

BRIGSBY BEAR

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VHS STATIC

Nostalgic, disorienting. Giving way to--
Warbled lo-fi tones of an 80s KIDS' TV THEME.
Triumphant, inspiring. Like something we've heard before...

But it's not. It's--

"BRIGSBY BEAR ADVENTURES" - OPENING CREDITS

Through a combination of cheap live-action sets and amateurish (yet vividly detailed) matte paintings, animation and puppetry, we're treated to:

-A rickety SPACESHIP approaches a cluster of COLORED PLANETS.

-Pink clouds part, revealing a lush WATERFALL OASIS surrounded by SAND DUNES. Rainbow sunset on the horizon.

-BRIGSBY BEAR waves hello from his cabin under the waterfall. He stands upright, with a cheerful animatronic expression.

-PAST ADVENTURES flash by: distant lands, strange creatures, enemies, allies, triumphs, defeats, kingdoms, space and--

CLICK. Fast-forward... for a while... then--

GRAND TEMPLE CHAMBER - THE CLIMAX! - NIGHT

Brigsby is CHAINED to a vine-covered stone wall, which SHAKES (in-camera), raining DUST and DEBRIS!

BRIGSBY

The temple's collapsing! Arielle,
Nina -- use your powers!

Across the chamber, also chained up: THE SMILES SISTERS. Adult twins in matching blue dresses and headbands. ARIELLE has a blonde ponytail, NINA pigtails.

They close their eyes and concentrate. Magic SPARKLES surround them... But nothing happens. The sparkles fade.

ARIELLE SMILES

It's Sun Snatcher, Brigsby!

DIABOLICAL LAUGHTER booms from above. They look up through an OPENING in the temple to see-- A sinister animated face among the stars. SUN SNATCHER.

SUN SNATCHER
Perish, Brigsby Bear!

Brigsby's eyebrows drop, contemplative.

BRIGSBY
 The stars are out...?
 (eyebrows shoot up)
 The vines! Remember? They release
 invisi-toxins at sundown. That
 means--

NINA/ARIELLE SMILES
 We're only imagining!

Brigsby looks down at his chains, which are now VINES.
 He breaks free, picks up a CRYSTAL and raises it...

BRIGSBY
 I summon the power of light!

The crystal GLOWS--

SUN SNATCHER
 Nooooooooooooo!

--and releases a massive ENERGY BLAST!
 But the Sun Snatcher DISAPPEARS just in time.

(echoing from beyond)
 I'll get you next time, bear!

The shaking STOPS. The dust settles...

NINA/ARIELLE SMILES
 You did it Brigsby!

But Brigsby looks down, disheartened.

BRIGSBY
 We're safe for now, but... I let
 the whole galaxy down.

We ride out an oddly silent, contemplative beat...
 And PULL OUT to reveal we're watching on a--

'19 VCR-BUILT-IN TV - KID'S BEDROOM (?) - DAY

REVERSE ON: JAMES (20s, messy hair) on the floor, captivated.
 Reflection of the TV glowing in his GLASSES.

Finally, Brigsby looks up.

BRIGSBY

(frustrated)

I don't get it. The prophecy said:
if we activate the Sortis Crystal
inside the temple, we could destroy
Sun Snatcher.

Nina puts her hand on Brigsby's shoulder, reassuring.

ARIELLE SMILES

Perhaps there's a lesson here,
Brigsby...

The Smiles Sisters turn to us.

NINA SMILES

When solving for x on a one
dimensional plane, where minus one
by the magnitude of one equals
minus x --

James whispers along like he's heard it a hundred times:

--always solve for the vector r !

ARIELLE SMILES

That's linear chaos.

BRIGSBY

Of course!

Brigsby taps his wrist transponder, which makes a HOLOGRAM.

That's why we couldn't defeat
Snatcher -- his vector path was a
parabolic orbit!

Nina Smiles looks like she has no idea what's going on.

NINA SMILES

Yep... That's it.

Brigsby turns to the camera.

BRIGSBY

Until our next adventure, remember--
(lower)
Prophecy is meaningless. Trust only
your familial unit and please
discard leftover food rations in
the yellow bin, not the red one--

James hits STOP. Automatic tape eject. Static...

He stares a moment, thinking it over... Then--

JAMES
(sotto)
That's it!

He goes to his DESK and opens a 90s laptop.
As he TYPES, we take a long look around...

Covering the walls are POSTERS of Brigsby Bear characters including a prominent late-teens ARIELLE SMILES. Brigsby FIGURINES and BOOKS cover every inch of desk and shelf space.

Note: like a Star Wars fanatic's bedroom, but without the accessible charm. Everything here has the warped, homemade quality of the show.

James finishes typing, slides the tape into a ILLUSTRATED CASE, then returns it to the one wall we haven't seen yet: Floor-to-ceiling shelves of tapes just like it. Hundreds.

LO-RES WEBCAM - JAMES' BEDROOM

James frames himself up as the pixels freeze and start.
He adjusts his hair, clears his throat. Click.

JAMES
Hey everyone, it's me, James. First thing, episode 34, volume 25 -- the recap is up, and there's a pretty good comment section right now, so check it out.

(pauses, nervous)

Also -- as some of you know might know, I've been studying the old volumes of Brigsby, going back to the first Quest Wars, when we meet the dark evildoer, a-k-a Sun Snatcher. Obviously, Snatcher gets away every battle. But Brigsby hasn't given up, and neither have I, and I have some new ideas that... well, I might be on to something big. So stay tuned--

(leans in)

--until our next adventure.

CLICK
BLACK

"Brigsby Bear"

LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Modest and cozy, with decades-old fixtures and appliances.

James stands in front of the coffee table, on top of which is a massive fold-out POSTER BOARD, featuring illustrations of Brigsby and a complicated flow chart with graphs and text.

JAMES

(mid-explanation)

...the trick is, basically, Brigsby has to find all the sacred artifacts. The Sortis crystal, Arielle's amulet, then...

He unfolds another section of the presentation board--
A BLACK HOLE surrounded by incomprehensible figures.

...you just have to find a collapsed star in an unclaimed system...

He turns to the couch, his audience: TED and APRIL.
50s. Pleasant, square parents, listening politely.

Easier said than done, I know, but--

The poster board wobbles and FALLS. James tries to set it back up, flustered.

(kidding)

Guess there's more gravitational pull from that black hole than I initially calculated...

James forces an awkward laugh. Ted and April share a look.

DINNER TABLE - MINUTES LATER

Ted and April on one side, James on the other.
Plain pasta steaming.

JAMES

So, what did everyone think?

APRIL

Private avowals first...

James nods. They fold their hands, look down, and MUMBLE incoherently under breath -- a prayer? But no one's in sync. Then, their words converge:

JAMES/TED/APRIL

...and may our minds be stronger
tomorrow.

To finish it off, they stand and exchange formal handshakes.

JAMES

(sitting back down)

I know there's still some things I
need to add before I post it, so...

James trails off, sensing something in their expressions.

What is it?

April nods to Ted: say something.

Ted slurps his pasta, chews, swallows, clears his throat.

TED

Well, pal. It's clear a lot of
imagination went into it. But the
thing is... I just don't know if
any of this is plausible within
Brigsby's universe.

James takes the note. Considers it.

I mean, you have him using
Arielle's amulet against Sun
Snatcher? Sure, it's powerful -- it
was created by the Drumbas -- but,
if I remember correctly, it's also
very unstable...

JAMES

Yes, but not if you can fold space-
time, that's--

(frustrated)

I should have explained, that's why
Brigsby needs Arielle's amulet, so--

APRIL

James.

He pauses, looks up at her.

APRIL

(gentler)

What your father's trying to say
is: we're proud of how smart and
talented you are.

(MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)

But all this time you've been spending on the Brigsby website, and your projects -- we just don't see the point.

JAMES

The point...?

James thinks... It's so self-evident it's hard to articulate.

TED

Well, I've heard it's starting to take some pretty unique narrative risks.

APRIL

Ted, we talked about this.

JAMES

I just... We all want to know what's going to happen, in the end.

APRIL

Which is fine, as a distraction, every once in a while. That we could understand; it's healthy. But we can't have things like this--

She holds up a hand-made poster:

First ever BRIGSBY BEAR fan meet-up!!!!

Featuring: James, Brigsbyfan1, Brigsbyfan2 and Brigsbygirl

Where: James' house

James takes it and folds it up, defensive.

JAMES

It's just an idea...

APRIL

Well, it's not realistic. You could be using this time and energy to further your studies, or solve the Vansmithe conjecture--

She gestures to an EQUATION on a nearby chalkboard:

$Ax = \overset{\circ}{A}x$

JAMES

I tried already...

APRIL

And we'll keep trying.

JAMES

But it's impossible! And it's stupid...

TED

Temper, James...

JAMES

I know, sorry. It's not stupid...
 (mumbles to himself)
 ...but there's no variant subspace parameters, so even if you wanted to it'd be impossible, plus I don't see you blockheads solving it...

APRIL

We can hear everything you're saying, James. My point is, we've come so far, working together. And now we are close to a real breakthrough.

(a beat)

Which is why, for a little while, we're going to take a break from Brigsby.

James expression falls, indignant.

JAMES

What?!

APRIL

You can watch once a week.

James shares a desperate look with Ted.

TED

Well, maybe that's a little harsh... What about twice? Once to revisit old episodes, and once when the new tape comes in?

APRIL

(frustrated)

Ted, we've discussed this. Once.

And that's that. April unfolds her napkin, readies utensils.

Don't let your noodles get cold.

But James just twists them in his fork.

JAMES
 (mumbles again)
 Doesn't even look like food, more
 like the ransack of Shabala...

Ted and April continue eating, ignoring him.

JAMES
 It's from Brigsby.

APRIL
 We know.

PRELAP: KNOCK-KNOCK

JAMES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

James sits in PJs (faded Brigsby shirt), staring at the blank space where his TV sat.

He turns as Ted opens the door, pokes his head in.

TED
 Hey bud...
 (off James' silence)
 So... I was thinking about taking a
 trip out to the pier?

James shrugs a soft "okay."

HALLWAY DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

A large, gold KEY goes into the keyhole, turns.
 The door opens to a small STAIRCASE. James follows Ted up to--

"THE PIER" - CONTINUOUS

A small hallway encased by GLASSED WALLS and an arched glass ceiling. Through them, all around: vast, moon-lit DESERT.

James and Ted walk to the end of the pier, where it balloons into a larger GLASS DOME, like an undersea observatory. They take a seat on a BENCH, looking out upon--

A SMALL OASIS a few yards ahead: a pond, half surrounded by shoulder-high palm trees and houseplants in oddly dark soil. Also, as Ted points out--

TED
 They sure came out tonight, huh?

--there are several LUMINESCENT INSECTS grazing and glowing around the edge of the water. Or rather, they look like insects, but are clearly animatronic. Similarly, a FOX-LIKE CREATURE stands further away, moving its head up and down.

TED

So, what's on your mind, pal?

JAMES

I don't know... I guess, just...
Someone out there is making
Brigsby, right? And other people,
just like us -- we're all watching
it, together. It means something.

Ted puts his arm around James' shoulder.

TED

Look at the Grazerbugs, James. All
they need in this world is fresh
water and cold moonlight to charge
their rectoskeletons. They're here
every night, surviving, just like
us. The difference is, we have
dreams and imaginations, to help us
escape. And no one can take that
away from you, ever.

As James thinks about that, one of the Grazerbugs SHORTS OUT.

JAMES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

James looks around at all his Brigsby stuff...

TED (O.S.)

Night, James! Powering down!

The lights flicker and fade. Darkness.
Then, a small FLASHLIGHT clicks on.

James puts it on his desk, angled at the poster of Arielle Smiles. He gets in bed, pulls up the sheets and quietly masturbates.

PRE-LAP: a warbled, distorted rooster CROW, announcing--

JAMES' BEDROOM - DAWN

Sunlight just creeping in. James sleepily comes to as the artificial crow sounds continues, rolling over.

From the bed, he has a sideways view through a crack in the window shade. Outside, we see--

TED, walking to a dusty '89 Pontiac Bonneville, off to work. Rumpled suit, briefcase in hand. Also of note: he's wearing a GAS MASK (or rather, a fanciful sci-fi approximation of one that looks assembled from spare parts).

James just lays there a moment and watches him go.

AROUND THE HOUSE - DAY - EXPRESSION ABSENT

-James does jumping jacks, showers, eats oatmeal.

-James does LESSONS with April: Graphing an indecipherable PHYSICS EQUATION using two computers at once.

-James says private avowals at the dinner table.

JAMES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

James lies on his bed, mood unchanged, deriving little joy.

TED (O.S.)
8:30 James! Powering down!

The lights flicker and fade. Darkness.
James' flashlight turns on.

HALLWAY - NIGHT

James slowly opens his door, tiptoes down the hallway...

He uses a PIN to open the locked closet, goes inside.
When he comes out, he's wearing Ted's GAS MASK.

He presses a glowing GREEN BUTTON next to the front door.
It opens. He steps into--

AIRLOCK (?) - CONTINUOUS

A sterile, sci-fi cube of plastic and plexiglass.

James presses a sequence of buttons near the exit door.
There's a heavy WHOOSH, then the door slides open.

JAMES' ROOF - NIGHT

James crawls to the top, finds his spot.
He looks out at the dome of stars, the distant mountains.
Then he sees something that makes him straighten up...

Sudden LIGHTS, dotting the horizon.

In a line, moving. Getting bigger. Flashing RED and BLUE.

A lo-fi OMINOUS SYNTH pulses to life...

(A Brigsby Bear fan would recognize this music from the Pla'torian Raider ambush in volume 15.)

James stares, intrigued and amazed and afraid.
We can hear SIRENS now. Five cars at least.

APRIL (O.S.)

James?!

He snaps out of it.

JAMES

I know I'm not supposed to be out here, but something's happening!

JAMES' HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ted HUGS James.

JAMES

Wait, what's going on though?

TED

Just remember everything we've taught you, and be strong, okay?

JAMES

(confused)

Okay...

James straightens his posture.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)

(megaphone)

We have the compound surrounded!
Leave the child, and come out with
your hands on your heads!

James looks between Ted and April, more confused than ever.

Ted opens the AIRLOCK to see LIGHTS in the driveway.
Silhouetted law enforcement.

April turns to James, broken, apologetic...

APRIL

This isn't how we planned it...

OFF JAMES, dumbfounded, as his parents walk outside.
The BRIGSBY MUSIC carries us to--

MODERN POLICE CRUISER - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Strange, sleek, alien. Reflecting rivers of smooth light.
As we approach, a shadowy POLICE OFFICER opens the rear door.

POLICE CRUISER - MINUTES LATER

Headlights slicing through desert darkness.

BACKSEAT

James (in his Brigsby shirt) strapped in, shell-shocked.
Holding tight to a DUFFLE BAG.

He opens his mouth to speak and the music CUTS OUT.
Just the engine and a crackle of radio chatter. He hesitates.

JAMES

So... I take it you guys are from
another zone or something?

The young DEPUTY in the passenger seat half-turns his head.

DEPUTY

We're from the Durmott County
Sheriff's office. We're gonna take
you on over the state border.

JAMES

(?)
Oh. Okay.

DEPUTY

Got about a five hour drive, if you
want to try and get some shut eye.

JAMES

Got it...

They pass a lone GAS STATION, and James looks out at it.
Never seen anything like it. Apprehension building...

