

Sequence 1-3

INT. SMALL UNDERGROUND CAVITY - DAY

Thick, settled dirt surrounds a small dark cavity. In the cavity, a skeleton, MILO, lays on his side breathing slowly. The roof of dirt is maybe three feet from his head. No light is coming through the encapsulating dirt. It is very dark.

MILO  
(Mumbling unintelligibly)  
Drift by the window... it's a d  
major seven.

Milo suddenly raises his arm and smacks the dirt roof. Some debris is loosened and trickles onto Milo's skull. Milo brushes it off lazily, more debris falls. Milo more consciously wipes it off his face and sits up. Slowly, he looks around not realizing where he is.

MILO (CONT'D)  
(Tiredly)  
Hello?

Milo looks around again. His eyes go wide.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Hello!?

Milo begins to feel his surroundings. He pats the roof above him and the dirt wall on either side. Panic begins to set in.

MILO (CONT'D)  
No no no no no. Hello? HELLO?

Milo begins to push helplessly against dirt surrounding him. Dirt falls on him steadily as he does. Milo wipes the dirt off him and puts his face into his hands.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Okay Milo, let's just figure this  
out. There are worse places to be  
right?

Milo sits still for a beat pondering his own question. His eyes open suddenly.

MILO (CONT'D)  
There are absolutely not any worse  
places to be.

Milo sits in this realization for a beat. He begins flailing wildly scratching and kicking trying to dislodge anything he can. As he kicks a good size rock comes out of the wall and rolls off his leg.

The rock rolls out of sight and after a few seconds a small crash echoes. Milo freezes. Slowly he stretches his legs, sliding his body flat. With his foot Milo feels around and finds the dirt begins to slope into a small hole.

MILO (CONT'D)  
A hole! Yes. Okay. A hole.

Milo, now flat on his back, attempts to turn around. He shifts his body onto his side and lunges his torso forward. Milo bends his legs and pushes them off the wall to scramble them backwards. He contorts himself into quite the twist and takes a breath.

MILO (CONT'D)  
(Exasperated )  
This is ridiculous.

With an extreme exertion, Milo lunges forward once more. His hips POP and he finds himself now laying on his stomach with his head facing the hole in the dirt. Milo army crawls forward and places his hands on the edge of the hole. He sticks his head in squinting to try and see down into it.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Hello?

Milos voice echoes down the hole. Milo takes a breath and plunges himself in. Quickly, he slips down into the hole leaving his small dirt resting place behind.

INT. LIVING ROOM, SMALL UNDERGROUND COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The quaint living room of a small cottage. The roof, made of dirt, has various roots poking out that reach towards the floor. The walls are covered with a simple off-white floral wallpaper. A small rounded door can be seen on the right side of the room.

A comfortable looking red wing backed chair sits between an old wooden hutch and a full bookshelf. Next to the chair is a small round wooden table with a vase of flowers, a spool of yarn, and knitting needles.

Sitting on the red chair is large mole, RUTHERFORD. Rutherford is neatly dressed in a cozy red knit sweater and tweed jacket. Small horn-rimmed glasses are perched at the end of his long nose which is buried in an old, well-loved book.

Rutherford's chair is adjacent to a small red-brick fireplace. Two freshly chopped logs are neatly crossed over one another. Slowly but surely, the logs begins to rattle.

As they do, the sound of something falling down the long neck of the fireplace grows.

Rutherford, completely unbothered by the growing sound, continues to read his book. He slowly licks the tips of his fingers and turns the page.

MILO (O.S.)  
(Screaming)  
AHHHHHH

Milo with a CRASH flies through the mouth of the fireplace sending a plume of dust and the two logs airborne. Rutherford pays no attention to the intrusion.

Milo, crumpled on the floors surveys his new surroundings.

Off screen a high pitched whistling fills the air.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Uhhh...

Rutherford raises a long finger to silence Milo but keeps his eyes on his book. Slowly, he finishes his page, nods, smiles, and closes the book. For the first time he raises his eyes to meet Milo. Rutherford is entirely unbothered by the situation.

RUTHERFORD  
It appears bone-walker, that you  
are just in time for tea.

Milo takes this in for a beat.

RUTHERFORD (CONT'D)  
Now here, you make yourself  
comfortable while I fetch you a  
drink.

Rutherford places his book on the small wooden table, stands slowly, and pats the seat of the chair while nodding at Milo. Milo un-crumpled himself and brushes off some dirt. Rutherford smiles kindly and excuses himself through a small open doorway.

Through the doorway, a tidy kitchen can be seen. Milo watches Rutherford exit and takes another look at this surroundings. Milo stands and picks up the two logs he sent flying upon crashing in. Milo places the two logs neatly back into the fire place. He surveys them for a moment, notices they are crooked, and adjusts them so they look as neat as they were before he crashed through.

Milo takes a seat on Rutherford's chair as Rutherford reenters. In one hand he holds a steaming mug of tea, in the other is a small wooden three legged stool. Draped over the arm with the tea is Rutherford's red knit wool sweater. Rutherford has since buttoned up his tweed coat to cover his now bare chest.

RUTHERFORD (CONT'D)

I realized you may not be able to actually drink anything so instead here's a sweater to keep you cozy.

Rutherford places the stool on the ground next to Milo and hands him the sweater. Milo takes it sheepishly.

MILO

That's very kind. Thank you.

Rutherford holds up a hand as if to say "of course." He sits on the stool and sips from his tea. Milo slips into the wool sweater. It's a little big, but it suits him.

RUTHERFORD

So, bone-walker.

MILO

(Interrupting)

Milo, my name is Milo, you keep calling me bone-walker.

Rutherford's eyes widen in surprise.

RUTHERFORD

Milo? Is it really? How wonderful. It's nice to meet you Milo, I'm Rutherford. Now tell me, what else do you remember.

Milo shifts in the chair uncomfortably.

MILO

Well... that's the thing. I...I can't seem to remember anything other than my name.

RUTHERFORD

Yes. That is to be expected, I am even surprised you remember that.

Milo goes to open his mouth but Rutherford holds up a finger.

