

The Three Misfortunes of Geppetto
(the story of the boy who grew to have a wooden child)

Written by

Michael Vukadinovich

The Three Misfortunes of Geppetto

(the story of the boy who grew to have a wooden child)

By Michael Vukadinovich

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

The bus, full of impatient travelers, is stopped in traffic on a snowy road. PETE, a sweet but antsy seven-year-old, sits playing a handheld video game. His GRANDFATHER, in his 60s with a slightly mischievous look, sits next to him. The DRIVER makes an announcement on the PA:

DRIVER

Get comfortable, folks. Looks like we'll be stuck here awhile as they clear the snow.

There's a collective groan.

PETE

Great, now we'll never get there and we've already been driving for like a 100 years.

GRANDFATHER

(looking at his watch)
Has it been that long?

PETE

(laughing)
I was exaggerating, Grandpa.

The grandfather winks at him. He considers something and after a moment reaches into his bag and pulls out a large, wooden book that's beautifully carved.

GRANDFATHER

I wasn't going to do this until later but now that we're stuck we may as well begin.

PETE

What is that?

GRANDFATHER

I'm going to tell you a story, Pete. Which means you need to turn off the game.

Pete gives him a look like he's crazy.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)
 I know what you're thinking. Stuck on a bus with your grandpa and no video games to play? That's how kids die of boredom. But I think you're going to like this one.

Pete looks at the wooden book and considers.

PETE
 (not convinced)
 Well, what's it about?

GRANDFATHER
 It's a true story full of misfortune, love and adventure. A story it's about time you heard, because it's partly your story.

PETE
 My story?

GRANDFATHER
 Yes, indeed. One thing I've learned is that it takes a great deal of occurrences, marvels, and curiosities for each of us to end up on this earth, and if we never learn these stories we never really learn who we truly are. Now the hero of this story lived a life full of great misfortunes.

PETE
 It's not sad, is it?

GRANDFATHER
 Like all good stories it's sad in parts and happy in others. Just like lives tend to be. Is that okay?

Pete nods and puts the game away.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)
 Good. Now let's see...

He opens the book to a page reading:

THE FIRST MISFORTUNE

The text continues underneath. On the opposite page is a beautifully detailed woodcarving of a woman lying in a hospital room.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)
 (reading)
 The first misfortune came in
 youth...

We CLOSE IN on the wood panel as it FADES into reality:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

We begin in the year 1919 in rural America. In a bright room the woman, EVE, gives birth with great ease. Outside the window the sun shines. Her husband, ADAM, watches nervously as the DOCTOR works.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 ...though he was born into bliss.

The DOCTOR hands Eve a beautiful, shining baby boy.

DOCTOR
 It's a boy.

ADAM
 Oh, thank god.

He clears his throat as Eve shoots him a look.

EVE
 (looking down at the baby)
 He's beautiful.

ADAM
 He's perfect.

The new parents share a look of complete happiness.

DOCTOR
 Have you thought of a name?

EVE
 Geppetto Henri Pedro Nikolai
 Woodmaker.

DOCTOR
 It suits him perfectly.

They all look down at Geppetto, beaming.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 It was a collection of the names of
 their tour guides from each of the
 countries the young parents had
 visited together.
 (MORE)

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
 They figured it would give their
 son a personality combined from the
 best traits around the world.

We FLASH through a series of black and white photographs:

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
 The joy of life from Italy.

-Adam and Eve stand in front of the leaning tower of Pisa as
 a very Italian tour guide tosses a pizza happily.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
 The intellectualism of France.

-Adam and Eve eat a baguette in front of the Eiffel tower as a
 very French tour guide smokes nearby, reading Descartes.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
 The carefreeness of Mexico.

-Adam and Eve lounge on the gulf of Mexico eating tacos in
 hammocks as a Mexican tour guide catches a fish for them.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
 And the hardiness of Russia.

-Adam and Eve stand in a snow storm wearing soviet hats and
 eating a bowl of goulash as a Russian tour guide is passed
 out drunk on the ground with a bottle of vodka.

INT. HOSPITAL

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 But it would be the boy's family
 name, Woodmaker, that would define
 him most in his life.

We PULL BACK from the happy family and move down the hall,
 passing rooms full of wounded WWI vets, coming to a much
 darker room where another boy is born. There are horrible
 screams of pain. Outside the window is a terrible rain storm.
 The ugly MOTHER struggles on the bed as the DOCTOR works.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
 At that very moment another boy was
 brought into the world under very
 different circumstances.

The child is finally born. The doctor holds him up with a
 disgusted look, quickly handing him off to the mother.

DOCTOR
Have you thought of a name?

MOTHER
Edmund.

DOCTOR
Edmund Vile.

MOTHER
It's pronounced Ve-lay!!!

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
As if to cancel all the goodness in
Geppetto's small heart, this child
was born evil and dark.

Thunder crashes outside. The doctor backs out of the room.

DOCTOR
Well I'll let you two have some
alone time.

He turns and runs. The mother looks down at the new baby,
EDMUND.

MOTHER
This world is hard, tough and
unfair. You will need to do
everything you can to get ahead or
you will die in a gutter like your
father.

EXT. GEPPELTO'S HOME - DAY

A beautiful house in the country. Geppetto, 4, plays in the
front yard with a dog as his parents watch from the porch.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
Geppetto's first years of life were
perfection itself and his life
seemed to be excessively blessed.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Geppetto, 11, skips a stone on the surface of a beautiful
lake.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
He was surrounded by nature.

It seems to skip endlessly.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Geppetto is the only student raising his hand as the TEACHER looks over the students.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
He excelled at school.

TEACHER
Yes, Geppetto.

GEPPETTO
76,486,233 and 7/8ths.

TEACHER
Correct!

All of the girls give him love eyes, but he only pays attention to one special girl, JULIA MOON, who shyly looks away from him. In the corner Edmund scowls at him.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND

Edmund pitches to Geppetto with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 9th. The score is tied.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
And exceeded at sports.

Edmund throws the ball and Geppetto hits a home run. A CROWD OF GIRLS cheer his full name: Geppetto Henri Pablo Nikolai Woodmaker!

Edmund throws his glove down angrily. From the stands Julia gives Geppetto a little wave as he runs the bases. He smiles back. Her FATHER, a stern man, sees the exchange and immediately leads her away by the hand, disapprovingly.

EXT. PARK - EVENING

A group of kids watch a Charlie Chaplin movie projected onto the side of a building. They laugh and have a great time.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
And he found at a young age what
many search for their whole lives.

Geppetto looks up at a large, two-story house and sees Julia looking down at them longingly from her bedroom window. A girl sitting next to him, SCARLET, sees him looking at her.

SCARLET

Forget about Julia Moon or her
father will kill you.

In the window Julia's father scolds Julia and closes the
curtains shut.

SCARLET (CONT'D)

I'll be your girlfriend, Geppetto.

GEPPETTO

Sorry, Scarlet.

Geppetto looks back up at the closed window. Scarlet is
disappointed.

EXT. JULIA'S HOME - LATER

Geppetto climbs a rain gutter up the side of her house,
almost falling on the trash cans below. Finally, he makes it
to her window and knocks. She smiles when she sees him.

INT. JULIA'S ROOM - LATER

Julia's room is full of delicately made paper objects, such
as animals and flowers. Geppetto has a mustache drawn on, a
little cane, and a hat and acts out the movie for her,
attempting to perform Chaplin's great vaudeville moves in
front of a hanging sheet. Julia can't help but laugh.

Julia's father enters and Geppetto dives into a wardrobe. Mr.
Moon looks at Julia and then at the shaking wardrobe. He
opens it to find Geppetto covered in Julia's clothes.
Geppetto smiles innocently.

GEPPETTO

Good evening, sir.

Mr. Moon takes the cane from his hands and holds it up.

MR. MOON

I'm going to beat you blue!

He swings the cane at him but Geppetto jumps between his legs
just in time and runs up to Julia.

GEPPETTO

I'm sorry, I have to be getting
home now.

He kisses her and something happens when their lips meet, a
shared feeling that their love is fated.

Geppetto pulls back with a look of complete wonder on his face while Julia smiles as wide as possible -- the best moment of her life.

MR. MOON
 (running at Geppetto
 furiously)
 Stay away from her!

Geppetto kisses her again quickly.

GEPPETTO
 Just wanted to make sure the first
 time wasn't a fluke.

JULIA
 Was it?

GEPPETTO
 No.

He jumps out the window just as Mr. Moon slams the cane down on the windowsill, shattering it. Geppetto slides off the roof and lands on the trash cans below. Mr. Moon and Julia watch as he gets up covered in garbage and runs down the street with a huge foolish grin on his face, people staring as he passes by.

MR. MOON
 (shouting)
 Never step foot on my property
 again you ragamuffin!

GEPPETTO
 (turning back)
 I'm sorry, Mr. Moon, but I don't
 think that will be possible since
 I'm going to marry your daughter.
 That's a promise.

Mr. Moon is flabbergasted as Julia beams.

JULIA
 (calling after)
 You're a prince, Geppetto. And I'm
 a princess.

Her father looks down at his daughter, troubled and confused by her reaction, but she just keeps watching Geppetto run away with a smile on her face. He's won her heart.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 And it might as well have been
 true.

I/E. GEPPETTO'S HOME - NIGHT

Geppetto lays in bed holding a tin can attached to a string to his ear. We follow the string out the window, through the front yard, over a gate, down a path to a dirt road and through the town past people kissing, drinking and fighting. We pass a speakeasy where a man gives a secret knock, opening the door and revealing happy people inside. We then pass a church where everyone looks depressed inside.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

They say when you find the love of
your life your heart begins to beat
a little differently.

We follow the string up the side of Julia's house and into her bedroom window where she lays in bed holding the can to her heart. Her heart has an unusual, almost musical beat.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)

This was true of Geppetto and
Julia.

EXT. TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Edmund cuts the string with scissors.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

But by nature of being so good
Geppetto made a true enemy for
himself.

INT. CAR - DAY

Geppetto rides with his parents, sitting in the back seat. They laugh and smile as happy as can be listening to the radio.

RADIO

That's right folks, this analyst
says invest, invest, invest! The
twenties are rolling, the cash is
flowing and there's no end in
sight.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Ahead of the car, in front of a railroad crossing, Edmund sees them coming and throws nails onto the road. He then hides behind a tree. The car drives over the nails, popping all the wheels, and comes to a stop on the railroad track.

INT. CAR

The family looks at each other with concern as the car lowers from the escaping air. Adam hits the gas and revs the engine but it doesn't budge. A train approaches in the distance.

RADIO

Wait a minute folks, this just in!
The markets have crashed!!! We're
ruined! RUINED!!!

Adam keeps trying the gas but the car won't budge.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

Now any reasonable person caught in
such a predicament would simply
exit the car. And Geppetto's young
parents were no doubt reasonable
people.

FATHER

Everyone out!

Geppetto gets out but his parent's stay put.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

But at that exact moment genetics
had other plans. For Geppetto's
father had a family history of
heart attacks.

QUICK MONTAGE:

1. Geppetto's grandfather has a heart attack while scoring a monster film as part of an orchestra in a movie theater.
2. Geppetto's great grandfather, a doctor, has a heart attack while listening to a patient's heart with a stethoscope.
3. Geppetto's great, great grandfather has a heart attack while working atop a lighthouse. He falls onto the light, shining it directly onto a ship and collapses, turning the light off. The ship crashes into shore in the background.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)

And at that moment he followed in
the tradition.

We CLOSE IN on Adam as he has a heart attack.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)

And poor Geppetto's sweet mother had a family history of going catatonic at the most unfortunate of times. A condition known as short term inconvenient catatonia.

QUICK MONTAGE:

1. Geppetto's grandmother gets married in a church, going catatonic when it's her turn to speak. Thinking she's changed her mind the groom runs out crying.

2. Geppetto's great grandmother goes catatonic while skiing down a mountain.

3. Geppetto's great, great grandmother steers a ship. The lighthouse in the distance blinds her eyes before turning off and she goes catatonic, crashing into shore.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)

And at that moment she followed in tradition.

We CLOSE IN on Eve as she goes catatonic.

Geppetto watches helplessly as the train approaches, its horn blowing. He tries to get his parents out but there isn't time. The train smacks into the car! Poor Geppetto is devastated. The world as he knows it comes to an end.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)

I will say, however, that poor, little Geppetto was fortunate in this: the history of heart attacks on his paternal side and the propensity for short term inconvenient catatonia on his maternal side cancelled each other out so he'd never have to worry about either ailment for the rest of his days. Though that was of little consolation in the moments after his parents were pummeled by a train.

EXT. FUNERAL - DAY

It rains heavily as Geppetto and the gathered townspeople watch his parent's caskets being lowered into the ground. He looks up to see Julia. They share a moment much beyond their years. Edmund moves in next to Julia and gives Geppetto a look of victory.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
Edmund had gotten what he wanted.

Geppetto then looks past them at a craggy, old woman. This is his AUNT EUNICE.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
After the death of his parents
Geppetto would have to go live very
far away with his aunt Eunice. A
horrid and foul woman.

She gives him a yellow, rotting smile.

EXT. GEPPETTO'S HOME - DAY

Geppetto drags his over-stuffed suitcase as he sadly walks away from his childhood home. Eunice waits in the back seat of her jalopy car for him. Before he gets to the car Julia runs up.

JULIA
Geppetto! Wait!

Geppetto stops, happy to see her.

GEPPETTO
Julia, what are you doing here?
Your father--

JULIA
--I brought you this.

She hands him a beautifully made, carefully folded, detailed and colorful paper heart.

JULIA (CONT'D)
I thought you might need a new one.

He takes it carefully. It's the most important thing he's ever been given and he cherishes it immediately.

GEPPETTO
(with great emotion)
I'll always keep it with me.

JULIA
Write me everyday until you can
come find me. And I'll do the same.

GEPETTO
 I promise, Julia.
 (beat, from his heart)
 I need you more than ever.

Shouting from the car:

AUNT EUNICE
 Hurry up you hormone infested brat.

Julia gives Geppetto a kiss.

JULIA
 (whispering in his ear)
 You will always have my heart.

She turns and runs away. He watches her for a long moment and then looks down at the heart.

GEPETTO
 Mine too.

EXT. CAR

Geppetto ties his suitcase to the top of the car. Eunice rolls down her window.

AUNT EUNICE
 You're driving.

GEPETTO
 But I'm 11.

INT. CAR - LATER

Geppetto drives the car, swerving every which way in the rain and almost colliding into trees and other cars. Eunice reads a bad romance novel, taking no notice of the near accidents.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 It wasn't too far on their long journey that Geppetto realized Aunt Eunice was not good with children, having none of her own and her husband many years dead.

He nearly drives off the edge of a cliff.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - NIGHT

A classic roadside diner right out of an Edward Hopper painting. Geppetto and Eunice sit at a table as a WAITRESS takes their order.

AUNT EUNICE
For dinner the boy will have a cup
of coffee, black, and some corn.

Geppetto looks over jealously at a display case full of fancy desserts.

AUNT EUNICE (CONT'D)
And I'll have the steak.

EXT. EUNICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A dilapidated old home standing alone on an unfriendly dirt road. The car parks in front, the motor steaming.

AUNT EUNICE
Finally. I've seen a drunk monkey
drive better than you.

INT. EUNICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Geppetto walks into his new home. It's dark and scary looking and has the cold, unfriendly feeling of a dank museum.

AUNT EUNICE
Your bedroom is up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM

Geppetto drags his suitcase into his new bedroom. He turns on the light to find it's covered in taxidermy animals with frightening faces. He screams.

AUNT EUNICE (O.S.)
Quiet boy! I'm trying to release my
bowels.

