

THE FLY

by
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From the story
by
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November 1, 1985

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

We are close on the face of SETH BRUNDLE, aging molecular physics wunderkind. He is not aging too badly, however, and looks much younger than his 38 years - playful child face, slightly heavy - a big kid. Even his arrogance is somehow engaging, especially now as he talks to someone who is, for the moment, off camera. Someone he seems eager to impress.

BRUNDLE

What am I working on? I'm working on something that will change the world and human life as we know it.

The off-camera voice that replies is female and matter-of-fact, and belongs to VERONICA QUAIFFE, who is evidently someone not likely to be easily impressed.

VERONICA (OC)

Change it a lot or just a bit? You'll have to be more specific.

Brundle lifts a glass of Scotch to his mouth and takes a sip. He glances around the room which we have not yet seen.

BRUNDLE

You want me to be specific here, in this room, with half the scientific community of North America eavesdropping?

CUT TO VERONICA

who is a very attractive woman in her mid-twenties. She is as focussed and analytical as Brundle is sloppy and puppyish. She toys with a drink but does not taste it.

VERONICA

Is there another way?

Brundle chews nervously on a fingernail.

BRUNDLE

You could come back to my lab. I'll make you a cappuccino. I have a Faema of my very own. Not the dilettante's plastic kitchen model. A real restaurant espresso machine.

Veronica studies Brundle carefully.

VERONICA

Somehow I get the feeling you don't get out much.

BRUNDLE

(AMAZED)

You can tell that?

VERONICA

Yeah.

BRUNDLE

Actually I've been alone working for a long time now.

Veronica picks up her bag - it's big and leathery and full of notes and books - and starts to move off through the room. Brundle grabs his drink and follows her. Scotch slops all over Brundle's hand and cuff, but he doesn't seem to notice it.

BRUNDLE

Hey! How about it? Are you coming with me?

VERONICA

Sorry, I've got three other interviews to do before the party's over.

We pop back and take a look at the room Brundle and Veronica are in. It is an enormous HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM full of rather eccentric science types. A GAUDY BANNER running the entire length of the room proclaims:

BARTOK SCIENCE INDUSTRIES
FOURTH ANNUAL
MEET-THE-PRESS LUNCHEON.

Brundle has to struggle through the crowd to keep Veronica within earshot.

BRUNDLE

Yeah. But they're not working on something that will change the world as we know it.

VERONICA

They say they are.

Brundle manages to wedge himself in front of Veronica and slow her down. He takes a quick sip of his drink, but there's almost nothing left: it's all on his sleeve.

BRUNDLE

Yeah, but they're lying.
(PAUSE)
I'm not.

Veronica takes a closer look at Brundle. Despite his soggy sleeves, he is very convincing.

INT. VERONICA'S CAR - NIGHT

Veronica drives through the night in her clapped-out Renault Le Car. Brundle is turning green.

VERONICA

Are you sick?

BRUNDLE

(QUEASY NONCHALANCE)
Oh, sure.

VERONICA

You're not a very accomplished drunk.

BRUNDLE

I'm always like this. Motion sickness. When I was a kid I puked on my tricycle. I hate vehicles.

VERONICA

Should I drive more slowly?

BRUNDLE

No, just turn left. We're almost there.

EXT. LAB WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Le Car pulls up outside a huge, dilapidated warehouse by the waterfront under a freeway. Veronica helps Brundle out of the car.

VERONICA

This is it?

BRUNDLE

It's cleaner on the inside.

INT. WAREHOUSE STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Veronica and Brundle climb the warped wooden stairs to the fourth floor. Brundle is breathing hard, very out of shape. He uses the ornate railing to haul himself from step to step.

VERONICA

Nice railings.

BRUNDLE

(BREATHING HARD)

Yeah. They're original.

VERONICA

You doing marine experiments?

BRUNDLE

No, why?

VERONICA

That fishy smell.

BRUNDLE

Oh, that. Used to be a packing house for fish. It's deserted right now, except for me. I've got the whole fourth floor. The top floor.

VERONICA

Want me to carry you?

BRUNDLE

Maybe next time.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Veronica and Brundle enter Brundle's lab through an ancient steel-and-rotting-wood sliding door. It is immediately obvious that the lab is not just a lab: Brundle lives here, and he lives messy. There is junk everywhere, amongst which are a couple of mattresses lying on the floor.

The immense warehouse space is only partially divided by a couple of brick half-walls and by the square wooden pillars which soar up to a system of interlocking skylights above.

Almost unnoticed amid the chaos stand TWO GLASS BOOTHS with moulded plastic bases. They are at opposite ends of the room and look very much like an Italian designer's version of hi-tech telephone booths or, possibly, portable shower stalls.

The whole thing feels completely wrong to Veronica.

VERONICA

Listen, maybe this is a bad idea.

BRUNDLE

(JOKING)

Too late. You've already seen it. I can't let you leave here alive.

VERONICA

I haven't seen anything.

Brundle carefully points out the glass booths.

BRUNDLE

Those.

VERONICA

Designer phone booths. Very cute. I'll bet you've got a really neat jukebox in here somewhere, too. Over there, maybe?

She points to a huge shape in a corner covered by a tarpaulin.

BRUNDLE

No, that's the prototype of these. First one I had made. It works, but it's clunky.

Brundle pulls a blue bathrobe being used as an impromptu dust cover off an extremely serious-looking control-module complete with computer console and monitor. The information storage system is all laser disc. The module is on wheels, but is plugged into a heavy-duty wiring loom at the base of one of the pillars.

Brundle flips a couple of switches. Lights come on. The monitor flickers to life. Very bright white interior lights also come on in the two booths.

BRUNDLE

I call them telepods. They're controlled by this.

VERONICA

(SARCASTIC)

Thank God for that.

Veronica takes a careful look at Brundle.

VERONICA

You're very eccentric.

BRUNDLE

(GENUINELY PLEASED)

You think so? That would be great. I've always considered myself invisibly middle-class.

VERONICA

I don't think you should worry about it. OK. So what do they do? The phone booths?

BRUNDLE

Telepods.

(PAUSE)

All right. As the magician says, "Give me something personal, an item of clothing or jewellery, something uniquely you."

VERONICA

You're joking.

BRUNDLE

(INGENUOUS)

No, I'm serious.

Veronica studies him once again. Yes, he's serious.

VERONICA

OK. Here goes.

Veronica hikes up her skirt and slips off her panties -an impulsive act rather than a calculated one. She holds them out to Brundle. They're lacy and pretty. Brundle is shocked.

BRUNDLE

Ah... well...

VERONICA

I don't wear jewellery.

BRUNDLE

Yeah. OK.

He takes the panties, gingerly.

BRUNDLE

Nice.

VERONICA

Thanks.

Brundle walks over to the nearest telepod and presses a button on the doorframe. The door unlatches with a click. Brundle carefully places the panties on the floor of the telepod, then closes the door again.

Brundle returns to the computer, sits down on an old steno chair, and starts to click away at the computer keys. Veronica looks over his shoulder.

The screen fills with techno-babble. This soon makes way for a three-dimensional graphic of Veronica's panties which rotates on the screen. A DATA LIST appears in the corner of the screen outlining the panties' vital statistics - weight, dimensions, density, molecular configuration, etc.

Satisfied, Brundle smiles, presses the ACCEPT button, and points to the first telepod.

BRUNDLE

Watch.

The first thing that happens is that the automatic door-latch on the outside of the telepod slides shut. The latch is substantial, even massive, suggesting that IT WOULD NOT BE A GOOD THING FOR THE DOOR TO OPEN ACCIDENTALLY.

Now, as Veronica watches, the PANTIES BEGIN TO DISINTEGRATE in the telepod. It's almost as though we can

see the atoms breaking off from the cloth itself and begin to float, swirl, swarm about in the bright cold light of the telepod. In moments, there is nothing left of the panties.

The telepod lights flash once, then go out.

Brundle turns proudly to Veronica.

BRUNDLE

Well?

VERONICA

Great. The world's largest microwave oven. I'm glad I didn't give you my Rolex.

BRUNDLE

No, no - you're missing the point. Look.

Brundle points to the screen. The words TELEPORTATION SUCCESSFUL are flashing on and off.

VERONICA

(CONFUSED)

Teleportation?

Brundle gets up and takes Veronica by the hand.

BRUNDLE

Now come with me.

Brundle marches Veronica across the room to the second telepod. Inside the telepod are her panties.

VERONICA

Wait a minute. Is that a hologram? Where are my panties?

Brundle press the door button and the door to the second telepod pops open.

BRUNDLE

That's them. The real ones. Go ahead. Pick them up.

Veronica hesitates a beat, then reaches into the telepod and picks up her panties. She crumples them in her hand. They feel the same.

BRUNDLE
(NIGHTCLUB MAGICIAN VOICE)
Examine them carefully for authenticity. Make sure nothing has been lost in translation.

Veronica looks at the label, the lace trim. It all checks out.

VERONICA
I don't think I get it. What happened?

BRUNDLE
You get it, all right. You just can't handle it. Your panties have just been teleported from one pod to another. Disintegrated there, and reintegrated there. Sort of. It'll change the world as we know it, right? Want me to autograph them?

VERONICA
This is incredible. How have you managed to keep this quiet? How could you do this alone?

BRUNDLE
I don't work alone. There's a lot of stuff in there I don't even understand. I'm really a systems-management man. I farm bits and pieces of this stuff out to guys who are much more brilliant than I am. But none of them knows what the project really is. I say - build me a laser this, design me a molecular analyser that - and they do. I just stick 'em together.

VERONICA
And the money? Bartok Science Industries finances this?

BRUNDLE
They leave me alone. I'm not expensive. They know they'll end up owning it all, whatever it is.

VERONICA

You haven't told them?

BRUNDLE

When I'm ready.

An insistent little beep begins to sound from somewhere under Veronica's chic padded jacket. She drops the panties onto a coffee table, fumbles around in her jacket and pulls out a small tape recorder from an inner pocket.

Brundle is stunned: she's been taping him.

BRUNDLE

Oh, no! Not that!

Veronica deftly flips over the cassette, sets the machine on RECORD, and drops it back into the pocket.

VERONICA

Why not? You want me to get the quotes right, don't you?

BRUNDLE

Don't do it. If this gets out now, it'll be a disaster.

VERONICA

Oh, I'm sure you're exaggerating.

BRUNDLE

But I'm not exaggerating...

VERONICA

(SUDDENLY ANGRY)

What do you think I'm doing here, anyway? Don't give me that naive bullshit. I'm a journalist. I was sent to that party by PARTICLE Magazine. You knew that.

BRUNDLE

But I thought this was... you know, personal. I wouldn't tell any of this stuff to a journalist.

VERONICA

But you did tell this stuff to a journalist.
And you know what? I think you did it
intentionally. I think you want me to tell
the world about this. You just haven't
admitted it to yourself.
(SHE HEADS FOR THE DOOR)
Listen - it's been real.

Veronica's almost out the door. She obviously has no
intention of hanging around to discuss it. Brundle picks
up her panties from the coffee table.

BRUNDLE

(WITH RISING ANGER)

Hey - you forgot something!

Veronica pauses, turns. Brundle balls up the panties and
throws them at her. They unfold in midair and flop
harmlessly on the floor between them.

Veronica shrugs and smiles a "What can I do?" kind of
smile. She leaves. Brundle slides the door closed after
her with a slam.

EXT. MONOLITH PUBLISHING BUILDING -MORNING

Establishing shot of sleeko modern office building.

INT. PARTICLE MAGAZINE EDITORIAL OFFICES - MORNING

We are in the office of STATHIS BORANS, the Editor-in-
Chief of PARTICLE Magazine. The office itself oozes power
and influence - the office of a starmaker in the arcane
world of modern science. Stathis himself seems a bit more
like the editor of a self-consciously chic New York
glossy, say VANITY FAIR. He wears small, round, horn-
rimmed glasses and immaculate classic clothes. Despite
his stylistic pretensions, however, his background is
solidly scientific, and the walls are covered with his
degrees, both honorary and hard-science.

Veronica is draped comfortably over an art-deco couch -
obviously very much at home. They are listening to her
tape.

VERONICA (ON TAPE)

You just haven't admitted it to yourself.
(PAUSE)
Listen - it's been real.

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)
Hey... you forgot something!

Veronica flicks off the tape recorder.

VERONICA
That's it. What do you think?

STATHIS
I think you're an opportunistic slut.

VERONICA
(IGNORING THE COMMENT)
What do you think about teleportation?

STATHIS
It's a joke.

VERONICA
What?

STATHIS
He's conning you. He's doing an old nightclub routine. The two cabinets. And you fell for it.

VERONICA
Hey, wait a minute...

STATHIS
Are we having lunch?

VERONICA
Listen, that was no nightclub routine.

The intercom buzzes.

STATHIS
(PICKING UP PHONE)
Yes?
(PAUSE)
Sure. Send him in.

Stathis hangs up.

STATHIS

You must have made an impression.

VERONICA

What do you mean?

STATHIS

Your magician has followed you here.

A young woman wearing a brisk business suit shows Brundle in. Stathis smiles a professional smile and extends his hand.

STATHIS

Stathis Borans. I'm the editor of PARTICLE Magazine. Nice to meet you.

BRUNDLE

Uh... Seth Brundle.

STATHIS

(KNOWINGLY)

Oh, I know who you are.

Brundle is about to ask "How?" but doesn't get the chance.

STATHIS

Listen... why don't you two use my office? I've got to run.

(TO BRUNDLE)

If you plan to make anything disappear, let me know. I have an assistant editor who's outlived his usefulness.

Stathis leaves.

BRUNDLE

You haven't wasted any time.

VERONICA

I'm not getting any younger.

BRUNDLE

I take it he wasn't too impressed by your tape.

VERONICA
(PACKING UP TAPE MACHINE)
He thinks you're a con man.

BRUNDLE
(BRIGHTENING)
Excellent!

VERONICA
Yeah? Well, let's see what the people at Omni
think about it.

BRUNDLE
Hold on, hold on. Look. I've come here to say
two magic words to you.

She stops at the door.

VERONICA
Yeah?

