

"HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS"

THE TEENY-WENIES

By Ed Naha

Based on a story by

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(Save 'em, trade 'em!
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friends!)

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EXT. STREET, MORNING

THE CAMERA moves along a typical suburban street in an AERIAL SHOT, showing bright and well kept home after home. Finally, we focus on two homes. One house is orthodox suburban, littered with pink flamingos and lawn jockeys. The other could use a coat of paint and some gardening repairs. We dwell on the better of the two homes for a moment.

INT. BEDROOM, MORNING

"BIG" RUSS JOHNSON slowly cracks his eyes open as a steady "clang-clang-clang" shatters the silence of the bedroom he shares with his wife, MAE.

Russ is a gruff, self-made man, the president of his own construction company (Olympian Construction--We Build Them Bigger and Better), Russ admires hard work and doesn't trust people who read newspapers that don't contain a comics page. Like many Americans, he's impressed by appearances. If it's big, it has to be great.

Mae is a quiet, but strong woman. She winds up, doing most of the child-rearing in the home and, at times, treats Russ like her biggest, most problematic child.

Russ staggers to the bedroom window and gazes down into his backyard.

EXT. JOHNSON BACKYARD, MORNING

There, his ten-year-old identical twin sons, RON and DON, are busy pitching a tent to spend the weekend in. The twins are gung-ho Cub Scouts with great imaginations. To them, the neatly-kept grassy yard, with its ceramic animals, is a jungle.

Although identical in appearance, Ron and Don are opposites. Ron has a mischievous streak as deep as the Grand Canyon while Don is the more responsible of the two.

INT. BEDROOM, MORNING

Big Russ gapes at the twins, checking his watch.

BIG RUSS

What are you two doing?

EXT. BACKYARD, MORNING

Don freezes. Ron continues banging merrily away.

RON

Pitching a tent, dad.

BIG RUSS (resigned)

Don't you know I'm sleeping?

RON

But you're talking to us, dad. You look wide awake. Doesn't, he Don?

DON (sotto, exasperated)

Ron!

Ron smiles innocently at his father. Big Russ slams the window down.

INT. BEDROOM, MORNING

Big Russ bites his lip and walks back towards the bed.

BIG RUSS

Everybody in this house is a comedian.

MAE

Except you, dear.

BIG RUSS

Darn right.

The clanging continues. Big Russ winces.

MAE

They're only children.

BIG RUSS

Hitler was a child once.

He crawls back under the covers.

MAE (smiling sweetly)

As long as you're up, why don't you make some coffee?

Big Russ stares at her, perplexed. She smiles brightly at him. He's beaten. He sighs and gets out of bed, grabbing his favorite, battered Olympian Construction cap (it has a picture of Hercules on it, with a big #1) down over his head with a sharp tug.

BIG RUSS

Good idea.

INT. HALLWAY, MORNING

Big Russ stumbles into the hall, still sleepy. He

encounters his oldest son, "LITTLE" RUSS, in the hall. Good looking and clean-cut, "Little" Russ is a strong but slightly diminutive fifteen year old. His dad is constantly pushing him to overexcell. "Little" Russ doesn't mind. He's a jock but not a typical one. He's quiet and, in fact, more than a tad self-conscious about his short stature.

BIG RUSS

Why don't you pump some iron, son. Get in shape for football practice.

LITTLE RUSS

Uh, dad...?

Big Russ doesn't give his son a chance to speak. He heads downstairs towards the kitchen. Little Russ shrugs and trots down the stairs and outside the house.

EXT. JOHNSON BACKYARD, MORNING

In the yard, while the twins continue to pitch their tent, Little Russ, clad in a sweatsuit, begins to pump iron.

Ron soon grows bored with the tent. He sits down on the ground with a thud.

DON

What's the matter?

RON

This is sissy stuff.

DON

What is?

RON

Camping in the yard. I want to camp out in the real jungle. With wild animals. Cannibals. Grizzly bears.

DON

Grizzly bears don't live in the jungle.

RON

They do in my jungle. And they'd eat weiners like you for breakfast.

INT. SZALINSKI KITCHEN, MORNING

This entire backyard tableau (Russ' prowess, in particular) is being watched from the house nextdoor by AMY SZALINSKI as she toils at the kitchen stove.

Fifteen-year-old Amy is a pretty, no-nonsense type. She's tall, wears glasses and feels very out of things because of

her height. To help "hide" her stature, she often walks stoop-shouldered and tends to be self-effacing.

At 9 A.M., the Szalinski place is already a madhouse. Amy is trying very hard to prepare breakfast for herself, her dad and her kid brother, six-year-old NICHOLAS. She is having a hard time of it. While scrambling the eggs, wisps of her straw-colored hair keep falling in her eyes.

Little brother NICK ignores her plight, reading a science-fiction novel at the kitchen table. One of the brightest tykes imaginable, Nick is far ahead of his peers in terms of schoolwork, which pleases his parents but annoys Amy, who winds up doing most of the drudge work. Nick is terrified of the real world. He is small and thin and has asthma. When faced with a problem he, more often than not, plays "sick."

AMY

How's the toast coming?

NICK

Fine.

He glances into the frying pan at what is supposed to be scrambled eggs.

NICK

Mom never made them like that.

AMY

Mom's not here.

NICK (after a beat)

When do you think she's coming back?

AMY

I don't know. Maybe never.

Nick stares at the eggs as Amy begins to pour them out onto a platter. The eggs resemble something yellow that has just been hit by a car traveling at a very high speed. He sniffs at the goop.

NICK

I hope she comes back soon.

Amy glances at the toast. Smoke is billowing from the toaster.

AMY

Nick! The toast is smoking! Do you know what that means?

NICK

It's hot?

AMY

Straight-A student but you can't
make toast.

NICK

I want to be a scientist like dad,
not a cook.

AMY

Where is dad?

NICK

Upstairs.

AMY (sighing)

As usual.

INT. ATTIC, MORNING

In the attic, WAYNE SZALINSKI is putting the finishing touches on an electromagnetic pulse invention he has constructed. A good-natured, easy-going guy with a PhD in physics, Wayne holds a low-level job for an aerospace company and spends his weekends on his own work. A bit of a scatterbrain in terms to day-to-day living, for Wayne, physics is easy...wearing matched socks is not.

As Wayne putters, the family's feisty little Yorkshire terrier, QUARK, watches, mystified.

WAYNE

This is it, Quark. A red-letter day.

He flicks the switch. The machine begins to hum. The dog backs towards the door.

WAYNE

A common laser device you say?

The dog's ears flop up, forming the canine version of a question mark.

WAYNE

Wrong, Quark. It's an amazing electromagnetic pulse device. If this honey works correctly, its computer scanners will hone in on a solid, inanimate object, analyze and isolate its molecular structure and, then, reduce the space between its electrons. You know what that means, don't you?

Quark stares, dumbfounded, at his master.

WAYNE

It will actually shrink the object. A boon to the space program. It will decrease the size and weight of payloads sent into space.

Quark yawns. Wayne walks over to a couch standing next to a wall and removes an apple from a paper bag. Quark barks and springs to life, wagging his tail furiously. Could this be snacktime?

WAYNE

Nifty, huh?

He walks over to a large steel plate, the size of a wall, and places the apple on a pedestal.

WAYNE

The only problem is: I haven't gotten this thing to work yet. But I'm close, Quark. Very, very close.

Quark, finally seeing that the apple isn't his, walks back towards the door, dejected.

Wayne puts on protective goggles and activates the double-beamed machine. THE TWO BEAMS SPARKLE AND COME TO LIFE, BUZZING HARMLESSLY IN THE AIR. WAYNE ADJUSTS THE CONTROLS. THE TWO BEAMS INTERSECT AND FORM ONE, POWERFUL, SOLID SHAFT OF LIGHT. THE BEAM HITS THE APPLE, ENGULFING IT. A SHADOW OF SPARKLING LIGHT SHIMMERS ALONG THE OUTSIDE OF THE APPLE. THE APPLE VIBRATES. Quark cowers. Wayne licks his lips in anticipation, waiting for the apple to shrink.

WAYNE

Come on. Shrink. Shrink.

THERE'S A SUDDEN BLAST. THE WALLS, QUARK AND WAYNE ARE COVERED WITH A SMALL SHOWER OF APPLE SAUCE. Quark happily licks the sauce off his paws.

Wayne sighs, turns off the machine, picks up his notes and a pencil and flops down on his favorite couch. Wayne sits on it upside down, his sauce-spattered head dangling over the side. He stares into space.

He sees Quark's head looming before him, upside down. Quark begins to lick the applesauce off his master's face.

WAYNE

Bummer, Quark.

The dog licks.

WAYNE

On the plus side, we have discovered a very expensive way to make apple sauce.

The dog finishes his facial snack and trots out of the room. Wayne begins making notes.

AMY (o.s.)
Dad! Come and get it.

Wayne gets up, tucks the pencil behind his right ear and walks out of the room. A beat. He returns to the room and grabs the papers he's left there, placing the pencil down on the couch. He leaves the room again. A beat. He comes back in and picks up his pencil. He exits.

INT. SZALINSKI KITCHEN, DAY

Wayne wanders into the kitchen, making notes. He's diligently studying a haphazardly piled sheaf of papers in his hands, not at all watching where he's going. Amy guides him so he doesn't collide with either Quark or Nick (this is something of a tradition). Amy watches her dad.

AMY
Dog.

Wayne instinctively changes the direction of his left foot so as not to squash Quark.

AMY
Nicholas.

Wayne pivots, still reading his papers, so as not to smack into Nick. He makes a move to sit down.

AMY
Sewing kit.

Wayne has almost sat down on a small table housing a sewing basket. He lifts his rear at the last minute and slides into the adjoining seat.

Nick sighs and begins his morning routine. He pops a series of pills from prescription bottles and, then, inserts a bronchial asthma inhaler into his mouth. He takes several Darth Vader-sounding gulps before facing the food.

Amy serves what looks like nuked-out bacon and slimed eggs to her father as Wayne, elbows on table, continues to pour through his notes.

AMY
Elbows up.

Wayne lifts his elbows. She slides the breakfast beneath him. He puts down his notes and stares at the food.

WAYNE
Ummm. Looks interesting. What is it?

AMY (embarrassed)
Scrambled eggs.

Wayne puts a fork into them. The eggs run through the prongs. He stares at the food. Amy walks quickly towards a cabinet drawer.

AMY
I'll get you a spoon.

Her father reaches for a slice of toast. it's black. He makes a move to butter it. The toast crumbles on impact. He shrugs and goes back to his notes, scribbling furiously.

AMY
Did you pick up the refill on Nick's inhaler, dad?

WAYNE (still scribbling)
Mmmm.

AMY
Dad. You promised. How could you forget? You were picking up my dress from the cleaners next door.

Wayne "mmmm's" and continue to scribble.

AMY
You forgot the dress, too?
No response.

AMY
Dad! I need that dress! There's a school dance Friday night.

NICK
Nobody's asked you to go.

AMY
Well, someone might!

WAYNE
Mmmmmmm.

AMY
No wonder Mom left. All you think about is that shrinking machine.

NICK
It's not a shrinking machine. It's an amazing electromagnetic pulse device.

Wayne continues to scribble. Nick looks at him, expecting a compliment. Amy gives Nick a "nyah nyah" glance.

AMY (muttering)
You're so obnoxious.

The phone rings. Wayne stops scribbling and jumps up to get it, taking his notes with him. Nick stirs his eggs.

NICK
Could I have a straw?

Amy snatches his plate away.

AMY
Look. If you don't want to eat it, fine.
Quark will.

She dumps the breakfast into the dog's bowl. Quark sniffs it and backs away. Nick flashes Amy a knowing, smug smile.

INT. HALLWAY, DAY

Wayne runs for the phone in the hallway, still juggling his papers. He picks up the receiver, glancing at the notes. It's his wife, DIANE.

WAYNE
Hello?

DIANE (v.o.)
Wayne? It's Diane.

Wayne perks up.

WAYNE
Oh, hi honey. Gee, I'm glad you called.
We miss you a lot. How's the new apartment.

INT. DIANE'S APARTMENT, DAY

Diane, a pretty woman in her mid-to-late thirties, stands in a studio apartment filled with unpacked boxes and crates. It's clear she hasn't settled into her new lifestyle.

DIANE
Just great. Wonderful. Lovely. I just called to remind you to take your suits to the dry cleaners.

WAYNE (v.o.)
Oh, yeah. Right.

DIANE
And don't forget the food shopping has to be done today.

WAYNE (v.o.)

Jeeez. Thanks for reminding me.

DIANE (smiling)

How's the experiment going?

INT. HALLWAY, DAY

WAYNE

I'm close. Uh, really, really close.

DIANE (v.o.)

Well, I thought I'd wish you good luck today at the scientific congress.

WAYNE

Thanks. I'll need it. All I have are my theories but, honey, if they go for them, they could fund my work for the next year. It'll be tough without physical proof, though. Scientists are weird.

DIANE (v.o.)

I never would have guessed.

Wayne stands, flustered, at the phone.

DIANE (v.o.)

Wayne? About the divorce.

WAYNE

Oh, yeah. The papers are ready?

DIANE (v.o.)

Uh-huh.

WAYNE (visibly shaken)

I thought it would take a little longer.

INT. DIANE'S APARTMENT

DIANE

Well...you really miss me?

WAYNE (v.o.)

A lot. One hundred per cent squared.

DIANE (smiling)

It's funny. You never seemed to notice me when I was around.

WAYNE (v.o.)

I know, honey. I've just been so pre-occupied with my work. Why don't you come back home?

INT. HALLWAY, DAY

As Diane talks, Wayne finds himself staring at his notes.

DIANE (v.o.)
Wayne, I miss you. I miss the
kids. Do you think we can ever be a family
again? A real family?

Silence. Wayne gapes at his notes.

DIANE (v.o.)
Wayne?

WAYNE (excited)
Of course! I know exactly what went wrong!

DIANE (enthused, v.o.)
Really? What?

WAYNE (staring at notes)
It should have been x over y, not y over
x. The beams didn't meld! They collided!

INT. DIANE'S APARTMENT, DAY

DIANE
You haven't heard anything I've said,
have you?

WAYNE (v.o.)
I did. I said I missed you and you
said...something back.

INT. HALLWAY, DAY

She slams the phone down hard. CLICK.

WAYNE
Diane? Diane?

He puts down the phone. Amy is standing next to him.

WAYNE
Uh, that was mom. She says 'hi.' We
had a bad connection.

AMY
I thought Nick and I would visit her today.

WAYNE
Uh, no need. She's coming over sometime
this weekend.

INT. HOUSE, DAY

Wayne walks through the house, collecting his hat and coat

and stuffing his papers into his briefcase. His kids trail behind him. He tosses on a very loud tie and heads for the front door. He still holds a notepad in his hand. He's studying it as he heads for the door. He reaches for the doorknob and misses. Amy opens the door for him.

AMY

Good luck, dad.

WAYNE

Hmmmm.

NICK

Good luck!

Wayne walks out the door. Amy closes it behind him. Amy and Nick sigh and glance at each other. They mouth the words "one, two, three..." There's a knock at the door. It's Wayne.

WAYNE

Wish me luck, guys.

AMY/NICK

Good luck, dad.

WAYNE

I'll only be gone for a few hours.

Wayne heads for the car. Amy eases the door closed, a wistful expression on her face.

EXT. SZALINSKI HOME, DAY

Walking towards his car, Wayne encounters Russ and Mae Johnson. Mae is busily tending to her pride and joy: her all-encompassing flowerbeds. Big Russ still wears his cap.

BIG RUSS

Hey, Szalinski, working on a Saturday?

WAYNE

Yeah, Russ. You know how it is.

BIG RUSS

I thought maybe you'd fix up your yard today. It's getting to look like a jungle.

WAYNE

Taken care of. I hired the Pervis boy to cut the grass.

BIG RUSS

Your house could use some sprucing up, too.

MAE (nudging Russ)

Russell.

Wayne sighs. He's been through this before.

WAYNE

Tell you what, Russ. If you'd like, I'll hire your company to fix it up. How's that?

BIG RUSS

No way. Olympian Construction doesn't diddle with small jobs. We only tackle The Big Stuff.

Wayne shrugs and gets into his car.

WAYNE

Well, maybe someday I'll get a bigger house.

Mae chuckles at Wayne drives off.

BIG RUSS

Egghead. I oughtta....

MAE

Forget about it.

BIG RUSS

Yeah. He wouldn't expect that.

Mae leaves, turning her attention to the flowers on the side of the house. Big Russ looks around. Reaching under his hat, he pulls out a pack of cigarettes. He produces a bent cigarette, sniffs it, straightens it, places it in his mouth and is about to light up when....

