

Big Fish Script - Dialogue Transcript

There are some fish
that cannot be caught.

It's not that they're faster
or stronger than other fish.

They're just touched
by something extra.

One such fish was The Beast.

And by the time I was born
he was already a legend.

He'd passed up more \$100 lures
than any fish in Alabama.

Some said that fish was
the ghost of a thief...

...who'd drowned in that river
years before.

Others claimed he was a dinosaur
left over from the "Cruaceous" Period.

I didn't put any stock into
such speculation or superstition.

All I knew was I'd been trying
to catch that fish...

...since I was a boy
no bigger than you.

And on the day you were born...

Well, that was the day

I finally caught him.

Now, I'd tried everything on it:

Worms, lures, peanut butter,
peanut butter and cheese.

But on that day I had a revelation:

If that fish was Henry Walls' ghost,
then the usual bait wasn't gonna work.

I was gonna have to use something
he truly desired.

- Your finger?
- Gold.

Now, I tied my ring onto
the strongest line they made...

...strong enough to hold up a bridge,
they said, if only for a few minutes.

And then I cast upriver.

The Beast jumped up and grabbed it
before it even hit the water.

And just as fast,
he snapped clean through that line.

Well, you can see my predicament.

My wedding ring,
the symbol of fidelity to my wife...

...soon to be mother of my child...
- Make him stop.

...was now lost in the gut
of an uncatchable fish.

What did you do?

I followed that fish upriver
and downriver.

This fish, The Beast...

...the whole time we were calling it
a him, when in fact it was a her.

It was fat with eggs
it was gonna lay any day.

Now, I was in a situation.

I could gut that fish
and get my wedding ring back...

...but in doing so I'd be killing the
smartest catfish in the Ashton River.

Did I want to deprive
my son the chance...

...to catch a fish like this
of his own?

This ladyfish and I...

- Well, we had the same destiny.
- "We were part of the same equation."

Now, you may well ask...

Oh, darling, darling,
it's still your night.

...why did it strike so quick on gold
when nothing else would attract it?

That was the lesson
I learned that day...

...the day my son was born.

Sometimes the only way to catch
an uncatchable woman...

...is to offer her a wedding ring.

What, a father's not allowed
to talk about his son?

I'm a footnote in that story, Dad...

...the context for your great adventure,
which never happened, incidentally.

You were selling novelty products
in Wichita when I was born.

Come on, Will.
Everyone loves that story!

They don't. I don't love that story. Not
anymore. Not after a thousand times!

I know every punch line, Dad.
I can tell them as well as you can!

For one night,
one night in your entire life...

...the universe did not revolve
around Edward Bloom.

- How can you not understand that?
- I'm sorry to embarrass you.

You're embarrassing yourself, Dad.
You just don't see it.

After that night, I didn't speak
to my father again for three years.

William Bloom, United Press
International. If I could just...

We communicated indirectly, I guess.

In her letters and Christmas cards,
my mother wrote for both of them.

And when I'd call, she'd say Dad was
out driving or swimming in the pool.

True to form, we never
talked about not talking.

The truth is, I didn't see anything
of myself in my father.

And I don't think he saw anything
of himself in me.

We were like strangers
who knew each other very well.

In telling the story
of my father's life...

...it's impossible to separate fact
from fiction, the man from the myth.

The best I can do
is to tell it the way he told me.

It doesn't always make sense,
and most of it never happened.

Give me back my ring!

Thank you!

But that's what kind of story this is.

His birth would set the pace
for his unlikely life.

No longer than most men's,
but larger.

And as strange as his stories got...

...the endings were always
the most surprising of all.

Yes. Yes, he's here.

It's your mother.

And what does Dr. Bennett say?

No, sure, I'll talk to him.

Yeah, I'll wait.

It's bad?

Yeah, it's more than they thought.
They're gonna stop chemo.

- You need to go.

- Probably tonight.

- I'm going with you.

- No, no, no. You shouldn't.

I'm going with you.

Now, which one's it gonna be?

"Monkey in a Barn,"
or "Dog in the Road"?

The one about the witch.

The one about the witch.

[Skipped item nr.]

Your momma says I can't
tell you that one anymore.

- You get nightmares.

- But I'm not scared.

Well, neither was I, at first.

Now, this took place
in the swamp outside of Ashton.

Children weren't allowed in the swamp
on account of the snakes, spiders...

...and quicksand that would swallow
you up before you could even scream.

There were five of us
out there that night:

Me, Ruthie, Wilbur Freely...

...and the Price Brothers,
Don and Zacky.

And not one of us knew
what was in store.

It's common knowledge that most
towns of a certain size have a witch...

...if only to eat
misbehaving children...

...and the occasional puppy
who wanders into her yard.

Witches use those bones
to cast spells and curses...

...and make the land infertile.

- Is it true she got a glass eye?
- I heard she got it from gypsies.

- What's a gypsy?
- Your momma's a gypsy.

Your momma's a bitch.

You shouldn't swear.
There's ladies present.

- Shit.
- Damn.

Screw.

Turn off your flashlights.
She'll see you!

Yet of all the witches in Alabama...

...there was one who was said
to be the most feared.

For she had one glass eye which
was said to contain mystical powers.

I heard if you look right at it,
you'll see how you're gonna die.

That's bull-S-H-l-T, that is.
She's not even a real witch.

If you're so sure, go get that eye.

I heard she keeps it in a box on her
night table. Or are you too scared?

I'll go in right now and get that eye.

- Then do it.
- Fine, I will.