(sarcastic)

So are you guys gonna give me a
breathing mask, or are we supposed
to just let the poison take over
our bodies?

DEPUTY

Breathing masks?

JAMES

Yeah... You know if you inhale the air out here you can get Traynco disease, right?

The deputy turns around, looks at him.

DEPUTY

Uh, look, there's this detective been working with the family -- he'll explain everything. But the bottom line is, you're safe now. And as far as the air goes, it's good to go. No mask needed.

(off James' uncertainty)

I promise, look--

The deputy hits a button and James' window slides down. WIND whips his hair. He holds his breath as long as he can... Then he exhales, breathes in and out... Whoa -- he's okay.

James unbuckles, sticks his head outside. Looks ahead.

CALIFORNIA FREEWAY - PRE-DAWN

The police cruiser through the suburbs. Traffic sparse.

BACK SEAT - PRE-DAWN

James sleeps, flat on the seat. Stirs awake. He looks up through the window, sees:

THE CITY OF CEDAR HILLS, UTAH - MORNING

GRAND BUILDINGS gleaming early sunlight. A steepled CHURCH, a green PARK, storefronts on MAIN STREET.

James rubs his eyes, making sure he's really awake.

POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

They pull into the parking lot of an impressive Spanish mission-style building.

MUSIC: Meeting of the High Council at Impossible Tower, Brigsby Vol. 16.

James steps out of the car, stands there. He tilts his head back, awestruck.

ENTRANCE - POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

James enters, timid, flanked by police officers.
He looks around, trying to make sense of the environment --
the people, uniforms, sounds, insignia, technology.

AT A TABLE: James fields questions from DR. EMILY LARSON.,
scribbling notes. James looks around, overwhelmed.

OMIT**INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION**

James' darkened REFLECTION in a two-way mirror.
Sitting at a table, looking around, trying not to freak out.

The DOOR OPENS and he looks over, braces himself.
An unsure beat as DETECTIVE VOGEL enters... The guy SMILES.

DET. VOGEL

James...

He walks over, puts a glass bottle of COCA-COLA on the table.
Pulls out his chair, turns it backward, sits down, relaxed
cool-guy style.

What is up, my man?

James stares back at him, unsure.

That is your name, right? James?
(off his shrug)
Okay. Well, mine's Detective Vogel.
(re: Coke)
And that's for you. Figured you
could use it.

James looks between Detective Vogel and the bottle, unlocking
some mystery. Readjusts in his chair.

If you're thirsty?

Vogel twists off the cap, slides it to him.
James leans forward, curious. Bubbles fizz.

(realizing)
Did you ever have soda growing up?
No? It's like, a delicious, fizzy
beverage.

James pushes the bottle away from him.

Alright...

JAMES
So, I'm a prisoner now?

DET. VOGEL
Whoa, what? No. Not at all. This is
just, I'm sorry--

He gets up, turns the chair forward, sits back down.

DET. VOGEL
Look, James. I'm a friend, okay?
The reason you're here, and the
reason I'm here, is so I can help
you. That's my job. Does that make
sense?

James stares back at him a beat...

JAMES
No.

Vogel doesn't quite know what to say. He glances at the
mirror. James sees it, turns to look as well.

BEHIND THE TWO-WAY MIRROR

DEPUTY BANDER watches as James searches his reflection.
Expression harsh, arms crossed, eyebrows flexed in scrutiny.

BANDER
This guy's pretty unstable, huh?

Next to Bander is Emily, observing.

EMILY
Actually, given the circumstances,
I'd say he's handling all this
remarkably well.

A28 **INTERROGATION ROOM**

A28

James turns back to Vogel.

DET. VOGEL
Do you know why we came to get you?

He thinks about it, unsure.

JAMES
Is it because one time I threw a
rock at a Gunnerfox?
(off his confusion)
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

I mean, the soldiers just showed up, and my mom and dad said I have to be strong, but I don't...?

DET. VOGEL

That's, uh... okay. Let's talk about your parents. Ted and April -- Tell me about them.

JAMES

I guess... they're older, and kind of boring. Normal.

DET. VOGEL

Did they have you locked in somewhere? Restrained?

JAMES

I mean... the doors were locked, and the airlock was off limits, because of regulations and stuff.

DET. VOGEL

Did they ever... touch you?

James thinks about it. Shrugs.

It's okay James.

JAMES

I mean... Yeah. Sometimes, they would grab me, like this--

James takes Vogel's hand... And SHAKES it, friendly.

And they'd say, good job on your studies, James, we love you.

(then)

It happened a lot.

DET. VOGEL

Right... Okay. But they never hurt you, in any way?

James hesitates, affronted. An absurd question.

JAMES

They're my mom and dad.

DET. VOGEL

So... you never tried to leave?

JAMES

I just figured with the quarantine,
you know?

No, Vogel does not. But he nods anyway. Looks him over.

DET. VOGEL

Who's that on your shirt there?

James just stares at him a moment, shrugs. Obviously--

JAMES

It's Brigsby.

Actually written ON HIS SHIRT: "It's Brigsby!"

Vogel waits for further explanation, but there is none.
He pauses a beat, not sure where to start.

DET. VOGEL

Okay. Well, James... We've got a
few things to go over. About you,
and your life, and... existence, in
general.

He pushes the soda back over.

First, Coke. I keep a stash in my
mini-fridge, for guests. I think
you'll like it.

James considers the bottle -- bright, dewy, inviting.

He brings it to his lips, sips cautiously, and...
Whoa. Amazing. Unlike anything he's ever tasted.
Takes him a second to process it.

JAMES

Um... so... What is this place?

MUSIC: Space jump to the shadow galaxy, Brigsby Vol. 20.

HALLWAY - POLICE STATION - MORNING

James floats, time slowed, shell-shocked.
Looks like he got an answer to his question and then some.

Deputy Bander holds a DOOR open, eying him.
James turns, stops in the doorway, looks inside--

MEETING ROOM - POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

THREE STRANGERS stand waiting to meet him.

LOUISE POPE (50s) and GREG POPE (50s), holding each other close, expressions of cautious elation. But one look at James and the floodgates open. They EMBRACE him, fighting tears.

GREG POPE

I knew it...

Louise Pope gestures for AUBREY POPE (17) to join them. Considerably less emotional, Aubrey adds a half-assed comforting hand to the mix.

POLICE STATION - PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

Surrounded by REPORTERS and TV CAMERAS. As James exits the building with the Popes, they SURGE forward.

MOMENTS LATER, James stands with the Popes, their arms around him, giving emotional interviews to a FEMALE REPORTER. James watches the interaction, trying to make sense of it.

Then it occurs to James that someone is speaking to him. MUSIC CUTS. James looks at the reporter.

JAMES

I, uh... I don't... what?

The reporter smiles, kind, patient.

FEMALE REPORTER

James, we know you've been through so, so much; how does it feel to finally be back where you belong?

The reporter puts the microphone closer to him. James looks at it, confused, then takes it from her. He awkwardly holds it away from his face.

JAMES

I didn't think, that... It's a different reality than what I thought. So, that's...

The reporter guides the mic toward his mouth.

(loudly)

...and everything's really big.

James looks to the reporter for a response. She just smiles, takes the mic and turns back to the camera.

REPORTER

Well, there you have it. Missing for over two decades, little James Pope finally returns home.

POPE HOUSEHOLD - FRONT FOYER - DAY

Big, modern, expensive. Natural light pouring in from everywhere. The front door OPENS.

Greg Pope steps aside, gestures "you first" to James. He readjusts the duffle bag strap, timid. Then he steps inside. Takes it all in.

The family DOG (a big poodle mix, MELVIN) trots over to James, excited. James dodges him, freaked out.

LOUISE POPE

Oh, I'm sorry, I meant to put Melvin outside.

She corrals the dog, petting him, settling him down.

He's nice, I promise. See?

James studies Melvin, not quite believing what he's seeing.

JAMES

It's a lot bigger than the Gunnerfoxes, but also very friendlier.

CLIMBING THE STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

James follows Greg and Louise Pope, looking at various FAMILY PHOTOS on the wall.

GREG POPE

Bathroom's just down the hall on the right, across from Aubrey's room. And this one's all yours...

He opens the door to--

JAMES' NEW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A plain guest room. Bed, end table, white walls. Dresser with a small flat screen TV on top.

GREG POPE

So, whaddya think?

James holds tight to his duffle bag, unsure.

LOUISE POPE

James, we just want you to know...
We don't expect any of this to be
easy. We know it's going to take
time to get comfortable, and settle
into everything, and that's okay.

GREG POPE

Right, and this is your space --
your "chill zone" -- where you can
be by yourself, whenever you want.

LOUISE POPE

Or, if you want to talk about life,
or what's next? Well, we can do
that too. But they said we should
take things slow. So, just know...

She catches herself, tears forming.

Every day you were gone, it was
like a piece of our heart was
missing. And now it's whole again.

She hugs James tight.

We love you so, so much.

James looks at Greg Pope over her shoulder, uncomfortable.

JAMES

Okay...

James disengages. Louise Pope steps back, cautious.

Uh... thanks.

And he gently closes the door on them.

DINING ROOM - POPE HOUSEHOLD - EVENING

Greg and Louise Pope, Aubrey and James sit around the table,
plating up slices of pizza. James inspects his, curious.

Greg Pope raises his beer, a toast.

GREG POPE

Well, James, I just want to say --
we couldn't be happier that you're
finally here with us, and I can't
think of a better way to say
"welcome back" than with one of our
favorite traditions--
(corny Italian accent)
--ah pizza pie!

Aubrey ignores him, texting. Louise smiles.

LOUISE POPE

Is there anything you'd like to
say, James?

James hesitates.

JAMES

Oh, yeah -- sorry.

James bows his head and begins to MUMBLE his private avowals.
It takes a while... Then:

...and may our minds be stronger
tomorrow.

James stands. He shakes Louise Pope's hand, then Greg Pope's.
Aubrey refuses, weirded out. Then he sits back down.
No one looks like they have any idea what just happened, but--

GREG POPE

Well, great. Thank you, James.
(grasping)
What do think about that, Aubs?
Pretty cool, huh?

Aubrey glances up, disdainful. James starts in on his pizza.

GREG POPE

So... Hey, you know what? We should
make the list! Remember, we talked
about this? We can do a list of all
of our favorite stuff, that James
hasn't gotten to do yet. Then we
can do them all, together.

LOUISE POPE

Oh, that's right! I love that idea.
Does that sound fun, James?

James finishes chewing a mouthful, shrugs.

GREG POPE

And I guess pizza's the first thing
we can cross off!

On AUBREY: not eating, eyeing James, grossed out.

GREG POPE

What d'you think, Aub? What should
we put on the list? What are some
of your favorite things?

AUBREY

I don't know... I guess, acting
like real people, and having normal
conversations, that aren't super
forced and weird. I like that.

GREG POPE

(undeterred)

You know, actually, I do think
that's a great idea -- I'd love for
you and James to sit down, talk,
get to know each other.

Aubrey looks at James, considering the prospect...

AUBREY

Yeah, we'll definitely have to get
together some time...

James says nothing. Louise Pope feels out the awkward
silence, then--

LOUISE POPE

Oh, I know -- swimming!

GREG POPE

Sure. There you go. In a pool, at
the beach. What else? Surfing,
maybe? Start with a boogie board,
obviously. And actually, now that
I'm thinking about it, should
probably learn to swim, before any
of that, so...

LOUISE POPE

...boats? Sea life, aquariums,
whale watching.

AUBREY

Why are you both so all about the
ocean right now? It's like freaking
him out.

James looks between them, silent, unsure.

GREG POPE

I'll tell you what. We'll put the list together. And we'll balance it out with plenty of land activities. And then, James, you can choose what you want to do.

James nods okay. Thinks about it...

JAMES

I, uh... I guess I'd just like to watch the new Brigsby tape, if that's okay?

GREG POPE

Brigsby tape?

JAMES

Yeah. The new one.

Greg and Louise Pope share a glance, unsure.

GREG POPE

I'm not sure I know what that is.

James half-chuckles, thinking it's a joke.

JAMES

Yeah... But seriously, did it come yet?

Neither Aubrey nor Greg nor Louise Pope know what to say.

LAPTOP SCREEN - MINUTES LATER

A GOOGLE search bar: "Brigsby Bear Adventures." ENTER.
We're in the LIVING ROOM.

James looks over Greg Pope's shoulder as he scrolls, trying to make sense of the flood of information on the screen.

GREG POPE

I don't know, James... I'm not seeing it anywhere.

JAMES

What is all this stuff?

GREG POPE

The internet? Anything you want to find out about, you can find it on here. There's some bad stuff too, but, well, we don't have to get into that... Anyway. Let's check Wikipedia.

JAMES

I think I had that "internet" on my fold computer? It had the Brigsby forum-page, and there was hundreds of members from different zones. Everyone watched it.

GREG POPE

Do you know the web address?
(off his confusion)
The thing you type up here?

JAMES

Oh, yeah. brigsbytalk-dot-star-star-star-46-dot-14-dot-46-dot-14-dot-46-dot-14-dot-online. Six.

Greg looks confused as he types it. "Unknown address."
James puts his hands on his head, frustrated.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

James bounds down the stairs, BRIGSBY TAPE in hand.

JAMES

Look! See? It was delivered to our supply drop every week.

He shows them the case, indicating--

Brigsby Bear Adventures, Volume 14,
Episode thirty, "Making friends
with the Wizzles."

Greg looks at the amateur artwork of Brigsby Bear surrounded by furry little friends. Greg and Louise Pope share a glance.

GREG POPE

Oh...kay. Cool. Well, hey -- we'll figure this out. But for now, there's a bunch of other tv shows we can watch, if you want?

James tilts his head, intrigued.

JAMES
So they do make other ones?

LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

On their 70 inch TV: a digital guide showing HUNDREDS of channels.

GREG POPE
See, all this comes from a satellite. There's lots of good stuff on, like...

He flips past a cop drama.

Police officers...

Then a sitcom.

Funny family...

A cooking show.

Fancy cakes. Then you got the music choice channels. This one's party jams.

(disco plays)
Do you like music?

JAMES
Oh, yeah, I know music. My dad -- I mean, my first dad -- he was an original member of The Beatlers.

GREG POPE
(what?)
Oh. Very cool. Uh, here--

Greg hands James the remote.

You can use these buttons to scroll, this one to select.

James tries it out, flying past hundreds of options. He selects one: THE NEWS.

NEWS ANCHOR (TV)
Tonight, an incredible story out of Utah -- a young man reunited with his family, 25 years after being abducted from Cedar Hills Memorial Hospital as an infant.

ON TV: Side-by-side MUGSHOTS of Ted and April.

GREG POPE

Maybe we should try something
else...

Greg Pope takes the remote back, flustered.
He fumbles with it, hits the wrong button.

NEWS ANCHOR (TV)

The alleged kidnappers are a former
City College professor, April
Mitchum, and her husband Ted, the
artist and designer behind the
wildly popular 80s toy, Terrence
the Tiger.

ON TV: 80s news footage of crowds in a toy store fighting
over a limited supply of Teddy Ruxpin-esque talking Tigers.

The couple are being charged with
felony kidnapping and imprisonment--

The screen goes OFF, leaving James' reflection, staring.
A uncomfortable beat. James takes a step backward.

JAMES

So... I think it's my bedtime, cuz
you probably need to turn off the
generator soon, right?

