

THE BOXTROLLS

Written By

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Based on the book Here Be Monsters by Alan Snow

## (0050 PRO) PROLOGUE

EXT. CHEESEBRIDGE ALLEY - NIGHT

Lightning strikes, illuminating a vine covered wall as the camera moves across a dark alley filled with CARDBOARD BOXES and CRATES. They boxes have stylized LABELS; the box in front is labeled FOCUS FEATURES.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS running on cobblestones and LABORED BREATHING.

HERBERT (O.S.)

No. Not my boy!

Lightning strikes again, highlighting the boxes and rubbish in the alley. Something is coming. Whatever it is, its breath is hurried and animalistic.

SFX: A BABY CRIES out.

Stumpy CLAWED FEET wrapped in rag run past a boxed labeled LAIKA. The camera follows the shadowed figure as it runs along cobblestones to the end of the lane. The creature pauses under an arched entryway and turns, revealing GLOWING EYES, a large mouth full of wonky teeth, and a BABY SHAPED BUNDLE in its arms.

LIGHTING CRASHES as the BABY wriggles and cries.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHEESE GUILD - ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON: A FIST pounds a door.

SNATCHER

(wheezing)

Wake his lordship.

SFX: A SERIES OF LOCKS being unlatched on the door.

A BUTLER opens the double doors, frowns. He starts to close the doors but Snatcher pushes against the effort.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

The unspeakable has happened.

(GASP) We must speak of it immediately!

A voice calls out from behind them.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (O.S.)  
 (tired)  
 What is it, Snatcher?

The butler moves aside, revealing a regal man with a white hat at the top of an ornate marble staircase.

INT. CHEESE GUILD - ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

LORD PORTLEY-RIND looks on from the mezzanine. The man in the red hat casts a long shadow across the gleaming checkered floors of the Cheese Guild.

SNATCHER  
 (gesturing theatrically)  
 Boxtroll monsters have stolen a  
child.

CLOSE ON: Lord Portley-Rind, perfectly groomed and perfectly horrified.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 (aghast)  
 No.

CLOSE ON: ARCHIBALD SNATCHER in the door, backlit by streetlights, sheets of rain falling behind him. He's a big man, but out of shape (all belly and no butt), with long shreds of greasy hair sprouting from beneath his crooked hat.

SNATCHER  
 (nods)  
 They're no doubt picking their  
 teeth with his adorable baby bones  
 by now!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 A horrible tragedy.  
 (beat, flippant)  
 Let's deal with it in the morning!

Portley-Rind turns to go.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
 STOP!

The Butler closes the door, but Snatcher shoves his foot in the way.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 (struggling)  
 Oh, oof! That's not the worst of  
 it! Next they'll come after...

The Butler shoves at the door, slapping and shoving Snatcher's face until the door slams shut. Snatcher opens the mail slot and yells through it.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
...OUR CHEESES!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
(gasp)  
My Gouda!?

SNATCHER  
(low)  
They'll stop at nothing.

Portley-Rind suddenly flings open the doors, stares wide eyed at Snatcher. He is crouched on the ground near the mail slot.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
You're the town exterminator. I'll  
pay whatever it takes.

Snatcher stands slowly.

SNATCHER  
Oh, I don't want money.

He steps into the house and into the light, REVEALING his greedy face for the first time. He smiles an oily smile.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
I want one of those.

Snatcher points to the WHITE HAT on Portley-Rind's head. Lord Portley-Rind grabs his hat protectively.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
A White Hat? You?! Absurd!

Snatcher turns to leave, moving towards the damp Market Square.

SNATCHER  
Alright then. But prepare to say  
bye bye to your Brie. Cheerio to  
your Cheddar. Goodbye to your...

Portley-Rind's resolve disappears. He raises his hand as if to stop Snatcher from leaving.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 (desperate)  
 Very well. Every boxtroll gone.  
 With proof!

Snatcher stops halfway down the stairs in the pouring rain, his back still turned to Portley-Rind.

SNATCHER  
 (low purr)  
 For a white hat?

CLOSE ON: Snatcher's grinning face as he turns back toward Portley-Rind.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 I will destroy every last boxtroll  
 in this town!

LIGHTNING CRASHES as Snatcher laughs maniacally.

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLES: "THE BOXTROLLS"

(0100 MON) MONSTERS

EXT. CHEESEBRIDGE - WORLD VIEW - SUNSET

WIDE VIEW OF CHEESEBRIDGE, a steep hill-town that looms over the countryside. A jumble of roofs, a tangle of twisting alleys, and perched at the summit, the imposing Cheese Guild Hall. The last rays of the setting sun disappear.

EXT. CHEESEBRIDGE STREETS

--a deep voice echoes out of a scratchy MEGAPHONE.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
 Hear ye! Hear ye! Good citizens of  
 Cheesebridge, the curfew is in  
 force. Don't dawdle or the beasts  
 will tear you limb from limb!

CLOSE ON: A FABRIC BANNER reading "BOXTROLL EXTERMINATORS".

The banner hangs on a strange rattletrap TRUCK that winds its way up the city streets. Sinister looking men in BLOOD RED TOP HATS hang onto the running boards. The most sinister of them all, Snatcher, rides on the roof.

SNATCHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 They will add your flesh to their  
 rivers of blood and mountains of  
 bones.

As the truck passes, PEDESTRIANS gasp and hurry into their houses, heeding the amplified warning. A CHEESEMONGER at The Cheesery pulls his FOLDING SIGN from the sidewalk and hurries inside. A COUPLE stops mid-conversation and heads indoors. A MAN CARRYING A CRATE brings his load into his shop, abandoning the crate sitting at the curb. Two FEMALE TOWNSFOLK head off down the street.

CLOSE ON: Archibald Snatcher as the truck rounds a corner. He holds a MEGAPHONE TUBE to his mouth and orates as he zeros in on a BOY playing ball in the street.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 Child! Do you want to end up like  
 the Trubshaw Baby?

The boy watches the truck as it passes, curiosity changing to horror.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 Dragged underground and feasted  
 upon one year ago this very night?!

The terrified boy shakes his head and GASPS as he is yanked inside by his MOTHER. His BALL bounces out of his hands and rolls across the cobbles.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 Lock your windows! Bolt your doors!  
 Hide anything that is not bolted  
 down.

One man grabs his DOOR KNOCKER and bolts inside.

Another man grabs his MAILBOX.

Another a BARBER POLE.

With a terrified look the last man peers out of the peep hole in his door, then slams it shut.

SNATCHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Hide your cheese. Hide your tender  
 and delicious babies!

EXT CHEESEBRIDGE STREETS - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

The wind blows trash down the empty streets. Snatcher's vehicle, rattling from its boiler, prowls past with Snatcher still calling out his warning until the sound fades in the distance.

SNATCHER (O.S.)

Beware the bloodthirsty monsters!  
They'll fry your eyes, gnaw on your  
knees, gobble your gizzards...  
Beware! BEWARE!

After Snatcher's truck has passed the CAMERA lands on: A MANHOLE. Carved in the heavy iron cover is a warning: "HERE BE MONSTERS".

A LONG BEAT OF SILENCE. The manhole cover slowly twists and lifts, a pudgy blue hand emerges. Two pairs of yellow, glowing eyes peer out. The creatures talk in expressive but unintelligible GURGLER. Down the street, two more manhole covers lift.

In pairs and in gangs, these BOXTROLLS -- so called for the cardboard boxes they wear -- emerge from the sewers and scurry through the streets of the besieged town. Their long, forboding SHADOWS creep across walls plastered with posters that read: "CHEESEBRIDGE: A GOUDA PLACE TO LIVE", "REDHATS - BOXTROLL EXTERMINATORS".

We watch them scurry through streets and alleyways, gurgling quiet directions to each other. They move swiftly and travel in packs. We see a lone boxtroll jump and pull himself in to his box as a DOG BARKS. He pops back out of his box and moves along quickly.

CLOSE ON: what appears to be a LARGE BOXTROLL MONSTER peering around the corner of a moonlight street. Its glowing eyes turn toward the camera as it sways slowly. Five more pairs of eyes light up within the large, boxy shadow and SIX BOXTROLLS separate from the mass, popping off to run their errands while the coast is clear.

BIRDS EYE VIEW: Groups of two and three boxtrolls snake their way down streets, skirting carefully around areas lit by street lamps.

In a small lane, groups of boxtrolls stop to collect mechanical stuff. They work together, using their boxes as tools and props.

SIX BOXTROLLS stack up in the background to steal a SHOP SIGN, while THREE BOXTROLLS cooperatively steal the WHEEL from a WOODEN CART.

One boxtroll uses his box to prop up a corner while the other two release the wheel from the axle. A LONE BOXTROLL crosses the frame to see what treasures he may find in a trash bin; as he knocks it over with a CLANG, TWO BOXTROLLS scurry past and stack together, stealing the HOUSE NUMBER from the front of a brownstone.

CLOSE ON: the boxtrolls' booty - the shiny brass number '2', the shop sign for 'TIMELESS TIMEPIECES', the wheel that rolls along between two boxtrolls.

Six other boxtrolls on the hunt stack together against a fence. We watch as one boxtroll makes it over the top, cooperatively pulling the others into the alley behind him.

(0200 BXT) BOXTROLL EXTERMINATORS

EXT. CHASE ALLEY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: The inside of a trash can as the lid is removed. Two BOXTROLL HANDS wriggle into view over the rubbish, full of NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, an APPLE CORE, a BANANA PEEL, and a FISH CARCASS. The boxtroll gurgles "EWW" and "BLECH" sounds as he moves these unwanted items aside. He gurgles with joy when a bit of brass is revealed.

FISH, a nervous 4-foot tall, wonky-toothed, pointy-eared, gangly-limbed boxtroll, pulls an old broken ALARM CLOCK from the trash barrel. He is in a large alley, filled with old boxes, crates, broken items and tarps strewn about.

Fish stares curiously at the object, turning it over in his hands and holding it to his ear, listening. He shakes the clock and hears loose gears RATTLE.

FISH

Hmm...

Fish opens the clock face and gurgles, intently toying with the mechanical interior. After a moment, the clock begins to TICK with activity. Fish gurgles excitedly and closes the clock face, holding it to his ear to listen to the rhythmic ticking.

FISH (CONT'D)

(GURGLES) Oh yeah...

Fish's eyes go wide as the clock's alarm RINGS, attracting the attention of an uglier, 2-foot-2 boxtroll.

SHOE

Huh?

As Fish stands proudly admiring the sound of his ringing alarm clock, SHOE bounces around his feet.

SHOE (CONT'D)  
(GURGLES) Gimme that!

Shoe, short and feisty, grabs the alarm clock from Fish and scampers away with it. Fish watches as Shoe climbs a stack of crates and hisses back at him, sniffing at his new prize. Fish scowls at Shoe and returns to the rubbish pile, shaking his head and muttering.

Behind him a half-dozen boxtrolls methodically pick through an assortment of trash barrels and old boxes. It's like a troop of monkeys at the dump. They find mechanical stuff, inspect it, and then either drop it into their box to keep or toss it back into the trash.

A filthy TEDDY BEAR WITH A MUSICAL KEY is discarded by another boxtroll, landing with a THUNK and A FEW TINNY MUSICAL NOTES. Fish turns excitedly.

FISH  
(curious)  
Ohhhh...

He picks up the teddy bear and cranks a key in its back as Shoe toys with the stolen alarm clock. The teddy bear plays MUSIC. Fish gurgles along to the tune and bobs his head, enjoying the moment.

Again, Shoe notices Fish has found something interesting. He shoves the alarm clock into his box, stealthily sneaks up on Fish and makes a grab for the teddy bear! Fish refuses to let go and they squabble over it. Suddenly all the boxtrolls snap to attention, their ears alert--

EXT. CHASE ALLEY

The creepy RATTLING SOUNDS of the Redhats' truck returns.

All the boxtrolls hide in their boxes. The "camouflage" works. Their boxes fit in perfectly with the trash barrels and packing crates.

The rattling comes closer... closer... then STOPS.

BAM! HEADLIGHTS light up the alley.

Three men dismount from the truck and cast long shadows across the alley and all of the boxes: the giant MR. TROUT, the beanpole thin MR. PICKLES, and the short, pit bull MR. GRISTLE.

The boxtrolls don't run -- they just KEEP HIDING IN THEIR BOXES.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
GENTLEMEN!

Snatcher spreads his arms theatrically and wades into the garbage-strewn alley.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
Look at all these boxes left lying about. How curious, how peculiar. I do believe... *evil is afoot.*

Gristle chuckles and breaks into a psychotic grin.

MR. GRISTLE  
(cold blooded)  
HAHAHA. FOOT.

MR. PICKLES  
Huh.

Fish peeks out of his box momentarily, then retreats when he sees the Redhats advancing into the alley.

Mr. Trout and Mr. Pickles absentmindedly check boxes for boxtrolls, but Mr. Gristle methodically stomps and smashes every box he can. When he finds a box with a boxtroll, he uses a CRICKET BAT to WHACK it back to the others to load onto the truck.

MR. PICKLES (CONT'D)  
You ever seen someone's foot be evil, Mr. Trout?

MR. TROUT  
I believe the boss meant evil is nearby, Mr. Pickles.

MR. PICKLES  
My foot had a pretty nasty bunion once. I wouldn't say the foot itself was evil.

MR. TROUT  
No, it's just a fancy-man's word for vicinity.

MR. PICKLES  
Wrinkly ol' bunion looked like my grandmum. Had to saw her off. The bunion, not my grandmum.

Mr. Gristle spots a shivering box and positions himself over it, cricket bat in hand.

MR. GRISTLE  
Ah, yes. FOOT!

WHACK! Gristle kicks the box, and it flies toward Mr. Pickles and Mr. Trout.

MR. TROUT  
There's one!

Mr. Pickles scoops it up in a dog catcher's net.

MR. PICKLES  
Come on, ya squirmy monster. Your days of evil-doin' are over.

Mr. Gristle finds another shivering box. He swings his bat.

MR. GRISTLE  
BOOM!

WHACK! A box slides over to Trout. A dizzy boxtroll pops out for a moment, groaning. Trout taps its head and the boxtroll retreats.

MR. TROUT  
You really think these boxtrolls understand the duality of good and evil?

MR. PICKLES  
They must, right? Why else would they hide from us. We are the good guys.

Mr. Pickles strolls off with both boxtroll and net.

MR. GRISTLE (O.S.)  
(hitting more boxes)  
Nice! NICE!

WHACK! Another box slides over to Trout. Trout scoops up the box before the creature can get away. The boxtroll's legs dangle below as it is carried away.

MR. TROUT  
Yeah... I suppose we are.

CLOSE ON: Fish and Shoe, in the shadows at the edge of the alley, gurgle to each other while the Red Hats are distracted. Their heads stay hidden in their boxes as they waddle slowly out of the alley.

Mr. Gristle is too preoccupied with smashing other boxes to notice them. He grunts and laughs with the effort.

Snatcher spots Fish and Shoe as they exit the alley and points at them.

SNATCHER  
MR. GRISTLE!

MR. GRISTLE  
Hmm?

SNATCHER  
ACQUIRE THEM!

Brandishing his cricket bat, Gristle springs after Fish and Shoe.

MR. GRISTLE  
Acquire! ACQUIRE! HAAAA!

The boxtrolls pop out of their boxes and RUN!

EXT. CHEESEBRIDGE STREET

Gristle closes in on them as they sprint down an alley. The boxtrolls join hands and vault over a fence like a Slinky toy.

Gristle smashes THROUGH the fence--

MR. GRISTLE  
COME BACK AND LET ME HIT YOU!

--but the boxtrolls have disappeared. Gristle stalks down the street and disappears around a corner.

After Gristle disappears, two boxes that are holding up a broken street cart suddenly move. It's Fish and Shoe hiding in plain sight.

Once they are sure they are not being followed they open a drainage pipe and slip underground into the sewers--

(0300 UDW) UNDERWORLD Eggs

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - ENTRANCE CHUTES

-- where they leap into cardboard-lined BOXTROLL CHUTES. They drop through the chutes, sliding on the cardboard, until they join up with other boxtrolls returning from a night of gathering.

They descend deeper underground until they are collected together in a funnel-shaped cave and one by one drop onto an--

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN

-- elaborate conveyor belt system for a roller coaster ride into a HUGE DARK SPACE with blinking lights and a cacophony of MECHANICAL NOISE. Fish, Shoe and boxtrolls of all shapes and sizes shoot off the end of the conveyor belt and tumble across the floor.

ON FISH AND SHOE where the alarm clock lands on the floor as they tumble to a halt. Shoe grabs the clock possessively, hisses at Fish, and runs away laughing. He has his treasure. Fish shrugs it off and rights himself, raising a hand to his mouth.

FISH  
(gurgled question)  
"Eggs?"

REVEAL THE CAVERN, the hub of the boxtroll world. It's full of workshops, interconnected machines and a constellation of lights that make it look like a subterranean Coney Island amusement park. Fish stands in front of a large STALAGMITE, around which the mechanical underground city is built.

FISH (CONT'D)  
(gurgled question)  
"Eggs?"

WHEELS - a boxtroll riding a unicycle - zooms quickly past, humming.

FISH (CONT'D)  
(to Wheels)  
"You see Eggs?"

Wheels shrugs his shoulders and rides away as OIL CAN - the smallest boxtroll - tumbles from the conveyor belt and rights himself with a squeak. Oil Can pulls, well, an OIL CAN from inside of his box and scurries off.

Fish makes his way to the base of a waterwheel made from scraps of metal.

High overhead, the boxtroll KNICKERS - a picture of underpants adorning the front of it's box - struggles with an armful of light bulbs while swinging from a rope. Two small boxtrolls hold the rope steady below.

SPARKY, a boxtroll wearing welding goggles, and a small boxtroll named BUCKET work side by side on an electrical generator, fitting dinner forks into a toaster as makeshift fuses.

FISH (CONT'D)  
 (gurgled question)  
 "Eggs?"

Sparky and Bucket look up from their work and give Fish directions to find Eggs.

SPARKY AND BUCKET  
 (gurgled in unison)  
 "Over there!"

In the background, Oil Can climbs down a pipe to grease up the generator and then scrambles back up the pipe.

Fish heads off as Sparky and Bucket turn on the toaster and get ZAPPED! They jerk and squirm as electricity courses through their boxes and they collapse on the ground. The strands of light bulbs flicker and light up.

Sparky and Bucket smile and beat their boxes in delight - they fixed the generator. The two boxtrolls holding the rope let go and beat their boxes. Knickers falls to the ground.

KNICKERS  
 AHHH!!!!

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Fish arrives at a SUBTERRANEAN GARDEN where boxtrolls sit among huge cabbages eating ladybugs and slugs. Fish stops in front of FRAGILE, a giant, slow moving, dim-witted boxtroll. Fragile slowly mists a seedling plant.

FISH  
 (gurgled)  
 "Eggs?"

Fragile just stares at Fish until Fish gets frustrated and leaves. Fragile slowly points, in the direction opposite Fish's path.

FRAGILE  
 (gurgles slowly)  
 Eggs.

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - PNEUMATIC TUBES - CONTINUOUS

ON A BOXTROLL'S REAR END. He scratches the backside of his box and - WHOOSH! - is sucked up into the air, revealing Fish.

Fish steps up to a huge PNEUMATIC TUBE driven by a dozen antique vacuum cleaners and calls up to SWEETS, a toothless boxtroll with a set of old human dentures in his mouth.

FISH  
(gurgled)  
"Eggs?!"

Sweets stops, thinks, gets an idea and starts to speak just as SPECS, a myopic boxtroll with an elaborate head gear of eye glasses, twists an ANCHOR switch, turning on the pneumatic tubes. First his DENTURES, then Sweets, are sucked up into the tube. Fish watches Sweets go and then sees Oil Can standing on top of the tubes oiling stuff.

FISH (CONT'D)  
"EGGS?"

Oil Can stops oiling the tubes.

OIL CAN  
(gurgled)  
"He's up there!"

Oil Can points up at a small cave high on the cavern wall.

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - EGGS' NOOK

Fish arrives at the opening of the small dark cave. In the shadows of the nook is a shape. It appears to be a very small boxtroll.

FISH  
(gurgled)  
Eggs?

EGGS  
(low, feral growls)

Out of the shadows waddles the small boxtroll. The first thing that comes into the light is his box with an EGGS LOGO printed on the front, then appears the dirty face of a feral-looking 2-YEAR-OLD HUMAN BOY, EGGS.