- Fine, you do it.
- Fine, I'm doing it.

Edward, don't!

She'll make soap out of you.
That's what she does.

She makes soap out of people.

Ma'am, my name is Edward Bloom...

...and there's some folks
like to see your eye.

- You get The Eye?

- I brought it.

Let's see it.

Whoa, help!

I saw how I was gonna die.
I was old and I fell.

I wasn't old at all.

I was thinking about death and all.
About seeing how you're gonna die.

I mean, on one hand,
if dying was all you thought about...

...it could kind of screw you up.

But it could kind of help you,
couldn't it?

Because, everything else,
you'd know you could survive.

I guess I'm saying I'd like to know.

That's how I go.

Hi, Mom.

- Is that Dr. Bennett's car?
- Yes. He's up with your father now.

- And how is he?
- Well... No, I got it.

He's impossible. He won't eat.
Because he doesn't eat, he's weaker.

Because he's weak,
he doesn't want to eat.

- How much time does he have left?
- You don't talk about that.

Not yet.

Will.

Dr. Bennett. Oh, it's good to see you.

My wife, Josephine.

A pleasure.

- You're seven months.
- To the day!

It's a boy.

Try to get him to drink one of these.
He won't, but go ahead and try.

Dad?

[Skipped item nr.]

You want some water?

- You are in for a surprise.
- Am I?

Having a kid changes everything.

There's the diapers and the burping
and the midnight feeding.

- Did you do any of that?
- No.

But I hear it's terrible.

Then you spend years trying
to corrupt and mislead this child...

...fill its head with nonsense,
and still it turns out perfectly fine.

- You think I'm up for it?

- You learned from the best.

Drink half the can.
I'll tell Mom you drank it all.

Everyone wins.

People needn't worry so much.
It's not my time yet.

This is not how I go.

- Really?
- Truly. I saw it in The Eye.

- The old lady by the swamp?
- She was a witch.

No, she was old and probably senile.

I saw my death in that eye,
and this isn't how it happens.

So how does it happen?

Surprise ending.
Wouldn't want to ruin it for you.

Your mother thought
we wouldn't talk again.

Look at us. We're talking fine.

We're storytellers, both of us.

I speak mine out,
you write yours down. Same thing.

Dad...

I hope to talk about some things
while I'm here.

You mean while I'm here.

I just want to know
the true versions of things:

Events. Stories.

You.

Your mother hasn't been
keeping up the pool.

- If you wanted to, you could fix it.
- Yeah, I will.

- You know where the chemicals are?
- I did it when you were gone.

I was never much for being
at home, Will. Too confining.

And this here, being stuck in bed...

Dying is the worst thing
that's ever happened to me.

- I thought you said you weren't dying.
- I said this isn't how I go.

The last part is much more unusual.

Trust me on that.

Dr. Bennett said I have
to stay at home for a week.

Oh, that's nothing. Once,
I had to stay in bed for three years.

- Did you have the chickenpox?
- I wish.

Truth is, no one quite knew
what was wrong.

Most times a person
grows up gradually...

...while I found myself in a hurry.

My muscles and my bones couldn't
keep up with my body's ambition.

So I spent the better part
of three years confined to my bed...

...with the encyclopedia being
my only means of exploration.

I had made it all the way to the G's...

...hoping to find an answer
to my "gigantificationism"...

...when I uncovered an article
about the common goldfish.

"Kept in a small bowl,
the goldfish will remain small.

With more space...

...the fish will grow double, triple,
or quadruple its size."

It occurred to me then that perhaps
the reason for my growth...

...was that I was intended
for larger things.

After all, a giant man can't have
an ordinary-sized life.

As soon as my bones had settled
in their adult configuration...

...I set upon my plan to make
a bigger place for myself in Ashton.

Tigers, go!

Edward Bloom!

Doggy! My doggy!
My doggy's trapped!

I was the biggest thing
Ashton had ever seen.

Until one day, a stranger arrived.

Calm down. Calm down, everybody.
Calm down. That's enough.

- Mr. Mayor, he ate an entire corn field.
- He ate my dog.

If you ain't gonna stop him, mayor,
we will.

I won't have mob violence
in this town.

Now, has someone tried
talking to him?

- You can't reason with him.
- He's a monster.

I'll do it.

I'll talk to him.
See if I can get him to go.

That creature could crush you
without trying.

Oh, trust me, he'll have to try.

Hello?

My name is Edward Bloom,
and I wanna talk to you!

Go away!

Now, I'm not going anywhere
until you show yourself!

I said, go away!

Armed with the foreknowledge
of my own death...

...I knew the giant couldn't kill me.

All the same, I preferred to keep
my bones unbroken.

Why are you here?

So you can eat me.

The town decided to send
a human sacrifice and I volunteered.

My arms are a little stringy, but
there's some good eating in my legs.

I mean, I'd be tempted
to eat them myself.

So I guess, well...

If you'd just get it over with quick,
because I'm not much for pain, really.

Oh, come on! I can't go back!
I'm a human sacrifice!

If I go back,
they'll think I'm a coward.

I'd rather be dinner than a coward.

Here.

You can start with my hand.
It'll be an appetizer.

I don't want to eat you.

I don't want to eat anybody.

I just get so hungry.
I'm just too big.

Did you ever think that
maybe you're not too big...

...but maybe this town
is just too small?

I've heard in real cities
there are buildings so tall...

...you can't even see
the tops of them.

- Really?
- Oh, I wouldn't lie to you.