LOUISE POPE

Oh -- well, we don't really have
bedtimes here, but you can go to
your room whenever you'd like.

Louise smiles reassuringly.
Greg nods, nothing of substance to add, but--

GREG POPE

We're on an electrical grid.

James nods as though he understands that.

LOUISE POPE

Whatever rules you had before,
don't worry about those. Things are
different here.

James scoffs nervously.

JAMES

Yeah. They are.

He slips out of the room.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

James steps to the top, pauses. He hears something--
Muffled SYNTH-Y music emanating from Aubrey's room.
James takes a couple steps closer, intrigued.

Then her door handle TURNS and starts to open...
James freezes, not sure what to do.
Aubrey steps out of her room, sees him.

JAMES

Uh, sorry.
(then)
I like those rhythms.

He spins awkwardly, goes to his door, shuts himself in.
Aubrey shakes her head.

AUBREY

So weird.

JAMES' NEW BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

James inspects his TV, Briggsby tape in hand.
But there's nowhere to put it.

TIME CUT: James channel surfs past: an infomercial, a
military recruitment ad, a body spray commercial, C-SPAN.
He lands on a trashy E! reality show.

On screen: two women yelling at each other, followed by--

REALITY TALKING HEAD

*Denise needs to realize, if she
wants this restaurant to take off,
she has to play by my rules.*

James turns it off. He just sits, alone, thinking...
Then the corners of his mouth turn down. His lip quivers.
Like it's all just now starting to hit him. He shrinks back
into his bed, pulls his knees up to his chest.

OMIT

POPE HOUSEHOLD - JAMES' BEDROOM - DAY

Daylight through the drawn shades of James' WINDOW.
Neighborhood sounds below -- a car driving by, a dog barking.

James steps over, timid. Pulls the shade aside just enough to sneak a peak at the strange world below...

POPE HOUSEHOLD - HALLWAY - DAY

Greg Pope comes up the stairs to James' door. He hesitates for a moment, listening -- nothing. He knocks, concerned.

GREG POPE

James? You alright in there, bud?
You didn't come down for breakfast.
We made a quiche. That's like a pie
sort of, but with eggs and stuff.

A beat -- no response.

Well, hey -- I took the day off, so
I was thinking maybe we could have
some fun? I've got a surprise
planned. How does that sound?

Another beat, then the door CRACKS OPEN.
James peers through, intrigued...

SINGLE-SCREEN MOVIE THEATER - AFTERNOON

On the marquee: "Now Showing: Hockey High"

Greg Pope and James approach on the sidewalk.

MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Old patterned carpet, neons, posters, displays.

James walks inside as though one might a cathedral, looking around in awe.

James takes a line of ONE-SHEETS, carefully absorbing them as though one might great works of art. He stops at one of a man in drag holding up a gun and a police badge. James chuckles, shakes his head.

Greg Pope watches him, not sure what to make of his son.

THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

James walks in, popcorn and soda in hand, looking around. Lights DIM and the screen GLOWS. James looks up, TRANSFIXED.

Music: Treasure of the Ancients, Briggsby Vol. 12.

He drifts toward the front row. Finds a seat in the middle. Mouth agape, glasses glowing. Religious awe.

ICE-RINK - ON SCREEN (45 minutes into the movie)

Following a HELMETED KID, moving the puck down the ice, juking some UNDERDOG HOCKEY KIDS, and scoring.

NERD HOCKEY KID

Who is this guy?

The Helmeted Kid hockey-stops, spraying up ice, then takes off the helmet, revealing... LONG BLONDE HAIR.

CHUBBY HOCKEY KID

A girl?

The team can't believe it!

And neither can James, in his seat, completely blown away by this narrative development.

JAMES

Whoa...

James continues to watch, but the sound and picture FADE OUT.

FAMILIAR VOICE (O.C.)

(whispers)

James...

Did he really just hear that? James spins to find: BRIGSBY BEAR, sitting in the seat behind him. James can't believe it.

JAMES

Brigsby?

(then)

You know my name?

BRIGSBY

I was transported to the inbetween-verse, James! I'm trapped!

The movie screen goes BRIGHT WHITE, illuminating-- The theater, EMPTY. An otherworldly MIST rising. James looks freaked out.

JAMES

What's happening?

Brigsby taps his wrist transponder, producing a hologram.

BRIGSBY

It's the Pla'torians... They must
have intercepted my dimensional
transmission. We're not safe here.
(springing up)
Follow me!

James and Brigsby run toward the movie screen.

Behind them, the PROJECTOR lens start to spin like a Gatling
gun, firing bursts of colored LASERS!

*(The sound and visual effects here are of the same quality as
"Brigsby Bear Adventures.")*

Following Brigsby's lead, James JUMPS inside--

THE MOVIE SCREEN - INFINITE WHITE

They run, dodging lasers all around them.

BRIGSBY

You were right about how to defeat
the Sun Snatcher, James. But we
don't have much time.

Brigsby starts to DISSOLVE, fading into white static.

You're the only one who can stop
him now! Find the Sortis Crystal,
James! Find Arielle Smiles! The
fate of our world depends on it!

Brigsby disappears. COLOR returns to the world around him.

PATTERENED CARPET - MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

James stands there, catching his breath.

GREG POPE (O.S.)

James? James!

James spins to see Greg Pope running up to him, worried.

GREG POPE

Are you okay?

James smiles, still processing it.

JAMES

Okay? That was amazing!

GREG POPE

You started running around,
shouting some kind of... weird
stuff pretty loudly?

JAMES

Yeah it was so fun!

Greg Pope touches his hand to James' forehead.

GREG POPE

You feel okay? You don't have a
fever or anything?

JAMES

I feel great.

(to everyone in the lobby)

I love movies!

EMILY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Big, bright and pleasant.

James sits on the couch, exuberance unabated.
Flanking him are Greg and Louise Pope, smiling hopefully.

JAMES

..and remember when the ice
warriors got their new armor? And
the one with the glasses -- the
Little Eddie? -- when it was too
big, it didn't even fit?

Across from them in a chair: EMILY. Expression warm.

Oh! And when the one called Gordo
ate all that cake and slipped and
fell on his backside?

(to Greg Pope)

Remember?

GREG POPE

Sure, yeah. Pretty funny...

JAMES

Yeah, it was different from Brigsby
'cause there weren't any spells and
it was only one adventure, but the
screen was so big!

Louise wants to respond but hesitates, looking to Emily for
the okay. Emily nods.

LOUISE POPE

That sounds so cool, and so big,
but hey -- since you brought up
Brigsby, maybe that's something we
should all talk about?

EMILY

I think that's a great idea. Thank
you, Mrs. Pope.

JAMES

Wait, who are you?

She smiles, patient.

EMILY

My name's Emily, remember?

JAMES

No, I know, but what's--
(gestures vaguely)
--this? Having a meeting with you,
here? What's going on?

EMILY

Well, James, since you're going
through such a confusing transition
at the moment, your parents and I
thought it might help if I dropped
by every once a while so we could
just... talk.

JAMES

About movies?

EMILY

Sure. Or, you know, any emotions
you might be experiencing, trying
to adapt to a very new, very
different environment. And, hey --

She shrugs like it's a chill plan off the top of her head.

...develop a plan to help you
through it.

JAMES

Okay, but why, though?

EMILY

Because... that's what I do; I help
people.

James rolls his eyes, frustrated.

JAMES

Everyone says they're trying to help me, but nobody can find the new episode of Brigsby!

EMILY

(choosing her words)
Right. Let's take a step back. Let's talk about Brigsby Bear Adventures.

JAMES

Wait, you know it?

EMILY

Your parents and I have learned quite a lot about it, actually. Including some things that you should know.

James tilts his head, intrigued.

JAMES

Like what?

EMILY

First of all, there wasn't a new Brigsby this week.

James looks between Greg and Louise Pope, unsure.

JAMES

That's... impossible.

EMILY

James, the way you were raised, you didn't even realize you were being held captive. And these people you thought were your parents -- you need to understand, these were not good people. They went to great lengths to placate you, but it was all just... an elaborate illusion. Does that make sense?

James twists his face up skeptically.

JAMES

Uh... I know that this society is kind of different from what they said, but... What does that have to do with Brigsby?

EMILY

Let's take a step back here, James. Now, the way the police found you was, someone spotted Ted going into a warehouse about 40 miles away from where he was holding you captive. The day they came to get you, they also went into that warehouse. Inside, they found props, puppets, costumes and a television set of a cabin. Do you see where I'm going with this?

James eyes go wide.

JAMES

Brigsby stuff?

EMILY

From what we can tell--

JAMES

(excited)

My dad actually got to go there?

Greg Pope's thrown off by that phrasing...

EMILY

James, Ted Mitchum -- your captor -- he went there several times a week. He was the one making the show.

James works it through. His eyes go somewhere distant.

James?

He snaps out of it, finds the words--

JAMES

(psyched)

Yes! He knows Brigsby--? I mean, he made it? That's... that's great!

Louise Pope looks between Greg Pope and Emily, unsure. *Uh-oh.*

GREG POPE

Um, James -- I think you're missing the larger context here--

JAMES

Cameras and characters?

EMILY

There's still a lot we're trying to figure out, but--

JAMES

Hold on... He was the one who decided what Brigsby would do next?

EMILY

That's right.

JAMES

Have they decided who's going to take over doing it?

EMILY

(?)

No one's "taking over doing it." You're the only one who's ever seen this show.

JAMES

But I have friends who watched it, on the Brigsby fan forum, on my computer?

EMILY

Well, the computer at your old house was running on a closed network, so any content there we can assume was created by Ted and April.

JAMES

You mean BrigsbyBoy1, BrigsbyBoy2, BrigsbyBoy3 -- they weren't real?

EMILY

I'm sorry, James. No.

James thinks a beat...

JAMES

What about BrigsbyGirl?

Emily looks a tad incredulous. She gestures "sorry."
James is bummed. A little embarrassed.

We were gonna meet up someday...

James readjusts on the couch. Sinks into it.

EMILY

I know this isn't easy, James. And there are going to be strong emotions associated with this. Like today, when you were overstimulated at the movie theater. But that's why I'm here, to help you figure things out.

LOUISE POPE

That's right, sweetie. And we're excited to help, too! We're gonna have so much fun together, getting you back on track, you won't even remember some old TV show.

James doesn't respond, lost in his thoughts.

EMILY

What do you think, James? Do you have any other questions?

JAMES

Yeah -- who made Hockey High?

Emily wasn't expecting that. She looks to Greg Pope.

GREG POPE

Um... I think it's the guy who did "Mr. Bachelor," right? Is that what it was called?

Louise shrugs.

JAMES

Does he do all the movies?

GREG POPE

Uh, no -- lots of people make lots of different movies.

A beat as James considers that, putting something together...

JAMES

Can anyone do it?

The BRIGSBY THEME begins to build, carrying to--

OMIT

JAMES' ROOM - NIGHT

DOOR: closed. LAPTOP: open.

James sits, eyes fixed with purpose. He Googles:
 "how... to... make... a... movie... show"
 His finger hovers over the ENTER key, drops.

ON SCREEN: A super fast-forward of James' internet deep dive:
 film history, stars, equipment, studios, sets, effects.

James' eyes dart, consuming everything.

JAMES' ROOM - DAY

James drops a stack of LIBRARY BOOKS on his desk:

"Film Directing." "The Art of Storyboarding"
 "The North American Grizzly Bear."

LATER -- James closes the grizzly book with a THUD.
 Worthless. Moves it aside, grabs "Practical Visual Effects."

JAMES' ROOM - NIGHT

James finishes a crude STORYBOARD on notebook paper:
 Brigsby jumping off a cloud, a Sun Soldier chasing him.

James tapes it to the wall, next to several others.
 We TRACK along the length of the wall, revealing--
 The room is COVERED in storyboards, floor to ceiling.

James leans back in his chair, assessing it all, proud.

There's a KNOCK, and he turns to his door. Opens it to find:
 AUBREY, who doesn't look very happy.

AUBREY
 (forced)
 Hey.

James stands there, unsure whether to respond.
 Aubrey rolls her eyes.

AUBREY

So, I'm going to our school's football game with some people, and if you want to come with me, to that, you're invited.

(lower, a suggestion)

But you definitely don't have to, if you're too busy, sleeping, or...

(looks into his room)

decorating, or whatever it is you've been doing in here.

James tilts his head, confused.

JAMES

Is that the thing with the mask guys, they get mad at each other?

AUBREY

Yeah, it's pretty stupid.

JAMES

So, should I-- You do want me to come to it?

LOUISE POPE (O.S.)

(listening from the stairs)

Aubrey...

AUBREY

(sighs)

Yeah, I guess.

AUBREY'S SHITTY MAZDA - NIGHT

Parked at the curb of another house.

Aubrey sits driver, finishing a text. James in the back.

AUBREY

So, look... mom and dad said I had to invite you, because you've been in your room so much, and they think you should socialize with people, or whatever. Also, they threatened to take my car away, which is some bullshit, but.

On James, in the BACK SEAT.

JAMES

"Bullshit?"

AUBREY
Bullshit. Yes.

JAMES
 Oh.

AUBREY
 We're not going to the game.

JAMES
 We're not?

AUBREY
 This kid's parents are out of town,
 so a bunch of people are hanging
 out. It's not a big deal, but for
 some reason, Greg and Louise always
 freak out, just because of this one
 time the cops came and I had to go
 to a court thing.

James stares back at her, confused.

Do not stare at people like that
 when we're there, okay? Be normal.
 (James adopts a "normal"
 posture)
 And don't tell anyone how old you
 are. Or that we're related.

JAMES
 Should... I go back to my room?

AUBREY
 What did I just tell you? They
 think we're going to the game and
 getting food after.
 (off his uncertainty)
 It'll be like four, five hours max.

The passenger door opens and MERIDETH gets in.

MERIDETH
 What's up what's up...

AUBREY
 Hey, sorry.

MERIDETH
 It's cool.
 (turning, to James)
 Hey, I'm Merideth.

James tenses up.

JAMES
 Hi...

AUBREY
That's James.

MERIDETH
 Yeah, I saw you on the news, man.
 Crazy.

She shoves him playfully. He's not sure what to say.

So... You like Cedar Hills?

James thinks about it. Offers--

JAMES
 I like movies.

Merideth LAUGHS.

MERIDETH
 Yeah, exactly.

PRELAP: bass-heavy PARTY JAMS.

HOUSE PARTY - LAWN

Teenagers approaching from all directions.
 Cars choke the street and driveway.

James follows Aubrey and Merideth, nervous. Aubrey turns--

AUBREY
 Just... do your own thing, okay?

Before James can put together a response, they're--

INSIDE

The MUSIC. The CROWD. Yelling, laughing, swarming.
 Merideth and Aubrey say hi (ad-lib) to some friends.
 James watches a couple DANCING, trying to make sense of it.

SPENCER
Yo!

SPENCER (18) weaves through the crowd, hands up for double high-fives.

Finally!

AUBREY

I know...

Aubrey reciprocates. Merideth medium-fives him, less into it. James clocks: he has a SPACESHIP on his shirt.

SPENCER

So, what's up?

AUBREY

(walking past him)

Just, you know, doing shit...

Spencer nods, sincere.

SPENCER

Right on.

(after her)

Keg's in the kitchen!

MERIDETH

Spence, you got any shit on you?

SPENCER

I don't, but Logan's around somewhere.

MERIDETH

Tight. Who are these people?

She squeezes past him.

SPENCER

Alright, see you out there.