Fish flashes a wonky-toothed smile at Eggs.

EGGS (CONT'D)

Fish!

Fish plays a game of hide and seek with the found teddy bear. He makes the arm, then another arm, then the head appear from the arm and head holes of his box. Baby Eggs is enthralled. He excitedly launches himself at Fish. They play wrestle over the toy until Eggs grabs it from Fish and scampers away.

Eggs hugs the bear. So cute. Then... RIPS ITS HEAD OFF!

He reaches into the teddy bear's chest cavity and pulls out the MUSIC BOX. He tosses the gutted bear body away and tries to get it to work. When he can't figure it out he holds it up to Fish.

EGGS (CONT'D)

Fish?

Fish winds the music box, gurgling an explanation of how it works. Music fills the dark nook.

Eggs giggles with delight as the gears work again. They both close their eyes and hum along to the music.

EGGS (CONT'D)

(hums tune)

Do do doo do doo...

EGGS (CONT'D)

(hums along with music)

They stop humming when the giant clock chimes signaling the end of the boxtroll "day".

CUT TO:

(0400 GRU) GROWING UP BOXTROLL

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - CLOCK

CLOSE ON: the clock as the large hands representing the moon and the sun flip.

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - SLEEPING PILE

As the lights go out, Knickers and the other boxtrolls gather at the center of the cavern to sleep in a big, communal stack of boxes like one big family.

The sleeping pile is stacked tight and high. Fish and Eggs climb to the top of the pile. Fish holds Eggs up so he can pull a chain to turn out the last light in the cavern.

Baby Eggs lies looking straight up. The ceiling of the cavern is dotted with lots of small lights and slowly turning machines -- it looks like the flickering of stars. Baby Eggs happily drifts off to sleep, snuggling the head he ripped from the teddy bear.

EXT. CHEESEBRIDGE ALLEY - NIGHT

The boxtroll clock chimes, signaling it is night above ground and time to wake up! Eggs swings from the light bulb and YELLS!

EGGS

Wake up!

The box pile explodes and falls apart as all the boxtrolls are startled awake.

- EGGS NOOK: Fish winds up the teddy bear's MUSIC BOX and adds it to a MUSIC MACHINE, built out of assorted junk and driven by the teddy bear's music box.

Eggs pounds a hammer on a typewriter at the bottom of the machine and Fish pulls out a saw and draws a bow across it. Together they play a croaking music-mechanique song.

- Eggs rides on WHEELS' shoulders. Wheels makes gurgling sounds like he is revving his engines. They ride around the base of the CONVEYOR BELT, watching boxtrolls roll down from the CHUTES.

Wheels swerves to avoid boxtrolls as they tumble off of the conveyor belt, holding Eggs out to Fish as he rolls into view. Fish catches Eggs and runs with him held like a football.

- Fish in the cavern nook. He pulls out a prize bit of junk - a 78 rpm album by the QUATTRO SABATINO. Eggs' eyes go wide.

EGGS

OOOH! Hee hee hee.

Fish puts the record on the player and lowers the needle. Baby Eggs holds on to the record player, shaking his bottom to the beat and dancing, while Fish plays a MUSICAL SAW with his BOW. Eggs dances and turns to Fish, beating his box approvingly.

- CLOSE ON: A roiling pile of BUGS as boxtroll hands, and one baby human's hand, reach in and grab fists full of bugs.

Boxtrolls munch up mouthfuls of bugs and Eggs chomps away with them, just another monster.

- Eggs and Fish play music in the nook, their music machine is evolving. First Eggs shakes the jar of buttons, then he strikes a beat on a cowbell.

- Eggs is chasing Oil Can. He trips on his box and falls flat on his face, popping out of his box by mistake. Oil Can sees Eggs empty box and FREAKS!

OIL CAN

AAAAHHH!

Oil Can's wailing gets all the boxtrolls in the cavern to turn, see the empty box and SCREAM! It's a collective communal melt down - Fish runs up to Eggs in a panic, crams his box back on and GURGLES the rule-

FISH

(gurgled)

BOXTROLLS NEVER TAKE OFF THEIR  
BOXES!

- Baby Eggs and Fish continue to play their music in the nook. Eggs hit the cowbell expertly with a spoon and dances, smiling and laughing.

DISSOLVE TO:

- 11 YEAR OLD EGGS laughing absolutely rocking out to the music machine with the Quattro Sabatino song mixed in. Eggs plays the WASHBOARD while Fish plays his saw. The jar of buttons and the cowbell have been added to the music machine.

- Close on several PILL BUGS crawling on the cavern floor. Shoe pokes them and they curl into a ball. He gathers them up and growls happily from behind a pile of junk, eyeing Eggs.

Eggs hides behind a little barrier of corrugated metal with his own pile of pill bug balls. Shoe hurls a bug at Eggs and misses, hitting the metal.

EGGS

Ha! Missed me!

Eggs tosses a bug at Shoe, and Shoe smugly laughs as the bug flies into a tube. While he laughs, the bug shoots out from the tube, smacking him on his nose. OOF!

- Eggs and Fish are grooving along to their music machine. Eggs transitions from the washboard to smashing light bulbs with a SKILLET.

Outside of the nook, other boxtrolls bob their heads happily along with the music.

- CLOSE ON: Eggs as he slides on a "new" HELMET made out of junk. It is fitted with lights so he can see in the dark.

PULL OUT. Eggs stands beneath the pneumatic tubes as the boxtrolls gather around him. Specs throws the switch and Eggs is sucked up the tubes, the boxtrolls beat their boxes in excitement. Shoe unceremoniously steps into the tube while the others celebrate.

- The shadowy shapes of Fish, then Shoe, then a super excited Eggs spring out of a manhole and scamper into the night.

Soon after, Shoe finds an umbrella, Fish holds up a busted wheel.

SHOE

Ahh!

FISH

Oooo!

Eggs finds his first real "treasure" in an alleyway - a broken EGG BEATER.

EGGS

(excitedly)

Oooh!

- Wheels zooms towards us carrying a MAIL BOX. Eggs pushes Shoe in a wheelbarrow as Fish runs along, all cheering with their loot. Suddenly BLAM! Wheels is hit by a BOLAS! Eggs leaps into a barrel and the others hide as the Redhats climb down from their truck and carry Wheels away.

MR. GRISTLE

HA HAAA!

MR. PICKLES

Another villain off the streets!

Eggs starts to move, to go after Wheels. Fish holds him back.

EGGS

(protesting, quietly)

Wheels!

(MORE)

EGGS (CONT'D)  
 (as Fish holds his arm)  
 What?!

FISH  
 (shaking his head)  
 Hide.

Eggs stares after his friend and slowly slips down to hide in a barrel.

- Like monsters from a child's nightmare the Redhats loom out of the darkness, smash boxes and collect boxtrolls.

- The boxtroll sleeping pile dwindles as more and more boxtrolls are kidnapped.

- Another night of scavenging as a garden gate hinge SQUEAKS! Eggs and Fish continue running but Oil Can can't help himself - he stops to oil the gate.

Oil Can doesn't realize Gristle is standing right behind him aiming a medieval looking BLUNDERBUSS BOLAS GUN!

BLAM! He fires point blank, capturing Oil Can. The little boxtroll's oil can flies down the street and lands in front of Eggs' hiding spot. Eggs WHIMPERS.

- SLEEPING PILE: The significantly smaller community tucks in for the night as the now rusty water wheel squeaks in the background. Eggs looks forlorn and holds Oil Can's oil can. Fish GURGLES reassuringly to him.

As Fish slips into his box to sleep, Eggs SIGHS and looks up at the greatly reduced number of "stars" (light bulbs) in the ceiling. The water wheel squeaks constantly in the background.

CUT TO:

(0500 WPR) WINIFRED PORTLEY-RIND

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - NIGHT

Eggs scampers through thick fog across a large Market Square encircled by regal buildings. At the far end stands the impressive CHEESE GUILD.

Fish and Shoe lag behind.

EGGS  
 (whispered)  
 This way.

Shoe runs face first into a STREET LAMP - BOOM! - sending gears and baubles clattering to the cobbles.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
 (louder)  
 Shoe! Come on.

SHOE  
 (gurgles angrily)

Eggs and the boxtrolls' silhouettes skitter across the square, over to a small side alley. There is a LOUD CLANG! as Eggs and the boxtrolls run into a trash barrel, sending the trash can lid noisily rolling across the square.

PAN UP the Cheese Guild... a LIGHT COMES ON IN A WINDOW.

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - WINNIE'S BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

IN THE WINDOW, peeking from behind an ornate curtain, a young girl watches the trash can lid fall over and wobble to a stop.

The young girl, WINNIE (12, red-hair, nightgown) GASPS with fear -- and fascination -- then whips the curtains closed.

WINNIE  
 (excited whisper)  
 Boxtrolls! (SHUDDER) They could  
 come eat my face off at any moment.  
 (excited)  
 I'd better warn father.

INT. CHEESE GUILD - MEZZANINE

Winnie runs down a staircase towards a set of double doors. The SOUND of LAUGHTER and WAFFLING VOICES grows as Winnie approaches the door.

Winnie knocks gently. No response. She knocks harder. Still no response. She impetuously pushes the door open.

INT. CHEESE GUILD - TASTING ROOM

It's a Victorian MAN CAVE. A dark, ornate rotunda with walls lined with cases of RARE CHEESES. At a table stacked with FINE CHEESES, four men are seated, wearing gleaming WHITE HATS.

BOULANGER, an old man in a STEAM-POWERED WHEEL CHAIR, snoozes at one end of the table while the short, rotund LANGSDALE and tall, thin, beak-nosed BRODERICK roar with laughter at the other end. Standing imperiously in the middle, and wearing the most ornate white hat, is LORD PORTLEY-RIND.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Settle down, men, settle down.  
Important town business to discuss.  
First on the docket: more  
complaints of crumbling bridges.

LANGSDALE  
Speaking of crumbling... is that a  
new blue cheese I see?

Broderick stands and leans into the cheese, breathing deeply.

BRODERICK  
Does smell delicious.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
I suppose we could do with a nibble  
first.

They taste cheeses like snobs tasting fine wines -- sniffing, rolling it on their tongues, spitting in buckets, etc.

BRODERICK  
Mmm... Pungent...

LANGSDALE  
Complex...

BRODERICK  
I'm tasting notes of... plum!

Bou langer snores.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
(mouth full, reading  
docket)  
All good fun, but we do have this  
school funding initiative to vote  
on. Been sitting here for months.  
All in favor of--

BRODERICK  
--Cutting open the Roquefort next?

ALL  
AYE!!

Lord Portley-Rind tosses the docket behind him, giving in.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

Well, okay, okay. A quick reminder,  
tomorrow is Trubshaw Baby  
Remembrance Day.

(pervy)

And we all know what that means...  
a performance by Madame Frou Frou.

A burst of STEAM shoots out of Boulanger's wheelchair.

BOULANGER

A VISION!

BRODERICK

Now there's a woman...

LANGSDALE

... With some cheese on her bones!

Portley-Rind leans in like he has a secret, and slowly  
caresses a piece of brie as he says:

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

A lady like that is like a fine  
brie. Raw. Dangerous.

(deep sniff)

Maybe a little stinky, but one  
taste and you'll be begging for...  
mmm . . .

Lord Portley-Rind nuzzles the brie and kisses its crust.

WINNIE (O.S.)

Father!

Suddenly, he looks up he sees:

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

WINIFRED!

He SQUEEZES the cheese in his hand, which EXPLODES all over.  
A hunk of the brie lands on his hat. He jumps up and storms  
over to the door. The White hats murmur and gasp.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (CONT'D)

Winifred go on. Off to bed. Off to  
bed! Come on, come on.

WINNIE

But Father! I saw boxtrolls again!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

Shoo. Shoo. Shoo.

Portley-Rind's eyes keep sliding back toward the room behind him, where the others are tasting another fine cheese.

WINNIE

They're right outside. They could come rip the flesh off my bones any moment!

Behind them: LOUD grunts of satisfied tasting.

WHITE HATS (O.S.)

(in unison)

Would be a shame to miss this, Portley-Rind!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

(calling back)

Yes, yes one moment!

(to Winnie, distracted)

Winifred, proper girls should not be obsessing over grotesque monsters.

Portley-Rind's attention is directed to the shenanigans going on behind him.

WINNIE

I'm not obsessed! I just can't stop imagining them gnawing off my toes and stringing them together as a necklace! Father? Father.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

(not listening)

Mmm hmm. Yes.

Portley-Rind turns back and pats Winnie on the head like she is a little dog.

WINNIE

(testing him)

If they kidnapped me and slurped up my intestines like noodles, would you give up your white hat to save me?

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

(still not listening)

Hmm? Um. Yes, Winifred.

WINNIE

Father!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 What? Uh... White Hat? Right.  
 (looks at his hat)  
 What.. Oh, seems to have been  
 smudged by a bit of brie. Be a dear  
 and have the butler give it a wash,  
 would you?

He hands a stunned Winnie his White Hat and turns her toward the stairs.

WINNIE  
 But--

He closes the door on her before she can finish her thought.

INT. CHEESE GUILD - MEZZANINE

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (O.S.)  
 Now gentlemen, I apologize...  
 sorry! Back to important White Hat  
 business... Pass the Camembert!

Winnie is hurt and frustrated. She looks down at the White Hat in her hands. Her eyes narrow.

WINNIE  
 I'll give your hat a wash all  
 right.

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - WINNIE'S BALCONY - NIGHT

High on the front of the Guild, Winnie bursts through a set of french doors and onto a balcony holding the white hat, her face an angry scowl.

She tosses Lord Portley-Rind's hat, frisbee style, out into the night sky. The hat glows in the moonlight as it sails across the Market Square.

EXT. MARKET SQUARE

The white hat hits the ground in the middle of the square.

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - WINNIE'S BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

She smiles, satisfied, dusts her hands.

WINNIE  
 Ha!

Then, her smile slowly melts as she realizes this was not her brightest move. She hears raucous laughter from the Tasting Room.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Uh oh.

INT. CHEESE GUILD - ENTRANCE HALL

CLOSE ON DOOR as Winnie quickly unbolts the locks and cracks the door.

(0550 TWH) THE WHITE HAT

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - NIGHT

Winnie cautiously peeks out of the Guild. The light behind her casts a long strip across the empty Market Square.

Mist swells in the small pools of light from streets lights. The rest is swathed in dark shadows. The hat is clear across the square.

Steeling herself, Winnie creeps out and down the stairs, her fancy satin slippers are silent. She gets to the bottom of the stairs and looks around. Nobody there.

The white hat looms from a distance. She gasps, realizing how far she has to go.

She creeps forward a few more steps and hears a noise. She hears something skittering along out in the fog and makes a terrified SQUEAK. She covers her mouth.

Something is watching her.

WINNIE

Who... who's there?

A shape steps forward from the darkness of a nearby alley, but is obscured by mist. Two little lights cut through the vapor.

Winnie scrunches her face slightly, focusing intently on the figure.

The shape creeps a little closer. A hunched-over silhouette, with glowing round eyes. It's a boxtroll monster!

Winnie gasps. She stays put and turns her head to the side, screwing up her face with curiosity as the figure stands upright.

The figure takes another step towards her. REVEAL it is Eggs. He lifts his goggles. The light from the street lamp reveals his face. He is guarded but curious and mimics Winnie's expression.

She gasps in wonder, the hat momentarily forgotten.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
(calling out)  
Who are you, boy?

Eggs looks confused.

EGGS  
Boy?

Fish and Shoe suddenly grab him from behind and pull him out of Market Square.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
(to Fish and Shoe)  
Why would she call me that?

Suddenly, BRIGHT LIGHTS hit them! It's the REDHATS' TRUCK!

Eggs and the boxtrolls sprint around the square, chased by the Redhats.

MR. PICKLES  
They're right there, Mr. Trout!

WITH WINNIE as she watches Eggs and the boxtrolls sprint out of the square just a few steps a head of the Redhat's truck.

MR. GRISTLE  
We're right behind you. HA hahaha!

Winnie stares, slack-jawed as the truck's lights disappear down the hill, then she turns and reaches for her father's hat, but it's gone, instead she sees--

-- a big shadowy figure holding the hat and staring at it lustily -- Archibald Snatcher. Winnie GASPS.

SNATCHER  
Hmm. Someone's out past curfew.  
Very dangerous.

Winnie is speechless for a moment, then-

WINNIE  
I... I saw a boy.

Snatcher still stares at the hat.

SNATCHER

All I saw was filthy boxtroll  
monsters.

Snatcher finally looks at Winnie with an oily, false smile.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

Miss Portley-Rind. Allow me to  
escort you home.

Snatcher leans down and offers his arm to Winnie. She snubs  
him.

WINNIE

I can escort myself, thank you.

Winnie turns her back to Snatcher and he gives a grunt of  
frustration and restraint. She turns back to collect the  
hat.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

If you'll just give me my father's  
hat back.

Winnie grabs for the hat. Snatcher swishes it out of her  
reach and heads for the stairs into the Guild.

SNATCHER

Yes, how did this hat find itself  
aaaaall the way out here?

Winnie runs after him.

WINNIE

The... wind! Blew it, right out the  
window. Very windy tonight!

Snatcher looks doubtful. He licks his finger and holds it up.

SNATCHER

Hmmm. Must've died down. Suddenly!

Snatcher heads right to the front door.

WINNIE

There's no need to go inside.

SNATCHER

Oh, but as a gentleman, I insist.

Snatcher shoves open the doors, pushes his way into the foyer-

(0600 SPR) SNATCHER AND LORD PORTLEY-RIND

INT. CHEESE GUILD - ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

-- and approaches the foot of the main stairs.

SNATCHER  
(calling out)  
Lord Portley-Rind!

CLOSE ON the TASTING ROOM DOORS.

SFX Muffled voices of White Hats enjoying themselves suddenly stop.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (O.S.)  
(muffled)  
Did you hear something?

Winnie winces. She turns to Snatcher who is admiring the white hat again.

WINNIE  
(desperate)  
Can I have the hat back now?

Snatcher puts the hat behind his back, grins and pulls Winnie up the stairs by her wrist, toward the Tasting Room.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
(pleading)  
Please.

Portley-Rind bursts out to see Snatcher ascending the stairs.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
What in Gouda's name is going on?  
Archibald Snatcher?

SNATCHER  
Deepest apologies, your Lordship.  
But I found something out in the  
street that belongs to you.

Snatcher gestures behind him revealing a sheepish Winnie. As he turns he also reveals the white hat. Portley-Rind rushes down the stairs to meet Snatcher half way and GRABS THE HAT.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
My White Hat!

Winnie looks stricken.

WINNIE  
Huh?

As Portley-Rind pulls on the hat, Snatcher refuses to let it go, so they tug each other up and down the stairs.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 I'll take that... Now, now,  
 Snatcher one doesn't acquire a  
 white hat by simply--  
 (straining)  
 --picking it up... off the street.

Portley-Rind finally wins the tussle and grabs the hat back. He growls under his breath at the smudges left on the brim.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (CONT'D)  
 (with emphasis)  
 A white hat indicates privilege,  
 prestige, position!  
 (THEN)  
 It must be *earned*.

He removes a handkerchief from his breast pocket and dabs at the hat's brim.

From the top of the stairs the other Guild members chime in.

LANGSDALE  
 With Valor!

BOULANGER  
 Chivalry!

BRODERICK  
 Or being rich! That's how I got it.

Snatcher looks up at them and bows, removing his red hat.

SNATCHER  
 Oh, don't I know it, sirs.

Snatcher climbs the stairs and gets face to face with Portley-Rind.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 Fortunately, we still have our  
 little... *agreement*.

Portley-Rind grimaces, remembering.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 Um.. eh..

Snatcher opens his arms, gesturing widely, as he recites the particulars of the deal.

SNATCHER

When I destroy every last boxtroll  
in this town, I shall earn my white  
hat... and join you in the Tasting  
Room.

Snatcher takes a step toward the Tasting Room door and looks  
longingly into its warm, inviting interior. The White Hats  
reach back and slam the doors shut. Snatcher's face falls.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

Good lord.  
(twists his mustache)  
Not sure who should be more  
terrified - the boxtrolls or us.

The White Hats chuckle. Snatcher's expression drops into a  
scowl. Portley-Rind puts his hat back on.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (CONT'D)

Now, how the devil did my hat get  
outside in the first place?

