the couple dances through.

MARNIE

It's... a bit hard to appreciate the music with that loud noise in the background... what is that?

OWEN

It must be coming from that scary-looking whistle!

Over by the band stand is a Blow Fly blowing on a PLASTIC WHISTLE shaped like a bird. Marnie suddenly becomes entranced.

NOTE: Bird Whistle will look like this: <http://golden-library.com/images/product/12%20plastic%20water%20warbler%20bird%20whistles%20kids%20toy%20party%20favors-.jpg>

MARNIE

F-Fascinating... This whistle comes from the Giants. It's designed to look and sound like a Sky Demon!

OWEN

Looks like it was made by a giant
named Taiwan.

MARNIE

The Taiwan?!

Marnie rushes over to look at the markings on the plastic.
Sure enough, the underside says "MADE IN TAIWAN".

MARNIE (CONT'D)

T-That's his signature! I've been
following his work for years now,
he's a genius!

OWEN

See? If we hadn't stopped, you
would have never found this piece
of art!

MARNIE

W-Well...

(undistinguished groaning
noise)

It's... it's a nice little
distraction... But we can't -

Owen interrupts her.

OWEN

My lady, look!

CUT TO Food stands around the festival.

OWEN (CONT'D)

They even have food from the
Giants!

As Owen says the names of the foods, the camera pans to
showcase each of them.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Roasted raisins, broiled
marshmallow, AH! Steamed bran
flakes!

MARNIE

S-Steamed bran flakes?

OWEN

You're a fan of the bran, eh? I'll
go grab us some!

Owen scoots off to the food stand. Marnie stands around, not sure what to do. She looks around at everyone dancing and having fun. She looks up at the sun, to see what time it is. She continues standing still. She looks at her wrist. There's a tiny SUNDIAL on her wrist, made of wood and twigs. She taps her foot impatiently. Suddenly, she feels a tugging on her feelers. PAN DOWN as we see a LITTLE PILL BUG GIRL with a big toothy smile looking up at her.

LITTLE PILL

Your feelers look funny!

Marnie's face gets red as her feelers lower. She tries to hide them a bit.

MARNIE

W-What? N-No they don't! T-They're very normal!

LITTLE PILL

I like them! They're super long!

She runs her hands over Marnie's abnormally long feelers and giggles. Marnie's confused look starts to fade into a smile. Cut to Owen walking back over holding two bags of steamed bran.

OWEN

JUST CALL ME THE BRAN MAN!

Cut to Owen POV shot as he stops in his tracks. He sees Marnie and the little pill bug girl dancing. All the other bugs are dancing around them and cheering. CUT TO Owen. A huge smile forms on his face.

OWEN (CONT'D)

(gasp)

That's it! That's exactly how to 'be', my lady!

Owen pulls out his dulcimer, and whispers into the ears of the crumhorn players. They nod, and begin a new song, with Owen playing the dulcimer. Marnie loosens up and begins to really embrace the moment. Owen scoots up and dances with her. She blushes a little bit. She looks over and sees a few bugs gossiping and mocking her long feelers. They laugh. Marnie's eyes widen. Suddenly, all she can see around her are bugs mocking her. The entire tone of the scene changes, as the music gets a bit fainter. Everything around her turns into a blur. Owen snaps her out of it, by playfully tugging on her feelers, along with the little pill bug girl from before.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Shake those feelers!

Marnie looks at him, face red, and hops away. The song abruptly ends.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Marnie?

Marnie runs by the podium where the aphid is blowing the whistle. She bumps into it by accident, causing the stand to wobble. The aphid falls off and lands on top of the whistle, breaking it.

APHID
Ah, geez...

TRANS. EXT. GRASSLAND FOREST - BEHIND FOOD STANDS - AFTERNOON

Marnie runs behind a food stand and slumps down. Ghibli sized tears begin to well up in her eyes. Owen follows her and slowly approaches her.

OWEN
My lady, are you okay...?

Owen startles her, and she quickly wipes away her tears.

MARNIE
W-We should never have stopped!
This is what happens when you stick
around and get involved with other
bugs! They just stomp all over you!

OWEN
What do you mean? You looked like
you were having a wonderful time!
You were really dancing there, if
only I had legs-

MARNIE
Well you don't, you just have
slime! Maybe if you took the time
to notice that, we wouldn't have
walked around aimlessly for hours!

Marnie instantly regrets what she just said, and it shows visibly. Owen looks hurt.

OWEN
Look... I know you didn't really
want me to come along. I was just
the only one you could get.
(MORE)

OWEN (CONT'D)

I understand. It seems like you
already have your path planned out.
Maybe we should split for the rest
of the night? It might be better to
just... clear our heads. You know?

Owen departs.

MARNIE

(sigh)

Nice one, Marnie... Why am I such a
piece of sap?

She runs her hands through her feelers and closes her eyes.

CICADA

(yelling)

HI.

MARNIE

(startled scream)

Marnie is startled by the CICADA suddenly sitting next to
her.

CICADA

(beat)

(yelling)

SO I OVERHEARD EVERYTHING.

Uncomfortable silence. Marnie looks back and forth. She
stands up and begins to walk away.

CICADA (CONT'D)

(yelling)

ROUGH DAY?

MARNIE

Oh! I guess... this is a
conversation.

sits back down next to him.

She

MARNIE (CONT'D)

U-Um, yeah... Yeah, just a bit.

Marnie stares at him blankly for a bit.

CICADA

(beat)

YEAH, I KNOW EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL.

MARNIE

You... do?