MAE (o.s.)

Russell. You're not thinking of smoking, are you?

He removes the cigarette, stashes the pack and calls back sweetly.

BIG RUSS

No, dear. You know I've given that up.

INT. SZALINSKI KITCHEN, DAY

Meanwhile, in the Szalinski kitchen, Nick sits in the window with Quark, where he's constructing a small town made out of Lego (tiny plastic bricks). He takes a whiff of his asthma inhaler as Quark begins to growl. Quark spots the Johnson's cat, Cicero, in the Johnson yard. The cat is twice as big as the dog.

NICK
Forget it, Quark.

EXT. JOHNSON BACKYARD, DAY

In the Johnson backyard, Ron has disappeared momentarily. Don sits in the tent, gazing into the fierce "jungle" through binoculars. Their pet cat, Cicero, walks up and stares into them. Don blinks and looks up. Little Russ continues to work out. Ron reappears, walking over to Don. Cicero pays no mind.

RON
Wanna have some real fun?

DON
You're not going to try to shave Cicero again, are you?

The cat tenses.

RON
No, better than that. Come on.

Ron is hiding something behind his back. He takes Don to the fence separating the two yards and produces a bottle of syrup.

RON
Watch this.

DON
Does mom know you have that?

Ron doesn't answer. He pours a healthy wad of syrup on the fence. Flies begin to land on it. They get trapped in it. Ron is delighted.

RON (to flies)
Gotcha.

DON
What's so exciting about this?

RON
The real fun comes when we feed them to spiders.

DON
Gross.

RON
Hey, they're only bugs.

Big Russ walks, disgruntled, into the yard. He spots the twins, frowns, and walks towards them.

DON

Here comes dad. He looks mad.

RON

Dad's always mad. Even when he's happy.

Ron, thinking fast, ditches the syrup. It lands in the Szalinski yard nextdoor, where the bottle empties onto a patch of grass.

BIG RUSS

What are you two up to?

RON

Nothing, dad. We're just watching bugs. Right, Don?

DON

Uh, yeah.

BIG RUSS

Well, don't watch the bugs in the Szalinski yard. Watch your own bugs.

Big Russ walks over towards Little Russ as Mae enters the yard to tend to some of the flowers back there. Don turns to Ron and points to the syrup.

DON

Mom's going to miss that syrup.

RON

Yeah. Right. Like she takes inventory of the refrigerator every day.

DON (shrugging)

Wanna play ball?

RON

Only if I bat.

Big Russ approaches Little Russ as the boy works out.

BIG RUSS

Better get a move on, son. You're going to be late for football practice.

LITTLE RUSS

Uh...dad....

The boy sits up and faces his father.

BIG RUSS

You got to get out there early to get the edge on the other guys.

LITTLE RUSS (awkwardly)
Dad. I'm not on the team anymore. I was cut.

BIG RUSS
...I know coach Farrell always wants his players there on ti...what?

LITTLE RUSS
I was cut. I was too short and too light.

BIG RUSS
Who said so?

LITTLE RUSS
Coach Farrell.

BIG RUSS
Oh he did, did he? Well, Bernie Farrell and I go back a long time. We played together. I used to knock him on his keister regularly.

Little Russ sighs.

BIG RUSS
Who the hell does he think he is? I'll get him on the phone. Make him realize how important being on that team is to you!

LITTLE RUSS
You don't have to, dad. It's okay.

BIG RUSS
It's not okay. You're the son of Big Russ Johnson.

LITTLE RUSS
Dad, please.

Big Russ leaves the yard. Mae sidles over to Little Russ and smiles.

MAE
You told him?

LITTLE RUSS
He didn't take it too well.

MAE
Don't worry. I'll cool him down.

She fixes a stern look on her face and marches towards the backdoor.

Little Russ stares down at the weights. He sighs and gazes up at the sky, defeated. He glances into the next yard. Amy is tossing a frisbee with Quark. He smiles at her. She looks away. Russ sighs and returns to pumping iron.

The twins are now playing ball. Don pitches a ball to Ron who proceeds to swat the ball high into the air. His "home runs" wind up missing Little Russ by inches. The ball whizzes by Cicero. The cat screeches. Little Russ doesn't even have to look up to realize who's doing the damage.

LITTLE RUSS

Knock it off, Ron.

RON

But I'm Don.

LITTLE RUSS

You're going to be dead meat in a minute.

Ron continues to swat the ball. Nick, interested, calls to them from the kitchen window.

NICK

Better watch out. You might hit that bee-hive.

He points to a hive in a tree that straddles both yards. Ron isn't impressed.

RON

What do you know about baseball, baby-brain? You can't play.

Ron swings at the next pitch and connects. The ball misses the bee-hive by inches, rebounding off the tree and bouncing back down into the yard. Don flashes his brother a smug smile. Ron gulps. He faces Nick.

RON

Lucky guess.

For his next turn at bat, however, he changes the angle of his batting position. Nick, not wanting to take any chances, pulls the screen down on the window, knocking a few legos off the windowsill and into the yard.

NICK

Bees can kill you. If you're allergic. I'm allergic. I could die if I got stung.

RON

Good!

Ron takes a fast swing and sends the pitch sailing over the

fence separating the two yards. The ball seems to take forever to reach its target...it smashes through the Szalinski's attic window.

There is a terrifyingly long second of silence. All the kids exchange petrified glances.

DON/RON

Uh-oh.

Little Russ leaps to his feet.

LITTLE RUSS

What have you two done this time?

The twins point to each other simultaneously.

DON/RON

He did it.

LITTLE RUSS

Great. You busted the egghead's window.

Nick trots out of the house, horrified. Amy runs over to the fence and yells at all three boys.

AMY

Can't you kids be careful? Look what you've done. My dad is going to kill me when he comes home. And I'm going to tell them who did it, too.

LITTLE RUSS

They're sorry...aren't you.

RON

Yeah. He's sorry.

DON

You're the one who hit it.

RON

You threw it.

INT. SZALINSKI ATTIC, DAY

In the attic, we see the ball perched precariously on a ledge directly above the machine's innerworkings. It is slowly teetering on the edge. It rolls off and smashes into the intricate, computer chip-laden guts of the machine, nestling in front of the power source of one of the two particle beam "cannons."

The gizmo sputters to life. A complicated computer, replete with screen, is hooked up to what looks like two laser

"cannons." The computer, which analyzes anything placed before the particle beams, goes haywire.

The two gun-like devices begin jerking back and forth and up and down. Only one of the barrels functions, however, FIRING WILDLY IN SHORT, CRAZY, STACCATO BURSTS. ZZZAP. THE BEAM HITS WAYNE'S COUCH. THERE'S A LOUD POP. IT'S SHRUNKEN TO MINIATURE SIZE. BZAP. POP. A CHAIR GOES NEXT. ZIP. POP. THERE GOES A TRUNK.

EXT. SZALINSKI YARD, DAY

In the backyard, Russ calms Amy down.

LITTLE RUSS

We'll get the window fixed. We'll pay for it out of the twins' allowance.

DON

But I didn't do anything.

RON

Yeah. If anyone should pay for it, it should be baby-brain. He made me move.

AMY

I heard what Nick told you. You would have gotten stung by those bees and died if it wasn't for Nick.

RON

My hero.

NICK

Actually, very few people die from bee stings. Unless, you're allergic. I'm allergic.

Ron snorts derisively. Amy shoots Nick a dirty look. She hates it when Nick acts smart. Which is almost all the time.

DON (to Amy)

Can we at least have our ball back?

RON (laying it on thick)

Puleeeeze?

AMY

Oh, all right. Nick? Take them upstairs and give them their ball.

NICK

Come on.

Nick leads the twins into the house. Amy and Little Russ are left standing awkwardly in the yard. Amy is several inches taller. She tries to slouch.

LITTLE RUSS
I'm really sorry.

AMY
You should be.

LITTLE RUSS
Uh-huh. (beat) I saw you throwing the frisbee to the dog. You're pretty good.

AMY
Thank you.

LITTLE RUSS
Ummm. Ever play with people?

INT. ATTIC, DAY

Nick takes the twins into the attic to retrieve the ball. The machine, at present, seems harmless enough. Only WE SEE THE COMPUTER SCREEN TRACKING THE CHILDREN'S MOVEMENTS. Don and Ron are amazed at the gizmo.

DON
Wow! Look at this stuff. It's right out of Star Trek.

NICK
It's my dad's. He works for an aerospace company.

DON (looking for the ball)
Your dad's a mad scientist?

NICK
No. He's pretty calm.

RON
Just look for the ball, okay?

Ron walks offscreen. The kids look for the ball. While they search, THE WORKING LASER CANNON BEGINS TRACKING RON'S MOVEMENTS, AIDED BY THE COMPUTER. No one notices. Don looks at Nick. Nick is standing, facing the wall, frowning.

DON
What's up?

NICK
I don't know. Something's different.

Don steps on something. It crunches. Curious, Don bends towards the floor.

DON

Hey, Ron. Look at this neat stuff.

He gets down on all fours and stares at the floor. The attic furniture is there, 1/4 inch tall.

DON

It looks like the prizes you get in Crackerjack boxes, only better.

WE HEAR A LOUD "POP." A FLASH OF LIGHT BURSTS FROM OFFSCREEN. Don turns around.

DON

Ron? Ron? Don't play around.

NICK

Hey! All my mom's stuff is gone!

Nick turns around in time to see THE STACATTO BEAMS CONNECT ON DON. DON IS IMMEDIATELY SHRUNK, THE ENERGY OF THE PROCESS CAUSING A RESOUNDING BANG AND A FLASH OF LIGHT. Nick is tossed onto the floor. He crawls to where Don has stood. Nick stares at the floor. Both Ron and Don are there, as teeny-weeny as can be.

NICK

It works!

The machine begins to aim its laser cannon on Nick. Nick's elation fizzles.

NICK

It works?

He makes a move for the door. BZAAAP. THE BEAM SMASHES INTO ONE OF DIANE'S SEWING DUMMIES. WHAM. NICK FREEZES. THE FORCE OF THE ENERGY "POP" CLOSES THE ATTIC DOOR. NICK GULPS AND TRIES TO RUN FOR THE DOOR. BZAAAP. POP! NICK IS HIT AND SHRUNK BEFORE HE CAN TAKE TWO STEPS.

EXT. SZALINSKI YARD, DAY

Both Amy and Russ grow restless.

AMY

I'm going upstairs. Those brothers of yours better not be teasing Nick. You may not be able to control them, but I can.

She turns to go inside, putting her hand on the railing. She

pulls her hand back, terrified.

AMY

Waaarggggh!

LITTLE RUSS

What is it? What's the matter?

AMY

A bug. A bug. I hate bugs. It touched me.

Little Russ takes his finger and "pings" the unseen bug off the stoop. It lands on the ground. He takes his foot and squashes it.

LITTLE RUSS

Better?

AMY (sooo mature)

Hmph. Murderer.

She storms inside. Russ is left in the yard. Quark walks up to him, wagging his tail.

LITTLE RUSS

You're lucky you're a dog.

INT. ATTIC, DAY

Amy enters the attic.

AMY

Nick?

BZZZAAAP. AMY IS SHRUNK. She finds herself on the vast floor of the attic, together with the three other children. The foursome find themselves 1/4 inch tall, stranded on a vast wooden plain. Shrunk furniture is everywhere. The twins aren't at all pleased.

DON

I don't know how you did it, but you did it.

RON

I didn't do anything. It was that machine.

DON

You must have touched it.

RON

You were the one who liked it. I thought it was junk.

AMY

Shut up! Both of you! Nick?

She walks over to her brother, who is mesmerized by the towering machine.

AMY

What happened? Where are we?

NICK

We haven't gone anywhere. We're still here. We've been shrunk, that's all.

AMY

That's all?

EXT. SZALINSKI YARD, DAY

Little Russ sits next to Quark when a tall, gangly kid enters the yard. It's TOMMY PERVIS, munching on an ever-present bag of oreos.

TOMMY

Hey, Russ. Mr. Szalinski around?

LITTLE RUSS

Naaah.

TOMMY

If you see him, tell him I'll be a little late mowing his lawn. I gotta go shopping with my mom. She wants me to get new shoes.

He points to his jogging shoes. They're falling apart.

TOMMY

Stupid, huh? These are just getting good.

Russ smiles at Tommy exits.

TOMMY

Catch you later.

LITTLE RUSS

Yeah. Later, Pervis.

Russ sits in the yard a beat. He then gets up and stands under the attic window.

LITTLE RUSS

Hey, you guys! Come on down!

No answer. He walks up to the back door and slowly swings it open.

LITTLE RUSS

Don? Ron?

He enters the house. Quark is left outside, whining.

INT. ATTIC, DAY

Russ slowly enters the attic.

LITTLE RUSS

Guys?

Nothing seems amiss. The shrunken kids, on the floor, spot Little Russ, now an Olympian giant.

DON

Look out!

RON

Go back!

AMY

Go get help! Get my dad!

Russ doesn't hear the teeny-weenies, let alone see them. He glances suspiciously around the attic. Hearing a strange buzzing sound, he turns around in time to see the LASER CANNON BOBBING UP AND DOWN, AIMING IN HIS DIRECTION. THE STACCATO BEAMS BEGIN FIRING AT HIM. RUSS BEGINS JUMPING UP AND DOWN, BACK AND FORTH, DUCKING AND DODGING THE BURSTS OF FLIGHT THE BEST HE CAN. HE'S A MOVING TARGET CAUGHT IN A PARTICLE BEAM SHOOTING GALLERY. THE MACHINE-GUN-LIKE BEAMS ZIP ALL AROUND HIM.

Every time his titanic feet hit the attic floor, the teeny-weenie kids are tossed up and down into the air, the victims of a boy-made earthquake. They try to struggle to their feet and stay upright but it's a losing battle. Every time they stand up, they're thrown to the ground again.

Little Russ moves towards them. One of his giant feet smashes the trunk to a pulp. The kids scurry about, trying to stay out of the way of Russ' tennis shoes.

Don slips down into a crack between two floor boards as one of the shoes hurtles down towards the floor. Ron hits the deck as the shoe comes down atop him. He's so small, however, that he fits inbetween one of the grooves on the shoes' sole. The shoe returns skyward, leaving Ron unhurt. Russ continues his wild dance AS THE BEAMS SKITTER BY HIM. FINALLY, HE DUCKS WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE DODGED. THE BEAMS CONNECT. BZZZAAAP. POW!

Russ is now insect-sized, too. He lies on the floor, moaning, totally in shock.

Meanwhile, the baseball, still balanced on the machinery, tumbles off the invention and onto the floor. It rolls, boulder-sized, towards the kids. They scatter. Amy stands, frozen in her tracks, as the ball heads directly for her.

NICK

Amy!

Russ sees what's going on and gets to his feet. In the best of football styles, he tackles the frightened girl. They both go tumbling out of the way of the titanic ball. The ball barrels into the rest of the tiny pieces of furniture, flattening most of them. Amy and Russ stare at each other as the twins and Nick run up to them. Russ helps Amy to her feet.

LITTLE RUSS

Are you all right?

AMY

Fine, thank you.

Without the baseball putting pressure on its inner-workings, the machine hisses to a halt and shuts down.

The kids stand, confused, on the vast attic floor. The reality of the situation hits them at once. Amy turns angrily towards Russ.

AMY

Why didn't you go for help?

LITTLE RUSS

How was I to know what was going on up here?

AMY

You could have looked for us.

LITTLE RUSS

I did.

AMY

Well, then, you should have moved faster. Ducked the beams.

She stands, looking down at him. He raises himself on his toes.

LITTLE RUSS

Yeah. Like you got out of the way of the ball, right? What do we do now?

AMY

I guess we just wait until dad gets home. He'll know what to do.

DON

If he doesn't...he'll step on us.

That remark visably shakes Ron.

RON

What????

NICK

Don't worry.

RON (recovering)

Who's worried? I'm...bored.

INT. HALL, DAY

At the science convention, Wayne's theories are greeted by the seriousness usually reserved for Henny Youngman routines. He's in front of an equation-laden blackboard, holding his papers in his hand. One young, arrogant scientist, FREDERICKSON, is particularly hard on Wayne.

FREDERICKSON

What you're trying to say is that size is relative, eh, mister Szalinski?

WAYNE (annoyed)

Yes, I am, Professor Frederickson.

FREDERICKSON

That's the most idiotic thing I've ever heard. Size is definitive. What's big is big. What's small is small.

The crowd seems to agree with Frederickson.

WAYNE

You're wrong!