BRUNDLE
Cheese-burger.

Brundle says these words as though they are indeed magical, irresistible. Veronica shakes her head and laughs. For her, it's Brundle himself who's rapidly becoming irresistible.

INT. EDITORIAL OFFICES. HALLWAY - MORNING

Veronica leaves with Brundle. They are showing signs of liking each other. Stathis watches them through the glass wall of the conference room. His eyes are laser bright. He is not smiling. He picks up the phone.

STATHIS
Renee? Get me everything you've got on Seth Brundle. Yeah. He's with Bartok. Yeah - their stable of geniuses. He was part of their dog and pony show two days ago. Yeah. But I mean, everything, including personal. Dig deep, darling. Thanks.

INT. MACDONALDSESQUE RESTAURANT - DAY

CU Burgers sliding down a ramp in assembly-line style.

CU cheese slices being slapped onto each burger by machine.

Brundle is taking Veronica out to lunch.

VERONICA

You always eat here?

BRUNDLE

I hate surprises. Scientists love things to be repeatable. Every time you walk in, it's exactly the same thing. I love it. Makes me feel secure.

Veronica takes a bite of her burger. It is obvious that she is used to better things.

VERONICA

It's a high price to pay for security.

BRUNDLE

Let's talk turkey.

Veronica is amused at Brundle's turn of phrase. He hasn't been on the streets since he was eight years old.

VERONICA

Sure. Turkey.

BRUNDLE

You were right. I've been working alone too long. I have a very strong urge to talk about what I'm doing. But still... if this gets out now, it'll kill me. The Bartok people will kill me, my colleagues will kill me. It's not ready yet.

VERONICA

Seems to work OK.

BRUNDLE

No. Something important is missing.

VERONICA

Yeah?

BRUNDLE

(HE WON'T TALK)

Yeah.

VERONICA

"Yeah" what?

BRUNDLE

(HE DECIDES TO TALK)

I can only teleport inanimate objects. Dead things.

VERONICA

Are you criticizing my taste in underwear?

BRUNDLE

(BRIGHTENING)

No! I love your taste in underwear!

VERONICA

What happens when you try to teleport living things?

BRUNDLE

(MAKES A FACE, SHAKES HIS HEAD)

Not while we're eating.

VERONICA

(LAUGHS, INDICATES BURGER)

It can't be worse than this.

(PAUSE)

You're not doing a very good job of convincing me. I think the world should know about it now, and I think I should be the one to tell it.

BRUNDLE

How about half of that?

VERONICA

What do you mean?

BRUNDLE

You should tell it, but not yet. Look, what have you got so far?

VERONICA

Just enough to make you nervous.

BRUNDLE

Why not get more? Let me become your major project. I'm talking about a book, not a magazine article. Follow me and my work day by day, in as much detail as you can stand. I don't have a life - so there's nothing for you to interfere with. Research the background. Cover the process.

(PAUSE)

You could even move in with me if you wanted to. I mean... you know, in a professional context.

VERONICA

Sure. I know.

BRUNDLE

(WRITING HER DUST-COVER BLURB)

"The complete record of the most earth-shattering invention ever. The one that ended all concepts of transport, of time and space, of borders and frontiers."

(DRAMATIC PAUSE)

And your book will end with me transporting myself fifteen feet through space, from one telepod to another. That's what's really missing. Wait for me that long.

Veronica has mustard on her upper lip and her eyes are bright. Brundle is pushing the right buttons.

INT. VERONICA'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Veronica opens the door to her apartment - one of those places in which something stylish has been done with not really very much. As she dumps the day's accumulated gear onto a floppy couch, she hears the shower going in the bathroom.

INT. VERONICA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Veronica cautiously approaches the bathroom. The door is open. Veronica approaches the shower and, taking a deep breath, pulls aside the shower curtain. Stathis is calmly taking a shower.

VERONICA

What are you doing in my apartment?

STATHIS

I happened to be in the neighbourhood, felt a bit scummy. Rough day.

Veronica pulls the shower curtain back into place in disgust and slams the bathroom door on the way out.

INT. VERONICA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Veronica is drinking coffee and sorting through some papers when Stathis walks into the room, fully dressed but still towelling off his hair.

STATHIS

No coffee for me?

VERONICA

As far as I'm concerned, you're not here.

STATHIS

The invisible man.

VERONICA

How did you get in?

STATHIS

I still have a key. You gave it to me, remember?

VERONICA

I knew I should have changed the locks.

STATHIS

I knew you wouldn't.

VERONICA

Yeah?

STATHIS

Yeah. That's because, unconsciously, you want me to come back to you, move in again.

VERONICA

No. That's because, very consciously, I'm lazy and disorganized.

STATHIS

You new playmate is an interesting guy.

VERONICA

What playmate?

STATHIS

The nightclub act. Brundle.

VERONICA

Yeah?

STATHIS

Yeah, I was wrong. He's really very brilliant. He was the leader of the F32 team. Remember that? An inch away from the Nobel Prize for physics. He was only twenty at the time.

VERONICA

Well, he acts like he's sixteen right now.
(PAUSE)

I'm not sure I'm going to do Brundle. I'm still considering the Psychology Today gig.

STATHIS

(SUSPICIOUS)

That's not like you.

VERONICA

(WRY)

How would you know? We only lived together for two years. You were just beginning to notice me when we split up.

STATHIS

Now that is like you.

VERONICA

Are you getting out or am I?

STATHIS

(AMIABLE)

I'll go. I've got to put this issue to bed. Shall I come back later?

VERONICA

No.
 (HOLDS OUT HER HAND)
 Key.

STATHIS

I'll keep it, for old time's sake. You want to keep me out, you change the locks.

He leaves.

INT. BRUNDLE'S LAB - NIGHT

On a video monitor, we are close on a small monkey. the monkey is in the sending telepod. We pop back to a general view of Brundle's lab. He is, indeed, about to transmit a monkey and is hard at work at his computer keyboard.

Veronica is also hard at work.

She's got the entire place wired now - videotape, still cameras, sound tapes. Tapes recording his computer screens. She's trying to keep track of everything from behind a small bank of video monitors stacked on a table.

Brundle plays the keyboard like Glenn Gould at his most eccentric - he mutters, mumbles, sings to himself. Finally, he sits back in satisfaction and presses the ACCEPT button.

CU the MASSIVE TELEPOD DOOR LATCH as it slides shut.

The control monitor diagrams the monkey, the outlined figure on the screen duplicating the movement of its real-life counterpart inside the transmitter. The animals vital statistics are calculated and appear. Then...

The light goes on in the transmitter, lancing through the ape who is frozen in fear. The animal disintegrates.

Brundle dances up from the keyboard and runs over to the receiving telepod. As he peers through the window, SOMETHING, presumably the monkey's body, lurches with a thump against the window. A RED SPLOTCH smears across the glass pane. From inside the chamber comes a sickening, tormented thrashing sound as the bloody, misshapen lump - a monkey turned inside out - splatters itself all over the glass of the telepod.

Veronica turns away from the spectacle, sickened. Brundle is devastated.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

Brundle, in CU on monitor and in life. Brundle's expression says "despair." We hear Veronica's voice off-camera as she interviews him.

VERONICA (OC)

We've got to do this, Brundle. Talk to the tapes. Get in the habit. The world will want to know what you're thinking.

BRUNDLE

Fuck! is what I'm thinking.

VERONICA (OC)

Good. The world will want to know that. What else? Why didn't it work?

BRUNDLE

I think it turned the monkey inside out.

VERONICA (OC)

Why?

BRUNDLE

It can't deal with flesh, with living things. It only seems to work with inanimate objects. Nothing that's alive.
(THOUGHTFUL PAUSE)
It must be my fault.

VERONICA

Why?

BRUNDLE

Computers are dumb. They only know what you tell them. I must not know enough about the flesh myself. Gonna have to learn.
(HEAVY, RAGGED SIGH)
I don't want to talk now.

INT. LAB. BEDROOM AREA - NIGHT

Brundle lies on his mattress, despondent. Veronica sits nearby.

VERONICA

Do you ever change your clothes?

BRUNDLE

Huh?

VERONICA

Your clothes. You're always wearing the same clothes.

BRUNDLE

No... these are clean. I change my clothes every day.

Veronica gets up and goes over to his free-standing closet. She opens the canvas door. Inside are neatly hung five versions of exactly the same clothes - sweater, pants, etc.

VERONICA

Five sets of exactly the same clothes?

BRUNDLE

I learned it from Einstein.

VERONICA

Repeatability?

BRUNDLE

Yeah. This way, I don't have to expend any thought on what I'm going to wear. I just grab the next set on the rack.

Veronica lets the canvas door of the closet swing closed and drifts back to Brundle.

VERONICA

I bought some steaks. Can I make you one?

BRUNDLE

We could go out.

VERONICA

Cheese-burgers?

BRUNDLE
 (NOW SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT IT)
 Well, I...
 (SHRUGS)
 We don't have to go there...

Veronica gets on the mattress with him..

VERONICA
 You're very cute.

BRUNDLE
 (NERVOUS)
 Am I?

VERONICA
 Uh-huh.

She runs a finger over his lips. He tries to talk while she does this.

BRUNDLE
 I... I think you're very beautiful.

Veronica's finger ends up stuck in one corner of his mouth. She laughs.

Veronica bends close to Brundle and kisses him full on the lips. It makes Brundle very nervous.

Brundle tries to roll elegantly out from under Veronica's advance but instead rolls half off the mattress and onto something sharp which has been lying on the floor. He yelps in pain.

BRUNDLE
 Ouch!

Brundle detaches himself from Veronica.

VERONICA
 What happened?

BRUNDLE
 I rolled onto something sharp. Take a look.

Brundle turns his back to Veronica. Stuck to his back at the end of three tiny streaks of blood staining through his shirt is an old circuit board.

VERONICA

Oh, God. Something's stuck to your back!

BRUNDLE

(COOL)

Well, pull it off.

Veronica is - perhaps surprisingly - squeamish. She grimaces as she pulls the board away. Three sharp metal connectors are the culprits. She shows it to Brundle.

BRUNDLE

Oh, yeah. I was wondering what happened to this.

Brundle feels for the scratches and brings back blood on his fingertips.

VERONICA

We'd better take a look.

Veronica begins to unbutton Brundle's shirt.

BRUNDLE

(NERVOUS)

Uh... I can do that.

Veronica brushes his hands away.

VERONICA

(SEDUCTIVELY)

No, you've lost some blood. Better let me do it.

Veronica takes Brundle's shirt off, caressing his shoulders as she does it. There are three long, deep scratches high on his back near the shoulder blade. Each scratch ends with a puncture mark.

VERONICA

Have you got any disinfectant?

Brundle hands her a nearby dusty old glass of Scotch.

BRUNDLE

This oughta do the trick.

Veronica dabs it on the scratches with her fingers. Brundle gasps at the sharpness. Veronica gives his shoulder a gentle bite.

BRUNDLE

Ah, please. No more pain.

VERONICA

Sorry. I just suddenly wanted to eat you up. You know - that's why old ladies pinch baby cheeks. It's the flesh, it makes them crazy.

BRUNDLE

(DISTRACTED)

Uh-huh. The flesh. Yes. Wanna try an experiment?

VERONICA

(EXCITED)

Sure.

To her consternation, Brundle jumps out of bed and heads for the kitchen.

BRUNDLE

Let's make a steak.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB. KITCHEN AREA - NIGHT

CU raw steak as it is cut into two halves.

We pop back to see Brundle at work in the kitchen.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

as Brundle puts one half of the steak through the teleporter on a white plate, and keeps the other half on a brown plate.

Brundle takes the teleported half out of the receiver and begins to cook each half in a pan, without seasoning. He is careful to remember which half is which.

Brundle pulls the steak halves off the stove.

Brundle places the teleported half of the steak on a table in front of Veronica.

END OF MONTAGE SEQUENCE

BRUNDLE

OK. Eat this. I need an objective opinion.

VERONICA

Are you serious? A monkey just came apart in that booth.

BRUNDLE

Eat!

Veronica takes a bite of the steak.

VERONICA

Hmph.

BRUNDLE

So?

VERONICA

It tastes - funny.

BRUNDLE

Funny how?

VERONICA

It tastes - synthetic.

BRUNDLE

Now try this half.

She takes a bite of the non-teleported half.

VERONICA

Ok. It could use some finesse, but... it tastes like a steak. What have we proved?

Brundle begins to free-associate with a passion.

BRUNDLE

Computers are dumb. They have no poetry. They do exactly what you tell them to do. Life is poetry. Even a good steak is poetry. The

computer is giving us its interpretation of a steak. It's rethinking it for us, translating it rather than reproducing it. And something is getting lost in the translation.

VERONICA

Me. I'm lost.

BRUNDLE

The ghost in the machine. The life essence. Soul. Yeah. So. I know what you're gonna say. You're gonna say, "But a steak is dead." Sure, a steak is dead - but it's dead life!

VERONICA

I don't think I was going to say that.

Brundle gets up and starts to back out of the kitchen, headed more or less for the lab's work area.

BRUNDLE

(DISAPPEARING AROUND THE CORNER)

It's what you've already said. It's the flesh. It should make the machine crazy, just like those old ladies pinching babies. But it doesn't, not yet. I haven't taught the machine how to be made crazy by the flesh, the poetry, the steak. I'm going to start teaching it now.

VERONICA

(CALLING AFTER HIM)

What are you going to do, read it "Naked Lunch?"

But Brundle is already gone. The sound of the keyboard clacking away madly floats back to Veronica from the lab work area. She shrugs and starts to finish off the good half of the steak.

EXT. LAB WAREHOUSE - MORNING

Veronica leaves the lab and walks down the street. She walks past a nondescript car out of which rises Stathis, who is unshaven, half-asleep, lurking like a common maniac. He's obviously been there all night.

Veronica gets into her car and starts it. Stathis starts his and follows her down the street.

EXT. MEN'S CLOTHING STORE - MORNING

Veronica goes into the store. Stathis waits a beat, then gets out of his car and follows her in.