RUTHERFORD (CONT'D)

I'm sure you have many questions Milo, and I'm sure I am unequipped to answer most of them. However, let me tell you what I know, and we can proceed from there.

Milo nods slowly. Rutherford takes a deep sip of his tea.

RUTHERFORD (CONT'D)

Now, I've only lived in this quaint hole for about two months. Originally, I was supposed to move into a hole with my sister across the forest, but she ended up getting married. He's a wonderful mole but... Well, I won't get into that. Fortunately, this hole, while a little smaller than I was hoping, was left to me in a will by my great aunt. It has been vacant for years and there was lots to do. First and foremost of course was to re-dig the chimney. It was getting colder and there is only so much a sweater can do. As I began to dig, I soon came across you Milo. It is not uncommon to come across things while digging, bones and skeletons and such. It is uncommon however for the skeleton to speak.

MILO

What did I say?

RUTHERFORD

I'm not too sure my dear boy, you were mumbling something or other. My first instinct, of course, was to stop digging as to not disturb your sleep any further. I went and consulted Frogbeard, our local wizard, and he referred to you as a "bone-walker." That, is where that came from.

MILO

(Hesitantly)

Frogbeard?

RUTHERFORD

Oh yes, you'll become much more familiar with him in time I'm sure.

MILO

So... What are bone-walkers exactly?

RUTHERFORD

I'm no expert, but Frogbeard informed me that bone-walkers are skeletons who's spirits reunite after death. You once had a body, but when that body was snatched, your memories and past life were snatched along with it.

MILO

Snatched? What do you mean snatched?

Rutherford nervously breaks eye contact and takes a sip of tea.

RUTHERFORD

There is an ancient being, their name long forgotten. A being known as The Snatcher.

As Rutherford mentions The Snatcher, a chill enters the home and Rutherford shivers. He looks around nervously.

RUTHERFORD (CONT'D)

I don't like to speak of such things in my home, but The Snatcher is a dark, insidious creature who works hand in hand with Death to steal the bodies of the dead.

MILO

Why would somebody want dead bodies?

RUTHERFORD

I don't know my boy, but whatever the reason, it can't be a happy one.

MILO

If I could get my body back from this "snatcher" would I get my memories back?

RUTHERFORD

I suppose so, but The Snatcher is dangerous Milo.

MILO

But... why else would my soul come back if it wasn't supposed to reunite with my body?

RUTHERFORD

I...I don't know my boy. These are not peaceful things. Death is usually the end.

MILO

Yet here I am.

RUTHERFORD

Yet here you are Milo. I apologize that I cannot provide you with more. I wanted to give you as much as I could before I sent you to Frogbeard.

MILO

Frogbeard wants to see me?

RUTHERFORD

Yes of course! He was quite fascinated when I told him about you.

MILO

And he'll know more about The Snatcher?

Rutherford gives Milo a sad smile.

RUTHERFORD

More than me I'm sure.

MILO

Then I think I need to go see him.

Milo stands.

MILO (CONT'D)

Will you come with me?

Rutherford shakes his head.

RUTHERFORD

I'm afraid not Milo. My sister should be over any moment for tea. Frogbeard's cottage is quite easy to find however, I'm sure you'll manage well.



Milo begins to take off Rutherford's sweater.

MILO

I appreciate your help Rutherford,  
your help and your sweater.

RUTHERFORD

Oh please do keep it. It suits you,  
and it's cold in those woods.

Milo stops removing the sweater and slides it back into place. Rutherford smiles.

RUTHERFORD (CONT'D)

Much better. I'll show you the way  
out.

EXT. FOREST, OUTSIDE RUTHERFORDS COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Rutherford opens a rounded wooden door on what looks to be a small mound of earth. Milo steps out and we catch a glimpse of a steep wooden staircase that leads back into Rutherford's underground cottage.

As Milo enters the forest, he is taken in with the grandeur of it all. He stands on a small worn down dirt path with lush green grass on either side. All around Rutherford's door are tall deep green pine trees that reach high into the sky. Blue hued light peers through the clouds overhead as sprinklings of birds and other critters are heard.

RUTHERFORD

Not much to look at is it?

MILO

This is...beautiful.

RUTHERFORD

It's certainly home.

They both admire the forest for a beat.

RUTHERFORD (CONT'D)

Now, to find Frogbeard's cottage  
all you'll need to do is follow the  
path until it forks. Take the left  
fork and follow it until the  
mushroom patch. Turn left again and  
you should see the cottage in the  
distance.

Rutherford puts an encouraging hand on Milo's shoulder.

RUTHERFORD (CONT'D)

It was wonderful to meet you my  
boy. I hope to see you again one  
day.

Milo looks kindly at Rutherford.

MILO

Me too.

Rutherford turns, enters his home, and closes the door. Milo  
watches him go then once again turns to the forest. He takes  
a deep and nervous breath.

MILO (CONT'D)

Okie dokie.

Milo starts to walk down the path.

EXT. FOREST, PATH - CONTINUOUS

The tall pines have quickly closed in tight to the path and  
they now stand about an arms length from Milo on both sides.  
Milo walks determinedly forward, his head slightly up,  
watching the tops of the trees.

Milo soon enough comes to a opening where the path forks. He  
looks both left and right.

MILO

Left it is.

Milo continues down the left path. As he walks he begins to  
hum a familiar tune.

MILO (CONT'D)

(Quietly)

What is that song?

Suddenly a loud rustling is heard from within the forest.  
Milo whips towards it frightened and finds a stag deer  
standing a few feet behind the tree line. The deer stares at  
Milo intently. Milo takes a breath of relief.

MILO (CONT'D)

You scared me!

The deer continues to stare.

MILO (CONT'D)

I'm looking for Frogbeard's  
cottage. Do you know where that is?

The deer stares for a beat, then turns and begins to walk deeper into the forest. Milo hesitates.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Should I... uh follow you?

The deer stops and turns its head back towards Milo.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Okay! Yeah, I'm coming.

Milo clumsily maneuvers his way off the path and in between some trees. The deer continues to walk off.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Wait up!