FREDERICKSON

Where's your proof? You have no proof!

Wayne is stuck and he knows it.

WAYNE

When Einstein came up with theories that led to the Atomic Bomb, you didn't ask him to blow one up, did you?

FREDERICKSON

You, Mr. Szalinski, are no Einstein.

The crowd laughs. Frederickson, sneering, gets up and walks out. The rest of the scientists follow, leaving Wayne alone at the podium. An older scientist, DR. BRAINARD, walks up

to Wayne.

WAYNE

Oh, hello, Dr. Brainard.

BRAINARD

Don't take it so hard, Wayne. Your ideas are very innovative. It will take time to convince people. Even I've had my share of problems with committees.

Wayne puts his notes in his briefcase.

WAYNE (sadly)

They even laughed at my tie.

Brainard stares at Wayne's loud tie.

BRAINARD

Don't feel badly. Anyone would laugh at that tie.

EXT. SZALINSKI HOUSE, DAY

Wayne's car pulls up in front of his home. Wayne walks up towards the house, crestfallen.

INT. HALLWAY, DAY

Quark runs up to greet him, barking.

WAYNE (softly)

Hiya, Quark. Okay. Treats. I know.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Wayne walks into the kitchen and gives Quark a milkbone. The dirty dishes are still in the sink. Wayne makes a mental note of that and calls out into the back yard.

WAYNE

Amy? Nick?

INT. ATTIC, DAY

Upstairs, the kids perk up.

NICK

It's Dad!

The kids begin yelling.

AMY

Up here!

LITTLE RUSS
We're up here!

DON
Mr. Szalinski!

RON
Yo!

NICK
Dad!

INT. HALLWAY, DAY

Wayne walks through the house.

WAYNE
Kids? I'm home. Amy? Nick?

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

No reply. Wayne shrugs. He takes off his loud tie, looks at it, frowns and places it in the garbage can in the kitchen; one of the foot-pedal models with a plastic bag liner. It's filled with Amy's sorta-scrambled eggs.

Glumly, Wayne walks upstairs towards the attic.

INT. ATTIC, DAY

He steps inside and sees the broken glass from the window.

WAYNE
Great. Just great.

The kids are screaming to get his attention.

AMY
Dad! We're down here!

LITTLE RUSS
Mr. Szalinski!

RON
Egghead!

Don punches Ron on the arm.

RON
Uh, Mr. Szalinski!

Wayne sees that glass fragments are scattered on the top of his machine. That doesn't exactly make his day.

WAYNE

What else can go wrong?

He backs over to where his old, reliable couch once stood and sits down. There's no couch. He goes crashing down onto the floor. The force of the impact sends the teeny-weenies tumbling onto the ground.
Wayne scrambles to his feet.

WAYNE

Oh, jeez. Not my couch! That's it!
That does it! I've had it! I've had
it with everything!

He storms out of the room. The kids squeak in protest.

AMY

Dad! Come back!

NICK

He can't hear you.

LITTLE RUSS

I thought your dad was going to save us.

AMY

He was upset.

LITTLE RUSS

Great.

AMY

Well, he had every right to be. These...
twirps smashed his machine with their
baseball.

RON

Who are you calling a twirp, beanpole?

INT. HALLWAY, DAY

Meanwhile, Wayne dials the phone.

DIANE (v.o.)

This is Diane Szalinski. I'm not home
right now, but if you leave a message
after the beep, I'll get back to you
as soon as I can.

WAYNE (outraged)

This is Wayne Szalinski. Your husband.
I don't mind you taking your stuff out
of the house when I'm not home. But our
couch? My couch? My thinking couch?
(cont.)

WAYNE (cont.)

And where are the kids? I'd appreciate it if you return them when you're done with them!!!

He slams the phone down. Quark is sitting at the foot of the stairs leading up to the attic, whining.

WAYNE

Nobody likes a whiner, Quark.

The dog continues to whine. Wayne sighs, bends down and pets the dog.

WAYNE

Except me.

INT. ATTIC, DAY

The ground beneath the kids begin to shimmy. Footsteps rumble ominously in the background. Nick jumps excitedly.

NICK

It's Dad! He's come back!

Amy stares at something high above her as a shadow falls over them all.

AMY

Oh, no!

Wayne has returned with the kitchen trashcan, a broom and a dustpan. The kids cling to each other as Wayne begins sweeping up the shards of broken glass.

Dust swirls everywhere around the kids as Wayne sweeps around the machine. Finished, he then turns to where the kids are huddled.

LITTLE RUSS

Scatter.

The children attempt to run. It's no use. They are caught by the broom. The kids attempt to cling to the frayed strands at the edge of the broom. No luck. They are swept into the dustpan.

Wayne carries the dustpan over to the open garbage can.

In the dustpan, the kids are screaming.

AMY

Dad, please!

NICK

Don't!

LITTLE RUSS

Mr. Szalinski! It's us!

RON

Knock it off!

DON

Stop!

The CAMERA follows the kids as THEY GO TUMBLING THROUGH SPACE TOWARDS THE TRASH.

INT. TRASHCAN, DAY

They hit wads of junk and go sliding about. Suddenly. DARKNESS.

INT. ATTIC, DAY

Wayne has closed the lid on the trashcan. He carries it downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Quark whines madly at Wayne's feet. Wayne tries to ignore the dog. He lifts the bag out of the trashcan, ties the top with a small green wire and makes a move to go into the backyard to place the trash at the rear of the property. Quark barks and tries to follow.

WAYNE

Quark. This isn't for you. It's garbage. You've had your treats.

He slams the door in the dog's face.

EXT. SZALINSKI BACKYARD, DAY

Wayne walks to the back of the yard. He places the bag down near the rear fence, next to several other garbage bags. He then returns to the house.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Quark whines and barks. Wayne sits down, dejected, at the kitchen table.

WAYNE

Quark! Not now, okay?

The dog, seeing that Wayne is in no mood for audio delights, slinks off into his corner and lies, pensively,

in his dog bed, glancing at the door leading outside.

EXT. SZALINSKI BACKYARD, DAY

In the yard, the garbage bag leans against the rear fence.

INT. TRASHBAG, DAY

Inside, in almost total darkness, the kids pull themselves through fast mounds of garbage and stand on an amazingly straight surface. They huddle together, scared and silent. Ron and Don scrape some of the slimed eggs off their shoulders.

DON

Yccchhhh.

RON

What is this junk? More of your dad's experiments?

AMY

They're eggs.

RON

Peeee-yooooo.

Silence. The kids gaze glumly into the darkness. Nick speaks. Slowly. Quietly.

NICK

Unless we get out of here, we're going to be taken to the dump in two days.

Amy and Russ exchange somber glances. Don reaches into his pocket. He nudges his brother. Ron suddenly grins and reaches into his pocket. Both boys produce pen knives.

RON

Lion scouts to the rescue!

Both boys tear into the thick side of the bag. The kids gather behind them.

RON

Quit shoving.

AMY

We're not.

The children, perched on garbage tilted on an angle, are leaning on the twins. As the twins cut further, the garbage shifts more. The twins finally rip a hole in the bag. The angle of the garbage causes the children to tumble out of the sack. A fistful of garbage slides out along with them.

DON/RON

Oh-oh.

INT. SZALINSKI BACKYARD, DAY

The kids and the garbage land in the yard below with a SPLAT. The kids stumble to their feet, making disgusted faces while scraping the bits of egg and bacon off them.

RON (proudly)

Nothing to it.

He ceremoniously slides his knife back into his pocket. All the kids stop what they're doing and gape at what lies ahead. They are confronted by a world unlike anything they've ever seen. From their quarter-inch height, the backyard is a totally alien landscape: large, green, never-ending...dangerous.

Before them lies a redwood forest-sized sea of grass, shadow-leaden and forboding with only a stray ray of sunlight or two illuminating the ground. The children stare somberly into the dark forestland. The Johnson kids stand together. Nick stands at Amy's side. Amy begins thinking outloud.

AMY

Our only hope is to get back to the house. If dad's machine can shrink us, it can enlarge us, too. Right, Nick?

Nick gapes at the never-ending terrain stretching out before him. He is stunned.

NICK (softly)

I suppose he could reverse the process.

AMY

Good. Then all we have to do is get across the yard.

Nick stares at the yard. He begins to cough. He pulls out his inhaler and takes several gulps.

LITTLE RUSS (to Amy)

What's his problem?

AMY (softly)

Asthma.

Nick continues to wheeze.

AMY (to Russ)

Look. Maybe you and your brothers had better go back to the house on your own. I don't know if Nick can make it.

LITTLE RUSS

That doesn't sound very....

RON

The beanpole's right. The whimoid
will just slow us down.

AMY

Can it, motormouth.

Ron turns to Don.

RON

I hate girls who're bigger than me.

Amy turns to Russ.

AMY

You can come back for us later.

Nick overhears and turns on Amy angrily.

NICK

I can make it.

AMY

You know how you get when you're
outside too long. You can't breathe.

NICK

I can do it.

The kids gaze deep into the Bobdingnagian forest.

LITTLE RUSS

Okay. So the plan is to get back
to the house, right?

KIDS (in unison)

Right.

They stand there a moment longer, looking at each other.

AMY

Which way?

LITTLE RUSS

Straight ahead, I guess.

The kids wander deeper into the underbrush. There is very
little light. They can't see the sky. They can hear noises
all around them. Buzzing. Crackling. Chomping. Suddenly,
Ron gives out with a Tarzan yell. The kids almost drop dead
from heart attacks.

LITTLE RUSS

Knock it off.

RON

Hey, this is an adventure, right?

LITTLE RUSS

Give me a break.

RON

Don't pick on me. You're not even sure we're going the right way.

LITTLE RUSS (to Amy)

Hmm. He has a point.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

He shinnies up a blade of grass. At the top, he stares into the distance.

EXT. SZALINSKI HOUSE, DAY

There, looming like a monolithic presence, surrounded by the swirling fog of debris, is the Szalinski house...seemingly a hundred miles away. From Russ' vantage point, it looks like Mt. Hood viewed from a great distance.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

The kids cluster around the base of the grass blade.

AMY

Can you see the house?

LITTLE RUSS

Sure can.

Nick breathes a sigh of relief and begins to cough. He takes his asthma inhaler out and gives himself a Darth Vader shot as Russ shinnies down the grass.

LITTLE RUSS

We can probably get there by sundown. Follow me.

AMY

Wait a minute. You don't know your way around this yard. You could walk us into a ditch.

LITTLE RUSS (patiently)

I'm the oldest, okay?

AMY

You are not. Besides, I'm the biggest.

RON

But you're a girl.

Nick clears his throat.

NICK

You're both the oldest. Why don't you both take charge?

Amy and Russ eye each other cautiously.

LITTLE RUSS

Sounds good.

AMY (reluctantly)

Well, okay.

Amy and Russ walk off. The three other boys fall in behind.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

Amy and Russ are in the lead. Amy gazes in awe at the titanic landscape.

AMY

You forget just how big this world can be sometimes.

LITTLE RUSS

When you're short, you think about that a lot.

Amy decides to let that one pass.

AMY

Do you really think we can make it back to the house today?

LITTLE RUSS

I don't know. It looked pretty far. I didn't want to scare the kids, though.

Look. I know we're not friends or anything, but we have to act like we know what we're doing. If the little kids get discouraged, they'll punk out on us.

AMY (smiling)

I'll be the mommy and you be the daddy.

LITTLE RUSS

I'm not fooling around.

AMY (sullenly)

I know.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

Don glances over his shoulder. He sees something and cocks his head. He nudges Nick. Nick turns as well. In the distance, the grass is blowing wildly. First, in one direction. Then, in another. A few pieces of twigs FALL UP INTO THE AIR.

DON

Pretty weird.

NICK

Look!

A mammoth dandelion suddenly LAUNCHES ITSELF INTO SPACE. Nick and Don exchange fishy looks. They turn back to the others. Before they can speak, the SOUND OF PROLONGED THUNDER RIPS THROUGH THE FOREST. There appears to be a real storm brewing. Blasts of wind howl through the oversized blades of grass. Russ is getting uneasy.

LITTLE RUSS

We'd better get moving.

THE EARTH BEGINS TO SHAKE VIOLENTLY BENEATH THE KIDS. They are tossed this way and that. They manage to get back onto their feet by clinging to the tree-sized roots of the grass and weeds. The whole world seems to be in turmoil. Squalls of wind and dust fly everywhere.

LITTLE RUSS

Earthquake!

Nick squints into the grit, wheezing.

NICK

Worse! Lawnmower!

The kids gape at the approaching cause of the maelstrom. THE OREO-MUNCHING PERVIS BOY, NOW THE SIZE OF THE JOLLY GREEN GIANT, IS PUSHING A KING KONG-SIZED POWER MOWER. THE GAS-POWERED MACHINE IS SHREDDING GRASS AND TOSSING THE DEBRIS INTO A BAG ATTACHED TO ITS REAR. SOME OF THE DEBRIS, HOWEVER, MISSES THE BAG AND COMES CRASHING DOWN ONTO THE FOREST FLOOR LIKE AN AVALANCHE OF UPROOTED TREES.

The kids scramble to their feet and try to outrun the machine. It's no use. Large, boulder-sized pieces of grass are smashing onto the ground all around them.

LITTLE RUSS

Get down! Get down!

Standing, Russ tries to get all the children flat onto the ground. A blast of wind sends him flying through space some ten feet.

AMY

Russell!!!!

The terrified children cling to the ground. Russ slowly crawls back towards them. The children huddle together as THE TITANIC MOWER PASSES OVER THE SECTION OF THE YARD WHERE RUSS HAS JUST MADE IT BACK FROM.

GRASS IS OBLITERATED, SUCKED INTO THE AIR. THE DIRT IS ALTERNATELY BEING BLASTED HELTER-SKELTER ACROSS THE FLOOR OF THE YARD AND BEING SUCKED STRAIGHT UP INTO THE AIR.

THE MASSIVE MACHINE HEADS FOR THE TEENY-WEENIES.

LITTLE RUSS

Hold on tight!

Above them, THE CIRCULAR BOTTOM OF THE MOWER HOVERS, LIKE AN OMINOUS MOTHERSHIP FROM SOME HELLISH PLANET. THE BLADES WHIRL MADLY. THE SUCTION CAUSES THE GRASS AROUND THE CHILDREN TO UPROOT AND BLAST OFF TOWARDS THE BLADES. The kids cling to each other. Their feet begin lifting from the ground, being drawn to the mower by its tremendous suction. Russ tries to pull the small children down to the ground. They are slowly being lifted.

LITTLE RUSS

Grab hands! Grab hands!

The kids form a human wheel, like earthbound skydivers in formation. They anchor each other as THE MOWER PASSES DIRECTLY OVER THEM.

Don holds onto one of Amy's hands and one of Russ's. He lets out a brief, terrified shriek as A HUGE BLAST OF SUCTION LIFTS HIS LEGS INTO THE AIR. HE LOSES HIS GRIP. HE IS TORN FROM THE GRASP OF HIS COMPANIONS.

RON

Don!

Ron stares, horrified, at the sight of HIS BROTHER, SWIRLING HIGH ABOVE HIM, BEING SUCKED INTO THE CLOUDS OF DUST AND DEBRIS HOVERING BENEATH THE CHURNING BLADES.

IN THE MIDDLE OF A DUST-FILLED LIMBO, WE SEE DON CLING FRANTICALLY TO A TREE-TRUNK SIZED STEM, HIS FEET STILL BEING YANKED UPWARD.

THE MOWER WHIRLS ABOVE THE REST OF THE KIDS FOR ANOTHER, LONG SECOND. THE NOISE OF THE MOTOR IS DEAFENING, SOUNDING

LIKE A MADDENED DINOSAUR. A LARGE, BRAND NEW SNEAKER SMASHES DOWN ONTO THE GROUND WITH A CRASH NEAR THEM.

The kids are buffeted about. Gradually, the noise subsides. THE MOWER MOVES ON. The THUNDER of the footsteps fades away.

The kids climb out from beneath a blanket of shredded grass, slabs of green about the size of surfboards. Ron is the first one to run off.

RON

Don! Don!

The other children follow him.

RON

He's in here somewhere. He has to be.

The children begin searching beneath the shards of grass for the missing boy. They can't find him.

LITTLE RUSS

Don!

AMY

Donald!

RON

Don? Don't kid around. Come on out.

The kids continue to search beneath the grass. Nick begins panting. He's tearing into the grass with all his might. After a tense minute or so, the children stop their search.

Ron gapes at the shredded grass.

RON

Don...mowed down at the age of ten.

DON (o.s.)

