

ONCE I HAD A FLOWER

(or The Boy and the Flying Hearts)

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Based on an idea by  
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Draft 1  
January 26, 2020

EXT. FIELD - DAY

An idyllic green pasture with fields lined by trees and old low stone walls. There are many patches of wildflowers. The setting is peaceful and serene, but we can hear the distant sound of a boy playing. A mysterious creature flies in from the distance, almost as if it has emerged from the sun. As it gets closer, it appears to be a large heart-shaped creature with a single eye in its center and wings that flutter at an unnaturally fast rate. It flies close to our view and pauses momentarily as it blinks, then breaks the fourth wall as if it is looking directly at us. It happens so quickly we can't quite take it all in, but in its eye can be seen the universe (open to artistic interpretation). Then it flutters down and comes to rest in a treetop, as it looks out over the pasture, quietly observing the following interactions, which we see seemingly from its POV.

A duck family waddles along as the mother duck leads her ducklings to a small pond. The smallest duck at the end of the line repeatedly stumbles and picks itself back up scrambling to keep up. At the water, the mother duck climbs straight in as the ducklings stop nervously at the water's edge, following along on the shore as the mother swims back and forth. The ducklings chirp anxiously. After a moment, the mother duck swims close to the shore and uses her bill to nudge all the ducklings into the water. They all swim away together.

A nanny goat stands beside an old stone wall, with two young goats playfully shoving each other to get the best position to nurse at their mother's teat. The mother goat licks their backs to clean their fur. A third young goat hops about playfully around her family, bleating.

A family of sheep lays beneath a shady tree. Some lambs eat grass and others seem to be napping. The mother sheep rises, sensing a threat and places herself between the viewer and the young lambs. She slowly chews the grass in her mouth, gazing almost menacingly toward us.

A large bull stands at the crest of a grassy knoll. He is stoic and intimidating. In the near distance behind him can be seen a family of cows quietly grazing.

A magpie flies up into the tree where the heart is resting. In its beak it carries the arm of a plastic action figure, which it adds to a nest it is building, made up of twigs as well as other plastic and metal toy pieces. The bird hops back down to the ground and walks to a pile of busted toys and other junk. The pile is twice as tall as the bird. The bird hunts and pecks through the pile, scavenging more materials for its nest.

The boy's voice, which has been heard distantly throughout the preceding views, now seems slightly closer, though still hard to quite make out until its playful tone abruptly turns to frustration.

DIDO (O.S.)  
Aw, come on! Another busted  
spaceship?

No sooner have we heard these words than a busted toy spaceship lands jarringly on the pile, causing a mini-avalanche of broken toys and startling the magpie, who flies up and past the heart.

The heart now turns to look at the boy. The boy continues playing with a mish-mash of action figures and dolls, acting out an adventure and speaking in the voices of the toys. He is oblivious to the serene natural beauty that surrounds him.

DIDO (CONT'D)

(as Toy 1)  
It looks like we're stranded here  
in this unfamiliar land until we  
can buy another new spaceship.

(as Toy 2)  
That's the third ship you've burned  
through since we left the galactic  
star base! I'm reporting you to the  
commander!

(as Toy 1)  
But you'll jeopardize the mission!  
These rotten ships weren't meant to  
handle inter-dimensional space  
travel. We need a bigger, better,  
powerfuller ship to reach the  
treasures of Star System Kluton Q-  
143.

(as Toy 2)  
Ugh, you're right. I need that  
treasure to buy everything I ever  
wanted. I wish you weren't the only  
pilot who can navigate the  
Plutonian asteroid fields.

Dido moves the toys toward a small tower he has built with the old stones from the crumbling walls around the field.

DIDO (CONT'D)

(as Toy 1)  
We'll take shelter in this moon  
tower until we learn the ways of  
this planet and take all the  
resources we need for the journey.  
Bot-Bot!