Then Spencer sees: James standing a few feet way, unsure.

SPENCER

Hey man. Spencer.

James stares a beat, nervous. Then, too-quiet--

JAMES

Is that some kinda Bear Speeder?

SPENCER

(leans in)

What's that?

Another song comes on, LOUDER. James steps over--

JAMES
 (yells)
 That some kinda Bear Speeder or
 Stealodrone Rider? On your shirt?

SPENCER
 Oh, yeah, dude, some Trek shit.

James nods.

JAMES
 I'm James.
 (then)
 My parents stole me, but I still
 think they were pretty cool.

SPENCER
 Tight... You need a beer?

HOUSE PARTY - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

PACKED with people, wall-to-wall, orbiting the keg.

James navigates the mess, timid, following Spencer.
 SQUEEZES around a couple making out against the wall.

Spencer sees a FRIEND preparing to do a keg-stand, and
 another filming it on his phone.

SPENCER
 Send me that! I need that!

The crowd SURGES and cheers as the keg-stand begins, forcing
 James back against the wall.

CROWD
 Co-ry! Co-ry! CO-RY!

Then into the corner. Trapped.

He sees an OPEN DOOR and ducks for it, panicked. Escapes to--

BACK DECK - CONTINUOUS

James stumbles outside, shuts the door behind him.
 Smaller crowd out here, quieter. He catches his breath.
 Sits at the patio table, surveys the scene--

On the other side of the deck: a couple BROS eye him.
 One says something to the other. They LAUGH.

James doesn't know what to do, so--

JAMES

(loud)

I'm James... Really great clothes!

The bros laugh even harder. James turns away, embarrassed. He takes a deep breath, uneasy.

Spencer steps outside, red cups in hand.

SPENCER

Hey man. Everything cool?

JAMES

Yeah... just meeting some people.

Spencer notices the bros, continuing to laugh.

SPENCER

Oh... Yeah, man -- I don't even know who those dudes are, but they look like dicks.

JAMES

Yeah...?

SPENCER

Totally. Don't even worry about it.

James nods, relaxing a bit. Smiles.

JAMES

I said I like their clothes, but really I like my clothes a bit more.

Spencer laughs.

SPENCER

Yeah, totally, man that shirt's hilarious.

Spencer hands James a beer.

So... You're Aubrey's... brother, person, right?

James considers whether to answer...

(MORE)

SPENCER (CONT'D)

I heard you were basically inside one house, like, your whole life?

James shrugs, guarded.

JAMES

I went on the roof sometimes.

SPENCER

(smiles)

Nice, man. Good call.

Spencer raises his cup. James mimics him.

Cheers, dude. To, uh...

(thinks about it)

Have you seen porn yet?

(off his confusion)

To pornography. And videogames. And like, millions of other... awesome shit.

JAMES

Yes, to all those... things.

They SIP. And James immediately SPRAYS it everywhere. Spencer LAUGHS, wiping himself off.

SPENCER

Oh, shit! Sorry, man. That's cool.

JAMES

I thought it was like soda.

James clears his throat, determined. Tries another gulp. COUGHS it up.

BACK DECK - LATER

Fully raging, music LOUDER. A few other people stand around James and Spencer, drinking, smoking. Including Merideth and LOGAN, extremely high, digging through a baggie of pills.

James looks looser now. Buzzed, likely.

JAMES

(rattles off)

...but this is before the collapse of the third federation, where everything changes, and Brigsby becomes an outlaw. But he's still a good guy, even though he has to work with the Stardust Bandits.

LOGAN

Wait, what are we even talking about here -- like, a trained bear?

JAMES

Yeah, Brigsby? He's trained in space combat, puzzle-solving, quests. And I guess he also allows you to be the best version of yourself via a series of instructional life lessons. Plus, did I tell you about the rainbow eyes?

MERIDETH

How do the rainbow eyes work?

JAMES

Oh, great question. they're just -- whenever you need a rainbow.

MERIDETH

(smiles at him)

That's insane. I love it.

Logan offers the baggie to Spencer, deep in thought.

SPENCER

Oh, I'm good man.
(passes it)
So, okay -- how many episodes?

JAMES

25 volumes, 736 episodes, total.

SPENCER

Holy shit...

JAMES

Yeah, I've got some old tapes if you ever want to see it?

SPENCER

Dude, yes! That'd be dope as shit.

JAMES

Yes, it's... dope as shit.

JAMES

And then there's gonna be a movie too, but it's not done yet, 'cause I'm making it and I just started.

SPENCER

Whoa, seriously? Cool. Are you gonna use all the original shit?

James considers that...

MERIDETH

(re: baggie)

Hey James, you want one?

JAMES

Yes!

MERIDETH

Do this--

She sticks out her tongue. James does it too. She places the pills, swallows, and James follows suit.

JAMES

Thank you. I love opto-pills.

Merideth laughs, gives him a HUG.

HOUSE PARTY - LIVING ROOM - 30-45 MINUTES LATER

MUSIC UP. Merideth and James dance among the partiers, exuberant. But James looks a little unstable, overwhelmed.

Freaking out, senses overwhelmed. She leads him to--

HOUSE PARTY - EMPTY GUEST ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Merideth opens the door, holding James' hand, leading him inside. She sits him down on the edge of the bed.

MERIDETH

There you go. Here, drink this.

She hands him a glass of water, sits next to him.

A beat of silence... Muffled MUSIC from the other room. James struggles to keep his eyelids open, mind racing.

MERIDETH

Don't worry, my first time rolling was intense too. But once you just relax and go with it, you're good.

James nods, unsure. More silence.

There's probably a lot of stuff you've never done, huh?

JAMES

Yeah, I guess.

MERIDETH

Have you ever been with a girl?

JAMES

(unsure)

Oh, yeah, on the internet, but it was actually just my first parents playing tricks on me.

MERIDETH

(smiles)

You're like, an actual interesting person.

JAMES

Oh...

MERIDETH

Everyone around here is like, the same. Boring, you know?

James nods, uncomfortable. Merideth looks at him, smiles... Then she leans in and KISSES James, spilling his water. Stunned, he sort of kisses her back, heart pounding.

Merideth runs her hand down to James' waistline, reaches into his pants... James doesn't know what to do so he awkwardly puts his hands in the air.

JAMES

Uh... Thank you. That's very nice.

Then the world SLOWS DOWN. Sounds get murkier, objects blurrier. James looks around, dazed, freaking out. Then he springs up--

JAMES

Okay, bye.

--and exits the room.

HOUSE PARTY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

James stumbles out, zipping up his pants, falling awkwardly into the wall. It catches the attention of--

AUBREY

James.

She comes over, helps him stabilize.

Whoa, hey, you need to chill, okay?
You're embarrassing me right now.

JAMES

Okay, sorry...

James pushes past her, heads to the--

BACK PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

James runs through the crowd, past Spencer, and jumps off the porch into the grass.

SPENCER

Yo, James, where are you going?

JAMES

Thanks for beer!

He runs into the backyard, disappears into the trees.

SPENCER

What the hell...?

JAMES, RUNNING - CONTINUOUS

He dodges branches and jumps shrubbery, on a mission.
Music: The Festival Fortuno, Brigsby Vol. 20.

Then James comes upon a CLEARING in the trees...
He slows down, stops. Looks around. Erie, moon-lit.
James treads carefully.

SPENCER (O.S.)

James! Hold on, man...!

James turns, listens... He hears far-off DIABOLICAL LAUGHTER.
Getting louder and louder until--

SUN SNATCHER

James!

Above a small hill, THE SUN SNATCHER appears in the sky!

His treacherous voice BOOMS--

Where are you even going, man?

James backs away, terrified.

JAMES
Sun Snatcher!

He turns, RUNS.

SUN SNATCHER
(laughing)
How are you possibly this wasted
right now?

James keeps going.

SUN SNATCHER
Dude, did you get dome from
Merideth?

JAMES
Stay away from me, Snatcher!

He TRIPS down a small hill into a mound of dirt. He's clearly fine, but he flails around dramatically.

Oh no! Tricksand!
(to himself)
Gotta find something to hold onto!

Off the high tension of this cliffhanger--

JAMES - SHOOTS AWAKE! - MORNING

He sits up, panicked. He calms down, realizes--
He's on a COUCH, in a bedroom that isn't his.

Around the room: empty bottles and red cups, comic and movie art, framed posters, books, and even a small shelf of cool ACTION FIGURES...

SPENCER is on his laptop, editing PARTY FOOTAGE with music and meme-type. James watches the screen a moment, intrigued.

JAMES
Where am I?

Spencer turns around, sees him.

SPENCER
Oh, hey, man... You're still at my place. Aubrey handled it with your parents, so all good.

JAMES
What happened?

SPENCER
Well, you tried to drink beer. Then
you started taking molly and you
got pretty lit.

James rubs his eyes, looks into the adjacent BATHROOM.
Where we see BRIGSBY, kneeling next to the toilet, vomiting.

JAMES
(snapping out of it)
I'm really sorry, Mr. Spencer....

SPENCER
No, man -- it's all good. You can
just call me Spence.

He gets up, looks around.

JAMES
Is this stuff from a show?

SPENCER
Ah, yeah, sort of. Shows, movies,
video games, comics.

Stops in front of Spencer's laptop video editing screen.

JAMES
Whoa... What is this?

SPENCER
Oh, yeah, just some bullshit.

He opens another video window, clicks play.

I also do, like, time-lapse stuff.

ON SCREEN: A sunset, then a whirl of darkening colors as the
camera tilts skyward, rotating with bright starlight.
James stares at the screen, blown away.

SPENCER
Yeah, I don't know, I'm still
learning. Might do some stuff with
it in college, maybe. I don't know.
Anyway...
(closes the laptop)
So wait, dude -- did you hook up
with Merideth though, or what?

JAMES

Oh, I don't know... She put the hand inside of the pants?

SPENCER

What! She is hot, dude! That's sick!

JAMES

(bashful-brag)

Yeah, we liked it.

Spencer CRACKS UP.

SPENCER'S TRUCK - POPE DRIVEWAY - MORNING

James hands Spencer a stack of TAPES through his window.

JAMES

So, these are in order from volume 14 to 20 -- that's when it started to get really good. And these ones are... I guess, they're my favorites.

Spencer inspects one of the cases.

SPENCER

Whoa, is Donald Duck in this shit?

Spencer indicates a weird Donald Duck knockoff on the cover, in a spacecraft.

JAMES

What? No, that's Goody Goose. He's the top pilot in the Starsquad Alliance.

SPENCER

Oh. Well, he looks a lot like Donald Duck.

(off James)

He's a popular cartoon character.

JAMES

It's not. It's Goody Goose.

SPENCER

Right on...

(then)

(MORE)

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Well hey, dude -- it was cool meeting you. Good luck with... you know, the world and everything.

JAMES

Yeah... Thanks.

SPENCER

I'll just give these back to Aub or whatever. Cool?

James nods, unsure.

JAMES

Cool...

Spencer waves, drives off. James watches him go.

POLICE STATION - DET. VOGEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Vogel, at his desk, reviewing a document.
James sits across from him, waiting patiently.

VOGEL

So, James -- what's this for, exactly?

JAMES

It's a list of everything for the Brigsby movie I'm making? I need all the cameras from my old dad's Brigsby set, all the props and costumes and stuff. Oh -- also, I need to find the Smiles Sisters, whoever they are in real life. And whoever did the voice of Brigsby Bear, obviously.

(off his hesitation)

You guys have all the stuff, right?

DET. VOGEL

We do, yes -- but it's evidence in an ongoing investigation.

JAMES

Okay, so... after that?

DET. VOGEL

After that, it's police property.

James hesitates, frustrated. Finds the words.

JAMES

But... the story of Brigsby Bear isn't finished, and I'm the only one who knows what's going on. I have to finish it.

Vogel half-smiles, apologetic.

DET. VOGEL

I'm sorry, James. It's just... we have rules here.

James reaches into his pocket, places two dollars and 35 cents on the desk. Vogel looks at James, confused.

JAMES

Why don't we keep this between you me?

(off his confusion)

I saw it on a TV.

DET. VOGEL

I can't accept that.

POLICE STATION - LOBBY - LATER

Vogel exits his office holding a sack lunch. As he walks through the lobby, he's confused by--

JAMES, clearly, sitting in a chair, "reading" a D.A.R.E. brochure, holding it up to obscure his face.

As Vogel exits, James lowers the brochure and stealthily follows behind.

POLICE STATION - LAWN - MOMENTS LATER

Vogel sits a public bench, eating a homemade sandwich.

James, behind a nearby tree that doesn't quite conceal him, waits for the right moment... and CRUNCHES a branch under his sneaker. Vogel turns his head.

VOGEL

James... Still hanging around, huh?

James steps over, timid.

JAMES

Um, so, I just... I feel like maybe I wasn't clear, earlier, about what I'm really trying to do here?

He sits down next to Vogel.

JAMES

How can I explain this in a way you would understand...?

(passionate)

Try to imagine a hero. And he's not on the bad side, he's on the good side. But he wants to go against a guy who is on the bad side. So he goes on... an adventure. Best part is, it's not even on a TV... It's on a screen so big, you feel like you're in another world. That's how I got the idea to make... a movie!

VOGEL

Yeah... No, I understand what movies are. And I think it's great to be creative. I actually performed in plays in high school.

(proud)

Prospero. The Tempest.

James just looks at him.

I pray thee. Mark me! That a brother could be so... perfidious.

(then)

I'm not sure how the rest goes.

JAMES

Whoa... That was very good.

VOGEL

Thank you.

JAMES

Do you do shows?

VOGEL

Oh, no. I don't act anymore. I'm just saying, I get what you're trying to do, and I wish I could help, but--

JAMES

Why?

VOGEL

Why what?

JAMES
Don't you do it any more?

VOGEL
Act?

Vogel thinks about it, shrugs.

You grow up, things change. You
move on. I do this now.

James nods, but looks bummed out by that explanation.

JAMES
That's really sad that you didn't
get to do what was important to
you... Bye.

James turns, mopes away.

Off Vogel, alone with his sandwich, considering that.

A DARK SPACE - LATER

Lights kick on, revealing a large POLICE STORAGE CLOSET
overflowing with BRIGSBY STUFF: boxes, costumes, robotic
parts, props, cameras.

VOGEL walks in, stops in front of a shelf, pulls from it a
prop SUN SOLDIER HELMET. Cool... He tries it on.

The DOOR OPENS behind him.

BANDER
(suspicious)
Detective...?

Vogel turns to Bander, takes off the helmet.

VOGEL
Yep... everything's here.

OMIT

POPE HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Sunny, clean. James and Louise Pope sit on adjacent couches.
Iced LEMONADES on coasters.

Louise organizes BOOKS and LIBRARY DVDs on the coffee table.

LOUISE POPE
 (bright enthusiasm)
 Well! I'm so glad you had fun and
 met new people last night.

JAMES
 (disinterested)
 Yeah...

LOUISE POPE
 But I want this to feel like fun
 too. So you don't have to be stuck
 with some boring tutor. This way we
 can enjoy each other's company, and
 go at our own pace, and learn about
 whatever you want to learn about.

All James can muster is a polite sort-of smile.

LOUISE POPE
 So, what do you think? World
 Geography? European history? The
 Bible?

James considers it...

JAMES
 Can I learn how to pilot a car?

LOUISE POPE
 Huh... you know, I don't see why
 not. We'd have to get you a
 learner's permit..