Snatcher smirks and gestures toward Winnie.

SNATCHER

I was told the wind had something  
to do with it.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

The wind, eh?

Portley-Rind looks at Winnie and frowns.

WINNIE

Father, I'm sorry--

SNATCHER

(interrupting)  
Sorry! Can't stay. Too much work to  
do.

(doffs hat)

Miss Portley-Rind, your Lordship,  
Sirs. I bid you good night. I'm  
sure we'll be seeing each other  
again very, very soon.

Snatcher oozes out the door. Portley-Rind looks at Winnie and  
shakes his head.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

(exasperated)  
Hmmm... Winnie...

Winnie is about to defend herself when Snatcher pops his head back in and points to his head.

SNATCHER  
Don't forget. I'm a size six-and-a-half. Order ahead.

As he finally leaves, his hat gets caught in the door and he lets out a frustrated growl/groan.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
(under breath)  
Ugh!

Winnie pleads her case from the foot of the stair case as the White Hats return to their cheese.

WINNIE  
Father, I'm sorry! I didn't mean to. Well, at first I did, but I think this situation offers a great opportunity for a father and daughter to discuss their feelings--

Portley-Rind rolls his eyes and turns back to the Tasting Room.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
--WAIT! I saw something out there.  
A boy with boxtrolls--

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
(interrupting)  
Not another word.

WINNIE  
But Father I really-

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Bed!

Portley-Rind shuts the door leaving Winnie alone. She looks back towards the front doors.

WINNIE  
I did see a boy...

(0700) FISH CAPTURED

EXT. CHEESEBRIDGE STREET - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Fish, Eggs and Shoe sprinting down a twisting and turning street. The Redhats' vehicle is right behind them.

Eggs' helmet is blown off while he runs. It flies onto the street behind them and is crushed under the Redhats' truck.

MR. PICKLES  
(yelling)  
Hark! Here come The Exterminators!

MR. GRISTLE  
Exterminate! HA ha ha ha!

MR. TROUT  
But don't that sound like we're the  
villains?

MR. PICKLES  
Huh.

ON TWO BOXTROLLS, SPARKY AND SNIPS, GATHERING A FEW BLOCKS  
AHEAD: BAM! They are hit by headlights as Fish, Eggs and Shoe  
come running between them.

EGGS  
RUN!

Sparky and Snips hide in their boxes.

MR. PICKLES  
Hark! Here come The  
Exterminators... OF JUSTICE!

MR. GRISTLE  
(screaming insanely)  
WE EXTERMINATE JUSTICE!

Mr. Pickles and Mr. Trout look at each, both terrified of Mr.  
Gristle.

MR. GRISTLE (CONT'D)  
Faster!

EGGS  
Grab hold!

Eggs, Fish and Shoe join hands and leap from the streets onto  
rooftops. As they careen from roof to roof, the boxtrolls  
tuck into their boxes, but Eggs can't fit in his box. He  
wraps his arms around Fish's box and rides on Shoe's box.

The Redhats' vehicle skids around the bend and swerves  
through the streets until it gets below them. Gristle's head  
sticks out, wind whipping his face like a dog.

MR. GRISTLE  
HA HA HA!

MR. PICKLES  
Over there Mr. Trout!

Pickles nervously aims a BOLAS GUN, clearly not comfortable with the weapon. He fires, and a WEIGHTED BOLAS shoots out... but, misses Eggs and the boxtrolls badly.

Eggs, Fish, and Shoe tumble off of the rooftops. They fall through the air before bouncing from a store AWNING and landing on the cobblestone street.

Eggs leads the boxtrolls toward a drain pipe.

EGGS  
This way!

Gristle FIRES his sawed off BOLAS GUN as the truck skids!

MR. GRISTLE  
(laughing)  
My turn! HA HA!

The bolas whizzes toward Eggs and the fleeing boxtrolls as they leap into a drain pipe!

INT. SEWER - DAY

ON FISH as a the weighted bolas wrap around his box. His feet are pulled out from under him as he reaches out toward his friends.

FISH  
Egg!

The bolas rope is attached to the Redhats truck, just outside of the sewer pipe. The rope tightens as they begin to wind up the slack.

Eggs and Shoe turn to see Fish grabbing the sides of the slick sewer, trying not to be pulled away. Eggs scrambles around Shoe, hiding in his box, and rushes to Fish as he is dragged down the pipe towards the Redhats.

Eggs grabs Fish's hand, but the Redhats are too strong. Fish frantically cries out.

FISH (CONT'D)  
Eggs! Eggs!

EGGS  
No!

Eggs can't hold on and Fish's hand slips free, he's pulled out of the pipe CRYING!

FISH

EGGGGS!

Fish is yanked out of sight. Eggs is left lying on the ground, gasping for breath. His best friend is gone.

SILENCE.

Eggs startles as Shoe touches his shoulder. He looks up and Shoe shakes his head, resigned. Shoe takes Eggs' arm and slowly leads him deeper into the pipe bend, toward home.

(0750 EGC) EGGS' CHOICE

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - EGGS' NOOK

CLOSE ON the spinning Quattro Sabatinos record.

Eggs sits hunched over in despair with one finger resting on the music machine, causing it to play very, very, slowly.

Behind Eggs we see Shoe's face appear. He stares at Eggs.

BEAT

Shoe throws a bug at Eggs. It bounces off his head. No reaction, so Shoe does it again... still no reaction.

BEAT

Shoe enters the nook. Eggs looks at him. Shoe holds out two hands full of yummy bugs.

SHOE

(gurgles) Bugs for dinner?

Nothing.

Shoe sighs, and puts a bug in his mouth.

EGGS

(quietly)

Why do we do this, Shoe...

Shoe stops eating, opens his mouth as if to answer then pauses, agape. The bug crawls out and up onto the top of his head. Shoe thinks, gurgling.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
 Carry on like everything is normal?  
 They drag us away and we do  
 nothing...

The lucky bug extends it's wings and flies away. Shoe doesn't react. He doesn't know what to say.

SFX: THE CLOCK GOES OFF SIGNALING TIME TO SLEEP.

Shoe glances out of the cave as the remaining boxtrolls start to make what's left of the communal sleeping pile.

Shoe looks back and forth between Eggs and the sleeping pile. He knows he should stay, but the sleeping pile is really coming together out there. With a whine of frustration for his friend, he shakes off some bugs for Eggs to eat and leaves.

Eggs sighs and looks over to the corner where Fish's old saw and bow lean against the wall.

The bugs Shoe left crawl up Eggs' arm and he angrily shoves them away and notices the Quattro Sabatino's RECORD COVER.

CLOSE ON: The faces of the four singers, each one festooned with an elaborate mustache, and then on to their orange and brown striped coats and finally focussing on their straw boater hats. Eggs lowers it to reveal--

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - DRESSING AREA - LATER

--Eggs REFLECTION IN AN OLD CRACKED MIRROR. He is wearing a disguise based on the singers from the Quattro Sabatino's record cover (which he holds in his hand). He has made a striped jacket by sewing strips of orange fabric to an old coat and found a filthy old straw boater. He has even drawn a twirled Van Dyck mustache on his face with a lump of coal.

EGGS  
 (hopeful)  
 I look like one of them.  
 (doubtful)  
 (SIGH) Sort of.

He looks at the pile of sleeping boxtrolls as they snore. He looks back at the mirror.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
 (determined)  
 I'll find you, Fish!

He tiptoes out into the cavern and sneaks off into the shadows.

INT. SEWER - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

In a pitch black sewer, a thin ray of sunlight shoots down from a hole in a manhole cover.

Eggs' filthy hand, wrapped in torn strips of fabric, reaches into the light. Dust motes drift around his hand and glow. The reflected light illuminates Eggs' wide eyed face.

(0800) DAYLIGHT

DOWN SHOT: Eggs climbs up toward the manhole. He has to squint at the bright sunlight.

EGGS POV: Looking up at the manhole until the bright light fills the screen.

SFX: As we go into the light, the sound of the streets of a bustling city gets louder and louder.

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

CLOSE ON: A heavy cast iron manhole as it grinds open. Blinding sunlight pours in.

Eggs' dirty face peeks out. His eyes go wide.

EGGS  
(amazed)  
Wow...

KLANG! A fat man steps on the manhole cover and slams it shut.

EGGS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Ahh!

A beat. The manhole opens again (KLANG!!), and again is slammed shut as it is driven over, by a CART that stops.

Eggs shoves the manhole open and clambers out. For a second he's reassured at how calm it is then the cart moves off and he is left crouching in the middle of a busy street. He looks up and is BLINDED BY THE SUN. AAARGH!

DRUM BEATS and a CYMBAL CRASH! Eggs jumps out of the way as a ONE MAN BAND marches through, almost running him over. He's pushed and shoved by a festive crowd...

EGGS (CONT'D)

AHHHH!!!

TOWNSPERSON 1

Outta the way!

Until he backs into an OLD TIMEY BACKDROP painted with lurid images of monstrous boxtrolls stealing a wailing baby.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Get yer picture taken with the Trubshaw Baby! A humorous keepsake for this dark and dreadful day!

EGGS

AHHHH!! (rights himself) Eek.

Eggs stumbles backwards into the crowd where he is crushed between pedestrians until he is lifted off the ground and carried along.

EGGS (CONT'D)

Ehh! Oof. Eek!

Above Eggs the bright sun distorts the faces in the crowd like in a fever dream.

Eggs is carried along, his feet lifted off of the ground by the bustling crowd.

EGGS (CONT'D)

Hey. Oww!

The crowd parts and he is dropped to the ground at the foot of a stage with a loud OOF!

(0900 MFF) MADAME FROU FROU

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - DAY

Everyone hushes as a too enthusiastic CARNIVAL BARKER'S voice introduces the act.

SNATCHER (O.S.)

Ladies and gents, From the long-lost land of Crackerslovakia --  
MADAME FROU FROU!

MADAME FROU FROU bursts through the curtains. She's a big, sexy, voluptuous woman, exotic in a weird Eastern European MAE WEST kind of way.

MADAME FROU FROU  
 (high-pitched lady-voice)  
 Helloooo Cheesebridge! Hello  
 darlinks! Thank you! Thank you! My  
 darlinks!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 Yoo hoo! I'm your biggest fan,  
 Frou Frou.

Portley-Rind and the White Hats call from their exclusive podium in the center of the crowd. Winnie and a very bored Lady Cynthia Portley-Rind stand next to Lord Portley-Rind.

MADAME FROU FROU  
 Lord Portley-Rind, you are TOO  
 much.  
 (flirting)  
 Or maybe just enough! Rowrr!

Frou Frou gives him a wink as Lady Portley-Rind elbows him in the stomach.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 Oof. Very good.

Frou Frou takes center stage.

MADAME FROU FROU (CONT'D)  
 Today I shall perform ze sad tale  
 of ze Trubshaw baby! But first, I  
 need a helper from ze audience!

Winnie jumps up and down, waving her hand enthusiastically.

WINNIE  
 (raises hand, jumps)  
 Me! Pick me! Me!

MADAME FROU FROU  
 (pretending not to see  
 Winnie)  
 Anyone? Anyone at all? Nobody?

TOWNSFOLK BOY  
 Excuse me, I'd like to--

Winnie roughly elbows the boy out of the way--

WINNIE  
 Move aside! Pick me...

-- and climbs up on stage without being asked. Eggs is transfixed - It IS the girl from last night!

MADAME FROU FROU  
 (falsely welcoming)  
 Ah! Little Miss Portley-Rind, you  
 shall play ze sweet little baby  
 Trubshaw.

Frou Frou gives Winnie a bonnet.

WINNIE  
 I saw a boy with boxtrolls last  
 night! Maybe your audience would  
 like to hear-- OOF!

Frou Frou shoves a pacifier in Winnie's mouth and scoots her  
 behind the curtains.

MADAME FROU FROU  
 Stick to ze script, my darlink!

Frou Frou walks to the BARREL ORGAN and turns the BRASS  
 HANDLE. Once it is wound, she takes her place at center  
 stage, a FAN poised coyly over her face.

MADAME FROU FROU (CONT'D)  
*Ten years ago a plot was hatched  
 Where evil was with cunning matched  
 Whoever left their doors unlatched  
 Would find their infant children  
 snatched  
 By Boxtrolls*

ON EGGS watching the show, shocked.

EGGS  
 What?!

Back to the show.

MADAME FROU FROU  
 Oo no Boxtrolls

Winnie and Mr. Pickles, without his red hat and wearing a  
 fake mustache, come dancing out on stage as Papa Trubshaw and  
 Baby Trubshaw. Pickles struggles to pick up Winnie and hold  
 her like a baby.

MADAME FROU FROU (CONT'D)  
*Trubshaw Senior loved his kid  
 The same as regular father's did  
 If you don't want to share his  
 plight  
 Make sure that you are locked up  
 tight  
 From Boxtrolls*

Winnie dances in place and pretends to sleep as Pickles walks off stage.

MADAME FROU FROU (CONT'D)

*For this night Baby's Dad Trubshaw  
Quite forgot to lock his door  
And as soon as he began to snore  
The Boxtrolls came in to withdraw  
Poor Baby  
Those vile Boxtrolls*

A trap door opens in the stage floor and Mr. Gristle climbs out dressed in a crude BOXTROLL COSTUME made from papier-mâché. Gristle GROWLS.

MADAME FROU FROU (CONT'D)

*So lock your windows, bolt your  
doors  
Or Boxtrolls with their creepy  
claws  
Will take your children in their  
paws  
And drag them down to feed their  
jaws  
Boxtrolls*

The crowd HISSES as Gristle grabs Winnie and pushes her down the trap! Gristle makes CHOMPING and NOM NOM sounds.

GRISTLE

RAWR!

Pickles runs onto the stage melodramatically pantomiming a heart-broken father searching for his missing child.

MADAME FROU FROU

*Mister Trubshaw went quite wild  
When he found out he'd lost his  
child  
He did what any Dad would do  
He ran off swiftly to pursue those  
Boxtrolls*

Mr. Gristle returns and stalks Pickles from behind--

CROWD

No! / Behind you!/ Look out man!  
He's behind you!

--And, a bit too enthusiastically, shoves Pickles down through trap door.

MADAME FROU FROU

*"Help, help, help me please won't  
you?"  
But the Boxtrolls did what  
Boxtrolls do  
They snatched him up and began to  
chew  
Until there was no residue  
Of Trubshaw.*

Mr. Trout throws an arm full of papier-mâché BONES onto the stage. Gristle picks one up, shoves it into his papier-mâché jaws and taunts the audience like a villainous professional wrestler.

MADAME FROU FROU (CONT'D)

*They pulled him down into their  
nest  
Hardly pausing to digest  
They left his bones but ate the  
rest  
Never be a dinner guest  
Of Boxtrolls  
Oo those Boxtrolls*

CROWD

Booooo!

EGGS

But she's lying.

A man standing next to Eggs overhears and looks down at him. Eggs pales and pulls his disguise tighter.

MADAME FROU FROU

*And that's the story of the  
Trubshaw kid  
Don't do what Father Trubshaw did  
If you see Boxtrolls don't placate  
them  
Catch 'em and exterminate them  
Boxtrolls*

Frou Frou wallops Gristle with her fan. The crowd cheers her on as she beats the crap out of him in a not-very-ladylike fashion. The crowd is whipped into a frenzy!

MADAME FROU FROU (CONT'D)

*Kill those Boxtrolls!*

Eggs is crushed by the furious crowd as they chant along with Madame Frou Frou.

MADAME FROU FROU (CONT'D)  
*Kill those Boxtrolls!*

CROWD  
 Kill those boxtrolls!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND/WHITE HATS  
 Don't forget about our party  
 tonight, Frou Frou!

Eggs looks around at the frantic crowd, he sees Winnie exiting out the back of the stage. She dusts herself off and heads back into the crowded market. Eggs follows her.

(1000 EFW) EGGS FOLLOWS WINNIE

EXT. MARKET SQUARE

As Winnie makes her way across the crowded square Eggs follows her.

- When he sees the One Man Band coming closer, he ducks down into a box shape as if he could hide like a real boxtroll. When the danger is passed he looks up and sees Winnie disappearing into the crowd.

- Eggs runs to catch up and has to jump over a vendor pushing a cart.

TOWNSPERSON 2  
 Hey? What the...

- Eggs falls in behind Winnie as she nonchalantly circles the tent of a cheese seller. She suddenly looks back and STARES RIGHT AT EGGS! Eggs hides behind a Swiss cheese.

Winnie ignores him and heads off down the street with Eggs still following until she--

EXT MARKET SQUARE - ARCADE - DAY

--Lunges around a corner and disappears! Eggs runs after her, turns the corner and she's gone. Suddenly she jumps out in front of him.

WINNIE  
 What do you want!

Eggs, startled, instinctively hides in a barrel. Winnie peers in at him.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
You're the worst pickpocket I have  
ever seen.

She tosses him a coin.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
Here, buy yourself a book on how to  
be a better thief.

She walks away shaking her head.

Eggs climbs up out of the barrel.

EGGS  
Wait! I saw you last night.

Winnie freezes, eyes wide. She slowly turns back to him. He  
looks down, too scared to look her in the eye.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
And they took Fish, and... I don't  
know where they took him...

He looks up and Winnie is right in front of him.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
Ah!

WINNIE  
You were with the boxtrolls last  
night?

Eggs wipes the coal dust mustache from his face.

EGGS  
Yes.

WINNIE  
(excited)  
Whoah! I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT! I KNEW  
IT!

Winnie gleefully dances about as Eggs climbs out of the  
barrel.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
Father didn't believe me but I KNEW  
IT! How did you escape?!

EGGS  
We went underground and they--

WINNIE  
 (interrupting)  
 Did they drag you down to their  
 hideous caves?

EGGS  
 Huh?

Eggs backs up as Winnie advances, intensely presses him for  
 information.

WINNIE  
 Were there mountains of baby bones  
 and rivers of blood?

EGGS  
 What?

WINNIE  
 Did they eat your family?

EGGS  
 My family-

WINNIE  
 Did they let you watch?!  
 (PAUSE)  
 I mean, make you watch?!

She grabs him by the shoulders.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
 TELL ME EVERYTHING!

Freaked out and frustrated, Eggs BITES HER ON THE ARM. She  
 freezes. They stare at each other, Eggs panting, her in  
 shock. She looks down at her arm flabbergasted.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
 You bit me.

EGGS  
 I need to find the Men in Red Hats!

Winnie looks at the bite mark again.

WINNIE  
 You bit me with your mouth.

EGGS  
 The Men in Red Hats!

WINNIE

The boxtroll exterminators? They live down on Curd's Way.

EGGS

How do I get there?

Winnie points to the Milk Street sign that they are standing under.

WINNIE

Curds Way? Milk turns into it.

The one man band drops a CYMBAL: BA DUM CHHHH!

Eggs turns to go, then hesitates.

EGGS

It's not true, you know.  
(angry)  
We don't eat babies!

He runs off down the street.

WINNIE

We? What do you mean we?

Eggs rounds a corner and is gone.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Come back here! TELL ME EVERYTHING!

She takes off after him.

(1100 SLR) SNATCHER'S LAIR

INT SNATCHER'S FACTORY - SAME TIME

CLOSE ON Fish's frightened face peeking out from under his box lid. REVEAL he's in a cage, being stared at by the three Redhats -- Pickles, Trout and Gristle.

Gristle reaches up and pokes him with a cricket bat.

MR. GRISTLE

(sinister whisper)  
POKE.

MR. PICKLES

You ever wonder what they're thinkin' 'bout, Mr. Trout?

MR. TROUT

I imagine they're evaluating their  
life choices.

MR. PICKLES

Ah. Wonderin' why they chose to be  
evil, disgusting monsters instead  
of good guys like us!

SNATCHER (O.S.)

Wrong, Mr. Pickles!

They turn to see Snatcher, coming down a long walkway behind  
them, backlit by tall windows. He finishes drying his face  
with a towel, then walks towards them, orating THEATRICALY:

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

A boxtroll cannot CHOOSE a new life  
because a boxtroll does not ASPIRE  
to be anything more than a weak,  
lowly pest.

(a beat)

But a man -- a great man!

(tosses towel, arms wide)

And his...

MR. TROUT

Colleagues?

MR. PICKLES

Best chums?