Dido grabs a third toy, a small metal robot, about 3 inches tall, which he calls Bot-Bot.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
 (as Bot-Bot)  
 Beep bee boop deedle deedle.  
 (as Toy 1)  
 Download a new language interpreter  
 node for this planet, and research  
 a brief history of its people.  
 Also, grab all my things and carry  
 them to the top of that moon tower.  
 (as Bot-Bot)  
 Doo-dop deedle deedle boop--  
 (as Toy 1)  
 Bot-Bot, wait!

Dido moves the toys toward a tall flower (about the size of the action figures) growing in the grass nearby.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
 (as Toy 1)  
 This flower! It's as tall as a man.  
 I've never seen anything like it.  
 I'd like to take it with us. If I  
 ever return home, I think my people  
 would marvel at something like this  
 when I tell them tales of our  
 journey.

He picks the flower and stares silently at it for a moment.

Just then, his play is interrupted by the sound of a small bell being rung in the distance. He looks up to see his mother at the back door of their cottage. She rings a dinner bell that hangs by the door, but she does not look up from a smart phone she holds in her hand.

MOTHER  
 Dido! Dinner! Get your butt in  
 gear!

Dido reflexively grabs a toy space laser and fires it at the stone tower and toys and flower he was just playing with. The toy laser flashes red and yellow and makes a wimpy sounding laser noise as Dido laughs with his best impression of an evil villain's maniacal laugh. Then he throws the toy laser at the stone tower, knocking it over and busting the laser.

He picks up Bot-Bot and bounds toward the cottage. As he approaches it, something catches the corner of his eye back toward his play area. He spins in that direction, where the heart is still watching. The heart flutters about.

Dido squints and rubs his eyes, confused by what he sees. When he looks again the heart is gone.

INT. COTTAGE KITCHEN - DAY

Dido and family are seated around a small table in a cluttered kitchen. Dirty dishes and pots and pans are stacked in the kitchen sink. Dido's Mother continues to scroll through her smart phone while eating with her free hand. His Father watches a game on a small TV set, mostly staring with his mouth agape and holding his fork with food mid-air. In between plays he grunts in approval or disdain and takes a bite. Aside from that he's mostly silent throughout dinner. Both parents' gazes remain unbroken throughout the scene.

Dido plays with his food without really eating it. He's built a mashed potato mountain and has a fork of chicken breast flying through the air like a spaceship before crashing it into the potato mountain.

DIDO  
My spaceship crashed again.

MOTHER  
Uh-huh.

DIDO  
I need a new one.

Silence. Dido fiddles with Bot-Bot and then continues speaking.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
Mom. Can you get me a new spaceship?

MOTHER  
You just got a new spaceship.

DIDO  
It broke. Are you listening?

MOTHER  
Dido, I've had a long day. Eat your food.

Dido begins idly pushing food around his plate.

DIDO  
The kind you got was a piece of junk. Plus one of my Army Jacks lost an arm somehow, so I had to toss that, too.

MOTHER

You've got plenty of other toys.

DIDO

But I need a spaceship for the mission.

MOTHER

You've got enough toys. When are you going to learn to be satisfied with what you have?

Dido's mother continues scrolling on her smart phone, adding clothing items to a cart in a shopping app.

FATHER

Wha'd you say?

MOTHER

I was talking to Dido.

Dido looks down at his plate, where he's arranged his food into the shape of a heart with wings and an eye.

FATHER

Were you telling him to take out the trash?

MOTHER

No.

FATHER

Tell 'im he needs to take out the trash before he plays.

DIDO

I can hear you, dad.

EXT. COTTAGE BACK DOOR - DUSK

The back door swings open and Dido steps out, holding an oversized bag of garbage in one hand, and carrying Bot-Bot in the other. He tosses the bag of garbage in the garbage can and turns back toward the house, but hears a rustling noise. He turns to search for the sound, and sees the flying heart hovering by a nearby cluster of trees.