Greg Pope, listening in from the kitchen:

GREG POPE
 Hey, that could be fun.

He joins them in the room.

There's a couple classes you're
 supposed to take, and a written
 test, but I could take you out,
 show you the ropes?

Just then, the DOORBELL rings. James turns, curious.

FRONT DOOR - OPENS

It's DETECTIVE VOGEL. In jeans and a tee-shirt, cheery.

James, holding the door, looks surprised.

DET. VOGEL

James Pope -- just the man I was looking for.

JAMES

Where's your soldier stuff?

DET. VOGEL

My--? Oh, I'm off duty.

He sees Greg Pope, behind James, smiles hello.

Mr. Pope. Hope I'm not bothering you. Just wanted to say hi to James, talk about a... matter we discussed earlier.

Off James, intrigued.

POPE DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

James follows Vogel to his Subaru Station Wagon. Greg Pope follows, curious.

DET. VOGEL

So, look... Obviously, there's no way I can get all that stuff you wanted. But, forensics has more evidence coming in than they know what to do with, and there's no way anyone's gonna notice a couple items.

Vogel opens his hatchback, filled with boxes. He pulls out-- A cheap looking CRYSTAL NECKLACE. James' eyes alight.

JAMES

The Sortis Crystal?!

James looks at Greg Pope, amazed. He isn't sure how to react.

DET. VOGEL

And I know this wasn't on your list, but...

He pulls out MAGIC STAFF.

JAMES

Bortep's staff? I thought it was lost in a time flux...

DET. VOGEL

Ha, yeah. Check it out -- if you hit this switch on the back...

It LIGHTS UP! Vogel spins it around, gesturing dramatically.

GREG POPE

(takes a step back)

Whoa...

DET. VOGEL

How great is that? Got a nice weight to it, too.

He sets it aside, goes back into the trunk...

And last but not least, saw a few of these bad boys laying around...

...and pulls out BRIGSBY BEAR'S BIG PUPPET HEAD! The exact one from the show. Whoa.

JAMES

(might pass out)

That's Brigsby...

DET. VOGEL

Yeah, I kind of assumed.

Vogel hands it to James, who receives it with great care. James feels Brigsby's fur. Closes and opens his eyes. He looks between Vogel and Greg Pope, speechless.

JAMES

Is this... I mean -- I can have it?

DET. VOGEL

You can hang onto it, for right now. I'm not technically supposed to be doing this, so nothing in public, okay?

James nods, overjoyed. Not sure how best to express his gratitude, he tries that Spencer thing and raises his hand.

DET. VOGEL

Do you have a question?

(realizes)

Oh, high five? Sure, okay. I'll high-five on that.

They connect a solid one.

JAMES

Thank you! Dope as shit.

DET. VOGEL

(slightly confused)

You're welcome.

JAMES

(to Greg Pope)

Pretty dope as shit.

GREG POPE

Sure, yeah. Very dope.

Greg Pope watches as James runs inside. He turns to Vogel, hesitates a beat.

DET. VOGEL

Uh, again, sorry if I was interrupting something, or--

GREG POPE

Oh, not at all. But I will say, it's just -- well, you know, this transition we're going through, it hasn't exactly been easy. As I'm sure you know.

DET. VOGEL

Of course. I'm just trying to help out any way I can.

GREG POPE

You know, that's the thing -- actually. This "Brigsby" business... I realize James is a fan, but all this stuff -- it's not just collector's items we're talking about here. These are tools that a very sick person used to imprison my son.

Vogel looks taken aback.

DET. VOGEL

Right, of course. I just thought -- he asked me for some help on this movie he's making, and I just figured, you know...

Greg Pope looks confused at that.

GREG POPE
He's making a movie?

OMIT

OMIT

THE BRIGSBY HEAD - COUCH - MINUTES LATER

Worn fur, imperfect hand stitching, eyes half-closed.

Hear a CLICK, then soft TAPE STATIC...
Followed by scratchy BRIGSBY DIALOGUE.
The EYES and SNOUT come alive! Moving along with the words.

On the back: Gears spin on a built-in TAPE DECK.

WIDER we see:
James, excited, shows Greg and Louise Pope how it works--

JAMES
See -- you just press play, and it
moves to the sound!

The Brigsby Head stops talking. Just STATIC from the tape.

Louise Pope smiles, wanting to match James' excitement, but
not quite sure what to make of it. Greg looks concerned.

LOUISE POPE
Well, that is... something, huh?

Then it starts up again. James watches, entranced.

BRIGSBY HEAD (TAPE)
We know what he have to do! But
there's only one way into The
Forbidden Forest...

JAMES
Oh! I know this one--

JAMES	BRIGSBY HEAD	*
We have to pass through the	We have to travel through the	*
core of the planet!	core of the planet.	*

The Brigsby Head stops again. James doesn't break his gaze.

JAMES
(filling in Arielle's
missing dialogue)
But isn't that -- that's where's
the fire gods live? The fire realm?

BRIGSBY HEAD (TAPE)

Yes. But we must make peace with
The Gods of the Fire -- for the
sake of both our worlds.

But then James notices Greg Pope's expression. He drops his
smile, self-conscious. Presses STOP on the tape.

JAMES

So, anyway... Maybe we could do the
studies some other time? I think
I'm just gonna go to my room for
the rest of the day.

LOUISE POPE

(disappointed)

Oh... Well, we don't have to study
right now if you don't want.

She stands up.

LOUISE POPE

Are you hungry? I could make you a
sandwich? And we could listen to
some more Briggles Bear? Maybe you
could tell me more about him?

GREG POPE

Or we could take a look at the
list? It is Saturday after all --
still plenty of time for some fun.

But James is already on his way out of the room.

JAMES

Uh... No thanks.

Greg Pope and Louise watches him go, dispirited.

JAMES' BEDROOM - EVENING

James, on his bed, wearing the Brigsby Head, getting a feel
for it. He timidly "acts" along with Brigsby's voice.

Then there's a KNOCK and his door opens.
It's Aubrey, who of course SCREAMS.

AUBREY

Jesus... What the hell?

James reaches behind the head, clicks "STOP."

JAMES
 It's me, James!
 (taking it off)
 Not a real bear.

AUBREY
 Why can't you just be normal?

JAMES
 Remember? I was kidnapped.

AUBREY
 No, I know. I just-- This whole
 thing is weird enough without you
 trying to hang out with people,
 embarrassing me in front of my
 friends.

(then)
Oh, also, everyone's saying you
 hooked up with Merideth? Do not do
 that. That is disgusting.

(tosses him her phone)
 And tell mom you need your own
 phone.

James looks at the phone, confused. Caller ID says "Spencer."
 James doesn't know what to do with it.

AUBREY
 Talk.

JAMES
 (holding phone up in front
 of him)
 Hello?

Frustrated, Aubrey walks over, guides the phone to his ear.

JAMES
 Oh...

AUBREY
 (leaving)
 Put it outside my room when you're
 done.

SPENCER (PHONE)
Duuuuude.

JAMES

Spencer?
 (to Aubrey)
 It's Spencer!

Aubrey shakes her head, almost smiles despite herself.

TACO STAND - NIGHT

James and Spencer share a small outside table, burritos.

SPENCER

Okay, first of all -- that last episode where Brigsby is on that ice planet?

James nods knowingly, an excited smile on his face.

Right as they realize the federation is invading...

JAMES

Mmmhmm -- Brigsby reveals the moon base...

SPENCER

Yes, dude! That was so awesome! How it just appears over the horizon, all lit up?

JAMES

Yeah. "Hope is not yet lost!"
 (then)
 That's what he says.

SPENCER

Yeah, the whole thing is like this insane piece of art. It's like a whole TV show made in a bedroom. And all those characters and effects and shit are crazy... like that icicle bicycle thing -- how'd he even build that? And then at the end of the episode, when the peace treaty goes into effect, Snatcher melts it? That was like, really good storytelling.

He notices James eyes WELLING...

Uh, you okay, man?

James takes a second, emotional. Smiles.

JAMES

Yeah, it's just... that was one of my very favorite parts.

STREET - MINUTES LATER

James and Spencer walk to his truck.

SPENCER

The only thing I didn't really get was all the weird math shit...

JAMES

Yeah, I never liked that stuff. My version's not gonna have any.

SPENCER

So, are you staying with the same story, or a new one?

JAMES

Basically just where the show left off -- Snatcher's more powerful than ever, the old alliances are broken and the galaxy's on the edge of destruction. And Brigsby's the only one who can save it.

SPENCER

Right on... So, what happens?

JAMES' BEDROOM - LATER

James and Spencer stand before James' story-boarded wall.

JAMES

(quick, excited)

Okay, first, Pla'torian raiders come in on their lightships, to Brigsby's cabin in the desert -- where he's lived his whole life -- and they take his bear parents prisoner. Then they bring him to a new world he never even knew existed: The Future Light Fortress. Everything is big and shiny and different. No one knows who he is, and he doesn't know them.

James takes him through it left to right...

At first Brigsy has to live with a king, and a queen, and a princess.
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

But they're actually Sun Soldiers, so Brigsby can't trust them. Then, it gets complicated...

Pieces of the story dissolve into each other, overlapping--

He has to escape the palace... travel to Forever Mountain to get the Sortis Crystal... finds the Smiles Sisters... and for the first time ever, Brigsby defeats Sun Snatcher, once and for all.

(catches breath)

And, maybe, at some point he gets his mom and dad out of space jail, because what they did isn't so bad.

Spencer looks overwhelmed, absorbing it all. James nervously awaits his reaction...

SPENCER

(delighted)

This is insane, dude.

James isn't sure how to take that.

I mean, like, awesome insane.

Spencer picks up the BRIGSBY HEAD, takes a closer look.

Also pretty crazy though.

James nods, relieved.

JAMES

Thanks.

SPENCER

Have you started shooting it?

JAMES

It's my first movie, so I don't really know how.

SPENCER

Well, I've got a camera, dude. And some of these scenes you can do with like, a couple setups, natural light. Do the sound later. Like--

He points out a storyboard.

SPENCER

Brigsby's the only one in this scene, right? We could do that tomorrow.

James looks over at him, cautiously excited.

JAMES

Really?

SPENCER

Yeah, there's a place that looks just like that, hour and a half away. And this stuff--

(pulls out his phone)

--see, this is just green screen and some props. Easy.

James regards the Brigsby video on Spencer's phone, struggling to comprehend how Brigsby Bear Adventures episode 6, Vol. 20 is contained within it.

JAMES

How'd he get in there?

SPENCER

Oh, yeah -- I put everything online. I'll send you the links. Figured since you don't have a VCR. It's already got like 200 views.

JAMES

Wait -- so, there's other, real people watching Brigsby?

SPENCER

Yeah man. People are gonna want to see this, too. I think it's awesome. We just have to figure out the rest of the costume.

James is too excited about all this to even process it.

JAMES

But... you really want to do this?

Spencer considers it, genuine.

SPENCER

Yeah, man. I guess it's been pretty chill, hanging out, or whatever. Brigsby, dude. I'm in.

James smiles, touched...

SPENCER

Also, I'm getting drug tested in a couple weeks, so I've just been hanging around, bored as shit.

(another thought)

Oh, dude! And you have to start it off with that theme song! Like dun da-dun da...

James sings along with him, and the BRIGSBY THEME kicks in! Feels like we should be already out on this moment but--

JAMES

You're my friend!

DESERT - DAY

Flat horizon. Waves of heat and shadow.
A SHAPE emerging from the mirage...

It's BRIGSBY BEAR (James), in slo-mo, running toward us. Dressed bear-head to toe in makeshift sci-fi fantasy garb.

Brigsby climbs up a ROCK FORMATION...
He summits, looks out. Mountains on the horizon.

Then he DRAMATIC-TURNS to look behind him.
Mouth closed. Eyelids lowered ever so slightly.
He raises his DIGITAL WATCH into frame. Speaks into it.

The BRIGSBY THEME continues, carrying us through--

FACE-TIME CAMERA - DESERT - DAY

James, in costume minus the Brigsby Head.
Behind him, Spencer sets up a shot on a tripod.

JAMES

(into camera)

Hey everyone, James here. Day one, Brigsby Bear Adventures, the final chapter. And that's why we're gonna take you... behind the scenes!

QUICK CUTS: James high-fiving Spencer. Running to another location. Filming a Joshua tree.

JAMES

Look, it's a spiker tree!

SPENCER

Yeah, those are called Joshua
Trees, actually.

JAMES

Dope as shit!

James ZOOMS IN on it.

JAMES' BEDROOM - DAY

James reads the Brigsby script into a TAPE RECORDER.

Spencer clicks a button on the back of the BRIGSBY HEAD,
ejects a cassette from the built-in deck, puts in James'.

OFFICE - DAY

A few CO-WORKERS gather around a laptop, watching an episode
of "Brigsby Bear Adventures" on YouTube.

On screen: Brigsby, in a volcano, sunglasses on, RAPPING:

BRIGSBY

*When my elders speak, I'm always
listenin'
And if I don't, I get my daily
discipline
Go to sleep
Go-go-go to sleep (close your eyes)
Go-go-go to sleep*

GREEN SCREEN BACKDROP

CLOSE ON: Brigsby's face, cycling through different bits of
dialogue and performance.

ANOTHER SETUP: Brigsby in a SCHOOL DESK, using a video game
STEERING WHEEL. Pulling a tough maneuver, losing control!

SPENCER'S TRUCK - DAY

Spencer at passenger, explains what to do.
James tries turning the key, and the ENGINE kicks on. Cool!

PARK BENCH - DAY

Two FRIENDS watch "Brigsby Bear Adventures" on a phone,
sharing earbuds.

*On screen: Brigsby at a campfire with a group of Wizzles, led
by the WIZZLE PRINCE.*

BRIGSBY

Wizzle Prince, I'm sorry, but what
the Smiles Sisters tell you is true
-- the Quantix is lost to time.

WIZZLE PRINCE

(coughing)

Wizeeee. We thank you for your
effort, Sir Bear. It seems as if
the end of our race is upon us.
Wizeeeee.

BRIGSBY

I will miss all of you when you
pass away, even though you brought
it upon yourselves.

(to camera)

See, curiosity is an unnatural
emotion. If the Wizzles hadn't
spent so much time seeking answers
about the world around them, they
might have had a better chance of
surviving. So long, Friends!

JOLLY MUSIC plays. Brigsby does a little JIG then touches his
WRIST TRANSPONDER, which teleports him away.

The Wizzle Prince COUGHS, then falls over, dead.

OMIT

GOOGLE SEARCH BAR - "HOW DO I GET METAL FOR THE MOVIE I'M
MAKING WITH SPENCER?"

FACE-TIME CAMERA - SCRAPYARD - DAY

James (in costume) and Spencer scavenge for parts, fuck
around, pick up some footage.

JAMES

Look at all this armor!

GARAGE - DAY

James duct-tapes pipes and scrap metal to LOGAN'S arms.

DORM ROOM - DAY

A group of COLLEGE DUDES gathered around a computer screen
watch "Brigsby Bear Adventures."

On screen: Brigsby is underwater, addressing the camera.

BRIGSBY

(gargling water voice)
*...and remember -- always sweep
 your corridors, and if you're
 feeling romantic emotions, only
 touch your penis twice a day.*

The dudes laugh hysterically.

GOOGLE SEARCH BAR - *"HOW DO I LEARN COOL FIGHTING STYLES I
 WANT TO DO THEM"*

FACE TIME CAMERA - SALT FLAT - SUNDOWN

James is sweaty, hyped up.