Hey! Over here! Whoah.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

The kids turn as one and see that, a city block away, Don is appearing and disappearing over a small forest of grass. He is literally bouncing up and down out of view. The kids run forward.

The children run forward and enter....

EXT. FLOWERBED/YARD, DAY

The children run into what appears to be a giant forest

filled with flowers; actually, it's just a few feet of an overgrown wild flowerbed sitting in the yard. Don is bouncing up and down on a flower, using it like a trampoline. Unfortunately, he has no control of his bounces.

RON

You jerk! You'll do anything for attention!

DON

Whoaaaaahhh.

RON

Don't mess around, Don.

DON

I didn't do anything.

Ron makes a move to grab his brother off the flower. He keeps on missing him. On the fifth or sixth bounce, Don winds up tumbling onto the ground. He gets up to his feet. He's shakey and there's a lopsided grin on his face. Everyone hugs Don except Ron. When the other kids are done, Don stands, smiling at his brother. He hugs Ron. Ron brushes him aside.

RON

You're a real turkey, you know that?

EXT. GIANT FLOWERBED, DAY

Amy and Russ, with the knowledge that Don is safe, take in the flowerbed. They stare, transfixed, at the Olympian swath of color.

AMY

It's beautiful.

Russ stares at Amy. She faces him, beaming. Slightly embarrassed, he looks away.

LITTLE RUSS

Yeah. It's okay.

Ron checks out the flowers, unimpressed. He gets an idea. He nudges Don. The twins grin at the flowers. Ron turns to Don. They smile in unison.

RON/DON

Recess!

They run by Nick towards the flowers. Nick, caught in their wake, goes spinning. He lands on the ground in sitting position. For one, brief moment, the kids act like total children. It's as if they've stumbled onto paradise. Amy

and Russ stand behind Nick.

NICK
It looks like Oz.

The twins discover that the shorter flowers make perfect trampolines. They begin bouncing up and down and from one flower to another. Ron gives another Tarzan yell.

DON
Up, up and awaaay!

LITTLE RUSS
Be careful. You might hurt yourselves.

He catches himself.

LITTLE RUSS
I can't believe I said that.

He turns and sees that Amy has fashioned a hula skirt around her belt from large flower pedals.

AMY
Oh, honey. I just have to have this dress.

LITTLE RUSS (grinning)
Cut it out, willya?

AMY
Please, dear. We can charge it.

Nick giggles. The twins leap by a "puff" flower. The flower disintegrates and rains down a shower of flowery "snow." The clearing really begins looking like a fairyland, now.

Nick gets up and starts wheeling joyfully through the "snow." Soon, he begins to sneeze. He pulls out his asthma inhaler and takes a whiff.

AMY
Are you okay?

NICK
Uh-huh. It's my hayfever. I'm fine.

He smiles. Pockets his inhaler. Puffs out his chest. He marches straight for the flowers, determined to have fun.

The twins are whooping and rebounding wildly from flower to flower. Nick hesitantly tries a bounce on a nearby flower. He lands awkwardly. He tries another bound. An another. He loses his balance and winds up tumbling onto the ground. He looks around, embarrassed. Amy and Russ have seen him and

laugh. Nick grins, realizing that the laughter isn't malicious. He gets back onto the flower and begins bouncing away, gradually getting the hang of it.

NICK (almost whispering)

Yahooo.

Gathering courage, he lets out a full whoop.

NICK

Yahoooooooo!!!!

EXT. SZALINSKI YARD, DAY, AERIAL POV

We hear, very faintly, the sounds of the frolicking children, AS WE SOAR HIGH ABOVE THE YARD, A DEAFENING BUZZING SOUND ECHOING IN OUR EARS.

EXT. YARD/FOREST, DAY

Amy and Russ watch the younger children play. Russ glances at the sun. He calls to the kids on the flowers.

LITTLE RUSS

Okay. It's time to move on.

Nick stops bouncing immediately. Ron and Don continue playing.

LITTLE RUSS

Come on, guys.

RON

No way, Jose.

LITTLE RUSS

I'm not kidding. I'm counting to five.

RON (to Don)

He's beginning to sound a lot like dad.

DON

Scary, huh?

LITTLE RUSS

Ronald. Donald.

AMY (to Russ)

Try to control those two, will you?

Ron notices Nick's hesitation. The little boy is obviously waiting for a cue from the twins.

RON

What are you stopping for? We're having fun, right?

Nick nods.

NICK

But Russ said...

RON (mimicking)

"But Russ said." What a wuss.

Russ walks forward and snatches Don off a flower. Don quietly stands by his side. Russ then pulls Ron off a flower. Ron is struggling.

RON

Hey. Cut it out! You wanna hurt me or something? I'll tell mom!

RUSS (quietly)

Look. There's something you'd both better understand. We're in a lot of trouble, okay? This isn't a game. We could die out here and no one would notice. The only way we're going to get out of this is if we all help each other. Got that?

RON

Uh-huh.

Little Russ, thinking it's all settled, turns his back on the twins. Ron immediately runs back to a flower and launches himself, again, on a flower-trampoline.

RON

But first....playtime.

The twins start bouncing again. Nick laughs and resumes as well. Amy and Russ exchange exasperated glances.

EXT. SZALINSKI YARD, DAY, AERIAL POV

WITH THE BUZZING DRONING IN OUR EARS, SOMETHING SHADOWY SWOOPS DOWN TOWARDS THE CHILDREN, STILL ROMPING FAR BELOW US.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

Amy and Russ watch the younger children play. Amy stiffens. She hears a faint buzzing.

AMY

What's that?

LITTLE RUSS

Sounds like a buzzsaw. It's probably my dad.

Amy stares at the sky around her.

AMY

It's coming from different directions.

LITTLE RUSS

Naaaah. It's just your ears playing tricks on you.

AMY

Will you shut up and listen?

Russ glowers but does as he's told. The buzzing seems to be coming from all around them.

Russ is getting nervous. The three younger children gradually slow down their bouncing. Ron, Don and Nick stand on their flowers, heads cocked. The noise around them grows louder and louder. The flower bed sounds like the streets of London just before the Nazi Blitz. The droning is overwhelming. Amy screams and points as a dark cloud falls upon the children.

A TITANIC HONEYBEE HOVERS OVER THE FLOWERBED.

LITTLE RUSS

Hit the dirt!

The twins dive off the flowers and run in one direction. Nick runs in another. Amy and Russ retreat together. THE BEE BEGINS FLYING FROM FLOWER TO FLOWER, EXTRACTING POLLEN, STUFFING THE STICKY YELLOW STUFF INTO "BASKETS" ON ITS REAR LEGS. From the children's POV, the bee is the size of a flying VW van.

Nick crouches beneath a flower, wheezing. The bee alights directly next to him. The pollen-gathering BEE DESCENDS LOWER AND LOWER. Nick trembles, trying to hold his breath.

Amy makes a move to yell. Russ puts a hand around her mouth.

LITTLE RUSS

Shhhhh.

Nick watches, horrified, AS THE BEE GETS CLOSER AND CLOSER. He's almost hyperventillating. THE BEE SUDDENLY SCOOPS NICK UP AND PLASTERS HIM ONTO ONE OF HIS HIND LEGS WITH THE STICKY SLABS OF POLLEN.

Amy breaks away from Russ and runs towards the bee.

AMY

Nick!

Ron and Don gape at each other.

DON

Holy...

RON

Cow!

Nick is half-smothered in pollen.

NICK

Amy!

Russ springs forward and, sprinting in front of Amy, leaps onto a flower, using it as a trampoline.

LITTLE RUSS

Wait here!

THE BEE, SATIATED, BEGINS TO TAKE OFF. Russ bounces from flower to flower, finally sailing through the air towards the bee. HE DIVES ONTO THE BACK OF THE RETREATING BEE.

NICK

Russell! Help!

Amy and the twins watch, fearfully, as THE BEE, ALONG WITH NICK AND RUSS, disappears in the sky. The humming noise fades into the distance. The twins stand, transfixed.

RON

Now, what?

AMY

We do as your brother told us. We wait.

EXT. SKY, DAY

Meanwhile, on THE BACK OF THE BEE, RUSS GETS A BREATHTAKING (AND DIZZY) RIDE HIGH ABOVE THE YARD. THE BEE TWISTS AND TURNS, RUSS STRUGGLING TO GET CONTROL OF THE INSECT BY GRABBING ITS WINGS. THE PROBLEM IS, HALF OF THE TIME, HE'S ALMOST SLIDING OFF THE BEE'S BACK. NICK SQUIRMS IN THE POLLEN ON THE BEE'S BACK LEG.

NICK

Russ! Russ!

LITTLE RUSS

Hold on tight, Nick. Hold on!

THE BEE CONTINUES TO CAREEN OVER THE YARD, QUITE ANNOYED

WITH ITS SURPRISE BAGGAGE.

EXT. YARD, DAY

Near the house, we see the Pervis boy surveying the newly cut grass.

EXT. SKY, DAY

Russ still struggles for control of the bee. He looks up.
THE BEE IS HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE PERVIS BOY'S HEAD.

LITTLE RUSS
Pervis!!!! Look out!!

NICK
Hey!!!!

EXT. YARD, DAY

We hear the tiny voices of the teeny-weenies call out. So does the Pervis boy, sort of. Confused, he starts swatting at the bee.

TOMMY
G'wan. Getoutta here.

The bee dodges and ducks the boy's swings.

EXT. SKY, DAY

THE BEE SWINGS AWAY FROM THE PERVIS BOY JUST AS RUSS GRABS ITS WINGS, GIVING THEM A SOLID YANK. UNABLE TO CONTROL ITS FLIGHT, THE BEE BEGINS A SPIRALING DIVE TOWARDS THE GROUND.

RUSS/NICK
Woaaaaaaaahhhhhh!!!!!!!

EXT. YARD, JUNGLE, DAY

THE BEE LANDS NOSE FIRST WITH A SICKENING CRASH....SENDING BOTH BOYS TUMBLING OFF. THE INSECT AND THE TWO BOYS LAY, INERT, ON THE FOREST FLOOR.

EXT. YARD, DAY

Amy and the twins linger by the flowerbed.

RON
I don't think we should hang around here.

AMY
We promised we'd wait and we will.

RON

You promised. I say we should go after Russ. You're just yellow.

AMY

If I were your sister, I'd spank you until you couldn't sit down.

RON

If you were my sister, I'd put myself up for adoption. Let's go.
(to Don)

I'm going to find Russ and the wuss. Are you coming or what?

Ron stalks off. Don sighs, gives Amy a "what can I do?" look and takes off after his brother. Amy hesitates, watching the two boys disappear. She grits her teeth and follows them.

INT. SZALINSKI HALL, DAY

Wayne is on the phone. We hear the last part of Diane's message before the beep. He slams the phone down. Quark is at his feet, whining.

WAYNE

I know. I know. Lunchtime.

The doorbell rings. Wayne walks towards the front door.

WAYNE

It's not like Amy and Nick to miss lunch without letting me know. Even if they are with their mother.

INT. SZALINSKI HOUSE, DAY

Wayne opens the door. Diane is there. They stare at each other angrily. Diane thrusts a handful of papers in his hand.

DIANE

Just sign them and I'll be on my way.

She marches inside. Wayne stands at the door. He pokes his head outside and looks to the left and the right, expecting to see the kids. They aren't there. Puzzled, he returns inside and closes the door.

WAYNE

Where are the kids?

DIANE

What?

WAYNE

And the couch? Where's my thinking couch?

DIANE

Where it always is.

WAYNE

It is not. You took it.

DIANE

I did not.

WAYNE

Yes, you did. You came back this morning and stole it.

DIANE

For your information, I spent the entire morning working on a deadline.

She glances around.

DIANE

Where are the kids?

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Diane walks into the kitchen. Wayne is trailing in the hall behind her. Quark continues to whine.

WAYNE

They're with you, aren't they?

DIANE

Quiet, Quark.

WAYNE

With the couch? And your things?

DIANE

Earth to Wayne. Earth to Wayne. I don't have the couch. Where are the children?

Wayne raises a finger to his lips, thoughtfully. Quark barks.

WAYNE

Quiet, Quark,
Well, I did forget to pick up Amy's dress and Nick's asthma medicine.

DIANE

How could you?

WAYNE

You didn't remind me...

Quark barks again.

DIANE/WAYNE

Quiet, Quark!!!

Quark stops barking and runs around in front of the back door. Wayne and Diane walk through the swinging door leading to the yard. Quark tries to run out after them. The door swings back on him. Thump. The dog retreats back into the kitchen yelping.

EXT. SZALINSKI YARD, DAY

Wayne stands on the back steps, Diane behind him.

WAYNE/DIANE

Amy? Nick?

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

Deep in the forest, the twins and Amy hear a thundering roar. It's the pitch of a tyrannosaurus rex. We can barely make out the words.

WAYNE/DIANE ROAR

Amy? Nick?

The kids run forward.

AMY

Mom! Dad!

DON

Mr. Szalinski! We're over here!
Over here!

RON

Yo! Mr. Szalinski!

EXT. JOHNSON YARD, DAY

Meanwhile, while Wayne and Diane are calling for their kids. Big Russ, still wearing his cap, walks out into his backyard where Mae is watering her garden.

BIG RUSS

Ron! Don! Russell!

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

The kids continue to run forward, the twins take the lead, leaving Amy far behind.

RON

It's dad!

DON

Dad! Over here!

EXT. JOHNSON YARD, DAY

Russ, spotting Wayne, walks over to the fence. He leans his arm on the fence and comes up with an elbow-ful of syrup. He frowns as Wayne walks over.

BIG RUSS

Hey, Szalinski. The yard looks a lot better. You know, you could probably have a flower garden over there.

MAE

Begonias would be nice.

DIANE

I always meant to...but there never was the time....

WAYNE

Hey, have you seen my kids?

BIG RUSS

Naah. I was just looking for mine. They never miss lunch.

WAYNE

Mine, either.

Wayne and Russ look at each other for a moment. They both turn away from each other and, trying their best to ignore each other, begin calling their children's names. They stop, waiting for each other to continue. A beat. When neither one begins calling again, each feels it's okay to continue. They both begin call again in tandem.

EXT. JUNGLE/YARD, DAY

The children continue to run breathlessly forward, shouting to their parents.

AMY

It's no use. They can't hear us.

RON

I thought your dad was a genius.

AMY

He is, but he still has normal ears.

EXT. YARD, DAY

The parents stand on either side of the fence, Mae continues to water her garden.

MAE

Nice to see you back, Diane.
Welcome home.

DIANE

I just came to check on the kids...
but Wayne seems to have misplaced
them.

MAE

I'm sure they'll turn up for supper.

DIANE

You're probably right. Good to see
you, Mae.

Wayne and Diane walk back towards the house.

EXT. JOHNSON HOUSE, DAY

Mae finishes watering her lawn. She turns off the nozzle of the house and glances at the Szalinski's backyard. It's almost all yellow.

MAE

Tsk. Tsk. Poor grass.

She turns the nozzle back on and sends a spray of water over the fence and into the yard.

EXT. FOREST/JUNGLE, DAY

Russ and Nick slowly sit up, dazed. As they do so, THEY NOTICE THE BEE SHAKE ITSELF AWAKE AS WELL. THE BEE IS VERY, VERY ANGRY. IT SPOTS THE TWO BOYS. WINGS BUZZING OMINOUSLY, IT BEGINS TO ADVANCE.

LITTLE RUSS

Are you strong enough to run?

NICK

Y-y-you bet.

The boys start to run from the bee. THE BEE SPRINGS FORWARD IN AN INCREDIBLY FAST MOTION. IT LOOKS LIKE IT WILL BE ATOP THE BOYS IN A MATTER OF SECONDS.

The boys seemed doomed when, WITHOUT WARNING, THE BEE IS K.O.'S BY A TITANIC DROPLET OF WATER. The two boys stop, puzzled.

NICK
Are we safe?

LITTLE RUSS
I'm not sure....

Suddenly, TITANIC DROPLETS OF WATER BEGIN FALLING ALL AROUND THEM. WITHIN SECONDS, THE GROUND BENEATH THEIR FEET TURNS TO MUSH. THE YARD IS SLOWLY FILLING UP WITH WATER.

LITTLE RUSS
Come on! Up here!

Russ shinnies up a blade of grass, pulling Nick up behind him, AS THE YARD SLOWLY FILLS WITH WATER.

EXT. YARD, DAY

We see Mae, humming merrily, hosing down the lawn in earnest.

EXT. FOREST/JUNGLE DAY

Amy and the twins walk through the twisted terrain.

AMY
Nick?

RON/DON
Russ?

A ROARING NOISE sends the ground beneath them trembling.