SNATCHER

... *stooges*

(THEN)

... can choose to change their  
lives. Our dreams are in our grasp!

Snatcher lifts Mr. Gristle into the air.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

Let us be dream-graspers, fate-  
snatchers, destiny-takers! Let us  
grasp our dreams and shove them  
down everyone's throat! Am I not  
right?

MR. GRISTLE

THROAT!

SNATCHER

YES!

Snatcher throws Gristle and Pickles catches him in his arms, holding him like a small child. Gristle smiles maniacally.

MR. PICKLES  
That's why your name is the boss,  
boss!

MR. TROUT  
I'mnotastooge, am I?

Pickles releases Gristle as they follow Snatcher.

SNATCHER  
Now, gentlemen. What better way to  
dream than to walk in the shoes of  
those to whom we aspire? Mr.  
Pickles, fetch the--

MR. PICKLES  
Shoes?

MR. TROUT  
Clogs?

MR. GRISTLE  
(brandishing cricket bat)  
BAT!

SNATCHER  
Cheese.

Snatcher walks away as Trout and Pickles blanch. Their faces go from rapt attention to apprehension. Gristle just keeps his deranged grin.

MR. TROUT  
Oh no.

MR. PICKLES  
Oh dear.

MR. GRISTLE  
Nice! Heh heh heh heh...

(1200) EGGS SAVES FISH

EXT. CHEESEBRIDGE - WORLD VIEW

Cheesebridge looms quietly overhead. The camera slowly pans down as--

EXT. INDUSTRIAL WASTELAND

Eggs reaches an intersection and stops at the street signs: MILK AVE and CURDS WAY. He looks around at the industrial wasteland. In the distance is one lone building with a bloody red top hat painted on the huge wooden door.

Eggs heads toward it.

INT. SNATCHER'S FACTORY

CLOSE ON Snatcher's grimy hands holding up a white hat made out of paper.

SNATCHER

Men, don your white hats.

Snatcher lowers the paper hat onto his head. Across the table from him the Redhats replace their red hats with paper white hats. They all sit at a table set with cracked crockery and mismatched plates.

MR. PICKLES

Are you sure about this, boss? You know what cheese can do to you...

SNATCHER

(tucking a napkin into his collar)

Unless you are referring to how cheese brings men of respect and power together in brotherhood, no, I do not know what...

(looming menacingly)

"Cheese. Does. To. Me."

MR. PICKLES

(GULPS) That's what I meant then.

SNATCHER

Marvelous! Then let us begin.

Trout takes a little piece of cheese out of a package labeled "EXTRA MILD CHEDDAR". He focuses and cuts off the tiniest little sliver and puts it on a plate, inspects it and slices it into an even smaller piece... then slices it again... and again... and again... and--

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

(yells)

ENOUGH!

Snatcher bangs his fist on the table. Startled, Pickles and Trout jump. Then Trout puts a tiny slice of cheese on a plate and very slowly rotates the top of the table like a Lazy Susan. It takes forever for Snatcher's plate to arrive in front of him.

Snatcher loses patience and spins the table so that a plate lands in front of him. As he moves to pierce the cheese with his fork, the plate shifts to the left. He glares at Mr. Trout and Mr. Pickles, who turned the table top. They immediately return the plate.

The Redhats stare nervously as Snatcher stabs the curd and raises it to his lips and places it on his tongue. He chews, relishing it, then swallows.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
(smiling)  
Mmmm!

The Redhats relax. They take a tiny piece of cheese each and eat it.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
I say, old chaps, it's quite, um...  
Quite--

MR. TROUT  
--Aromatic? Oaky? With an undertone  
of a mother's smile on a warm  
spring day? Hmm...

SNATCHER  
Yes! Those things! Etcetera  
etcetera, big words, chummy  
banter...

As the Redhats look on in horror, red spots appear across Snatcher's face. He scratches at them absently.

MR. PICKLES  
(whispered to Trout)  
Someone's got the cheese fits  
again.

MR. TROUT  
(shudders)  
Ohhh...  
(whispered to Gristle)  
Quickly, quietly, get the leeches.

Gristle scurries away, crossing behind Snatcher.

MR. GRISTLE  
QUIETLY!

SNATCHER  
(slurred)  
Where is he going? Is he getting  
more cheese?

Snatcher's lips instantly PUFF UP into huge, wobbly,  
distended FISH LIPS. The Redhats stare--

MR. GRISTLE  
Quietly!

SNATCHER  
What?

MR. PICKLES  
(scared)  
I think you've had enough for  
today, boss.

In the background, Eggs' silhouette appears in the soot-  
covered window. He wipes away the grime to look in.

EXT. SNATCHER'S FACTORY - DAY

Eggs looks away from the window up at a large, rickety AIR  
DUCT attached to the side of the building. He climbs into the  
duct, leaving his disguise behind.

INT. SNATCHER'S FACTORY - DAY

BACK TO SCENE. Snatcher's face is now grotesquely misshapen  
and one eye has swollen shut like Quasimodo.

SNATCHER  
(slurred by swollen lips)  
Isn't this nice? Chewing the  
cheddar with the big cheesses.  
Holding my own--  
(gulps cheese)  
--With sssophissstication and  
sssavoir faire!

Pickles, and Trout sit nervously at the table and stare at  
him.

MR. PICKLES  
(super worried)  
Yup. Nothing terrifying about that.

MR. TROUT  
 (rubs his neck, nervously)  
 Uh huh huh...

SNATCHER  
 Thisss is where I belong!

He leans back in his "throne" and begins orating again.

MR. TROUT  
 Spot on, as always, sir.

Eggs appears peeking out of the air duct high on the factory wall.

MR. PICKLES (O.S.)  
 You're not wrong, boss.

SNATCHER  
 (angry)  
 Well not here! In this rotten  
 factory!

Snatcher quickly leans forward, slams his fist on the table and stands.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 I belong up there!

Eggs shrinks back into the duct, afraid that Snatcher has noticed him.

MR. TROUT (O.S.)  
 I'm agreeing so I don't upset you.

MR. PICKLES (O.S.)  
 Very clever.

ON SNATCHER as he lurches up from the table and points toward the city. Eggs retreats slightly into the duct in response to Snatcher's erratic movements.

SNATCHER  
 In the tasting room, supping on the  
 choicest cheeses... Everyone in  
 town bowing down to me, like a  
 gentleman, a lord with a white hat!

ON EGGS: He spots Fish in a cage suspended above the floor.

EGGS  
 Fish!

He leaps onto a hanging chain and climbs.

MR. PICKLES (O.S.)  
You've never been wrong, boss.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
It's a time-honored tradition.

In the background, Snatcher stands up quickly, sending his chair flying and stalks around.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
(frustration)  
Aaaarrgh!

Eggs climbs across the rafters, above the Redhats as--

MR. TROUT  
Now, now boss... Don't get yourself  
all worked up.

MR. PICKLES  
Use your breathing.

--Pickles and Trout follow Snatcher nervously, like guards at an insane asylum.

ON SNATCHER: as they move in to comfort him but he rails back at them, arms flailing.

SNATCHER  
Stand back peasants! You don't  
touch your King!

ON EGGS: as he works his way through ceiling girders. He jumps from the rafters to a loose chain.

SNATCHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
King Archibald Snatcher. Yes, I  
shall be king too, why not?

MR. TROUT (O.S.)  
Stay with us, boss.

MR. PICKLES (O.S.)  
Tell us more about when you'll be  
king.

Eggs lands quietly. He peeks out from behind a crate and sees Snatcher climb onto the table to get away from Trout and Pickles.

SNATCHER  
HE won't let me! That pompous  
Portley-Rind and his gaggle of  
giggling sycophants.

Fish's cage hangs in between.

MR. PICKLES (O.S.)  
Now, now Boss, you be careful up  
there.

Eggs runs to Fish's hanging cage and climbs on.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
Father always said if you worked  
hard, you'd get a white hat! And  
what did he ever get! NOTHING!

EGGS  
(whispers)  
Fish.

FISH  
(startled)  
Ahhh!

Fish hides in his box making the cage swing and SQUEAK.

ON GRISTLE: In the corner where he leans into a filthy FISH  
TANK pulling out slimy, wriggly LEECHES and dropping them  
into a jar.

Gristle jerks up and hones in on the sound like a bat. He  
stares as the cage slowly spins threatening to reveal Eggs.

MR. TROUT  
Hurry Mr. Gristle, were losing him.

Gristle turns back to harvesting leeches just as Eggs swings  
into view. PHEW!

Eggs swings himself back out of sight.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
I've worked my hump off for this  
town!

MR. PICKLES (O.S.)  
And it's growing back.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
Wading through wet garbage in the  
middle of the night, crawling after  
monsters! What has Portley-Rind  
ever done. Eat some cheese, run the  
government, NOTHING!

ON FISH: as Eggs watches the Redhats argue. Snatcher unsteadily climbs on top of the table and continues his tirade.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 What has Portley-Rind ever done.  
 Eat some cheese, run the  
 government, NOTHING!

Fish pokes his head back out of his box.

FISH  
 Eggggs!

EGGS  
 SHH!

MR. PICKLES (O.S.)  
 Come on down from there, boss.

Eggs throws the lock on Fish's cage and hops down, holding the door open.

MR. TROUT (O.S.)  
 Just put one giant blob-shaped foot  
 in front of the other.

EGGS  
 (whispering)  
 Let's go... Come on, come on!

Fish shuffles out of the cage, murmuring with fear.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
 (angry)  
 I'll rip that hat off of Portley-  
 Rind's head... WHOA HOAH!

THUNK! Fish hides in his box and Eggs hunkers down as if he had a box, but Snatcher wasn't talking to them.

MR. PICKLES  
 Boss, boss!

MR. TROUT  
 Boss!

ON SNATCHER: He has lost his balance and crashed to the floor. Trout and Pickles twist their hands, unsure of what to do, as Snatcher lays atop the broken table.

SNATCHER  
 (groggy)  
 I'm alright. Just give me a hand.

Snatcher holds up his cheese-covered hand and the hand suddenly SWELLS UP into a grotesque meat glove!

MR. PICKLES  
(disgusted)  
Ugh. Mother of sausages!

MR. TROUT (O.S.)  
Holy meat glove!

Eggs looks horrified at the sight of Snatcher's giant hand.

Fish won't come out of the box so Eggs is forced to lug him like a sack of concrete to the wall beneath the heating duct.

Trout and Pickles help Snatcher up.

MR. TROUT (CONT'D)  
Upsy daisy now, boss. Let's get you  
a nice cuppa tea--

Snatcher SMACKS Trout away with his swollen hand - (YELP!)-

MR. PICKLES  
AAAH! Mister Snatcher!

-- and stares at Pickles. His eyes are swollen nearly shut and blink spastically.

SNATCHER'S POV: Blurry and distorted at first, then, at each blink, Pickles morphs into Lord Portley-Rind, white hat and all.

MR. PICKLES/PORTLEY-RIND  
Huh?  
(uneasy)  
... What is it, Mr. Snatcher?

SNATCHER  
You.

MR. PICKLES/LPR  
Me?

SNATCHER  
GIVE ME THAT HAT!

He LUNGES AT PICKLES (AHHHH!) and chokes him with his giant cheese hand!

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
I'll make those brie stuffed pigs  
bow down to me! I'm going to be  
somebody!

Pickles wrestles Snatcher's swollen face into a headlock.

MR. PICKLES  
AHH! I got him! Do it!

MR. TROUT  
MR. GRISTLE NOW!

MR. PICKLES  
NOW! NOW! NOW!!

Gristle runs up and hurls the jar of leeches onto Snatcher's face.

MR. GRISTLE  
LEECHES!

SNATCHER  
AHHHHH! UGH. OOF. GAHHH!

Snatcher grunts and yells then everything goes silent, except for the sucking sound of the leeches. Mr. Trout shrinks away and Mr. Gristle grins, enjoying the spectacle.

ON EGGS: Eggs is horrified by the sight of the leeches sucking on Snatcher's swollen face.

EGGS  
Eww!  
(to Fish)  
You have got to help me, Fish!

FISH  
(gurgles) Okay.

Fish sticks his right arm out of the box.

EGGS  
(groan) Uggggh.

Eggs grabs Fish's arm and swings the whole box over his shoulder so he is wearing Fish like a back pack. Then Eggs grabs a pipe on the wall and climbs toward the duct.

They swell up larger and larger as Snatcher's face shrinks back down to normal. They drop off one at a time and squish at Snatcher's feet.

Snatcher flicks off the last few leeches and flips his hair. His face is marred with red spots from the suckers but has returned to its normal size.

SNATCHER  
 (groggy)  
 Oh, hello. Where were we?

MR. TROUT  
 We was about to... uhh...

MR. GRISTLE  
 (quietly, gestures with  
 the empty jar)  
 Leeches.

MR. TROUT  
 ... Put that new boxtroll to work.  
 Ain't that right, Mr. Pickles?

Mr. Pickles stumbles over, rubbing his sore neck.

MR. PICKLES  
 That is correct.

SNATCHER  
 Ah yes... right. Open the workshop  
 Mr. Trout!

Trout runs to a lever and pulls it.

(1250 EMS) EGGS MEETS SNATCHER

INT SNATCHER'S FACTORY - DAY

The factory is filled with load-grinding sounds as a steam wheel turns. Huge timbers in the wooden floor PULL OPEN, REVEALING A DARK PIT BELOW in the FACTORY SUB-LEVEL.

Eggs and Fish are still a few feet short of the air duct. Eggs heaves Fish halfway into the duct and has to stretch out over empty space to push him in.

Snatcher and the Redhats reach Fish's empty cage.

SNATCHER  
 Huh? Where is the beast?

Eggs pushes Fish half into the duct while hanging from the swinging cage. Fish is looking straight down, suddenly his eyes go wide!

FISH  
 Huh?

Eggs follows his gaze and looks down.

EGGS

(gasps) But.. you're all alive!?

BIG REVEAL: IN THE DARK PIT ARE DOZENS OF ENSLAVED BOXTROLLS in chains! They surround a massive, unrecognizable machine. They work on different sections drilling, welding, wrenching, etc.

Oil Can looks up and spots Eggs and Fish.

OIL CAN

Eggs?

BOXTROLL PRISONERS

Eggs! Eggs! EGGS!

Then amidst all the weird gurgling a HUMAN VOICE calls out.

PRISONER

Huh?

EGGS

Huh?

Eggs looks and sees a strange man HANGING UP SIDE DOWN amongst the boxtrolls. His head is covered with a wild mop of tangled hair and a long beard and mustache dangle from his face.

Pickles looks up and spots Eggs straddling the cage and the duct. He points up, the Redhats follow his gaze.

PICKLES

There he is...

Snatcher stares at Eggs' dirty, panicked face.

SNATCHER

It can't be. It's not possible.

(angry )

It's not right!

MR. PICKLES

That's our boxtroll! Give 'im back!

SNATCHER

(shoves Pickles)

Don't stand there gawking. Get him!

MR. GRISTLE

Chase time!

Gristle laughs with delight and bolts off, tossing his white paper hat to the ground. Snatcher looks to Trout.

SNATCHER

Mr. Trout!

Mr. Trout pulls a lever and the cage Eggs is standing on jerks up. Fish falls the rest of the way into the duct and disappears.

FISH

AHHHHHH!

The cage drops! Eggs leaps onto a rafter as the cage crashes to the factory floor!

SNATCHER

TEN YEARS and NOW you show up?!

Eggs looks down as the floor closes over the boxtroll prisoners faces.

OIL CAN

Egggs!

EGGS

What are you doing with them?

SNATCHER

You'll find out soon enough!

Pickles runs past fumbling with a bolas gun as Gristle leaps onto the nearest hanging cage and points at Trout with his cricket bat.

MR. GRISTLE

Up!

Trout pulls a lever and Gristle rides the cage up into the rafters like a pirate.

MR. GRISTLE (CONT'D)

I'M FLYING ON A CAGE!

He leaps off the cage and grips his cricket bat with his teeth. He swings through the rafters on ropes, all the while laughing like a maniac. He lands in front of Eggs and swings the bat aloft.

MR. GRISTLE (CONT'D)

HA! (swings) RAH!

Eggs shrieks and runs across the skinny girders. Gristle follows on his heels.

SNATCHER

SHOOT MR. PICKLES! Shoot!

Pickles nervously aims his bolas gun at him.

MR. PICKLES

It'd be easier if he'd stop moving!

Gristle runs behind Eggs, swinging his bat at his head. Eggs avoids being hit but loses his footing.

MR. PICKLES (CONT'D)

Stop moving!

Eggs falls, hits a beam hard, and grabs the bottom edge of a girder. He hangs there, an easy shot.

MR. PICKLES (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Gristle raises his bat to strike. Pickles fumbles for the trigger. There's no way they can miss.

EGGS

(defiant, scared)

Boxtrolls don't hurt anyone! Let them go!

SNATCHER

Yes, well, I need them. They're my ticket to a white hat, Trubshaw Baby!

WINNIE (O.S.)

TRUBSHAW BABY!?

Everyone freezes and whirls around. Pickle's shoots distractedly - POP! - but the net misses Eggs and loops around a rafter.

MR. PICKLES

Oops.

Winnie stands in the open doorway of the factory.

WINNIE

(to Eggs)

I knew there was something strange about you!

Winnie notices Gristle wielding a cricket bat, Pickles a gun, and Snatcher looking sheepish.

SNATCHER

(nervously)

Miss Portley-Rind! What a surprise!

(MORE)

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

Does your.. does your father know  
you're here?

WINNIE

(dismissive)

No of course not!

(up to Eggs)

But wait til I tell him! The  
Trubshaw Baby! Alive!

Winnie sees Trout towering over her.

MR. TROUT

(regretfully)

Sorry, miss.

Winnie looks at Snatcher in horror and confusion. Trout picks her up in his big hands.

WINNIE

What are you doing? Unhand me!

SNATCHER

Looks like the Boxtrolls have a new  
victim, miss. And her name is YOU.

Gristle remembers Eggs. He swings his bat over his head and brings it down but Eggs leaps, grabs the rope from Pickles' missed shot, and SWINGS LIKE TARZAN towards the door that Winnie opened.

Trout panics as he sees Eggs swinging towards him. He holds Winnie up to protect his face. Eggs barrels into Trout's belly, knocking him backward and getting him wedged in the door.

(1300 WCH) WASTELAND CHASE

EXT. SNATCHER'S FACTORY - DAY

Eggs and Winnie tumble outside the factory and roll to a stop in a cloud of dust.

SNATCHER

They're getting away Mr. Gristle!

WINNIE

(panicked)

What have you dragged me into?

Fish calls to them from a manhole.

FISH  
Eggs! Eggs! Eggs! Eggs!

EGGS  
RUN!

Eggs and Winnie run.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL WASTELAND

Still running Eggs and Winnie suddenly hear a loud CRASH!

Behind them Gristle comes crashing through a high window swinging on a chain.

MR. GRISTLE  
I'm swinging on a chain!

EGGS/WINNIE  
AHHH!

Eggs and Winnie slide into the manhole that Fish holds open. They make it in and slam it shut just in time for Mr. Gristle to face plant on top of it.

MR. GRISTLE  
Stuck on a manhole!

Trout finally pops out of the factory doorway. He and Mr. Pickles come running up to the motionless Mr. Gristle, standing over him.

MR. TROUT  
Oww...

MR. PICKLES  
Don't make no sense. That's evil prevailing over good.

Snatcher arrives.

SNATCHER  
(to Trout)  
If Lord Portley-Rind finds out that boy is alive, it will ruin everything I've worked for!

MR. TROUT  
You mean, we worked for?

Snatcher glares at Mr. Trout, silent.

MR. PICKLES  
I think we're all saying the same  
thing here.

MR. TROUT  
I don't think we are.

SNATCHER  
(annoyed)  
Bah...

Snatcher walks away, frustrated.

MR. PICKLES  
But, just in different ways.

(1400 FMR) FAMILY REUNION

INT BOXTROLL CAVERN - ENTRANCE CHUTES - MOMENTS LATER

Winnie screams as she flies down the chutes, into the cavern,  
down the conveyor belt, and crashes into the boxtroll  
sleeping pile.

INT BOXTROLL CAVERN - NIGHT

Winnie lays amongst the scattered boxes. She pushes herself  
upright, coughing. Boxtrolls poke their heads out all around  
her and stare.

WINNIE  
(gasp) Ohh!