Milo hurriedly steps after the deer.

EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

Milo trudges onward just steps behind the deer who is calmly walking forward. The trees have thickened as the two have moved deeper into the woods. It is noticeably darker than it was earlier.

MILO  
(Nervously)  
So, um, are we close you think?

The deer makes no acknowledgement of Milo's inquiry and continues to move forward.

MILO (CONT'D)  
There's just not a lot of light getting through anymore, maybe we should move close to the path?

Again no response from the deer. Milo exhales deeply, clearly concerned.

The two maneuver their way through trunks and large root systems, the deer much more gracefully than a nervous Milo. A rustling is heard overhead. Milo sends his eyes upwards to the top of the trees. As he does so, the deer stops dead in its tracks and stare intently to the side. This causes an unaware Milo to walk into the deer.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Oof, sorry about that. Is everything okay?

The deer continues to stare. Another rustling is heard above and the deer shoots it's gaze to towards the sound. Milo attempts to see what the deer is staring at.

MILO (CONT'D)  
What's going on?

The deer sniffs the air hesitantly. It turns and looks at Milo. Then, without warning, it darts off deeper into the woods.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Hey!

Milo takes off after the deer who is now bounding its way through the trees.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Come on! What's this about?

Milo manages to keep up for a moment avoiding different branches and roots. The deer is still just in his eyesight ahead. The trees are continuing to get thicker blocking more and more light overhead.

The deer stops for just a second to look around. Milo smiles as he begins to gain on the deer.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Trying to lose me or someth

Milo is interrupted as he trips over a large root reaching up at his ankles from the dirt. Milo crashes to the ground hard. Milo groans and slowly sits up. He wipes some small sticks and dirt off of his sweater and looks around. The deer is nowhere to be seen.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Wonderful.

Milo stands.

MILO (CONT'D)  
That's just great. Thanks a lot!

Milo's words echo emptily across the forest. Deep within the trees now, branches reach at Milo in all directions. Milo looks around hopelessly for any sign of the deer.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Follow a deer Milo, that's a great idea.

Milo takes a hestiant step forward ducking beneath a large branch of pine tree. Milo shakes his head in exasperation. He's lost and guideless.

Another rustling is heard, but this time not from overhead. Milo shoots his body towards the noise. He squints to try and see through the trees.

MILO (CONT'D)

Hello?

Rustling once more. Just ahead, Milo can see the branch of a tree jostling. He approaches it slowly.

MILO (CONT'D)

Hello?

The branch begins to rustle. Milo, now close enough to make it out, sees three small needled branches tangled on the end of a larger pine branch. Milo leans close to inspect it. As he does so, the three small branches rustle once again appearing to be tangled and stuck in and over one another.

Milo reaches out to touch the jostling branches. He slowly brings his boney finger down onto the small branches which flinch at his touch.

Two large orange eyes appear in the trees behind Milo. They move forward to reveal a large kind looking frog. Over his body are deep red robes cinched at waste with a brown belt. A long gray beard hangs from his face. This is FROGBEARD. Frogbeard noiselessly leans in close to Milo.

FROGBEARD

Careful now, you must be gentle.

Milo jumps and Frogbeard quickly stabilizes him by placing a hand on Milo's shoulders.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

It's okay, stay calm and help the branch.

Milo looks Frogbeard up and down. Milo nods slowly and turns his attention back the branch. He once again brings his finger down onto the small rustling branches, this time even more gentle and slow. The branch does not flinch, but slowly eases into Milo's touch.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

Very good. Carefully untangle it now.

Milo, with his other hand, grabs the small branch and helps it untangle itself. The branch moves slowly with Milo's help and slowly blooms from a tangled bunch to the end of a three pronged branch. Milo proudly looks back at Frogbeard who is still watching intently from his shoulder.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

Wonderful. Now watch.

Milo turns his attention back to the branch. The longer middle prong outstretches and the two side prongs begin to slowly flap up and down like the wings of a bird. The flapping becomes gradually more rapid as the three prongs break off from the rest of the branch. This new creature flaps clumsily into the air. It dips as if it is going to fall to the ground. Milo outstretches cupped hands but they are an unnecessary safety net and the small tree-bird confidently finds its stride.

Milo watches joyously as the tree-bird flaps up into the sky above him and Frogbeard. They both stand upright to watch the tree-bird. The tree-bird dips once again and flaps excitedly and thankfully around a laughing Milo. It ascends once more over the tops of the trees and out of sight. Milo and Frogbeard watch silently as it flies away.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

Quite a sight isn't it?

MILO

That really was something. What was that?

FROGBEARD

Names have never been much my specialty. I've always just called it a tree-bird

Frogbeard looks at Milo and smiles.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

Underwhelming I know.

Milo returns the smile.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

You must be the bone-walker Rutherford found.

Frogbeard outstretches his hand. Milo shakes it.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

I'm Frogbeard, the steward of these woods.

MILO

Hi Frogbeard, my name is Milo, I'm very happy you found me.

FROGBEARD

Milo? Is this name recently given or one remembered?

MILO

Remembered. Rutherford said that was strange.

FROGBEARD

Very strange. Do you remember anything else from your past?

MILO

No, nothing.

Frogbeard stokes his long beard.

FROGBEARD

How curious. And what finds you so deep in these woods Milo? So far away from the path? I'm sure Rutherford provided ample directions.

MILO

(Sheepishly)

He did...uh...I followed a deer into the woods, I thought it was leading me to your cottage.

Frogbeard chuckles and shakes his head unsurprisingly.

FROGBEARD

The deer of these woods often mislead visitors. I apologize. I'll be sure to have a chat with them in due time.

MILO

Do many come to visit the woods?

FROGBEARD

Not often, bone-walkers even less often.

MILO

But you have seen others like me?

FROGBEARD

Very rarely Milo, and none who remembered anything from before they woke.

Milo sighs.

MILO

Rutherford mentioned you might know more about the being who took my body, The Snatcher?

A breeze blows through the woods eerily. Frogbeard looks around the woods.

FROGBEARD

I know of the being you speak yes.