Dido instinctively ducks behind the garbage can to spy on the heart.

DIDO

Bot-Bot, what do you see?

Dido remains hidden behind the garbage can, but slowly pokes Bot-Bot's head around the side of the can.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
 (as Bot-Bot)  
 Beep beep boop.

He pulls Bot-Bot back behind the can to face him.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
 (as himself)  
 That's what I thought I saw, too.  
 Weird. It was probably just a bird,  
 right?  
 (as Bot-Bot)  
 Boop.  
 (as himself)  
 Let's look together just to make  
 sure.

He peeks out from behind the garbage can, holding Bot-Bot. This time there's no denying what he sees. He watches the mysterious flying heart as it hovers back and forth. After a moment, the heart moves slowly away from him. Dido shoves Bot-Bot into the pocket of his jacket and begins sneaking along to follow the heart. He sticks to shadows and crouches so as not to be noticed.

He follows the heart from tree to tree through the field. Soon the cottage is in the distance. At the edge of a clearing, Dido gets rather close to the heart.

Suddenly the heart whirls around bringing itself eye to eye with Dido as if it knew it was being followed all along. Dido freezes in place, in awe of the creature now that he sees it up close. For a moment they are both eerily silent as they size each other up.

The heart blinks its eye and begins to emit a strange glow. Dido now gazes into the eye in the same way his parents had gazed at their screens during dinner.

Within the eye, Dido sees a vision. In it, he sees himself, surrounded by toys - all sorts of bright shiny toys - so many that they come up to his chest like he's in a ball pit. He smiles wide and holds his arms up to the heavens as an intense and joyous light shines down on him. Everything moves in slow motion as even more toys begin raining down on him.

Back in reality, Dido is transfixed by the glow from the heart. Suddenly the glow disappears, and the heart begins to fly away.

Dido stands motionless for a moment before shaking himself out of a stupor and realizing the heart is half way across the clearing. He takes off at full speed, desperate to catch another glimpse of the vision.

After a brief and intense chase over hills and stone walls, Dido gains ground and reaches his arm out. He is almost close enough to touch it, but it is just beyond his fingertips. Mustering all his energy, Dido puts his head down and lets out a primal scream as he lurches forward to grab the heart.

The heart is frightened, and lets out a bright flash of light. Suddenly there is a swirl of light and color, which fills the screen as the heart opens a magical portal to escape.

EXT. MOEBIUS CITY CENTER - DAY

As the swirl of light from the portal dissipates, Dido finds himself still at an all out run, but transported to a strange and futuristic city. The heart flutters up and away as Dido bolts head on into a steadily whooshing stream of traffic. Without slowing or hesitating, the traffic seamlessly navigates around Dido, miraculously avoiding him and each other as he continues running across the street. Before he even realizes what has happened, he is safely on the other side of the traffic.

Full of shock, he glances erratically around him, while still running, until he runs splat into the side of a gleaming skyscraper, and tumbles backward. Lying on his back, he looks left and right for the heart, then sees it high above him. He watches helplessly as it flies peacefully up into the clouds and disappears, much as it appeared in the opening.

As he watches the heart drift away, Dido finally becomes aware of the change in surroundings. He stands and cranes his neck to look in awe at the towering buildings, seemingly built one on top of another. A large SIGN reads "IT'S O.K. TO DREAM IN MOEBIUS CITY!"

He reaches into his pocket to retrieve Bot-Bot. The toy robot has been smashed into several pieces by the impact of running into the building. A look of concern crosses Dido's face, and we can see that he cares for this toy as if it was a real living being.

DIDO

Bot-Bot?

Dido looks up again to take in his surroundings. Everything he sees runs with the efficiency of a finely tuned watch.

He watches the traffic, which is mostly made up of sleek modern buses that seem to run autonomously. There are no discernible traffic lights or lanes; the buses simply weave in and out, avoiding pedestrians and pulling to the side to let passengers in and out. It is as if everything is in perfect communication with everything else.