CICADA

OF COURSE. YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN
LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS FESTIVAL
FOR SEVEN YEARS. BUT ALL THAT IN-
BETWEEN STUFF WAS JUST SUCH A
HASSLE. SO I SLEPT THROUGH IT ALL,
AND HERE I AM!

He raises his hands in the air, as if to motion to some grand
thing occurring around him. Marnie can't help but notice that
they're just sitting around, doing nothing.

MARNIE

But you're just sitting here. You
skipped all those years just to sit
here...?

CICADA

THE JOURNEY DOESN'T MATTER, IT'S
THE DESTINATION THAT COUNTS!

MARNIE

I don't think that's how the saying
goes. Never mind...
(sigh)
I just want to get to the Garden.

CICADA

WHY ON EARTH WOULD YOU WANT TO GO
THERE?!

MARNIE...

My parents went there to stop the
Great Devourer... but they never
came back.

CICADA

WOW, THAT'S DEPRESSING! SO YOU
WANNA GO THERE TO GET EATEN TOO?

MARNIE

What? N-No! It's to save the whole
kingdom, you ding dong! But Owen
keeps... trying to... show me...
the things that we're saving.

Marnie has a realization. A wave of guilt washes over her
face.

MARNIE (CONT'D)

I... I need to go talk to Owen.

CICADA
OKAY. I'LL JUST BE SITTING HERE
ENJOYING THE FESTIVAL.

Marnie runs off. The cicada sits there, talking to himself.

CICADA (CONT'D)
IT'S MUCH MORE PEACEFUL WITHOUT
THAT ANNOYING WHISTLE!

TRANS. GRASSLAND FOREST - FESTIVAL SQUARE

Marnie returns to the festival square, but finds that it is completely deserted. There is no music, and no bugs around.

MARNIE
Huh? Where did everyone go? Hello?
Owen? ...Anyone?

A loud stomping is heard. Marnie cautiously turns around. Staring down at her is an enormous frog, or a CROAKER, as they call it. Essentially a dragon in the insect world. Marnie stares at it in silence. She accidentally lets out a cricket chirp in a small comedic moment. It looks down at Marnie, curious.

MARNIE (CONT'D)
Oh sap...

The Croaker hops a bit closer. Marnie looks over and sees the whistle.

MARNIE (CONT'D)
T-The whistle! It wasn't just for
show! The Sky Demon noises were
keeping the Croakers away!

The Croaker starts to ready for a pounce, just as Marnie jumps away. The Croaker chases Marnie in a frightening scene that showcases the true small size of the insects. She stops and analyzes the situation in slow motion. She sees the whistle, and begins to think about what she could use to replicate a Sky Demon noise.

MARNIE (CONT'D)
If I could take the mouthpiece from
that whistle and...

She sees a long, smooth BLADE OF GRASS.

MARNIE (CONT'D)
Make a grass whistle!

Marnie runs towards the mouthpiece, but the Croaker unleashes its TONGUE. He latches onto the mouthpiece, and it flies back in his face, knocking his head and confusing him briefly. Marnie slowly grabs the mouthpiece.

MARNIE (CONT'D)
 Sorry, I need to borrow this,
 please don't eat me.

Marnie takes this opportunity to pluck the grass blade and position it next to the mouthpiece. The blade of grass falls over. She sees two identical wooden statues. They are the exact size of the blade of grass, with an indentation in the middle. This allows the whistle to blow through the hole the two statues would make, creating a whistle noise. Marnie rushes toward them, pushing the statues toward the grass blade. The grass is now held up perfectly straight. The Croaker begins rushing towards her. Marnie blows hard on the mouthpiece, but no noise comes out.

MARNIE (CONT'D)
 W-W-What?! No! There's too many air
 gaps!

The Croaker rushes towards Marnie. She closes her eyes in fear, but suddenly a ball of slime gets thrown into the Croakers mouth. It stops and coughs out of disgust. Marnie looks up.

MARNIE (CONT'D)
 Owen!!

Owen squirms up to Marnie and assists in sealing the air gaps with his slime. The Croaker snaps out of it and looks up in anger. He croaks and extends his tongue. Marnie and Owen both blow on the mouthpiece. A loud screech comes out, and the Croaker stops in its tracks. It runs off in fear, with its tongue following behind him at a distance.

OWEN
 I'll be honest, I'm not too sure
 what we did there. Was kinda just
 doing whatever it was you were
 doing.

Bugs start coming out of hiding. The Cicada comes out, as well.

CICADA
 WHAT'S WITH ALL THE COMMOTION? SOME
 OF US PREFER PEACE AND QUIET!

Slime is thrown on his face.

CICADA (CONT'D)

BWAHHH!

CUT BACK to Marnie and Owen.

MARNIE

I'm sorry, Owen... You were just trying to get me to enjoy myself, and I lashed out at you. That wasn't cool.

OWEN

Everyone has their uncool moments. Luckily your coolness outweighs them.

Marnie blushes.

OWEN (CONT'D)

There's a lot of beauty out there worth saving, you know.

MARNIE

...I want to get to know it. Will you help me?

OWEN

As your squire... I would be honored. I can get... carried away sometimes. Can you help me stay focused on our goal?

MARNIE

As your liege... I would be honored.

They smile at each other.

MARNIE (CONT'D)

What do you say we get something to eat, Bran Man?

They start walking towards the food stand, as the sun begins to set. She looks over at Owen and blushes a tiny bit. Suddenly, loud drum beats are heard. One after another. Marnie's feelers pick up something from far away. Her eyes widen. The camera quickly zooms out and pans all the way over to the Garage. The Great Devourer is being revved up. With one final drum beat, the engine starts.

END