INT. MEN'S CLOTHING STORE - MORNING

Stathis watches her shop - for a man. It's making him crazy. He no longer looks cool and powerful, just jealous and unbalanced.

Finally, unable to bear it any longer, Stathis intercepts her amongst the clothes racks just as she's picked a jacket out for Brundle.

STATHIS

I should have known it!

VERONICA

(SHOCKED)

What are you doing here? I hate this!

STATHIS

I followed you. Psychology Today, my ass. You stayed with Brundle all night. Why didn't I believe you? I wonder.

Stathis grabs the jacket out of her hand and holds it up to himself.

STATHIS

Yeah, I think he'd look great in this, don't you? I mean, for your TIME magazine cover you've gotta look good.

VERONICA

Listen Stath. Don't you get it? I'm finally onto something that's big. Huge.

STATHIS

Oh yeah? His cock?

VERONICA

Crude, Stath. Very crude.

Stathis throws the jacket at her - rather viciously.

STATHIS

It's too perfect to believe! You're a goddess. I give thanks to you for making my most paranoid fantasies come true!

He gets on his knees right in the middle of the aisle and bows down to her. Shoppers and clerks try to ignore them, hoping it will all just go away soon.

VERONICA

(FURIOUS)

I don't have to report to you, you creep!

She turns and starts to walk away.

Stathis struggles to his feet.

STATHIS

(PATHETIC, GENUINELY HURT)

Ronnie! You've got to talk to me!

VERONICA

I don't have to do anything! We're finished, remember? I'll spend the night anywhere I damn well please!

She stomps over to the cash, where there is a pile of men's clothes already assembled.

VERONICA

(INDICATING JACKET)

I'll take this too.

CLERK

Certainly.

Stathis watches from a distance, glowering.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP OF RECEIVER

The screen is filled with GLOWING LIGHT. AS THE CAMERA PULLS BACK, we realize it's the light of the receiver chamber.

INTERCUTTING SHOTS...as the reintegration process completes its cycle.

ON BRUNDLE...as he bites his nails, nervously waiting for the light to go out.

ON VERONICA... behind the stack of video monitors, recording it all.

ON COMPUTER MONITOR...there is a computerized diagram of something forming...

ON RECEIVING CHAMBER DOOR...inside the same shape forming in the diagram is forming here. It is some sort of PRIMATE.

ON MONITOR...the diagram is filling out more. We hear the machine shut off and the reflected light from the receiver disappears. The diagram of the ape starts to move, reflecting the movements of the actual subject in the telepod. Its statistics are also calculated on screen.

ON RECEIVER DOOR...as Brundle opens it. Inside a SMALL MONKEY sits, apparently healthy, happy, and totally whole.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Brundle opens the receiver and the monkey playfully scrambles up his arm, clinging to his neck. Brundle smiles and strokes him.

Making a cursory inspection of the monkey, Brundle takes it over to a table and deposits it in its CAGE. It chatters at him contentedly.

Brundle looks up into the lens of the nearest camera. He can barely suppress his pride and excitement.

BRUNDLE

I think it's time for champagne!

Veronica flicks off the monitors and comes out from behind the stack to join Brundle.

VERONICA

(EXCITED)

Oh, God, Brundle! It's really happened! You did it! And all because you get car sick!

BRUNDLE

(EXUBERANT)

Yeah, I did it! I really...

(CONFUSED)

Car sick?

VERONICA

I finally figured it out. You came up with this so you wouldn't have to travel in my car.

They laugh, they kiss. We notice that Brundle is wearing new clothes, including the jacket that Stathis saw Veronica buying in the store.

Brundle takes the bottle of champagne waiting in its cooler and struggles to pop the cork. He's not really very good at it. Veronica gently takes over and does it for him while they talk.

VERONICA

What next?

BRUNDLE

I send the monkey out for tests, see if he's really OK.

VERONICA

How long will that take?

BRUNDLE

Could be weeks. Why?

VERONICA

I was thinking - we could take a holiday.

BRUNDLE

We could?

VERONICA

(POPPING THE CHAMPAGNE CORK)

Yeah. Like an old married couple. You know - the old man's got a coupla weeks off, so they go to Florida, someplace warm.

BRUNDLE

Just you and me?

VERONICA

Why, is there somebody else you want to bring along?

BRUNDLE

No, no... it's just... is this a romance we're having? Is that what it is?

Veronica laughs and hugs him.

VERONICA

Could be a romance.

She's about to pour the champagne when she spots a manila envelope on the table. It has the PARTICLE Magazine logo stamped on it, and clipped to it is a piece of expensive PARTICLE notepaper which says "From the Desk of Stathis Borans, Editor, PARTICLE Magazine." In handwriting, it says: "Thought you'd like to see this before it went to the printer. All my love, Stath."

VERONICA

What's that?

BRUNDLE

Somebody slipped it under the door. Hand delivered - there's no postage.

Veronica hands the champagne bottle to Brundle and rips open the envelope. It's a mockup of the next issue of PARTICLE. On the cover is Brundle - in his new jacket (artists's rendering). He's been made to look a little crazed.

Under his photo it says, TELEPORTATION A REALITY? SETH BRUNDLE - Youthful Father of a New Age. In the background are sketched two telepods. The sketch of the telepods is all wrong - Stathis hasn't actually seen the telepods - but the message is clear: Stathis intends to blow the entire deal.

VERONICA

Shit!

BRUNDLE

What is it?

Veronica slips the magazine back into the envelope.

VERONICA

It's...uh... just personal bullshit...

BRUNDLE

I thought old married couples shared all their personal bullshit. That's how they stayed old and married.

VERONICA

(KISSES HIM WITH REAL TENDERNESS)

Don't rush it, Brundle, and it'll all happen. I've got to go out for a few hours.

BRUNDLE

But... right now? The champagne...

VERONICA

Just a few hours. I've still got the residue of another life, you know? I gotta scrape it off my shoe and get rid of it for once and for all.

Veronica leaves.

Brundle sighs and pours himself a glass of champagne.

EXT. MONOLITH PUBLISHING BUILDING - NIGHT

Establishing shot.

INT. STATHIS'S OFFICES - NIGHT

The offices are all but deserted. A janitor is polishing the floors. Veronica walks in on Stathis and throws the magazine mockup on his desk.

VERONICA

What's this supposed to mean?

STATHIS

It means that I'm your editor and I'm shaping your material into a story.

VERONICA

You're the one who told me there was no story. You said Brundle was a con man.

STATHIS

I've decided to trust your journalistic instincts.

VERONICA

Thanks a lot. But this isn't your story. It's mine.

STATHIS

Says who? I sent you to the Bartok party to see what you could find. Your discovery is my discovery.

VERONICA

Don't be a bastard.

STATHIS

Don't be a bitch.

VERONICA

You don't have anything.

STATHIS

I have your tape. I have a lot of background on Brundle. He's been working on this thing for six years. There's material out there to find if you dig deep. I dug deep. Enough to unearth a cover story.

VERONICA

I'll sue you. I'll get an injunction!

STATHIS

Great! Let's play. But that's my game. You know that.

Veronica flops into a chair with a big sigh. She's going to have to negotiate.

VERONICA

What do you want from me?

STATHIS

I care about you and I worry about you. I want to know what's going on. Everything.

VERONICA

I don't want you to know everything.

STATHIS

(SUDDENLY FRUSTRATED AND ANGRY)

You really like this guy. You're fucking him. I hate it!

VERONICA

Yeah, I like him. He's funny.

STATHIS

You told me I was funny.

VERONICA

You were funny.

STATHIS

Not any more, huh?

VERONICA

You're scaring me.

STATHIS

(YELLING LIKE A PSYCHOTIC)

I'm not a psychotic! I won't hurt you!

VERONICA

Your gravity scares me.

STATHIS

I love you. Is that what you mean?

VERONICA

You're in pain because of me. That scares me. I really don't want that power. I wish you would take it back.

STATHIS

I wish I could. What do we do now?

VERONICA

Are you gonna wreck me with this Brundle thing?

STATHIS

You really think it's the Pulitzer Prize for little Ronnie Quaife, do you?

VERONICA

Stath! It's teleportation! It's one of the great dreams - and it's on the verge of coming true! No more planes, trains, ships, cars, roads... Everything to do with transportation will become obsolete! And I'm right there in the middle of it - the only recorder of the event from the inside out!

STATHIS

OK. OK. Look - just keep me informed, all right? As a friend, as a professional confidante. And if you need any help, you come to me.

VERONICA

That's all?

STATHIS

I don't want you to disappear from my life.

They kiss, delicately - a friendly kiss.

VERONICA

OK.

STATHIS

(PAUSE)

What about sex? I'm not saying love or affection. Just stress-relieving sex, you and me.

Veronica laughs, stands up and heads for the door.

VERONICA

(LAUGHING)

You're disgusting - as always.

STATHIS

I wouldn't want to disappoint you.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Brundle is drinking the champagne himself. He has let the monkey roam free and is playing with it. He's a little drunk.

BRUNDLE

(TO MONKEY)

"From the desk of Stathis Borans." Sure. How about, "Under the desk of Stathis Borans." Is that where she is right now? Right. It's the Ronnie game, and I'm catching on fast.

The monkey chatters amiably. A fly buzzes around its face. Brundle brushes it away.

BRUNDLE

(TO MONKEY)

I never meant to kill your brother, you know. It was a mistake. Manslaughter but not homicide. As the general said, "There's nothing I'd ask you to do that I wouldn't do myself, boys. You know that."

This gives him an idea.

BRUNDLE

Hey, you're all right. I'm looking at you, and I can tell you're OK. So - what are we waiting for? Let's do it?

He takes a hefty slug of champagne, then takes off his clothes.

BRUNDLE

"All my love," huh? That means he's her lover, doesn't it? "From the desk of your lover, Stathis Borans."

Brundle rises and walks up to the transmitter, examining it. He chews on a fingernail for a moment, then opens the door.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Brundle moves to each of the VIDEO CAMERAS and turns them on.

He moves to the controlboard. He fingers the TIMER nervously, hesitating...he glances at the transmitter, then back at the timer.

The FLY buzzes about Brundle's head. Brundle distractedly brushes the insect away.

ON FLY

THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THE FLY as it alights on the outside of the transmitter door.

ON BRUNDLE

He sets his empty champagne glass down on a table, still gazing at the control panel timer. He glances once more at the transmitter, then, heaving a deep sigh, turns once more to the timer, resolved to action.

CLOSE ON BRUNDLE'S HAND

As his fingers set the timer. A DIGITAL READOUT displays: "00:20"...TWENTY SECONDS, then: "00:19".

ON TRANSMITTER TELEPOD

Brundle quickly enters it and closes the door. THE CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE ON THE GLASS WINDOW OF THE TRANSMITTER DOOR. THERE WE SEE CRAWLING ACROSS THE PANE... THE FLY -- BUT NOW ON THE INSIDE!

INTERCUTTING SHOTS...as the Transmission process commences.

ON TIMER...the display readout has moved to "00:08."

ON MASSIVE TELEPOD DOOR LATCH... as it slides shut with great finality.

ON BRUNDLE...little droplets of sweat bead his brow as he stares down at the floor of the chamber..waiting...

ON FLY...crawling in the corner of the glass door, quite unnoticed by Brundle.

ON TIMER..."00:04"

ON MONKEY... outside the door of the transmitter, pawing at it, watching Brundle inside - a strange reversal of the usual routine.

ON BRUNDLE... noticing the monkey outside. He manages a nervous smile.

ON VIDEO EYEPiece MONITOR... as it dispassionately records everything.

ON FLY... its buzzing drowned out by the hum of machinery.

ON TIMER...as it goes from "00:01 to "00:00".

ON BRUNDLE...waiting...

ON MONITOR...Brundle's outline is diagrammed, his vital statistics computed down to the minutest fraction. But not only Brundle is charted on the monitor -- so is the fly!

ON FLY...crawling along the glass.

ON BRUNDLE...anxious, sweat pouring from his brow.

ON MONKEY... cavorting outside the door.

ON BRUNDLE'S EYES...seen only for an instant, before the ENTIRE SCREEN is filled with BRILLIANT LIGHT.

ON MONKEY... as it screeches and runs in terror.

ON TRANSMITTER TELEPOD...its interior bathed in light, Brundle fading from view...

ON MONITOR...Brundle's outline becomes fragmented. THE FLY has already disappeared!

ON TRANSMITTER TELEPOD...The light goes off, the chamber is empty. There is a FLASH OF LIGHT in another part of the room.

ON RECEIVER...now full of light, the reintegration process has commenced. Brundle begins to re-form.

ON MONITOR...duplicating Brundle's reintegration in the receiver. A human outline fragmentedly appears.

ON BRUNDLE...as the light shuts off abruptly. He shakes himself as though coming out of a daze.

Brundle opens the receiver door and steps out.

THE CAMERA PANS PAST BRUNDLE TO THE INTERIOR OF THE GLASS WINDOW -- BUT THERE IS NOTHING THERE!

Brundle looks around for his audience. He sees the monkey cowering on the sofa. Brundle smiles at it triumphantly.

BRUNDLE

Now you tell me - am I different somehow? Is it live, or is it Memorex?

(LAUGHS, PERHAPS A LITTLE TOO GIDDY)

Too bad you missed it, Ronnie. Too bad.

In a mood of righteous anger, Brundle grabs the champagne bottle and finishes off the champagne.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAB WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Veronica's car pulls up and stops on the deserted street outside the lab warehouse. She gets out of the car and looks up. All the lights in the lab are out.

INT. LAB WAREHOUSE. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Veronica makes her way up the stairs. It is spooky there in the dark, alone with the echo of her footsteps.

INT. LAB. LIVING ROOM AREA - NIGHT

Veronica slides open the big front door. No sign of Brundle.

INT. LAB. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Veronica creeps in to Brundle's bedroom. He's asleep. She slips off her clothes and gets into bed with him. She gently strokes his shoulder.

Brundle stirs, wakes up, turns sleepily to Veronica.

BRUNDLE

(SLEEPILY)

I missed you last night.

VERONICA

It's still night. I came back.

(PAUSE)

You had to celebrate without me. I'm sorry.

BRUNDLE

(PAUSE)

I went through last night.