People walk about much as the buses move - propelled with a confident sense of purpose. People weave in and out, smiling, nodding, and tipping hats to one another as they pass.

On a nearby street corner there is a small bodega with a counter open to the street. As people pass in a steady stream, a man behind the counter hands each passerby a different item, predicting their needs, whether it is a cup of coffee, an apple, or a bar of soap.

A woman carrying two large bags of produce stumbles and all the groceries spill out. Immediately another man and woman stop and quickly help pick everything up. In mere seconds, the three of them are back on track moving in the flow.

Dido takes all this in with quiet wonder.

DIDO (CONT'D)

Where am I?

As he mutters the words, a bus glides to a smooth stop directly beside him. A bus window pops open and a bus driver smiles at Dido.

BUS DRIVER

Moebius City Center, quadrant G.

DIDO

Huh?

BUS DRIVER

You said "where am I?" You're in Moebius City Center, quadrant G. Where are you heading?

DIDO

Um. I'm not sure, sorry.

BUS DRIVER

Just summon another bus when you're ready.

The bus smoothly merges back into the flow of traffic.

Dido looks back down at the busted Bot-Bot, then up to the sky. He sighs wistfully, recalling the heart that somehow brought him here. There is no sign of it any more.

We gaze down on Dido from a great height, perhaps as though we're watching him from the POV of the heart rising higher and higher. We see the grand scale of the city, and Dido seems incredibly small, dwarfed by the towering buildings as the city continues moving all around him. He alone is still.

Just as it seems he may be frozen in place, Dido perks up with an idea, and dashes over to the corner bodega.

DIDO  
Hi! How much is a--

The shopkeeper doesn't wait for the end of Dido's sentence before thrusting a notepad and pencil into Dido's hands.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
Awesome.

Dido eagerly flips open the notepad and readies his pencil. He's interrupted by the sound of the shopkeeper clearing his throat. Dido looks up at him.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
Oops. Uh, what do I owe you?

The shopkeeper looks confused, and then gestures toward a line of people that has formed while Dido is blocking the storefront.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
Oh.

Dido steps to the side and the flow of people resumes. Dido buries his head in the notepad as the city continues to buzz around him. After a moment he smiles at his work and rushes to the edge of the traffic. He stops and looks around.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
Uh. I'm summoning a bus.

Another bus stops for him.

BUS DRIVER 2  
Where to?

Dido holds up the notepad revealing a drawing of the flying heart.

DIDO  
Do you know where I can find this?

BUS DRIVER 2

Of course! Nowhere. Er, Everywhere.  
Well, you can't find one, but your  
best bet would probably be one of  
the Ubiq shrines at Moebius Top.

DIDO

Okay, how do I get there?

The bus driver smiles patiently, blinks his eyes, and turns his head to look at the bus door, which is open and right in front of Dido.

DIDO (CONT'D)

Oh. Right. So I just get on?

EXT. MOEBIUS CITY - DAY

The bus barrels along amid the tall buildings.

INT. BUS - DAY

Dido sits at the front of the bus. Out the windows, the city whizzes by in bright blurs. Dido's eyes dart back and forth as he watches the passing scenery. The bus driver taps a few buttons, then swivels his seat to face Dido.

BUS DRIVER 2

First time in Moebius?

DIDO

Uh-huh.

BUS DRIVER 2

Meeting your parents somewhere?

Dido doesn't know how to respond.

BUS DRIVER 2 (CONT'D)

What's your name, kid?

DIDO

Dido Carrozza.

The bus driver twirls around and types this name into a computer in the bus console.

BUS DRIVER 2

Two R's?

DIDO

And two Z's.

On the screen a swirling circle appears momentarily and then the words "UNKNOWN PERSON." A small item tumbles out of a hole in the console like a toy vending machine. The bus driver grabs the item and affixes it to Dido's chest - a large button, emblazoned with those words - "UNKNOWN PERSON."