Winnie gets as far away from the boxtrolls as she can,  
bumping into Knickers as she shuffles backwards.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
STAY AWAY FROM ME! Someone, help!!!  
Wealthy girl in danger!

She pushes herself against a wall. The boxtrolls gather,  
curious. Winnie spots Shoe nearby, with worms and bugs  
dangling from his mouth. She hides behind a cabbage,  
whimpering.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
If you're going to eat me just get  
it over with. I'm sure I'm  
delicious.

Suddenly there is the sound of happy boxtrolls gurgling and  
drumming their boxes.

Winnie peeks out. The boxtrolls are surrounding Eggs and Fish and celebrating their return. No one is paying any attention to her.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Hmm?

FISH

(GURGLING EXCITED HELLOS)

EGGS

It's not just us. All the others are alive too!

EGGS (CONT'D)

We saw them!

WINNIE

(behind the crowd)

What's going on?!

EGGS

(ignoring her)

Oil Can, Wheels, all of them!

SPECS

(GURGLES)

EGGS

Yes!

CLOCKS

(gurgled)

Where are they?

EGGS

I don't know, but The Redhats have them building something in their factory.

WINNIE

(shouting)

I said what's going on? Why aren't they ripping out our eyeballs and eating our faces?

The boxtrolls wince at the sound of Winnie's screaming voice and some of them drop into their boxes. Eggs turns to look at her.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

And where are the rivers of blood and mountains of bones?! I WAS PROMISED MOUNTAINS OF BONES!

The rest of the boxtrolls squeak in fear and drop into their boxes. Eggs looks pointedly at the boxtrolls, then back at Winnie.

EGGS

I TOLD you, we don't eat people!

WINNIE

Why do you keep saying "we"? You're not one of them! You're a boy!

EGGS

(incredulous)

No I'm not, I'm a boxtroll! Eggs the boxtroll.

He points to his box like it's the most obvious thing in the world.

WINNIE

Oh really? Then let's see you fit in your box.

EGGS

I... I can't right now.

WINNIE

Mm hmm.

EGGS

(defensively)

I'm long-boned.

The surrounding boxtrolls gurgle in agreement with Eggs. But as his argument with Winnie gets louder the boxtrolls shrink away from the two humans.

WINNIE

You don't talk like them!

EGGS

I- I have a speech impediment!

WINNIE

Your ears aren't pointy!

EGGS

(tugging on his ears)

I slept on them funny!

Winnie is getting exasperated.

WINNIE

Oh for goodness sake. Give me your hand!

Winnie lunges forward and grabs Eggs' hand, but he resists.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

(wryly)

I don't bite.

Eggs stops resisting and she quickly unwraps the rags from his hand.

EGGS

Hey!

Winnie takes Fish's hand and holds it up next to Eggs hand.

WINNIE

See? You're not like them.

She drops Fish's hand and holds up her own. She presses her hand to his hand, five fingers to five fingers.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

You're one of us. You're a boy,  
Eggs. Or should I call you the  
Trubshaw baby?

A beat. Eggs pulls his hand away and stares at it, his face confused.

Then he looks at Fish, who is looking at his own hand in bemusement.

EGGS

It's not true is it Fish? I'm a  
boxtroll like you, aren't I?

Fish shakes his head, "No". Eggs looks dumbstruck.

WINNIE

See?! I was right!  
(to Fish)  
Now admit it, admit you stole him!

FISH

Gurglegurglegurgle!

WINNIE

(to Eggs)  
Is he confessing?

EGGS  
He says I was... *given to him.*

WINNIE  
Ha, right again! I- ...wait, what?

Winnie and Eggs are both flabbergasted.

EGGS  
I was given to you?

Fish nods his head. Yup.

Eggs' legs give way beneath him. He stumbles back and sits down on the floor.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
Who gave me to you?

Fish starts gurgling and keeps gurgling, his face suggesting that he's conveying something from long-long ago...

FISH  
[GURGLE GURGLE]

Winnie stands by Eggs, watching Fish curiously.

WINNIE  
What's he saying?

EGGS  
Oh, sorry. He says a long time ago  
there was a kind man--

DISSOLVE TO:

(1500 TBB) TRUBSHAW BABY

INT. TRUBSHAW KITCHEN (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

Fish and Shoe stand beside a rubbish bin, tinkering with a WHIRLIGIG CONTRAPTION.

EGGS (V.O.)  
-- The one man in town who saw they  
weren't monsters...

SFX: A baby GIGGLES.

Fish and Shoe startle and hide in their boxes. The whirligig clatters to the ground.

EGGS (V.O.)  
 ... But builders... like him.

POV FISH: Herbert Trubshaw stands at an open window to his second-floor workshop, holding a BABY in his arms. Instead of chasing them away he SMILES at them.

Fish and Shoe slowly lift their heads out of their boxes, returning the smile.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANOTHER NIGHT: Herbert, baby Eggs, and Fish sit on the back stoop and discuss an invention. As Herbert talks, Fish casually takes it from him and tweaks it.

HERBERT  
 I've tried adjusting the dongle and there doesn't seem to be any possible solut-- Oh look, you've solved it!

Fish laughs with Herbert. Herbert hands Baby Eggs to Fish, and he holds the child at arm's length.

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
 Who's up for a jelly break?

Fish stares at Baby Eggs as Herbert eats a spoonful of jelly. They smile at each other.

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
 (voice fades)  
 I tell you I could eat this stuff for the rest of my life.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANOTHER NIGHT: Fish and Shoe enter the back yard and freeze as they step into light.

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
 But one night...

In the second story windows, menacing silhouettes of Snatcher and Gristle loom over Herbert, who clutches baby Eggs to his chest.

Snatcher's muffled voice can be heard threatening Herbert and the baby.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
 Come on! I'm being reasonable. I can be unreasonable.

EGGS (V.O.)  
Snatcher wanted him to build  
something...

HERBERT  
I-- I'm an inventor, not a killer!

Eggs (V.O.)  
But he refused...

LIGHTNING CRASHES.

Fish stares up at the window. At Snatcher's loud threat,  
Shoe runs away.

EGGS (V.O.)  
And when the Redhats tried to take  
me away from him...

Snatcher's silhouette moves menacingly towards Herbert.

SNATCHER  
Maybe if I hold on to your son...

Herbert shoves Snatcher away. Snatcher growls.

HERBERT  
Not my boy!

Herbert kicks Gristle and opens the window. He places the  
baby into a box pulley system that dangles from the upper  
floors. He untethers the rope, yelling to Fish.

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
RUN! PROTECT MY--UGHH!

Herbert is tackled by Gristle.

Fish watches the crying baby lower to the ground in an Eggs  
box. He is frozen with fear.

EGGS (V.O.)  
And then they...

Snatcher CLUBS Herbert across the head and Herbert goes down  
hard. Dead. The baby CRIES.

Snatcher looks out the window, panting from exertion, and  
sees Fish staring up in shock.

Thunder BOOMS, lightning FLASHES, and RAIN POURS DOWN as Fish bolts through the gate and out of the yard with Baby Eggs still in the Eggs box.

BACK TO:

INT BOXTROLL CAVERN - NIGHT

Eggs holds his box, staring forlornly down at his label.

WINNIE (O.S.)  
They what?

EGGS  
(whispered)  
They killed him.

Fish is silent. Eggs bows his head and walks away.

Winnie and the boxtrolls watch him quietly.

(1550) FATHERS

EXT. EGGS NOOK - MOMENTS LATER

Eggs sits alone on the edge of his nook, looking out over the cavern. Winnie quietly walks up and sits next to him.

WINNIE  
I think that kind man was your  
father.

BEAT

EGGS  
(looks up, confused)  
What's a father?

She has to think.

WINNIE  
Um... well... a father is the one  
who raises you... looks after you.  
Loves you.

EGGS  
Oh! Like Fish.

WINNIE  
Yes...

Winnie looks at Fish, who bends down to lap water from a bucket of water like a dog.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

... No. They're supposed to be like that man in the story. Someone who'll do anything to help you. They always listen and never get angry...

Winnie warms to this conversation. She's half talking to herself. Eggs hangs on every word.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

They guide you when you don't know what to do. They're there when it's dark and you're scared or lonely, and they are never, ever too busy to talk to you...

Winnie stops, suddenly sad.

EGGS

You have a father!

Eggs stands, bouncing excitedly.

EGGS (CONT'D)

We can tell him I'm the Trubshaw Baby... and the boxtrolls didn't eat me. And he'll stop Snatcher!

WINNIE

(embarrassed)

Well, he doesn't really listen to children.

EGGS

He's a father, isn't he?

WINNIE

You don't know what he's like.

EGGS

But he's the only father we have.

Eggs grabs Winnie by the shoulders. He releases her when she shies away.

EGGS (CONT'D)

Please help us.

Winnie SIGHS. She stands to meet Eggs, eyeing him.

WINNIE

If I agree to help, you have to do exactly as I say.

EGGS

I promise!

WINNIE

All right, first thing's first...  
off with the box.

Eggs GULPS.

(1600 OWB) OFF WITH THE BOX

INT BOXTROLL CAVERN - DRESSING AREA - NIGHT

A wide-eyed Fish stands holding Eggs' EMPTY BOX. Around him other Boxtrolls stare horrified at a boxless Eggs.

BOXTROLLS

(terrified)

AAAAAAAah!

Eggs screams along with the boxtrolls, holding his chest. Winnie points, reprimanding the howling crowd.

WINNIE

(sternly)

Stop that!

The boxtrolls instantly shut up - more afraid of Winnie than a boxless boxtroll.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

(to boxtrolls)

Alright, you petty thieves. Bring me your loot!

The watching boxtrolls look excited -- 'That's easy'! They race off in different directions..

QUICKER CUTS

- Winnie tears a large piece of BLUE FABRIC in half.

- Specs offers her an arm-load of PEWTER CUPS.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Oh, thanks.

- Shoe offers Winnie his OLD ALARM CLOCK.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

No.

- Winnie threads a needle.
- Specs offers Winnie a pair of LAMPS, she takes the SHADES.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

This might work.

- Shoe offers Winnie a SAW.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

No.

Shoe growls and walks off.

- Bucket offers Winnie a JAR OF BUTTONS.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Oh yes!

- Winnie holds up the jar and selects a BUTTON.
- Shoe offers Winnie a TOILET PLUNGER.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

No!

Shoe angrily tosses the plunger aside and storms off.

- Fragile offers Winnie a pair of shoes. She excitedly swipes them from his hands.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Yes!

Fragile is frightened and hides, whimpering.

REVEAL Eggs in the broken mirror dressed in a surprisingly fashionable suit made of trash.

He looks like the Little Lord Fauntleroy of the junk yard.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

You look like a proper boy.

The boxtrolls look like proud parents. They nod and grumble in approval.

Eggs looks at his warped reflection in an old, broken mirror. He looks stunned by his own transformation.

EGGS  
 (to himself)  
 Me... a proper boy.

Eggs smiles sweetly, standing tall.

WINNIE  
 How do we get out of this place?

CUT TO:

INT. CAVERN - PNEUMATIC TUBES

A MOMENT LATER: Specs turns an ANCHOR attached to the wall.

Winnie stands underneath the cracked bell, the mouth of the PNEUMATIC TUBES, confused.

FWOOMP! A shocked Winnie gets sucked up a PNEUMATIC TUBE while Eggs watches, bemused.

WINNIE  
 AHHHHHHHH!

(1700 PTY) PARTY

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - NIGHT

Eggs and Winnie (woozy, her hair frazzled from the tube ride) crawl out of a manhole.

WINNIE  
 Come on, Eggs.

They climb the Guild stairs together. Winnie pats down her hair as Eggs lopes past her like a nervous boxtroll. He wipes his nose with the back of his hand, wipes it on his pants, adjusting his disguise as he reaches for the door handle.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
 (shrieks)  
 STOP!

Eggs stops, eyes wide. Winnie pushes him away from the door. They stop in front of the tall guild door. Sounds of party guests can be heard. Winnie turns to Eggs.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
 You don't scratch there in public!  
 That's why they're called...  
 (whispered)  
 ... privates.

Winnie looks around to make sure nobody saw that.

EGGS  
(whispered)  
Okay.

WINNIE  
For this is to work, there are a few things you need to know. When you meet someone, you must look them in the eye and shake hands.

Eggs OPENS HIS EYEBALLS STUPIDLY WIDE and WIGGLES HIS HANDS in the air like a lunatic.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?! Put those down!

She pulls his hands down.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
Like this.

Eggs puts his left hand out. She slaps it away.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
The other one.

EGGS  
Oh, right.

She shoves his hand into hers -- a proper shake.

WINNIE  
Then you say,  
(snobbish)  
"It's a pleasure to meet you."

EGGS  
(impersonating Winnie's  
snobbish voice)  
"It's a pleasure to meet you."

WINNIE  
And you say that even if you're not pleased to meet them.

Eggs looks confused, but nods yes anyway. A look of doubt comes over Winnie's face.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
(SIGHS)  
Just stick close, okay?

She opens the huge doors and the elegant sound of chamber music and civilized conversation pours out.

INT. CHEESE GUILD - ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

ON THE GUILD DOORS: as a BUTLER holds an enormous cheese tray out for party guests. Lady Cynthia pierces cheese with her fork and the tray whirls away.

LADY CYNTHIA (O.S.)  
Is that all that is left of the new  
Roquefort? (trails off)

Winnie enters and Eggs follows her, standing tall and straight like a stiff little wooden soldier. Eggs stares around, curious.

EGGS  
Which one is your father?

WINNIE  
(sarcastic)  
Lord Portley-Rind. He's usually  
making speeches about cheese.

They search the crowd for Lord Portley-Rind.

LADY CYNTHIA (O.S.)  
Oh, Winifred!

Winnie stops, forces a smile. Eggs ducks down and covers his head.

WINNIE  
Hello, mommy dear.

Winnie's mother, LADY CYNTHIA - a high strung, slender stick of a woman - appears.

LADY CYNTHIA  
(notices Eggs)  
Oh. Who is this?

Eggs peeks out from under his hands and looks up, timidly.

EGGS  
I'm Eggs?

WINNIE  
(interrupting)  
--Bert. Eggsbert. Is a normal  
name... that he has.

Lady Cynthia looks flustered, but tries to keep up appearances.

LADY CYNTHIA

Eggsbert. How nice, I... umm, adore names from the bible.

Lady Cynthia reaches for Winnie's hand, but Eggs suddenly grabs and shakes it vigorously.

EGGS

Its a pleasure to meet you.

Winnie winces. Lady Cynthia is flustered as Eggs continues to wiggle her arm about. Winnie whispers to Eggs.

WINNIE

No, no. You kiss a lady's hand.  
(Winnie makes KISS SOUNDS on the back of her hand)

Eggs releases Lady Cynthia. She gasps and straightens, taking Winnie's hand.

LADY CYNTHIA

(flustered)

Darling, it's time to take off that dress and... burn it.

Lady Cynthia drags Winnie away.

WINNIE

(calling back)

Don't move. I'll be right back.

EGGS

But which ones are the ladies?!

Eggs looks around, finding himself amongst formally dressed aristocrats. He tries to slink away but bumps into a couple.

LADY BRODERICK

Oh!

SIR BRODERICK

Ahem!

The couple turns around to stare incredulously at Eggs. He stares at them, agape, then remembers what Winnie taught him.

He stands very straight and sticks his hand out to Sir Broderick.

EGGS  
 (snobbish)  
 It's a pleasure to meet you.

Sir Broderick smiles and shakes his hand.

SIR BRODERICK  
 Very good.

EGGS  
 Even if I don't mean it!

SIR BRODERICK  
 (insulted)  
 What? Well, I never!

Sir Broderick tries to lead his wife away, but Eggs grabs her hand and kisses it!

EGGS  
 And, it's a pleasure to meet you.  
 (KISS SOUNDS)

Two kisses later with no effect, Eggs licks Lady Broderick's hand.

LADY BRODERICK  
 Nooo!

She is disgusted and SHAKES HER HANDS in the air to get the lick off. She walks off wailing.

EGGS  
 I was right!

Eggs misunderstands her hand shakes as "shaking hands" - he bulges out his eyes and waves hands in the air exactly like Winnie told him not to.

Sir Broderick hustles his wife away. Eggs saunters off, shaking his hands at everyone.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
 It's a pleasure to meet you... it's  
 a pleasure to meet you... it's a  
 pleasure to meet youuuuu! Oooooh!

Eggs is distracted as a LADYBUG buzzes in. It lands on a flower arrangement in the middle of A TABLE FULL OF CHEESE.

Eggs grabs the bug and is about to put it in his mouth, when:

SIR LANGSDALE (O.S.)  
 [GRUNT!]

Eggs turns to see Sir Langsdale putting an OLIVE on a stack of cheese and crackers. Langsdale shoves the stack into his mouth, smacking with approval.

Eggs places the ladybug on a CRACKER STACKED WITH CHEESE, and *then* eats it. Sir Langsdale sees him eat the bug and is appalled.

SIR LANGSDALE (CONT'D)

Hmm? Well I could just...

Sir Langsdale storms off. Eggs doesn't notice. He goes down the table, shoveling various cheeses into his mouth.

EGGS

(mouth full)

Yum. Mmmthat's good.

BOULANGER (O.S.)

(clears throat loudly)

Eggs looks up and sees two aristocrat ladies and Boulanger using forks to nibble politely.

FEMALE ARISTOCRAT A (O.S.)

Eww.

A lady aristocrat pointedly taps her plate with the fork, signaling to Eggs.

EGGS

(mouth full)

Huh? Oh!

BLARRG! He SPITS the chewed cheese back on to a plate, grabs a fork, and gingerly nibbles at the regurgitated food. The ladybug rests on top then flies away. He shovels a forkful into his mouth.

THUD. Ladies faint. Eggs watches them nonchalantly while SMACKING his mouthful of cheese.

BUTLER (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen... Lord Portley-Rind!

He puts down the plate and fork quickly as Lord Portley-Rind appears.

Eggs joins the crowd that has gathered around the Cheese Guild staircase as Portley-Rind orates.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

Distinguished members of the cheese guild. We were here to celebrate the successful fund-raising for a new children's hospital! But my fellow White Hats and I decided the money would be better spent on this. I present: THE BRIHEMOTH!

He whips a sheet off a giant WHEEL OF CHEESE. Everyone gasps and applauds. Eggs walks toward the stairs. Suddenly, he is grabbed from behind.

MADAME FROU FROU

Zere you are!

Madame Frou Frou's crazily painted face looms over him. People nearby turn and stare. He/She suddenly pulls Eggs away.

MADAME FROU FROU (CONT'D)

Come. Such a naughty boy! We have so much to discuss.

(Snatcher's voice)

Alone.

Eggs' eyes go wide as he realizes who it is.

EGGS

You're Snatc--

SMACK! Madame Frou Frou covers his mouth, and hugs him close, LIFTING HIM OFF THE GROUND.

MADAME FROU FROU

(Snatcher's voice)

Come to snitch on old Snatcher did you?

As Madame Frou Frou carries him away, he waves to people in the crowd as if nothing untoward was happening.

SIR BRODERICK

Hello, Frou Frou!

MADAME FROU FROU

Nice to see you, too!

He/She shoves Eggs through a curtain into--

INT. CHEESE GUILD - COAT ROOM - NIGHT

--The dark corner of a closet. Madame Frou Frou advances on Eggs.

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER  
 You really think Portley-Rind will help a nobody like YOU? In this town, you want help, you've got to help yourself! That's what a man does!

Snatcher adjusts his dress.

EGGS  
 You're a liar! When I tell Winnie's father the truth, he'll-- OOF!

Eggs' tries to run out of the closet. Snatcher shoves him to the floor.

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER  
 He'll THANK ME! Because all your little boxtroll friends are going to die - tonight.

EGGS  
 What?!

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER  
 That will make me the most respected man in this town.

Snatcher talks to himself as he rifles through the coats searching for something.

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 (while searching)  
 They'll have no choice but to give me a white hat.

Snatcher finds what he's looking for - a long SCARF.

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 They'll parade me into the tasting room on their shoulders!

He winds the ends around each fist and snaps it tight as he stalks toward Eggs.

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 And I'm not going to let that be ruined by some little boxtroll sewer rat.

Snatcher is about to strangle Eggs when the curtain is suddenly pulled aside and light fills the closet.

SIR LANGSDALE

Yoo hoo, Madame Frou Frou... You promised your snookums a dance!