VERONICA

You went through? Without testing the monkey?

BRUNDLE

I was a bit drunk. I was upset.

VERONICA

(UPSET)

You could have killed yourself! You're like a little pouty kid. I can't believe it!

BRUNDLE

Me neither. I keep surprising myself.

(PAUSE)

Are you sleeping with Stathis Borans?

VERONICA

What are you talking about?

BRUNDLE

I dunno. I just have that feeling...

VERONICA

(INCREDULOUS)

That's why you were upset?

BRUNDLE

I got jealous.

VERONICA

Oh, God.

(PAUSE)

But... you don't have to be jealous. He's an old boyfriend. He was teaching at college, I was a science major. He got me started in journalism.

BRUNDLE

Did you manage to scrape him off your shoe?

VERONICA

We're just platonic. We talk business.

BRUNDLE

Is he still in love with you?

VERONICA

(LIGHTLY)

How could he not be?

(PAUSE)

What about our deal? You went through and I wasn't there!

BRUNDLE

Don't worry. I taped it for you.

VERONICA

You did?

Brundle nods.

VERONICA

But why? You were mad at me.

BRUNDLE

I wanted to hurt you. But I'm finding that if I don't share everything with you, then it's... as if it hasn't really happened.

VERONICA

That sounds like love.

BRUNDLE

It does?

VERONICA

Yeah, it does.

BRUNDLE

Well, you know about these things, right?

VERONICA

Yeah, I do.

She kisses him. They begin to make love.

The camera finds Veronica's hands as they clasp Brundle, then follows one of her hands as it moves down Brundle's side.

There, we see that the skin in the area of the three scratches has taken on a strange, rough texture. Even more startling, we see that HAIRS are growing out of the scratches - three from the top one, one from the middle scratch. And these hairs are decidedly NOT HUMAN: they are coarse, strong, and METALLIC-GREEN in colour.

Veronica's fingers glide past the hairs without quite touching them.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB. BEDROOM - VERY EARLY MORNING

CU BRUNDLE, asleep, lying on his back. We hear a faint buzzing. A FLY hovers near Brundle's cheek, then lands. He unconsciously brushes it away.

The FLY continues to buzz over Brundle's head. Suddenly, Brundle makes an instinctive, eyes-closed grab for the insect.

With an amazing display of reflexes and speed, Brundle's hand sweeps through the air and snatches the fly. We hear it BUZZING in Brundle's hand.

The hand has not moved. Brundle's arm remains in mid-air. His fist clenches. He opens his eyes, now stone-cold awake, fully realizing what he's done.

Brundle stares up at his hand. He slowly opens his fingers, releasing the fly. It buzzes off.

Brundle stares up at his hand, wondering about the feat he just performed. Blind luck? A fluke? Or something more? He flexes his fingers open and shut several times. He smiles.

Brundle, totally nude, sits up on the edge of the bed, staring at his hands in curious pleasure. He turns, notices VERONICA in bed with him. He smiles at her sleeping form, turns, rubs his hands over his own chest.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB. BEDROOM - MORNING

CU VERONICA

Veronica wakes up. She hears noise, motion in the lab. She turns to Brundle, but he's no longer in bed with her. Still half asleep, slightly nervous, Veronica gets up out of bed and follows the sound.

INT. LAB - MORNING

Veronica peers tentatively around the corner of the half wall which separates the bedroom from the lab proper and finds herself looking at a strangely beautiful and unexpected sight.

Brundle, nude, bathed in shafts of soft morning light which highlight the rough textures of the warehouse walls and floors, is performing a series of slow, complex, highly controlled gymnastic manoeuvres on the pipes and wooden studs which link the pillars of the lab.

Veronica is quietly astonished. She walks slowly into the lab, drawn and hypnotized by the beauty of the moment, not wanting to disturb it.

But soon she finds herself reaching out to touch Brundle as he twists and turns in slow motion. The spell doesn't break; it's as though he expected her. Brundle keeps performing, now with a sweet, shy smile.

VERONICA

I didn't know you could do that stuff.

BRUNDLE

When I woke up, I felt like doing this. And I just started to do it.

(PAUSE)

I always... thought I could do something like this if I just... wanted to enough.

Brundle finally stops his exercises and stands squarely in front of Veronica. He is sweating, breathing hard. He's the same Brundle, and yet... he seems so much more physically self-aware, vibrant.

Veronica studies him carefully. She touches him again, traces the line of his collarbone with her finger. She takes his hand in hers and kisses it with great tenderness.

DISSOLVE TO:

TV IMAGES. From time to time we cut to the live (film) version of these same images. When we are live, we also see reactions from Veronica.

BRUNDLE is being interviewed in CLOSE-UP; VERONICA speaks OFF-CAMERA.

VERONICA (OC)

We've just seen the first teleportation of a human being. Dr. Seth Brundle, how did it feel going through? What did it feel like?

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

It feels like a stutter.

VERONICA (OC)

A what?

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

A stutter. A hiccup. A slight dislocation of my physical life. Not unpleasant. Just a little interruption of rhythm. For a second I thought it didn't work. I thought I was in the same telepod I started out in.

VERONICA (OC)

And did you feel at all different?

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

A little... unbalanced. That's all.

VERONICA (OC)

And now?

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

I should feel exactly the same as before, but I don't. I'm not complaining. I feel very - co-ordinated. And very energized. I feel as though I work better, physically. Everything seems to just - work together better than it ever did before.

VERONICA (OC)

Why should that be?

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

It's possible that the teleporter has somehow... improved me.

VERONICA (OC)

But that's fantastic! How is it possible?

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

In reassembling me it might have - this is just a guess - but it might have just - seen where things could be improved - theoretically, and it did it. I told it to be creative, and I guess it has been.

VERONICA (OC)

Could this ever be dangerous?

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

Well, it's certainly unexpected. The monkeys don't seem to exhibit any changes from their norm at all. We'll see when they come back from testing.

VERONICA (OC)

But you haven't really answered me. Could this be dangerous?

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

It feels too perfect to be dangerous.

VERONICA (OS)

You like the way it feels?

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

Yes, I do.
(BIG SMILE)
Want to try it?

CUT TO:

CU VERONICA

live. She shakes her head "No."

EXT. KENSINGTON OUTDOOR MARKET - DAY

Lyrical montage as Brundle and Veronica walk the lively, bustling streets of Kensington Market hand in hand.

EXT. ITALIAN SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

We are CLOSE on a cup of cappuccino. Brundle's hand comes into the shot and begins to dump spoonful after spoonful of sugar into the cup.

BRUNDLE (OC)

... so I asked the computer if it had improved me and it said it didn't know what I was talking about.

We pull back to see VERONICA sitting across from Brundle, watching him with some CONCERN. They sit at a table under an Alfa Romeo umbrella - a small Italian sidewalk cafe.

She bites a fingernail - Brundle's habit - as the FIFTH TEASPOON OF SUGAR is dumped into the cup, but says nothing. Brundle, excited, wired-up, doesn't seem to notice that he is doing anything odd. He speaks with a rapid fervour.

BRUNDLE

That made me think very carefully about what I'm feeling and why. I'm beginning to think that the sheer process of being taken apart, atom by atom, and then put back together again, why, it's like coffee being put through a filter. It's somehow a purifying process, it's purified me, it's cleansed me, it's allowed me to realize the personal potential I've been neglecting all these years that I've been obsessively pursuing goal after goal...

Brundle has been stirring the sugar into the cappuccino. Now he pauses to drain the cup - without the slightest reaction to the incredible sweetness of the drink. He puts the cup down.

VERONICA

Do you normally take coffee with your sugar?

BRUNDLE

(DOESN'T GET IT)

What?

Veronica just shakes her head. Brundle reaches across the table and takes her hand. He continues to rattle on with incredible intensity.

BRUNDLE

I just don't think I've ever given me a chance to be me. And now that I've achieved what will probably prove to be my life's work... I can be me, the real me, at last.

For some reason, Veronica finds herself looking away.

INT. LAB. BEDROOM - LATE DAY

Veronica and Brundle are in bed making love - but something's wrong. Veronica pushes Brundle away and rolls over in the bed, obviously exhausted.

VERONICA

I've got to stop. I have to sleep.

Brundle begins to caress her, kiss her.

BRUNDLE

Not yet.

Veronica sits up to get away from him.

VERONICA

I've got to. How can you keep going? You can't possibly have any fluid left in your body. We've been doing this for hours.

Brundle sits up behind her and begins to kiss her shoulder.

BRUNDLE

I'm not ready to stop.

Despite her fatigue, Veronica begins to respond. She holds Brundle, runs her hands down his back. Suddenly, she feels something that disturbs her. She stops, pulls away, searches Brundle's body for whatever it was she felt.

VERONICA

Hey, what's this?

BRUNDLE

It's an attempt to distract me, that's what it is.

VERONICA

No, I'm serious. Look at these.

Brundle lifts his arm and cranes his head around to get a look. What he sees are the STRANGE, METALLIC-GREEN HAIRS growing out of the scratches in his back - only now there are more of them, and they are longer, almost... bristly.

BRUNDLE

(NOT CONCERNED)

Happens when you get older. Weird hair configurations.

VERONICA

They're very coarse.

BRUNDLE

I've never really been hairy enough, you know what I mean? Always too boyish. I'm looking forward to a hairy body. One of the compensations of old age.

Veronica jumps up and grabs a pair of toenail scissors from the edge of the sink. She flops back down onto the bed and begins to attack the hairs with the scissors.

Brundle protests - but not seriously.

BRUNDLE

Hey - not my new hairs!

VERONICA

Relax, Brundle. I don't think you really want a body covered with these. God, they're really tough!

Veronica is having difficulty getting the scissors to cut through the hairs. Finally, she gets the first one trimmed off and starts on the next one. Brundle sits happily on the bed and begins to speed-rap again.

BRUNDLE

(SPEEDY BUT HAPPY)

Listen. I want you to go through. I want to teleport you. As soon as possible. Right now. You'll feel incredible. Ronnie - I hardly need to sleep any more. And I feel wonderful. It's like a drug, but a perfectly pure and benign drug. The power I feel surging inside me - you'll feel fantastic. And I won't be able to wear you out... We'll be the perfect couple. The dynamic duo! C'mon. Right now!

He grabs her by the arm and begins to pull her off the bed. She pulls back, shrinking away from his craziness.

VERONICA

Hey, lay off, will you? Don't give me that born-again teleportation rap. I told you I was scared to do it. What more do I need to say? I'm not going to do it!

When he sees that she's resisting, he lets go.

BRUNDLE

You're a fucking drag, you know that?

Veronica looks at Brundle, wide-eyed.

VERONICA

(VERY QUIETLY)

Something went wrong, Brundle. When you went through. Something went wrong.

Brundle completely ignores her words. He begins to throw on an outrageously wrong combination of clothes.

BRUNDLE

No? Not you? You're too chicken-shit to be a member of the dynamic duo club? OK, then, great, I'll find somebody else. Somebody who can keep up with me!

VERONICA

Brundle, you've got to listen to me!

BRUNDLE

(ANGRY, SPEEDY)

You're afraid to dive into the plasma pool, aren't you? You're afraid to be destroyed and reconsidered, aren't you? You might think you were the one to teach me about the flesh, but you only know society's straight line about the flesh, you can't penetrate beyond society's sick, gray fear of the flesh! Drink deep, or taste not the plasma spring, you see what I'm sayin'...? I'm not just talking about sex and penetration, I'm talking PENETRATION beyond the veil of the flesh, a deep, penetrating dive into the plasma pool... !

Brundle storms out the door, slamming it behind him.

VERONICA

No! Brundle, please, wait!

Veronica slides open the heavy door, thinking she might run after him - but the sound of his footsteps tells her she'll never catch him: he's fast, and he's gone.

She comes back in, distraught but thinking. She goes back to the bed and looks for something in the twisted sheets. She soon finds what she's looking for - the FOUR OR FIVE STRANGE METALLIC-GREEN HAIRS she managed to trim from Brundle's back.

Veronica lays the hairs out on the night table, then picks up the longest one and studies it in the light of the bed-lamp.

CU BRUNDLE'S WEIRD HAIR

It's coarse and very animal-like, but also somehow beautiful in its iridescent greenness.

Veronica dumps an old telephone bill out of its envelope and drops all the hairs into the envelope for safe-keeping.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Brundle stalks the neon-lit downtown streets, looking for a place to put his seething energy.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Brundle spots a bar that looks just about right - three or four shady women hanging around the entrance, along with an assortment of hungry men. Brundle pushes through the small group at the entrance and enters the bar.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Brundle stands alone at the bar. In the garish neon of the place he no longer looks friendly and cuddly; he is angry, manic and, somehow... predatory.

Two large men with tatoos on their arms are arm-wrestling at a small table, egged on by a VOLUPTUOUSLY SLEAZY WOMAN. Beer is sloshing everywhere as the men struggle for an advantage.

The bartender puts a drink down - a double Scotch - in front of Brundle, who is in the process of unwrapping an O'Henry chocolate bar. The bartender winces as Brundle bites off a piece of chocolate then washes it down with some Scotch.

Brundle gets up and, still munching on his bar, begins to drift over to the table and the sleazy woman, whose name is TAWNY.

BRUNDLE

Who's winning?

TAWNY

Dunno. Hope it's Marky.

BRUNDLE

How come?

TAWNY

'Cause the winner wins me, and I like Marky tonight.

BRUNDLE

Yeah? Well, I like you tonight. Maybe I'd better get involved in this, too.

The two men ease off their wrestling. The biggest one, MARKY, grabs Brundle by the lapels.

MARKY

You're disturbing us.

BRUNDLE

I got a hundred bucks says I can beat either one of you.

The men laugh. Marky grabs Brundle's arm and rips his jacket sleeve right off. He folds Brundle's arm back and displays it to Tawny.

MARKY

Like those biceps, Tawny?

SECOND MAN

Hey, I know his secret.

(GRABS THE CHOCOLATE BAR AND SLURPS ALL OVER IT)

He eats chocolates and peanuts for energy!