BUS DRIVER 2

When you're done at the shrine, summon another bus. Ask for the Department of Child Welfare. Their assessment will direct you to the appropriate academy which will house you during your stay and refine your elementals if you choose.

DIDO

Elementals?

BUS DRIVER 2

Your inherent skills. A tutor can help sharpen them, and enroll you into your apprenticeship when you're ready.

DIDO

Oh, I'm just trying to find the flying heart thing.

BUS DRIVER 2

Ubiq.

DIDO

I what?

BUS DRIVER 2

The flying heart thing is called a Ubiq.

DIDO

Yeah, that thing. I'm pretty sure it's filled with all kinds of awesome toys. Every toy I could ever want. I've got to find it.

BUS DRIVER 2

Hmmm. I don't know about all that. Where'd you say you were from?

DIDO

I didn't.

## BUS DRIVER 2

Well, I hope you figure things out, kid. Here's your stop. Ubiq shrine is right at the top of the steps. Don't forget to summon a bus to Child Welfare when you're done. Trust me, you'll be taken care of. Godspeed.

## EXT. MOEBIUS TOP - DAY

Dido steps off the bus and looks up as the bus speeds away. He is standing at the foot of a flight of steps. At the top of the stairs is a small, ornate building that seems almost out of place in this modern city. On top of the building's roof is a large sculpture of a Ubiq.

The stairs appear to be a short flight of roughly 25 steps. Dido takes a breath, then puts his head down and begins climbing the steps. After a few seconds of walking, he stops and looks up again. Mysteriously, the stairs ahead of him seem to have grown into 100 steps. He looks behind him, and is still standing at the base level.

## DIDO

What?

He begins climbing again, this time with his eyes fixed on the shrine at the top of the steps. With each step, it appears to grow farther away as the staircase stretches out before him and more steps appear. He increases his pace gradually until he is at a full run. He puts his head down again as he barrels up the steps. After a few seconds of running, thinking he's surely made some progress, he stops to catch his breath. He looks up the stairs and can no longer see the shrine. Confused, he turns around and sees that the shrine is now far below him.

## DIDO (CONT'D)

Aw, come on!

He heaves a frustrated sigh and starts down the steps. Soon he notices the steps are curving away from the shrine, so as he walks down, he is once again getting farther away. He throws his hands up.

## DIDO (CONT'D)

How am I supposed to get over there?

Immediately, a bus appears out of nowhere and stops beside him.

BUS DRIVER 3

Where to?

DIDO

The Ubig shrine.

BUS DRIVER 3

Oh, that's simple. It's right at the top of the steps!

The bus driver gestures, and Dido turns to find that he is back where he began, at the bottom of a small flight of steps. The bus pulls away.

DIDO

Alright. Here we go.

He bolts up the stairs at full speed. As he runs, the steps seem to morph into a spiral staircase and he is running in circles. He sees the shrine distantly above him. Finally he gives up, comes to a stop, and sits on the steps, burying his face in his knees. He is hyperventilating and even on the verge of tears.

LARRY (O.S.)

Can I help you?

EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Dido looks up once again to find that he is sitting in a small courtyard at the front door of the shrine. A short plump man in a simple brown robe smiles kindly at him with an outstretched hand.

DIDO

I made it here?

LARRY

Seems that way. Is this where you meant to be?

DIDO

This is a Ubig shrine, right?

LARRY

The most mystical little Ubig shrine in Moebius Top! But I'm a little biased. I tend to this shrine. My name is Hilarion the Chronicler.

Dido stares at him blankly.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
You can call me Larry.

Dido still sits motionless.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
Why don't I help you up?  
(helping Dido up)  
By the way, you don't happen to  
have a name, do you?

DIDO  
Dido.

LARRY  
Dee-doh. I like it.  
(sing-songy)  
Deeeeeeeeeee-doooooooooooooh.