RON
What the?

They turn and see a CASCADING WALL OF WATER HEADING FOR THEM.

AMY
Head for higher ground!

The three children run for their lives AS THE WALL OF WATER APPROACHES THEM. THERE'S NO ESCAPE. THEY RUN BREATHLESSLESSY AS THE SUDDEN FLOOD SMASHES THROUGH THE GRASS AND TWIGS.

AMY
Look!

Ahead of them lies a gigantic pop bottle cap. Amy vaults into the cap, turns, and yanks the two small boys inside by their belts AS THE WATER CATCHES UP WITH THEM. BEFORE THEY KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, THEY ARE SENT FOR A SPIRALING WHITE WATER RAPIDS RIDE. THE BOTTLE CAP SPINS MADLY AS THE WATER RUSHES THROUGH THE YARD. The three children cling to its side as it bumps and zig-zags through the raging river, like a waterborne tilt-a-whirl car.

EXT. JUNGLE/YARD, DAY

IN THE HURRICANE CAUSED BY THE FLOOD, RUSS AND NICK CLING TO THE GRASS BLADE. THE WATER RAGES BELOW THEM. NICK BEGINS TO SLIP.

NICK

Russ!

Russ bends down and grabs Nick by the back of his shirt just as the little boy begins to fall into the water. Russ grimaces, Nick's struggling body causing him to slide down the grass blade. The grass blade is being buffeted by the raging river. The two boys are getting closer to the water when...

AMY

Nick! Russell!

THE SODA BOTTLE CAP GOES CAREENING DOWN THE RIVER TOWARDS RUSS AND NICK. The twins hold on for dear life as the cap barrels towards the grass blade.

LITTLE RUSS

Geronimo!

THE BOTTLE CAP PASSES BENEATH THE BLADE OF GRASS. RUSS DROPS NICK INTO THE CAP AND, THEN, JUMPS FEET-FIRST INTO THE CAP.

INT. CAP, DAY

NICK LANDS WITH A THUD, ROLLING INTO AMY'S ARMS. RUSS LANDS STANDING. IT LOOKS AS IF HE'S ABOUT TO LOSE HIS BALANCE WHEN A HAND APPEARS. RUSS GRABS IT AND IS TOSSED ONTO THE FLOOR OF THE CAP. HE FINDS HIMSELF HOLDING HANDS WITH AMY. HE QUICKLY DISENGAGES HIMSELF AND CLINGS TO THE SIDE OF THE CAP AS IT CONTINUES TO SPIRAL IN THE RIVER.

EXT. YARD, DAY

Mae, quite pleased with his act of kindness, shuts off the hose and leaves the yard.

EXT. RIVERBED, DAY

The cap goes crashing into a riverbank as the flood waters recede. The children tumble, gasping from the cap. They collapse on the "riverbed," exhausted. Amy hugs Nick. The twins kneel next to Russ.

DON

Hey, brother. We missed you.

RON

Yeah. We thought some Queen Bee married you or something.

Nick sits up, laughing. He puts his arm around Russ, facing the twins.

NICK

Naaah. But you should have been on that bee! It was great! And, then, Russ made the bee crash. And it came after us and...

Russ staggers to his feet.

LITTLE RUSS

We can talk later. Now, we've got to head home.

Amy smiles.

RON

Aww, come on, Russ. We're tired.

AMY (acting like a mother)

Listen to Russell. We're all together again. We have to be strong. We have to get home. We can't dally here.

RON

Dally?

DON

She's right. It's getting late.

The three young boys look at each other.

RON

I bet it's almost supertime.

DON

I bet mom made hamburgers.

He turns to Nick.

DON

Saturday is hamburger night.

The three boys aigh hungrily and look at each other sadly.

LITTLE RUSS

Let's go.

AMY

Come on, troops.

The five kids begin their trek again. Don and Ron, forcing themselves to act like scouts, begin singing "The Green Grass Grew All Around" as they march. Nick joins in as well. Russ and Amy smile at the trio.

LITTLE RUSS

Kids.

AMY

Yeah.

The three younger boys suddenly come to a stop. They gaze ahead, a look of wonder and pleasure on their faces.

INT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

There, before them, illuminated by an almost religiously inspired stream of sunlight is a titanic oreo cookie. Soggy from the "rainstorm," the cookie glistens magically like a cream-filled rainbow.

INT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

Ron is profoundly moved. The sunlight caresses the oreo magically.

RON

I think I've died and gone to heaven.

NICK

It's as big as a house.

RON

I'm hungry enough to eat it myself.

NICK

Double filling. It has double filling.

The kids run forward to the cookie. They reach it and begin tearing out handfuls of white cream filling.

RON

I was born for something like this.

Don looks up, horrified.

DON

Uh, guys?

OVER THE TOP OF THE COOKIE APPEARS AN ARMY OF ANTENNAE, TWITCHING OMINOUSLY.

LITTLE RUSS (looking up)

In here! Quack!

The children dart behind the cover of grass as A HORDE OF TITANIC ANTS THUNDER OVER THE TOP. THE ANTS SWARM OVER THE MASSIVE OREO, DISMANTLING IT WITH EASE.

RON (whispering)
What pigs!

THE ANTS BEGIN CARRYING LARGE WADS OF THE COOKIE OFF IN THEIR MANDIBLES.

DON
That's not fair!

RON
That was our cookie.
(to Don)
I say we fight them.

LITTLE RUSS
Stay down. They might think we're food.

RON
You're kidding me. Ants don't eat people.

NICK
We're not normal-sized people.
They might think we're crumbs or enemy insects or something.

RON
They're only bugs. I squash them all the time.

NICK
You couldn't try that now. Ants can lift over twenty times their weight. That's like us lifting a tractor.

RON
No sh...kidding.

LITTLE RUSS
How do you know all this stuff?

NICK
I read a lot of books.

LITTLE RUSS
You must read 24 hours a day.

NICK (shrugging)
I don't have anyone to play with.

THE ARMY OF ANTS CONSUMES THE COOKIE. THEY MARCH OFF, CARRYING LARGE CRUMBS OF IT. LEAVING LAST, CARRYING A BIIIIIG PIECE, IS A BABY ANT. IT STRUGGLES WITH THE BOULDER-SIZED WAD OF CHOCOLATE. IT DROPS IT. PICKS IT UP. TRIES PUSHING IT. THE LITTLE ANT IS DETERMINED TO MOVE THIS CRUMB. IT DOESN'T CARE HOW BIG THE CRUMB IS.

RON (suddenly grinning)
I say it's time for a snack.

DON
Get serious.

RON
I have a plan.

Ron tears off a stiff piece of grass and fashions it into a spear. He looks at Don. Don sighs, shakes his head and does the same.

DON
I hate it when you have plans.

RON
Ready, brother?

DON
I guess so.

THE TWINS CHARGE THE ANT, WHOOPING LIKE INDIANS, SWINGING THEIR "STICKS" OVER THEIR HEADS. THE LITTLE ANT, PANICKING, DROPS THE CRUMB. IT BEGINS TO RUN AFTER THE RETREATING COLONY.

The rest of the kids run through the soggy terrain towards the twins.

AMY
Don't let it get away! It'll bring
back the others!

DON (to Ron)
Nice plan.

RON
Okay. Now it's time for plan number two.

RON RUNS UP TO THE ANT AND DIVES ON ITS BACK, COWBOY STYLE, WHOOPING.

RON
Scouts to the rescue!

The rest of the kids run up to Don. At first, they all laugh at the sight of Ron, CLINGING TO THE ANT'S BACK. It's great sport.

DON
Ride 'em cowboy.

Don JUMPS ONTO THE BACK OF THE ANT AS WELL. THE TWINS WHOOP LOUDLY AS THE ANT CAREENS AROUND THE CLEARING IN CIRCLES.

LITTLE RUSS

Okay. Enough fun. Pull him over.

ON THE ANT, RON AND DON EXCHANGE GLANCES.

DON

You heard Russ. Pull him over.

RON

You pull him over.

Each one of the twins grab an antennae and try to yank the ant in one direction or the other. It doesn't work. They glance meaningfully at each other before turning towards the rest of the kids.

DON/RON

We can't pull him over.

The kids watch helplessly as the twins' ANT SKITTERS AROUND THE CLEARING.

AMY

Don't let him go!

RON

I'm not! I'm not!

AMY (disgusted)

Boys.

LITTLE RUSS

Come on, Nick.

Russ and Nick charge the ant and try to grab ahold of it, brahma bull wrestler style. The ant easily out maneuvers them. They dive and miss, hitting the muddy dirt with a thud. Nick is slow to get up. Russ grabs the ant by the neck and is carried along, heels dragging on the ground. He is shaken off and falls at Amy's feet.

AMY

Pathetic.

Russ glances around, looking for some way to help. He picks up one of the twin's spears. Amy looks at the spear, reaches over and bends it easily. She looks at THE RAMPAGING ANT. The spear isn't going to work. Amy spots the fallen crumb and runs towards it.

THE ANT CONTINUES TO REEL AROUND. Amy takes a wad of cookie in her hand and walks directly in front of the charging ant. Nick, still sitting dazed in the dirt, is horrified. He is coughing and wheezing.

NICK

No, Amy! Look out!

Amy swallows hard and holds her ground. The ant goes skidding to a stop. The twins go tumbling from its back. The ant slowly approaches Amy, antennae twitching. Amy gazes into the face of the little ant. She crinkles her nose. It's repulsive. The ant calmly walks over and gently removes the small piece of crumb from her hand. It munches on it merrily.

Little Russ walks up to the ant and slips a grass lariat around its neck. The ant, munching merrily, allows it.

The twins are both dizzy. They stagger up to Amy.

RON

All right, Stretch. Stretch the lion tamer.

The kids WATCH THE ANT MUNCH THE CRUMB.

RON

Wow. A bug pig-out.

LITTLE RUSS

We can't just leave him here. He might bring back the whole colony.

AMY

You know, if he'd let us, we could use him for transportation.

LITTLE RUSS

What?

AMY

He moves a lot faster than we do. We could get through the yard in half the time.

DON

Ride him like a horse?

RON

Or an elephant in darkest Africa!

AMY

Sort of. He's too small to hold all of us, through.

DON

But he's not tame or anything. How will we steer him?

AMY

I have an idea.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DAY

AMY, DON, RUSS AND NICK ARE BEING PULLED ON AN INDIAN-STYLE SLED ATTACHED TO THE ANT. THE SLED HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED FROM BITS OF GRASS AND FLOWER STEMS. RON IS ON THE ANT'S BACK, WEARING A FLOWER LEAF AROUND HIS HEAD LIKE A TURBAN, HOLDING A STICK WITH AN OREO CRUMB AFFIXED TO THE END. THE CRUMB IS DANGLING IN FRONT OF THE ANT'S HEAD. The kids are singing "And The Green Grass Grew All Around" while munching smaller crumbs.

AMY

Okay. Hang a left.

RON TILTS THE STICK TO THE LEFT SIDE OF THE ANT'S HEAD. THE ANT GOES FOR THE FOOD. IT'S THE OLD CARROT ON THE STICK PLOY. THE ANT VEERS LEFT. RON SMILES HAPPILY.

RON

Who says that junk food isn't good for you?

He turns to Amy.

RON

Where to now, Bwana-ette?

AMY (laughing)

Home, James.

RON

The name's Tarzan.

Ron gives an impromptu yell. He holds the stick directly in front of the ant. The ant plows forward.

EXT. HOMES, DUSK

A patrol car sits outside the two homes. There's an officer interviewing Big Russ and Mae at the front door.

EXT. JOHNSON HOME, DUSK

At the Johnson's, a cop is furiously taking notes as he interviews the parents.

COP

Any reason your kids would want to run away?

MAE

No. None at all. The twins were in the yard playing and our oldest boy, Russ, was...Oh, God. You don't think because he was cut from the football team....

Big Russ "shhhhh"s her.

BIG RUSS

There's no reason my kids would run away. They're happy kids. No problems.

COP

Uh-huh.

BIG RUSS

What's "uh-huh" supposed to mean?

MAE

Russell.

BIG RUSS

Well, I don't like the way he said "uh-huh." It didn't sound sincere.

COP

Did you have an argument with your son this morning, Mr. Johnson?

BIG RUSS

I don't argue with my kids, mister. I discuss things with them.

COP

Uh-huh. Did you discuss his getting cut from the team?

BIG RUSS

What are you getting at?

COP

Maybe he felt you were angry with him.

BIG RUSS (steamed)

Me? Angry with him? I love those kids! I'm their father. I worship the ground they walk on, dammit.

Russ kicks his foot forward. He hits a lawn jockey, sending its head tumbling into space. The cop looks at him impassively.

COP

Uh-huh.

BIG RUSS
He's doin' it again!

EXT. SZALINSKI HOME, DUSK

Wayne and Diane show a second cop to the front door. They are hand in hand.

COP #2
Okay, folks. We'll tell all our patrol cars to be on the lookout for two kids and a couch.

WAYNE
Beige couch.

COP #2
Right. We'll check in with you tomorrow.

The cop leaves the parents. Wayne makes a move to go inside. Diane, glancing at the Johnson's home, where the first cop is leaving, walks out of the front door.

DIANE
In a minute, dear.

Wayne goes inside. Diane walks over to the Johnson front porch where Mae watches the patrol car drive off.

EXT. HOMES, DUSK

Mae looks up at Diane and smiles sadly.

MAE
Hi, Diane.

DIANE
Hello, Mae. Problems?

MAE
The twins and Russ have run away.

Diane cocks her head inquisitively.

MAE
I knew Russ was upset this morning, but to run away? I keep on telling Russell, go easy with the children. Don't get so excited. But Russell is just as much a child as the kids are.

DIANE (smiling sadly)
Wayne, too.

MAE

Well, for better or for worse, right?

DIANE (awkwardly)

Right.

INT. SZALINSKI KITCHEN, DUSK

Wayne is tethering a barking Quark to a long leash in the kitchen as Diane enters.

DIANE

Not now, Quark. Did you know the Johnson children are gone, too?

WAYNE

No. I can't figure why they would have taken the furniture...I wonder if they were upset about breaking the window?

DIANE

What window?

WAYNE

In the attic. They threw a baseball through the window and hit my machine and...

DIANE

Amy and Nick don't play baseball....

Their eyes meet.

WAYNE

The Johnson kids do.

DIANE/WAYNE

They're missing, too.

They trot upstairs to the attic.

INT. ATTIC, DUSK

Wayne picks up the ball. He tosses it to Diane. She looks at it. It has a burn mark on it.

DIANE

It has to belong to the twins next door.

Wayne inspects the machine.

WAYNE

The override circuitry is damaged.

DIANE

What?

Wayne is onto something. He gets down on his knees.

WAYNE

It's possible that the ball activated the particle beams.

DIANE

What are you talking about?

He crawls around the floor in an exaggerated, careful manner...as if his arms and legs were made of rubber.

WAYNE

Nothing. I hope...Don't move!
Oh, jeez.

He gingerly picks up a teen-weeny piece of debris. He holds it in the palm of his hand. He looks at the machine. At first, he is elated. Then, the reality of the situation hits him.

WAYNE (enthused)

It works!

Then, soberly.

WAYNE

My god. It works.

He stands and, like an Indian rubber man trying to levitate off the ground, carefully walks over to Diane on his tip-toes.

DIANE

What is it?

In his hand is a tiny, perfectly intact, beige couch. It's smaller than a button.

WAYNE (somberly)

The thinking couch.

Diane stares at him, dumbfounded.

DIANE

Do you think the kids....?

WAYNE

If the couch was affected and the kids were up here...all of them...

They both get down on their hands and knees.

DIANE

Kids? Are you here?

They begin crawling, trying as hard as possible not to

touch the floor, across the room. They sort of look like Marcel Marceau impersonating a tarantula.

WAYNE

Kids? Careful now. Watch you knees.

DIANE

I know. I know. Amy? Nick?

After a moment of creepy-crawling, Wayne focuses on the dustpan leaning against the wall. He leaps to his feet. Diane gasps.

WAYNE

Get the flashlight! I'll get a magnifying glass!

He runs out of the room. Diane follows him, taking veeerrry long, bouyant steps.

INT. STAIRWAY, DUSK

They run downstairs.

DIANE

What about the children?

WAYNE

I swept the room this afternoon and put the trash out in the yard!

EXT. YARD, DUSK

In the gathering darkness of early evening, Diane and Wayne carefully go through the trash, using a large flashlight, the magnifying glass and tweezers.

Big Russ Johnson sneaks out into his backyard and leans against the fence. He reaches under his hat and produces a cigarette. He lights up and takes a deep breath. He then notices Wayne and Diane. They don't spot Big Russ, however. He sees the neighbors whispering into the large trashbags as they tweeze their way through the gunk.