They howl in laughter. Brundle pulls out a hundred-dollar bill which has been wadded up in his pocket. He slams the hundred on the table.

BRUNDLE

A hundred. And I get to take the lady home for the night if I win.

TAWNY

Says who?

MARKY

Hey - an easy hundred, Tawny.

TAWNY

Yeah, but says who? It's the idea of it. I ain't no hooker.

Marky ignores her and sits down, ready to rumble.

MARKY

C'mon, let's get it over with.

Having said her piece, Tawny sits down to enjoy the fun.

Brundle sits down opposite Marky. They spend a few minutes gripping and re-gripping each other's hand under the scrutiny of the second man. A few spectators accumulate around the table.

Finally, they're ready to wrestle.

ON BRUNDLE, as they start.

ON MARKY, confident.

ON BRUNDLE, having no trouble.

ON TAWNY, wondering what's happening.

ON MARKY, his confidence turning to mush as he meets the steel in Brundle's skinny forearm.

The tension is building between the two arms: they are shaking.

CU BRUNDLE - he's doing well but it's an effort.

CU BRUNDLE'S FINGERTIPS - the hand that's wrestling. Under the pressure of the fight, a STRANGE, PUS-LIKE SECRETION begins to ooze from under his fingernails and down the back of Marky's hand. It goes unnoticed in the general sweat and beer.

The strain is enormous. Veins are bulging. Arms are quivering. Muscles are fibrillating. Then SUDDENLY, all the pent-up energy is released with a sickening CRACK! as MARKY'S FOREARM SHATTERS! Splintered bone slices out through the skin of Marky's wrist and glints in the icy light of the bar.

Marky shrieks in agony. Brundle lets go. Marky holds his arm and stares at it as though it belonged to someone else. His hand dangles at an impossible angle; the piece of cracked ulna looks white as a tooth. The second man and Tawny look on in disbelief.

People begin to gather around. Marky starts to moan as blood begins to well up in a serious way and spill out of the wound onto the table top.

Brundle grabs his hundred dollars in one hand and takes Tawny by the wrist with the other. She's stunned and she lets herself be dragged out of the bar.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Once Brundle and Tawny are out on the street, Tawny recovers enough to talk.

TAWNY

(IN AMAZEMENT)

Jesus! Are you a body-builder or something?

BRUNDLE

Yeah, I build bodies. I take 'em apart and then I put 'em back together again.

TAWNY

(IN BREATHLESS ADMIRATION)

You sure took Marky apart.

BRUNDLE

Let's go back to my place.

TAWNY

Your place?

(COY)

Yeah, well, OK. I live with my mother anyway. But could we go to a few more bars first? It's too early to quit.

BRUNDLE

Sure. A few more bars.

EXT. LAB WAREHOUSE - EARLY MORNING

A cab pulls up outside. Brundle and Tawny get out, blinking in the early morning light.

INT. LAB WAREHOUSE. STAIRWELL - EARLY MORNING

Confronted with the number of stairs, Tawny sits down heavily on the steps.

TAWNY

Oh, no. No elevator. I'll never make it.

BRUNDLE

There is an elevator.

Brundle picks her up effortlessly.

BRUNDLE

Don't you feel elevated?

He sprints up the ten flights of stairs with Tawny in his arms.

TAWNY

You're sure in good shape for somebody who only eats candy bars.

INT. LAB - MORNING

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

as Brundle, naked, teleports himself from one telepod to the other.

During this sequence, we watch Tawny's amazed reactions as she sits on the mattress watching the process with a drink in her hand.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Brundle steps from the receiving telepod. Tawny is impressed.

TAWNY

Wow! Are you a magician?

BRUNDLE

Yeah. Now it's your turn.

TAWNY

I don't think I want to try it.

BRUNDLE

Why not? It'll make you feel sexy.

TAWNY

I already feel sexy. How about a nice alcohol rub?

Tawny pushes Brundle down onto the mattress and starts to rub the booze over his skin. The instant the stuff hits his skin, he screams in pain, whipping around to slap the bottle out of her hand.

BRUNDLE

(SCREAMS)

Don't do that! It hurts!

Tawny doesn't seem to be the slightest bit intimidated by Brundle's violence.

TAWNY

Sorry, Hun. I didn't realize you had the skin of a princess.

(SEXY VOICE)

Real sensitive, huh?

Brundle jumps up from the mattress and begins to pace back and forth like a maniac.

BRUNDLE

(PACING)

I want you to go through. I think you'll like it.

TAWNY

But I don't want to. I'm afraid.

BRUNDLE

Don't be afraid.

A voice comes from out of the shadows by the door.

VERONICA

(TO TAWNY)

No - be afraid. Be very afraid.

Veronica steps into the light. Tawny is weirded out by Veronica's dark tone of voice, by her gravity.

TAWNY

(WEIRDED OUT)

Who's this?

BRUNDLE

I live with my mother, too. Mum, meet Tawny.

TAWNY

I think I'd better go. Thanks for the wonderful time.

Tawny gets herself together in an amazingly short time - she's had practice - and is out the door in seconds. She doesn't look back.

Now Brundle comes out into the light and we take a close look at him - as does Veronica. We see that his skin seems very red and rough, his beard stubble thick, coarse, and flecked with the same metallic green of the first few hairs that grew from his side. His cheeks are gaunt, his eyes seem unnaturally wide-open.

BRUNDLE

Why did you scare her off? Jealous?

Brundle's tone doesn't bother Veronica. She's functioning on a different level altogether.

VERONICA

You're changing, Brundle. Everything about you is changing. You look bad. You smell bad.

BRUNDLE

I've never been much of a bather.

Veronica throws down the phone bill envelope with the metallic-green hairs in it. We can see the hairs through the plastic window in the envelope.

VERONICA

Those weird hairs that were growing out of your side - I took them to a lab, Brundle. Had them analysed.

Brundle nervously picks up a candy bar and begins to eat it.

BRUNDLE

The hairs? Oh yeah.
(PAUSE)
That's a strange thing to do.

VERONICA

Not as strange as the results. The guy at the lab had trouble identifying them. He finally came to the conclusion that they were definitely not human.

BRUNDLE

(LAUGHS)
Yeah?

VERONICA

(DEADLY SERIOUS)
Not human, Brundle. In fact, very likely insect hairs.

BRUNDLE

That's ridiculous. That's silly.

She turns Brundle around. More hairs have already sprouted from the three scratches, thick, coarse, metallic-green.

VERONICA

Look.
(BRUNDLE LOOKS)
Something happened when you went through, Brundle. You've got to get help! You've got to find out what went wrong!

Brundle freaks out.

BRUNDLE

(FREAKING)
Get out of here! You're jealous, jealous! I've become free, I've been released and you can't stand it! You'll do anything to bring me down. Look at me! Does this look like a sick man? Does this look sick?

He begins to PUNCH AWAY chunks of an immense wooden support beam with his right fist! Shards of wood fly everywhere. He smashes it and smashes it until Veronica puts her hands over her ears and screams at him.

VERONICA

(SCREAMS)
Stop! Stop it!

BRUNDLE

Do you know any sick old men who can do that?
GET OUT! Get out!

Brundle actually pushes and shoves her out the door, then slides it closed behind her. He makes a lot of noise locking it up, so that she knows he's serious.

EXT. LAB WAREHOUSE. STAIRWELL OUTSIDE THE DOOR - DAY

Veronica bursts into tears. Brundle yells at her through the door.

VERONICA

(SOBBING)

Brundle! You're committing suicide! Please don't do it! Please don't!

BRUNDLE (OC)

Don't come back. The deal's off. I don't need you any more!

She runs off down the stairs, crying as she goes.

INT. LAB - DAY

Brundle, now very alone, feels his beard, then feels the hairs on his side.

INT. LAB. BATHROOM - DAY

Brundle is in the bathroom, studying himself in the mirror. He does not look well. He looks cancerously gaunt. He picks up his electric razor and begins to shave the strange hairs off his face. The razor snags painfully in the hairs and keeps jamming. Finally it stops working. Brundle throws the razor down in anger, then begins to bite nervously at his fingernail.

To his (and our) horror, THE NAIL COMES OFF IN HIS MOUTH! THE ENTIRE NAIL. Brundle spits it out in disgust. He examines the tip of his now nail-less finger. It is swollen and sore-looking, and there is a series of small holes where there used to be a nail.

Brundle squeezes his fingertip. A STICKY PUS-LIKE FLUID SPURTS from the nail onto the mirror, then continues to ooze for seconds after Brundle has stopped squeezing.

Brundle takes toilet paper and tries to clean off his finger, but the paper sticks to the fluid and makes a complete, gooey mess.

Brundle now gingerly tests another fingernail. It seems loose. He squeezes that fingertip and the nail pops off, goo oozing out from underneath it. The nail next to it splits open of its own accord, ready to fall off at any instant.

Brundle is weak in the knees. He clutches the towel rack for support and sits on the edge of the tub.

BRUNDLE

(SUDDENLY VERY AFRAID)

Oh, no. What's happening? Am I dying? Is that it?

(YELLS)

Is this how it starts? Am I dying?

INT. LAB - LATE DAY

We are tight on the keyboard of the computer. Brundle's hands - clothed in a mismatched pair of old cloth gardening gloves - come into the shot and take a disc out of the disc-holder. The title of the disc is "FIRST TRANSMISSION - S. BRUNDLE."

The disc goes into the slot.

The machine is turned on.

Brundle's face is sweaty and intense.

Brundle's gloved fingers dance over the keys.

MONITOR - we see a flood of figures and tables as the machine retraces the steps recorded during Brundle's first tipsy teleportation of himself.

On the monitor Brundle sees himself outlined and analysed and diagrammed. AND THEN he sees something strange: ANOTHER OUTLINE - THE OUTLINE OF A FLY! It's in CU, complete with tables, etc.

Now the screen splits into two and the outlines disintegrate. A few beats later, the reintegration is charted, BUT THERE IS ONLY AN OUTLINE OF BRUNDLE!

Brundle now types into the machine: WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FLY? by using the code number attached to the outline of the fly.

The machine answers: FUSION.

Brundle asks for clarification. DO YOU MEAN ASSIMILATION? DID BRUNDLE ABSORB THE FLY?

The answer is NO: FUSION OF FLY AND BRUNDLE AT THE MOLECULAR-GENETIC LEVEL.

CU BRUNDLE

He is now very afraid.

INT. VERONICA'S APT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Veronica is working late on her mini-word processor. The small, cheap printer is printing. She's drinking coffee, smoking too many cigarettes. There are scientific journals and reference books spread open everywhere. The phone rings.

VERONICA
(ANSWERING PHONE, DISTRACTED)
Yeah?

There is a long pause before anyone speaks. Veronica immediately knows it's Brundle.

VERONICA
Brundle?
(NO ANSWER)
Brundle, I've been trying to reach you for five days. Where are you?

BRUNDLE (PHONE)
(SO DOWN HE'S ALMOST INAUDIBLE)
I've been afraid to see you. Now, I'm afraid not to.

VERONICA

Where are you? Are you at home?

BRUNDLE

Veronica... you... you don't know how right you were... Please come to see me. Please come now.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Veronica slides open the door, which is unlocked. She comes inside, sliding the door closed behind her.

She begins to walk from the darkness into the light. As she walks towards the bedroom, she sees that the place is littered with candy wrappers, donut boxes, empty soda cans, half-eaten pastries, chocolate boxes... you name it.

Brundle is lying slumped on an old sofa. He wears socks on his feet and gloves on his hands. The gloves and socks are wet and sticky.

She approaches him, fearful. He doesn't seem to know she's in the room.

VERONICA

I'm here, Brundle.

Brundle looks up, dazed. He's gotten worse fast. His cheeks have sunk more, but now his temples have swollen grotesquely and there are two separate lumps high on his forehead. The metallic-green hair seems to have grown all over his face - it's patchy in spots, but is growing where hair shouldn't grow - right up to the rims of his eyes and over his forehead.

Brundle looks up at Veronica. His eyes finally manage to focus on her, then well up with tears which stream down his face and get tangled in his beard. When he speaks, his voice is scratchy, raspy.

BRUNDLE

Don't come too close to me.

VERONICA

Why not?

BRUNDLE

I'm diseased. You were right. It could be contagious somehow. I wouldn't want to infect you.

Veronica sits down on the sofa amid all the junk-food remains.

VERONICA

What happened?

BRUNDLE

(IRONIC, TEARFUL LAUGH)

I know an old lady who swallowed a fly. Perhaps she'll die.

VERONICA

(VERY DISTURBED)

Brundle, please...

BRUNDLE

(HE CAN'T STOP THE METAPHYSICAL SPEED-RAP)
Impurity. Lack of integrity. Where does the body stop and the outside world begin?
(SUDDENLY INTENSE)

I was not pure. The teleporter insists on inner purity, and I was not pure.

VERONICA

(VERY QUIETLY)

I don't know what you mean.

BRUNDLE

A fly got into the transmitter pod with me. That first time. When I was alone. The computer got confused - there weren't supposed to be two separate genetic patterns - and it decided to splice us together.
(LAUGHS)

It mated us, me and the fly. We hadn't even been properly introduced. My teleporter turned into a gene-splicer, and a very good one. And now I'm not Seth Brundle any more - I'm the offspring of Brundle and housefly.

VERONICA

(HORRIFIED)

Oh, my God.

(PAUSE)

What... what will happen?

BRUNDLE

I think it's showing itself as a bizarre form of cancer. General cellular chaos and revolution. I'm just going to disintegrate - in a novel way, no doubt. And then I'll die, and then it'll be over.

VERONICA

No! I don't accept that. There must be something we can do. There must be somebody we can go to, tests that can be done...

BRUNDLE

(SARDONICALLY SCRATCHING AT HIS EAR IN IRRITATION)

No. I won't be just another tumorous bore, talking endlessly about his hair falling out and his lost lymph nodes. I know what that's all about and I won't go through it!

VERONICA

(ANGRY FOR BEING CHASTISED)

Then what do you want me to do? Why did you call me?

BRUNDLE

Keep to your part of the deal. Tape me, record me. This is, after all, the continuation of the Pulitzer prize-winning epic, isn't it? And everyone is just as interested to know what went wrong, as what went right - maybe more interested.