When he sees the animals are stuffed he relaxes a little and opens his bag. The first thing he does is hang up Julia's paper heart on the wall. He then takes out a framed picture of his parents and puts it next to his stiff, dusty bed.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Geppetto lays in bed wide awake as Eunice's snores fill the house.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

Geppetto lay in bed that night unable to sleep because of Eunice's snoring, the shadows of the dead zoo all around him, and all the coffee he had to drink. He thought of only two things: his parents whom he missed more than anything. And Julia Moon whom he missed a touch more.

Geppetto can't take it anymore. He gets out of bed and walks through the dark house. He sees a door under the staircase. He tries to open it but it doesn't budge as if it hasn't been opened in years. He puts his shoulder into it and pushes as hard as he can, finally managing to open it inch by inch.

He walks into the dark, musky room and finds the light. He turns it on to see that it's a magnificent workshop full of all kinds of tools, machines and wood all covered in dust.

He's in complete awe as he looks everything over. The various saws, wedges, vices, etc. He picks up a small wedge and a piece of wood and begins to carve.

INT. WORKSHOP - MORNING

The block of wood is now a carving of Julia. He holds it up proudly.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

Geppetto became so focused on transforming the block of wood into something new that he didn't notice the snores of his aunt had ceased.

REVEAL: Eunice looks down at him disapprovingly. Geppetto feels her breathing angrily and turns around slowly.

GEPPETTO

I'm sorry, Aunt Eunice. I should have asked permission.

He stands there ready for the worst.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

But before she could punish the boy in the worst ways imaginable she was taken away to another time by the sight, smells and sounds of the workshop.

Eunice's face slowly turns from an evil scowl to something much softer as she looks around the workshop and is filled with memories. Her eyes stop on an unfinished writing desk in the corner, long discarded.

We CLOSE IN on her.

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

A young, handsome man works in the pristine shop making the beautiful writing desk. This is Eunice's husband, PETER. After a moment a much younger Eunice enters. She's beautiful, before the tragedies of her life have gotten to her. She brings her husband a cup of coffee.

AUNT EUNICE

Take a break, Peter. You've been in here for hours.

PETER

If you say so but I want to finish your desk so you can begin writing.

AUNT EUNICE

You're so silly. I'm no good.

PETER

You write the best poems I've ever read.

AUNT EUNICE

Well you're very poorly read.

He puts his work down.

PETER

I can't work when you're around, anyway. It'd be dangerous with such a beautiful woman in here. I wouldn't be able to concentrate.

Eunice laughs happily.

AUNT EUNICE
You're a fool.

AUNT EUNICE (CONT'D)
I brought you a cup of coffee.

He takes the cup and sips from it.

PETER
You could make me a cup of coffee
and a bowl of corn for dinner for
the rest of my life and I'd be
happy. As long as it was you making
it.

AUNT EUNICE
(playfully)
Like I said, a fool!

He grabs her and kisses her.

BACK TO:

INT. WORKSHOP - MORNING

Eunice looks down at Geppetto cowering. Without a word she
walks out. Geppetto looks down at his carving curiously.

EXT. EUNICE'S HOUSE - DAY

Geppetto opens the mailbox and finds a letter from Julia. He
rips it open quickly and begins to read.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
He and Julia kept their promise to
each other, writing everyday,
sharing all of their secrets and
all the details of their young
lives. And before long he could
tell her mood simply by the curve
of her writing. The way it looped
when she was happy.

INSERT: a letter from Julia with looping handwriting.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
Slanted when she was nervous.

INSERT: a letter from Julia with slanted handwriting.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
And dipped when she was sad.

INSERT: a letter from Julia with dipping handwriting.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)
 So that as the years passed they
 felt they knew each other better
 than if they had been together the
 whole time.

INT. GEPPETTO'S ROOM - DAY

CU: Geppetto's hand as he writes a letter to Julia: "Will you marry me?"

PULL BACK to see Geppetto, now 23, a handsome and strong young man. Behind him are thousands of letters organized into volumes.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 And they made secret plans to run
 away and marry as soon as he had
 enough money.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

The workshop is now full of all kinds of magnificently made objects: hearts, clocks, puppets, tables, chairs, shelves, and many, many carvings of Julia.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 For they both new Mr. Moon would
 never allow her eldest daughter to
 marry an orphan carpenter.

A man hands Geppetto a stack of bills and walks out satisfied holding a wooden chair. Geppetto pulls an envelope of money from his pocket and adds the bills.

Aunt Eunice, now an old woman, enters with a letter.

AUNT EUNICE
 Another letter.

Geppetto stops his work and takes the letter from her. He opens it and reads eagerly. As he reads his face falls.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 The handwriting had the sharp edges
 of desperation.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIA'S HOME - DAY

Julia, a beautiful young woman, with her parents and four little sisters, watches sadly as their furniture is repossessed by two movers.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
Mr. Moon had lost everything and things had become dire.

EXT. JULIA'S HOME - DAY

Edmund, an unscrupulous young man, approaches the house with a smirk on his face. He saunters into the front yard, watching approvingly as the men carry a couch out.

EDMUND
Lift with your backs, men. That's the way.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
Meanwhile, Edmund Vile had become very wealthy and powerful, as evil men do in difficult times, taking advantage of people at their most vulnerable.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A FATHER, MOTHER and their THREE CHILDREN watch sadly as an auction takes place on the front yard of their humble home. They're poor and hopeless and about to walk away.

Just then several friends and neighbors approach and each hand the father a few dollars, as much as they can afford, so they he can save his home. The father is shocked and looks back at his family happily. He then makes a bid, confident they'll get the house back.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
He purchased houses from families who could no longer afford to pay for them.

Then Edmund steps forward. To the AUCTIONER:

EDMUND
I'll give you a dollar more.

AUCTIONER

Sold!

The family is devastated. Edmund smiles as he wins the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Edmund watches as construction workers work on the house.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

And he turned them into several
room tenements buildings.

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - DAY

Edmund shows the same family of five a tiny single room
apartment in their former home.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

Renting the rooms to the same
families he stole from at a very
nice profit.

The father and mother look at each other sadly. It's their
only option.

BACK TO:

INT. JULIA'S HOME

Edmund knocks on the door and enters.

EDMUND

Anyone home? Well not for long
anyway.

The Moon family instinctively takes a step away from him as
he walks in.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

I brought the contract we
discussed, Mr. Moon. Now in these
times 1/28th of the original price
isn't so bad. You're practically
stealing from me.

He looks over the family.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 Why is everyone so glum? When the papers say there's a depression going on this isn't what they mean.

He approaches Mr. Moon with the contract and a pen.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 Well, have you made a decision?

Mr. Moon looks down at it with a pained expression. He looks back at his family -- what should he do?

MR. MOON
 We could starve.

EDMUND
 Then don't be a fool and SIGN IT!

As Mr. Moon considers it:

JULIA
 How can you be so cruel?

Edmund looks at Julia and walks over to her.

EDMUND
 The only cruel thing here is how beautiful you are.

He offers her a rose.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 A rose for a rose.

She recoils from him. Undeterred he looks back at Mr. Moon.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 (to Mr. Moon)
 I'm not a cruel person, Mr. Moon.
 I'm sure we can work something out.

He looks back at Julia and smiles. Her younger sisters all hide behind her.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 He promised to save the family in exchange for Julia's hand in marriage. And Mr. Moon had no other choice but to agree.

INT. JULIA'S HOME - NIGHT

Julia writes secretly by candle light as everyone else sleeps. Tears fall from her eyes onto the letter.

JULIA (V.O.)
 (as she writes)
 Please come for me, Geppetto. I cannot bear the thought of having to marry that man. Come for me and we will run away together.

BACK TO:

INT. EUNICE'S HOUSE

Geppetto sadly finishes the letter.

GEPPETTO
 (reading)
 Your love, Julia.

His heart sinks and he collapses. Eunice runs to him.

AUNT EUNICE
 (worried)
 Geppetto! Geppetto?!

GEPPETTO
 I have to save her.

AUNT EUNICE
 Oh thank god. I thought you were suffering from inconvenient short term catatonia.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Geppetto builds different oddly shaped machines out of wood and household objects.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 Geppetto prepared to leave immediately, but knowing his aunt had grown dependent on him in her old age, could not leave her helpless.

INT. EUNICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Geppetto shows Eunice the completed machines proudly. One machine washes and dries the dishes, another machine does the laundry, a third makes cakes. All of them are operated by puppets and have a Rube Goldberg quality to them. Eunice is amazed. She looks at Geppetto with wonder.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
And before he could start his
journey history intervened.

EXT. PEARL HARBOR - MORNING

Dozens of Japanese planes approach the unsuspecting, sleeping naval base and begin to drop hundreds of bombs. They explode on the ships, causing them to burst into flames as men jump for their lives. The air raid siren goes off and the US soldiers, totally unprepared, try to fight back as the ships begin to sink.

INT. EUNICE'S HOUSE - DAY

Eunice and Geppetto, with his packed suitcase from childhood next to his feet, sit listening to President Roosevelt on the radio with a grim seriousness.

ROOSEVELT
(on the radio)
December 7, 1941—a date which will
live in infamy—the United States of
America was suddenly--

INT. JULIA'S HOME - DAY

Julia and her family huddle around their radio. Her face is pale with worry.

ROOSEVELT
(on the radio)
--and deliberately attacked by
naval and air forces of the Empire
of Japan.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
Julia knew instantly what the news
meant for Geppetto.

JULIA
I'm feeling unwell. Excuse me.

She walks out. As soon as she's out of sight she runs to her room where she changes her clothes, putting on pants and pinning her hair up under a hat. She draws on a mustache with make-up. She stops for a moment when she notices it looks like a Chaplin mustache and smiles at the memory of Geppetto.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A soldier posts a notice that reads "All Men Report for Duty Immediately. Or Face the CONSEQUENCES."

INT. JULIA'S ROOM - LATER

Now dressed as a man, Julia puts a pillow under her covers to make it look like she's sleeping and then climbs out her window.

EXT. EUNICE'S HOUSE - DAY

Geppetto stands across from Eunice holding his suitcase.

AUNT EUNICE

War took my Peter from me. Don't let it have the satisfaction of taking you too.

Geppetto gives her a hug.

GEPPETTO

Goodbye, Aunt Eunice. I'll always be grateful to you for taking me in.

AUNT EUNICE

I may not have always been good to you but I taught you how to drive when you were eleven and that's something.

Geppetto hugs her. He walks away as Aunt Eunice watches him go, tears in her eyes.

INT. EUNICE'S HOUSE

Eunice walks into her house to see the writing desk finished and beautiful. She is shocked.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Geppetto walks down a dirt road among hundreds of young men all going to report for duty. Some sing patriotic songs while others are quiet and focused. They hold American flags and pass around bottles of cheap alcohol. Women hand them cups of water as they pass. Children salute them and tell them to give Hitler what he has coming. A PREACHER runs along beside them praying for their safety.

The men stop on seeing an ugly old WITCH standing in the road selling different potions.

WITCH

Turn invisible. Make your enemy see spiders and snakes all around. Confuse them with a potion of dizziness. All for mere dollars.

PREACHER

Get away with your evilness! Away witch! These men have god on their side.

He holds his bible up. The soldiers join in on chiding her.

WITCH

You think god gets involved with such follies of man? You will see soon enough, there is no god where you're going. Mark my words, most of you will not return home and your women will come to me looking for help with the grief they'll feel.

She disappears into the woods to hisses and jeers but the men continue on silently, considering her warning.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Julia, dressed as a man, goes to hop on the back of a pick-up truck with a group of men. A man, ANDERSON, stops her.

ANDERSON

You smell like a woman.

Julia gets tense. After a moment the man grins.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

I got a lotta lovin' from my woman too. Best part about going to war if you ask me. Name's Anderson.

JULIA

Ju...James.

Julia grunts and spits.

ANDERSON

Nice to meet you, James.

EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY

Geppetto gets to a town full of chaos. Old men read the headlines declaring war on Japan and Germany while children play war in the streets, pretending to shoot Hitler.

Groups of young men shout war slogans like "Avenge Dec. 7" and "Hitler's next." They take turns buzzing their heads, say goodbye to mothers and lovers and jump in army buses and on the back of trucks, sticking their heads out of the windows and waving goodbye excitedly. Worried women run after them reminding them to eat well and to take care of themselves. Everyone is full of energy, excitement and nervousness. The depression is forgotten.

Geppetto watches the scene. A couple YOUNG MEN run past him slapping him on the back.

YOUNG MAN

What are you waiting for?

YOUNG MAN 2

Don't you want your shot at killing Hitler?

Geppetto walks forward.

INT. RECRUITING OFFICE - DAY

Geppetto enters a small room stuffed full of young men. He walks to the counter where a fat SERGEANT sits.

GEPPETTO

The name's Geppetto Henri Pablo Nikolai Woodmaker. I'm reporting for duty.

SERGEANT

You don't say. Can you shoot a gun?

GEPPETTO

Yes.

SERGEANT
Next of kin?

GEPPETTO
What?

SERGEANT
Who do you want us to tell if you
get yourself killed?

A moment.

GEPPETTO
Julia Moon.

The sergeant writes it down.

SERGEANT
Welcome to the war. Next!

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A DOCTOR examines Edmund as a NURSE watches, holding a clip board. Edmund tries to bribe him slyly with hundred dollar bills but the doctor doesn't notice.

DOCTOR
Strong pulse, healthy kidneys,
perfectly red tongue ... I can't
find anything wrong with you.

EDMUND
Then pease, doctor, LOOK A LITTLE
HARDER!

He throws a bunch of bills at him. The doctor looks at them and then back up at Edmund.

DOCTOR
I'm afraid you're in no condition
to be fighting a war with your flat
feet, weak eye sight and feminine
hands. You'd be putting your fellow
soldiers at risk.

EDMUND
A true shame.
(beat)
Leave that last one out.

The nurse looks at them skeptically and then writes on her clipboard.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Edmund walks into the lobby smugly to find a very large man named HOTSPUR fighting with several doctors.

HOTSPUR
Let me fight!!!

DOCTOR
You failed every intelligence test.

HOTSPUR
I'll intelligence you!

Hotspur picks up the doctor and tosses him across the room. Edmund smiles.

EDMUND
(to himself)
Perfect.

Edmund approaches Hotspur who looks down at him angrily.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
You're grossly enormous.

Hotspur snorts threateningly.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Easy, I mean it as a compliment.
What's your name?

HOTSPUR
Hotspur.

EDMUND
(reviling in his name)
Hotspur. Brilliant. Hotspur, today
is your lucky day. I am going to
give you a job.

HOTSPUR
Why would I want a job from you?

Edmund looks him up and down.

EDMUND
Let me guess, you have nowhere to
go since not even the army will
take you in wartime.

Hotspur is quiet.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Dead parents?

Hotspur nods and wipes away a tear.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
No schooling?

HOTSPUR
I had schooling!

EDMUND
Past the age of ten?

Hotspur is quiet.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Some jail time for petty crimes?

Hotspur looks down at the ground.

HOTSPUR
I didn't mean to.

EDMUND
You'll take the job from me because your only other option is joining the circus, and I believe they already have an elephant. Come with me. Now that there's a war going on there's money to be made and I need a strong man.

EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY

Julia walks through the crowd, getting knocked around. She looks desperately for Geppetto, worried she'll never find him in the chaos. Finally, her eyes light up as she sees him getting onto a bus in the distance.

I/E. BUS

Geppetto gets on the bus and makes his way to the back to find a seat. As he does he hears a voice call his name.

JULIA (O.S.)
Geppetto!

He knows the voice instantly. He runs to a window, pushes the man sitting there aside and sticks his head out trying to find her. As he scans the crowd he doesn't see her because she's dressed like a man.

JULIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Geppetto! Over here!

He looks and finds her in the crowd letting down her hair and rubbing away the mustache. Geppetto can't believe it. Anderson sits next to him shocked, seeing Julia's not a man.

GEPPETTO
(amazed)
Julia! My god you're so beautiful.
(then concerned)
Are you real? Please be real.

JULIA
(laughing happily)
Yes! I'm real.

GEPPETTO
What are you doing here?

JULIA
I had to see you before you left.

GEPPETTO
Hold on, I'll come to you. Don't move. Don't disappear.

He gets up as the bus starts.

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)
(to the driver)
Wait! Stop the bus!

The driver just grunts and begins to drive.

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)
Stop!

Geppetto runs to the door but two higher ranking SOLDIERS hold him back. He tries to push them aside but they knock him to the ground.

SOLDIER
Take a seat, soldier.

GEPPETTO
The love of my life is out there.

SOLDIER 2
You're property of the US Army now.

Geppetto runs back to the open window. Julia runs after the bus as it begins to drive away.

JULIA
They've already set a date.

GEPPETTO
What?! When?

JULIA
The evening of summer solstice.
June 21st. It's the most time I
could get.

GEPPETTO
(crushed)
But that's only 6 months away.

JULIA
I've never seen my father so
desperate. You can't let me marry
Edmund. I'd rather die.

GEPPETTO
I won't let it happen, Julia. Not
even this war will stop me. I
promise, I'll come for you.

JULIA
Just please stay safe. If anything
were to happen to you...

GEPPETTO
Nothing will happen to me.

He hangs out of the bus as far as he can and cups her face in his hand.

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)
You're the most beautiful woman in
the world. Nothing could keep me
from you.

A tear falls from her eye onto his hand. She can't keep up anymore. Their hands separate.

As if the simple truth of it should make the bus stop, the war end and make everything right:

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)
But I love you.

JULIA
I love you, too.

They watch each other disappear in the distance, looks of desperation on their faces, the world so much bigger than the two of them.

His hand suddenly stings and he looks down at it to find the teardrop burning a little hole. He looks at it curiously.

EXT. TOWN STREET - LATER

The last of the trucks and busses carrying the soldiers leave the dusty town behind. The only residents left are the children, elderly and women. They have nothing to do now but wait. Slowly, one by one they go home. Julia is the last one waiting in the street, having fallen to her knees.

JULIA
I don't care what happens to me,
just bring him back.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Geppetto looks down at the paper heart, Anderson next to him.

ANDERSON
You better forget about her. She'll
only cause you trouble where we're
going.

Geppetto folds the heart and puts it into his coat pocket.

INSERT: The wooden book to a page reading:

A MISFORTUNE AVERTED

On the opposite page is a woodcarving of a dilapidated theme park located on a small, rocky island surrounded by crashing waves.

We CLOSE IN on the wood panel as it FADES into reality:

EXT. PLEASURE ISLAND - DAY

A destroyed sign on the ground reads "Pleasure Island." Bums, drunks and various vagabonds and outcasts happily make their home here. There are crumbling carnival games, a huge rollercoaster missing pieces of track, a ferris wheel leaning to one side, a water ride full of sludge, discarded food carts, etc.

A friendly elderly man, GEORGE, leads Edmund and Hotspur through the park.

GEORGE

Before the crash and war, Pleasure Island was a grand place for children. They had dreams about coming here. It was a dream. They loved the games, screamed on the rides, and ate cotton candy until they turned pink. But after my wife died I just didn't have it in me to keep up the work. Then the depression came and the children stopped coming. The result is what you see before you now.

They come to a stop and look back on the decaying island.

EDMUND

I'll take it, George. I've always wanted my own island.

GEORGE

If I'm going to sell it to you I need your word that you'll keep it affordable, clean fun. It was created in the belief that all children deserve an innocent world and I want to make sure that spirit lives on. The children need it more than ever.

EDMUND

You have my word, George. Believe me, I'm about to be a married man.

He smiles wildly and shakes George's hand.

GEORGE

Great, then I'll get the contracts.

George walks away. Then to Hotspur:

EDMUND

Just think of all those returning young vets with army checks looking to blow off some steam. We put in some bars, casinos, and brothels and the money will start rolling in. And entertainment. Some quality entertainment.

In the background he sees a BUM holding a whiskey bottle and trying to pet a cat. The cat is blind and takes a step forward every time the man attempts to pet him.

BUM
Here kitty, kitty, kitty.

The cat moves away a little more and the man follows until he's under a roof. Just then a fox jumps from the roof and lands on the man's face. He screams and tries to hit the fox off. He drops the bottle which the cat, only pretending to be blind, rolls away. The fox jumps off the man and joins the cat in licking the booze from the bottle. The bum gathers himself and walks away. Edmund is delighted at the scene.

EDMUND
What magnificent creatures!
(to Hotspur)
Bring them to me.

INT. JULIA'S HOME - NIGHT

Julia lays in bed reading a letter from Geppetto.

GEPPETTO (V.O.)
My dearest Julia. I hope this
letter finds you since I don't know
when I'll be able to write again.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Geppetto and a few other soldiers take cover as a bomb lands nearby.

GEPPETTO (V.O.)
You mustn't believe everything you
read in the papers. The truth is
that none of this war business is
as bad as the wretched feeling deep
in my soul of being apart from you.

The bomb lands, tossing soldiers like rag dolls. Geppetto runs to one of them who lands dozens of feet away. It's Anderson. He's severely injured, his blood draining fast.

ANDERSON
(weakly)
Geppetto.

GEPETTO
 (trying to keep it
 together)
 You're going to be okay, Anderson.

Anderson coughs up blood. There's no way he's going to live and Geppetto knows it.

 GEPETTO (CONT'D)
 Everything is going to be okay.

EXT. BOMBED OUT VILLAGE - DAY

A deserted and destroyed village. It looks haunted with only the skeletons of buildings remaining. Geppetto and several other soldiers chase a starving chicken through the streets.

 GEPETTO
 They take care of us and we have
 plenty to eat

One of the soldiers shoots the chicken.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

A gray, smoky battlefield on what was once a golf course. Hundreds of US soldiers wait behind a barricade nervously, smoking cigarettes, flipping coins, playing cards, and writing letters to pass the time. We come up to Geppetto looking down at the paper heart, lost in thought. He looks a little shell-shocked.

 GEPETTO (V.O.)
 We mostly just wait around, having
 fun telling stories.

Suddenly a wave of planes fly overhead dropping bombs. The soldiers all take cover.

 GEPETTO (V.O.)
 Sometimes I think that our love is
 so strong that I can stop it all.
 That everyone will freeze in their
 tracks and just stop and I'll be
 able to walk home to you. For how
 can wars go on when such love
 exists in the world?

As Geppetto looks over the barricade he holds up the paper heart and everything freezes: the falling bombs, the planes overhead, the soldiers firing next to him and even the explosions. He climbs over the barricade, ready to walk home.

Then suddenly everything starts again and one of the soldiers next to him pulls him down, saving his life.

SOLDIER

What the hell are you doing?

Geppetto falls to the ground and puts the paper heart in his pocket.

EXT. FOREST- DAY

In the middle of a battle Geppetto emerges from the smoky forest carrying two wounded soldiers to safety as bombs explode all around. Medics run up to him and take the men as Geppetto collapses from exhaustion.

GEPPETTO (V.O.)

I will find a way to make it home to you, my love, and all will be as it should be.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Geppetto sits in a field on a sunny day writing the letter, now with a medal pinned to his uniform.

GEPPETTO (V.O.)

I will not let Edmund Vile marry you. If there was justice in this world such men would not even be able to look at you. I love you. Geppetto.

BACK TO:

INT. JULIA'S HOME

Julia finishes the letter and falls back on her bed.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

But the wedding was only a month away and she knew what he wrote about the war was a lie from the slant of his writing. She began to make plans to run away.

Julia's mom enters holding two different wedding dresses.

MRS. MOON

Look what I've got...

She sees the letter in her hand.

MRS. MOON (CONT'D)

Oh, Julia, you must give up on childish notions. Do you want your sisters to be out on the streets?

JULIA

Of course not.

A car honks outside.

MRS. MOON

He's here. Try and behave yourself this time. We're lucky he fancies you. It's the only chance we have.

INT. JULIA'S HOME

Edmund looks at both the dresses hanging. Julia, her parents and Hotspur stand behind him as he decides.

EDMUND

It's difficult. I want everyone to know I'm marrying a beauty but I don't want to be upstaged on my big day.

JULIA

It won't matter because Geppetto will stop the wedding.

MRS. MOON

(scolding)

Julia!

EDMUND

No, no it's okay. This terrible war is affecting us all in strange manners.

(he turns to Julia)

Just promise me that when he dies you'll forget about him. I can be a terribly jealous lover.

JULIA

He's not going to die.

Edmund looks her straight in the eye.

EDMUND

I wouldn't put money on it.

She steps back, fearing he knows something she doesn't.

INT. CONGRESSMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A roughed up CONGRESSMAN sits behind his desk as Edmund and Hotspur stand across from him. A plaque on the desk says CONGRESSMAN O'NEIL.

CONGRESSMAN
I can't just have a man sent to the
front lines for no reason?

EDMUND
Hotspur, give him a reason.

Hotspur cracks his knuckles and picks up the congressman.

CONGRESSMAN
(cowering)
Okay, okay, okay ... just keep him
away from me.

EDMUND
(smiling)
Democracy is a beautiful thing.

EXT. COAST OF FRANCE - DAY

A huge battle. Thousands of US and German soldiers run at each other firing their guns on the edge of a cliff overlooking the ocean. Machine guns shoot down at them from all sides. It's pure chaos as men die by the dozens.

Geppetto bravely runs in the middle of it all toward a machine gun taking out their men. As he runs he collides with the Germans. The battle turns into hand to hand combat. Geppetto takes a couple men out with the butt of his gun but stops on seeing one large German aiming a gun right at him.

He thinks he's done for and pulls out the paper heart, holding it tightly, looking resigned. The German sees Geppetto clutch the heart and a look of recognition flashes across his face. Instead of firing, he knocks him hard across the head with the gun causing his dogtags to fly off and land on the body of another soldier. Geppetto falls off the edge of the cliff toward the water.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Geppetto crashes into the water, unconscious. He sinks into the dark as bullets shoot through the water all around.

He suddenly comes to and opens his eyes to see he's in front of a large whale. It's an eerie moment - is he awake? Dead? Next to the whale is a baby whale, dead from being shot by dozens of bullets. Blood seeps from the several holes.

The father whale nudges the baby with his nose but there's no response. It's too late. The father whale lets out a deep, haunting sound of mourning. He then spots Geppetto and turns toward him angrily. Geppetto swims as fast as he can toward the surface with the whale following, threateningly. Geppetto struggles to swim as the whale begins to suck in water.

Just as the whale is about to swallow Geppetto a bullet grazes his side. He slows and retreats as Geppetto gets to the surface, filling his lungs with air. He then looks around for something to float on. He sees a few planks nearby. He brings them together and pulls himself on top, passing out.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Geppetto lays on his back, floating on the planks in the middle of the ocean. The wound on his head swells. We CLOSE IN on him.

CUT TO:

EXT. JULIA'S HOME - DAY

Geppetto runs toward the house as Julia comes outside to meet him. She's pregnant with his child and smiles at him happily. As he's about to touch her he--

BACK TO:

EXT. OCEAN

--comes to and realizes he's in the middle of the ocean with nothing around. His mouth is parched and the sun beats down intensely. He's at the mercy of the tides.

EXT. OCEAN - LATER

We see Geppetto passed out on the makeshift raft through a BLACK AND WHITE CAMERA. He's having troubled dreams.

Pull back to reveal a Frenchman (34) filming Geppetto with a large, water proof camera from a boat. This is JACQUES COUSTEAU.

The side of the boat reads "CALYPSO" and is fitted with all sorts of research and scientific equipment. A very well put-together man named TOMA who's always smoking hangs off the side of the boat.

TOMA
Il est mort, no?

COUSTEAU
L'amour le maintient en vie.
(Love keeps him alive.)

TOMA
Stupide américaine.

Toma shrugs and throws a bucket of water onto Geppetto who wakes up, coughing weakly. He slowly comes to and sees the boat with the men looking down at him. He takes a defensive position.

COUSTEAU
It is okay, we are French. We do not believe in war.

TOMA
Which is why we always lose them.

Geppetto looks at all the odd instruments on the boat and then at the camera.

GEPPETTO
Who are you?

COUSTEAU
Le Commandant Cousteau. Explorer and documentarian. And this is my associate, Toma.

Toma nods his head slightly. Geppetto rubs his eyes.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
At first he thought it was a dream.

COUSTEAU
Will you be boarding or do you prefer your current vessel?

INT. CALYPSO - NIGHT

Geppetto, now with a bandage over his head, sleeps in a hammock as Toma takes away an empty soup bowl. Geppetto wakes up and looks at Toma.

GEPPELTO
What's the date?

 TOMA
May 19th.

Geppetto passes out.

 TOMA (CONT'D)
 (shaking his head)
Stupide américaine.

EXT. CALYPSO - DAY

Toma helps Cousteau get out of the water in his full diving gear. He holds an underwater camera.

 COUSTEAU
The footage is amazing, Toma.

Geppetto walks out onto the deck weakly in new clothes.

 COUSTEAU (CONT'D)
So you decided to return to the
land of the living.

Geppetto falls over.

 TOMA
Stupide américaine.

INT. CALYPSO - NIGHT

Cousteau, Toma and Geppetto dine together in a room overlooking the water. The walls are covered with books, maps and photographs of past adventures. Toma smokes as he eats.

 COUSTEAU
My crew all deserted me months ago
either to fight or because they're
scared of encounters with U-boats.

 GEPPELTO
What about you?

 COUSTEAU
I am an explorer at heart. I do not
stop because of men's follies.

 GEPPELTO
Don't you want to fight?

COUSTEAU

I'm afraid the sea is man's only hope. Now more than ever before. This very war is being fought in the seas and the advances we are making will determine the outcome.

GEPPETTO

(to Toma)

What about you?

TOMA

I am here for the money.

GEPPETTO

The money?

TOMA

What better time to be making films on shipwrecks than when so many are being wrecked?

COUSTEAU

And you, Geppetto? What keeps you going through all this madness?

GEPPETTO

The love of my life is being forced to marry another four weeks from now. I am going to rescue her.

A moment as Cousteau and Toma examine him.

COUSTEAU

I am a captain without a crew and you are a traveler without transportation. I think we can make a deal, as the Americans say. There's an island not too far off the East Coast of the states. I can take you as far as that but you will have to work for it and it will be dangerous. No waters are safe these days.

GEPPETTO

(with determination)

I'll do anything to get back to her.

EXT. JULIA'S HOME - DAY

A soldier walks stoically up to Julia's house and knocks. After a moment Julia answers and he hands her a letter and Geppetto's dogtags. She looks at the man and then down at the letter. There's a moment of disbelief or unwilling to believe and she smiles slightly as if it's a joke. Then it hits her and she crumbles to the ground in grief, wailing as tears stream down her cheeks. The soldier walks away.

INT. EDMUND VILE'S MANSION - DAY

All sorts of plans for Pleasure Island are pinned to the walls featuring bars, casinos, rides, shows, etc. The cat and fox sleep on the floor nearby. Edmund reads an article in the newspaper about the financial success of the new Pleasure Island, his picture front and center.

EDMUND

Excellent.

He then scans an article listing the soldiers who have died in battle while stuffing his face with roasted chicken. Geppetto's name is listed. Edmund smiles on seeing it, food falling out.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

I suppose we won't need to be inviting him to the wedding.

He cracks himself up and tosses a piece of chicken on the ground. The cat and fox fight over it causing Edmund great delight.