JAMES

We've been practicing all day, and
 hopefully we're ready, because the
 sun's almost down, and that's when
 it's time to have a justice duel.

SALT FLAT - DUSK

Smoke machine SMOKE billows across the fairway.
 A lit-up Storm Soldier (Logan) emerges. Looks pretty cool.

Brigsby and the Storm Soldier engage in choreographed battle.

GOOGLE SEARCH BAR - *"HOW TO MAKE A GOOD EXPLOSION THANK YOU"*

HARDWARE STORE - DAY

James, wearing his Brigsby shirt, loads FERTILIZER into a
 shopping cart, while Louise Pope adds potted flowers.

LOUISE POPE

Is that everything?

JAMES

(lying)
 Yep, this is everything I need for
 my new garden.

An EXCITED MAN approaches them.

EXCITED MAN

Excuse me, are you--? You're the
 bear guy, right?

(off James)

Dude -- I saw your shirt, and --
 You're the guy, right?

(MORE)

EXCITED MAN (CONT'D)

Me and my friends love those videos. They're so insane. I mean they're awesome, but it's like, crazy dark and shit, you know? Anyway--

(pulls out phone)

Could I get a picture?

The excited man puts his arm around James, takes a selfie. James smiles awkwardly, excited but unsure. Louise smiles, but looks concerned...

EXCITED MAN

Thanks, man. Peace!

JAMES

Yes. Peace!

POLICE STATION - DET. VOGEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Vogel puts the finishing touches on some paperwork. Then his phone BUZZES. He checks the number, intrigued...

JAMES (PRELAP)

Do you have any questions?

FACE-TIME CAMERA - POPE HOUSEHOLD - BACKYARD - DAY

JAMES

The mysterious Planet Glindos-1 was referenced in the show, but we never got to actually see it... Until today!

James turns the camera to reveal: a MATTE PAINTING of his own creation. A CAVE looking out onto a crystal world. It's densely detailed, but nowhere near Ted's work.

Hmm, I wonder who might be hiding out in the Glindos crystal-fields?

POPE HOUSEHOLD - BACKYARD - DAY

VOGEL stands in front of the Glindos-1 matte painting, dressed in costume: a Jedi-esque HOODED ROBE.

James stands with Vogel, looking over his lines. Spencer preps the camera.

VOGEL

Just to be clear, when I say I've fled to the dark corner of a lost world, is that his own personal world, or an actual new land?

JAMES

Um... both.

VOGEL

Okay, great, that's what I was thinking.

JAMES

The number one thing to remember is, Feldo Mortese is a powerful Bandith Warrior, but he's sad. That's why he lives in a cave.

Vogel nods, confident.

VOGEL

Let's give it a shot.

James stands back, giving Vogel some room.

VOGEL

And you're sure your parents aren't coming home any time soon?

JAMES

One's doing golf, and the other one went out to stores. Don't worry, just focus on your tragic past.

Vogel takes a deep breath. He puts his hood up, hunches over and folds his hands, physically inhabiting the character.

JAMES

And... Action.

Vogel holds for a purposeful beat, then--

VOGEL

(extremely goofy accent)

My kind rose up against the one you call Sun Snatcher. And we lost. The few who survived, fled. And now only I remain, cowering in a dark corner of a lost world... waiting for this day. The fulfillment of a prophecy long forgotten.

Spencer watches from behind the camera, transfixed but weirded out.

VOGEL

(escalating)

You, Brigsby Bear, have been chosen. You stand between existence and naught.

(crescendo)

You are our last hope. Our keeper of light!

On James, genuinely impressed. Has to compose himself.

JAMES

Cut. Perfect. Moving on!

VOGEL

Wait, that's it?

Vogel pulls his hood down, exhilarated.

VOGEL

Can we do one more? I think there's another level I can get to.

JAMES

Whoa, really? Another one?

VOGEL

Definitely.

(hood back up)

You mind if I try something?

James shrugs, game.

JAMES

As long as it doesn't violate any sacred codes of Bandith culture, yeah! Sure.

VOGEL

Great, thank you.

Vogel turns his back to the camera. Takes a deep breath.

SPENCER

Rolling...

A long beat as Vogel does nothing. And continues to. James looks on, considering the choice, intrigued...

POLICE STATION - EVIDENCE LOCKER - DAY

BANDER walks past rows and rows of BRIGSBY TAPES, browsing. Stops in front one: "Volume Five, Episode One."

On a small VCR/TV:

BRIGSBY (but cheaper, cruder) on a small, sparsely decorated set. The words "It's Brigsby!" hand-painted in big block letters on the wall. Low-rent "Captain Kangaroo" vibe.

He confers with YOUNG ARIELLE and NINA SMILES, surrounded by a magic force field.

BRIGSBY

Your magic powers get stronger by the day, Sisters!

ARIELLE SMILES

Soon we'll be strong enough to banish Sun Snatcher to the shadow galaxy forever!

BRIGSBY

That's right! But first, we have to make our physical bodies strong.

(turns to camera)

Ready, everyone?

Brigsby and the young Smiles sisters MARCH in place, then launch into some coordinated calisthenics.

And one, and lunge, and two, and two. Now crunch! And stop. And remember that we're all just rapidly decaying organic material! And hop!

On Bander, expression hardened, super weirded out.

OMIT

POPE DRIVEWAY - DAY

James stands holding a BASKETBALL, looking none too enthused. Greg Pope, in gym shorts, instructs James on shooting form.

GREG POPE

Okay, now just keep your shoulders square, elbow in -- good. Now bend your knees, lift the ball into the air, and follow through with your hand.

James gives it a try, but the ball falls well short of the basketball hoop.

GREG POPE
Hey, alright! Good first try.

MINUTES LATER: Greg Pope uses a broomstick to lower the hoop.

GREG POPE
There we go... This'll be a little easier. Plus -- look, we can do slam dunk on it!

Greg Pope goes up for a monster jam!

GREG POPE
Wooooo!
(lands awkwardly)
Ooh-- yikes, tweaked my ankle there a bit... Darn it.

He limps to the ball, passes it James.

Here, wanna give it a shot?

James lets the ball bounce past him.

JAMES
Actually, I'm pretty busy with my movie today...

GREG POPE
Well, maybe take a little break? Seems like you've been working pretty hard, and could be nice to just hangout for a bit, you and me?

James starts to walk off.

JAMES
No thanks.

Greg Pope hesitates, frustrated. Then--

GREG POPE
Am I doing something wrong here?

James turns around: huh?

GREG POPE
Look I don't want to discourage you from being creative, but the thing is, this movie you're making...
(MORE)

GREG POPE (CONT'D)

it's based on something that... Really bad people created it... as a way to hurt you, and keep you away from us. And we don't want spending too much time thinking about that sort of thing, okay? You're with the good guys now.

JAMES

But... Brigsby's what makes me happy. I'm not like you.
(gestures to hoop)
I don't like slamming, okay?

James heads inside. Greg Pope stands there a moment, frustrated. Stretches out his injured ankle.

AUBREY'S ROOM - DAY

Aubrey and Merideth, hanging. SPENCER, in the doorway, holding the Brigsby head.

AUBREY

So, what are you guys doing?

SPENCER

Oh, you know, mess around with this crazy bear thing. Hike around, go to the beach, camp for the night.

James comes up behind him.

JAMES

We're going to a real mountain. Do you guys want to come?

AUBREY

Yeah, I don't know...

SPENCER

I'm bringing party supplies...

Merideth gives a thumbs-up.

JAMES

Come on, it's gonna be so much fun, and also dope as shit.

Aubrey sorta-smiles, hesitant.

MOUNTAINS - TRAIL - AFTERNOON

Green and golden, sparkling LAKE below them. Hiking up.

CLEARING - MINUTES LATER

Aubrey sits with Merideth, watching--

James and Spencer set up a shot, yards away. James, wearing the costume, excitedly explains how we wants it to look, boundless energy and enthusiasm. Spencer's into it, laughing, making suggestions.

Aubrey can't help herself -- the interaction makes her SMILE. That look on James' face -- happy, himself. Her brother.

James runs over, tries to get her involved. She LAUGHS.

MOUNTAINS - SUNSET

Vast, rolling ridges, GLOWING with magic hour light. BRIGSBY, the size of an action figure, adventures atop.

LAKE - DUSK

Wash of waves, crackle of campfire.
Two tents. A few campsites and RVs in the distance.

Merideth poses for phone pics, wearing the Brigsby head, holding a bottle of tequila, giving the middle finger. Spencer frames it up, hesitates.

SPENCER

No Facebook or Instagram, please.

MERIDETH

It's a snap; chill.

JAMES

Merideth, could I talk to you for a second?

Merideth takes off the Brigsby head.

MERIDETH

Sure, what's up?

James hesitates. Something weighing on him...

JAMES

Maybe we should go over here...

MERIDETH
(confused)
Okay...

She hands the head off to Logan. James and Merideth walk.

JAMES
First of all, I think you're so great.

MERIDETH
Thanks man. I think you're chill too.

JAMES
And the other night was fun.

MERIDETH
Ha, yeah you were so wasted.

JAMES
Yeah... Listen, this is really hard for me, cuz I know we really liked feeling each other's bodies and doing sex type stuff, but--
(beat)
I don't think I can marry you.

MERIDETH
(laughs)
Yeah, for sure.

JAMES
So, you're okay with that?

MERIDETH
Uh, yeah, of course. I'm never getting married. My parents are so messed up and sad.

JAMES
(relieved)
Really? That's so great. Thank you.

James gives her a friendly hug.

(under breath)
So, no marriage. But do we still want to do that stuff?

AUBREY
Hey, James--

Over by the fire, Aubrey scrolls through songs on her iPhone.

AUBREY
Was it this song?

She plays a sparkly night jam. James walks over, listening.

JAMES
I don't think so. But I like it.

AUBREY
Oh, maybe it's... Hold on--

Another song -- the same synth-y music that was coming from her room the other night!

JAMES
Yeah! That's it!

AUBREY
I've been listening to this constantly; it's amazing. I'll send you a playlist.

James doesn't know what that means but is nevertheless floored with gratitude.

JAMES
That would be so cool, to get one of those.

Merideth takes off the Brigsby head, sits down with them. Aubrey looks at James, thinking.

AUBREY
They probably didn't even let you listen to music, huh?

JAMES
No, they did, sometimes. Mostly stuff by The Beatlers, cuz my old dad was in that band.

MERIDETH
Did you just say "Beatlers?"

JAMES
Yeah, The Beatlers.
(off their confusion)
I have one of their tapes...

James roots through the contents of his duffle bag. He pulls out a cassette, and puts it into the Brigsby head.

He presses play, and the mouth moves along with the lyrics.
The music is incredibly strange.

AUBREY

Whoa. This... sucks. It's like the
worst thing I've ever heard.
(listens more)
I kinda love it.

James smiles. A moment between them...

JAMES

Too bad you weren't abducted. I bet
we would've had fun together.

Aubrey's a bit confused by the sentiment, but moved
nonetheless.

AUBREY

Yeah, I guess... I always wondered
who you were. What it would be like
to meet you. I remember when I
first found out. I was 9, maybe.
Dad said, "You have a big brother."
It made so much sense. I always
knew there was something... not
there, with them. So I was like,
the consolation prize, I guess.
(then)
Sorry I've been kind of...
whatever, to you.

JAMES

That's okay... I'm glad you came.

AUBREY

Yeah, me too.

James surprises her with a HUG, which she begrudgingly
reciprocates. But the moment is crashed by--

SPENCER

Awwwwwww.

AUBREY

(disengaging)
Oh God, whatever...

SPENCER
 (to James)
 Last shot, man You ready to do
 this?

James stops the tape, springs up, excited.

JAMES
 Yeah! Let's go!

EMPTY BEACH - NIGHT

Spencer's truck pulls onto the sand. ROAD above the bank
 ahead. Engine cuts, lights fade.

James unlatches the truck bed gate. Pulls the TARP off--
A FUTURISTIC SPACE GENERATOR!
 (Scrap metal, computer parts, LED lights.)

SPENCER
 Holy shit, man... Look at all this
 electronic shit.

JAMES
 Yeah, that part's the mainframe,
 and that's the quadrium processor.

SPENCER
 Man, this is gonna look awesome.

They get in, lift it.

SPENCER'S TRUCK - EMPTY BEACH - MINUTES LATER

Spencer tapes the TRIPOD to the open bed gate, camera lens
 pointed behind the truck. He turns on LIGHTS, angles it on
 James, 50 yards away, half-burying the blinking GENERATOR in
 the sand.

SPENCER
 You ready to do this?

James gets the sand just right...

JAMES
 Okay, ready!

James strikes a MATCH and lights a FUSE in the sand. Then he
 puts on his Brigsby head, and kneels next to the generator.

Spencer hits RECORD, gets in the truck.

TRUCK CAM:

Brigsby flips open a panel, punches in a code on the mainframe. Then it shoots a tower of SPARKS!

Brigsby stands, starts running away from it...

And the generator EXPLODES into yellow and green flames!
Followed by a spray of professional-grade FIREWORKS!
Deep, loud, huge.

SPENCER'S TRUCK - THAT MOMENT

Spencer slams on the breaks, shocked. Jumps out of the car.

BEACH - CONTINUOUS

There's a CAR ALARM going off somewhere. Generator SMOKING.

SPENCER
Dude, what is this shit!?

JAMES
(running up)
Did you get it?

SPENCER
The bomb that you just exploded?
Yeah, I got it. What the was that?!

JAMES
I worked on it, yesterday, so our
movie would have more--
(clearly read this
somewhere)
--big budget appeal.

SPENCER
Someone definitely saw that. We
gotta go, now.

The generator starts to FLAME.

Holy shit!

He runs towards it. James follows, not nearly as worried.

JAMES
Did it look cool?

SPENCER
Dude -- I've been driving around a
truck filled with explosives all
day. That is not cool, at all.

They scoop sand, struggle to put it out.

JAMES

I know you talked about using animation, but I thought doing it for real might be better. Plus, practical effects are a dying art form.

SPENCER

You can't just blow shit up, man!

JAMES

Why not?

Spencer stands up, notices something--
On the ROAD above: RED AND BLUE LIGHTS heading toward them.

SPENCER

God damnit...

COAST GUARD (LOUDSPEAKER)

Step away from the device, and put your hands in the air!

JAMES

Oh, it's just police. They're nice.

The COAST GUARD TRUCK comes into the shore.

COAST GUARD (LOUDSPEAKER)

Hands up, now!

James puts his hands in the air, yells--

JAMES

We're okay! We don't need any police help! Sorry about the mess -- we're just gonna finish cleaning up! Thank you! Bye!

James turns around and starts casually jogging away.

An OFFICER jumps to shore, chases James and TACKLES him into the sand.

PARKED POLICE CAR - BACK SEAT

James, head tilted back, holding tissues in a bloody nose.
Spencer, sick to his stomach, freaked out. Silent...
James looks over, nervous, offers--

JAMES

I bet I can explain it to Detective Vogel...?

SPENCER

Doesn't matter... I'm on probation.

JAMES

What does "on probation" mean?

SPENCER

It means my life is over.

A charged silence between them. James finally breaks it--

JAMES

I think the next scene where we need explosions, we should do your idea, with the animation.

Spencer just shakes his head.

CEDAR HILLS POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM

James, alone again. A different sort of anxiety hanging.