And all-you-can-eat buffets.

- Now, you can eat a lot, can't you?
- I can.

So why are you wasting your time
in a small town?

You're a big man.
You should be in a big city.

You're just trying to get me
to leave, aren't you?

- What's your name, giant?
- Karl.

Well, mine's Edward.
And truthfully...

Well, I do want you to leave, Karl.
But I want to leave with you.

I mean, you think this town
is too small for you?

Well, it's too small for a man
of my ambition.

So, what do you say? Join me?

Okay.

Okay.

Now, first, we gotta
get you ready for the city.

Edward Bloom, first son of Ashton...

...it's with a heavy heart
that we see you go.

But take with you
this key to the city...

...and know that any time
you want to come back...

...all our doors are open to you.

That afternoon as I left Ashton,
everyone seemed to have advice.

Find yourself a nice girl, now!

Watch your pride, Edward Bloom!

But there was one person whose
counsel I held above all others.

She said that the biggest fish
in the river...

...gets that way
by never being caught.

- What'd she say?
- Beats me.

[Skipped item nr.]

There were two roads out of Ashton:

A new one which was paved
and an older one that wasn't.

People didn't use
the old one anymore...

...and it had developed a reputation
for being haunted.

Well, since I had no intention
of ever returning to Ashton...

...this seemed as good a time as any
to find out what lay down that old one.

- You know anyone who's taken it?
- That poet, Norther Winslow, did.

He was going to Paris, France.

I guess he liked it.
No one ever heard from him again.

I'll tell you what.
You go the other way.

I'll cut through here,
and I'll meet you on the far side.

You're just trying to run away,
aren't you?

Here.

Just to be sure, you can take my pack.

Why, you son of a...

Now, there comes a point
when a reasonable man...

...will swallow his pride and admit
that he's made a terrible mistake.

The truth is,
I was never a reasonable man.

And what I recall of
Sunday school was that...

...the more difficult something is,
the more rewarding it is in the end.

Friend! Welcome to you!

- What's your name?
- Edward Bloom.

- "Bloom" like a flower?
- Yes.

Oh, here! Here you are, right here.
"Edward Bloom."

We weren't expecting you yet.

- You were expecting me?
- Not yet.

- You must've taken a shortcut.
- Why, yes, I did. It almost killed me.

Life will do that to you.
And truthfully, the long way is easier.

- But it's longer.
- Much longer.

And you're here now,
and that's what matters.

What is this place?

The town of Spectre.
Best-kept secret in Alabama!

Now, it says here
you're from Ashton, right?

Last person we had from Ashton
was Norther Winslow.

The poet?
Whatever happened to him?

He's still here. Let me buy you a drink.
I'll tell you all about it.

Hell, I'll have him tell you!

I have to meet somebody,
and I'm already running late.

Now, son, I already told you.
You're early.

Now, tell me if that isn't
the best pie you ever ate.

It truly is.

Well, everything tastes better here.
Even the water is sweet.

Never gets too hot,
too cold, too humid.

At night, the wind goes through
the trees where you'd swear...

...there was a whole symphony
out there playing just for you.

Hey! Jenny!

Come back here!

Jenny!

Hey, I need those.

- There is no softer ground than town.
- That almost rhymes.

He's our poet laureate. Come on.

I agreed to spend the afternoon,
if only to understand...

...the mystery of how a place could
feel so strange and yet so familiar.

I've been working on this poem
for years.

Really?

There's a lot of expectation.
I don't wanna disappoint my fans.

May I?

It's only three lines long.

This is why you should never show
a work in progress.

I got him!

There's leeches in there.

- Did you see that woman?
- What did she look like?

- Well, she was...
- Was she naked?

Yes, she was.

It's not a woman. It's a fish.
No one ever catches her.

Fish looks different
to different people.

My daddy said it looked like the

coon dog he had when he was a kid...

...back from the dead.

Oh, darn.

- How old are you?

- Eighteen.

I'm . That means when I'm
you'll be .

- And when I'm you'll only be .

- You're pretty good at arithmetic.

And when I'm you'll be .
That's not much difference at all.

Sure is a lot now, though, huh?

Hey, Edward!

[Skipped item nr.]

[Skipped item nr.]

Roses are red
Violets are blue

I love Spectre...

Excuse me.

Jenny thinks you're quite a catch.
We all do.

What?

I said, you're quite a catch.

I have to leave.

Tonight.

Why?

This town is more than any man
could ask for.

And if I were to end up here,
I would consider myself lucky.

But the truth is, I'm just not ready
to end up anywhere.

But no one's ever left.

How are you gonna make it
without your shoes?

Well, I suspect it will hurt. A lot.

Now, I'm sorry, but...
Well, goodbye.

- You won't find a better place.
- I don't expect to.

Promise me you'll come back.

I promise. Someday.
When I'm really supposed to.

That night,
I reached two conclusions.

The first was that a dangerous path
is made much worse by darkness.

The second was that I was
hopelessly and irrevocably lost.

These woods would become
my graveyard.

As difficult as it was to reach Spectre,
I was fated to get there eventually.

After all, no man can avoid
reaching the end of his life.

And then I realized
this wasn't the end of my life.

This isn't how I die.

Friend.

- What happened to your shoes?
- They kind of got ahead of me.

I don't know if you saw it,
but Josephine had some photos...

...in the most recent Newsweek.

Really?

That's just wonderful.

I spent a week in Morocco
for the story. It was incredible.

Oh. We'll have to pick up a copy.

I don't know if you're aware of this,
Josephine...