MONTAGE:

1. Geppetto scrubs the deck of the Calypso.
2. Geppetto films a shipwreck underwater in full diving gear. It's haunted looking. Toma is next to him, smoking even in his diving suit.
3. Geppetto, Toma and Cousteau quietly and tensely monitor a German U-boat below them on the radar.
4. Julia has all of Geppetto's letters spread out across her room, up the walls and even across the ceiling so that the entire room is covered. She lays in the middle, crying.
5. Geppetto, Toma and Cousteau watch a projected film strip of Cousteau swimming under water with all sorts of amazing sea creatures.

6. The Calypso passes a burning boat in the night.
7. Geppetto carves a new wooden steering wheel for the ship.
8. Julia looks out her window as the sun rises. She holds out her palm in front of her as if she's trying to push down the sun but it continues to rise. She can't stop time from passing.

I/E. CALYPSO - NIGHT

A German boat chases the Calypso in the dark sea, lighting it up and tearing it apart with bullets from a machine gun. Geppetto and Toma run around the deck throwing items overboard, taking cover as the bullets hit all around them. Cousteau steers the boat as fast as he can.

COUSTEAU

We're still too slow. Throw everything over!

Geppetto picks up a camera to throw it over.

TOMA

Not the cameras!

A line of bullets hit the deck all around Toma. It's a miracle he isn't hit. He looks down with amazement and lights a new cigarette.

TOMA (CONT'D)

Okay, maybe the cameras too.

Geppetto is about to throw it overboard when he stops and looks at it. He then looks at the thick fog on the horizon.

GEPETTO

I've got an idea.

EXT. CALYPSO - LATER

Geppetto sets up the projector off the back of the boat and aims the lens carefully at the fog. The Germans are closer now. Two Germans on the ship pick up a torpedo.

GEPETTO

Okay, turn it on.

Toma plugs in the projector. It turns on and projects a film of several powerful ally ships approaching on the surface of the water.

Against the thick fog they appear to be real ships, or something much sinister: ghost ships. Cousteau approaches and looks at the projection.

COUSTEAU
Brilliant.

They wait a moment in anticipation. The German ship turns around. The three men celebrate, Cousteau and Toma messing Geppetto's hair and slapping him on the back.

TOMA
I need a drink.

Geppetto looks proud.

EXT. PLEASURE ISLAND - DAY

The Calypso docks at the island which has a much more sinister feeling now. The rundown rides and attractions have been replaced with sleazy bars, casinos and brothels. It has the feeling of a twisted Bourbon street.

EXT. PLEASURE ISLAND - LATER

Geppetto stands on the dock saying goodbye to Cousteau and Toma as ships come and go in the background.

COUSTEAU
Go to the bar next to the theater
and ask for a man named
Mangiafuoco. If it's after 9am
he'll be there. But go before 2 or
he'll be drunk. He's what they call
a shady man but he will help you.

GEPPETTO
Thank you.

TOMA
When you get there tell Layla I
said hello. But don't let Lola hear
or she'll get jealous.

COUSTEAU
Stay away from them, trust me. Now
good luck, my friend. True love
always finds a way.

They hug. He then moves to Toma.

TOMA
 (now with love)
 Stupide américaine.

They hug. Geppetto leaves them behind.

EXT. PLEASURE ISLAND - LATER

Geppetto walks through the island, looking for the bar. Young soldiers on leave run around drunk and full of lust. They gamble and fight over money and they drink and fight over women.

INT. BAR - DAY

Geppetto walks into the dark, smoky bar which is full of all kinds of odd performers like Siamese twins, a contortionist, a fire breather, a man covered in tattoos, a ventriloquist with an evil looking puppet, etc. A person dressed half as a woman and half as a man plays the piano in the corner and signs a duet, sounding like a man when showing his male side and sounding like a woman when showing her female side. As Geppetto looks around a BEARDED WOMAN approaches.

BEARDED WOMAN
 Well hello, handsome.
 (moving closer)
 Need some company?

Geppetto recoils at first but pulls himself together.

GEPPETTO
 No, I was just looking for
 Mangiafuoco.

BEARDED WOMAN
 Mangiafuoco? What do you want from
 Mangiafuoco?

GEPPETTO
 I was told he could help me.

The CONTORTIONIST approaches by flipping over several times, almost hitting Geppetto who ducks.

CONTORTIONIST
 You think you'll find help from
 such a twisted man?

GEPPETTO
 I'm trying to get home. I have
 someone waiting for me.

The VENTRILOQUIST uses his puppet, PUNCH, to speak.

PUNCH
 Waiting gets old fast when you're
 lonely. I got tired of waiting for
 my old owner so I took on this
 idiot here.

The contortionist flips back upright.

CONTORTIONIST
 Punch is right.

GEPPETTO
 I need to get home.

PUNCH
 Home is wherever people will pay to
 see you perform. So you better get
 a skill, jack.

The TATTOOED MAN turns around from the bar.

TATTOOED MAN
 (tapping Geppetto on the
 chest)
 Stay away from ink because that's
 my bag.

Geppetto backs up landing in the lap of the Siamese twins,
 LOLA and LAYLA.

LOLA
 He's cute. Don't you think, Layla?

LAYLA
 Not bad. Shall we share him?

LOLA
 Maybe I want him all for myself.

LAYLA
 Not fair, you got the sailor, Lola.

LOLA
 I can't help that he preferred me.

LAYLA
 You kept me up the whole night.
 Tramp!

LOLA
 Hussy!

They begin to fight with each other, each using an arm.

The FIRE BREATHER shoots fire from his mouth catching Geppetto's sleeve on fire. Geppetto begins to panic as the freaks move in on him and steal money from his pockets. Suddenly a very round man with a thick beard picks him up and pats the fire out with his hands. This is MANGIAFUOCO. Everyone freezes when they see him. He looks around at the performers. In a thundering voice:

MANGIAFUOCO
Back to rehearsal!

Everyone leaves the bar, giving Geppetto the stink eye.

PUNCH
Dummy.

Mangiafuoco holds up Geppetto so their eyes are even.

MANGIAFUOCO
One day I'm going to fire them all
and start a marionette show just to
save me the trouble. Now what do
you want?

GEPPETTO
I need help getting home. I was
told you could help.

MANGIAFUOCO
Do you have money?

Geppetto looks through his pockets, and irritated, realizes his money was stolen. He shakes his head "no."

MANGIAFUOCO (CONT'D)
I am in show business, not charity.
Besides, there are no passenger
boats navigating these waters.

Mangiafuoco drops him to the ground and walks to the bar where he downs a drink.

GEPPETTO
Jacques Cousteau said you'd help.

Mangiafuoco stops.

MANGIAFUOCO
You know Jacques Cousteau?

GEPPETTO
I sailed with him.

MANGIAFUOCO

Why didn't you say so? That man saved my life on sixteen separate occasions.

Mangiafuoco slaps him on the back to be friendly but Geppetto goes flying. He gets up smiling.

MANGIAFUOCO (CONT'D)

Now where did you say you needed to get to?

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

Geppetto stands in an empty whiskey barrel as Mangiafuoco holds the lid.

MANGIAFUOCO

It won't be the most comfortable way to travel but it'll get you to where you need to go.

GEPPETTO

Thank you.

Mangiafuoco is about to put the lid on but stops.

MANGIAFUOCO

(with a new seriousness)

One day I will need a favor in return. Do not forget what I have done for you.

GEPPETTO

Of course not.

MANGIAFUOCO

Very well then. Safe travels.

Mangiafuoco flashes a foreboding grin and closes the lid.

INT. BOAT

The cargo area of the boat. Three deck hands sit around drinking and playing poker on top of the barrel as Geppetto waits inside uncomfortably.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

And so it was Geppetto made his way back, slowly getting closer to his love who believed him to be dead.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Julia cries in her wedding dress as a seamstress makes adjustments.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

But believing Geppetto to be dead
Julia gave up on running away and
resigned herself to marrying
Edmund. Her life had no meaning
without Geppetto and if she could
not be happy herself ever again,
she could at least save her family.

INT. BOAT - LATER

One deck hand remains and is passed out drunk. Geppetto opens the top of the barrel and sneaks out.

EXT. BOAT - EVENING

Geppetto sits atop the sail looking out over the dark ocean. In the distance he sees land and smiles.

EXT. DOCKSIDE BAIT STORE - DAY

Geppetto looks at a newspaper. The date in the corner: Thursday, June 19. He's takes it in for a moment before opening the paper. He keeps turning pages until he finds the headline he's looking for:

EDMUND VILE AND JULIA MOON TO BE MARRIED ON SATURDAY
AFTERNOON IN GRAND CEREMONY, ANYONE OF IMPORTANCE TO ATTEND,
THOSE DEEMED NOT IMPORTANT TO WATCH JEALOUSLY FROM A DISTANCE

Geppetto gets a determined look on his face.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

He only had three days to travel
1,000 miles. But, he thought, he
had already come half-way around
the world so what was 1,000 miles?

MONTAGE:

1. Geppetto walks away from the sleepy coastal town with a new determination.

2. Geppetto walks down the side of a highway as a chain gang hits rocks with mallets. A truck approaches and he puts his thumb out for a ride but it doesn't stop.

3. Edmund and Julia have their wedding portrait painted. Julia sits sadly while Edmund lays across a pillow flamboyantly, holding the fox and cat.
4. Geppetto runs along the side of a train and manages to jump into one of the box cars where several other men hide.
5. Geppetto walks over a grassy hill as a fighter jet flies overhead.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - EVENING

Geppetto comes up to a tent revival in full swing, the gospel music filling the night.

INT. TENT REVIVAL

Geppetto watches as the choir sings enthusiastically. The congregation moves along with passion. As he gets lost in the spectacle and feeling an ominous BLIND MAN sitting nearby turns toward Geppetto.

BLIND MAN

You're going to have three great misfortunes in your life.

Geppetto looks around.

GEPPELTO

Are you talking to me?

BLIND MAN

The first has happened. Prepare for the remaining two.

Geppetto looks into the man's face and then turns away, leaving quickly.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Geppetto drags himself along, exhausted, hot and hungry from the journey with night approaching fast. As he walks a hot air balloon approaches from the sky behind him rather quickly. In fact, it's coming right at him really fast.

Two men in the basket yell at Geppetto to watch out. Geppetto turns and sees it. Shocked, he jumps off the side of the road right before he's hit and lands in a thicket of thorny bushes.

The balloon flies by and goes back up into the air. As Geppetto gets up and brushes himself off he looks up confused only to see the balloon coming right back at him!

Again Geppetto has to jump off the side of the road not to be hit. The balloon lands on the road. On the side is a painted logo that reads: THE AMAZING, SUBLIME, MIND BENDING, GARY AND JERRY VAUDEVILLE TEAM SPECIALIZING IN MAGIC, HUMOR AND ILLUSION

The two men stick their heads out to see Geppetto laying in the bushes. They are, of course, GARY and JERRY, two eccentric vaudeville performers. Gary is short and fat while Jerry is tall and thin.

GARY
You killed him, Jerry. Nice job.

JERRY
You're the one steering, Gary

GARY
This is no time for blame. A man's dead and it's all your fault.

GEPPETTO
(on the ground)
I'm not dead. I'm fine.

Gary and Jerry look at each other a moment then rush to Geppetto. They stand him up and brush him off quickly.

GARY
You should be more careful.

JERRY
You could get hurt.

GARY
Walking in the road like that.

GEPPETTO
Well I didn't think I'd be attacked from above.

GARY
There you are.

JERRY
Good as new.

They each pat Geppetto on the back causing him to fall back down the ledge. They look at each other and rush down to get him, standing him back up.

JERRY (CONT'D)
You should be more careful.

GARY
Standing on a ledge like that.

GEPPETTO
Just leave me alone!

He pushes their hands away and begins walking down the road angrily. Gary and Jerry look after him a moment and then rush up to catch him.

GARY
So you're just going to walk away
without even a thank you?

JERRY
Let alone a cash prize of
gratitude?

Geppetto stops and turns toward them.

GEPPETTO
Why would I thank you? Now leave me
alone! I have somewhere to be.

He turns and keeps walking.

GARY
So he's one to hold a grudge, is
he?

JERRY
Must be Irish.

GARY
At least let us make it up to you.

Gary catches up to Geppetto, reaches behind his ear and pulls out a white dove. Geppetto can't believe it.

GEPPETTO
How did you do that?

GARY
Same way I do this.

He pulls out a handkerchief, holds it up so Geppetto can see it and then shakes it, turning it into a cane. He then turns the cane into a bowling ball, which he drops on Jerry's foot. Jerry begins to cry and Gary turns the ball back into a handkerchief which he hands to him to wipe his tears. Jerry applauds loudly as Garry bows.

JERRY
Bravo! Bravo!

GEPPETTO
Who are you?

GARY
I'm glad you asked.

JERRY
For we are--

They come together theatrically.

GARY AND JERRY
The amazing, sublime, mind bending,
Gary and Jerry Vaudeville team
specializing in magic, humor and
illusion.

A beat.

GARY
Not to be confused with the
amazing, sublime, mind bending,
Gary and Terry Vaudeville team
specializing in magic, humor and
illusion.

JERRY
There was a case in the courts.

GARY
Now we have to specify.

GEPPETTO
Why not just change your name?

Gary and Jerry just look at each a moment. Obviously they've never thought of this. Then:

GARY
It's already painted on the
balloon.

Jerry sighs, relieved they have a reason.

GEPPETTO
I see. Well you two are surely
talented but I'm afraid I have to
keep going.

GARY
Where are you headed?

JERRY

Let us give you a lift.

GEPPETTO

(with seriousness)

I'm going to Edmund Vile's wedding.

JERRY

That's where we're going, isn't it Gary?

GARY

Exactly the place.

JERRY

It's meant to be.

Geppetto stops.

GEPPETTO

(interested)

You are?

JERRY

What a monstrosity!

GARY

Wrong word.

JERRY

What a coincidence!

GARY

Better! Now what do you say, show some sense and let us give you a ride.

Geppetto looks them over, still unsure. He then looks down the dark, uninviting road.

GEPPETTO

Okay, but I have to get there fast for my whole life depends on it.

GARY

No need to worry for the amazing, sublime, mind bending, Gary and Jerry Vaudeville team specializing in magic, humor and illusion are performing at the reception and they have never once been late to a gig.

JERRY

(quickly)

Not to be confused with the amazing, sublime, mind bending, Gary and Terry Vaudeville team specializing in magic, humor and illusion.

GARY

Are you on the bride or the groom's side?

GEPPETTO

Neither, I'm going to stop the wedding.

This stops Gary and Jerry who look at Geppetto curiously.

GARY

Stop the wedding?

GEPPETTO

Yes.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

When they saw his face they understood the situation immediately for such true love is impossible to hide.

Gary puts his arm around him.

GARY

Come, we will get you there in time.

They lead him to the balloon.

I/E. HOT AIR BALLOON - NIGHT

Geppetto holds on to the basket nervously as they float high over the land. A few lights twinkle below them.

EXT. WEDDING - DAY

A grand event under a huge white tent. Everyone rich and of importance is present and dressed to kill. The guests walk through the entrance with an air of superiority as the ragamuffins, hobos and general population look on jealously. In the background the balloon makes a crash landing.

EXT. WEDDING - LATER

Gary and Jerry struggle to carry a huge wood crate up to the entrance where Hotspur keeps the uninvited out with a menacing look and crossed arms. They stop when they get to him and put the crate down.

HOTSPUR
Invitation.

GARY
Invitation? Do you have any idea
who were are?

Hotspur just stares at them.

GARY (CONT'D)
(to Jerry)
I have the feeling he doesn't have
many ideas at all.