DIDO  
Do you know anything about the  
flying heart I saw?

LARRY  
Straight to the point, eh? No  
fooling around with you. What do  
you hope to know?

As Dido begins speaking, Larry interjects sporadically.

DIDO	LARRY (CONT'D)
I don't know what's going on.	
I was chasing the heart	--Ubiq.

DIDO (CONT'D)	LARRY (CONT'D)
--because I wanted what I saw	--a vision?
when I looked inside it	

DIDO (CONT'D)	LARRY (CONT'D)
--and suddenly I was here in	
this city	--Moebius.

DIDO (CONT'D)	LARRY (CONT'D)
--and the bus drivers	--navigators.

DIDO (CONT'D)	LARRY (CONT'D)
--could sense when I needed	
them, and I showed one of	
them a drawing of the heart	--Ubiq.

DIDO (CONT'D)	LARRY (CONT'D)
--and she brought me here	--Moebius Top.

DIDO (CONT'D) LARRY (CONT'D)  
 --and I thought the stairs  
 would never end --ugh

DIDO (CONT'D) LARRY (CONT'D)  
 --then I sat down, and  
 somehow I ended up in front --that rings a bell.  
 of the shrine

DIDO (CONT'D) LARRY (CONT'D)  
 --and you were standing there --Larry.

DIDO (CONT'D) LARRY (CONT'D)  
 --and none of this makes  
 absolutely any sense --seems clear to me.

DIDO (CONT'D) LARRY (CONT'D)  
 --but I just want to figure --you're catching on!  
 out where I can find the Ubiq

DIDO (CONT'D)  
 --so it will send me back home with  
 all the toys I could ever want!

Dido finally stops, out of breath, and looks hopefully at  
 Larry for answers.

LARRY  
 Sounds like you've had quite a day.  
 Why don't you come inside for tea?

INT. LARRY'S RESIDENCE - DAY

Larry fills a tea kettle with water and places it on a flame  
 on the stovetop. Dido is seated at a table. Above them a  
 series of staircases cascades up a tower to a shrine at the  
 top. This seems much taller than the building looked from  
 outside. The room is mostly bare and simple, besides  
 houseplants scattered all around, and an enormous pile of  
 books, twice as high as a person.

LARRY  
 So, you were brought to Moebius by  
 a Ubiq. This is quite rare. I've  
 devoted my life to the study of  
 Ubigs and I've never met anyone who  
 has actually witnessed, let alone  
 experienced, an actual  
 transmission. Tell me how it  
 happened.

Larry walks to the book pile and begins searching for a book,  
 which involves physically scaling the pile, walking up, down,  
 and around it.

DIDO

When I saw the... Ubiq, I didn't know what it was. But I felt drawn to it. I followed it, and then it showed me the most beautiful thing. I saw myself surrounded by everything I could ever want.

LARRY

How glorious! It showed you a vision of love? Knowledge? A perfect unity and wholeness of every relationship?

DIDO

No, I mean like toys.

LARRY

Hmmm.

DIDO

But for some reason, it brought me here. It made a mistake.

LARRY

It was no mistake.

DIDO

That's why I need to find it again. So I can get out of this place, and go to where the toys are.

LARRY

Why would anyone ever want to leave Moebius?

DIDO

Well, I didn't come here on purpose.

LARRY

But you're here! Do you realize how lucky that makes you? In Moebius, every need you have is met, as a right. Ah! Here it is.

He grabs a book and makes his way down the pile, where he opens the book in front of Dido. He points at the illustrations.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Centuries ago, we found a way to harness the magical energy of the Ubigs.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

That force allows our city to run in harmony, and supply exactly for the needs of each person.

DIDO

So you mean maybe the toys I saw ARE here somewhere?

LARRY

I said we supply the needs of each person. Not wants, Dido. Needs. There is no excess. There is no waste. No one has more than they need. Everyone has what is right for them.