He leans forward and spills out the contents of a plastic bag at the foot of the sofa - junk food, all of it sweet. He grabs a donut and jams it into his mouth. White goop instead of saliva drips from his chin. Thicker, more viscous. He talks while he chews.

BRUNDLE

It's disgusting, isn't it? You've got to get back behind the video camera. People will want to know... they'll want to see with their own eyes...

Brundle suddenly begins to scratch and tug again at one of his ears. IT COMES OFF and drops onto the sofa, looking like a black, shrivelled-up potato chip amongst the junk food.

Brundle stops in his tracks and stares at the ear. Despite his foray into angry wit, Brundle is now stunned, broken. He picks the ear up and cradles it in his hand.

BRUNDLE
(STUNNED, SHOCKED)
My... my ear... !

Veronica stares on, horrified, paralysed. Brundle begins to cry, to wail hopelessly, and Veronica has to go to him, to hold him, to rock him in her arms. But even as she does so, she sees that Brundle's other ear is also turning black around the edges, shrivelling...

Brundle keeps sobbing.

BRUNDLE
(SOBBING UNCONTROLLABLY)
Help me, help me. Please... please help me!

INT. STATHIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Veronica and Stathis are talking about Brundle.

STATHIS
Don't go back to him. Call the police, the Public Health Department.

VERONICA
That's your advice? That's it?

STATHIS
But he's right, don't you see? It could be contagious. It could turn into an epidemic.

VERONICA
I've got to go back to him. He's got no one else. If you saw him Stath... if you saw how scared and angry and pitiful he is...

STATHIS

I'm sure Typhoid Mary was a very nice lady, too. When you met her socially.

(GRABS HER ARM)

Listen, I don't want you to...

VERONICA

(SHAKES HIM OFF)

I don't care what you want!

STATHIS

(HANDS-OFF GESTURE)

Sure, OK. Just tell me... do I have your permission to claim your body after it's all over?

Veronica can't stop a bit of a smile from showing. Stathis takes the opportunity to make peace.

STATHIS

Look... how about this? You say if I only saw him. OK - show me. Tape him. He wants you to anyway, right? Show me, and let me think about what we might be able to do. But don't get close. Please.

EXT. LAB WAREHOUSE - DAY

Veronica gets out of her car in front of the lab. She hesitates just that telltale beat before she slams the car door and begins to walk towards the front door.

INT. LAB. - DAY

Veronica enters the lab and immediately puts her hand to her face - the stench is very, very strong, and the litter on the floor and everywhere else has accumulated at an alarming rate.

ANGLE FROM CEILING LOOKING DOWN ON VERONICA

as she makes her way through the litter, looking for Brundle.

VERONICA

Brundle?

BRUNDLE (OS)

I'm here.

Veronica's gaze follows the voice - up to the ceiling.

VERONICA'S POV

We realize that a moment ago we were looking at Veronica from Brundle's POV FOR HE HANGS UPSIDE DOWN FROM THE CEILING BY ALL FOURS!

If this weren't startling enough, the changes in his appearance most certainly are. He's completely naked, and his torso is beginning to be covered all over with metallic-green hair.

And his musculature has changed again - stringy and powerful, not like a gymnast. Not human. A hernia-like bulge protruding from his left side is the only suggestion of weakness in his grotesquely sleek shape.

Brundle scrambles adroitly across the ceiling, then down the wall. Veronica watches with her eyes huge.

VERONICA

Brundle... I...

BRUNDLE

Gotten pretty good at it, haven't I? It's almost second nature.
(HOLDS UP HIS HANDS)
Stopped biting my nails, too.

Veronica can only stare at him. He approaches her, still in shadow.

BRUNDLE

I seem to be stricken by a disease with a purpose, wouldn't you say? Maybe not such a bad disease after all.

She shakes her head in disbelief, then turns to leave.

VERONICA

(OVERWHELMED)

I can't stay here.

Brundle grabs her. His fingers are longer, thinner. They have no more nails on them, they glisten with the oily secretion. His palms are forming small, cushion-like pads. His feet - the same, the toes long and oily.

BRUNDLE

Why not? Why can't you?

Veronica can not bear to look at him.

VERONICA

(WITH DIFFICULTY)

Can't take it... Too much.

Brundle moves out into the light and we can now see how much more his face has changed. His skull has swollen even more at the temples and his forehead as well, so that the entire shape of his skull has altered. And his face is now covered with the metallic-green hair, so that there is not a square centimetre of normal flesh showing.

Brundle's eyes are almost lost in this new face, but they are now very bright and piercing.

BRUNDLE

What's there to take? The disease has just revealed its purpose. We don't have to worry about contagion any more. I know what the disease wants.

Veronica looks down at the hand holding her arm, then forces herself to look Brundle in the face.

VERONICA

What... what does the disease want?

BRUNDLE

It wants to turn me into something else. That's not too terrible, is it? Most people would give anything to be turned into something else.

VERONICA

Turned into what? An insect?

Brundle lets her go - his fingers stick momentarily to the arm of her blouse - and laughs, a harsh, grating little laugh.

BRUNDLE

You mean a fly? Am I turning into a hundred-and-eighty-pound fly?

He laughs again.

BRUNDLE

No, I'm becoming something that never existed before. I'm becoming... Brundlefly.

(SLOWLY, STRETCHING IT OUT)

B-R-U-N-D-L-E-F-L-Y.

(PAUSE)

Don't you think that's worth a Nobel Prize or two?

Veronica just stands there, defeated by his sarcasm and defeated by the rapidly accelerating bizarreness of his condition.

BRUNDLE

(SUDDEN ENTHUSIASM)

C'mon, now. Let's go.

Brundle begins to take charge, full of enthusiasm. He gently but firmly places Veronica behind the ever-present video camera, and then bustles around, his movements awkward and strange, setting up a chair and table in front of the camera.

BRUNDLE

I want to give a demonstration that I think you'll want to record for posterity. Yes, yes. I think you must chronicle the rise and fall of Brundlefly, don't you? At the very least, it should make a fabulous children's book. Do they give Pulitzer Prizes for kiddies' books?

INT. VERONICA'S APT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

We are tight on the screen of Veronica's TV set, watching the demonstration that Brundle was just talking about.

On the tape, Brundle is sitting at a table in his lab with a pile of his usual junk food in front of him. He is smiling - a still-recognizable smile, since his jaw and mouth have not undergone any change in shape, though his jaw is covered with metallic-green beard.

BRUNDLE (ON TAPE)

How does Brundlefly eat? Well, he found out the hard and painful way that he eats very much the way a fly eats. His teeth are now useless, because although he can chew up solid food, he can't digest it. Solid food hurts. So, like a fly, Brundlefly breaks down solids with a corrosive enzyme playfully called "vomit drop." He regurgitates on his food, liquefies it, then sucks it back up. Ready for a demonstration, kids? Here goes.

Brundle now bends close to the food until his face is almost touching it.

We pop back to AN ANGLE WHICH EXCLUDES THE TV SCREEN and see that Stathis is watching alone in the living room. He is shaken by what he is watching.

STATHIS

(SHAKEN)

Oh my God, my God.

From the TV's speaker we hear hideous, enthusiastic slurping and sucking sounds, BUT WE DO NOT SEE WHAT STATHIS SEES.

Stathis runs his hands through his hair. He leans forward and switches off the tape machine. His upper lip is beaded with sweat. He wipes it off with his sleeve.

Veronica comes in the front door and, without a word, sweeps past Stathis and down the hall.

STATHIS

(CALLING OUT TO HER)

Hey, Ronnie? I don't blame you for not wanting to watch it. Ronnie?

No response.

He gets up and leaves the living room, looking for Veronica.

INT. VERONICA'S APT. HALLWAY - DAY

Stathis walks down the hallway, worried.

STATHIS

Ronnie? Where are you?

Stathis hears sobbing coming from the direction of the bathroom. He turns and sprints down the hallway.

INT. VERONICA'S APT. BATHROOM - DAY

Stathis appears in the doorway of the bathroom. Veronica is sobbing her heart out, slumped against the bathroom counter. She's still wearing her coat. Stathis steps inside the bathroom and puts his arm around her.

STATHIS

(VERY GENTLY)

What is it?

Veronica tries to answer but can't, she's sobbing so profoundly. She turns to him, barely able to get it out.

VERONICA

(WITH DIFFICULTY)

I saw a doctor. I'm... I'm pregnant, Stath.

STATHIS

Oh, no. Oh, no.

He holds her tight.

VERONICA

(RENEWED SOBBING)

I'm pregnant with Brundle's baby!

Stathis hugs her again, then holds her at arms length so that he can look her in the eye.

STATHIS

What do you want to do?

Veronica, still racked by sobs, tries to wipe her eyes.

VERONICA

(TEARFULLY)

I don't know. I just don't know.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

We are close on Brundle's fingers as they dance over the keys of the computer keyboard. Brundle has cut the fingers off a pair of yellow rubber kitchen gloves and jammed them down over his fingertips, so that his fingers won't stick to the keyboard.

CU MONITOR

which reads:

GENE-SPLICING PROGRAM NOW IN PLACE

TELEPOD 1: TRANSMITTER POD SUBJECT A

TELEPOD 2: TRANSMITTER POD SUBJECT B

TELEPOD 3: RECEIVER POD FOR GENETICALLY FUSED
A-B COMBINATION SUBJECT

We pull back to see that in front of Brundle and his keyboard stand not two, but THREE telepods, the third one of a somewhat older and more handbuilt vintage than the other two - the original PROTOTYPE TELEPOD which has been sitting in corner of the lab under a tarpaulin and was noticed by Veronica on her first visit to the lab.

In TELEPOD A sits a monkey, in TELEPOD B an alley cat. TELEPOD C, the old prototype receiver, is empty.

Brundle operates the machine. The monitor says,

READY FOR FUSION

Brundle presses the ACCEPT button.

The telepods go through their normal disintegration routine as the animals' outlines appear on the monitor in split screen fashion.

But now, as the reintegration process begins, a stream of data concerning this new experiment, the fusion of monkey and cat, floods the screen. The basic message that gets across to us through all the hi-tech compu-talk is:

PERCENTAGE OF MONKEY - 63
PERCENTAGE OF CAT - 37

These numbers fluctuate as the machine tries to strike a molecular balance between the two creatures.

Finally, an outline of the fused creature begins to form on the screen. Brundle looks up at the old third telepod to see the actual creature forming, and it is indeed grotesque: two heads - one monkey, one cat - at odd angles to each other, six legs which are not quite symmetrically placed on the monkey torso, cat tail.

As the creature solidifies and the light goes off, it sits there in the telepod for a moment, stunned, half-reclining as though crippled.

Brundle gets up, goes to the third telepod, and with great apprehension, opens the door.

The thing just sits there, slumped for a beat, then SUDDENLY LEAPS UP AT HIM, its two heads SHRIEKING! It jumps on his arm, clinging, snarling, then drops to the floor. The two heads begin to bite each other, blood begins to flow - the thing now running around in mad floppy circles, smearing blood everywhere.

Brundle is horrified. He grabs a metal rod leaning in a corner and begins to smash at the deformed thing. He keeps smashing at it until it stops its hideous screeching and lies dead, mangled on the floor.

Brundle wraps it up in a towel and throws it into the refrigerator. He draws the old torn sheet back down over the third telepod so that he doesn't have to look at it again.

Back at the monitor, the screen is flashing the words:

FUSION SUCCESSFUL
RECEIVER TELEPOD 3

Brundle puts his face in his hands for a few moments, then pulls himself together. He pulls the rubber fingertips off his fingers and throws them to the ground.

Brundle has now developed some insect-like tics and mannerisms, his head twitching with nervous little jerks and his long fingers in constant motion. We now see clearly that all of Brundle's fly characteristics have been accentuated even further. The metallic-green hair which completely covers his face is much thicker than before, and the hernia-like bulge in his side is more protuberant now, stretched to the bursting point and obviously causing Brundle some pain.

Brundle looks up at the skylight. The sky is clear, the moon is a scimitar. On an impulse, he jumps up on the wall, sticking there for a beat. Then, with incredible agility, he ascends the wall, crosses the ceiling towards the skylight.

ON THE CEILING

Brundle glides on all fours, upside down, towards the skylight. Once there, he crawls into it and opens it up.

EXT. LAB ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Brundle clambers out of the skylight onto the roof. The night is gorgeous, clean and bright, the sky pocked with stars. Brundle breathes deeply. He is still alive, isn't he? He can still respond to the beauty of the night, can't he?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MONTAGE - BRUNDLE'S TRAVELS - NIGHT

We follow Brundle on his solitary sojourn in a MONTAGE SEQUENCE. He climbs walls with amazing ability, leaps from rooftop to rooftop, hangs upside down from ledges and lampposts, eavesdropping on the city life around and below him, the inhabitants unaware of the unusual and shadowy observer in their midst.

He scurries along the girder of a bridge, gazing down on the traffic and the river below him.

These moments should be poetic, even beautiful, joyous. The moon is luminous, the dark night exquisite. Resigned to his fate and momentarily forgetful of his future, Brundle seems to be revelling in his unique powers.

A brief euphoric fling.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Brundle leaps across a narrow alleyway to the wall of the building opposite him. He smiles with smug satisfaction at his feat, then suddenly winces, grabbing his side with one of his hands.

WE HEAR A CRACKING, SPLITTING SOUND. Brundle muffles a startled cry and, losing his balance, slides several feet down the wall before regaining hold.

He looks down at the huge bulge in his side... IT IS STARTING TO SPLIT OPEN! Brundle is horrified and in pain. He starts to quickly move down the side of the building, but the pain impedes his progress.

He manages to get down at least another floor before he's hit with another sharp pain. He doubles up and his tenuous grip on the wall causes him to slide another several feet downward before he regains his grip.

The side is gaping wide open now and SOMETHING is starting to protrude. Brundle is in shock. Another ripple of pain causes him to release his grasp entirely and he falls to the ground in a dirty narrow alley, where he writhes on his back in pain, as a STRANGE, HAIRY STICKLIKE APPENDAGE -- ACTUALLY THE BEGINNINGS OF A FLYLIKE LEG -- begins to unfold awkwardly out of his side. Despite his excruciating pain, Brundle watches with fixated, wide-eyed terror at his latest transformation!