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER

(deep Snatcher voice)

I did?

(as Frou Frou)

I did! Ha! But of course!

(1750 DAN) DANCE

INT. CHEESE GUILD - ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

Sir Langsdale pulls Madame Frou Frou out of the closet and walks her out on to the dance floor. He gooses her.

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER

Oooh! Vatch your hands, monsieur!

SIR LANGSDALE

(laughs lasciviously)

ON EGGS, as he slowly exits the closet. He awkwardly adjusts his collar as he takes in his surroundings. Couples are joined together in a WALTZ, filling the entrance hall with activity.

Eggs looks up at Portley-Rind at the top of the stairs, then at the impenetrable wall of dancers. He tries to walk through the crowd and is nearly trampled. There is no way to get to Portley-Rind without causing a scene.

Winnie runs up, now in a new, clean YELLOW DRESS.

WINNIE

There you are.

EGGS

(urgent)

We have to get to your father!

WINNIE

You can't just cut through.

Winnie sizes up the situation: Portley-Rind across the room, the dance floor between them. Suddenly her face brightens.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

We'll dance!

EGGS  
We'll WHAT?

Winnie grabs Eggs by the shoulders and pulls him onto the--

INT. CHEESE GUILD - ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

-- Dance floor, joining the swirling lines of waltzing couples.

WINNIE  
Like this. One two three... one two  
three.

Winnie continues counting the steps as she guides Eggs to the center of the dance.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
Just make a box.

EGGS  
You made me get out of my box!

WINNIE  
With your feet, silly!

Eggs looks down, concentrating very hard. He gradually catches on.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
That's it, Eggs. You're dancing!

She laughs. Eggs lets down his guard and joins in laughing.

For a moment they forget why they are at the party. They spin crazily around the room, looking back and forth at each other, until Eggs looks past Winnie and sees Snatcher/Frou Frou glaring at him.

EGGS  
Snatcher is here.

WINNIE  
Who? Where?

Winnie sees Madame Frou Frou waltzing with Sir Langsdale. Frou Frou breaks from Langsdale as partners change, lunging toward Eggs. Broderick catches her hand and pulls her back into the waltz.

SIR BRODERICK  
My turn, Madame.

WINNIE  
 (confused, gasps)  
 Frou Frou?

- Eggs and Winnie try waltzing across the floor toward Portley-Rind, but before they can reach the stairs, the dance forces them apart. New partners whirl them in opposite directions.

EGGS  
 Winnie!

- Eggs ends dancing with Female Aristocrat B, the lady he licked.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
 I uh...

- Madame Frou Frou heads for Eggs again as partners swap but Sir Langsdale, her biggest fan, leaves Lady Cynthia and grabs her.

SIR BRODERICK  
 (lascivious laughter)  
 Ah ha ha ha!

- Frou Frou/Snatcher grabs Sir Broderick by the face and shoves him away. She grabs Lady Cynthia, pulling her close with a hand wrapped around her face, dancing directly toward Eggs.

LADY CYNTHIA  
 (startled, confused)  
 Ooh!

WINNIE  
 Uh oh!  
 (yells to Eggs)  
 EGGS LOOK OUT!

- Eggs turns in time to see Frou Frou/Snatcher racing toward him. He ducks under ladies' gowns, crawling across the dance floor. As he passes under each lady, their dresses shoot up:

LADIES  
 (SCREAMS!)

- Frou Frou/Snatcher whips up ladies' dresses looking for Eggs, until she/he get slapped across the face while peeking under a skirt. Frou Frou/Snatcher sees Eggs crawl out from under a dress, toward the stairs and Lord Portley-Rind.

- Portley-Rind stands sniffing and caressing his giant cheese, oblivious to the chase happening right below him..

- Eggs races up the stairs on all fours, his feral side coming through. Frou Frou/Snatcher GRABS his leg.

EGGS

Ahhh!

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER

(snarls)

Portley-Rind turns in time to see Eggs go totally feral--

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

What is going on here?

-- and BITE Madame Frou Frou's hand!

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER

OWWW!

Snatcher shoves Eggs and send him flying right into the giant cheese wheel. The wheel rocks off its pedestal, and rolls down the stairs!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

NO NO NO NO NOOOO!

Lord Portley-Rind chases after the cheese, trying to stop it. Everyone stops dancing and watches as the cheese wheel rolls through the foyer. The butler opens the door and it rolls out the front door...

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - NIGHT

... Down the Guild steps... through the Market Square... down the streets... lower and lower, until it's out of view. We hear a SPLASH as it reaches the river.

INT. CHEESE GUILD - ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

Portley-Rind stands frozen in shock at the foot of the stairs.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

What have you done!?

Eggs begins to speak... haltingly at first... but then growing in confidence.

EGGS

Lord Winnie's Father...

The crowd and Portley-Rind all turn and stare at Eggs.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
 People of the upper world --  
 Archibald Snatcher has lied to you  
 all!

Frou Frou/Snatcher looks at the crowd and GULPS!

EGGS (CONT'D)  
 He told you that boxtrolls are  
 monsters -- that they steal  
 children -- but they don't. They  
 would never hurt anyone. I know  
 because...

Eggs looks to Winnie. She nods, encouraging him.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
 Because... I am the Trubshaw Baby!

A long beat. CLOSE ON LORD PORTLEY-RIND as he seems to be  
 thinking intensely...

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 Do you know how expensive that  
 cheese was?

EGGS  
 What?!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 (flippant)  
 We might as well have built a  
 children's hospital!

WINNIE  
 Did you hear a word he said?!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 (dismissive, to Winnie)  
 Not now.

WINNIE  
 But father--

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 (points to White Hats)  
 Have you any idea how long it will  
 take my men to fish it out of the  
 river?!

The White Hats look worried. Boulanger rolls forward in his  
 wheelchair and adjusts his hearing horn.

LANGSDALE

Ahh. What?

BOULANGER

Eww... the river?

Eggs moves down the stairs.

EGGS

If you won't listen to me, ask  
Snatcher himself.

Eggs PULLS OFF SNATCHER'S WIG. A long beat, as Snatcher looks  
caught.

CROWD

(shock)

GASP!/ Oh my!

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER

(whimpers) You have me. I am not a  
true red head.

LADY CYNTHIA

(sympathy for Frou Frou)

Poor woman.

SIR LANGSDALE

(sympathy for Frou Frou)

For shame.

Now the crowd turns ANGRY.

CROWD MEN

How rude! / The lad's fuddled! / An  
outrage! / The very thought!

(MORE)

I saw him bite a bug on a cracker!/  
He must hate cheese! / He's a mad  
man! / I believe her's wearing a  
lamp shade as a sleeve!

CROWD LADIES

Nasty boy! / Oh, he's awful!

(MORE)

That's the one who crawled under my  
dress! / I knew he was up to no  
good the second he goosed me. / My  
husband is angry so I am too!

Portley-Rind angrily climbs the stairs to Eggs.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

You insult our guest of honor?

He grabs the wig away from Eggs.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (CONT'D)  
Who are you?!

EGGS  
(sheepish)  
A proper boy.

WINNIE  
He is with me father.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
You know this... creature?

WINNIE  
He's my friend. What he said is  
true--

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Enough!

WINNIE  
But...

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Winifred!

Winnie gives in and bows her head. Eggs is stunned and hurt.  
Portley-Rind turns on him.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (CONT'D)  
(to Eggs)  
I don't want to see you again, do  
you hear me?

EGGS  
But he's not a...

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Leave my house. Now!

Eggs walks slowly down the stairs. As he passes, Frou  
Frou/Snatcher smiles an evil grin.

Eggs glares at Snatcher and walks past Winnie without even  
looking at her. She looks heartbroken.

The crowd shuffles away from Eggs as he walks out the door.  
The butler wordlessly shuts it behind him.

The music begins again and the crowd goes back to chatting.  
Portley-Rind hands the wig back to Madame Frou Frou and leads  
her down the stairs.

SNATCHER

Zees parties are so confusing. No?

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

There, there. You poor, poor dear.

Winnie watches Lord Portley-Rind pass.

CUT TO:

(1800 BKE) BROKEN EGGS

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a manhole cover. Eggs is opening the cover in the center of the square. They meet at the very spot they first saw each other.

WINNIE

Eggs, wait!

EGGS

(bitter)

You said fathers were supposed to help. That they took care of kids.

WINNIE

(sigh) Well, they're supposed to.

EGGS

People are just mean and selfish. They're monsters.

Eggs climbs down into the manhole.

WINNIE

Not all of us. You aren't.

Eggs stops climbing.

EGGS

Well, I don't want to be a boy anymore.

Eggs starts down again. Without looking up at her, he extends a hand.

EGGS (CONT'D)

It was a pleasure meeting you.

WINNIE

Eggs...

EGGS

And, Winnie, I really do mean it.

Winnie sadly watches Eggs climbs down into the dark.

(1900 HMR) HOME RUINED

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - DAY

Fish is waiting with the remaining boxtrolls as Eggs spits out of the chute, back into the cavern.

BOXTROLLS

Eggs!

They gather around and DRUM THEIR BOXES, excited. Eggs looks at the crowd, frowning.

EGGS

We have to leave the cavern.

The boxtrolls stop drumming.

EGGS (CONT'D)

(sternly)

We're not safe down here anymore.  
Come on...

Eggs pushes through the boxtrolls heading for the pneumatic tubes.

SHOE

Eggs?

Fish follows him, pulling the EGGS box out of his front flap and holding it out. The other boxtrolls don't move.

Eggs turns back toward them.

EGGS

(angry)

I said, we have to leave now!

The boxtrolls shake their heads and GURGLE nervously. Some shrink away from him as he shouts.

EGGS (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

Snatcher is planning something! We  
have to get out of here.

Knickers simpers, rubbing his hands together and pulling his box up higher.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
Come on let's go. Now!

The boxtrolls hide in their boxes like scared little kids pulling sheets over their heads during a thunder storm.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
(angry frustration)  
Get up! No! NO!  
(shaking Knickers out of  
his box)  
Don't don't just hide!  
(tries to shake Ink loose)  
What are you doing?!

Eggs looks around for Fish.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
(pleading)  
Fish, help me.

Fish quickly unfolds Eggs' box and offers it to him, smiling.  
Eggs SMACKS the box out of Fish's hands!

EGGS (CONT'D)  
NO! I'm not a boxtroll!

Fish shrinks away and hides in his box as Eggs comes closer, shaking and whimpering.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry. I... I didn't mean it.  
Please come out. Fish.

Suddenly, the whole cavern rumbles... dust and pebbles drop from the ceiling and bounce on Fish's box. Eggs stares at the ceiling.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
(scared)  
He's here.

The boxtrolls look up, confused. The cavern RUMBLES and SHAKES. LIGHTS GO OUT one by one... the giant chandelier FLICKERS, GOES OUT AND DROPS TO THE CAVERN FLOOR. SMASH!

INT. BOXTROLL CAVERN - DAY TO NIGHT

A hole opens in the cavern roof. Spinning blades of a digging machine pierce the ceiling. Large chunks of rock crash down, as the enormous MECHA BOX DRILL drops into the cavern!

Boulders and dust rain down. Through the murk, Eggs sees a huge metal box covered in bits of scrap metal, with gaps revealing an interior of huge gears and cables all spinning and twisting like the guts of a giant watch. The whole machine has an ad hoc, made-from-assorted-scrap-and-junk feel that is unique to a boxtroll creation.

ON EGGS as his eyes go wide.

Two big spot lights BLAST ON like eyes, and the mecha box drill rises up on three legs. As it rises, it tears walkways and lights from the cavern walls.

BOXTROLLS

AHHHHHHHH!!!!

As it turns, it rips the intricate boxtroll clock from its stalagmite and sends it crashing down. The mecha box looks like a monstrous, giant mechanical boxtroll.

The mecha box's spotlight "eyes" cut through the dust and darkness, catching each fleeing boxtroll, making them instinctively STOP RUNNING and HIDE in their boxes!

Snatcher's head appears out of the top. He still has his Madame Frou Frou white pancake makeup on, with a slash of crimson lipstick, making him look crazier than ever.

SNATCHER

How's that for an entrance!

Trout, Pickles and Gristle emerge from beneath the machine.

MR. PICKLES

(cheering)

Dramatical!

MR. TROUT

Don't you mean "dramatic"?

Mr. Gristle laughs insanely.

Snatcher hits a lever and a large MECHANICAL ARM unfolds from the drill. Snatcher laughs heartily as he plays with his new toy, opening and closing the CLAW at the arm's end. He swings the claw at stalactites, sending them crashing to the ground.

EGGS

AHH!

Eggs shoves boxtrolls out of the way as the rocks fall to the cavern floor.

Some jump out of the way and Snatcher swings again, sending the clawed arm into Eggs' nook, smashing the music machine.

Eggs drags boxtrolls towards the pneumatic tubes -- but they stay in their boxes refusing to move.

EGGS (CONT'D)

Get up! That thing will kill you!

SNATCHER

My, my, what a surprise. Don't look like your little friends wanna run, does it?

(THEN)

How strange, how peculiar. No, wait, it's exactly as I expected!

Eggs stacks a group of boxtrolls under the tubes, all of them still tucked into their boxes, and pleads.

EGGS

You have to get up. Please!

SNATCHER

NEVER GONNA HAPPEN, TRUBSHAW!

Eggs turns the anchor switch and the boxes start to rise into the tubes. The mecha box's claw arm GRABS the tube and rips it out of the machine. Cocoa falls! There's no way out.

Eggs jumps out of the way as the mecha claw arm drops the tube overhead. He rights himself and gasps up at Snatcher in at the mecha drill controls.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

Time to earn my white hat!

Snatcher pulls another LEVER and releases the VACUUM ARM. It slithers toward a group of boxtrolls. Eggs whimpers as Snatcher hits the lever's BUTTON to begin the suction.

The boxtrolls in front of Eggs get sucked up by the mecha box's vacuum arm. He tries to hold on a boxtroll mid-suction but it is ripped away.

EGGS

No!

The mecha box's vacuum arm turns on other boxtrolls.

Sweets and Knickers grab hold of boulders. Knickers nearly loses his/her bottom box as he/she is hoovered up. Sweets' teeth are sucked out of his mouth, then he is sucked up.

A panicked Eggs looks around, eyes wide.

EGGS (CONT'D)

Fish! Shoe!

Eggs grabs Fish and Shoe by their arms, where they try to hold themselves together. He tries to run with them in tow. Gristle clubs Shoe toward the vacuum arm with his cricket bat, where he is sucked up.

Eggs and Fish huddle together as Snatcher rides up, headlights blaring. Eggs has to shield his eyes from the blinding light.

Eggs picks Fish up, wrapping his arms around the box as best he can.

EGGS (CONT'D)

NO! Please!

SNATCHER

Give up, Trubshaw! Boxtrolls lost loooooong time ago. These miserable pests will never be a match for a man with dream!

(THEN)

MR. GRISTLE!

Eggs holds Fish tightly and tries to run but Gristle fires his bolas gun after him. It wraps around them and they fall to the ground. Eggs lands hard and hits his head, knocking him unconscious. Fish peeks out of his box, fretting.

FISH

Eggs? Eggs?

Snatcher flips levers and switches, grinding gears and sending flames out of the drill's FURNACE GRILL as the machine stands. He points to Eggs.

SNATCHER

ACQUIRE THEM!

As Snatcher stomps away, the Redhats step in and pull Fish out of the bolas rope. Fish's head comes out of his box and screams.

FISH

(SNARLS FEROCIOUSLY)

He HISSES AND BARES HIS TEETH at the Redhats! Pickles and Trout jump back! Gristle knocks Fish unconscious with the butt of his rifle. Trout and Pickles recoil.

MR. PICKLES  
Never seen one do that before!

MR. GRISTLE  
THAT BOXTROLL WAS MAD!

Gristle walks back toward the mecha box, laughing. Pickles look shocked at Fish's flaccid body. Trout picks up the limp Eggs and slings him over his shoulder.

MR. PICKLES  
Goodness always triumphs over  
evil... right Mr. Trout?  
(Trout walks away)  
Mr. Trout?

Pickles picks up Fish and follows Trout.

MR. PICKLES (CONT'D)  
(convincing himself)  
I'm still sixty to seventy percent  
certain that's us. A couple of good  
guys vanquishing evil and all that.

ON EGGS in the mecha drill's CAGE. He lies passed out atop a pile of boxtrolls. As the mecha box climbs back up the hole, it pushes a huge stalagmite over and the rest of the cavern collapses down around it.

INSIDE THE MECHA BOX CAGE, EGGS' SEMI CONSCIOUS POV: he looks at the home he once knew, now destroyed. His eyes close.

FADE TO BLACK.

(2000 CCB) CRUSHED CARDBOARD

INT. SNATCHER'S FACTORY BASEMENT - NIGHT

Eggs wakes to find himself back in his box and in a hanging cage. A figure swings back and forth in the foreground, whispering.

PRISONER (O.S.)  
(whispered)  
Jelly. Jelly!

EGGS  
(groggily)  
What the...?

Eggs starts and looks up through cage bars - a strange man hangs upside down by a pair of iron boots.

His bright, crazy eyes peek out from a tangled mass of scraggly beard and long hair. This PRISONER stares intently at Eggs.

PRISONER  
When I'm good I get jelly. I like  
jelly. JELLY!

EGGS  
(whispers)  
Who are you?

PRISONER  
Who am I? Who are you?

EGGS  
(confused, defeated)  
I don't know.

Eggs turns away. LONG BEAT

PRISONER  
Boy? Or Boxtroll?

Eggs doesn't answer.

PRISONER (CONT'D)  
Dresses like a boxtroll, but, uh...  
looks like a boy.  
(giggle)  
A boy-troll? Yes, or a box-boy?  
(excited)  
A new species. Never seen before.

Eggs looks toward the sound of footsteps.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
(humming... then in normal  
voice)  
*Ohhh... nooo boxtrolls!*

Eggs watches as Snatcher comes down a dark stairway and walks up toward the Prisoner.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
(singing)  
Trubshaw senior loved his kid, same  
as regular faaaaathers did....

Snatcher smacks the Prisoner and tugs on his beard. Eggs' eyes dart back and forth between Snatcher and his long lost father, HERBERT TRUBSHAW.

EGGS  
 (to the Prisoner)  
 He's my, you're my... are you my  
 father?

HERBERT  
 JELLY!

Herbert chuckles in an unhinged kind of way. Eggs' face falls.

SNATCHER  
 He was once. Won't get much out of  
 him now, though. A decade hanging  
 upside down scrambled his noodles  
 good.

Snatcher spins Prisoner Herbert around.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 (RE: mecha box)  
 Still, did a fine job designing  
 this beauty. Best inventor in town,  
 your dad. Working with the best  
 little builders.

Snatcher spins Eggs' cage so he can see the Redhats stacking the boxtrolls into a pile, underneath a menacing-looking box crusher.

Fish and Shoe poke their eyes out above their boxes, then immediately dart back inside, scared.

EGGS  
 No, no no, don't hide. Fish! Shoe!  
 RUN! Get up, get up and run!  
 Sparky. Sweets, run!

SNATCHER  
 Yell all you want, boy. They ain't  
 gonna run. You can't change nature.

Eggs pants and lowers his head, defeated. More and more boxtrolls are placed on top of each other. The whole pile SHIVERS in fear.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 (calls down)  
 I'm coming down, men! I want to  
 pull the crushing lever myself!  
 (wistful, to Eggs)  
 It's the little moments.

Snatcher heads down. Herbert chuckles again. Eggs slowly looks at him.

HERBERT

Yes. I see it now! A mutation of nature. Self-imposed metamorphosis.

(THEN)

Boxboy! You did it!

EGGS

I don't understand.

HERBERT

You changed your nature. Tell them.

Herbert gestures toward the shivering box pile. He still has crazy eyes, but for a moment, he stares right at Eggs. Maybe he's lucid after all. Eggs can't tell.

EGGS

I tried. They won't listen.

Eggs turns away from Herbert and bows his head. Snatcher flips a lever, starting the machine. Eggs starts, holding on to the bars as he stares intently.

HERBERT

You did it. You made you. Tell them. Tell them. Tell them!

Eggs watches as the gears continue to turn and the crusher to rise. The pile of boxtrolls shiver with fear.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

Boxboy! BOXBOY!

(THEN)

My son.