Jerry laughs loudly but stops quickly when Hotspur looks down at them, cracking his knuckles threateningly.

GARY (CONT'D)
Well, good sir, it pleases me to
tell you that we are:

They come together theatrically.

GARY AND JERRY
The amazing, sublime, mind bending,
Gary and Jerry Vaudeville team
specializing in magic, humor and
illusion.

A beat.

GARY
Not to be confused with the
amazing, sublime, mind bending,
Gary and Terry Vaudeville team
specializing in magic, humor and
illusion.

JERRY
We are performing for these very
guests.

GARY
The elite of the elite.

JERRY
The cream of the ocean.

GARY
Wrong word.

JERRY
The cream of the crop.

GARY
Better.
(sotto to Hotspur)
He has a condition.

Jerry looks embarrassed. Hotspur looks them over.

HOTSPUR
No one gets in without an
invitation. Not even mothers.

He gestures to where Edmund's mom waits sadly outside the tent with a group of people struggling to get a view.

GARY
Very well. Let me see, where did I
put that...

He begins to search through his pockets but can't find it.

JERRY
Where's the last place you left it?

GARY
That's sort of the point, isn't it?

Gary then looks up at Hotspur.

GARY (CONT'D)
Ah ha! There it is!

He reaches behind Hotspur's ear and pulls out the invitation.

GARY (CONT'D)
I knew I had it.

Jerry applauds wildly. Hotspur snorts and takes the invitation. He looks it over and then moves aside for them to pass. Gary and Jerry give each other a nod, pick up the heavy crate, and start to walk in. Just when they think they've made it:

HOTSPUR
Wait.

They stop nervously.

HOTSPUR (CONT'D)

What's in the crate?

Gary and Jerry look at each other. Then:

GARY

Well, sir, if you must know in the crate we have something absolutely terrifying.

JERRY

Exceedingly ferocious.

GARY

Upmost dangerous.

JERRY

The sight of it makes woman faint.

GARY

Men cry.

JERRY

Children go mad.

Inside the box Geppetto tries to growl convincingly. Hotspur takes a step back.

HOTSPUR

Well what is it?

GARY

Our greatest and most dangerous trick.

JERRY

Perhaps the world's most dangerous trick.

(to Gary)

Too much?

GARY

Not at all, for it is true. In this crate we have a wild, East African, saber-toothed, tri-horned, poison-skinned, venom-shooting, web-spinning, guerilla-monkey, spotted leopard.

JERRY

The most deadly animal known to man.

GARY
Which we, Gary and Jerry, two
humble vaudeville performers and
simple magicians, this very night
will turn into the most beautiful--

JERRY
--Elegant!

GARY
--Stylish!

JERRY
--Fur coat the lady in waiting has
ever seen.

GARY
With only the stroke of a wand.

JERRY
As a wedding gift.

GARY
From us!

JERRY
Jerry and Gary.

GARY
Gary and Jerry.

JERRY
(sotto)
Would you like to see it?

Geppetto shakes and growls more. Hotspur gulps.

HOTSPUR
(scared)
I better not. On the job, you know.

GARY
We understand.

They bow, pick up the crate and walk into the tent just as
the orchestra begins to play.

INT. WEDDING - LATER

Gary and Jerry watch the ceremony sitting on the crate in the
back of the tent. Edmund stands on stage smugly next to a
PRIEST. Julia's parents sit in the front row.

EDMUND
 (to the priest)
 Tonight is going to be incredible.
 (beat)
 You'll just have to take my word on
 it.

The music starts and Julia enters looking absolutely beautiful. Everyone's breath is immediately taken away by her beauty. She looks at Edmund with hesitation and then at her family. She walks forward as the crowd stands in complete awe.

Jerry whispers to Gary while pointing to Geppetto in the crate:

JERRY
 She's way out of his league.

GEPPETTO
 (from the crate)
 What's happening?

GARY
 I think you're aiming too high.
 Have you ever considered a bar
 maid?

JERRY
 Or a disgraced nun?

Guests look back at Gary and Jerry, annoyed by their talking, but they just look over their shoulders to see what they're looking at.

Julia gets to the podium and looks up at Edmund. There's a sadness in her face for he's not the one she loves. The priest begins solemnly.

PRIEST
 Dearly beloved, we are gathered
 here today to witness as...

He pauses, takes a piece of paper from his pocket and reads from it. As he reads Edmund mouths the words silently along.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
 ...the handsome but manly, dashing
 but approachable, athletic but not
 in a gross way, amazingly
 intelligent but not in a weird way,
 good-hearted but not a pansy,
 Edmund Vile.

EDMUND

Veee-laaay!

PRIEST

Edmund *Veee-laay!* takes the hand of Julia Moon in marriage.

(beat)

Now if there's anyone here today who knows of any reason why these two shouldn't be joined in holy matrimony, let them speak now or forever hold their peace.

He looks over the guests but everyone is quiet. In the back Gary and Jerry sit on the crate, crying, moved by the ceremony. Geppetto struggles to shake them off of the crate but they don't notice.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

It was Geppetto's moment, what he had traveled thousands of miles to do, but Gary and Jerry were so moved by the beauty of the ceremony, the idea of two people eternally promising their love to each other, and the smell of the delicious buffet currently being prepared outside that they forget they were sitting on Geppetto.

GARY

It's so beautiful.

JERRY

Makes me want a wife.

Back at the front:

PRIEST

No one? No reason is too small you know. Don't be self-conscious.

(beat)

Perhaps you think they're ill-suited?

(beat)

Their interests too dissimilar that you worry they will grow apart over time, eventually taking other lovers to fill the holes in their hearts, which would be a disgrace to the institution of marriage.

(beat)

(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)

Perhaps you find one the most beautiful, gentle, lovely person in the world and the other a mule's ass.

No one speaks. Edmund gives the priest an angry look.

EDMUND

(sharply)

Get on with it then.

The priest looks at Mr. Moon in the front row. He just stares at the ground. He then looks at Julia and sighs.

PRIEST

Very well. Then I shall continue...

Julia's face falls, her fate sealed.

Inside the crate Geppetto pushes against the top as hard as he can. It's his only chance and he gathers all his strength. Finally, the lid of the crate flies off. Gary and Jerry scream as they tumble off, having forgotten all about Geppetto. Geppetto jumps out.

GEPPETTO

You can't marry him!!!

JULIA

(happily)

Geppetto!

EDMUND

(angrily)

Geppetto!

Shock all around. The guests whisper "He's alive" and "It's a miracle."

PRIEST

Thank god.

JERRY

(with relief)

Oh that's right. For a second I thought it was a wild, East African, saber-toothed, tri-horned, poison-skinned, venom-shooting, web-spinning, guerilla-monkey, spotted leopard.

We CLOSE IN on Julia who's overtaken with the miracle of it all.

JULIA

I thought you had died.

GEPETTO

I promised I'd come, didn't I? Not even a war could stop me.

She nods, wiping away tears. Geppetto, astonished by her beauty, forgets for a moment that she's about to marry someone else.

GEPETTO (CONT'D)

You look even better than in my dreams.

EDMUND

(mocking)

"You look even better than in my dreams." Can't you even die properly?

GEPETTO

(to the crowd with authority)

I came to stop the wedding for I'm afraid the bride's heart belongs to another.

Geppetto pulls out the paper heart. Julia beams with happiness.

EDMUND

This is absurd. Someone arrest him.

The priest looks to Julia who smiles widely.

PRIEST

Is this true?

JULIA

(unable to contain her happiness)

Yes! I love him insanelly, madly and truly!!!

The crowd is stunned silent.

EDMUND

I am feeling extraordinarily angry AT THIS MOMENT! This being my wedding day and my bride apparently IN LOVE WITH ANOTHER MAN! A DEAD MAN!

(to Julia)

And we were getting on so well.

JULIA
I don't love you, Edmund Vile. And
I never could.

EDMUND
It's pronounced Veee-laaaaay! Veee-
laaaaay! Veee-laaaaay! Veee-
laaaaay!!!

He pulls out a small gun and aims it at Geppetto.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
You never, ever go after another
man's woman, unless you're French,
and you look much too pleased with
yourself to be French.

As he fires Julia pushes his arm up into the air so the
bullet pierces the tent. The crowd goes crazy, running every
which way.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(to Julia's father)
You're a ruined man!

MR. MOON
No, this will save me.
(to Julia)
Forgive me. I see now that Geppetto
is the only one who deserves you.
Seeing you smile again makes me
rich enough for a lifetimes.

EDMUND
Has everyone gone mad?! You can't
buy food with smiles.

Julia runs to Geppetto in the chaos.

GEPPETTO
Sorry to ruin your wedding and not
even bring a gift.

JULIA
You get a year.

They kiss madly, having waited years for this, but their
moment of reunion is ruined by another a gun shot.

GEPPETTO
Let's get out of here.

EDMUND
 (to Hotspur)
 Stop them!

Geppetto pulls her through the chaos, ducking as Edmund continues after them, firing shots. They look for a way out but every way is blocked by panicking guests or Hotspur coming after them angrily.

JULIA
 We're trapped.

GEPPETTO
 There's always a way out.

GARY
 (calling)
 Geppetto! Over here!

Geppetto looks up and sees Gary and Jerry waving them over.

GEPPETTO
 See.

He takes Julia by her hand and runs across the chairs toward them. Edmund fires another shot at Geppetto, just missing.

GARY
 Hurry, get in the box.

GEPPETTO
 Are you crazy?

JERRY
 Only clinically. NOW IN THE BOX!

They push Geppetto into the crate and then look up at Julia.

GARY
 Excuse us, miss.

JERRY
 Apologies.

They grab her and stuff her into the crate, putting the lid over it just as Edmund walks up. The crate shakes a little as Gary and Jerry stand in front of it.

EDMUND
 I've got you now you imbecile.
 Really, you must have a faulty
 brain if you think you can hide in
 there. I'll almost feel bad about
 killing you, but not quite.
 (MORE)

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 (to Gary and Jerry)
 Now move aside!

They do.

GARY
 As you say.

JERRY
 Your wish granted.

GARY
 But they're not in the box.

EDMUND
 You must take me for an idiot.

GARY
 We take you for nothing, sir.

Edmund pushes them aside and lifts the top open on the crate.
It's empty.

EDMUND
 How in the world...

Gary and Jerry step forward and bow as the guests applaud at their trick.

GARY AND JERRY
 We are the amazing, sublime, mind bending, Gary and Jerry Vaudeville team specializing in magic, humor and illusion.

A beat.

GARY
 Not to be confused with--

Edmund loses his temper and grabs Gary.

EDMUND
 TELL ME WHERE THEY ARE BEFORE I
 KILL YOU TOO!

Gary motions with his head to outside the tent. Edmund shoots a hole in the tent and rips it open with his hands. In the very far distance Geppetto and Julia run away, making their escape. The guests applaud again.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 (to everyone)
 Oh shut up will you?!

INT. WOODS - DAY

Geppetto and Julia stop and hide behind a tree as Edmund and Hotspur drive by looking for them. Once they pass they relax.

JULIA
You saved me. You did it.

GEPPETTO
Did you doubt I would?

JULIA
It seemed impossible.

GEPPETTO
What seemed impossible was how much
I missed you.

Julia sees the scar on the side of his head. She runs her fingers over it.

JULIA
You were wounded?

GEPPETTO
It's nothing--

She kisses the scar.

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)
Well it did hurt.

She kisses it again. A moment passes as they look at each other, amazed just to finally be together alone.

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)
(seriously)
There's something I have to tell
you. Something I couldn't write.

JULIA
(concerned)
What is it?

GEPPETTO
This.

He takes her in his arms and kisses her madly, falling onto a pile of leaves. We hear the musical beating of her heart.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

Though their love was true and a misfortune was averted don't for a second think all will end well, for that's just not how these stories go.

Geppetto pulls out a beautiful wooden ring and slips it on her finger.

GEPPETTO

Now I have a childhood promise to keep.

She pulls him close and they continue kissing passionately.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

We come up to a small hut with oddly colored smoke coming from the chimney. Edmund's fox and cat wait outside for him. A sign on the outside reads: FOR ALL YOUR WITCHERY AND PSYCHIC NEEDS

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

For that very night, still in his wedding suit, Edmund went to a woman with no name who was rumored to be able to cause strange curses.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

There are odd relics hanging from the walls and shelves of jars full of colorful powders, dead animals and strange plants. As Edmund considers a handwritten menu of curses on the wall, the witch approaches with a dead bat.

EDMUND

What evil are you going to cause with that?

WITCH

Evil?

She takes a bite out of it.

WITCH (CONT'D)

This is dinner.

Edmund is disgusted.

WITCH (CONT'D)

So have you made up your mind yet?

EDMUND

I don't know, how about just
KILLING THEM?!

WITCH

No can do. That goes strictly
against the 1923 League of Witches
Charter which clearly prohibits
curses causing death in order to
better the name of withes and
witchery.

EDMUND

Give them some terrible, puss
filled boils!

WITCH

I don't do anything found in Job.
You just can't do it better.

EDMUND

Make their hair turn into snakes.

WITCH

Come on. Stop thinking so obvious.

EDMUND

I don't hear you making any
suggestions.

WITCH

Well if they really love each
other, and it's true love which is
a very rare thing, then the way to
hurt them most, to truly add
sadness to their lives, isn't to
make them ill or ugly, for true
love conquers those things.

EDMUND

Go on.

WITCH

The only way to truly curse them is
to make their love feel incomplete.

EDMUND

How do I do that?

WITCH

What do all couples deeply in love
want most?

Edmund is stumped.

WITCH (CONT'D)
The physical manifestation of love
itself, the result of passion.

Edmund still has no idea.

WITCH (CONT'D)
A child.

EDMUND
Genius! We'll give them dozens of
children. Gross little grubby
nagging children.

The witch puts her hand to her forehead.

WITCH
No, you fool.

EDMUND
No?

WITCH
We'll make them unable to produce
any children. Their marriage will
bear no fruit so at the center of
it will be a hole they cannot fill.

Edmund flashes an evil smile.

EDMUND
Make it so. Or if they do have a
child it can have snakes for hair
so they constantly get bit.

WITCH
Let me handle this. There's a
special power to true love.

She starts gathering ingredients for the curse.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
She had come across true love only
one time before.

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. HUT - DAY

Many years earlier. A young Eunice sits across from the witch
in all black.

WITCH

I'm afraid there is no way to bring him back and because of man's follies there will be many more like you.

Eunice bursts into tears, a show of emotion that surprises the witch. The tears fall on the ground and burn little holes.

INT. HUT - LATER

Eunice has left. The witch scoops up the tears into a small vile she has labeled "Tears of True Love."

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

A dark, quiet church. The same priest now eagerly marries Julia, still in her wedding dress, and Geppetto. There are no guests and it couldn't be more different from the earlier wedding. They look at each other with a huge amount of happiness. They've been waiting this moment for years.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

So while Julia married for the second time in one day, this time to her true love, she had no idea of the curse being placed on her at that very moment.

JULIA

(simply from the heart,
with great honesty)

I will love you, Geppetto, as I always have: with my whole body, my whole soul, and my whole being. If we run out of room in this world to contain my love for you we will make a new one. And when that one fills up we'll make another one. We'll make a whole world just for the love I feel for you on a rainy afternoon. Another for the love I feel for you when you laugh. And feel sad. And the way you get happy when you see a dog. It will take 1,000 worlds just to contain the love I feel for you.

Geppetto's heart swells. As he speaks Julia becomes overcome with emotion.

GEPPELTO

(with great conviction)

And I will love you, Julia, as I always have: as if everything depended on it. The street lamps lit by it, the cable cars powered by it, and all the people living given the hope to get out of bed because of it. I will love you forever and the lights will never flicker, the cars never stall, and the people will never give up because my love for you in unending. It will be the thing of stories, the envy of poets.