Door opens... and OFFICER BANDER comes in. Deadly serious. He throws a folder on the table. Stands there a moment, lets his presence do the intimidating. Then--

BANDER

Malibu PD says they found marijuana and an open container of alcohol in the truck. Not to mention the improvised explosive device, the detonation of which is technically an act of domestic terrorism. You have anything to say for yourself?

James really thinks about it. Doesn't want to mess this up.

JAMES

Everything that happened, it was my fault. All the marijuana smokings, the bad drinks. Those were mine. The explosion stuff too. No one else should get in trouble.

BANDER

Where'd you get the bomb-making materials?

JAMES
Just, the internet. And the store.

BANDER
And the costume?

James hesitates...

JAMES
I stole it.

BANDER
You stole it?

JAMES
Detective Vogel told me where they had all the stuff, so I snuck in when no one was looking, but it wasn't his fault, okay? He didn't do anything wrong.
(then)
I'm sorry to you. And I'm sorry to America.

Bander sits. Looks at him.

BANDER
I watched the tapes.

JAMES
What tapes?

BANDER
"Brigsby Bear." Several episodes.

JAMES
Which ones?

BANDER
The first couple volumes.

JAMES
(?)
Oh, those ones are just for kids...
(thinks about it)
I mean, they were for me, I guess, when I was a kid.

BANDER
Well, I think I got the gist of it. Dark. Filled with messages.

Bander takes a long, probing look at him.

They really did a number on you,
didn't they?

OFF JAMES, uncertainty weighing...

MATCH CUT TO:

THE BRIGSBY HEAD - EVIDENCE LOCKER

Sideways on a shelf. Obscured as a metal gate SLAMS SHUT.

OMIT

POPE HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Greg and Louise Pope, Aubrey, James and Emily sit around the coffee table. Greg looks stern, Louise on the verge of tears. Aubrey and James just eye the floor.

Emily leads the discussion with a comfortable, everything's-fine confidence.

EMILY

James. Your family is all here today because they care about you very, very much. But they're also concerned.

(a beat)

You haven't been communicating with them, James. To put it lightly. Next thing you know, you're falling in with the absolute wrong kind of people, and--

AUBREY

You mean me and my friends?

GREG POPE

Aubrey, you know what she means.

EMILY

The point is, we're looking at some serious criminal charges here.

James chews on that, incredulous.

JAMES

I was just making Brigsby...

EMILY

James, we're not here to talk about Brigsby. This is about you.

James feels out the room. Not sure about the look on everyone's face. Especially Louise, barely holding back tears. Greg looks at him, calm, concerned.

GREG POPE

We love you, James. And we want you to be happy.

EMILY

That's right. And we want you to recognize the chance you have -- right now -- to embrace a new start.

JAMES

So... what does that mean?

EMILY

It means finally putting Brigsby aside, and moving on with the rest of your life.

James can barely comprehend this, indignant.

JAMES

So... what? Just forget about him?

Emily sighs with profound concern.

LOUISE POPE

James, I know that sounds hard, but the world is so much bigger than you know. And it's filled with so many amazing, wonderful things.

GREG POPE

That's right -- remember Gordo from Hockey High?

JAMES

I don't care about that stuff. I already know Brigsby's the greatest hero. And when everything's against him, he never gives up, even if it's hopeless.

James pauses, emotion surfacing.

He's my whole life.

Greg Pope takes a hard look at him, frustration boiling over.

GREG POPE

Your whole life? Your whole life
we've been out there, looking for
you, James. For 25 years, I
couldn't sleep. Because every night
I would close my eyes, and there
you were, in my arms, smiling.

A silent beat as Greg collects himself.

These... monsters, they stole you
away from us. They destroyed us. Do
you understand that? And now that
we have you back, all you want to
do is stay in their world. It
hurts, James. It isn't right.

James absorbs all that. Finally musters:

JAMES

You don't know anything about
Brigsby. At all. And you never
will. So... fuck you.

(then)

I know what it means.

An emotional silence hangs over the group.

GOOGLE SEARCH BAR: *"BRIGSBY SMILES SISTERS REAL LIFE"*

James scans the flood of results. Eventually finds:

"Arizona Woman performed in Pope kidnapper's bizarre videos."

POPE HOUSEHOLD - MIDNIGHT

James straightens up, checks himself in the mirror.

Lights off. Dead quiet. James sneaks down the stairs...
Swipes a CAR KEY from the counter.

DRIVEWAY - MINUTES LATER

James REVERSES down the driveway in Greg Pope's Lexus.
K-turns into someone's BRICK MAILBOX, demolishes it.
He peels off, swerves through the yard, and disappears down
the street.

MUSIC: Spirit Journey to the Quantnix Zone, Brigsby Vol. 19.

OMIT

LEXUS - DESERT - MORNING

The Lexus slows to stop. James stares ahead at--

HIS OLD HOUSE - DAY

Perimeter of POLICE TAPE but otherwise as he left it.
James gets out of the car, takes a look around...

He goes the OASIS. Takes GRAZERBUG in his hand, looks at it
for what it is -- a light bulb, goofy face, antenna.
And the GUNNERFOX -- open back, clear animatronic features.

He wipes dust off the PIER, sees the empty BENCH inside.

ROADSIDE DINER - PARKING LOT - DAY

The Lexus, parked outside with a couple trucks.
Inside, James counts change from the console.

ROADSIDE DINER - BOOTH - MINUTES LATER

James, holding a menu, looks around--
He sees a handful of other patrons and a line cook.

As he looks over the menu, a WAITRESS steps over.

WAITRESS (O.S.)
Can I get you something to drink?

James looks up with the intention of answering, but is
suddenly unable. Standing in front of him is ARIELLE SMILES.

ARIELLE SMILES
Sir?

James snaps out of it, but doesn't know where to start.

JAMES
Uh, yeah, just -- I only have this
many credits.

He puts a handful of COINS on the table.

ARIELLE SMILES
(counting)
Okay... That'll get you a fountain
drink, or a coffee? Piece of fruit,
maybe?

James looks up at her, staring, not able to shake his awe.

Hello?

JAMES

Sorry, it's just...

(joking)

I never would of guessed I'd find you so far outside the gates of Glenrona.

(then)

But I did actually have to go to a lot of diners out here.

She looks caught off guard. Notices his BRIGSBY T-SHIRT.

ARIELLE SMILES

(realizing)

You're the... James, right?

(off him)

Um... My shift's almost up; give me a couple minutes, okay?

James watches her walk away. Blinks to make sure she's real.

ARIELLE SMILES (PRELAP)

I guess I found out when you did, basically...

125

BOOTH - MINUTES LATER

125

James and Arielle Smiles sit across from each other. Sandwiches and fountain sodas before them.

ARIELLE SMILES

It was a little extra money every month... He told me it was for Canadian public access. I would just show up, and he would give my lines. I didn't really ask a lot of questions, obviously. I mean, it was fun, but...

James listens, rapt, quiet reverence unbroken.

I've been sick to my stomach. I wish I had never, uh... I don't know what to say. I'm just so, so sorry, for everything.

James makes a face, confused.

JAMES

"Sorry?" But... you and Brigsby --
and Nina too, I guess -- you were
the only thing that made the world
okay. You were all I had.
(realizes, emotional)
And I guess you still are.

Arielle Smiles looks taken aback.

ARIELLE SMILES

You realize I'm not actually her,
right? My name's Whitney.

JAMES

No, I know, now, but--

ARIELLE SMILES

Nina too -- he just flipped the
image, or something.

JAMES

Yeah, it's a cool effect, but...
you made it real. And the way you
were there for Brigsby, even when
it seemed impossible? He never
could have done it by himself.

A beat as Arielle Smiles looks James over.

ARIELLE SMILES

How did you find me?

JAMES

(shrugs)

The same way Brigsby did, I
guess... Destiny.

James timidly reaches across the table and puts his hand on
top of hers. She seems a little uncomfortable, but lets it
stand. Then her phone BUZZES and she takes her hand away.

ARIELLE SMILES

I'm sorry, I have to pick up my kid
in a few minutes.

JAMES

Oh. Okay...

ARIELLE SMILES

I'm glad I met you though, I guess.
You seem really... sweet.

James cracks a smile, touched. A big moment for him. But--

JAMES

Wait, before you go, I've always wanted to ask... In Volume 19, did you really not know about the Quantix the whole time? Or were you just trying to protect the Wizzles?

ARIELLE SMILES

Uh... I don't really remember that.

JAMES

Oh. Yeah.

(then)

So, you would never want to do it again, then? To help me finish it?

She hesitates...

ARIELLE SMILES

I mean, I don't really know if...

But her eyes are drawn outside. James turns to look too--

POLICE CRUISERS pull into the parking lot, lights on.

James turns back to Arielle Smiles, dejected.

JAMES

That's okay. I guess it's time for me to go, anyway.

ARIELLE SMILES

Those are for you?

He nods, solemn.

JAMES

I've been an outlaw ever since I came to this world.

(then)

It's dope as shit.

James stands, reaches into his pocket...

And he pulls out the SORTIS CRYSTAL. Places it on the table.

You're the only one who can keep this safe.

(then)

Thanks for the sandwich and coke.

James walks for the door.
Halfway there, he stops, turns back around.

JAMES

Also, I'm in love with you, and I
always have been.

He continues to the door, opens it.
Puts his hands up, faces his fate.

Please no tackles!

Arielle Smiles watches him, overwhelmed.
Off the Sortis Crystal, gleaming in the sunlight.

POPE HOUSEHOLD - TOP OF THE STAIRS - NIGHT

James timidly steps out of his room...
Murmur of Greg and Louise Pope ARGUING comes into focus:

GREG POPE (O.S.)

What choice do we have?

KITCHEN - POPE HOUSEHOLD

Greg and Louise Pope stand on either side of the island.
Exhausted, emotional.

GREG POPE

We know what Dr. Larson
recommending to the judge.

LOUISE POPE

But we can appeal, right? Or
something? He's not dangerous, he
just... He needs us. To make more
of an effort, to be with him.

GREG POPE

I'm making an effort!

LOUISE POPE

You pushed him away. You don't
listen, you don't care about what
anyone else wants. This is what you
do!

GREG POPE

He's not well. You didn't see what
I saw. I watched him have a full
break with reality.

LOUISE POPE

So we just kick him out?

GREG POPE

What happens if we just let him go on like this? He's not-- He's 25. He can't just live in his own world forever. Don't you want him to have a real life?

LOUISE POPE

Of course I do...

GREG POPE

What if he ends up like them -- alone, shut off from the world? What if he kidnaps someone and forces them to watch his Bear movie?

LOUISE POPE

Greg. That's ridiculous.

GREG POPE

Is it? He's not well, Louise. And they're still in control!

(then)

I want my son back...

Louise covers her face, quietly sobs.
Regret flashes over Greg Pope. He wraps her in a hug.

GREG POPE

I'm sorry. We knew this wasn't going to be easy. We knew that...

TOP OF THE STAIRS - SAME

James, despondent, lets their words sink in...

MUSIC: Imprisoned in the Mirror Chamber, Briggsby Vol. 24.
The somber music carries us through--

EMPTY GYM - DAY

SPENCER sits with other rehabbing youths, fold-out chairs encircled for discussion. But SPENCER'S not listening...

He sneaks out his phone, checks it--
A row of unanswered texts to Aubrey.
"Hey..." "I'm sorry..." "You around?" "Can we talk?"

WATKINS GLEN MENTAL HEALTH CENTER - DAY

A white DOOR opens to reveal--
A sterile, semi-private room. Shared bathroom in the back.

James stands in the doorway. Wearing nice, new, stupid clothes. Holding a small bag of personal supplies.

SPENCER'S ROOM - DAY

Spencer scrolls Twitter on his computer, bored.

He opens a video-editing application. Presses play on a BRIGSBY CLIP (*adventuring in the mountains*).

It looks pretty good. He smiles...

MENTAL HEALTH CENTER - DAY - EXPRESSION ABSENT

-James sits slumped in a chair at GROUP TIME.

-James meanders around the therapeutic courtyard garden.

-James by himself at a cafeteria table. A friendly patient, ERIC, takes a seat across from him, holding two soft-serve cones. He offers one to James.

-James does lessons with DR. MORROW in the COMPUTER LAB, graphing another physics equation. Dr. Morrow takes notes.

DR. MORROW (PRELAP)
Well, I'm impressed. But I'm also
very confused...

MENTAL HEALTH CENTER - ACTIVITIES ROOM - DAY

James sits at an art table, drawing with crayons.

Across the room, Emily and Dr. Morrow confer.

DR. MORROW
He's extremely sharp. We started
with algebra, and quite quickly
made our way to quantum field
theory. Then, it got... well,
strange. Very theoretical, hard to
follow. He showed me an equation
they were working on. Said it was
part of a larger theory that
would... Allow them to travel
between parallel dimensions.

(MORE)

DR. MORROW (CONT'D)

(then)

Nonsense, essentially.

Emily considers that, confused. Turns to look at James.

James continues to color with little energy, uninspired.
Eric comes over, excited--

ERIC

What are you working on?

James shows him his drawing: a simple RECTANGLE. That's it.

ERIC

Whoa! Let me try.

Eric sits down with him.

EMILY (PRELAP)

James, I just want to start by
saying how extremely proud I am.

MENTAL HEALTH CENTER - MEETING LOUNGE - MORNING

James sits at a table with Emily, despondent.
But Emily smiles encouragingly.

EMILY

Really. I mean it. I know it hasn't
been the easiest road getting here,
but you're showing real progress.
Soon, we can get you back on track
with your education, and start
strengthening other aspects of your
life. Doesn't that sound great?

This appraisal doesn't seem to lift James' spirits.

(pressing on)

Well, in the spirit of putting
things behind us, there was one
thing I thought you should know...
Your kidnappers have pleaded
guilty. That means they're going
away, for a long time. And it's
okay to have conflicting emotions
about that...

James considers that with an unexpected wash of emotion...
Emily holds him by the shoulders, finds his eyes.

You made it, James. You're okay.

She brings him close, hugs him.

JAMES' NEW ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Silent. James lays awake in bed, unable to sleep.
Then, the sound of soft STATIC fades in...
Confused, James turns to the--

RADIO, which begins emitting a pulsing, ethereal GLOW.
James sits up in bed, freaked out.

BRIGSBY (RADIO)
(coming in and out)
James... Are you there, James...?

James stands, goes to the radio.
Brigsby...?

He fiddles with the dial, finding the frequency.

BRIGSBY (RADIO)
(clearer)
James, is that you? I've been
trying to reach you! I'm trapped in
negative subspace -- I had to hack
your dimension's earth's A-M
frequency! I need you, James. Now
more than ever before...

James really thinks about that, and his eyes well with tears.

JAMES
No. I can't.

A beat of empty static before--

BRIGSBY
(heartbroken)
James? But... It's our most
desperate hour. The universe hangs
on the edge of existence.

He can barely bring himself to do it but--

JAMES
Don't you get it? It's too late!
Everyone's mad at me because of
you.
(then)
I can't be with you any more.

James CLICKS OFF the radio. He sits on his bed, unsteady.
Catches his breath, wipes his eyes.

AUBREY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Aubrey does homework, uninvested. Interrupted by the DING of a cell phone notification. She checks her phone.

It's another in a long line of unanswered Spencer texts:
"check yr email (bear emoji)"

Aubrey looks cautiously intrigued...