MILO

Do you think if I got my body from The Snatcher I could get my memories back too?

Frogbeard takes in this inquiry for a moment. It seems to worry him.

FROGBEARD

Perhaps, but such things should not be discussed in a place with so little light.

Frogbeard turns and begins to walk through to woods. He waves at Milo, bidding him to follow.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

Come Milo, I'll tell you what I can, but I can't promise my knowledge will be satisfactory.

Milo follows after Frogbeard.

EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

The trees have thinned once again and light pours in from the tree tops. Milo and Frogbeard walk side by side. Frogbeard walks slowly, his large eyes seemingly surveying everything at once.

FROGBEARD

I was born in a pond not far from this forest. As soon as I grew legs, my grandfather began teaching me to care for it.



Frogbeard extends his arms stopping Milo from moving forward. Milo watched inquisitively as Frogbeard bends down close to the forest floor. A small cream colored snail is inching across the grass. It's cheeks are rosy and its smile is warm. Frogbeard puts out a long finger and the snail slowly climbs aboard. Frogbeard stands.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

Almost squished you there Susie.  
Sorry about that.

SUSIE

(Kindly)

Always blabbing on Frogbeard. It appears you talked this young man to death!

MILO

Oh, no. I came like this. Already dead. I'm Milo, it's nice to meet you.

SUSIE

Hello there Milo, welcome to our forest.

FROGBEARD

Where are you heading Susie?  
Perhaps I can give you a lift?

SUSIE

I was just going down to Miss Marshes house, she just had her babies. Are you heading that way?

FROGBEARD

Ah! How wonderful. Yes we are heading right by her. We'd love your company.

Frogbeard moves his hand so Susie can perch herself comfortably on his shoulder. The three companions set off once again.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

I was just telling Milo how I came to be the warden of these woods.

SUSIE

Oh Frogbeard has been here as long as I can remember. He's been a wonderful help to all of us critters.

FROGBEARD

I appreciate that. It's taken a long time to learn the ways of the forest.

MILO

What does the warden do exactly?

SUSIE

There was once much darkness in these woods. There still is some areas, but Frogbeard has helped keep things light.

FROGBEARD

I merely advocate for those who call these woods their home Milo. Forces of darkness and light are always at odds, I bargain with such forces to try and find a balance.

SUSIE

Yes. You ran that nasty Snatcher right out of here. I call that balance.

MILO

Wait, you've met The Snatcher?

Frogbeard goes to speak but is interrupted.

SUSIE

Met The Snatcher! Frogbeard here almost defeated her!

FROGBEARD

That's quite an over simplification.

SUSIE

If what I've heard is correct Milo, Frogbeard may be the most powerful being in all of these many lands.

FROGBEARD

You've heard very incorrectly my dear friend.

Susie opens her mouth to speak but before she can, Frogbeard gently grabs her off his shoulder.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

And here we are at Miss Marshes.  
Please give her my best. Tell her  
I'll bring some stew by shortly.

Frogbeard places Susie back on the forrest floor. She smiles  
back up at Frogbeard and Milo.

SUSIE

Yes. Well. I appreciate the ride  
Frogbeard. It was wonderful to meet  
you Milo.

MILO

You too!

Susie turns and begins to inch her way into the base of a  
tree trunk.

MILO (CONT'D)

Did you really fight The Snatcher?

FROGBEARD

There are many things people choose  
to misunderstand. The Snatcher is  
one of them. Come.

Frogbeard takes a sharp turn and walks in between two trees.  
Milo follows.

EXT. FOREST, MUSHROOM PATCH - CONTINUOUS

The trees open up into a large clearing filled with red  
mushrooms with white spots. The mushrooms cover almost every  
inch of ground in this clearing with sizes ranging from very  
small to toddler size.

Frogbeard enters the clearing in front of Milo, he sits on a  
particularly large mushroom and pats one next to him for  
Milo. Milo sits also.

FROGBEARD

Like I said, forces of light and  
darkness are always at odds. My  
role is merely to bargain with this  
forces. The Snatcher is on the side  
of darkness, but is a very  
misunderstood being.

MILO

So you've met her?

FROGBEARD

Not exactly.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. CITY OF AVIUM - DAY

The town square of a seaside city. The ocean can be seen in the distance. A wide cobblestone path houses different shops and buildings. The path opens into a circular area surrounding a large stone fountain.

Standing on the lip on the fountain, is a large bipedal crow. THE CROW. A bustling group of different creatures surrounds and faces him as he appears to preach.

FROGBEARD (V.O.)

Long ago, in a city on the coast known as Avium, a being simply called "The Crow" started a rather successful church which he called The Church of Light. In essence, The Crow's preached that by following his teachings, his followers could escape death and achieve immortality in this life.

A short distance off from the crowd, a hooded figure walks into view. Her face is unseen underneath the hood apart from large green glowing eyes. This is THE SNATCHER. Tentatively, she approaches the large group.

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

It is said that The Snatcher sought out The Crow and his teachings. Some theorize, but no one is quite sure where she came from.

The Snatcher hangs back from the rest of the group and listens intently to The Crow's preaching. Soon, The Crow stops speaking and steps off the lip of the fountain and the crowd disperses. Many of the creatures come and shake the hand of The Crow before leaving. The Snatcher, hangs back and waits until only her and The Crow remain. The Snatcher slowly approaches.

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

The Snatcher wished to study under The Crow's tutelage, hoping herself to obtain immortality and spread the same knowledge to others.

The Crow smiles and takes The Snatcher under his wing.

INT. OLD WOODEN CHURCH HOUSE, BACK ROOM - LATER

The Crow and The Snatcher enter a small room with wooden walls. A wooden desk sits in the middle of the room. Scrolls and old books cover the surface of the desk entirely and spill onto the floor.

FROGBEARD (V.O)

The Snatcher spent countless hours studying The Crow's collection of ancient works. She read all she could about death, life, and those who created our existence.

EXT. AVIUM CLIFF'S - LATER

The Crow and The Snatcher sit on the top of a large hill overlooking the ocean. A small wooden church house sits beside them. On the cost, the town of Avium can be seen.