WAYNE

Amy? Nick?

DIANE

Can you hear us?

Big Russ gapes at them, straining his ears to hear what they're saying. He can't hear a word.

Wayne spots a hole in the side of the bag. He shines the flashlight on it.

WAYNE

Look. The kids must have made it from the inside, see?

He trains the flashlight on the ground.

DIANE

Do you think they got out?

WAYNE

They must have made it into the grass and...

He stops mid-sentence, a terrified look on his face.

DIANE

Wayne? What's wrong?

WAYNE

The Pervis boy mowed the lawn today!

Russ still strains his ears to hear. No dice.

Wayne points to several Hefty bags in the corner of the yard.

WAYNE

Let's try those.

Wayne and Diane undo the bags and begin sifting through the grass collected in them.

WAYNE

Amy?

DIANE

Nick?

Big Russ takes a deep puff.

BIG RUSS

Eggheads. They're the first to crack under pressure.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, DUSK

The kids continue to slog onward through the soggy yard. The ant is growing weary. Ron removes the crumb from in front of the ant.

RON

I think the antmobile needs to recharge his batteries.

The kids tumble from the sled. They tether the ant and the

antmobile to a stalk of grass.

NICK

Me, too.

DON

It's getting dark.

RON

We'll never get back in time.

Ron seems really depressed. Amy puts an arm around him.

AMY

That's okay. At least our dad'll know something is wrong if we're not back by supper. He'll look for us.

LITTLE RUSS

I don't think he'll see us.

RON

He doesn't even know we're shrunk.

The kids are now sitting, despairing. Amy refuses to be beaten.

AMY

He'll find us. I know he will.

DON

She's pretty gutsy.

RON

For a girl.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, NIGHT

We see that the kids are sitting near the fence. Big Russ, above, is still smoking, watching Wayne and Diane in the back of the yard. He casually flicks the ashes off his cigarette.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, NIGHT

Suddenly, the air is filled with a hissing sound.

LITTLE RUSS

Look out!

FLAKES OF MOLTEN ASH THE SIZE OF AUTO TIRES BEGIN DRIFTING DOWN AROUND THEM, SIZZLING INTO THE SOGGY GROUND.

LITTLE RUSS

Take cover!

The kids run off.

EXT. YARD, NIGHT

Big Russ continues to flick his ashes.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, NIGHT

The kids huddle together. THE ASHES ARE RAINING DOWN HEAVIER, NOW.

Ron and Don are huddled under one leaf when a WAD OF ASH LANDS ONTOP OF IT, BURNING A HOLE THROUGH IT. Don takes off screen left. Ron runs to screen right, the CAMERA following him.

He runs blindly into the forest. He skids into a small pond of horrible goo. He sinks up to his waist. The puddle is covered with THE BODIES OF LARGE, DEAD FLIES.

RON

Help! Quicksand!

Ron begins to struggle helplessly in the mire. The other kids dart out from behind their cover and run to the edge of the pond of goo. ASHES CONTINUE TO FALL.

NICK

That can't be quicksand.

Ron struggles, glancing around him. He lifts up a hand and puts it to his mouth. He tastes the goop.

RON

Help! Syrup!

AMY (puzzled)

How did syrup get in our yard?

RON

Never mind. Never mind.

He squirms around, singing further into the mush.

AMY

Don't move. The more you move, the faster you'll sink.

Don tries to stick his arm towards his brother. It won't reach. He almost topples into the pond himself. Nick grabs his legs and pulls him back. THE ASHES STILL FALL.

AMY

We'll make a rope. We'll pull you out. Keep calm.

Ron lies in the syrup. He is slowly sinking. His teeth are chattering. He is beginning to sob; breathless little boy-terrified gasps.

RON (softly, shaky)
Hurry. Please hurry.

He slowly turns his head to the left. The body of a half-dead fly floats, half-submerged, in the goop. The fly is still buzzing half-heartedly. Ron is really scared. He turns his head away from the fly and looks at something else. Anything else.

The kids are tearing at grass fibers, tying them together.

EXT. YARD/FENCE, NIGHT

Big Russ inhales on his cigarette, still watching the Szalinskis. He takes one, last puff before tossing the cigarette into the Szalinski yard and moving closer to Wayne and Diane for a better look.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, NIGHT

Down below, the kids are trying to toss their newly-made rope towards Ron. They keep on falling short of their mark.

AMY
More rope!

Nick peels a strand of grass off a stalk. A ROARING, WHOOSHING NOISE REVERBERATES ALL AROUND THEM.

LITTLE RUSS (looking up)
What the heck was that?

The kids take off in every direction as THE GLOWING, SMOLDERING CIGARETTE BUTT SLICES THROUGH THE AIR. IT LANDS IN THE SYRUP, STILL BURNING, A TOBACCO METEORITE.

THE UNLIT SECTION OF THE CIGARETTE BUTT LANDS NEXT TO RON. THE CIGARETTE IS SLOWLY BURNING DOWN TOWARDS HIM. HE'LL BE BURNED TO DEATH WITHIN MINUTES.

He begins to struggle. He sinks further. The kids run forward, trying to shield themselves from the heat.

AMY
We have to push it away.

The kids pick up a stick and move to the edge of the syrup pool. They extend the stick, trying to prod the butt away from the petrified Ron. The stick doesn't reach.

RON

Help!

DON

What'll we do?

PART OF THE CIGARETTE ASH FALLS OFF THE BUTT WITH A ROAR, LANDING IN THE SYRUP NEAR THE KIDS. The kids back off, holding their hands in front of their faces AS THE ASHES SIZZLE INTO THE SYRUP. RON WATCHES, HORRIFIED, AS A WAD OF HOT ASH FALLS ON THE TRAPPED FLY, SIZZLING IT AS THE INSECT SINKS BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE GOOP.

Nick stares at Ron. He slowly backs away from the scene, seemingly horrified. He turns and runs full-tilt back into the forest. Amy notices but is concentrating too much on Ron's safety to act.

RON

Please! Help me, please!

Ron spots Nick running off.

RON

Don't leave me, please!

The children continue to try to get nearer to Ron. They hear a crunching sound behind them. THEY TURN AND SEE THE LITTLE ANT CHARGING FORWARD, NICK ON ITS BACK. NICK IS HOLDING A COOKIE CRUMB SUSPENDED FROM A STICK BEFORE THE ANT'S FACE.

NICK

Come on, boy. Come on.

Nick leads the ant to the edge of the bog. He slides off the ant, takes the crumb and tosses it to Ron.

NICK

Ron! Catch!

Ron reaches for the soggy oreo fragment and ensnares it. A glimmer of hope plays across his face.

RON

I read you, baby-brain.

He turns to the ant.

RON

You! Here you go, boy. Come and get it.

THE ANT EXTENDS ITS ANTENNAE. IT HONES IN ON THE OREO CRUMB. THE CIGARETTE CONTINUES TO SMOLDER. THE FIRE IS GETTING CLOSER TO RON.

THE ANT CLIMBS UP A STALK OF GRASS TO THE EDGE. THE GRASS SLOWLY BOWS DOWNWARD UNDER ITS WEIGHT. THE ANT EXTENDS ITS ANTENNAE TOWARDS THE CRUMB IN RON'S HAND. THE CIGARETTE BURNS DOWN LOWER AND LOWER, CLOSER AND CLOSER.

Ron drops the crumb in the syrup. The kids gasp as it disappears beneath the goop. Ron looks helplessly up at the ant. THE ANT TWITCHES ITS ANTENNAE. IT CAN'T SENSE THE CRUMB ANYMORE.

RON

Oh, no.

THE ANT WAITS A BEAT. IT DOESN'T RETREAT. IT CONTINUES TO STAND FIRM. RON REACHES UP AND GRABS AHOLD OF ONE OF THE ANTENNAE. THE ANT SLOWLY BACKS DOWN THE GRASS BLADE, HOISTING RON UP AND OUT OF THE SYRUP TO SAFETY. THE CIGARETTE BURNS DOWN TO THE SYRUP WITH A HISS.

AMY

I don't believe it.

The kids run up to Ron. Don stares at the ant.

DON

He saved your life.

NICK

Even when you dropped the crumb.

RON (genuinely moved)

Yeah. He could've gotten wasted by the cigarette butt, same as me.

He stares at the ant. The kids take turns patting the ant.

RON

Okay, boy. You're free. It's time for you to go back home.

DON

Yeah. Your parents are probably worried about you.

NICK

Like ours.

Russ and Amy approach the ant. Amy extends a hesitant hand towards the "bug." She pets it. It twitches its antennae.

THE ANT MARCHES OFF. IT TURNS ONCE, LAST TIME TOWARDS THE KIDS, ITS ANTENNAE TWITCHING.

RON

I don't know if you can understand me or not, but from now on, I'm going to be good to bugs.

NICK

Even mosquitos?

RON

Except mosquitos.

THE ANT SHAMBLES OFF INTO THE FOREST.

RON (to Nick)

Thanks for the help, baby-brain...
I mean, Nick.

NICK

No problem, scout.

Ron grins at Nick. Nick offers a shy smile.

EXT. YARD, NIGHT

Meanwhile, Wayne and Diane continue sifting through the bags of grass. They find nothing. They look at each other sadly. There's a noise behind them. They turn and train the flashlight at the garbage. Cicero the cat sits there, a piece of discarded, egg-stained toast in its mouth. Diane gasps. The cat takes the toast and runs off. Wayne sighs.

WAYNE

We still have a bag left.

DIANE

I-I can't.

WAYNE

There's still hope. Come on. Shine the light over here.

Suddenly, the last bag is illuminated by a bright light from behind them. Big Russ stands at the fence with a Kong-sized flashlight.

BIG RUSS

Lose something, folks?

Diane and Wayne exchange guilty looks.

WAYNE

If I show you something...something really strange...will you promise not to get upset?

BIG RUSS

Me? Get upset? Heck. I'm as cool,
calm and collected as they come.

WAYNE

Come on up to my lab.

BIG RUSS

Lab?

WAYNE

Uh, attic.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, NIGHT

Ron, covered with syrup, walks over to a puddle of sprinkler
water.

RON

Help me wash some of this off, willya?

Don steps into the puddle and begins splashing his brother.
Amy and Russ begin doing the same.

RON

I'm pooped.

DON

Me, too.

LITTLE RUSS

Maybe we should rest for the night.

AMY (nodding)

We have a lot of ground to cover
tomorrow...I think.

Nick wanders off. THE CAMERA follows him. He comes to a halt,
smiling.

NICK

Hey, come look.

The kids trot over to Nick.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, NIGHT

Stretching before Nick are a few, Stonehenge-sized monolithic
structures.

LITTLE RUSS

What are those?

NICK

My legos.

The kids wander up to the titanic plastic blocks. They are square with station-wagon-sized round indentations on the back.

Nick sits in one of the round indentations.

NICK

Pretty cozy.

The twins climb into two adjoining round spots.

RON

Not bad.

DON

It's better than a tent.

LITTLE RUSS

Get some sleep now, okay?

RON

No problem.

Russ and Amy walk over to another Lego. They sit on the square end of one. They are both exhausted. They gaze up into a picture perfect, clear sky. A full moon shines down on them, illuminating the area in a magical, blue glow.

LITTLE RUSS

Tired?

AMY

I'm okay.

LITTLE RUSS

I'm so sleepy, I ache.

AMY (smiling)

Me, too.

He stifles a yawn. Amy continues to gaze at the sky.

AMY

Great moon.

LITTLE RUSS

Yeah, it's pretty full.

AMY

It's funny. The moon looks the same whether you're big or small.

Russ nods. He looks at Amy, smiling shyly.

LITTLE RUSS

You want to hear something stupid?

AMY

Sure. I enjoy stupid things.

LITTLE RUSS

Well, I've wanted to talk to you sometimes but I've felt weird because well, you're....uh...

AMY

Taller?

LITTLE RUSS

Yeah. Dumb, huh?

AMY

Well, it doesn't make much difference now, does it? What's the big deal if you're a quarter of an inch tall or three sixteenths?

LITTLE RUSS

Yeah.

He suddenly turns and gives her a peck on the cheek. She turns towards him and gives him a brief, but tender, first kiss.

EXT. FOREST/YARD, NIGHT

We see the tiny kids illuminated from above by the pale blue light of a full moon. The CAMERA slowly moves up and away from them, taking the whole, titanic yard into view.

INT. ATTIC, NIGHT

Big Russ stands next to Wayne and Diane at the machine.

BIG RUSS

Nice CB set.

WAYNE (flipping knobs and switches)

Russ, the world of science is a mysterious, complex one....

BIG RUSS

Is this going to take long?

WAYNE

Each and every one of us is made up of countless, tiny particles which move around and....

BIG RUSS

Get to the point. Get to the point!

WAYNE

And what this machine does is analyze the molecular structure of...

BIG RUSS

Szalinski!

Wayne gulps and sighs and blurts it out.

WAYNE

I think this machine shrunk our kids.

BIG RUSS

Say what?

WAYNE

This machine. I think it shrunk our kids.

Big Russ begins to laugh. He looks at Diane. She's not laughing. He looks at Wayne. Wayne slowly shakes his head "yes."

BIG RUSS

What do you take me for, a complete idiot?

DIANE

But it's true...I mean, about the machine.

WAYNE

We have proof.

Diane places the tiny couch in Big Russ' hand.

BIG RUSS

So what? A toy? Big deal. That doesn't mean our kids have shrunk.

WAYNE (adjusting the gizmo)

I'll show you. Put your cap on that pedestal.

BIG RUSS (aghast)

My Olympian cap?

WAYNE

Yes. Yes. You want proof, don't you?

Russ slowly lifts the hat from his head. He is inundated by a shower of cigarettes. He gazes at his hat nervously.

BIG RUSS

I've had this cap for twenty years.

Wayne gets the machine humming. Big Russ gingerly places the cap on the pedestal in front of the metal wall.

WAYNE

Okay. Step back and be amazed.

Wayne activates the machine. BOTH BEAMS SKITTER ACROSS THE ROOM. Big Russ is not impressed.

BIG RUSS

Big deal. I have a lava light at home that works better.

WAYNE

Watch when the beams connect.

Diane and Big Russ watch AS THE TWO BEAMS HONE IN ON THE CAP. THE CAP SHIMMERS. QUIVERS. FINALLY, IT EXPLODES, SENDING BITS AND PIECES OF CHARRED MATERIAL EVERYWHERE. Diane gasps in horror. Wayne is perplexed. Big Russ is stunned.

WAYNE

I don't understand it. It must have worked before....

BIG RUSS

Are you saying my kids...that machine...
you blew up my kids?!

He makes a move to strangle Wayne. Wayne, ignoring lunging Big Russ, walks over to the cap fragments.

WAYNE

Of course not. If they had blown up, we would have found...

Diane gasps.

WAYNE

I mean. No. They shrunk. I'm positive.

BIG RUSS

And I'm positive that you should be locked up. I don't know what your game is, Szalinski. But if I find out that you've done anything to my kids...I'll do to you what you did to my genuine number-one-in-a-series Olympian Construction Cap.

He makes a move to stalk out of the room. He glances nervously at the floor and tip-toes carefully out, staring this way and that at the floor.

Wayne stares at the machine sadly.

Diane gently walks up to him and puts his arm around him. She gives him a gentle squeeze.

DIANE

How about a drink?

Wayne nods "yes," and the two leave the attic.

INT. KITCHEN, NIGHT

Wayne sits at the kitchen table, a half-filled glass of milk before him. Wayne fingers the magnifying glass absent-mindedly. Diane toys with the flashlight. Wayne smiles sadly.

WAYNE

It's all my fault. It's all my fault.

DIANE

No. You're just dedicated. I should have understood that. You have dreams.

WAYNE

But I forget reality. I ignore the people I care about the most.

DIANE

Oh, Wayne. How could I have left you and the kids...if anything happens to them....

Wayne places the magnifying glass softly on the table top. Diane lays down the flashlight. They sit in silence for a long minute. Tears begin to roll down Diane's face. Wayne pulls his chair next to hers and puts a protective arm around her. He knocks over a salt shaker in the process.

WAYNE

We'll find them, hon. I promise.
We'll find them.

Diane places her head against his chest and cries. Wayne swallows hard, wipes a single tear from one eye and hugs her closer.

Silence. Still tethered next to his dog bed, Quark sighs.

EXT. YARD, NIGHT

We see the light from the kitchen window. WE SLOWLY MOVE AWAY FROM THE WINDOW AND SEE IT LOOMING OVER THE SILHOUETTES OF THE LEGO VILLAGE WHERE THE CHILDREN LAY SLEEPING.