...but African parrots, in their native
Congo, they speak only French.

Really?

You're lucky to get four words
out of them in English.

But if you were to walk
through the jungle...

...you'd hear them speaking
the most elaborate French.

Those parrots talk about everything.
Politics, movies, fashion.

Everything but religion.

Why not religion, Dad?

It's rude to talk about religion. You never know who you're gonna offend.

Josephine actually went to the Congo last year.

Oh, so you know.

Hello.

Hi. How are you feeling?

Oh, I was dreaming.

What were you dreaming about?

Oh, I don't usually remember...

...unless they're especially portentous. Do you know what that word means?

It means when you dream about something that's gonna happen.

Like one night, I had a dream...

...where this crow came and said:

"Your aunt is gonna die."

I was so scared,
I woke up my parents...

...but they said it was just a dream
and to get back to bed.

But the next morning,
my Aunt Stacy was dead.

That's terrible.

Terrible for her, but think about me,
young boy with that kind of power.

Wasn't three weeks later when the
crow came back to me in a dream...

...and said, "Your daddy's gonna die."

I didn't know what to do.

I finally told my father, but he said:

"Oh, not to worry."
But I could see he was rattled.

The next morning, he wasn't himself.

Kept looking around, waiting for
something to drop on his head.

Because the crow didn't say how it
was gonna happen, just those words:

"Your daddy's gonna die."

Well, he left home early
and was gone a long time.

When he finally came back,
he looked terrible...

...like he was waiting
for the ax to fall all day.

He said to my mother:

"I've just had the worst day of my life."

"You think you've had a bad day?"
she said.

"This morning, the milkman
dropped dead on the porch."

Because, see, my mother

was banging the milkman.

- Can I take your picture?
- Oh, you don't need a picture.

Just look up the word "handsome"
in the dictionary.

Please?

All right.

I have photos of the wedding
to show you.

There is a great one
of you and my father.

I want to see pictures of your wedding.
I've never seen any.

That's because we didn't have
a proper wedding.

Your mother-in-law was
never supposed to marry me.

- She was engaged to somebody else.
- I never knew.

Will never told you?

Probably just as well.

He would have told it wrong, anyway.

All the facts, none of the flavor.

Oh. So this is a tall tale.

Well, it's not a short one.

[Skipped item nr.]

I'd just left Spectre and was

on my way to discover my destiny.

I'd just left Spectre and was
on my way to discover my destiny.

I'd just left Spectre and was
on my way to discover my destiny.

Not knowing what
that would be exactly...

...I explored every opportunity
that presented itself.

Coco! Coco! There they are.

Ladies and gentlemen!

You may think
you've seen the unusual.

You may think you've seen the bizarre.

But I've traveled
to the five corners of the world...

...and let me tell you,
I've never seen anything like this!

When I met this man...

...he was picking oranges in Florida.

His fellow workers called him
El Penumbra. "The Shadow."

Because when you worked
beside him...

...he blocked out the daylight!

Not to alarm you, ma'am,
but if this man wanted to...

...he could crush your head

between his toes...

...like a tiny walnut.
But he won't do it.

No. No, ladies and gentlemen...

...he will not hurt her...

...because he is our own gentle giant.

Ladies and gentlemen,
I give you Colossus!

Ladies and gentlemen,
boys and girls...

...thank y'all for coming.

Drive home safely, everyone.
Thank you for coming.

It was on that night
Karl met his destiny.

And I met mine, almost.

They say when you meet
the love of your life, time stops.

And that's true.

What they don't tell you
is that once time starts again...

...it moves extra fast to catch up.

What's your name?

- It's Karl.
- Karl.

Tell me, Karl, have you ever heard
the term "involuntary servitude"?

- No.
- "Unconscionable contract"?

- Nope.
- Great.

Here you go.

Here you are.

Mr. Soggybottom,
come down this here...

...so he can use your back
to sign on it.

Okay. Thank you. Yeah.

Hey, kid.

- Your friend just made himself a star.
- Oh, that's great.

- My attorney, Mr. Soggybottom.
- Good to meet you.

Pleased to meet you.

What's the matter? I haven't
seen a customer so depressed...

...since the elephant sat
on that farmer's wife.

"Depressed"?

See? The big guy likes it.

I just saw the woman I'm gonna marry.

I know it. But I lost her.

Oh, tough break.

Well, most men have to get married

before they lose their wives.

I'm gonna spend the rest of my life
looking for her. That or die alone.

Damn, kid.

Let me guess. Real pretty?

Reddish-blondish hair?

Blue dress?

Yeah!

I know her uncle. Friends of the family.

Who is she? Where does she live?

Forget it. Don't waste your time.
She's out of your league.

- What? You don't even know me.

- Sure I do.

You were hot shit back in Hickville, but
here in the real world, you got squat.

You don't have a plan or a job.

Nothing except the clothes
on your back.

Well, I have a whole backpack
full of clothes.

Oh, someone stole my backpack.

You were a big fish in a small pond,
but this here is the ocean...

...and you're drowning.
Go back to Puddleville.

- You'll be happy there.

- You say I don't have a plan. I do.

I'll find that girl, marry her,
and spend the rest of my life with her.

I don't have a job, but I would
have a job if you gave me one.

And I may not have much...

...but I have more determination
than any man you're likely to meet.

I'm sorry, kid. I don't do charity.
Come on, big boy.

Wait. Look, I'll work
night and day for you...

...and you won't have to pay me.

You just have to tell me who she is.