FROGBEARD (V.O)

With the help of The Snatcher, The Church of The Crow grew exponentially. Many flocked from far away lands to hear of their teachings.

Slowly, in a time lapse, a large grey gothic style church begins to be erected. A cobblestone path can be seen extending from the city and turning into steep steps up to the church. Hundreds of creatures begin to appear slowly and walk into the church. All are greeted by a smiling Crow at the large front doors.

INT. CHURCH OF THE CROW - MOMENTS LATER

Inside the new church, pews spread across the stone flooring of a large cathedral. Stained glass windows color the light streaming through them. The pews are filled completely with different creatures staring intently ahead at an impressive pulpit.

Behind the pulpit, preaching enthusiastically is The Crow. Behind him, writing rapidly into a faded black notebook, is The Snatcher.

FROGBEARD (V.O)

The churches success was widespread and powerful. Yet, it did not last.

The Crow finishes preaching and the creatures begin to leave the cathedral.

As they do so, The Snatcher approaches the pulpit and shows The Crow her notebook. Hastily, The Crow rips it out of The Snatchers hands and stuffs it into his robes. The Snatcher steps back, clearly hurt by this.

INT. CHURCH OF THE CROW, BACKROOM - LATER

A large circular room. The same wooden desk sits in the middle, yet now scrolls and books are neatly tucked away into a wooden shelf.

The Crow and The Snatcher enter as The Crow slams The Snatchers notebook on the desk. It flips open revealing strange geometric shapes and symbols.

FROGBEARD (V.O)

Legend has it that The Snatcher became infatuated with the ways of darkness. She found an ancient ritual which would allow for contact with Death themselves. The Crow condemned this ritual, saying it could only lead to destruction and darkness.

The Crow chastises The Snatcher and aggressively pushes her notebook off the desk. The Crow stomps out of the room and The Snatcher hurries to collect her book.

EXT. CHURCH OF THE CROW, COURTYARD - NIGHT

Behind the church, The Snatcher carries large stones and places them carefully in a circle. With a piece of charcoal, she begins to draw the same symbols from her notebook on the stones.

FROGBEARD (V.O)

Late one night, in secret, The Snatcher performed the ritual.

The Snatcher gently places her notebook in the center of the stone circle. As she does so, the symbols on the page and on the rocks begin to glow a deep purple. The purple glow oozes off of the stones and form an inky circle surrounding The Snatcher.

FROGBEARD (V.O) (CONT'D)

They say The Snatcher was taken by Death themselves that night.

The inky substance now surrounding The Snatcher begins to inch it's way up her legs. The Snatcher watches excitedly as she begins to be pulled downwards into the substance.

Suddenly The Crow bursts out of the back of the church. Frantically, he rushes over to The Snatcher. Before he can reach her however, she is completely submerged in the inky substance. As The Snatcher's head goes under, the circle closes in on itself and disappears with a SNAP, leaving only The Snatcher's notebook behind.

FROGBEARD (V.O) (CONT'D)  
The Crow was devastated at the loss  
of his companion.

The Crow launches himself onto the ground where The Snatcher disappeared. He grabs the notebook and flips through it rapidly. He places the page with the symbols down on the ground hoping to recreate the ritual. Nothing happens. The Crow crumbles to the ground.

FROGBEARD (V.O) (CONT'D)  
Without The Snatcher, The Crow fell  
into sadness. The church suffered  
greatly, and eventually became  
abandoned.

The Crow remains on the ground as the church behind him slowly ages and pieces erode away leaving it in ruins.

FROGBEARD (V.O) (CONT'D)  
Little is seen of The Crow these  
days. Some still congregate in the  
ruins of his church, but it has  
never been quite the same.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. FOREST, MUSHROOM PATCH - CONTINUOUS

Back in the mushroom patch, Milo and Frogbeard sit. Milo stares intently at Frogbeard who in turn stares intently at the ground.

FROGBEARD  
It was many years before The  
Snatcher was heard from again. She  
did not visit The Crow, but instead  
was spotted stealing the bodies of  
the dead.

MILO  
Do you know why?

FROGBEARD

No. The purposes of Death are a mystery to me, but I choose to think the reasons are less sinister that many believe.

MILO

When did you meet her?

FROGBEARD

When my grandfather died, I laid him to rest in the pond. I watched as his body floated from one end to the other. I saw her on the other end. She received him with great care. It was peaceful, almost beautiful.

MILO

That was it?

FROGBEARD

That was it. As I told Susie, the story has become greatly exaggerated. Since I saw her for that brief moment, I've tried to approach the death of those in my woods with peace and beauty. I like to believe The Snatcher and I have a certain respect for one another. I do not disturb her, and she does not disturb the forest. Instead of locking the bodies of the dead away, I try and embrace death.

Milo and Frogbeard sit in silence for a beat.

MILO

I think I need to find The Snatcher. I think I need to speak to her.

FROGBEARD

She is a powerful being, and dangerous. She has often been hunted and does what she must to protect herself.

MILO

But if I could get back my body, could I also get back my memories?



FROGBEARD

Everyone is entitled to know who they were Milo, but perhaps it is more important to discover who you are?

MILO

Maybe The Snatcher can help me figure out both. Why else would I be here?

FROGBEARD

A fine question.

Frogbeard stands.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

In my gut I can't help but feel your fate is indeed tied with The Snatcher.

Frogbeard's tummy rumbles.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

Yet I suppose it may just be lunchtime. To find The Snatcher, I feel you should first consult The Crow.

Behind the mushroom patch, in a thicket of trees, there is a rustling. A short round wood creature bursts into the patch. It's ears are point and eyes large and round. Leaves and branches stick out in all direction on the top of its head. This is GERHARD.

GERHARD

Frogbeard! I can help the skelington! I can help the skelington find The Crow!

Frogbeard turns and smiles at Gerhard.

FROGBEARD

Ah! Gerhard my boy, why am I not surprised you were eavesdropping

GERHARD

I walked by and you were talking about The Snatcher! I love when you talk about her.