They both feel the enormity of the moment. This is everything they've ever wanted and have fought for.

PRIEST

You may now kiss the bride.

Geppetto kisses her. It's the happiest moment of both their lives. Then she suddenly grabs her stomach, doubling over in pain. Geppetto holds her.

GEPPELTO

(concerned)

What is it?

JULIA

Nothing. Just a passing pain.

She smiles at him.

INSERT: The wooden book to a page reading:

THE SECOND MISFORTUNE

On the opposite page is a woodcarving of Julia and Geppetto outside an unfinished house Geppetto is building. It's hidden in the side of a hill.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

The Second misfortune came in the spring of Geppetto's life...

We CLOSE IN on the wood panel as it FADES into reality:

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - DAY

Geppetto and Julia hang a wooden plaque with their initials on the door.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 Believing Edmund Vile would never
 cease in his quest for revenge,
 Geppetto took his new bride and
 retreated deep into the woods where
 they created their own paradise.

After hanging it they step back from the house and take it all in with a great deal of happiness. He takes her hand.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Geppetto and Julia lay on their backs in the grass looking up at the stars. The house behind them is closer to being done.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 The first year passed happily
 because they were together freely
 for the first time in their lives.

JULIA
 You think there's anyone up there
 looking down on us?

GEPPETTO
 Of course. Don't you?

JULIA
 There's so much misfortune in the
 world I don't see how there could
 be.

Geppetto tilts Julia's head so she's looking up at the sky sideways. He then uses his finger to trace a shape by connecting the stars, leaving a white line between them. The shape becomes a cricket.

GEPPETTO
 See, there's an enormous cricket.
 Everyone is preoccupied with the
 other constellations that they miss
 the giant cricket.

Julia laughs.

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)
 It's right there for you to see.

JULIA
And what does the cricket do up
there?

GEPPETTO
He keeps an eye on us I suppose, to
make sure we do the right thing and
not the wrong thing.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
But just as the witch had planned,
there was one thing missing.

A star shoots across the sky.

JULIA
(pointing)
A shooting star!

They watch it until it disappears.

GEPPETTO
Did you make a wish?

JULIA
Of course.

GEPPETTO
What did you wish for?

JULIA
If I tell you it won't come true.

She kisses him.

JULIA (CONT'D)
But you should have a pretty good
idea by now.

They continue to kiss as we PAN UP to the sky.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Geppetto and Julia wake happily in each other's arm.

JULIA
I dreamt of a name last night.

GEPPETTO
A name?

JULIA
For our son.

GEPETTO
You know we'll have a son?

JULIA
I am sure of it.

GEPETTO
And what makes you so sure?

JULIA
A blue fairy, whose face I couldn't see, appeared before me in my dream and said to name our son Pinocchio.

GEPETTO
(laughing)
Pinocchio?

JULIA
Yes!

GEPETTO
If you dreamt it then it is the perfect name.

He kisses her as she laughs.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
But the curse was not to be broken.

MONTAGE:

1. Geppetto and Julia visit a doctor who holds up a chart and shakes his head "no." They look at each other disappointed.
2. Geppetto downs a bottle of fertility elixir almost spitting it out. He then smiles at Julia sure it will work.
3. Geppetto chases the elixir salesman trying to get his money back.
4. Julia wears a contraption that shakes her belly. Though she's really uncomfortable she looks up at Geppetto and smiles hopefully.
5. Geppetto and Julia visit another doctor getting more bad news. They look at each other hopeless.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Geppetto and Julia, now 33, lay on a blanket looking up at the stars.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 And as the first year became the
 first decade the disappointment
 became a misfortune.

A shooting star flies across the sky but neither of them make
 a wish.

EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY

Edmund walks carrying two sacks of cash away from the bank.
 As he passes different TOWNSPEOPLE they point and snicker at
 him behind his back. Edmund feels them looking at him.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 Meanwhile, Edmund found that the
 curse did not satisfy his desire
 for revenge. He had been made a
 fool of by an orphan carpenter and
 he was certain it had made him a
 laughing stock of society.

He turns around angrily.

EDMUND
 What the hell are you all looking
 at?!

No one's there. He pulls himself together and keeps walking.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 And being a vain man it grew worse
 and worse in his mind.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Edmund sits in the back of a large car with two cheap women
 fighting over him. They are Scarlet, the girl from Geppetto's
 youth, and SAMANTHA. Hotspur drives.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 Then one night his opportunity
 finally came.

SAMANTHA
 I don't see why Samantha has to be
 here.

SCARLET
 I knew him before you did,
 Samantha. We went to school
 together.

SAMANTHA
You went to school?

EDMUND
Ladies, please, there's no reason
to fight over me. I have an arm for
each of you, do I not?

He holds out an arm to each of them. Scarlet and Samantha
look at each other then each grab an arm.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Now let's eat lobster and
champagne. Hotspur, to the Coral
Gables. We'll close the place down!

The girls giggle with excitement and begin to put make-up on.
Hotspur confirms with a grunt and starts to drive. As they
drive forward Edmund sees Mr. Moon, Julia's father, selling
apples for a nickel on the corner.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
STOP!!!

The car comes to a screeching stop causing the make-up to go
all over the girl's faces. Edmund looks at Mr. Moon.

SAMANTHA
Hey, what's the problem?

SCARLET
I'm trying to put make-up on here.

EDMUND
(to himself)
Well if it isn't my ex-future-
father-in-law.

SAMANTHA
You're married? Figures.

SCARLET
He's not married, he was left at
the altar by Julia Moon.

Edmund pushes them away.

EDMUND
Get away from me.

SCARLET
What's the idea?

SAMANTHA
Yeah, what about dinner?

EDMUND
(calmly)
Well, I'd suggest you eat it
everyday.
(then furious)
NOW GET OUT!

He opens the door and throws a bunch of money on the ground which they immediately scramble to pick up.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(calmly)
Thank you, ladies. Shall we say
next Thursday at the same time?

He slams the door on them, looks back at Mr. Moon and grins.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
As he saw the broken man a new
insidious plan began to grow in his
heart.

Edmund rolls down the window.

EDMUND
Get back in the car, Scarlet.

SCARLET
Bye, Samantha.

She smiles proudly as she opens the door.

INT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Julia sleeps as Geppetto looks through a wooden box of his memories. There are photographs of him and his parents and other objects from childhood.

As he looks he sees the paper heart. He takes it out but as he does part of it accidentally gets caught on a splinter on the box and it tears in half. He looks shocked and can't believe what he's done. He makes sure Julia is still asleep.

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Geppetto works on making a new paper heart identical to the old one. Behind him is a wooden cradle and carved baby toys long discarded or left unfinished.

INT. HILLSIDE HOUSE

He walks back into the house holding the heart. As he does Julia wakes up.

JULIA
What were you doing?

GEPPETTO
Just checking on the workshop.

She sees the heart.

JULIA
Were you doing something with the heart?

A beat.

GEPPETTO
No, I just wanted to look at it.

JULIA
(concerned)
Is that a new one? It seems different.

GEPPETTO
No, it's the same as always.

She looks at the heart and then at his face.

JULIA
I must just be tired.

Geppetto smiles at her but a flicker of regret flashes across his face.

GEPPETTO
Go back to sleep my love.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
It seemed a simple lie, for he knew she would take the broken heart as a bad sign, but the consequences of a lie are never simple.

EXT. FANCY CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Edmund walks up to the store with Scarlet who's dressed like a prostitute. The fox and cat follow them.

EDMUND

Stay.

The cat and fox sit at the door.

SCARLET

Say, why is that fox and cat always following you around?

EDMUND

Because, my dear, I FIND HUMANS TO BE EXTREMELY UNPLEASANT!

He opens the door.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Now don't embarrass me.

INT. FANCY CLOTHING STORE

The WOMAN behind the counter looks shocked as Scarlet enters.

SCARLET

Wow, this is real fancy stuff.

EDMUND

Don't touch anything.

(to the woman)

Can you make her look respectable?
I realize it won't be easy.

SCARLET

Hey, what's that supposed to mean?

Geppetto holds up a wad of cash.

EDMUND

I'll make it worth your while.

EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY

Scarlet, now dressed up and looking like a respectable young woman, walks up to Mr. Moon selling apples. She now speaks in a very proper tone.

SCARLET

(RE: the apples)

Those look beautiful.

MR. MOON

They were picked just this morning.
Did it myself.

SCARLET
How much?

MR. MOON
Nickel each.

SCARLET
I'll take one.

She takes out a nickel and gives it to him. She takes her apple and is about to leave but stops.

SCARLET (CONT'D)
You look familiar. Are you Julia Moon's father?

MR. MOON
(sadly)
She used to be my little girl, yes.

SCARLET
I thought it was you. Remember me, Scarlet Shaw? I was classmates with Julia.

He looks at her a moment, trying to remember.

MR. MOON
I believe I do.

SCARLET
It's a shame about them not having children. Two people meant to be together like that.

MR. MOON
(suspicious)
How do you know?

SCARLET
(acting embarrassed)
My husband's a doctor and he tried to help them. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said anything. It's none of my business.
(beat)
But you know, I might know someone who can help them. Jim would kill me for getting involved but I just feel so bad for her. We were such good friends once upon a time.

She takes a piece of paper, writes on it and hands it to him.

SCARLET (CONT'D)

Give this to Julia. She's not what you'd call traditional but she's helped a lot of girls I know. Maybe she can help Julia too.

Mr. Moon looks down at the paper.

MR. MOON

Thank you.

SCARLET

(losing the proper tone)

So long mister.

She takes a bite of the apple and walks away. As he watches her the cat and fox take an apple behind his back.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

A less broken man might have noticed her break in character.

Scarlet walks to where Edmund hides behind a corner holding out a wad of cash. She takes it.

SCARLET

Thanks a bunch. That was the second easiest 50 bucks I ever made.

The fox and cat bring Edmund the apple.

EXT. ALLEY - EARLY MORNING

Mr. Moon ties a letter to the foot of a pigeon.

MR. MOON

Bring this letter to my daughter. Be safe with it for its contents may change the course of their lives.

He releases the bird and it flies away with purpose.

INT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Julia watches impatiently as Geppetto reads the letter from her father. The pigeon sits on her window sill. Geppetto finishes reading and looks at her.

JULIA

(anxiously)

Well?

GEPPETTO
It's not something we should be
getting involved in.

JULIA
But we've tried everything else.

GEPPETTO
We will let it come naturally.
There's a new doctor in town and I
think--

JULIA
--Every doctor has told us the same
thing. There is nothing less
natural about this method if it
works.

(beat)
Don't you want a child as badly as
I do?

GEPPETTO
(pained)
It's all that I want for us.

JULIA
Then we must at least try before
it's too late. Do it for me,
Geppetto.

Geppetto looks at her a long moment.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Geppetto and Julia walk through the dark woods.

JULIA
We already came this way. I
remember that tree.

GEPPETTO
It looks new to me.

There's a loud howling sound in the distance.

JULIA
What was that?

GEPPETTO
Let's keep moving.

They walk a little faster. Finally, they come upon the
witch's hut where colored smoke floats from the chimney.

They share a moment of hesitation but Geppetto walks to the door and knocks.

 GEPPELTO (CONT'D)
 (calling)
 Hello? Witch?

After a moment the witch, looking more disgusting than ever, answers and looks them over.

 WITCH
 What can I do for you?

Geppetto and Julia are taken back by her appearance. Then:

 GEPPELTO
 We're trying to have a child.
 Perhaps we came to the wrong--

 WITCH
 You wouldn't believe the cases of
 sterility I've been getting these
 days. Must be something in the
 water. Come in.

Geppetto and Julia relax.

INT. HUT - LATER

Geppetto and Julia sit across from the witch pleading.

 GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 As Geppetto and Julia told their
 story with passion, the witch
 realized this was the young couple
 Edmund had been bested by and who
 she had cursed a decade before. She
 could see that their love was true
 and felt torn for the first time in
 her life. Causing a terrible spell
 across space and time was one thing
 but to actually meet the recipient
 of such a spell was quite another.

Julia and Geppetto finish.

 GEPPELTO
 So can you help us?

 JULIA
 You're our only hope.

GEPPETTO
We've tried everything else.

The witch thinks a moment.

WITCH
I think I can help.

Julia and Geppetto smile at one another, full of hope.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
But it was not so easy for she had
guaranteed Edmund her curse. It was
therefore unbreakable.

WITCH
But I'm afraid it won't come
naturally.

JULIA
What do you mean?

WITCH
The child cannot be born.

Julia and Geppetto share a disappointed look.

WITCH (CONT'D)
Mr. Geppetto, you're a carpenter,
yes?

GEPPETTO
I am.

WITCH
I am glad to hear it. There's a
moving forest far away from here,
and hidden in this forest is a
magic tree, that's twisted and
knotted and bears no fruit. If you
carve from the wood of this tree a
boy puppet, as real looking as you
can, he will become flesh and bone
and be like any other real child.
This is how you might have a child.
The only way I'm afraid.

They consider this unexpected option.

GEPPETTO
How do I get to this tree?

WITCH

I hope you're serious about your desires because it's a long and dangerous journey up cliffs of death, over glaciers of despair, and through rivers of peril.

Geppetto shares a look with Julia. Then:

GEPPETTO

I am.

WITCH

Good.

She pulls out a blank map and unrolls it across the table. Geppetto looks down at it.

GEPPETTO

It's blank.

WITCH

If your heart is true the map will reveal the way to you. Whenever you doubt your way close your eyes and think of that which you cherish most.

EXT. HUT - LATER

Geppetto and Julia leave the witch, their hope for a child renewed.

PAN to Hotspur watching as Geppetto and Julia walk away from the hut, his eyes narrowing.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Geppetto and Julia come out of the woods to their hillside home. Hotspur watches from a distance as they enter.

HOTSPUR

You've done good, Hotspur.

He turns and runs.

INT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Geppetto packs a small bag of water, food, the map and an axe which hangs from his belt as Julia watches worried.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 Geppetto prepared for the long
 journey ...

INT. EDMUND VILE'S MANSION - NIGHT

Edmund sits at his desk in front of a blazing fire signing
 notices of foreclosure.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
 ... while Edmund learned of their
 whereabouts.

EDMUND
 (as he looks through
 notices)
 Oh the poor crippled Billy. How
 could I possibly toss him out on
 the streets?
 (he signs it)
 Because what cripple buys a two-
 story house? An idiot one!

Hotspur walks in.

HOTSPUR
 I've found them.

EDMUND
 (greatly pleased)
 Excellent.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - MORNING

Geppetto stands at the door, saying goodbye to Julia.

JULIA
 (realizing the tragedy of
 it)
 Why is it so much of our life is
 saying goodbye to each other?

GEPPETTO
 (his voice faltering from
 emotion)
 This will be the last time. When I
 come back we will have a child. I
 promise you this.

He kisses her and walks away from the house.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Geppetto follows a stream coming to a fork in the road with a sign with two arrows. One says COMFORT AND CIVILIZATION and points to the right while the other says DANGER AND DISTRESS and points to the left. Geppetto goes to the left.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - MORNING

Edmund and Hotspur watch from a distance as Julia hangs laundry in the sun. A satisfied look flashes across Edmund's face. He approaches the house with purpose.

INT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Julia enters the house with her laundry basket. She turns around to find Edmund standing there with an evil smile, Hotspur behind him.

EDMUND

Hello, my dear. It's been far too long.

She screams and tries to close the door on him but he blocks it open and grabs her.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Now what kind of greeting is that for the man you almost married? I know we didn't exactly end things amicably, you leaving with another man and me shooting at you and all, but isn't that all water under the bridge?