Every month you work for me...

...I'll tell you one thing about her.
That's my final offer.

Let's get started.

From that moment on, I did everything
Mr. Calloway asked.

I'd go three days
without stopping to eat.

And four days without sleeping.

What kept me going was
the promise of meeting the girl...

...who would be my wife.

Stick together, that's the way
it's gonna be.

- The way it was, and the way it will be.
- Mr. Calloway, sir?

It's been a month today.

This girl, the love of your life...

...her favorite flowers are daffodils.

- So get that stuff...
- Daffodils.

Daffodils.

Daffodils.

True to his word...

...every month Amos would tell me something new...

...about the woman of my dreams.

Enjoy yourselves, enjoy yourselves.

She's going to college.

College. She's going to college.

She likes music.

Music. She likes music.

Over the months, I learned a lot about the woman I would marry...

Over the months, I learned a lot about the woman I would marry...

...but not her name,
and not where to find her.

That time had come.
I couldn't wait any longer.

Mr. Calloway?

It's Edward Bloom.
I need to talk to you.

Mr. Calloway?

No. Wait!

That night, I discovered that most
things you consider evil or wicked...

...are simply lonely and lacking
in social niceties.

Didn't kill anything, did I?

A few rabbits. But I think one of them
was already dead.

That would explain the indigestion.

Thank you.

I was wrong about you, kid.

You may not have much,
but what you got, you got a lot of.

You could get any girl.

There's only one I want.

Her name...

...is Sandra Templeton.

She goes to Auburn.

Semester's almost over,
so you better hurry.

Thank you. Thank you.

- Good luck, kid!
- Thank you, sir!

- Bye, now.
- Bye, Edward.

After saying my goodbyes,
I hopped three trains...

...to get to Auburn that afternoon.

You don't know me,
but my name is Edward Bloom...

...and I love you.

I've spent the last three years
working to find out who you are.

I've been shot, stabbed, and trampled
a few times. I broke my ribs twice.

But it's all been worth it
to see you here now...

...and to finally get to talk to you.

Because I'm destined to marry you.

I knew it when I saw you at the circus,
and I know it now more than ever.

- I'm sorry.
- You don't have to apologize to me.

I'm the luckiest person
you'll find today.

No, I'm sorry I'm engaged
to be married.

But you're wrong. I do know you.

At least by reputation.

Edward Bloom from Ashton.

See, I'm actually engaged
to a boy from Ashton. Don Price.

He was a few years older than you.

Well...

Congratulations.

I'm sorry to have bothered you.

Stop it! It's not funny.

That poor boy.

Fate has a cruel way
of circling around on you.

After all this work to leave Ashton...

...the girl I love was now engaged
to one of its biggest jerks.

There's a time when a man
needs to fight...

...and a time when he needs to accept
that his destiny's lost...

...the ship has sailed,
and that only a fool will continue.

Truth is, I've always been a fool.

Sandra Templeton, I love you,
and I will marry you!

So as you can see, if we apply
these rules to our everyday life...

...supply and demand
makes much more sense.

Take a look at the next graph, and the import of this will be even stronger...

- for three hours.

Look!

- Daffodils!
- They're your favorite flower.

How did you get so many?

I called everywhere in five states.

I told them it was the only way to get my wife to marry me.

You don't even know me.

I have the rest of my life to find out.

Sandra!

It's Don. Promise you won't hurt him.

If that's what you want, I swear to it.

- Bloom?
- Don.

What the hell are you doing?
This is my girl. Mine!

I wasn't aware
that she belonged to anyone.

What's the matter?
Are you too scared to fight back?

I promised I wouldn't.

Stop it!

Don, stop!

While I took the beating of a lifetime,
Don Price was ultimately defeated.

All the physical activity had worsened
a congenital valve defect.

Put simply, his heart
wasn't strong enough.

Don! I will never marry you.

What?
You mean, you love this guy?

He's almost a stranger,
and I prefer him to you.

As it turned out, Sandra was able to
keep her same date at the chapel.

Only the groom had changed.

I thought you said you didn't
have a church wedding.

We were all set to,
but there was a complication.

Is it the medicine
that's making you thirsty?

Truth is,
I've been thirsty my whole life.

Never really known why.

There was a time when I was ...

You were talking about your wedding.

I didn't forget.
I was just working on a tangent.

You see, most men, they'll tell you
a story straight through.

It won't be complicated,
but it won't be interesting, either.

[Skipped item nr.]

I like your stories.

And I like you.

And I like you.

Well, when you work for the circus,
you don't have a regular address.

Well, when you work for the circus,
you don't have a regular address.

So after three years,
there was a lot of undelivered mail.

During the four weeks
I was in the hospital...

...the postmaster
finally caught up with me.

And it seems that while my heart
belonged to Sandra...

...the rest of my body belonged
to the U.S. government.

A hitch in the Army was up to
three years at that point...

...and having waited three years
just to meet Sandra...

...I knew I couldn't survive
being away from her that long.

So I took every hazardous
assignment I could find...

...with the hope of getting
my time down to less than a year.

Go! Go!

When I was offered
a secret mission...

...to steal the plans for
the Wong Kai Tang power plant...

...I jumped at the chance
to serve my country.

Go! Go!

Any of you got needs?

How could you miss your cue?

You make me look like a fool
out there alone.

You weren't alone!

Who the hell are you?

I'm not going to hurt you.

Damn right you're not.

GUARD!

Tell your men not to bother us!

And close that curtain!

Please, I need your help.