FROGBEARD

Hmm. Milo, this is Gerhard, a young and might I say eager sapling.

Gerhard turns to Milo and smiles wide. Sitting down, Milo and Gerhard's head are at the same height. Gerhard outstretches a wooden hand, Milo shakes it.

GERHARD

Hi Mr. Skelington! I'm Gerhard.

MILO

I'm Milo. You're a...sapling?

Milo turns to Frogbeard and Gerhard continues to enthusiastically shake his hand.

MILO (CONT'D)

What is a Sapling?

GERHARD

I'm a tree!

FROGBEARD

Yes all trees were once saplings. But most saplings place their roots much before they reach the age of young Gerhard here.

Gerhard blushes.

GERHARD

I haven't found the right place yet.

Milo smiles encouragingly at Gerhard, who is still shaking his hand.

MILO

I bet it's a tough decision. Choosing one place to be for the rest of your life? I can't even imagine.

Gerhard returns the smile and lets go of Milo's hand.

GERHARD

I can take him to The Crow. I know the way!

Frogbeard strokes his long beard.

FROGBEARD

It's a long way to go, but being free from your prying ears for a time may be a rewarding experience for myself.

MILO

I'd be happy if you came along  
Gerhard. I'm not the best with  
directions.

FROGBEARD

Then I suppose it is settled.

Frogbeard place his hand on Gerhard shoulder.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

You be a good guide, Milo's journey  
is an important one. Try to leave  
mischief behind.

GERHARD

I will.

Milo stands and approaches Frogbeard. Frogbeard extends a  
hand and Milo takes it.

FROGBEARD

Milo, you will always have a place  
in our forest.

Frogbeard's tummy rumbles again.

FROGBEARD (CONT'D)

Now, I really must be off to lunch.

MILO

Thank you. I will not forget your  
kindness.

Frogbeard smile and trudges off into the forest leaving  
Gerhard and Milo alone in the mushroom patch.

GERHARD

Ready to go?

MILO

Lead the way!

Gerhard begins to walk out of the mushroom patch in the  
opposite direction of Frogbeard. Milo takes a few steps and  
turns back to where Frogbeard left. Milo takes a deep breath,  
and follows after Gerhard.

EXT. FOREST, PATH - LATER

The green pine trees have given way to thinner orange and  
red poplars.

Yellow sunlight streams down brightening a dirt path. Gerhard walks in front of Milo excitedly skipping along. Milo watches him with a smile.

MILO

What kind of tree are you?

Gerhard slows his pace to match that of Milo.

GERHARD

I'm a pine like the ones back by the mushroom patch. I'll be bigger and greener than these ones when I'm all grown.

MILO

But you'll only finish growing when you put your roots down?

GERHARD

If I ever put my roots down.

MILO

Is that a choice? Can you stay out of the ground?

GERHARD

I don't know. No sapling has ever done it before.

MILO

Maybe you'll be the first.

GERHARD

Well, I think I'd like to put my roots down one day. I just have to find the perfect spot.

MILO

That's a tall order. Perfect can be hard to come by.

In the distance ahead of Milo and Gerhard, the top of an old victorian mansion can be seen. It seems very oddly placed, almost sandwiched between poplars. Gerhard's eyes go wide with excitement.

GERHARD

Do you see that?

MILO

What? That big house up ahead?

GERHARD

I think that's the Rambling House.

Gerhard sprints up ahead leaving Milo behind.

MILO

Woah! Hey! Slow down!

Milo picks up his pace catching up to Gerhard who has since stopped. The mansion is now fully in view. Vines creep up the side of its discolored stones. The mansion's large windows are tinted with a fine layer of dirt. Crumbling red brick steps lead up to two large wooden double doors. It sits awkwardly a few feet off the path.

MILO (CONT'D)

What did you call this place?

GERHARD

The Rambling House.

MILO

I don't know what that means.

GERHARD

I've heard Frogbeard talk about it.  
I didn't think I've ever see it  
myself.

MILO

What's so special about an old  
abandoned house?

GERHARD

It's always moving. It's never in  
the same place twice.

MILO

What's inside?

GERHARD

I've never met anyone who knows.

Gerhard and Milo survey the house for a beat.

GERHARD (CONT'D)

I'm going inside.

MILO

Shouldn't we keep moving?

As Milo speaks Gerhard is already walking towards the Rambling House.

MILO (CONT'D)

Gerhard! I don't know if this is  
such a good idea.

Gerhard now stands at the door. He reaches out and opens it.  
Complete darkness is on the other end.

GERHARD

(To himself)  
I'm going inside.

Gerhard enters the Rambling House, a distant ring of a bell  
is heard. The door slams behind him and the house begins to  
rattle.

MILO

Oh boy.

Milo quickly runs up the stairs, yanks the door open and  
enters the house. As he does so the door slams behind him and  
another distant ring of a bell is heard. The house continues  
to rattle and shake.

INT. THE RAMBLING HOUSE, BATHROOM

Milo find himself in a small rectangular bathroom. His back  
is at a white wooden door. To his left is a small wooden  
basin with a white porcelain sink. Above the sink is a large  
rectangular mirror with a wooden frame. Tucked on the other  
side of the basin is a toilet. Directly in front of Milo is a  
bathtub which completely fills the small wall. The curtain is  
drawn.

MILO

Gerhard?

No response. Milo takes a step and opens the shower curtain  
revealing nothing but an empty tub.

MILO (CONT'D)

If this is a joke I do not get it.

Milo turns and surveys the rest of the empty bathroom. He  
exhales exasperatedly. He steps back to the sink and looks in  
the mirror. For a beat Milo eyes himself with doubt.

Slowly, at the top corner of the mirror a pointy nose and two  
eyes push their way out of the surface.

FACE IN THE MIRROR #1

Look at this bloke. He thinks he  
can catch The Snatcher?

At the opposite corner another face pushes out of the surface of the mirror.

FACE IN THE MIRROR #2

This one does? No way he can. He can't even keep track of a little tree.

FACE IN THE MIRROR #1

This is the same bloke who followed a random deer into a forest.

FACE IN THE MIRROR #2

Dreadful. Same bloke who can't remember anything past his first name.