Eggs looks up and turns to Herbert.

EGGS

Father?

Despite being upside down and covered with hair, Herbert looks almost sane.

HERBERT

Son! They can change. They can do it! Tell them.

BEAT. Eggs looks from Herbert's face to the still shivering boxtrolls.

EGGS

Fish, Fish, everyone! Listen! I'm a  
boxtroll and I stopped hiding, so  
you can too! Stand up for  
yourselves! We can fight back!  
Don't be afraid anymore. Sparky!  
Fragile! Get up! Get up and *fight!*

The box pile stops shivering and settles. Are they listening?  
Eggs swings his cage around and he pleads.

EGGS (CONT'D)

Just stand up and take a step.  
Please! Do it for me!

A beat. Then...

SNATCHER

Well, good speech.

Snatcher pulls a lever, and--

SMASH! The box crusher flattens the entire pile of boxtrolls.

EGGS

No! No! No! NOOOOOO!  
(crying)  
Fish, Shoe, Sparky...

Herbert is smiling and mumbling the same thing over and over.

HERBERT

Look what you did. Look what you  
did! (laughs)

EGGS

(tearful)  
Yeah. Yeah look what I did. They're  
crushed.

Snatcher appears, coming up the stairs. Eggs looks up at  
Snatcher in horror.

MR. TROUT

(regretfully)  
Hey, Boss, your monsters are all  
loaded.

SNATCHER

(staring right at Eggs)  
All but one.

Eggs looks up, terrified.

CUT TO:

(2100 SAS) SNATCHER'S ASCENSION

EXT. CHEESEBRIDGE - WORLD VIEW - JUST BEFORE DAWN

The wide view of rooftops and chimneys in golden morning light is marred by the SMOKE of a coal furnace. The Mecha Box Drill makes its way slowly up the hillside town.

EXT. CHEESEBRIDGE STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Snatcher's amplified voice booms out of a scratchy loudspeaker and through the sleepy morning streets, rousing the townsfolk. Lights appear in windows.

SNATCHER (O.S.)

Hear ye! Hear ye! Good citizens of  
Cheesebridge, come out of your  
homes! The curfew has been lifted!

QUICK SHOTS OF TOWNSPEOPLE, the reverse of the opening scene of the movie:

- A man OPENS his peep-hole and looks around.
- Another OPENS his door and looks up as a shadow passes over his house.
- A MOTHER swings her door open and a LITTLE BOY rushes outside to see: Snatcher riding atop the giant mecha drill as it lumbers up the winding streets towards Market Square. Trout and Pickles follow behind, with Mr. Gristle riding the back of the Mecha Drill.

TOWNSFOLK BOY

Whoah! What is it?

FEMALE TOWNSFOLK 1

It's Snatcher!

SNATCHER

Fear not, the monsters have been  
vanquished! Your streets are SAFE!

MR. GRISTLE

(VERY MENACING) SAAAFE!

Trout and Pickles walk along behind the machine, amongst the gathering crowd, worried.

The townspeople smile in relief and wonder, and step out of their doors.

MALE TOWNSFOLK (?)  
The curfew is over?

MR. TROUT  
Yeah...

FEMALE TOWNSFOLK 1  
That's incredible.

They begin to follow after the mecha drill.

SNATCHER  
Join me! Your purger of pests! Your white knight who has taken back the night!

As Snatcher continues his ascension, all kinds of townspeople, women, children, rush to join the parade. The Mecha Drill's heavy iron legs smash into the cobblestones as it walks up the hill.

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - CHEESE GUILD - DAWN

The crowd arrives at the stairs of the guild with the mecha box. Snatcher beams with pride as he calls out through the whiney loudspeaker.

SNATCHER  
Lord Portley-Riiiiind!

The door cracks open and Lord Portley-Rind looks out.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
I come bearing the most delightful news.

He blinks in amazement at the scene before him - Snatcher atop a giant machine, a huge expectant crowd around him.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Mr. Snatcher, what the devil is this?

SNATCHER  
(triumphant chuckle)  
Show him lads.

The Redhats release the crushed boxes from the cage so they fan out dramatically at the foot of the stairs.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 Flattened to extinction. Every  
 last, slimy one of them.

The crowd applauds.

Up at her balcony, Winnie hears the noise and comes out to investigate.

WINNIE  
 (GASP)

SNATCHER  
 Your lordship, I said I would not  
 rest until I caught every last  
 boxtroll and I am a man of my word.

He hits a switch and the mechanical arm swings around to present Eggs, wearing the evil-boxtroll costume Mr. Gristle wore in the Madame Frou Frou show. The mask covers Eggs' face and his hands are bound behind his box. His feet and hands are covered with grotesque claws.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 With this boxtroll, I will end  
 their reign of terror.

Up on her balcony, Winnie stares at the monster. CLOSE ON the EGGS LOGO on its box.

WINNIE  
 EGGS!

SNATCHER  
 (to crowd, arms wide)  
 I'd say that deserves a white hat,  
 don't you?

The crowd cheers.

SHOPKEEPER WOMAN A  
 A white hat for Mr. Snatcher!

MALE TOWNSFOLK (O.S.)  
 Our hero! / Be-hatify the man!

Lord Portley-Rind steps nervously forward.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 Yes, well. I'm not sure... We'd  
 have to take a vote...

The crowd begins chanting loudly.

CROWD  
 (in unison, chanting)  
 WHITE HAT! WHITE HAT! WHITE HAT!

The Redhats stand with the crowd, Gristle chanting along with them. Pickles and Trout look uncomfortable.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 There's probably some, uh,  
 paperwork... then have a hat  
 shipped in...

Snatcher moves the machine forward, dangling the "boxtroll" out front, daring Portley-Rind to deny the mob.

SNATCHER  
 No. Methinks a deed of this  
 magnitude deserves something a bit  
 more... significant.

Portley-Rind stares up at him blankly.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 I want YOUR hat.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
My hat?

Snatcher looks appealingly back at the crowd, who are good and riled up.

CROWD  
 (in unison, chanting)  
 WHITE HAT! WHITE HAT! WHITE HAT!

SHOPKEEPER WOMAN A  
 WHITE HAT! WHITE HAT!

BOY  
 WHITE HAT! WHITE HAT!

The crowd moves forward, pressing closer to the Cheese Guild stairs. They continue calling for Lord Portley-Rind's hat.

MR. GRISTLE  
 CHANTING! CHANTING! CHANTING!

MALE TOWNSFOLK  
 WHITE HAT! WHITE HAT! WHITE HAT!

Lord Portley-Rind gestures to the crowd to calm down.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 (through gritted teeth)  
 All right. All right. As soon as  
that boxtroll is dead, you may  
 have... my... hat.

Lord Portley-Rind casts down his eyes, beaten.

(2150 SCR) SNATCHER'S CORONATION

EXT MARKET SQUARE - DAWN

Snatcher hits a button and the mecha box is lowered to the ground.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 Yes. And then we can eat cheese  
 together.  
 (excited)  
 In the Tasting Room.

Snatcher laughs and climbs down from the mecha drill. Gristle has removed his hat and taken a knee, Snatcher uses his head as a step stool.

MR. GRISTLE  
 Haha, FOOT!

He hands a REMOTE CONTROL to Trout, who is huddled nervously with Pickles. Gristle stands and returns his hat to his head, grinning.

SNATCHER  
 Do the honors.

Snatcher strides off towards Portley-Rind.

MR. PICKLES  
 (whispers to Trout)  
 I thought this was all gonna be a  
 show, like with Frou Frou.  
 (pulls out fake mustache)  
 I brought my mustache and  
 everything.

MR. TROUT  
 This really does stretch the limits  
 of the term "hero", doesn't it?

Gristle glares at them. He GROWLS, threateningly.

MR. GRISTLE  
 HAT! (CLEARS THROAT LOUDLY)

Pickles quickly puts on his mustache and Trout presses the button to raise the mecha box. Eggs in his monster disguise swings on the chain.

Snatcher steps in front of Portley-Rind. He removes his red hat.

SNATCHER  
(calling out)  
Musician, drum-roll!

ON the One Man Band, who excitedly strikes up a drum roll.

Snatcher tosses his red hat away.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
Mr. Trout! Lower the beast down.

Trout reluctantly maneuvers Eggs over the furnace's mouth. Eggs struggles to free himself. He presses a button and the furnace doors OPEN WIDE and white-hot flames pour out of the coal fire.

CLOSE ON EGGS as his eyes widen, flames reflected in them. He struggles.

Snatcher takes a knee, and presents his head. Portley-Rind reluctantly removes his hat, breathing hard.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Repeat after me: With this hat, I,  
state your name...

SNATCHER  
With this hat, I, Archibald  
Penelope Snatcher...

Trout begins to lower Eggs into the furnace. He and Pickles are sweating, intensely reluctant to kill the boy. Portley-Rind slowly begins to lower the white hat onto Snatcher's head.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
With profound esteem for dairy and  
dairy products... proudly swear to  
uphold the dignity of the White  
Hat.

The hat creeps lower as Portley-Rind matches the last boxtroll's progress toward the flames.

SNATCHER  
(repeating after Portley-  
Rind)  
(MORE)

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
Proudly swear to uphold the dignity  
of the White Hat.

Suddenly, Winnie bursts out the front doors and sees Eggs  
moving closer and closer to death.

WINNIE  
Father! Father!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Not now, Winifred!

Exasperated, Winnie runs to Pickles and Trout.

WINNIE  
STOP! STOP!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (O.S.)  
And henceforth, whereupon and  
thereupon... the placing of this  
hat... we shall conclude by...  
ushering our newest member into a  
world of privilege, pride, and  
pasteurized dairy!

MR. TROUT  
I can't, miss. Apologies.

MR. PICKLES  
We're just doing our jobs.

WINNIE  
Your JOBS? Are you pest  
exterminators or *evil henchmen*?!

MR. PICKLES  
(long, hurt gasp)  
I knew that's how people saw us.

ON EGGS, mumbling against his mouth gag.

WINNIE  
You don't have to do this!

MR. TROUT  
She has a point, Mr. Pickles. This  
could be our chance for redemption.

MR. PICKLES  
A second chapter!

MR. TROUT  
People love a flawed hero!

The FEET of Eggs' BOXTROLL COSTUME are licked by flames as he creeps closer to the furnace.

WINNIE  
(hurriedly)  
Sure, yes, whatever! Just let him go!

Pickles and Trout stare at each other, unsure of what to do.

ON SNATCHER and the white hat hovering so tantalizingly close to his head.

ON EGGS as he shuts his lids tightly against the coal fire.

ON the One Man Band, who is looking a little tired and sweaty from a really long drum-roll.

Back to Trout and Pickles, who smile at each other.

MR. TROUT  
Yeah?  
(at Mr. Pickles' nod)  
Yeah.

Trout stops the machine and the mechanical arm reverses it's direction, moving Eggs away from the fire.

EGGS  
(behind the gag)  
Huh?

Snatcher growls as Lord Portley-Rind swiftly pulls his white hat away.

ON the One Man Band as he *finally* stops his drum-roll, and collapses exhausted.

Trout and Pickles turn to Winnie.

MR. PICKLES  
Redeemed!

MR. TROUT  
(to Winnie)  
Thank you, miss.

Gristle LUNGES IN, seizes the controller.

MR. GRISTLE  
Ha HA!

WINNIE  
 (protests)  
 STOP IT!

Winnie tries to take the controller from Gristle, but he snaps his teeth at her menacingly.

Gristle turns the mecha drill arm back on! Eggs resumes his descent.

Mr. Trout pulls Winnie out of the way.

MR. TROUT  
 Watch yourself.

The tips of Eggs' boxtroll-suited feet are licked by the flames, and he pulls them up out of the way.

Gristle laughs heartily at Eggs' precarious situation.

MR. GRISTLE  
 Ha Ha HAAAAA!

In the quiet hush of the ceremony, suddenly a faint sound can be heard GROWING LOUDER.

HERBERT (O.S.)  
 Jelly! Jelly! JELLY!

Gristle turns to the sound.

MR. GRISTLE  
 Hmm?

Through the mouth of the boxtroll costume, Eggs sees--

(2200 TNT) THE NAKED TRUTH

-- Snatcher's vehicle comes shooting into the square! It is covered in boxtrolls.

HERBERT  
 I like Jelly!

Fish is stacked on Shoe in the driver's seat. Fish steers, Shoe works the pedals. Herbert sits in Snatcher's seat, laughing in delight, his hair and beard whipping in the wind. He giggles into the megaphone while the boxtrolls holler and cheer.

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
 JELLY! Ha ha ha ha!

Eggs excitedly murmurs through his gag.

Winnie smiles.

WINNIE

FISH!

The truck SKIDS to a stop, spilling NAKED BOXTROLLS EVERYWHERE!

CROWD (OVERLAPPING)/ MR. TROUT  
BOXTROLLS! / And they're NAKED! /  
AAAAAH! / NAKED TROLLS! / EWW! No  
wonder they wear boxes!

ON Gristle as he's overrun by naked, angry boxtrolls!

MR. GRISTLE

OHH! EWW -- NAKED!

ON SNATCHER AND PORTLEY-RIND:

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

What is going on here?!

SNATCHER

I... I am befuddled as your  
lordship! I... I crushed them  
myself!

Portley-Rind places the white hat back on his own head.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

Evidently not! That was the closest  
you will ever come to a White Hat.

(THEN, twirling his  
mustache)

I hope you enjoyed it.

Fish grabs the mechanical arm remote control from Gristle's hands. He uses it to lift Eggs away from the furnace's mouth.

The naked gaggle of boxtrolls carries Gristle away and throws him into a barrel labeled "LEECHES".

Fish releases Eggs from the mechanical arm, sending him flying into a CHEESE TENT. He tumbles out on to the market square, covered in Gouda and Swiss. Ecstatic boxtrolls and Winnie swarm him. Off come the gloves and mask and a relieved Eggs pops up. Winnie hugs him!

FISH AND BOXTROLLS

(in unison)

Eggs!

EGGS  
 (to boxtrolls)  
 You're alive! You're all alive! But  
 how?! I saw you crushed!

Fish happily GURGLES his answer. Eggs' face lights up with joy, reacting to each gurgle like it's a revelation.

WINNIE  
 (interrupting)  
 AHM?

EGGS  
 Oh... sorry. He says they were  
 hiding and then they heard me  
 yelling at them...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. SNATCHER'S FACTORY - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Eggs begging the boxtrolls to save themselves, but this time we see it from the REVERSE ANGLE.

EGGS (O.S.)  
 ... We can fight back! Don't be  
 afraid anymore. Sparky! Fragile!  
 Get up! Get up and fight. Stand up!  
 Fight back. Please! Do it for me!

What Eggs couldn't see is the boxtrolls, led by a NAKED Fish, squirm out of the back of the boxtroll pile. They are terrified, but they all do it until Knickers freezes at the threshold.

SNATCHER (O.S.)  
 Wow, good speech.

Fish has to grab Knickers and pull him out just as SMASH! THE CRUSHER CRASHES DOWN!

We even hear Herbert's laughing and calling out to Eggs as the naked boxtrolls stack together and hide out of sight.

HERBERT  
 Boxboy! Look what you did!

BACK TO:

EXT MARKET SQUARE - DAWN - CONTINUOUS

Fish and Eggs hug tightly.

EGGS

You got out of your boxes! You did it!

The townspeople peek out of their hiding places, confused.

WORKMAN A

The boy is friends with a boxtroll?!

SHOPKEEPER LADY

But boxtrolls are monsters.

Winnie turns to the townspeople.

WINNIE

Boxtrolls aren't monsters. They never ate the Trubshaw Baby, he's right there with Fish and-- (GASPS)

Winnie stares at Herbert, the hairy lunatic standing next to Eggs. Eggs smiles up at Herbert.

EGGS

My father.

WINNIE

Your father?

HERBERT

(smiling at Eggs)  
Look what you did.

EGGS

You were right. Thank you.

HERBERT

(bowing)  
Jelly.

The townspeople stare at Herbert.

SHOPKEEPER LADY

Herbert Trubshaw?

MALE WORKMAN A

The inventor?

SHOPKEEPER LADY

Alive?

The crowd murmurs angrily.

CROWD (OVERLAPPING)

Oh get out of here. / Snatcher said  
he was killed. / How can that be? /  
How is this possible? / He lied to  
us?

SHOPKEEPER B

Snatcher lied!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

He lied to us and to poor Madame  
Frou Frou!

Everyone turns toward Portley-Rind as he looks around for  
Snatcher.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (CONT'D)

Snatcher!

But Snatcher is gone.

Suddenly the shrill accent of Madame Frou Frou rises above  
the crowd. They look up as the mechanical arm of the mecha  
box drops Snatcher into the cockpit.

MADAME FROU FROU/SNATCHER

(taunting in Frou Frou's  
voice)

We could've been somezing special,  
but you've broken our agreement.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

Why is he talking like Madame Frou -  
Oh my God!

(bows head)

I regret so much.

Snatcher pulls levers and grinds gears again. The crowd gasps  
and shrinks away from him. He turns the mecha box toward  
Portley-Rind and uses the mechanical arm to reach for the  
white hat.

SNATCHER

(in Snatcher's voice)

I'll take my white hat now.

Portley-Rind ducks and weaves to avoid the huge, snapping  
claw.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

AHHHH!

Snatcher gets frustrated and SMASHES THE STAIRS! Portley-Rind  
sprints off the stairs and out into the square.

**(2350 BTL) BATTLE REDUX**

Portley-Rind sprints off the stairs and out into the square as Snatcher SMASHES TENTS WITH THE CLAW! Snatcher drives the mecha box, stomping after him and right toward the crowd.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (CONT'D)

RUN!

Lord Portley-Rind runs through the square and the mecha box chases him, SMASHING the tent out of the way with its giant iron fist!

The frightened townspeople SCREAM and run!

ARISTOCRAT MALE A

The curfew's back on! IT'S BACK  
ONNN!

CROWD

AHHHH!

CUT TO EGGS AND THE GANG as Fish finishes putting on his box.

EGGS

No more hiding, right?

FISH

(GURGLES "RIGHT!")

Fish nods. Eggs turns to Knickers.

EGGS

(determined)

RIGHT?

Knickers flashes his best 'angry face' and throws down his box, preferring to fight in his FRILLY UNDERWEAR!

KNICKERS

(GURGLES a war cry)

EGGS

(to all the boxtrolls)

You built that thing! You can take  
it apart!

Eggs charges forward with all the boxtrolls!

EGGS AND BOXTROLLS

ROAWRRR!

CUT TO Portley-Rind cowering behind Snatcher's vehicle, holding his white hat to his head. Snatcher stalks by in the background, the mecha box drill sending cobbles flying.

SNATCHER  
Looooord POORTLEY-RIIIIND!  
(smashes tents)  
Come out, come out, come out!

Suddenly, the mecha box lurches. Snatcher loses his footing.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
Whoah whoa.

Snatcher looks down and sees boxtrolls climbing up the legs, tearing pieces off. Shoe hisses at him.

CUT TO shots of hero boxtrolls wreaking havoc on the machine:

- Sweets grabs a pulley cable on one of the mecha drill legs.

SWEETS  
(gurgling swears)  
Chmeey! @#\$%&!

EGGS  
(to Sweets)  
Tear it down!

Sweets bites the cable and it snaps in half.

- Sparky and Bucket remove pieces of the motor and get SHOCKED! They look a little charred as they pull out electrical elements and throw them away.

- Knickers rages, wailing on the side of the machine in his frilly underpants. He smashes his paws through a piece of sheet metal, pulling out a hose. It releases steam as he hold the hose triumphantly over his head.

SNATCHER  
Get your grimy paws off of my  
machine!

Snatcher pulls a lever and the furnace ROARS to life, spewing flames from the front grill. The boxtrolls near the grill cringe away.

Snatcher deploys the spinning chassis. The box rotates, picking up speed as the boxtrolls try to hang on. They grab on to each other when they lose grip on the mecha box. Fish holds on to Eggs' ankles.

EGGS  
 (shouts to Fish)  
 We need to put out the fire!

Fish nods at him. He is knocked by another flying boxtroll into the square.

Fish lands near Winnie! She scowls and walks off with determination while Fish rubs his aching head.

CUT TO Portley-Rind still cowering. Hands GRAB THE WHITE HAT OFF OF HIS HEAD.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 (gasp) AHH!