JULIA

Leave me alone.

EDMUND

Very well.

Edmund pushes her away and looks around the home.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

It's quaint. Of course, if you stayed with me you'd have your own mansion full of servants. But this is nice too. Maybe I'll buy it.

JULIA

Get out of my home!

He gets in Julia's face.

EDMUND
You might also have a child if you
stayed with me.

She slaps him.

JULIA
How dare you.

EDMUND
Feisty, just like I always imagined
you'd be. Of course we never got to
that, did we? Luckily I wasn't
waiting.

JULIA
You're disgusting.

EDMUND
Yes. So where is he?
(calling)
Geppetto! Come out, come out
wherever you are.

JULIA
I would die before I told you
anything.

EDMUND
Hiding like a coward. To be
expected.

JULIA
(sudden courage)
He's the bravest man I know.

EDMUND
Really, I just don't get what you
see in him.

JULIA
You want to know what it is?

EDMUND
Tell me.

JULIA
He's everything you're not.

Edmund laughs hysterically.

EDMUND

You're right in the sense that
he'll soon be poor and dead while
I'll still be rich and alive.
Hotspur.

Hotspur grunts and begins turning the house upside down. As
he does Edmund moves closer to Julia:

EDMUND (CONT'D)

You know, I really think after I
kill Geppetto we should give things
another shot. We were good
together.

JULIA

The thought makes me want to vomit.

EDMUND

You say that now but when you're a
starving widow selling rotten
apples on the streets with your
sick father you'll see things
differently.

JULIA

I could be dying of hunger and
freezing to death while rats ate my
flesh and disease burned my eyes
and I still wouldn't come to you.

EDMUND

We'll just have to agree to
disagree then.

Hotspur comes back into the room.

HOTSPUR

He's gone. Packed a bag.

JULIA

You'll never find him.

EDMUND

Again, I hate to be disagreeable
but while Hotspur may be as dumb as
a bat he's an expert tracker.

Edmund moves in on Julia, rubbing her cheek with his hand.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Now you needn't worry, my dear, I
would never harm a hair on your
head.

(MORE)

EDMUND (CONT'D)

(beat)

BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO SEE GEPETTO
DEAD!

(to Hotspur)

Let's go.

He walks to the door. Hotspur follows. Before leaving Edmund turns back.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

I'll be waiting for you in my mansion full of food and wine. You have an open invitation. Heck, I'll even help with the funeral expenses because I'm just that good of a person!

He leaves. Julia moves to the window and watches as Edmund and Hotspur walk into the woods. She gets a determined look on her face.

INSERT: The wooden book to a page reading:

THE THIRD MISFORTUNE

On the opposite page is a woodcarving of Julia running through the woods as fast as she can.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

The third misfortune was the worst of the three.

We CLOSE IN on the wood panel as it FADES into reality:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Julia runs up to the witch's hut out of breath and knocks on the door impatiently.

WITCH (O.S.)

(from inside)

Okay, okay. Give me a break. I'm 126 for Christ's sake.

After a moment the witch answers.

WITCH (CONT'D)

Don't tell me you want twins.

JULIA

Edmund Vile is after my husband. I have to do something before he kills him.

She opens the door for her.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

An evil looking woods. Hotspur looks down at a foot print and then around at the landscape.

HOTSPUR

This way.

Edmund giggles and follows Hotspur.

EDMUND

Oh this is too fun! Should I shoot him in the heart or the stomach? The heart has so much more symbolism but there's just something so appealing about the stomach.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Geppetto stands in the middle of the thick woods holding up the map trying to decide which way to go. Little light gets through to the bottom and the ground is covered in thick mud. The map is still blank and the twisted trees which seem to be closing in on Geppetto. He takes a few steps forward and looks at the map. Nothing.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

As he was about to give up he remembered the witch's words about the heart revealing the location.

He closes his eyes and concentrates hard.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)

And since his heart was full of only one thing, he thought of his love for Julia which was truer than any compass.

He opens his eyes and looks at the map. It shows a path through the trees to a bridge. He keeps going.

EXT. BRIDGE - LATER

Geppetto comes up to a decrepit bridge over a deep ravine where a SMALL BEARDED MAN guards it. It sways unsteadily in the wind, the rotting boards creaking and the rope fraying.

SMALL MAN
Stop. Why is it you want to cross?

GEPPETTO
For love.

SMALL MAN
Move closer.

As he does the small man pulls out a sword and holds it up to Geppetto's throat.

SMALL MAN (CONT'D)
Only those I allow pass across this bridge.

GEPPETTO
Will you allow me?

The small man looks into Geppetto's eyes.

SMALL MAN
You are on the right path.

He lowers the sword and lets him pass.

Geppetto crosses, looking over the edge at the deep ravine far below where there's a dry riverbed full of sharp rocks. His foot breaks through one of the boards and he just manages to catch himself on the rope. He moves quicker.

INT. HUT - DAY

Julia and the witch sit across from each other looking down at a crystal ball which shows Edmund and Hotspur coming to the bridge Geppetto just crossed.

WITCH
They will catch him within the hour.

JULIA
Can't you do anything? A spell to slow them down? Or make them lost?

WITCH
I will do what I can but there is something you possess that is much stronger than any trick or illusion I can create.

JULIA
Me? I don't have anything.

WITCH

You have true love and there is nothing stronger in this world.

JULIA

But how is that going to save Geppetto?

WITCH

The potion of eternal love. True love is forever. It cannot be killed. It always finds a way to continue on and on even as the world grows darker and darker. Bring me three items. Something you gave to your love, something your love gave to you, and something you made together. Bring them quick and if your love is really true no harm will come to either of you who drinks the potion.

JULIA

Thank you, witch.

Julia runs out of the hut.

WITCH

(calling after)

Be sure that none of the items are false!

The witch looks back down at her crystal ball.

WITCH (CONT'D)

Now for some fun.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Edmund and Hotspur approach the small man.

EDMUND

Look at this little man! And his little beard!

(to the small man)

Hello little man!

The little man holds up his large sword.

SMALL MAN

Only those I allow pass across this bridge.

EDMUND
How rude. And that hardly seems true.

SMALL MAN
Why is that?

Edmund pulls out his gun and shoots the man dead.

EDMUND
Because I have this.

They cross the bridge.

EXT. BRIDGE - LATER

They get to the other side only to discover they're on the same side of the bridge as when they began.

EDMUND
(furious)
What is going on?! A bridge is meant to be crossed, is it not?

HOTSPUR
It is.

EDMUND
Then this bridge HAS A SERIOUS DEFECT OF CONSTRUCTION.
(calmly)
You know what I'm going to do?

HOTSPUR
What boss?

EDMUND
I'm going to find the man who built this bridge and I'm going to have a little conversation with him AS HE BOILS IN A POT OF OIL!

HOTSPUR
You already killed him.

EDMUND
Damn.

HOTSPUR
I think these woods are cursed.

Edmund looks around a little worried, hearing strange sounds.

EDMUND

It was such a lovely Tuesday until
you said that.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Geppetto comes to a clearing and up to a huge, vertical cliff disappearing into the clouds high above. Huge boulders roll down the face of the cliff, which is covered in cactus, and crash into the ground causing it to shake.

He looks up at it in disbelief. He then closes his eyes, concentrates for a moment and then looks down at the map which changes to show the cliff. He's on the right path. He begins to climb the jagged, sharp rocks sticking out from it.

INT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - DAY

Julia runs into the house and begins searching.

--She uses soap and water to slip the wooden ring that Geppetto gave her off her finger.

--She removes the plaque on the door.

--She opens the wooden box and takes the paper heart.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - LATER

Julia runs as fast as she can with the three items.

EXT. CLIFF SIDE - DAY

Geppetto is about halfway up the cliff, hanging from a rock, when a boulder comes right for him with great speed. It shakes the face of the cliff. He looks around and sees a cactus plant a few feet away. He starts to sway side to side to build momentum and leaps, grabbing onto to the cactus as the boulder flies past him, just missing him. He screams as the thorns sink into his hands.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Edmund and Hotspur once again run across the bridge only to find themselves on the same side as they started.

EDMUND

This is getting to be highly annoying. We are burning this bridge down. Hotspur.

Hotspur makes a torch from a stick and a piece of his shirt.

INT. HUT - DAY

Julia hands the three items to the witch who looks them over.

JULIA

A ring Geppetto made for me, a heart I made for him, and the plaque from our house which we made together into a home.

WITCH

Perfect. And these are not false items but the true items of your love?

JULIA

Yes.

The witch places the items in the caldron.

WITCH

Three items of love. One from the loved to beloved, one from the beloved to the loved, and one from the two make three. If the love is true then no harm shall come upon the head of either who drinks from the potion of eternal love.

Brightly colored smoke rises.

EXT. BRIDGE

Edmund and Hotspur walk through the dark woods as the bridge burns to the ground behind them.

EXT. CLIFF SIDE

Geppetto pulls himself over the top of the cliff and catches his breath. He wraps his bleeding hands in a piece of ripped off clothing. He looks back over the woods far below and sees Edmund and Hotspur following him. His eyes narrow and he keeps going more determined than ever.

INT. HUT - DAY

The witch gives Julia a small bottle of potion.

WITCH
Drink half.

Julia drinks it.

WITCH (CONT'D)
Give the rest to Geppetto.

JULIA
How will I find him?

She pulls out a compass and the vile of Eunice's tears of true love which she sprinkles over the face of the compass, whispering:

WITCH
North, south, east, west, show the
way to her love, the one her heart
beats for in her chest.
(to Julia)
Now go. Time is not on your side.

EXT. GLACIER - DAY

Geppetto comes up to the edge of a huge glacier of white ice that extends to the horizon. Wind blasts across it causing ice tornados to form. It's freezing, barren and unfriendly to all life. An ice desert.

Geppetto breaks off some ice and puts in his parched mouth. He takes out the map. It shows the enormous glacier. He pulls up his collar to protect his face and begins to walk.

EXT. CLIFF SIDE

Hotspur climbs, struggling with each inch, as Edmund hangs from him with his arms around his neck. Suddenly, the rock Hotspur is holding onto breaks away and he slips. Edmund falls a few feet before he's able to grab onto another rock. He looks down at the ground far below.

EDMUND
I'm too rich and handsome to die.

Hotspur pulls him up.

EXT. WOODS

Julia runs fast looking down at the compass. She trips on something, falling to the ground hard. The potion goes flying. She's stunned for a second but then gets up quickly and finds the bottle. It's unbroken. Relief.

A man screams in pain behind her. It's Jerry.

JERRY
Owwwwwww! Owwwww!

Gary rushes to Jerry who writhes in pain on the ground.

GARY
What is it, Jerry?

JERRY
I'm dying, Gary! Owwwww! It hurts.

GARY
(begins to cry)
What is it that got you, Jerry? A bear? A lion?

JERRY
Both I think. Owww!

GARY
Are you saying they worked together?

JERRY
I am, Gary. It was a very well thought out attack.

GARY
This is horrifying news. I knew the day would come, but so soon?

JERRY
It's come, Gary. Save yourself.

Julia approaches from the dark.

JULIA
It wasn't a bear or a lion.

Gary and Jerry are shocked. Gary snaps and a tie rolls down his front. Jerry waves his hands and a bouquet of flowers appear in his hand.

GARY AND JERRY
Julia.

GARY
As beautiful as ever.

JERRY
Indeed.

GARY
(to Jerry)
You're not dying then?

Jerry thinks a moment.

JERRY
No, I suppose I'm not.

GARY
Oh, thank god.

They embrace, relieved.

JULIA
I'm afraid I need your help.

GARY
Anything you desire. For--

GARY AND JERRY
The amazing, sublime, mind bending,
Gary and Jerry Vaudeville team
specializing in magic, humor and
illusion--

JERRY
--Are always willing to help a
beautiful woman in need.

A beat.

JULIA
Don't you have to say that thing
about Gary and Terry?

GARY
Not any longer for the two died in
an unfortunate accident on a
whaling excursion.

JULIA
Oh dear.

JERRY
Yes, it's been said before but I'll
say it again. Never trust the
asparagus on a whaling ship.

They hold their hats to their chests.

GARY
Such talent.

JERRY
Such imagination.

A moment. They put their hats back on quickly.

GARY
Now how can we help you?

EXT. GLACIER - LATER

Geppetto, freezing and being smacked by the wind, passes the frozen bones of a large animal. He looks as if he's about to collapse and die himself but he forces himself to continue on. As he does he sees a spot of green in the distance. The only other color than white that he's seen in miles.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Geppetto steps off the glacier and comes to the fertile banks of a fast flowing river carved deep into the earth. He runs to it and immediately puts his frostbitten and cut hands into the water feeling both pain and relief.

EXT. GLACIER

Edmund and Hotspur, both freezing and exhausted, inspect Geppetto's footprints on the ice. They go every which way. Hotspur picks a direction.

HOTSPUR
This way.

They trudge on.

EDMUND
Will this glacier never end?

I/E. HOT AIR BALLOON - EVENING

Julia watches the ground below as Garry and Jerry guide the balloon over the woods. She reads the compass.

JULIA
(pointing)
That way. And fast!

Jerry nods and burns the flame hotter.

EXT. RIVER

An exhausted Geppetto struggles to cross the river. The tide moves fast and takes him away. He goes under the surface, headed for a waterfall. Several moments pass and he doesn't resurface.

It seems he's gone when his arm suddenly shoots up. He's so close to going over the falls when he grabs onto a branch and stops himself. He manages to pull himself to the other side inch by inch as the water pounds him. Finally, he gets to the other side and falls onto shore, catching his breath and spitting out water.

He looks up and sees a thick forest of oddly twisted trees on the edge of a cliff covered in fog. The way the tree's branches are shaped they seem to take on an almost human form. He looks down at the map which is now just an image of the magic tree. The tree is twisted and distinct. He's made it. He takes out his axe and runs to the forest. Now to find the right tree.

EXT. MOVING FOREST

Geppetto enters the forest, holding up the map and comparing its image to the actual trees to find the right one. As he does there's a loud, haunted, sustained creaking sound. Geppetto looks around nervously. Then the trees completely disappear leaving nothing but a wide open field. Geppetto is stunned. After a few seconds they reappear in completely new positions.

I/E. HOT AIR BALLOON

Gary, Jerry and Julia hang on tightly as they go up the side of the cliff. They just manage to clear it, the bottom of the basket skimming the edge. Gary and Jerry exchange a look of relief. Julia sees the enormous glacier in the distance.

JULIA

My god...

EXT. MOVING FOREST

Geppetto keeps looking for the tree, moving from one to the other, when he hears the click of a gun. He stops and closes his eyes. He's made it so far and now this.

REVEAL: Edmund stands behind him pointing a gun at him.
Hotspur stands next to him threateningly.

Geppetto holds the axe close to his chest. As he turns around
he slides it behind his back so they don't see it.

EDMUND

The great Geppetto who always
excelled at everything! Well look
at us now. I'm rich and powerful
while you're poor and about to die.

GEPPETTO

No matter how much money you have
I'll always have something you're
incapable of possessing. Something
you can't buy and that will haunt
you until the day you die.

EDMUND

An orphan's upbringing?

GEPPETTO

True love.

Edmund begins to laugh.

EDMUND

You want to know something? I made
love last night with Rebecca. And
with Michelle the night before. And
Becky and Devon before that. And
Susan, Tara and Amanda over
breakfast. And it all felt pretty
true to me!

GEPPETTO

You have no idea.

EDMUND

So what are you after out here? An
herb to make tea from? A special
plant to eat? I know how witches
think, Geppetto. I knew her first
after all. If anything, you should
be thanking me. Who wants kids
these days? Especially on a
carpenter's salary.

GEPPETTO

(his anger growing,
stepping forward)
So it was you.