EXT. YARD, DAY

The scene gradually brightens. Morning has come. We now see that the children have made it all the way to the yard's edge. They are nestled in the Lego toys that Nick had dropped there the day before. In the background, the Szalinski home stands, as tall as a glacier.

Russ wakes up first. He stretches, yawns, opens his eyes and turn around.

LITTLE RUSS
I don't believe it.

AMY (waking up)
What?

Amy turns. They are only yards away from the house. She squeals with delight and gives Russ a big hug.

AMY (running off)
Nick! Twins! Come on! We're home!

The three younger children wake up, lazily.

NICK
Huh?

RON
Wuzzat?

Nick spots the house and grins.

RON
All right!

DON
Yahoo!

EXT. YARD, DAY

The kids run to the end of the yard. They run towards the first step leading to the back door.

EXT. YARD, DAY

They slow their pace and gradually come to a halt. Their faces are glum.

BEFORE THEM STANDS THE BIGGEST STEP IN HISTORY. A STRUCTURE AS BIG AS A CITY HALL.

LITTLE RUSS
Uh, it's a little bigger than I thought it would be.

He frantically looks around for something to scale the step with. He finds a small twig. He places it against the step like a ladder. It's pathetically small, like placing a step-ladder against a skyscraper.

The rest of the children look on nervously.

LITTLE RUSS

Don't worry. I'll figure something out.

Amy's lower lip begins to quiver. Russ tries to cheer her up.

LITTLE RUSS

Don't worry. We'll make it. We just have to come up with a plan.

Tears begin to dribble, silently, down Amy's face.

The twins and Nick exchange frightened glances. This is the first time Amy has really acted like a (gasp) girl. Nick approaches her. He kneels next to her.

NICK

Amy? Don't cry. Amy? Come on. Even if the odds are against us, so what? People beat the odds all the time, right?

LITTLE RUSS

Sure. We've gotten this far.

DON

Yeah. We've gotten through a flood.

RON

And killer bees.

NICK

And a power mower.

RON

And maple syrup!

Amy sniffs and nods, only half believing.

AMY

But how will we get inside the house?

Nick stands up suddenly. He stares at the door and smiles. He has an idea. Placing two fingers in his mouth, he emits a shrill whistle. He's winded after one try. Wheeze. Wheeze.

LITTLE RUSS

What are you doing?

NICK

Hitching a ride.

He puffs out his little chest again and lets out a second, shrill blast.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

In the kitchen, Wayne and Diane are sound asleep at the table. Quark is still tethered. He hears a very faint, very familiar whistle. His ears perk up. It's Nick. Quark begins to whine and pull at the leash. He can't get out. Another whistle. He gnaws at his leash. It's too thick.

EXT. YARD, DAY

Nick's face is now beet red. He whistles again.

AMY

Quark will never hear you.

NICK

Sure he will. Dogs have great ears.

Russ and the twins exchange glances. They shrug. They begin whistling and shouting.

LITTLE RUSS

Here, boy.

RON

Yo, dog!

DON

Wake up!

AMY

Hey, Quark.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Quark stops gnawing at his leash. He turns himself around and slowly pulls himself, backwards, out of his dog collar. He runs for the swinging door leading outside. He can't budge it. He pushes and pushes and pushes again. The kids outside are still whistling and yelling. Quark pushes. No dice. Finally, Quark backs up waaaay across the kitchen and charges the door. He hurls himself onto its surface. The door flies open, staying in that position.

EXT. YARD, DAY

The kids scatter as Quark goes tumbling down the stairs. Quark gets to his feet and stands, puzzled. We watch the dog's startled expression as he registers tiny, invisible

voices all around him.

NICK
Good boy, Quark.

AMY
Over here, Quark.

LITTLE RUSS
Atta way, dog.

Quark turns this way and that, trying to find his masters. Finally, he zeroes in on the source of the sound. He cautiously approaches a spot on the ground. He stares at the teeny-weeny youngsters. He lets out a small whimper.

AMY
It's okay. It's us, Quark.

NICK
We're just littler, now.

Quark does a "say what?" take.

AMY
Lie down, Quark. Lie down.

Quark begins to sniff at the kids. They are almost sucked up his nostrils.

AMY
Don't sniff, dumb-bell. Lie down.

Quark does as he is told.

AMY
Stay, Quark. Stay.

NICK
All aboard.

The dog whimpers slightly as the barely larger-than-flea sized kids climb up his ear and onto the back of his head.

EXT. DOG, DAY

The kids hold onto Quark's head.

NICK
Phew. Quark needs a bath.

LITTLE RUSS
Everybody on?

RON

Uh-huh.

DON

Ready for take-off.

AMY

Okay, Quark. Get up. Come on, boy.
Get up.

EXT. YARD, DAY

Quark gets to his feet.

AMY (v.o.)

Inside, Quark. Take us inside.

Instinctively, Quark sits down and, with his rear leg, scratches his head as if he were in pursuit of fleas.

EXT. DOG, DAY

The kids hang on for dear life as the skin beneath them shimmies and a large paw rakes the surface behind them.

NICK

Cut it out, Quark.

AMY

Knock it off!

EXT. YARD, DAY

The dog whimpers and stops scratching. Quark stands up.

AMY (v.o.)

Come on, Quark. Up the steps. Into the house.

Quark takes the first step and stops. He turns to the right. The Johnson's cat is there, hissing. Quark growls.

LITTLE RUSS (v.o.)

Oh, no. It's Cicero.

RON (o.s.)

I've always hated that cat.

AMY (v.o.)

Quark. Up the stairs, boy. Don't chase the cat.

Quark looks as if he's going to chase Cicero. The cat is bigger than the dog, however, and lunges after the tiny canine. Quark, panicked, takes off. He runs to the back of the

yard, Cicero in pursuit.

KIDS (v.o.)
Whoaaaaah!

Quark hits the trash bags and wriggles under the fence. The cat chasing him.

EXT. DOG, DAY

The kids yell as Quark takes them on a wild ride.

EXT. STREET, DAY

Quark darts into the street. He's a yard dog and totally panics when outside his turf. As soon as Quark darts into the street, Cicero skids to a stop, curbside, and watches wide-eyed as the dog skitters around in traffic. Quark zig-zags up and down the street, in and out of traffic, yelping.

EXT. DOG, DAY

The kids scream as titanic cars and people pass them by. Horns blare. Tires screech. People yell. It's like being caught on an out-of-control plane zipping through the canyons of New York City.

NICK
Whoa, Quark. Whoah!

AMY
Look out!

We see a titanic car bearing down on the dog from one side. Little Russ spins around and points. There's a car approaching from the other side, too.

EXT. STREET, DAY

We see Quark, paralyzed with fear, as the two cars come speeding towards him from both sides. The dog doesn't move. Quark lays down in the street and closes his eyes.

EXT. DOG, DAY

The kids dive down on Quark's head as deafening screeches and horns shake the sky. They close their eyes. CRAASSSHHHH!

EXT. STREET, DAY

Quark opens his eyes and gets up. The two cars have crashed and are suspended, pyramid style, above him. The two drivers are screaming at each other from inside the car. Quark trots away. He passes by the amazed Cicero with a "snort."

NICK (v.o.)

Way to go, Quark.

EXT. YARD, DAY

Quark squeezes under the fence into the backyard and leaps up the steps leading to the back door.

CHILDREN

Whoaaaaaahhhh!

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Quark skids into the kitchen.

AMY (v.o.)

Go get dad, Quark. Go to dad.

Quark trots over to the sleeping Wayne's leg. He nuzzles the leg and whines. Wayne snores a bit and, still asleep, swats his leg with his hand. The kids yelp as Quark backs up.

NICK (v.o.)

We'll get killed that way.

LITTLE RUSS (v.o.)

Let's try yelling.

KIDS (v.o.)

Mom!

Dad!

KIDS (v.o.)

Mr. Szalinski!

Yo, Prof!

Wayne and Diane continue to sleep. Quark stands before them, puzzled.

NICK (v.o.)

They can't see us from here.

LITTLE RUSS (v.o.)

They can't hear us, either.

RON (v.o.)

They'd see us from the kitchen table.

AMY (v.o.)

Good idea. Quark. Up on the table, boy.

The little dog cocks its head and, obediently, stands on its hind legs, trying to get up on the table. He's too short.

EXT. DOG, DAY

The kids are sliding off his head.

AMY
Down, Quark. Get down!

The dog's head straightens as he slides off the table leg.
Russ scans the room.

LITTLE RUSS
We have to get on that table somehow.

NICK (pointing)
Quark can drop us off there.

He points to the shorter, more accessible sewing stool,
standing less than a foot from the kitchen table.

AMY
Take us to the sewing table, Quark.
Over there, boy. Come on.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Quark trots over to the table.

INT. SEWING TABLE, DAY

The kids leap off the dog and stand on the table. The
kitchen table looms before them, a mammoth chasm separating
the two pieces of furniture.

RON
Great. Now all we need is a helicopter.

DON
Can we throw things at them to wake
them up?

RON
What are we going to throw?

Ron points to a thimble, four times his size.

RON
Want to try chucking this, Hercules?

AMY
Cut it out. We'll think of something.

Russ roams around the sewing table. Even the regular-sized
needles are titanic. He comes across a small, portable sewing
kit: the kind you buy in a five and dime store or get for free
in a hotel. It consists of a small envelope, a few tiny but-

tons and needles 1/4 the size of your everyday, household needles.

Russ picks up one of the small needles by one end. It's far too big to throw.

AMY

Can you throw it?

LITTLE RUSS

Not a chance.

He begins prowling around again. All the kids do. Nick trips over a small rubber band. Russ grins.

LITTLE RUSS

Maybe we can shoot it, though.

Ron grabs the rubber band.

RON

Not a bad idea.

DON

This genius stuff is spreading.

Russ takes a small spool of thread and places a strand of thread through the needle. He hooks one end of the thread to a splinter in the table-top, anchoring it. He then makes sure that the spool holding the rest of the thread is jammed tightly down on a large needle stuck into a pin cushion in the sewing kit.

LITTLE RUSS

This ought to hold. Maybe we can shoot this thing at your dad. If we hit him, he's sure to wake up and spot us.

RON

Suppose we miss?

Little Russ points to the way the needle is threaded.

LITTLE RUSS

It's like a harpoon. If we miss, we pull it back and try again....I hope.

Russ walks up to the rubber band, puzzling over it. He tries to stretch it between the points of a scissor. It pops off.

DON (looking at a nearby spool)

We can make a spool cannon.

He takes a small spool of thread and rolls it on its side in front of the rubber band. The kids take the rubber band and

stretch it around the spool. Russ takes the needle and places it inside the round cylinder.

The kids hold the side of the spool. Russ grabs the end of the needle, places it against the rubber band strung around the spool and, slowly, pulls the needle back. Further. Further. Finally, it's 75% out of the cannon muzzle.

LITTLE RUSS

Great idea.

He peeks through the "spool barrel" of the cannon. The other kids take their places on either side of the spool.

He peeks through the "spool barrel" of the cannon. The other kids take their places on either side of the spool.

LITTLE RUSS

A little to the left.

The kids push the spool.

LITTLE RUSS

A little more. A little...perfect.

LITTLE RUSS (straining)

Ready. Aim. Fire!!!!

He lets the needle go.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

The rubber band recoils with a spronnnng. The needle soars towards the table, the spool of thread it's affixed to whirling madly.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

The needle goes sailing past Wayne and winds up embedding itself in an orange resting in a fruit dish in the middle of the table. Sploosh.

EXT. SEWING TABLE, DAY

The kids stare at the far off orange.

RON

We're sunk.

LITTLE RUSS

No we're not. Let's just pull it back.

They tug on the thread, trying to dislodge the needle from the orange. It won't budge. As one, the children stop yanking on the thread.

RON
Now we're sunk.

They gaze at the kitchen table. It's only one or two normal sized feet away but a good mile or so from the kids' point of view. Spanning the chasm between the sewing stool and the kitchen table are two strands of thread, hooked into the needle. Nick "twangs" the thread. It quivers but seems very, very solid.

LITTLE RUSS (smiling at Nick)
Ever gone tightrope walking?

NICK (nervously)
No.

Russ trots over to the spool of thread still attached to the needle. He pulls the thread taut around another needle, causing the newly formed rope bridge to tighten. He then walks over to the edge of the sewing table.

LITTLE RUSS
The only we're going to get onto that table is to climb over.

RON
Like on a rope bridge?

LITTLE RUSS
Right. Like in scouts.

Ron looks at the linoleum floor miles below them.

RON
No offense, but in scouts they never asked us to climb over the Grand Canyon.

LITTLE RUSS
You have a better idea?

AMY
Russell. Nick will never make it.

NICK (defiantly)
Yes I will.

LITTLE RUSS (thoughtfully)
Amy might be right, Nick. We can wake up your dad and come back for you here.

NICK (bristling)
No way. We all go together.

Ron and Don pat Nick on the back.

RON
Way to go, scout.

DON (to others)
He'll make it. No sweat.

Russ looks at the double stranded rope bridge before them.

LITTLE RUSS
I'll go first. The trick is to
move slowly and evenly.

He gets on the rope bridge, grabbing the top strand of the
thread with his hands and sliding his feet onto the bottom
strand.

LITTLE RUSS
We won't be climbing as much as pulling
ourselves across. Understand?

The kids nod. They're scared stiff.

LITTLE RUSS
Okay. Let's go.

Amy gets on the rope bridge next. Her knees almost buckle
as the bottom strand wiggles under her weight.

LITTLE RUSS
Easy. Don't be afraid. Just hold
on tight with your hands. That's it.

The twins are next on. Ron gulps, looks down at the dizzy
view, grits his teeth and climbs on. Don takes a deep
breath and does the same.

DON
I wish I was home watching TV.

RON
You and me both.

Nick stands on the edge of the table. He gapes at the floor
far below and, then, at the kitchen table standing, tow-
ering, at the other end of the bridge. He glances at Quark.

Quark cocks his head, flattens his ears and whines.

NICK
I know just how you feel.

Nick takes a deep breath and gets on the bridge. He shuts
his eyes for a moment and exhales.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

The thread wobbles constantly as the teeny-weenies slowly inch their way across the rope bridge.

LITTLE RUSS

Slow and steady. Fine. Fine. Can you all say that? Slow and steady and slow and steady.

The kids begin to chant "slow and steady" as they rhythmically work their way across the bridge. The bridge begins to tilt upwards towards the table top. THE CAMERA slowly pans across the frightened faces of the children as they chant and begin the trek upwards for the last fifteen inches or so...

EXT. TABLE, DAY

We see a slight tug on the thread attached to the needle. The needle, still embedded in the orange, begins to jiggle slightly.

Wayne and Diane sit, sleeping at the table.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Quark sits in the corner, amazed at the goings on.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Still chanting "slow and steady," the kids continue their crossing. Suddenly, Amy loses her footing. She shrieks, her feet dangling in the air.

LITTLE RUSS

Just hang on! Hang on!

She desperately tries to get her feet back on the bottom strand of thread. Her lack of balance causes the other kids to sway dangerously on the thread. The kids shout as they try to steady themselves. Slowly, Amy regains her footing.

LITTLE RUSS

Are you okay?

AMY

I've been better.

LITTLE RUSS

Okay. We're almost there. Slow and steady. Everybody. Slow and steady.

The thread suddenly begins to quiver.

AMY
What's wrong?

LITTLE RUSS (alarmed)
I don't know. Come on. Faster.
Fast and steady. Fast and steady.

RON
Make up your mind!

EXT. TABLE, DAY

On the table top, we see that the needle-anchor is beginning to work itself loose from the orange in a big way. Each twinge on the thread caused by the kids' feet and hands is making the needle wriggle more.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

The kids are pulling themselves upward for their lives. They are a mere inch or two from the table top. The thread is jiggling madly now.

LITTLE RUSS
Come on! Hurry!

RON
I don't like this!

DON
You think I do?

Nick can't speak. He's wheezing, now, pulling his own weight furiously. He begins to gasp. The other kids turn and stare as Nick launches into a full tilt asthma attack. He desperately reaches into his pocket for his inhaler. He produces it but it tumbles out of his hand, tumbling towards the floor far below. He is gasping for breath. His face is red.

Russ turns towards him.

RUSS
Nick, you don't need that junk.
You're going to be all right.
Take deep, steady breaths. Okay?
Try it. Slowly.

Nick begins breathing in and out, in and out, in and out. Gradually, he stops gasping.

RUSS
Better?

Nick nods his head. He is scared stiff.