What makes you think we'll help you?

Over the next hour, I described
my love for Sandra K. Templeton...

...and the ordeal that brought me

before them.

As it had always been,
this love was my salvation.

It was destined to be.

We put together an elaborate
plan for escape...

...involving a whaling ship
to Russia...

...a barge to Cuba,
and a small, dirty canoe to Miami.

We all knew it would be dangerous.

And what are we supposed to do
when we get to America?

I can get you bookings.

I know the biggest man
in show business.

Bob Hope?!

Bigger.

Ready?

And so the twins and I
began our arduous journey...

...halfway around the world.

Unfortunately, there was no way
to send a message back to America.

And so it was no surprise
that the Army believed I was dead.

No, God!

After four months, Sandra had gotten over the worst of the nightmares.

When the phone rang, she didn't think it was somehow me calling her.

When a car drove past, she didn't get up to check out the window.

I talked with your father last night.

You never told me how your parents met.

They met at Auburn.

What about the details?
How they fell in love.

The circus. The war.

You never told me any of that.

That's because most of it never happened.

But it's romantic.

- What?

- What, I know better...

...than to argue romance with a French woman.

Do you love your father?

Everyone loves my father.
He's a very likable guy.

Do you love him?

You have to understand.

When I was growing up,
he was gone more than he was there.

And I started thinking maybe he's got
this second life somewhere else.

Another family, another house.

And he leaves us
and goes to them.

Or, or...

Or maybe there is no second family.
Maybe he never wanted a family.

Whatever it is, he likes his second life
better and he tells his stories...

...because he can't stand
this boring place.

- But it's not true.
- Well, what's true?

He's never told me
a single true thing.

Look, hey...

I know why you like him.

I know why everyone likes him.

But I need you to tell me
that I'm not crazy.

Oh, you're not.

And I think you should talk to him.

Larry Puckett's Chevrolet
lets the customer do the talking.

Larry Puckett's GM-certified vehicles
are under factory warranty.

And you can save up to percent
off the original MSRP.

- Did I ever tell you about...?
- Yes.

The maple tree and the Buick?
We've heard it.

I know someone who hasn't.

- The...
- Tree fell on the car, spilling the syrup.

Which attracted the flies,
which got stuck to it...

...and flew off with the whole car.

But the real story
is how I got the car.

- You see...
- Dad?

Son.

Can we talk?

I think I'll get started
on these dishes.

I'll help you.

- You know about icebergs, Dad?
- Do I?

I saw an iceberg once.

They were hauling it down to Texas
for drinking water.

They didn't count on there being
an elephant frozen inside.

- The woolly kind. A mammoth.
- Dad!

What?

I'm trying to make a metaphor here.

Well, you shouldn't have started with a question...

...because people want to answer questions.

You should've started with, "The thing about icebergs is..."

Okay, okay. The thing about icebergs is you only see percent.

The other percent is below the water where you can't see it.

And that's...

...what it is with you, Dad.

I am only seeing this little bit...

...that sticks above the water.

Oh, you're only seeing down to my nose? My chin? My...

Dad, I have no idea who you are...

...because you've never told me a single fact.

I've told you a thousand facts, Will. That's what I do, I tell stories!

You tell... lies, Dad.

You tell amusing lies.

Stories are what you tell
a -year-old at bedtime.

They're not elaborate mythologies
that you maintain...

...when your son is and
and and .

And I believed you.

I believed your stories
so much longer than I should have.

Then when I realized
everything you said was impossible...

...I felt like a fool
to have trusted you.

You're like Santa Claus
and the Easter Bunny.

Just as charming and just as fake.

You think I'm fake.

Only on the surface, Dad.
But it's all I've ever seen.

Look.

I'm about to have...

...a kid of my own.

It would kill me
if he went through his whole life...

...never understanding me.

It would kill you, huh?

What do you want, Will?
Who do you want me to be?

Just yourself.

Good, bad, everything.
Just show me who you are for once.

I've been nothing but myself
since the day I was born.

And if you can't see that,
it's your failing, not mine!

Your father decided
that he needed to have an office...

...and, of course, it wouldn't do
to have it in the house.

So...

You'll know better than me
what's important.

What is it?

It was during the war.

Your father went missing.
They thought he was dead.

Oh, that really happened?

Not everything your father says
is a complete fabrication.

I think I'll go check on him.

I need to lie down for a bit.

Okay, go.

After the war, the sons of Alabama
returned home, looking for work.

Each had the advantage over me.

They were alive,
while I was officially deceased.

With my prospects few...

...I took a job as a traveling salesman.
It suited me.

If there was one thing
you can say about Edward Bloom...

...it's that I am a social person.

- Congratulations.
- Thank you, sir.

I could be gone
for weeks at a time.

But every other Friday,
I put all the money I made...

...into an account set aside
for a proper house...

...with a white picket fence.

I'd like a moment of your time
to tell you about my new product...

...the Handi-matic.

A few years later, I added
other products and other cities...

...until my territory stretched from
the coast to western Texas.

Edward?

Edward Bloom!

It's me, Norther Winslow.

I don't believe it.

I was astonished to see the greatest poet of both Ashton and Spectre...

...all the way out in Texas.

I want you to know, when you left Spectre, it opened my eyes.

There was a whole life out there that I was not living.

So I traveled.

I saw France, Africa, half of South America.

Every day, a new adventure. That's my motto.

That's great, Norther. I'm happy for you.

What are you doing now?

I'm robbing this place.

All right, everybody down!