FACE IN THE MIRROR #1

Embarrassing really.

Milo, flabbergasted by what has just happened. Looks at the faces defensively.

MILO

Look I don't even know who... I don't even know what you are.

FACE IN THE MIRROR #1

Well we know who you are Milo.

FACE IN THE MIRROR #2

A bloody fool!

FACE IN THE MIRROR #1

An absolute numbskull if you ask me.

MILO

I didn't ask you. I didn't ask anybody.

FACE IN THE MIRROR #2

Maybe you ought to though eh? You're clearly not doing too hot on your own.

FACE IN THE MIRROR #1

Honestly. I mean do you really truly think a nothing like you can find The Snatcher?

MILO

I... I don't know.

## FACE IN THE MIRROR #1

I can't say I'm surprised you don't know.

## FACE IN THE MIRROR #2

Me either mate. No surprise here. But let us help you Milo. There's no way you can do it.

## FACE IN THE MIRROR #1

And that's just the truth of matter ain't it! You can't do it. You can't do anything!

Milo once again stares at himself in the mirror. He doesn't like what he sees. He shakes his head, snapping out of it.

## MILO

I don't need this. I'm leaving

Milo turns towards the door.

## FACE IN THE MIRROR #2

Oh running away? Big surprise.

Milo turns the knob and the door flies open. A nebula of swirling purple and blue stars sucks him through the doorway.

## INT. THE RAMBLING HOUSE, DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

Milo flails as he floats out of the bathroom into a large open space. A multitude of nebulas and cosmic streaks slowly twirl around him. A large moon peers over Milo in the background.

Another door appears in the distance and opens. As it does so it creates a gravitational pull sending Milo hurling towards it. Just as Milo enters the doorway a large lobster peaks its head from behind the moon.

## LOBSTER

Know your worth Milo!

Milo flies through the doorway and the door slams shut.

## INT. THE RAMBLING HOUSE, HALL OF DOORS - CONTINUOUS

A long, narrow, seemingly endless hall. Purple carpet runs along the floor. On either side of the hall are countless doors, each evenly spaced from each other. A good ways down the hall, a hooded figure floats away holding a large silver candlestick.



One of the doors opens, spitting Milo into the hall. He lands on his feet and looks around. He is clearly shaken by the events of the last few minutes. Milo notices the hooded figure.

MILO  
Excuse me!

The figure pays no mind and continues to flow away. Milo runs after it.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Hi! I'm sorry I think I'm very very  
lost.

Milo, almost caught up with the hooded figure. Reaches his hand out to touch its shoulder.

MILO (CONT'D)  
I'm looking for my friend Gerhard?  
About this tall, made of wood,  
leaves for hair.

The hooded figure stops.

HOODED FIGURE  
You.

MILO  
I'm sorry what?

HOODED FIGURE  
Who are you?

MILO  
Oh. I'm Milo, I really don't know  
how I got here but I'm looking for  
my friend and

HOODED FIGURE  
Who are you?

The hooded figure now turns to face Milo. All that is seen underneath its hood is a deep piercing blackness.

MILO  
You know, sorry I asked, I think  
I'll just keep looking around.

HOODED FIGURE  
Who are you?

Milo backs up slowly.

HOODED FIGURE (CONT'D)

You.

Milo turns and begins to run down the hall. The hooded figure begins to slowly float after him.

HOODED FIGURE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

Milo is now in a full sprint. The hooded figure moves at the same pace.

HOODED FIGURE (CONT'D)

WHO ARE YOU?

Milo turns and tries one of the doors to his left. It's locked. The hooded figure ever approaches.

HOODED FIGURE (CONT'D)

YOU.

Milo begins rapidly trying as many doors as he can. It takes a few tries, but finally one opens. Milo hurries inside.

INT. THE RAMBLING HOUSE, MUSIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

An open square room. Wide draped windows cover most of the walls. A candle chandelier hangs down from the ceiling providing a dim light. On top of the wooden floor sits a large red rug, a harp, a black grand piano, and a couple wooden chairs.

Milo rests up against the door breathing heavily. He takes a beat to gather himself, and begins to look around the room. Milo walks to the window and moves the drape revealing the glass. Outside are more of the cosmic nebulas Milo saw earlier.

Milo moves towards the harp and gently runs his boney finger along its strings. Finally, he sits down at the piano.

The ivory keys are well polished and contrast beautifully against the black sharps and flats. Milo looks up and down the piano. He looks comfortable here.

Milo delicately places his hands on the keys, he closes his eyes, inhales deeply and begins to play an arrangement of the beginning few notes of "Autumn Leaves." The music echoes throughout the room.

As Milo plays, two eyes open on either end of pianos fall board. Just underneath the keys, a long mouth opens. This is VINCE.

VINCE

Hey you're pretty good.

Milo jumps and abruptly stops playing the piano. He notices the two eyes and quickly stands.

MILO

I didn't realize you were...alive?

VINCE

Alive as ever my friend! You can call me Vince. That delightful creature over there is Shirley.

By the crown of the harp two eyes open.

SHIRLEY

It's a pleasure to meet you. You play beautifully.

MILO

Oh... Thank you. I don't know how I know that song, but it's been stuck in my head all day.

VINCE

It probably doesn't matter how you know it, you played it either way.

Milo smiles at this.

MILO

That's a good point.

Milo sits back down on the piano bench.

SHIRLEY

You must be quite lost if you ended up in our little room.

MILO

I am. I keep sort of... just showing up places.

VINCE

Well we always appreciate a visitor. Especially musical ones.

SHIRLEY

It's true. We don't often find someone who can play.

MILO

I think I really like to play, but  
I can't remember anything about  
myself.

VINCE

Did you like it when you played  
just now?

MILO

I did like it yeah.

VINCE

Then I'd reckon you like playing!  
No need to remember it.

Milo takes a moment to sit in this well needed kindness.

MILO

You're both very kind, the first  
kind people I've met in this house  
actually.

SHIRLEY

Really? That's sad to hear. I feel  
like there are always kind faces  
when you look for them.