HD TV - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A reel of beautifully photographed BRIGSBY SCENES, edited together with music and early effects work.

REVERSE ON:

Aubrey, Greg and Louise Pope, watching from the couch. Aubrey points things out to Louise Pope, who smiles, impressed and proud. Greg Pope is more guarded, but...

ON SCREEN:

James, in costume, runs down a sunset-lit green hill toward Aubrey. He takes off the Brigsby head, sweaty, laughing.

JAMES (ON SCREEN)

Did we get it!? This is gonna be better than all the other Brigsby episodes, ever!

REVERSE ON:

Greg, eyes glued to the screen, a realization dawning.

PRE-LAP: KNOCK-KNOCK

CEDAR HILLS POLICE STATION - VOGEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Vogel looks up from his desk to see...

VOGEL

Mr. Pope...

Greg Pope stands in the doorway, heart heavy, conciliatory.

GREG POPE

Detective... I was hoping we could talk?

VOGEL

(worried)

You mean, about Feldo Mortese?

GREG POPE

What's Feldo Mortese?

VOGEL

Oh, nothing, never mind. What can I help you with?

MENTAL HEALTH CENTER - KITCHEN - NIGHT

James sneaks in under cover of darkness, searches cabinets.

JAMES ROOM - MENTAL HEALTH CENTER - NIGHT

James pulls the sheet off his bed, fashions it into a SACK.

He adds: A bar of soap, plastic utensils, a pair of clean socks and underwear. Ties it off.

There's a KNOCK, and James looks up to see Eric come into the room, heart heavy, holding a paper grocery bag.

ERIC

I'm just wanted to say good luck on your adventure, and I'm gonna miss having you around.

Eric hands him the bag. James looks inside, pulls out some arts-and-crafts cardboard cut outs.

Throwing stars, knives, laser guns -
- basically all my weapons I've been saving up.

JAMES

Thanks Eric. I didn't know if I'd ever have a real friend again.

They hug. Then--

ERIC

So, how are you gonna break out of here?

JAMES

It's complicated. I've been planning it for a long time.

CUT TO:

A TV CRASHES THROUGH A FIRST-FLOOR WINDOW! - NIGHT

Lands in the street next to the mental health facility.

James clears the glass and wire around the edges with a broken SHOWER HANDLE. He tosses his supplies, hops out.

Then he runs into the night.

OMIT

BUSHES - NIGHT

Brushed out of the way to reveal--
The POPE'S BACKYARD. Dark, quiet...

POPE HOUSEHOLD - BACK PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

James sneaks around the side of the house, then quietly to the door. Tries the handle... OPENS it slowly.

POPE HOUSEHOLD - STAIRS

Dark throughout. James climbs to the 2nd floor hallway.
Enters--

JAMES' ROOM

To find it back to its original state, stripped of all
Brigsby-ness. James stands there a moment...

Then he sees his DUFFLE BAG in the corner. He opens it, makes
sure his BRIGSBY SHIRT is inside. He folds it carefully,
places it back inside, and zips the bag up.

POPE HOUSEHOLD - MOMENTS LATER

James sneaks back down the stairs, duffle bag in hand. He
starts to exit, but stops himself, noticing--

LIGHT coming from a cracked door... He moves closer, curious.
Hears the muffled sound of VOICES and MOVEMENT.

He leans to the crack, sliver of light painting his face.
What he sees makes his JAW DROP...

James pulls the door all the way OPEN, revealing--

BRIGSBY BEAR'S CABIN!

(Well, actually the GARAGE, transformed by the presence of
the Brigsby Bear set. But still!)

James steps inside, taking it in with religious wonder.
Every consciousness-seared detail made real before him.

MUSIC: The peak of Forever Mountain, Brigsby Vol. 16.

He drops to his knees, overwhelmed.

AUBREY (O.S.)

James?

James turns to the DRIVEWAY, where he sees--

GREG and LOUISE POPE, AUBREY, SPENCER and VOGEL, unloading the back of a MOVING TRUCK. Surrounded by Brigsby props, costumes, pieces of sets, lights, and an old TV CAMERA.

James looks between them, tears in his eyes, at a total loss. They look surprised to see him, but glad. James stands.

JAMES

What is...? I mean... How did this happen?

LOUISE POPE

Well, it was supposed to be a surprise, for when you got home...

JAMES

But they told me... They said they were gonna get rid of everything?

Spencer hops down from the truck.

SPENCER

Yeah, Feldo gave us a heads-up.

Vogel smiles at James.

VOGEL

I wanted to say thanks. And I figured, better this stuff with you than in a dumpster somewhere.

AUBREY

It was Dad's idea to do the garage, though.

James turns to Greg Pope, hardly believing any of this.

JAMES

Really?

GREG POPE

Yeah, well...

He hesitates, voice wobbling with emotion and contrition.

Aubrey showed us some of the stuff you had done together, and... yeah. I guess, I thought it looked pretty cool, son. And then I thought about the list, so... Might be a fun thing to do with the whole family, right?

James wraps his head around the very concept.

JAMES

But... they told me not to even think about Brigsby any more, or I would never get to leave?

GREG POPE

Right, well... It sounds to us like Dr. Larson's being a little too hard on you.

JAMES

Yeah.

LOUISE POPE

And you've been doing so well with everything else -- in a couple weeks they're letting us have an independent evaluation, then, hopefully, you get to come on home.

JAMES

And finish Brigsby...

GREG POPE

We're your family, James. We love you for who you are. And we know Brigsby's a part of that.

James lets that wash over him, emotion surging...
He steps over to his family, tearing up.
HUGS his mom. His dad and his sister join in the embrace.

Spencer hangs back. Thinks about something...

SPENCER

Dude, wait, how did you get here?

JAMES

(through tears/the hug)
I threw a TV through the window.

That throws off the hug a bit. His parents GRUMBLE (ad-lib).

I know, sorry...

The hug loosens, turns into a close grouping.

LOUISE POPE

Well, we have to tell somebody...?

Greg Pope thinks about it.

GREG POPE

They don't know you're gone yet,
right?

James shrugs. So Greg shrugs too.

Well, I'm sure we'll get a call.

(then)

You want to help unload everything?

James smiles. Uh, yeah. He does.

MUSIC UP -- James laughs with his family, explaining various props and miniatures, inspecting everything, trying the LIGHTS out, high-fiving Spencer, handing out Pop-Tarts...

FADE OUT...

CROSSLAKE MINIMUM SECURITY PRISON - DAY

Greg Pope's LEXUS pulls up outside, idles.

"Six Months Later"

GREG POPE'S LEXUS - CONTINUOUS

In the passenger seat, James looks out the window, apprehensive.

GREG POPE

You okay, kiddo?

James takes a deep breath.

JAMES

I think so.

Greg gives him a loving pat on the shoulder.

GREG POPE

I'll be here if you need anything.

CROSSLAKE MINIMUM SECURITY PRISON - YARD - DAY

Picnic style tables strewn about a patchy lawn.

A GUARD escorts a prisoner into the yard... TED BURRELL.
He searches, finds us.

JAMES waves to him, timid.

TED BURRELL (PRELAP)
Well bud, would you look at that...

TIME CUT: James and Ted sit at a far table.
Ted looks James over, amazed, a war of emotions.

TED BURRELL
You're all grown up and out in the
world and... just, wow. I didn't
know if I'd ever get to see you
again...

James sorta smiles, not quite comfortable.

So... How are you, bud?

JAMES
I'm... good. With my original
family, and I'm going to a math
school, which is easy, so far.

TED BURRELL
That's fantastic! Your-- uh, April
would be so happy to hear that.
Have you been to see her yet?

James shakes his head no. Ted gets it, but--

Well, we write each other. And I
know she'd love it. She finally
solved the Vansmithe, you know.

JAMES
Really? What was it?

TED BURRELL
Six! The whole time.

JAMES
(skeptical)
Ooohhhh.
I actually, uh -- the reason I came
here. I had a question...

Ted nods like he understands.

TED BURRELL

Well, I don't know how much of it I can really explain, but... I still think about the day she came home, with you in her arms... And, you know, it wasn't my idea, exactly, but... There you were.

(beat)

I guess I was scared, bud. And I knew it was wrong, but... some part of me felt like, you were our boy. And we wanted to give you everything we had to give.

James looks away from him, unexpected emotion surfacing. He organizes his stack of papers, covering.

JAMES

That's, uh... That's not really why I'm here, though.

TED BURRELL

What's all that?

JAMES

Brigsby Bear Adventures. The movie.

TED BURRELL

Really? You wrote it?

JAMES

Yeah, I finished it. The whole story. I did it with my family, and some friends. And we got a bunch of free money from the internet.

TED BURRELL

James, that's... amazing!

James shrugs modestly.

JAMES

Well, there's still one thing we can't get right...

TED BURRELL

What's that?

JAMES

The voices.

Ted hesitates...

TED BURRELL

I, uh... I thought it was best to just put all that behind me. I'm actually working on something new.

JAMES

Really? What?

TED BURRELL

(sheepish)

It's just a novel right now, but...
Knights of the Spectrum: 12th
Dimension Masters.

JAMES

Whoa, cool. What's the story? Wait,
no -- we don't have time.

James reaches into his pocket, pulls out a TAPE RECORDER.
Ted considers it...

(pleading)

The premiere's next week...

TED BURRELL

Well, I am interested to see the
direction you went with it...

Ted picks up the top page, looks it over. A grin creeping up.
James hits RECORD. Ted clears his throat...

TED BURRELL

Ready?

James nods, and Ted gives him a smile...
Then he launches into a fully-inhabited performance:

(Brigsby voice)

It was a time of reckoning for the
galaxy I called home. And a time of
great magic...

Off James, surprised and oddly delighted.

The BRIGSBY SCORE begins to rise, carrying us to--

MOVIE THEATRE MARQUEE - NIGHT

BRIGSBY BEAR ADVENTURES: THE MOVIE

WORLD PREMIERE
SOLD OUT!

MOVIE THEATER

A packed audience, hushed, attentions rapt.

ON SCREEN

Brigsby looks out over a sunlit desert valley.
His mouth moves in sync with the dialogue. Sort of.

BRIGSBY (V.O.)
...few were able to stand against
the darkness...

On the horizon, the SUN SETS at a sped-up pace.
There's an intense RAINBOW SUNSET, beautifully rendered.
Then STARS in the night sky.

Brigsby's eyelids lower. He sees LIGHTS dot the horizon.
In a line, moving. Getting bigger. Flashing RED and BLUE.

As for me, I didn't have a
choice...

The BRIGSBY THEME kicks into full gear, takes us into--

"BRIGSBY BEAR ADVENTURES" - OPENING CREDITS

Yes, the same sequence as the original show, but with several
NEW SHOTS of James' making.

AUDIENCE - THAT MOMENT

Spencer and Aubrey sit together, dressed up, enjoying it.
Then Spencer notices across the aisle -- an EMPTY SEAT.

BATHROOM - MOVIE THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Spencer walks in to find-- JAMES, in his Brigsby shirt,
standing over a toilet, dry heaving.

SPENCER
Whoa, hey, man -- you okay?

JAMES
What if... they don't like it?

SPENCER

Dude, everyone here is psyched.
They're gonna love it.

JAMES

I'm just gonna stay here for a
bit...

LATER: James lying on his back, alone, stressed.
Muffled BRIGSBY SFX and MUSIC coming from the theater...

ON SCREEN - THE FINAL SCENE!

A celebration in the FUTURE LIGHT FORTRESS CEREMONIAL
CHAMBER. The production quality similar to the Brigsby TV
show, but with a cinematic flair that is all James' own.

An animated CROWD (GOODY GOOSE among them) cheers and wave
banners. TRUMPETS blare.

Brigsby kneels in front of an ALIEN KING (ERIC from the
hospital, in makeup), who places a MEDAL around his neck.
FELDO MORTESE, also wearing a medal, looks on, proud.

ALIEN KING ERIC

We name you, Brigsby Bear... Hero
of Eternity!

ARIELLE AND NINA SMILES (yes, the Arielle and Nina Smiles),
wave their hands, casting SPARKLES over the celebration!

Brigsby stands, shakes hands with a DAD SUN SOLDIER.

BRIGSBY

When I came to this world, I
thought you were my enemy. But we
came together to defeat Sun
Snatcher. And now, we're family.

The Sun Soldier nods, embraces a MOM/DAUGHTER SUN SOLDIER.

AUDIENCE

Greg Pope smiling, Louise teary with pride, holding hands.

ON SCREEN

Brigsby addresses the crowd.

BRIGSBY

Worlds must now be rebuilt. It will
take time, but together we can...

But he trails off as DIABOLICAL LAUGHTER rises from above...
And the chamber begins to SHAKE and FALL APART!

ARIELLE SMILES
Sun Snatcher? It's impossible...

NINA SMILES
He must have infiltrated our
dimension when we folded space!

The roof RIPS OFF the palace!
SUN SNATCHER hangs overhead, obscured by wisps of cloud.

SUN SNATCHER
I have you now, bear!

AUDIENCE

BANDER makes a wholly invested "whoa!" face, which he turns
to share with VOGEL, who smiles and nods knowingly.

ON SCREEN

Brigsby confers with Feldo and the Sisters as debris rains.

ARIELLE SMILES
The Sun Snatcher simply can't be
defeated, Brigsby!

FELDO MORTESE
Perhaps not. But now, a choice.
Perish here together, and let
Snatcher enslave all worlds? Or
fold every molecule of this
dimension into a singularity,
creating a whole new universe,
where the forces of light can fight
on...

BRIGSBY
A new beginning...?

AUDIENCE

EMILY, arms crossed, skeptical, wondering what in God's name
she's subjecting herself to.

ON SCREEN

Brigsby wields the SORTIS CRYSTAL, latches it onto Arielle's
AMULET. An ENERGY FIELD surrounds them. Brigsby looks deep
into Arielle's eyes...

BRIGSBY
One more thing...

Holy shit -- Brigsby KISSES Arielle Smiles!
Animatronic mouth opening and closing. It's... romantic.

BRIGSBY
Goodbye Arielle.
(afterthought)
You too, Nina.

Nina, off to the side, waves casually.

AUDIENCE

AUBREY puts her hand over her mouth to keep from laughing.
Next to her: LOGAN and MERIDETH, stoned, enraptured.

ON SCREEN

Brigsby looks up, energy field glowing, amulet in hand.
The score CRESCENDOS... and he FLIES into the sky on a bright white beam of energy!

Brigsby exits the atmosphere and COLLIDES with Sun Snatcher,
trapping him in an energy field, which rockets through space!

SUN SNATCHER
Nooooooooooooooooo!

Faster and faster! Light speed! Into the biggest star in the universe! It explodes in a SUPERNOVA, becomes a BLACK HOLE and begins swallowing all existence! Entire galaxies crumble and swirl into dust until... NOTHING. Soundless darkness.

But then-- LIGHT! A BIG BANG births a new universe!

"A FILM BY JAMES POPE AND HIS BEST FRIENDS AND FAMILY"

LOBBY - THAT MOMENT

James sits, clutching his knees, listening...
And then... APPLAUSE? Getting louder...

THEATER - SECONDS LATER

James walks in to find a STANDING OVATION, the crowd facing the screen, whistling, shouting, cheering.

Standing in front of the screen is BRIGSBY BEAR himself.
Brigsby NODS to James. James nods back.
Brigsby steps inside the screen and gives James a final wave.

Off James waving goodbye, we--

VHS STATIC