Hey!
Just slide that over.

- Would you mind grabbing that?
- What?

The gun.

I'm gonna be cleaning out the cash drawers...

...and my associate here is gonna handle the vault.

All right, you!

You help my friend, okay?

Let's go!

I'm sorry, ma'am.

I am.

I really just don't want anyone
to get hurt.

It's not that.

It's just...

There's no money.

We're completely bankrupt.

Don't tell anybody.

It turned out that the Savings & Loan
had already been robbed...

...not by armed bandits, but
by speculators in Texas real estate.

All right, let's go!

Norther!

Yeah! There's gotta be
close to \$ here!

And that's just from the drawers.

Let's see what you got
from the vault.

This is it? The whole vault?

I'm afraid so.

It's got your deposit slip on it.

Well, I just didn't want you
leaving empty-handed.

There's something you should know.
The reason they don't have money...

I told Norther about
the vagaries of Texas oil money...

...and its effect on real-estate prices...

...and how lax enforcement
of fiduciary process...

...had made savings and loans
particularly vulnerable.

Hearing this news,
Norther was left with one conclusion:

I should go to Wall Street.
That's where all the money is.

I knew then that while my days
as a criminal were over...

Thanks for the hand!

...Norther's were just beginning.

When Norther made
his first million dollars...

...he sent me a check for .

I protested, but he said it was my fee
as his career advisor.

It was enough to buy my wife
a proper house...

...with a white picket fence.

And for that, it was all the riches
a man could ever want.

I was drying out.

I see.

I think we ought to get you
a plant mister...

...so we can just spray you
like a fern.

Come, now.

I don't think I'll ever dry out.

You carry on. I'll see...

Hello.

- Are you Jennifer Hill?

- I am.

And you're Will.

I've seen a picture of you.
That's how I recognize you.

Listen, Kenny,
why don't we skip the lesson today?

We can go again next week.

Do I have to give it back to my mom?

Well, I won't tell her if you won't.

How did you know my father?

Well, this was on his sales route...

...so he was through here all the time,
and everyone in town knew him.

Were you having an affair?

Wow. Wow, you just said it.

I was expecting to dance
around this for another half-hour.

I've seen him with women.
He flirts. He always has.

And on some level,
I just presumed that he was...

...cheating on my mom.
I just never had proof.

Well, can I ask you a question?

If you found this deed,
why didn't you just ask Eddie?

Because he's dying.

Look, I don't know how much
you want to know about any of this.

You have one image of your father...

...and it'd be wrong of me
to change it...

...especially this late in the game.

My father talked about things
he never did...

...and I'm sure he did a lot of things
that he never talked about.

I'm just trying to reconcile the two.

The first thing
you have to understand...

...is that your father
never meant to end up here.

Yet he did.

Twice.

The first time, he was early.

The second time, he was late.

Those days, your father was working
for himself.

If there's one thing you could
say about Edward Bloom...

...it's that he was a social person,
and people took a liking to him.

One night, he was returning
from three weeks on the road...

...when he hit a thunderstorm
unlike any in his life.

Fate has a way of circling back
on a man...

...and taking him by surprise.

A man sees things differently
at different times in his life.

This town didn't seem the same
now that he was older.

A new road had brought
the outside world to Spectre...

...and with it, banks, liens and debt.

Almost everywhere you looked,
people were bankrupt.

The auction today
is for the town of Spectre.

- The opening bid will be \$.
- So Edward Bloom...

...decided to buy the town.

- .

- I couldn't believe my eyes...

- He was never a wealthy man...

...but he had made other men rich,
and now he asked for their favors.

- I'm trying to save...

- Most of them hadn't seen Spectre.

They only had Edward's words
to describe it.

That's all he needed.
He sold them on the dream.

So first he bought the farms.

Then he bought the houses.
And then he bought the stores.

Whatever he bought, the people were
not asked to leave or pay rent.

They were just asked to keep
doing as they were doing.

In that way, he could make sure
the town would never die.

Within six months, his trust had
purchased the entire town.

With one exception.

You must be Edward Bloom.

How do you know?

No one would come out here
unless they had business.

And no one would have business
with me except for you.

You're buying the town.

Apparently I overlooked this one
piece of it, and I'd like to remedy that.

In order for the town to be preserved,
the trust must own it, in its entirety.

And so I've heard.

I'll offer you more than it's worth.
And you won't have to move.

Nothing will change except the name
on the deed, you have my word.

Now, let me get this straight.

You buy the swamp from me,
but I'll stay in it?

You'll own the house,
but it'll still be mine?

I'll be here, and you'll come and go as
you please to one place or another.

Do I have that right?

In so many words, yes.

Yeah, then I don't think so,
Mr. Bloom.

If nothing's gonna change,
I'd just as soon it not change...

...in the way things haven't been
changing all this time.

It's not like you'll lose anything.
You can ask anyone in town.

Why are you buying this land,
Mr. Bloom?

Some sort of midlife crisis?

Instead of buying a convertible,
you buy a town?

Helping people makes me happy.

I'm not convinced
you should be happy.

- I'm sorry. Have I offended you?
- No.

You did exactly what you promised.

You came back.
I was just expecting you sooner.

You're Beamen's daughter.

Your name's different.
Did you get married?

I was . He was .
Turns out that was a big difference.

I won't be selling you this house,
Mr. Bloom.

I see.

Well, thank you for your time.

- It's stuck.
- Yeah.

- Oh, I'm so sorry! l...
- It's okay. Just leave it.