MILO

I've actually been looking for my  
friend Gerhard.

VINCE

Little tree fella? Made of wood?

MILO

Leaves for hair! Have you seen him?

SHIRLEY

I believe he's in the parlor with  
Theia.

MILO

Who's Theia?

SHIRLEY

This is her house. I'm surprised  
you haven't met her yet.

MILO

I'd really like to. Where is the  
parlor?

VINCE

Right through the door you came of course.

Milo stands excitedly.

MILO

You have both been so helpful.  
Thank you.

Milo walks towards the door.

VINCE

Wait! Before you go, we never caught your name.

MILO

I'm Milo... and I like to play the piano.

SHIRLEY

Good luck out there Milo. You'll do great.

Milo smiles and exits through the same door he entered.

INT. THE RAMBLING HOUSE, PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

A large cozy room with regal red wallpaper. Paintings hang on the wall above a large roaring fireplace. Around the room are small fancy looking knickknacks and busts of various figures. Facing the fireplace are two large chairs. In one sits Gerhard who contently watches the fire with his hands rested on his round tummy. In the other sits a figure in a black gothic dress with a white collar. Her large oval head has no features. Instead, nebulas of blue, purple, and black swirl inside. This is THEIA.

Milo enters from a door behind the two chairs. Theia and Gerhard turn to face him. Milo rushes to Gerhard's side.

MILO

Gerhard! There you are.

GERHARD

Hi! Where have you been?

MILO

Where have you been? I've been all over this place looking for you.

GERHARD

When I walked through the front door I turned around and you weren't behind me. Then I met Theia. She said if we wait here you'd probably show up eventually. She's really nice.

Theia waves timidly.

THEIA

Hello Milo, I'm sorry I wasn't there to greet you. I try to greet all our visitors but sometimes the front door opens to strange places.

MILO

Yeah I landed in the bathroom.

THEIA

Oh... Well I hope your time here hasn't been too difficult. This house can often show us things about ourselves that are uncomfortable.

MILO

It's certainly been interesting. What is this place?

GERHARD

The Rambling House, I already told you that.

MILO

Right, I know what it's called, but what is it?

THEIA

Things work differently here than they do on the outside, which can be disorienting. I don't choose where the house moves or who enters. If someone does I haven't met them.

MILO

Sure, but what's the point of a moving house?

THEIA

I'm not sure, but it still moves. I just try and help out whoever is here at the time.

GERHARD

She said she could get us to the  
Church of the Crow!

MILO

Wait really? You know how to get  
there?

THEIA

Oh yes. I'm sure there's a door  
around here somewhere that leads  
right to it.

Theia stands up from her chair.

THEIA (CONT'D)

Let's go look for it.

Gerhard also stands. Milo and Gerhard follow Theia to the  
door in which Milo entered.

THEIA (CONT'D)

No better place to start than the  
hall of doors.

MILO

Can you make the doors go where you  
want?

THEIA

If you know where you want to go  
you'll always end up there  
eventually.

Theia opens the door and holds it open. Only darkness is seen  
on the other end. Gerhard happily strolls through. Milo is  
nervous, but takes a step and enters. Theia follows and  
closes the door gently behind her.

INT. THE RAMBLING HOUSE, HALL OF DOORS - CONTINUOUS

Milo, Theia, and Gerhard enter the same narrow hallway  
through one of the doors. The hooded figure floats in the  
distance with its candlestick. As the three companions enter,  
it turns and begins to float towards them.

HOODED FIGURE

YOU.

It holds out a blackened finger towards Milo as it  
approaches. Milo nervously begins to step backwards. Theia  
moves in front of him and smacks the finger away.

THEIA  
Knock that off.

The hooded figure is taken aback by this.

HOODED FIGURE  
You?

Theia begins to shoo the hooded figure with her hands.

THEIA  
Shoo! Go on, get out of here.

The hooded figure turns, hangs its head, and begins to float away.

THEIA (CONT'D)  
You big pest.

Milo looks impressively at Theia.

THEIA (CONT'D)  
That things is all over the place.  
Always shouting at people. Anyways.  
Let's get looking.

Theia turns in the opposite direction she shoosed the hooded figure and approaches a door on the left side of the hallway. She grabs the handle and attempts to turn it. Locked.

THEIA (CONT'D)  
Not this one, it's locked.

MILO  
You don't have a key?

THEIA  
If it wants to be locked it's going  
to be locked. No point in forcing  
it.

Theia moves to the next door down the line. She turns the handle and the door opens. Only darkness is seen on the other end. Theia surveys it for a moment, shakes her head, and closes the door.

THEIA (CONT'D)  
Not that one either.

GERHARD  
How can you tell?

Theia shrugs.



THEIA

I know a lot of stuff.

Theia moves down to the next door and opens it. The same darkness is seen on the other end. She surveys it, then nods.

THEIA (CONT'D)

I think this is it! This one should take you very close to The Church of the Crow.

Theia holds the door open as Gerhard and Milo approach it. Theia crouches down to be at eye level with Gerhard. She gently takes his hand.

THEIA (CONT'D)

It was wonderful to meet you. Remember what I told you, you'll do well.

Gerhard nods and smiles. Theia stands back up to face Milo.

THEIA (CONT'D)

Gerhard told me about your quest to find The Snatcher. Be careful, be brave, know your worth.

The ring of a bell is heard off in the distance.

THEIA (CONT'D)

Oh! It sounds like someone else just entered. I'd better go find them before they get too turned around. Leave whenever you're ready, just close the door behind you.

Theia turns and surveys the hall. She picks another door and grabs its handle.

THEIA (CONT'D)

Good luck!

Theia opens and exits through the door. Far off in the distance, another door opens and Theia comes right back through.

THEIA (CONT'D)

Oh. Wrong door!

Theia moves to a different door and exits again. This time for good.

Milo looks down at Gerhard with a smile.

MILO

Ready to go?

GERHARD

Lead the way!

Milo takes a step towards the door. Before he can enter, Gerhard laughs, and races past Milo, pushing him out of the way. Milo laughs and follows Gerhard through the door.