Boxtrolls fly across the square and hit the ground, skidding into tents and store fronts.

CUT TO Snatcher as he spins around in the mecha drill control seat, laughing like a mad man.

WINNIE (O.S.)  
 Oh Mister Snatcher...

He spots Winnie waving the hat and DANCING A WIDE PIROUETTE. Snatcher hits a lever and the spinning slows. He woozily tries to find her, off kilter from the momentum.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
 ... how did this hat get alllll the  
 waaayyy out here?

Snatcher forgets about Portley-Rind and stomps after Winnie.

SNATCHER  
 You vile little brat!

Winnie RUNS as the mecha drill clamors towards her.

WINNIE  
 Ooh!

Suddenly Pickles and Trout run up beside Winnie, both hatless.

MR. TROUT  
 (running)  
 Perhaps we can be of some  
 assistance, miss.

Winnie hands the hat to Pickles and ducks out of the chase. He examines the hat while running.

MR. PICKLES

So this is what all the fuss is  
about?

Pickles places the white hat on his head and turns to Trout.

MR. PICKLES (CONT'D)

What do you think, Mr. Trout?

A mecha drill leg SMASHES the cobbles beside Pickles. He  
tosses the hat to Trout.

MR. PICKLES (CONT'D)

'Ere you have a go.

Mr. Pickles tosses it to Mr. Trout, who puts it on  
momentarily.

MR. TROUT

I think white quite suits me.

Trout tosses the hat back to Pickles, teasing Snatcher as a  
mecha leg misses him. He tosses the hat to Winnie.

CUT TO a wider view of Market Square as Winnie, Pickles, and  
Trout play keep away with the white hat, tossing it around  
like a frisbee. Snatcher spins the mecha box around, trying  
to grab the hat.

WINNIE

Over here!

SNATCHER

You ungrateful stooges!

Pickles, now holding the hat, taunts Snatcher.

MR. PICKLES

Is this what you wanted, boss?

Pickles tosses the hat high. It soars past Snatcher's head.  
Snatcher fails to grasp it, then Lord Portley-Rind.

SNATCHER

Mine!

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

Mine!

Suddenly, Herbert leaps up and grabs the white hat.

HERBERT

JELLY!

Herbert laughs as he runs around, weaving between the mecha drill legs. Portley-Rind chases after him.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
It's not funny! No, no, no!

Herbert gives an extra-jaunty laugh and ducks away from a mecha leg quickly. Portley-Rind runs SMACK into it, falling to the ground.

CUT TO Gristle as he climbs woozily out of the leech barrel.

MR. GRISTLE  
Ohhhh...

BACK ON Herbert as Snatcher keeps up the chase, hot on his heels.

SNATCHER  
(to Herbert)  
Come back, you loony!

Herbert runs past Gristle and hands him the hat just as Snatcher swings the massive mechanical arm.

HERBERT  
Jelly!

MR. GRISTLE  
HUH?

Gristle gets WHACKED, sending the white hat sailing into the air and Gristle sailing across the square.

The hat is caught by Winnie. Snatcher chases her, corners her and is about to crush her with the arm when the gears GRIND in protestation.

CUT TO Eggs, Shoe, and Oil Can on the mecha arm joint. They sneer at Snatcher. Shoe giggles as he removes a final gear from the arm. The arm hangs in the air for a moment then suddenly FALLS OFF and CLANGS TO THE GROUND with Shoe and Oil Can!

EGGS  
Whoops!

SPARKY/BOXTROLLS  
(GURGLE YELL!)

Eggs watches the arm fall, worried about his friends. He doesn't notice Snatcher looming over him. Furious, Snatcher swings a LARGE WRENCH at Eggs' head.

SNATCHER

Stop destroying my indestructible  
machine!

Eggs barely ducks out of the way and falls, catching a hold of the arm joint and scrambling up to the front of the box.

Snatcher keeps swinging the wrench again - KLANG! -, tracking Eggs. He SMASHES the left headlight of the mecha drill and reels back to swing again when--

Eggs grabs onto a lever, pulls it hard, and the mecha box tilts violently back, sending Snatcher tumbling to the edge. Smoke starts coming out of the furnace.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

AHHHHHHH!!!!

Eggs presses the red button and THE VACUUM ARM SWINGS DOWN LIKE A GIANT ACCORDION.

EGGS

Fish, grab hold!

ON CUE, Fish and Shoe scream directions. A group of boxtrolls run up to the vacuum arm and grab hold. They form a caterpillar conga-line to stretch it toward THE CENTER OF THE SQUARE.

FISH

(GURGLES "PULL!")

Shoe pulls the manhole cover away from the hole.

ON EGGS as he looks out over the square. Snatcher looms in the furnace smoke.

EGGS

That's right! Pull it over there!

Suddenly, Snatcher appears behind him.

SNATCHER

YOU FILTHY MONSTER!

EGGS

AHHHH!

Snatcher grabs Eggs by the shoulders and forces him down over the edge of the mecha drill control booth.

ON THE BOXTROLLS as Fish grabs the mouth of the vacuum and jumps down into the sewer, dangling ABOVE THE WATER! The vacuum can't reach!

FISH  
 (GURGLED) Uh oh.  
 (gurgled)  
 IT DOESN'T REACH!

WINNIE  
 IT DOESN'T REACH! PULL IT HARDER!

ON EGGS as Snatcher grasps his neck, threatening.

SNATCHER  
 (with effort, strangling  
 Eggs)  
 You think you can win and live  
 happily ever after! They'll never  
 accept the likes of us!

Eggs pushes against Snatcher's chest, trying to get free.

ON WINNIE, SHOE and the others as they STRAIN to pull the vacuum arm closer. Trout and Pickles have joined in.

WINNIE  
 ALL TOGETHER!

MR. TROUT  
 Now!

MR. PICKLES  
 Pull!

CLOSE ON the mecha box's legs as they are dragged toward the manhole, pushing up cobblestones as they go.

WITH Fish as the tube reaches the water. He scrambles up the vacuum tube as it crashes into the water, hard.

MEANWHILE, Snatcher and Eggs struggle, their hands on each others' throats.

EGGS  
 I'm nothing like you. You're the  
 monster!

Snatcher pulls him close and GROWLS.

SNATCHER  
 MONSTER?

Snatcher GROWLS and rears back with the wrench! Eggs reaches over and SLAMS down the vacuum ON SWITCH!

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

(surprised)

Huh?

FOOOMP! Water is sucked up in HUGE GULPS that race up the tube!

WATER HITS THE RED HOT FURNACE! BOOM! An EXPLOSION of steam and smoke fills the screen, obscuring our view.

ON THE WHITE HAT as it sits on the cobblestones. Lord Portley-Rind picks it up with a chuckle and places it on his head. He twirls his mustache with delight.

ON THE MECHA DRILL as it stands still, steam dissipating around its carcass. The vacuum arm is now just a stump of steel and shredded canvas.

The boxtrolls and townsfolk stare at it through the steam.

A LONG BEAT OF SILENCE is broken by shouts:

WHITE HATS (O.S.)

WE'VE DONE IT!/ HUZZAH!/ THREE  
CHEERS FOR US!

Sir Langsdale, Sir Broderick, and Sir Boulanger crest the hill at Milk Street, pushing the giant CHEESE WHEEL that rolled into the river.

SIR LANGSDALE

We got the cheese.  
(they see the devastated  
square)  
Lord... Portley-... Rind?

They stand in the entrance to the destroyed square, jaws agape. Glasses broken, an almost blind Gristle stumbles out, looking battered and worn.

MR. GRISTLE

UGH! I HAVE LOST A LOT OF BLOOD.

Gristle looks up to see Snatcher and Eggs still clinging to the mecha box as it falls toward him! He spots Snatcher and watches as the box gets closer...

MR. GRISTLE (CONT'D)

Boss?

Timbeeeeer! The mecha box drill crashes on to Mr. Gristle and sends Snatcher and Eggs flying SPLAT! into the GIANT CHEESE WHEEL! SMOKE, STEAM, AND MELTED CHEESE SPLATTER EVERYWHERE!

The crowd watches while Fish runs to look for Eggs in the huge mound of cheese. Suddenly, Eggs GASPS and breaks through the cheese. Fish rushes to him.

FISH  
(concerned)  
Eggs? EGGS!

The townspeople CHEER!

CROWD  
YEEEEAAAAYYY!

Winnie beams and runs to join Eggs and Fish when something suddenly ERUPTS OUT OF THE CHEESE IN FRONT OF HER!

SNATCHER  
RAWR!!!

CROWD  
(from happy)  
YEEEEAAAAYYY!  
(to disgusted)  
EEEEWWW!

A GIANT, SWOLLEN HAND grabs Winnie and pulls her toward --  
SNATCHER-MONSTER.

WINNIE  
(MUFFLED SCREAM)

He's pulled himself out of the cheese and he is not in good shape. Think Elephant Man stung by bees.

ON TROUT and PICKLES. They reel in disgust.

MR. PICKLES  
(cowering)  
Eww!

MR. TROUT  
Not again.

ON EGGS and FISH: Eggs is dumbstruck. Fish gags, cheeks full.

Lord Portley-Rind runs up to Snatcher, pleading.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Winnifred!

The monster snatches Winnie up under his misshapen arm and staggers out of the mound of cheese.

SNATCHER  
 (to Snatcher)  
 GIF. ME. MY. HAT.

Portley-Rind twists his hands.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
 Well... what about Broderick's hat?  
 It's just as white and fluffy.

ON WINNIE as she squeals in protestation from behind Snatcher's monstrous, swollen hand.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (CONT'D)  
 Oh take it.

Portley-Rind removes his hat and hands it to Snatcher.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND (CONT'D)  
 Just let go of my daughter.

Snatcher takes the hat with his sausage fingers. He pulls Winnie closer to him.

SNATCHER  
 YEAH! ARSHBALL SHNASHER, YOOFINE'LY  
 DONE IT!

CLOSE ON, Snatcher's beaming face. He waves the White Hat over his head and does an awful little dance.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
 NOW TO THE TASTING ROOM!

(2400 TTC) TO THE TASTING ROOM

INT. CHEESE GUILD - TASTING ROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON: Portley-Rind's hat being held aloft by one grotesquely swollen hand.

SNATCHER  
 Men, don your White Hatsh...

Snatcher lowers the hat onto the top of his head.

REVEAL Snatcher is sitting at the Tasting Room table, still clutching Winnie under his swollen arm. She whimpers in fear.

Portley-Rind, wearing Snatcher's red hat, and Eggs and Fish, wearing pilfered white hats, sit on the other side of the table. Fish's hat slips down over his eyes, too big for his pointy head.

A small, ornately covered cheese tray sits in front of Lord Portley-Rind.

EGGS

Please, Snatcher, let her go. You don't have to do this--

Snatcher interrupts Eggs and slams a meaty fist down on the table!

SNATCHER

ISH TASHTING TIME!

Winnie whimpers. Portley-Rind, Eggs, and Fish look nervous.

Awkward silence.

Lord Portley-Rind clears his throat and gestures to the cheese tray.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND

I present the tastiest cheese known to man. Made from the milk of the male, lactating fruit bats in Borneo. Aged for centuries in secret--

SNATCHER

(interrupts, angry)  
Shut up! Enough shtalling.

Portley-Rind lifts the lid off the cheese tray, revealing a small greenish portion of powerful looking cheese. A waft of stink fills the air and everyone recoils. Fish stabs a fork into the cheese.

Eggs pushes the cheese tray across the table, face drawn in disgust. It stops in front of Snatcher. He lifts the fork in his ham-sized swollen fist and removes a curd. He gives the cheese a loong SNIFF.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

(snifffff) Yesh... rich bouquet, cheesy cheese-like... OW!

Winnie BITES his puffy hand, breaks free of the headlock, and runs into the arms of her father. They hug.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
Oh, my Winnikens!

Snatcher stares at her in disbelief.

SNATCHER  
You bit me... wif yor... MOUTH?!

Eggs looks at Winnie. She shrugs.

Snatcher growls, shrugs it off, and raises the forkful of cheese to his mouth... then pauses. His STOMACH GURGLES loudly. Everyone else recoils, scared. Fish hides in his box.

LONG PAUSE

Snatcher raises the cheese to his mouth again.

EGGS  
(gentle plea)  
Don't do it. It won't change who  
you are.

His hideous, swollen head turns back to Eggs and he blinks. For a moment he looks sad, almost like he wants to listen to Eggs.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
Cheese, hats, boxes - they don't  
make you. You make you.

Snatcher looks sharply at Eggs.

SNATCHER  
I have made me, boy.

Snatcher looks back to the curd, ready.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)  
This is my dessshhtiny.

Snatcher opens his mouth wide.

ON EGGS, WINNIE, FISH, LORD PORTLEY-RIND as Snatcher slowly places the curd on his tongue. They are terrified.

Snatcher chews loudly.

Snatcher swallows. He glances down to his stomach...

Eggs and Fish flinch, expecting something terrible to happen. Even Portley-Rind and Winnie cower.

A beat.

Everything is fine. Everyone relaxes. A feeling of relief washes over Snatcher. His face brightens.

SNATCHER (CONT'D)

(pompous)

Mmm, aromatic?... Oaky?... With an undertone of a mother's smile on a warm spring--

**BOOOOOM!!!**

He explodes.

EXT. WIDE OF CHEESEBRIDGE - DAY

The top of the Guild explodes with a puff. The sound of the explosion is delayed slightly because of the distance.

A beat as the smoke hangs in the air. The grazing cows gently MOO.

(2600 PMY) PLEASED TO MEET YOU

EXT. MARKET SQUARE ALLEY - DAY

We see the clear, blue sky over Cheesebridge for a moment before tilting down into Market Square.

WINNIE (O.S.)

There I was, trapped in his sweaty armpit...

Madame Frou Frou's cabaret cart has been repainted, with a new sign reading "WINNIE". Winnie stands mid-stage orating her horrific tale.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

...Until he swelled like a balloon and.. POP! --

BLAM! A boxtroll bursts out of the trapdoor below the stage, releasing a cloud of confetti that explodes everywhere. They perform for a mixed crowd of townspeople and boxtrolls.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

(arms wide)

-- An ocean of guts exploded over us like a hurricane of YUCK!

The crowd applauds, townspeople clap their hands and boxtrolls drum their boxes.

Lord Portley-Rind and Lady Cynthia applaud the loudest.

LORD PORTLEY-RIND  
My little angel. My weird little  
angel.

Winnie curtsies deeply, head down.

EGGS  
Winnie!

Winnie looks up and spots Eggs standing at the edge of the crowd. Under his arm he is holding an old record album.

WINNIE  
Huh?

EGGS  
(quietly, to Winnie)  
Where's Fish?

WINNIE  
(sotto voce, quietly to  
Eggs)  
Uhh.

Winnie shrugs, "I don't know" and starts another story.

WINNIE (CONT'D)  
(to the audience)  
And now I will tell the heroic  
story of the Naked Boxtrolls and  
the Crusher of DOOOOOOM!

Winnie gestures to the stage curtain, which moves to reveal Knickers - wearing only his knickers - standing beneath a mock cardboard '1 TON' WEIGHT.

Eggs walks away from the stage as boxtrolls scramble to get better seats.

CUT TO:

The square is cleaned up from the battle and there are a few new additions. Eggs spots Oil Can, hard at work lubricating the cables for the One Man Band's kick drum. Oil Can smiles and they both move on to REVEAL:

A tent with a sign for SPARKY'S SCRAP SHACK - a boxtroll appliance repair service - hanging from it.

SIR LANGSDALE stands next to his toaster as Bucket and Sparky peer inside it.

SIR LANGSDALE  
It hasn't worked right in years!

Boulangier speeds around the repair tent, making rusty squeaks with each wheel rotation. An excited Oil can squeals and chases Boulangier's wheelchair.

SIR LANGSDALE (CONT'D)  
I said I like it burnt, then she says well I don't! So here I am.

Suddenly Eggs appears next to Langsdale.

EGGS  
You guys seen Fish?

Bucket and Sparky grunt "No" and get back to work. They both raise forks and prepare to plunge them into the toaster.

EGGS (CONT'D)  
Thanks!

Eggs walks away as Langsdale backs up.

SIR LANGSDALE  
Oh. I... I don't think that's a good idea.

As Eggs walks away, a loud BZZZT sound and a bright light go off behind him.

CUT TO:

Specs mans a control switch at a BOXTROLL MANHOLE exit. He throws the switch and Sweets shoots up out of the manhole, blown by a strong wind. He lands just as Eggs walks up.

EGGS  
Have you seen Fish?

Specs shrugs 'No' but Sweets brightens--

SWEETS  
(toothless mouth)  
Mushurgle, mushmoogle,  
mushmushgurgle...

He mumbles until his teeth suddenly shoot up out of the manhole. He grabs them, jams them in--

SWEETS (CONT'D)

Nope.

Sweets walks off. Suddenly the sound of a loud HONK! Eggs looks up as.

HERBERT (O.S.)

Ahh, there he is.

FISH

Eggs!

Snatcher's vehicle appears. Herbert is driving and Fish is riding in Snatcher's old seat.

A new logo has been painted over the old silhouette of a rampaging boxtroll. In its place is a kinder silhouette of a boxtroll holding a light bulb, surrounded by a circle made of three arrows - it's the prototype of the international sign for recycling.

Eggs holds up the record - a new copy of the QUATTRO SABATINO'S album from the old music machine.

EGGS

Look what I found!

Fish gurgles happily as Eggs hands him the album and climbs aboard the vehicle.

HERBERT

Brilliant, son!

CLOSE ON: The record being put on the player on top of the vehicle. The record begins to play.

Fish sits back in Snatcher's old seat, Eggs holds on to the side.

EGGS

And now we go like this.

Fish and Eggs start rocking out, bobbing their heads to the music like they used to. Fish and Eggs hum to the tune.

HERBERT

Ahh. I've missed so much.

He joins them in the head-bobbing.

WIDE: As the music swells we follow the vehicle as it winds it's way across the market and away through the arch.

As the music fades away, two familiar silhouettes pause from sweeping up some trash.

MR. TROUT  
Aww, ain't that lovely?

Trout empties his dust bin into a TRASH BARREL. A loud snuffle can be heard.

MR. PICKLES  
Yeah... all happy 'n tidy.

Shoe sticks his head out of the barrel, covered in dust.

SHOE  
(GURGLES angrily)

MR. TROUT  
Like the end of a story, if our  
lives were a story.

Shoe climbs out of the barrel. He pulls Lord Portley-Rind's white hat out of the trash. It is filthy and torn. Shoe frowns at it, tears a frilly ribbon off the top, and tosses the rest back in the trash.

MR. PICKLES (O.S.)  
Not sure what we'd do next, though.

Shoe looks around defensively, grunts quietly, and scampers to the center of Market Square. We follow him into the dark as he jumps down an open manhole.

(2700 CRED) END CREDITS

(2750 UNV) UNIVERSE

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Pickles and Trout are still awkwardly standing around, not sure what to do next.

MR. PICKLES  
Hmm.

MR. TROUT  
Just keeping the streets clean...

MR. PICKLES  
Free from evil.

MR. TROUT  
Yep.

MR. PICKLES  
Ya ever think about the universe,  
Mr. Trout?

The camera pulls out gradually --

MR. PICKLES (CONT'D)  
What if our world is just like a  
tiny speck...

MR. TROUT  
A tiny little speck!

MR. PICKLES  
And there are giants looking down  
on us?

MR. TROUT  
And every time we move...

MR. PICKLES  
It's actually them moving us.

-- Revealing that Market Square is a set.

Pickles and Trout stare at each other. A beat.

MR. TROUT  
Seems a bit tedious.

Pickles blinks.

MR. PICKLES  
Like that, just there, me blinking.  
That would've taken them a day.

The camera keeps pulling out and lights and the stage table  
can be seen.

MR. TROUT  
Me moving my arm. Five hundred men!

MR. PICKLES  
I mean, none of them are going  
home. They're having to do this  
bit. And now this bit. And this  
bit. I mean, this should stop.

CUT TO BLACK.

MR. TROUT (O.S.)  
I think it throws up notions of  
free will.

MR. PICKLES (O.S.)

It's too much. And then they'd have had to've done me talking about the blink. And it never ends. I think they make a meal of it, to be honest. I don't know how they get the time. They've got to have other jobs. It's more like a hobby. Y'know, like stamp collecting, something you do in your free time.

THE END