- No, I'll...
- Please! Just go.

- But...
- Go.

Most men in that situation would accept their failure and move on.

But Edward was not like most men.

But Edward was not like most men.

Hold!

They both had completely different characters but...

...well, just one pair of legs.

As the months passed, he found more and more things to fix...

...until the shack no longer resembled itself.

Of course, the best part was coming up with the new material.

By the time the twins and I had got to Havana...

...we'd worked out a new routine, using only a ukulele and a harmonica.

- Well...
- You could leave it there.

No.

Now, don't.

Don't be embarrassed. I should never have let you think that...

I'm in love with my wife.

Yeah, I know.

And from the first day I saw her
until the day I die...

...she's the only one.

Lucky girl.

I'm sorry, Jenny. I am.

Wait! Edward.

One day, Edward Bloom left...

...and never returned
to the town he'd saved.

As for the girl...

...the common belief
was that she'd become a witch...

...and crazy at that.

She became something
of a legend herself.

And the story ended where it began.

Logically, you couldn't be
the witch, because she was...

...old when he was young.

Well, it's logical if you think
like your father.

See, to him there's only
two women:

Your mother...

...and everyone else.

And one day...

...I realized I was in love with a man
who could never love me back.

I was living in a fairy tale.

I'm not sure I should've told you
any of this.

No, no, no, I wanted to know. I'm...

I'm glad I know.

I wanted to be as important to him
as you were.

And I'm...

I was never gonna be.

I was make-believe.

And his other life, you...

You were real.

Mom?

Josephine?

Josephine?

Will!

What happened?

Your father had a stroke.

He's upstairs with your mom
and Dr. Bennett.

Is he gonna be okay?

I don't suppose that I could...

...stay here with him.
I mean, in case...

In case he wakes up,
I really ought to be here.

I'll stay.

Why don't you go home with
Josephine. I'll stay tonight.

- Is that okay?
- Fine.

Will, you'll call if there's any...?

I will. I will. I'll call.

- Do you want some time with Dad?
- Yes. Thank you.

Glad to see you're not trying
to have a heartfelt talk.

One of my greatest
annoyances is when...

...people try to talk to those
who can't hear them.

Well, we have an advantage.

My father and I never talk.

Your father ever tell you
about the day you were born?

Yeah, a thousand times.
He caught an uncatchable fish.

Not that. The real story.
He ever tell you that?

No.

Well, your mother came in about
in the afternoon.

Her neighbor drove her, on account of
your father was away on business...

...in Wichita.

You were born a week early,
but there were no complications.

It was a perfect delivery.
Your father was sorry not to be there.

But it wasn't the custom then for men
to be in the room for deliveries...

...so I can't see how it would've been
much different had he been there.

And that's the real story
of how you were born.

Not very exciting, is it?

And I suppose if I had to choose
between the true version...

...and an elaborate one involving
a fish and a wedding ring...

...I might choose the fancy version.

But, then that's just me.

I kind of liked your version.

Dad?

Hey, Dad? Hey, you want me
to get the nurse?

What do you want? What can I do?
What can I get?

You want some water?

You want a bit of water?

The river.

The river?

Tell me how it happens.

How what happens?

How I go.

You mean what you saw in The Eye?

I don't know that story, Dad.
You never told me that one.

Okay. Hey, okay, I'll try.

I need your help.
Tell me how it starts.

Like this.

Okay. Okay.

Okay, so it's in the morning...

...and you and I are in the hospital,
and I've fallen asleep. And I wake up...

...and I see you,
and somehow you're better.

Dad?

You're different.

- Dad.
- Let's get out of here.

Then I say:

Dad, you're in no condition...

Get that wheelchair.

Hurry up! We haven't much time!

Once we get off this floor,
we're in the clear.

And we get in the wheelchair...

- Faster!
...like we're escaping the hospital.

What are you doing?

We pass Dr. Bennett,
who tries to slow us down.

- Stop them!
- We're flying down the hall.

Orderly after orderly is chasing us.

Mom and Josephine
are at the end.

No time to explain! Stall them!

We come flying out
over the curb...

...and your old red Charger is there.
But it's new. Brand-new.

And I pick you up...

...and somehow you hardly weigh
anything. I can't explain it.

Leave it! We don't need it!

Water. I need water.

- Where are we going?
- The river.

And we have to take Glenville
to avoid traffic...

...because the damn church
people drive too slow.

And as we get close to the river...

He's here!

...we see that everybody
is already there.

And I mean...

...everyone.

It's unbelievable.

The story of my life.

The strange thing is, there's
not a sad face to be found.

Everyone is just so glad
to see you...

...and send you off right.

Goodbye, everybody!
Farewell! Adieu!

My girl in the river.

You become what you always were.

A very big fish.

And that's how it happens.

Yeah.

Exactly.

Mom?

The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not be in want.

He makes me to lie down
in green pastures.

He leads me beside the quiet waters.

He restores my soul.

He guides me in the paths of
righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through
the valley of the shadow of death...

...I will fear no evil,
for you are with me.

Surely goodness and love will
follow me all the days of my life.

Have you ever heard a joke so many
times you've forgotten why it's funny?

And then you hear it again
and suddenly it's new.

You remember why you loved it
in the first place.

So he said he'll fight the giant
who was feet tall!

- No way!
- Dad! That's right, isn't it?

Pretty much.

See? So he was a giant.

That was my father's final joke,
I guess.

A man tells his stories so many times
that he becomes the stories.

They live on after him.

And in that way,
he becomes immortal.