The insect leg now begins to probe around, function like a real leg, almost with a mind of its own. Grotesque as Brundle himself has become, he can't accept the next step towards real insectness which this new leg represents. He screams at the leg.

BRUNDLE

(SCREAMING AT THE LEG)

No! No, I won't! I won't, I won't, I won't..!

Brundle grabs at the leg, holds it, subdues it, and then begins to gnaw with his teeth at its base, twisting himself into a agonized ball in order to do it.

The leg begins to lever at his back, small hooklike protrusions all along its underside catching in the flesh of Brundle's back, tearing it in protest against Brundle's attempt at amputation.

Finally, Brundle has severed the leg with his teeth. The leg drops off leaving a strand or two of stringy gristle hanging from the knobby stump in Brundle's side. The leg twitches on the ground, tries to extend itself.

Brundle looks at the leg in shock, his eyes crazed, like an animal who has been caught in a leg-trap and has had to gnaw the leg off to be free. Brundle tries to steady himself, then staggers away down the alley. As he goes, he wipes the insect blood from his lips with his two forearms - IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY THAT FLIES CLEAN THEIR FACES!

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HOSPITAL - DAY

A taxi pulls up and Stathis gets out.

He helps a very pale and fragile-looking Veronica out of the car.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Stathis holds Veronica's hand as she is wheeled down the corridor. She is very nervous, almost in tears.

VERONICA

Stath... I'm scared!

STATHIS

It's going to be all right, Ronnie. It's going to be fine.

VERONICA

(TEARFUL)

I don't think I want to lose it. Is there something wrong with me? Why am I losing it?

STATHIS

It's better this way, Ronnie. You'll see. It's the best thing that could happen.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - CLOSE-UP - OPERATING LIGHT

The dehumanizing blue-white light of an OVERHEAD OPERATING-ROOM LAMP. WE HEAR VERONICA'S MOANS... AND VOICES.

VOICE #1 (OS)

She's expelling it. We won't even have to go in.

(TO VERONICA)

It's going to be easy. Don't worry, honey.

VERONICA (OS)

Please, Brundle, please don't...

THE CAMERA PANS FROM THE LAMP TO AN OPERATING TABLE BELOW. Veronica is miscarrying right there on the table. A TEAM OF DOCTORS AND NURSES work over her.

STATHIS stands at the head of the table, still holding Veronica's hand. Veronica grimaces and groans. A NURSE mops her sweaty brow.

NURSE

OK, that's it. We've got it.

DOCTOR

No, no. There's more in there. A lot more.

NURSE

(SURPRISED)

There's more?

DOCTOR

C'mon, girl. You can help us out. Give us a push. Push!

(VERONICA DOES)

Thatta girl. We're getting it.

VERONICA

(INCOHERENT, IN PAIN)

No, no...wait! Brundle, please, no...!

DOCTOR

That's it. That's it. It's coming. It's...

(SUDDEN HORROR)

...Ohh, my God!

VERONICA'S POV - ON EXPELLED FOETUS

...as the doctor lifts it out of the womb. Perhaps there are some human features about the face, if indeed there is a face at all on THE HIDEOUS, SQUIRMING GIANT FLY-MAGGOT!

Stathis registers unutterable HORROR. Veronica SCREAMS.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. VERONICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Veronica wakes up screaming. She's alone in bed. She's been dreaming. Once she realizes she has not given birth to a fly-maggot baby, she starts to laugh at herself - then, remembering that she is pregnant by Brundle, she begins to weep again.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Brundle is working away at the computer keyboard - only now he has to use pencils, one in each hand, to push the keys: his fingers are losing their human flexibility.

The words on the monitor read:

THE BRUNDLEFLY PROJECT

PROBLEM: TO REFINE GENETIC FUSION PROGRAM

GOAL: TO DECREASE TO A MINIMUM THE PERCENTAGE OF "FLY" IN BRUNDLEFLY

SOLUTION: THE FUSION BY GENE-SPLICING OF BRUNDLEFLY WITH ONE OR MORE "PURE" HUMAN BEINGS

As Brundle thinks about his next step, he begins to chew on one of the pencils. He is soon distracted by the sound of several small, hard things dropping onto the keyboard. Brundle looks down. Five small, white chunks of something lie partially hidden in the crevices between the plastic keys. Brundle digs one out with the pencil. It is a tooth, its jagged root smeared with blood, and it has just fallen out of Brundle's mouth.

Brundle begins to roar with laughter. He clumsily digs the rest of the teeth out of the keys, then carries them over to the refrigerator. As he walks, he delivers a

little speech to the teeth which sit attentively in the palm of what used to be his hand.

BRUNDLE

(LAUGHING, TALKING TO HIS TEETH)

You're relics. Yes, you are. You can't deny it. Vestigial, archaeological, redundant. Artifacts of a bygone era. Of historical interest only. How long will it take for you and all the other manifestations of the Brundle Age, the Stone Age, to fall away, to reveal the Future... ?

He opens the fridge and carefully places the teeth in an ice cube tray. The fridge is empty except for a few other barely recognizable lost appendages - Brundle's shrivelled ears, his fingernails.

Suddenly, Brundle hears the door to the lab slide noisily open. He turns, startled.

Veronica steps warily into the lab - she has kept her keys to the building. Brundle looks wildly around the room - in guilt? in shame? - closes the fridge door and walks quickly over to the computer keyboard. He picks up a pencil with desperate awkwardness and uses it to press the keyboard's STORE button. It is obvious that he does not want Veronica to see what he's been working on.

Veronica approaches him but stops some distance away. She is stunned by the changes in his appearance, struggling for some kind of emotional equilibrium. They stand frozen for a beat, then Brundle begins to speak. But even Brundle's voice has become a horror: it is scratchy and metallic, and full of guttural, insect twitters.

BRUNDLE

(INSECT VOICE)

You've missed some good moments. Is that why you're here? To catch up?

VERONICA

(SHAKEN, HESITANT)

I... wanted... What were you putting in the fridge?

BRUNDLE

(MATTER-OF FACT)

My teeth. They've started to fall out. The fridge is now the Brundle Museum of Natural History. Want to see what else is in it?

VERONICA

No.

BRUNDLE

(MERCILESS)

Then what do you want?

VERONICA

(FALTERING)

I came to tell you that... I came to tell you... I... I just had to see you... before...

Tears begin to well up in Veronica's eyes.

BRUNDLE

You've got to go, now, and never come back here.

(PAUSE)

Have you ever heard of insect politics?

Veronica shakes her head, completely baffled.

BRUNDLE

Well, neither have I. Insects don't have politics. They're very brutal. No compassion. No compromise. We can't trust the insect. But I'd like to become the first... first insect politician. I'd like to, but I'm afraid...

VERONICA

I don't... know... what you're trying to say...

BRUNDLE

I'm saying... that I don't... feel very human any more. I'm saying I'm an insect who dreamt he was a man, and loved it, but now the dream is over, and the insect is awake.

Veronica bursts out crying.

VERONICA
 (MOVED TO TEARS)
 Brundle, please... no...

BRUNDLE
 (SLOW, CAREFUL, DELIBERATE)
 I'm saying, I'll hurt you if you stay.

Veronica bursts out crying. Brundle doesn't move.
 Veronica turns and runs out of the lab.

Brundle remains motionless, and from a distance seems completely dispassionate. But when we move close to his face, we see that he too is crying.

EXT. LAB - NIGHT

Veronica bursts out of the lab door and runs across the street to where Stathis is leaning against her car, waiting.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Veronica tries to pull open the door of the car but Stathis grabs her, puts his arms around her.

Veronica pulls free, her eyes streaming tears. But despite the tears, her face is set hard now, determined.

VERONICA
 Let's go. Let's do it now.

STATHIS
 Now? Wait a minute. What did he say when you told him?

VERONICA
 I couldn't tell him. I couldn't...
 (SHOUTS)
 Let's go, dammit!

STATHIS
 I think we should wait a few days. I don't think you're in the right state of mind...

VERONICA
 No! Now! I want it out of my body now! You should have seen him. There could be anything in there, in me, in my body!

STATHIS

But I don't know if I can arrange it now, right now, tonight. Why do we have to run around in the dark like ...?

VERONICA

(FREAKING)

Because I don't want it in my body! Do you understand? I don't want it in my body!

Veronica gets into the car. She hugs herself tightly and turns her face away from Stathis. Stathis stares at her for a beat, then gets into the car himself.

EXT. LAB ROOFTOP - NIGHT

From the rooftop of the lab warehouse, BRUNDLE IS WATCHING as Veronica's car pulls away from the curb and moves off down the street. He has heard the whole thing.

EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC - NIGHT

Establishing shot of a compact, modern brick five-storey downtown building. The softly lit sign on the small, neatly manicured patch of grass in front of it reads:

COVENTRY COMMUNITY MEDICAL CLINIC

INT. DR. CHEEVERS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Doctor Cheevers opens the door to his office and ushers in Stathis and Veronica. Cheevers is tall and sweet-mannered.

CHEEVERS

Hi. C'mon in.

Cheevers shakes hands with Stathis - they obviously know each other.

STATHIS

Hi, Brent. Thanks.
(INTRODUCES VERONICA)
Veronica Quaife.

CHEEVERS

(TO VERONICA)

Hi.

(VERONICA JUST NODS)

Well, OK. What's the story?

Although Cheevers has directed this question to Veronica, it is Stathis who answers.

STATHIS

She's pregnant and she wants an abortion.

CHEEVERS

In the middle of the night?

STATHIS

We have good reason to think that this child will be deformed.

CHEEVERS

Yeah, but... in the middle of the night?

STATHIS

Look, Brent... please.

CHEEVERS

Is it your child?

STATHIS

No. It's the child of a man who is deformed.

CHEEVERS

Listen, I don't mean to interfere, but... I detect a certain... uncertainty here. You know, there are tests that can be done to determine whether or not...

VERONICA

(BARELY CONTROLLED)

I don't want tests! Tests can't guarantee anything. The baby could start off normal and then become a monster. I want an abortion! I'll do it myself if I have to!

Although Veronica speaks quietly, Cheevers can easily see how disturbed she is, how close to the edge. He seems to be picturing Veronica trying to abort her own baby.

CHEEVERS

(PAUSE)

No, I don't think you should do that.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The clinic operating room is surprisingly simple, spartan - really not much more than a standard examination room except for two unusual features.

The first unusual feature is the immense floor-to-ceiling window which composes one wall of the room - a legacy from the building's history as a small office complex. The window has been frosted to provide privacy.

The second unusual feature is a TV set above the small operating table.

Cheevers adjusts the TV set on its swivel so that Veronica will be able to see it when she lies down on the table. She is, at the moment, sitting quietly in a chair in the corner of the room.

CHEEVERS

I've found TV to be the best anaesthetic.

He turns it on. A commercial for Pampers is on. Adorable kids toddling everywhere.

CHEEVERS

(EMBARRASSED)

Oh, shit.

STATHIS

Uh... maybe no TV...

To the men's surprise, Veronica, relieved to actually be in the process of aborting Brundle's baby, comes out with a hearty laugh.

VERONICA

(LAUGHING)

Leave it on. This kid wouldn't look like them anyway.

Cheevers, relieved to see that he hasn't blown a very delicate moment, smiles and reaches for the door.

CHEEVERS

(RELIEVED)

Great! OK. I'll just get you a more appropriate costume and we'll be on our way in no time...

Cheevers leaves the room. There is an awkward, silent moment between Stathis and Veronica. And then...

WITHOUT WARNING, the immense floor-to-ceiling WINDOW of the operating room EXPLODES into the room! Shards of glass and pieces of window frame fly everywhere.

BRUNDLE hurtles into the room, the force of his entry carrying him crashing into the operating table which tips over and smashes to the floor.

Stathis stands frozen in the corner of the room, but Brundle ignores him. He wants Veronica.

Brundle finds Veronica cowering in the corner, blood trickling down her left temple from a glass cut, eyes wide in disbelief. Brundle scrambles to his feet, picks Veronica up and effortlessly tucks her under his arm. Then, without the slightest acknowledgment of Stathis, he calmly steps out through the broken window and disappears, taking Veronica, who is too stunned to resist, with him.

Stathis manages to shake off his paralysis, runs to the window and tries to look out, but as he leans against a piece of windowframe, he cuts himself on the minute fragments of jagged glass lodged in it. Stathis recoils with the pain, but still manages to catch a glimpse of Brundle, silhouetted in the moonlight, carrying Veronica over the rooftops.

Now Cheevers whips open the door, folded hospital gown in hand. The room is a complete shambles. Stathis turns to meet his astonished gaze. All he can do is shrug.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

We are with Brundle as he carries the terrified Veronica, over the rooftops. Finally he alights in a cozy little rooftop nook overlooking a park.

Brundle lays Veronica down on the slate of the rooftop. His eyes are glistening, moist - are they full of tears? He speaks with a voice even harsher and more metallic than before, but there is a strange, rhythmic catch in his voice which might be weeping.

BRUNDLE

Why did you want to kill Brundle? The baby will be all that's left of the real Brundle. Please don't kill me. Please don't kill me.

VERONICA

I can't have it. I'm afraid!

BRUNDLE

(RELENTLESS)

Have the baby. Let me live long enough to see the baby.

VERONICA

I can't! I can't!

BRUNDLE

(FLAT, EXPRESSIONLESS)

Too bad.

(INSCRUTABLE PAUSE)

Too bad.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

We are inside the darkened lab. There is a sharp "crack" from outside the door, which then slides open: someone has just broken in.

Stathis enters the lab with a crowbar in one hand and what looks like an abnormally large, slim attache case in the other. A soft bag hangs from his shoulder by a webbed strap.

Stathis switches on a small lamp and puts down the bag, the crowbar, and the case. He now opens the sleek plastic case to reveal a very expensive Italian over-and-under skeet shotgun - not really a great weapon but obviously the only one instantly accessible to him.