Edmund cocks the gun, stopping Geppetto.

EDMUND

I'm not one to lose. You should have learned that with your parents.

GEPPETTO

(confused)

My parents?

EDMUND

I had to get rid of you somehow. And believe me, it gives me great pleasure to finally be getting credit for that one.

(to Hotspur)

I was so ahead of my years.

Hotspur agrees with a grunt. Geppetto clutches the axe with white knuckles, his blood boiling.

GEPPETTO

I'm going to kill you Edmund Vile. I promise you and there's not a promise I haven't kept.

EDMUND

It's pronounced Veee-layyyy! And that seems so doubtful, given the circumstances. BURN IT ALL.

Hotspur uses his torch to begin lighting the grass on fire.

GEPPETTO

No!!!

The flames begin to rise. As the trees catch fire they seem to make weeping sounds.

I/E. HOT AIR BALLOON

Julia sees smoke starting to rise from the forest.

JULIA

(pointing)

Over there! They're over there!

GARY

We're on it.

Gary and Jerry change directions.

EXT. MOVING FOREST

Geppetto still holds the axe behind his back. The flames get out of control, the wind spreading them quickly to the trees.

EDMUND

I have to tell you, Geppetto, I'm glad we find ourselves living at the same time and in the same place. It's always been an enormous comfort to me to ruin your dreams over the years.

The loud creaking sound begins again.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

What in the world?

And the trees disappear. As Edmund and Hotspur are distracted by the disappearing trees, Geppetto throws the axe at Hotspur. It lands in his chest. Hotspur takes a few steps back, still holding the torch, and then falls over dead.

Edmund looks supremely annoyed.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Hotspur!!!

(to Geppetto)

That is very ANNOYING OF YOU!

He holds the gun right at Geppetto and fires. Just as he does the trees reappear again in a new configuration, one flaming one appearing right in front of Geppetto and stopping the bullet. Geppetto lets out a sigh of relief.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

You stupid, moving TREE! I am going to make it my personal mission to see you become TOILET PAPER!

Geppetto runs behind another tree as Edmund comes after him with the gun. He goes from tree to tree, trying to stay ahead of Edmund and avoiding the flames, which spread quicker because of the moving trees. As Edmund moves after him a flaming branch falls from above and almost takes him out.

Meanwhile, in the hot air balloon Gary and Jerry attempt to make a dangerous landing near the cliff's edge covered in trees and flames. The balloon sways back and forth as the wind blows hard.

JULIA

We have to land!

JERRY
It's too windy. We'll hit a tree.

GARY
Or catch on fire.

JERRY
And if this thing catches fire,
it's kaboom!

The trees disappear below.

JULIA
Look!

They look down seeing a wide open field.

JERRY
Go now!

They move the balloon down as quickly as possible and make a rough landing. As soon as they do the trees appear again, covering the sky above them with a canopy of branches. Gary and Jerry give each other a look of relief. That was close.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Let's buy a car, Gary.

GARY
A bicycle made for two.

Julia gets out of the basket and runs toward Geppetto, avoiding the flames which continue to rise.

GARY (CONT'D)
Julia...

JULIA
(back over her shoulder)
It's okay, I'm protected.

She keeps running, moving from tree to tree, looking at the compass.

Back to Edmund and Geppetto.

Geppetto takes cover behind a tree, hiding, as Edmund looks for him.

EDMUND
Come out, come out wherever you
are.

He jumps behind one tree but he isn't there.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Really, I have dinner reservations tonight, Geppetto. Can we get on with this murder?

Geppetto comes to the edge of the cliff obscured by trees and fog and just manages to stop himself before going over. He looks down. Far below the ocean beats against jagged rocks.

Edmund turns in circles aiming his gun, searching for Geppetto.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Look on the bright side of things, Geppetto. It won't be as bad as being hit by a train.

Julia stands behind a tree looking for Geppetto. She spots him as he runs from one tree to another. She takes out the potion. She's about to run toward him when--

Edmund also catches a glimpse of Geppetto and fires. The bullet hits him in the arm. Geppetto lets out a yell of pain.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

That's more like it.

Geppetto grabs his arm and sees blood on his hand. He rips off a piece of clothing and ties it around his arm.

Julia stops, shocked by seeing Geppetto get shot. She has to get to him. She has to save him.

Geppetto quickly moves behind another tree as Edmund keeps approaching him. As he does Edmund moves to the other side of the tree Julia's behind. They're mere feet away without knowing it. Suddenly, the creaking sound begins again.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

(singing creepily)

Nowhere to hide when the trees
subside. Now to pay you back for
stealing my bride.

And the trees completely disappear. Julia and Geppetto are both left without cover in the open field.

Edmund sees movement out of the corner of his eye, turns and fires thinking it's Geppetto.

The bullet hits Julia's heart. She looks shocked as she feels the pain.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 (confused)
 Julia?

CUT TO:

INT. HUT

The witch watches the whole thing on her crystal ball.

WITCH
 No...

BACK TO:

EXT. MOVING FOREST

Julia holds her hands to the wound and then looks at the blood on her fingers.

JULIA
 Why does it hurt?

EDMUND
 What are you...

She sees Geppetto across the way. They lock eyes.

GEPPETTO
 (unbelieving)
 Julia? But you can't be here.

JULIA
 I came to save you.

She falls to the ground.

EDMUND
 What a stupid thing to do...

Geppetto turns his eyes on Edmund who looks on totally shocked. Geppetto charges him with all his strength and all the anger in his soul and knocks him over the edge of the cliff. Edmund falls screaming to his death, hitting the jagged rocks below.

Gary and Jerry watch the whole thing somberly.

Geppetto runs to Julia who lays on the ground. The trees reappear and they are now under a tree. It's the same tree shown on the map. The magic tree. A very twisted, distinct tree.

GEPPETTO
(pleading)
Julia? Please don't die.

JULIA
I thought our love was true.

GEPPETTO
It is true. It is. How could you
doubt?

JULIA
But the potion didn't work.

GEPPETTO
What do you mean?

JULIA
The potion of eternal love. I gave
her the ring, the heart, and the
plaque of our home and she made a
potion from it. But it didn't work.
(beat)
Our love isn't true.

GEPPETTO
(realizing)
The paper heart?

JULIA
The one I made you.

GEPPETTO
But that isn't the same heart,
Julia.

JULIA
What do you mean, Geppetto?

Geppetto really starts to break down, realizing what's
happened. Julia has a harder time with each breath.

GEPPETTO
I lied to you.

JULIA
Why, Geppetto?

GEPPETTO
I tore the heart in two on
accident. I made a new heart and I
told you it was the same one you
gave me. But it was a lie. I'm so
sorry, Julia. God, I'm so sorry.

Julia smiles.

JULIA
That's good news.

GEPPETTO
Why?

JULIA
Because it means our love is true
after all. I love you, Geppetto.
You are a prince and I am princess.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
And it was true.

She dies in his arms. Geppetto is shocked to his core.

GEPPETTO
Julia? Julia? Wake up. Please wake
up. You are everything to me.

She doesn't move. Geppetto loses it.

INSERT: The wooden book to a page reading:

THE RESULT OF MISFORTUNE

On the opposite page is a woodcarving of Geppetto weeping
under the magic tree with Julia in his arms.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
The third misfortune was the worst
of the three.

We CLOSE IN on the wood panel as it FADES into reality:

EXT. MOVING FOREST

Geppetto lets out a terrible moan full of agony. It echoes
through the woods as he holds Julia. Gary and Jerry weep as
they watch the scene.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
Even in the greatest misfortune
there are great miracles.

As Geppetto holds her in his arms, a small acorn falls off
the magic tree and lands in the cuff of his pants.

The flames start to engulf the forest but Geppetto doesn't
move. Gary and Jerry run up to him and drag him through smoke
to the balloon as he holds on to Julia's body.

I/E. HOT AIR BALLOON - NIGHT

Gary and Jerry sadly fly Geppetto home through the night sky as he holds Julia in his arms. He looks as if his soul has died.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Geppetto carries Julia to their home. Gary and Jerry watch from the balloon basket with their hats over their hearts.

As Geppetto walks the acorn falls out of the cuff of his pants and lands on the dirt.

INT. HILLSIDE HOUSE

TIME LAPSE: Geppetto weeps over Julia's body as three days and nights pass.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

For three days and three nights he did nothing but weep over the body of his true love.

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Geppetto finishes a beautifully made wood casket.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

On the fourth day Geppetto buried his wife.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - EVENING

Geppetto stands over his wife's grave.

GEPPETTO

You said it would take many worlds to hold your love for me and now I feel it will take millions to hold the grief I feel. I'm so sorry for lying to you. I will never forgive myself.

He breaks down.

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)

The rest of my life will be nothing but waiting to meet you in the next.

(MORE)

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)

(beat)

I will get there as soon as I can.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - MORNING

Geppetto walks away from the house with a single bag.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

Feeling he had nothing to live for he spent the next several years wandering the Earth, throwing himself into the most dangerous situations. His only hope being that he too might meet his end.

MONTAGE:

1. Korea, 1952. A beat-up Geppetto fights with a dwindling team of soldiers. He leads a charge, running right at the larger opposing army. He gets to the end unscathed and realizes somewhat unbelievably that not only is he alive, but that they've won the battle.
2. Mount Everest, 1953. Geppetto steps carefully along the ledge of an icy cliff high up in the sky. He comes to two passed out climbers stranded on the mountain, Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay. He revives them with oxygen, picks them up, and starts carrying them toward the summit.
3. Off the coast of Massachusetts, 1956. Geppetto swims in extremely rough currents pulling scared survivors from portholes of the sinking SS Andrea Doria. He has a rope tied around his waist connected to the Calypso which Cousteau and Toma steer carefully nearby. He struggles not to get sucked into the ship as water begins crashing through the windows.
4. Nova Scotia, Canada, 1958. Geppetto crawls through a deep, dark and dangerous mine shaft about to collapse. Suddenly the ground begins to shake and he moves faster as rocks start to fall. He breaks through a blockade using all his strength and rescues several trapped miners running out of air.
5. Algeria, 1959. An even more beat-up Geppetto fights with a ragtag team of poorly armed nationalists. Again he leads a charge, running at a much larger and better equipped opposing army. It looks to be a suicide mission but he breaks through the enemy line and looks back over the battlefield which is covered in the bodies of enemy soldiers. They've won. A look flashes across his face: *You've got to be kidding me.*

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)

But no matter what danger he faced
he survived and it would be someone
else's death to bring him back to
life.

INT. EUNICE'S HOUSE - DAY

Geppetto enters the house slowly. The house is covered with scribbled pages and the writing continues onto the floor and walls. Eunice, dead, sits at her desk with an unfinished page in front of her.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)

Because of Geppetto, Eunice had
found her love again despite the
pain, and spent her last days
writing thousands and thousands of
love poems to Peter in a sort of
fever dream. The poems continued
onto the floor and walls of her
house so that the home itself was a
poem. There is a curse to defeat
death and it's called true love.

Geppetto looks around in wonder at the poems.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.) (CONT'D)

It was time to go home.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - DAY

Geppetto, aged past his years, approaches the house which has fallen into disrepair. He stops on seeing a giant tree in front. It looks identical to the magic tree on the map. Geppetto can't believe it.

Geppetto approaches the tree cautiously, as if it might not be real and could disappear any moment. He touches it.

He steps back and takes out his axe. He swings at the tree, splitting it open.

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

The workshop is covered in dust from years of neglect. Geppetto works on a block of wood carefully, which is starting to look like a rough puppet.

INT. WORKSHOP - LATER

Geppetto uses several different tools, carefully carvings the puppet's features, shaving away thin pieces at a time and blowing away the dust.

INT. WORKSHOP - LATER

The puppet looks nearly complete.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
As he worked on the puppet he gave
it a heart.

Geppetto finishes making a new paper heart. He rolls it up and puts it into a small hole where the puppet's heart would be.

GEPPETTO
So you will know love in your life.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
And a conscience.

Geppetto catches a live cricket in his fingers.

GEPPETTO
You will be his conscience. If he
is ever caught between right and
wrong make noise so he will know
which choice to make.

He puts it into a small compartment in the puppet's back.

GRANDFATHER (V. O.)
And finally, he fashioned a nose
that could grow so the child could
not hide a lie.

He carves a nose that can slide in and out like a telescope.

GEPPETTO
If you ever lie let your nose grow
long so you will learn from my
mistake. Let it grow even if it's a
good lie so I will not lose you
too.

INT. WORKSHOP - LATER

Geppetto finishes painting the puppet which looks incredibly real. It's his best work. He holds it up and looks at it hopefully. Nothing happens. He closes his eyes.

GEPPETTO

Please, if there is anyone there,
make this child real. I cannot bear
to have had all of the misfortune
been for nothing.

He opens his eyes and waits a moment full of all the hope he has left in the world. Nothing happens and he's overtaken with disappointment.

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)

(to the puppet)

You were to be our child. And we
would have loved you more than
anything. But I know now there is
no magic in this world. It was
foolish to think a child might come
from wood. And so I have been made
a fool.

He sets Pinocchio on a shelf and walks out.

We slowly CLOSE IN on Pinocchio on the shelf. There's a bright flash and Julia appears dressed in all blue. She looks more beautiful than ever. She approaches the puppet.

JULIA

My child, Pinocchio, I give you the
gift of life which was stolen from
me. Watch after your father who
will need you more than ever. My
love for him will live through you.

She touches the puppet and he comes alive.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Learn to be brave, honest and
generous and you will become a real
boy. My son, who is the result of
love.

Julia and the puppet look at each other for a long moment, her face full of goodness. Then she disappears into blue light as Pinocchio blinks his eyes. He looks down at his hands and then touches his face.

INT. WORKSHOP - LATER

Pinocchio now stands in the middle of the workshop. Geppetto enters the workshop and stops in his tracks on seeing Pinocchio. He stares at him for a moment, unbelieving.

GEPPETTO

My son?

Pinocchio looks at Geppetto, his face innocent and full of wonder. Geppetto breaks down.

GEPPETTO (CONT'D)

My son, Pinocchio.

PINOCCHIO

Father.

Geppetto embraces Pinocchio.

GEPPETTO

I've wanted you for so long and now I needed you to be real more than anything.

PINOCCHIO

I will be brave, honest and generous for you. And I will become a real boy.

Geppetto looks Pinocchio in the face.

GEPPETTO

Come. I have a story to tell you.

He takes him by the hand paternally and leads him into the house.

EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE - EVENING

As we PULL BACK from the house, leaving it in the distance, we see the fox and cat watching it, waiting.

The image turns into a wood carving, the last page of the book, which--

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT

--the grandfather closes. Pete listens, enthralled by the story. The bus is now moving.

GRANDFATHER

The end.

PETE

Did a puppet really become a boy,
grandpa?

GRANDFATHER

Well, there are those who say it
never happened because they can't
accept magic. They say it was just
a case of madness caused by grief.
Or that the whole story is pure
invention. But know what I say?

PETE

What?

GRANDFATHER

If there was no magic in this world
the misfortune would just be too
much for us to bear.

He smiles at the boy, happy to have told the story.

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

Now excuse me, Pete, but nature
calls.

As he stands up to go to the restroom a small cricket runs
across his shoulder and jumps under his collar. Pete sees it
and his eyes go wide.

The grandfather winks at Pete whimsically and walks away down
the aisle.

Pete looks down at his video game and considers playing it,
but instead picks the book up and opens it to the first page,
amazed by the carvings.

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

The bus passes under a sign reading, "PLEASURE ISLAND NEXT
EXIT."

WE RISE UP to see Pleasure Island in the distance. It's
restored to its former glory, full of amazing rides and
games, and once again a grand place for children.

FADE TO BLACK.

The End