The floor seems to sway below the children.

They continue to climb.

EXT. TABLE, DAY

The needle continues to wriggle.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Russ is within a hair of the table top when....

EXT. TABLE TOP, DAY

The pin springs loose from the orange. The needle begins to slide across the table.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Russ holds desperately onto the edge of the table as the thread goes limp. The kids lose their footing and cling to the thread as it drops down like an elevator sans shaft.

The needle zips along the table top, coming to an abrupt halt as it hits the lip of the table and gets wedged in the formica. Russ climbs ontop of the table and grabs the thread.

LITTLE RUSS

Hold on! Hold on!

Amy, Ron, Don and Nick cling to the thread. Russ begins to pull the thread taut, using every ounce of his strength.

LITTLE RUSS

Try to climb! Try!

Russ clings desperately to the thread, holding it as tightly as he can. He puts all his weight behind it.

On the thread, the remaining children have to climb, hand over hand up the thread, wrapping their legs around the lone, taut strand.

Amy gets to the top of the table and pulls herself up and over. She leans down and grabs Ron. She pulls Ron up. Russ holds the thread desperately. Ron pulls Don up.

Now, the only child remaining, dangling from the needle is Nick.

RON

Come on. Grab the thread.

Ron and Don grab the thread and, with their brother, hold it taut. Amy grabs on and pulls back, trying to give Nick every advantage. Amy, the closest to the edge of the table,

gazes down at Nick, terrified. In spite of the tautness of the thread, she doesn't think the little boy will make it.

AMY (to the boys)
Can you handle this thread?

Russ and the twins nod "yes," straining. Amy, still holding the thread, calls down to Nick.

AMY
Nick. Stay there. I'm coming down to get you.

Nick stares at the table top above him.

NICK (wheezing)
No. I can do it. I can do it...
by myself.

Nick slowly, laboriously, begins to shinny up the taut thread. Hand over hand over hand. Knees wrapped tightly around the thread. Hand over hand. Knee up. Knee up.

Amy watches silently as Nick grimly continues his ascent.

AMY (to Russ)
He'll never do it.

LITTLE RUSS
Sure he will. Come on, Nick.

RON/DON
Come on, Nick. Come on.

With the boys chanting for him to "make it," Nick pushes upward. His face is red with exhaustion. His forehead is a mass of sweat droplets. He climbs and climbs and, then, stops.

He is an inch away from the table top, the kids all cheering him on.

Nick gazes down at the floor below him.

The view is dizzying.

He sees Amy's worried face above him. Taking a deep, wheezing breath, he begins to climb again. Finally, he makes it to the table top. Amy extends a hand and pulls him up and onto the top.

Don, Ron and Russ let the thread go and run towards little Nick. The needle becomes unstuck and zips by them and over the edge of the table. It tumbles, in seemingly slow motion, towards the floor below. The kids surround Nick.

NICK (wheezing)
I told you I could do it.

RON
So, who said you couldn't?

DON
I knew you could do it all along.

Russ winks at Nick. Nick shrugs.

NICK
Let's get dad.

EXT. TABLE TOP, DAY

The kids run across the vast expanse of the table and stand in front of the slumbering parents. They walk up to Wayne, whose head is on the table, and yell into his ear.

AMY/NICK
Dad!

LITTLE RUSS
Mr. and Mrs. Szalinski!

RON
Yo! Over here!

No response. The sleeping parents still sit, mountain-like, in their chairs.

AMY
Forget it. They can't hear us.

RON
I wish we still had that needle, I'd jam it in...

DON
We'll never wake them up.

LITTLE RUSS
And when they do wake up, they'll need a neon sign to see us.

Nick gazes glumly at the table top. He sees the mound of salt Wayne has spilled the night before. He gazes at it.

Nick turns to Ron and Don.

NICK
When explorers get lost in the snow, they make snow signs, right?

RON

Yeah?

He points to the salt.

DON

A salt sign?

The kids turn and focus on the mound of salt. Ron smiles, pointing to the abandoned magnifying glass.

RON

That ought to help, too.

DON

Lion scouts to the rescue.

Ron and Don and run to the salt mound and begin laboriously fashioning a large arrow leading to the magnifying glass.

LITTLE RUSS (smiling)

Sometimes I'm almost proud of those guys.

Russ, Amy and Nick join in the construction of the arrow. The finished work is some three inches long, the arrow "head" pointing to the magnifying glass.

Once the arrow is finished, the kids all huddle beneath the magnifying glass.

NICK

When dad wakes up, he'll have to see us.

AMY

They look pretty tired. They could sleep all day.

NICK

Quark. Hey, Quark. Wanna eat?

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Quark, hearing the tiny but distinct voice, wags his tail. He runs to the food bowl. There's no food there. The dog turns, puzzled, towards the table.

NICK (v.o.)

Chow time, Quark.

The dog begins to bark. Wayne stirs slightly. Quark begins to whine and bark again, circling his empty bowl. Wayne's eyes flutter.

EXT. TABLE TOP, DAY

The kids watch Wayne slowly awaken.

LITTLE RUSS

All right. You're dad's waking up.

DON

Everybody move around.

LITTLE RUSS

Shake it.

The kids begin to dance and wave under the magnifying glass. Wayne wakes up and launches into his habitual morning sneezes. A sudden gale of wind blows across the table top.

LITTLE RUSS

Hold on.

The kids cling to each other as they are buffeted by the wind. Half of the salt arrow is blown away.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

Wayne stretches.

WAYNE

Not now, Quark.

He gets up to leave the table when Quark suddenly leaps onto his lap and, then, onto the table.

DIANE (waking)

What's going on?

WAYNE

Quark's going bonkers.

Wayne turns and is about to yell at the dog when he spots the remainder of the arrow and, then, the magnifying glass.

EXT. TABLE TOP, DAY

Wayne gapes at the dancing kids.

WAYNE

Oh my god.

DIANE (spotting the glass)

What?...What?

WAYNE (near tears)

You're alive! You're safe!

The kids continue to wave and yell. Diane leans down towards them.

DIANE
Thank god they're all right.

RON (even though he can't be
heard)
You should have seen us ten minutes ago!

She makes a move to grab the kids. They duck. Wayne restrains her.

WAYNE
Don't touch them.

She pulls her hand back.

WAYNE
They're too small to handle. We may hurt them.

DIANE
That's right.

He faces the kids, gently lifting up the magnifying glass.

WAYNE
Don't worry, guys. You're safe now.
Wait right there.

The twins look at each other.

RON
Where does he expect us to go?

Amy hugs Russ.

LITTLE RUSS
Everything is going to be all right, now.

Nick smiles, collapsing into a sitting position. Phew!

Wayne brings a spoon over to the table and sets it down next to the children.

WAYNE
Can you make it up here?

Nick is the first one to leap into the spoon.

NICK
Come on, slowpokes.

Russ and Amy share an amused grin and climb into the spoon.

The twins follow with a whoop.

EXT. SPOON, DAY

Wayne carefully lifts the spoon.

INT. KITCHEN, DAY

He heads for the stairs leading up to the attic.

WAYNE (to Diane)

Get the Johnsons over here. I'll warm up the machine.

Quark leaps off the table and follows.

AMY (from the spoon)

You're a hero, Quark. That was a two milkbone move.

The dog wags its tail merrily.

INT. ATTIC, DAY

In the attic, Wayne carefully places the spoon in the target area of the room while Diane holds Quark in her arms. A stricken Mae Johnson stands nervously next to her, linking her arm in Diane's. Big Russ is dumbfounded and, as usual, irate.

BIG RUSS

You're a maniac, Szalinski. Do you realize what you've done? They're ruined for life!

WAYNE

I have the atomic makeup computed.

Wayne adjusts the computer, focusing it on the children.

BIG RUSS

If you hurt them any more, Szalinski, I'll personally re-do your house with my bulldozer!

WAYNE

Now, I have to figure the amount of space needed to be placed between their atoms.

MAE

Please hurry.

WAYNE

It's done. Now, to add an extra dollop of energy, to replace the energy they lost when shrinking....

He makes a move to turn on the machine. Big Russ tenses.

BIG RUSS
If you blow them up....

Wayne withdraws his arm.

DIANE
What's wrong?

WAYNE
He has a point. I haven't gotten the machine to work properly. But the kids have.

INT. ATTIC FLOOR, DAY

The kids stare at each other, confused.

RON
Some genius.

NICK
Give him time. He'll figure something out.

INT. ATTIC, DAY

WAYNE (scratching his head)
Somehow, the kids stumbled onto something that I've been overlooking.

He then notices the twins' baseball still resting on the floor. He smiles.

WAYNE
Russ, toss me that ball?

BIG RUSS
I oughtta bean you with this ball.

He picks up the baseball and tosses it to Wayne. Wayne studies it. He gazes at the burn mark on the ball. He then makes some adjustments in the machinery.

WAYNE
The answer has been right under my nose all along.

BIG RUSS
You like baseball.

WAYNE

The machine uses two beams, a laser tracking beam and the actual shrinking beam. The tracking beam focuses the second beam on the target. The reason things have been blowing up instead of shrinking is that, when the beams collide, they generate too much heat. Yesterday, this ball must have blocked the tracking beam. The shrinking beam worked all on its own. Now, all I have to do is shut off the one beam...

He throws the switch into "on" position again. THE MACHINE SPUTTERS TO LIFE. THE BEAMS GO SKITTERING THROUGH SPACE.

WAYNE

Let's see if it works. I need a target.

BIG RUSS

You already blew up my hat.

Wayne looks about. He realizes he still has the ball in his hand. He tosses the ball before the beams. THE BALL IS ZAPPED AND MINATURIZES. THE TINY BALL FALLS NEXT TO THE CHILDREN. Nick turns to Ron.

NICK

I told you he'd figure it out.

Big Russ is impressed. He turns to Mae.

BIG RUSS

Did you see that?

WAYNE

Now, all I have to do is reverse the polarity of the beam and...add some energy.

THE MACHINE BEGINS TO HUM. THE ATTIC LIGHTS DIM AND FLICKERS.

WAYNE

Come on. You can do it. Come on.

THE PARTICLE BEAMS GO SKITTERING THROUGH SPACE, TOWARDS THE FLOOR.

INT. ATTIC FLOOR, DAY

THE KIDS BEGIN TO RUN AND JUMP, TRYING TO POSITION THEMSELVES IN THE SPOTS WHERE THE CRAZY RAYS WILL LAND.

KIDS

This way!
No, over here!
There it goes!
Get it!

INT. ATTIC, DAY

The parents watch, amazed, as the little kids hurl themselves into the beams. RUSS IS STRUCK BY ONE.

HE BEGINS TO GROW AND GROW AND GROW.

Big Russ' mouth drops open and Quark's ears flop straight back as RUSS GROWS FIVE FEET TALL. SIX FEET TALL. TEN FEET TALL. FIFTEEN FEET.

HIS HEAD CRACKS OUT OF THE ROOF OF THE ATTIC. HIS FEET, SUPPORTING THE TOO HEAVY WEIGHT OF HIS BODY, BREAK THROUGH THE FLOOR.

Wayne begins tinkering happily with the machine.

WAYNE

A few small adjustments. Not to worry.

RUSS REACHES DOWN AND PICKS UP HIS FATHER, HOLDING HIM HIGH IN THE AIR.

LITTLE RUSS

Am I big enough for you, now, dad?

BIG RUSS

Russell! I never...I mean...you were always big enough for me. Put me down. Please. I'm sorry I yelled. I'll never yell at you again. You don't have to play football. You can play...checkers and it'll be fine with me. Honest. Put me down. Don't hurt me. Please. I'm your father, Russell.

LITTLE RUSS SMILES AND PLACES BIG RUSS GENTLY DOWN ON THE FLOOR.

LITTLE RUSS

I'd never hurt you, dad. I'm still the same old Russ. You see, dad, it's not how big you are on the outside...it's how big you are on the inside that really counts. Size doesn't mean anything.

Big Russ wipes his brow. He faces, Mae, sweating.

BIG RUSS

What a kid, huh?

MAE (grinning, relieved)

Uh-huh.

Wayne adjusts the machine. RUSS SHRINKS TO HIS NORMAL SIZE AS THE OTHER CHILDREN GROW UP INTO THEIR NORMAL HEIGHTS.

Amy and Russ hug. Wayne and Diane rush towards their kids. Big Russ and Mae do the same. (The words come fast and furiously as emotional pandemonium reigns.)

NICK (hugging Wayne)

I knew you could do it. You're something else.

Diane puts her arm around Wayne.

DIANE

You are something else.

Wayne hugs his kids.

WAYNE

I promise you....I'll never ignore you again. If you ever, ever think I'm doing that....

NICK

We'll make you eat Amy's eggs.

AMY

Twirp.

The twins stand, side by side, comparing heights. Ron is on his toes.

RON

Hey, look. I wound up taller than you.

DON

You're on your toes.

RON

Am not.

DON

Are too.

Big Russ and Little Russ stand, facing each other.

BIG RUSS

Son...if I've ever...well, made you feel bad...about...

Little Russ gives a startled Big Russ a hug.

LITTLE RUSS

Don't sweat the small stuff, pop.

Wayne straightens up.

WAYNE

Hey, explorers. How about some breakfast?

KIDS

Yeah.

DIANE

Pancakes and fresh maple syrup?

THE KIDS

Oh, no! No syrup! Please.

The parents look at each other, confused.

NICK (to adults)

It's a long story....

INT. SCIENCE CONFERENCE ROOM, DAY

Later, at another science conference, we see Amy, Russ and Nick speaking before a large gathering of scientists. Nick is holding Quark.

AMY

...and, then, my dad used his amazing electro-magnetic pulse device to restore our size.

NICK

And that's how it happened.

LITTLE RUSS

Really.

Wayne smiles and steps up to the podium.

WAYNE

You asked for proof, gentlemen? Here is your proof. Three living subjects who have proven that size can be altered.

He is nearly laughed out of the hall. Dr. Frederickson leads the jeering.

FREDERICKSON

It's a fairy tale, Szalinski. You can hardly call the stories of...children... credible scientific proof.

The crowd continues to laugh. In the audience, Dr. Brainard looks concerned. Wayne waits for the hooting to die down. He glances at Diane, in the audience. She's sitting next to

Mae and a very, very smug Big Russ (wearing a brand new Olympian cap).

BIG RUSS (muttering)
Damned eggheads.

WAYNE
I thought you might consider this all far-fetched.

He smiles and exchanges knowing glances with the three children on the stage.

WAYNE
So, I brought along, a, um, visual aid. Dr. Frederickson? Would you be so kind as to open the back doors.

Puzzled, Frederickson moves towards the doors. He swaggers, actually, a know-it-all in control. The doors burst open and the twins gallop into the room on the back of their NOW-GIANT ANT. RON HOLDS A FULL BAG OF OREOS BEFORE THE EVER-HUNGRY INSECT. THE ANT CHASES FREDERICKSON AROUND THE ROOM.

The scientists gasp and scatter. Big Russ stands, emitting a roaring laugh.

BIG RUSS
I love it. I love it!!!.

Dr. Frederickson is panting, horrified at the monster pursuing him.

FREDERICKSON
Call it off! Call it off! You'll get the grant! Halp! Halp!

In a corner, Dr. Brainard smiles whimsically. He casually lights his pipe.

BRAINARD
Interesting.

THE ANT SKITTERS ROUND AND ROUND THE ROOM, CHASING FREDERICKSON AND THE OREOS.

Quark yipes from the stage, then jumps out of Nick's arms and begins chasing the ant, barking at it. Diane and the Johnsons walk up to Wayne. Russ slaps him on the back. The two men share a hearty laugh.

THE ANT GALLOPS UP ONE WALL, ACROSS THE CEILING AND DOWN THE OPPOSITE WALL, THE TWINS WHOOPING, QUARK BARKING.

The scientists continue to scramble. Frederickson continues to run for his life. QUARK CHASES THE ANT. THE ANT TURNS AND CURIOSLY CHECKS OUT THE LITTLE DOG. QUARK TURNS TAIL AND RUNS AWAY, WHINING.

On the stage, Little Russ, Amy and Nick watch the scientists dodge and duck and Frederickson scream.

NICK

I think they're impressed.

Amy and Russ nod, laughing.

Wayne and Diane stand, hand in hand, watching the scientists cower under their chairs.

THE TWINS, WHOOPING LIKE WILD INDIANS, CONTINUE TO GALLOP AROUND THE ROOM ON THEIR ANT. In the middle of the panedemonium, the Johnson family and the Szalinski family stand side by side. Friends. Neighbors.

The kind of just-plain-folks who live right down the street from you.

Well, almost.