Stathis sits on the couch and calmly assembles the shotgun. He then breaks out a box of shells from the bag

and loads each barrel of the gun - two shots only. The barrels are swivelled back into place and locked. The safety is slid to OFF.

Stathis gets up from the couch and, shotgun in hand, walks over to the metal crank which hangs from the main skylight. He cranks the skylight open wide.

Stathis now settles down to wait in the nearest chair - which happens to be the old steno chair in front of the computer keyboard. It doesn't take Stathis long to notice the beige plastic box of discs on the table, and it takes no time at all for him to generate enough curiosity to open the box and flick on the computer's master switch.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Stathis is deep into Brundle's computer discs. We are close on the computer monitor as it plays back for us the computer-graphics version of the disintegration of the cat and the monkey and their subsequent reintegration as the cat-monkey creature. As before, the following final words flash triumphantly on the screen:

FUSION SUCCESSFUL
RECEIVER TELEPOD 3

Stathis is confused.

CU the words "TELEPOD 3" flashing on the computer screen.

Stathis now switches to another disc whose title is "FUSION PROGRAM." He punches up "FUSION PROGRAM MENU," and finds listed: "BRUNDLEFLY PROJECT."

"BRUNDLEFLY PROJECT" is duly punched up, and it produces the following:

THE BRUNDLEFLY PROJECT

PROBLEM: TO REFINE GENETIC FUSION PROGRAM

GOAL: TO DECREASE TO A MINIMUM THE PERCENTAGE OF "FLY" IN BRUNDLEFLY

SOLUTION: THE FUSION BY GENE-SPLICING OF BRUNDLEFLY WITH ONE OR MORE "PURE" HUMAN BEINGS

GENE-SPLICING METHODOLOGY

A. HARDWARE:

TELEPOD 1: TRANSMITTER OF SUBJECT A

TELEPOD 2: TRANSMITTER OF SUBJECT B

TELEPOD 3: RECEIVER FOR GENETICALLY-FUSED A-B COMBINATION SUBJECT

CU the words "TELEPOD 3" on the screen.

Stathis gets up from the chair and takes a quick walk through the lab - shotgun always in hand - looking for this mysterious TELEPOD 3. He soon spots the THIRD TELEPOD, once again covered by the tarpaulin.

Stathis pulls away the tarp to reveal the third telepod. It is clunkier and less tidy than the other two pods, but it's basically the same machine. Stathis turns and begins to walk back to the computer.

BUT HE DOESN'T GET THERE, because BRUNDLE drops down on top of him from the skylight!

Stathis sprawls on the floor, but doesn't let go of the shotgun. Brundle lands neatly on his feet and stands crouched, ready to do battle. Stathis swings the shotgun around towards Brundle, and Brundle leaps, grabs the barrel of the gun and holds it away from himself.

Stathis tries desperately to wrench the gun free, but Brundle is much too strong. Brundle grabs Stathis by the wrist with his other hideous hand. He slowly, contemptuously brings the wrist towards his mouth. As Stathis watches helplessly, Brundle's ENTIRE FACE OPENS UP to reveal HIDEOUS FLY MOUTH PARTS! A HUGE FLY TONGUE unfolds and spurts milky, viscous vomit onto Stathis's clenched fist.

Stathis screams as his fist dissolves into a dripping, simmering, bloody pulp. Near fainting, Stathis drops the shotgun. Brundles tongue retracts AND HIS FACE CLOSES AGAIN, leaving no trace that it had ever split open!

Brundle reaches for it but Stathis manages to hook his foot over it. BRUNDLE'S TERRIBLE MAW OPENS AGAIN and more fluid spews out over Stathis's foot. The shoe, the sock, the flesh, the bone, all bubble and dissolve and drop away, leaving nothing but a steaming, bloody, cauterized stump.

Brundle's movements, his facial expressions, are completely dispassionate, insect-effective. He methodically begins to suck the liquifying, pulpy flesh back up into his crop, mercilessly probing what was Stathis's foot with his metallic-green tubular tongue.

Stathis is past screaming now. He simply nods off, almost gently, into semi-consciousness.

Brundle's face hovers like a bad dream over Stathis's face. Stathis's mouth is open, he is breathing deeply as though in the deepest kind of sleep; but his eyes are open, he seems to be aware on some praeter-conscious level. Brundle bends closer to Stathis, closer, inches away...

A voice shatters the moment, a voice which comes from behind and above Brundle.

VERONICA

(QUIETLY)

Don't kill him! If there's anything human left inside you, don't kill him!

Brundle turns to see Veronica peering down at him through the skylight.

VERONICA

(ALMOST A WHISPER)

Please.

Brundle turns back to Stathis, who now curls up in the corner like a spider touched by a lit cigarette. Brundle hesitates, calculates. Then finally, HIS FACE CLOSES AGAIN and he leaves Stathis, gets up, swings up a support beam to the skylight and Veronica.

BRUNDLE

Help me. Help me. Help me to be human.

VERONICA

How?

Brundle tucks Veronica under one arm and effortlessly swings back down into the lab with her. He leaves her in a corner and goes over to the computer. He is not really surprised to see that the computer has already been switched on and that the right disc is up.

Brundle reaches over to the controller and flips some switches. Operating lights come on in Telepod 1, then Telepod 2, and then, Veronica notices with a start, in Telepod 3.

Brundle gestures towards the appropriate telepods.

BRUNDLE

I go there. You go there. We come apart, and then, we come together -
(INDICATING THIRD TELEPOD)
- there. You, and me, and the baby, together. We'll be the ultimate family. A family of three, joined together in one body, more human than I am alone.

Veronica now realizes exactly what Brundle has in mind. She begins to back away, edging towards the door.

VERONICA

Oh, no. You can't... you can't mean that...

Without hesitation, Brundle leaps across the room and grabs her. Veronica screams in horror.

VERONICA

(SCREAMING)

No! No! I won't do it!

Brundle starts to drag her towards the second telepod.

Veronica begins to fight Brundle. She smashes at him with her fists, she jams her hands up under his chin and pushes with all her might. **AND HIS LOWER JAW COMES RIGHT OFF IN HER HANDS!** Brundle releases her. She stares in disbelief at the dripping human lower jaw, complete with quivering lip, which she now holds in her hands. She looks back at Brundle, stunned, mesmerized. Where his jaw

was there are now vibrating, twitching insect mouth parts.

Veronica screams. With one sudden, vicious swipe of his claw-hand across her face, Brundle drops Veronica as though she had been pole-axed, severing her scream in mid-air.

Brundle's tubular tongue is now completely exposed, and it stretches outwards and upwards, fusing with the other mouth and nose parts to form a true fly proboscis. He writhes and twists like a caterpillar weaving a cocoon as the end of his transformation is finally triggered off.

The bulges on his forehead split open and short antennae uncoil and spring erect. At the base of the antennae are several small, black, simple eyes, deep and unfathomable, like bullet holes in the skull. The dome-like swellings of his temples split open to reveal two damp masses of glistening black spheres, like mounds of caviar, which rapidly begin to swell and multiply until they have formed two huge insect compound eyes which swivel on extremely short stalks. Brundle's own human eyes burst like raw eggs and dribble down his face as out of the sockets slide two clusters of short, bristly hairs.

There is a witness to Brundle's transformation: Stathis has been edging towards his shotgun, inching his way along the floor, fighting the agony, blacking out for seconds at a time and recovering.

Brundle is now a completely non-human thing - yet he seems bent on completing his fusion project. Whether this is out of a still-living desire to regain some kind of humanity, or out of mere insect momentum, we can't tell. In either case, he picks up the unconscious Veronica and places her - is it gently or just fastidiously? - into Telepod 2 and closes the door.

CU - AUTOMATIC EXTERIOR LATCH OF TELEPOD 2 DOOR SLIDING HOME.

He goes back to the computer and sets it to time a countdown, which we see on the monitor:

COUNTDOWN TO FUSION

60 SECONDS

Now Brundle gets into Telepod 1 and swings the door shut behind him.

CU - AUTOMATIC EXTERIOR LATCH OF TELEPOD 1 DOOR SLIDING HOME.

This is Stathis's cue. He glances at the monitor.

CU MONITOR - which reads:

COUNTDOWN TO FUSION

28 SECONDS

Stathis struggles to his knees; then, using the shotgun as a crutch, he manages to stand erect. He limps over to Telepod 2, unable to avoid noticing how frail and unreal Veronica looks, slumped in the corner of the telepod like a doll under glass.

Now Stathis props himself up against a support beam and raises the shotgun, resting the barrel on his truncated left forearm.

From inside Telepod 1, Brundle sees Stathis, understands his intention. Brundle throws himself against the door of his telepod, but it won't move. He starts to slam his claw-hands against the glass like a pair of sledgehammers, but the glass is immensely strong.

CU MONITOR - which reads:

COUNTDOWN TO FUSION

13 SECONDS

Stathis is unsteady, has difficulty controlling his weapon.

Brundle continues to hammer at the glass - NOW WITH SOME SUCCESS, as the glass is beginning to craze in star-shaped patterns under Brundle's blows!

Stathis has now managed to draw a bead on his target - the THICK CLUSTER OF CABLES which connect Veronica's telepod to the computer and to the lab's power supply.

CU MONITOR - which reads:

COUNTDOWN TO FUSION

5 SECONDS

STATHIS FIRES! The cables at the foot of Telepod 2 EXPLODE INTO A BALL OF SPARKS AND FLAME!

Brundle pounds insanely at the glass of his telepod and the GLASS FINALLY SHATTERS. Brundle reaches out of the telepod and slides open the latch. He swings open the door. He steps out of the telepod...

CU MONITOR - which flicks from 1 SECOND to:

COUNTDOWN TO FUSION

0 SECONDS

An intense white light spills out of the open telepod door, enveloping Brundle - who has not quite managed to step completely free - AND THE FRONT THIRD OF THE POD ITSELF!

Brundle begins to disintegrate, AND SO DOES THE FRONT THIRD OF THE TELEPOD! Brundle and part of the telepod are scrupulously analysed and outlined on the monitor, and then they disappear both from the monitor and from Stathis's sight.

Now ONLY TWO-THIRDS OF THE TELEPOD ARE LEFT STANDING, edges jagged, wires hanging, as though its front third had been sliced off by a chain saw. The remains of Telepod 1, looking like some kind of alien ruin, slump sideways under their own, now-unsupported weight.

Stathis turns to Telepod 2 - and releases an audible sigh of relief when he sees that Veronica still lies there, untouched.

Suddenly, TELEPOD 3 IMPLODES, sucked in on itself as though a complete vacuum has suddenly appeared at its core.

Warily, apprehensively, Stathis limps over to the smoking rubble of Telepod 3, once again using the shotgun as a crutch. Now he stands, swaying unsteadily, in trepidation before the heap of rubble, searching for signs of Brundle. A beat, an then...

OUT OF THE SMOKE AND RUBBLE RISES A THING, a confused mass of insect and human flesh, metal, circuit boards, wires and glass - the result of the FUSION OF BRUNDLE AND TELEPOD 1.

Stathis staggers back in horror.

The Brundle-Thing comes after him, dragging parts of its lower body along the floor, pieces of black insect flesh fused with electronic circuitry dropping off it as it comes, a hideous, raging, MORTALLY STRICKEN monstrosity. Its claw-hands, which now stick out of its body at crazy, asymmetrical angles, reach out for Stathis. Stathis twists away but falls crashing to the floor.

Stathis slides himself backwards along the floor with his good hand, his stump, his chin... anything. THE BRUNDLE-THING'S MOUTH PARTS - now located somewhere in the middle of its chest - dribble steaming, corrosive vomit-drop.

Stathis now finds himself jammed into a corner. He has no place else to go. The Brundle-Thing's CLAW-FINGERS TREMBLE as it reaches out for Stathis. Is it trying to attack Stathis or is it reaching out for some kind, any kind of human contact? There is no way for us to know.

The Brundle-Thing begins to go into a dying spasm, shaking, twitching, shuddering. From somewhere deep within its deformed body comes an unearthly whistling sigh, perhaps more an expression of release than pain.

Stathis finds himself sobbing uncontrollably as the Brundle-Thing gives a last tremour and then is still.

Stathis crawls his way over to Telepod 2 and unlatches the hatch door. He works his way halfway into the pod so that he can stroke the hair of Veronica, who responds to

his touch and murmurs as she begins to regain consciousness.

STATHIS

(SOOTHING)

Ronnie, Ronnie, it's OK. I'm here. We came through it. We came through it.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STATHIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Veronica is murmuring in her sleep. She's in bed. Stathis is beside her, caressing her. He has an artificial rubber left hand, which looks quite real at first glance. Their bedroom is very stylish and sumptuous.

STATHIS

(SOOTHING)

It's OK, darling. I'm here, everything's OK.

Veronica sits up. She is somehow disturbed; maybe it's only because she's still half in her dream. She looks down at her stomach. It's big. She's very pregnant.

VERONICA

(DISORIENTED)

It was that dream again! Brundle...
Brundle's baby was being born..

STATHIS

(PATTING HER TUMMY)

This baby is mine, remember? Yours and mine.
The most horrible thing that can happen is
that it'll look more like me than you.

Veronica lies back, dreamily.

VERONICA

Oh, yeah. Yeah. I'm awake now. It's OK.

Stathis smiles and kisses her. Despite what she says, Veronica is still disoriented, unsettled. She begins to sink back into her dream.

INT. VERONICA'S DREAM - DAY

Veronica dreams about a gorgeous CHRYSALIS - a butterfly's cocoon - which resembles that of a Monarch butterfly. The chrysalis, a translucent jade-green, hangs from a leaf in a brightly surreal landscape.

The chrysalis begins to twist and turn as something inside it struggles to be born. Finally, a BEAUTIFUL HUMAN BABY WITH GOSSAMER, INSECT WINGS emerges. The baby clings to the chrysalis for a few moments, fanning its wings slowly until they dry.

Then the baby takes flight and disappears, LEAVING THE BURST AND SHRIVELLED CHRYSALIS BEHIND.

INT. STATHIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In her sleep, Veronica is now smiling serenely.

THE END.