DIDO

So why did it show me the toys?

Larry flips to another page in the book.

LARRY

As I said, an actual transmission is rare. But a Ubiq can display a vision of what you most desire. But! If you are not in tune with what you most need, the vision will be distorted. You see what you want; it takes you where you need. It was not a mistake that it brought you here. You made the mistake in seeing the toys. When your heart aligns with your needs, a Ubiq will fulfill your vision. When your heart and your needs are not in line the results are... unpredictable.

DIDO

So, when I see another Ubiq, how do I know if it's showing me a real vision?

LARRY

You must know who you are.

DIDO

I want to try again. How do I find another one?

LARRY

You don't find a Ubiq. It is simply there when it should be there. Like many worthwhile things.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

They are not ready for you until  
you're ready for them.

DIDO

I'm thirsty.

The tea kettle whistles. Larry laughs.

DIDO (CONT'D)

What?

Larry grabs the kettle and pours the water over some leaves  
in a tea cup.

LARRY

You're ready for tea. And the tea  
is ready for you.

Larry serves the tea, and Dido smiles into the steam rising  
from it. Larry pours his own cup as well.

LARRY (CONT'D)

This is my own blend, made from the  
leaves of several plants grown here  
on the premises.

DIDO

(sips)

It's good.

Larry raises his teacup to offer a toast.

LARRY

May what you need be what you want.

They clink teacups. Larry raises his pinky and downs the cup  
in one gulp.

DIDO

The bus driver said something about  
taking an assessment. And  
sharpening my skills? Would that  
help me find another Ubiq?

LARRY

That I can't say. But it will help  
you find you.

EXT. MOEBIUS CITY - DAY

A bus moves rapidly through the city. Through the window we  
can see Dido watching the city pass. He sees a sign that says  
"BE THE BEST VERSION OF YOU IN MOEBIUS CITY."

EXT. DEPARTMENT OF CHILD WELFARE - DAY

Dido exits the bus and looks up at a tall building, with a sign identifying it as the Department of Child Welfare. As he approaches the building an enormous glass door opens for him.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

As Dido enters the building a yellow arrow illuminates on the floor. He follows it to a reception desk where an eager young man greets him.

RECEPTIONIST

Hello young man! Wait a sec. Is that an Unknown Person button?

Dido looks down at the button he'd forgotten the bus driver gave him.

DIDO

Hi.

RECEPTIONIST

I wasn't sure the rumor was true.  
 (calls to back)  
 Linda! An unknown person!  
 (to Dido)  
 It's been a while. How are you?  
 Step on up!

A woman appears through a door behind the desk. This is LINDA.

LINDA

What do you know. Did you run his button, yet?

RECEPTIONIST

No, he just got here and I called for you.

LINDA

(impatiently)  
 Well...

RECEPTIONIST

Right. I'll need your button please.

Dido unpins his button and hands it to the receptionist. The receptionist places it in a slot on his desk, and a nearby screen lights up with Dido's name.

LINDA

Welcome Dido. We're glad to have you. We'd like to offer you an aptitude assessment to reveal your Elementals. What do you think about that?

DIDO

Yes. That's why I'm here.

The screen bings and the words "Verbal Acceptance" appear.

LINDA

Alright, follow me.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Linda leads Dido along a long, brightly-lit hallway.

LINDA

This assessment is simple and accurate. It's also 100% voluntary. If at any point you decide to stop, you can. The results will reveal your Elementals, which are your natural core strengths. If you accept the results you can be enrolled into an academy that will further develop your Elementals to prepare you for a guaranteed career path in a job aligned to you. Does all this make sense, Dido?

DIDO

I think so.

LINDA

Alright, here we are. Empty anything metal in your pockets, please. It will interfere with the equipment.

Dido reaches into his jacket pockets. He had forgotten that Bot-Bot was still in his pocket, in pieces. He pulls the parts out and places them in a receptacle next to the door where they've stopped.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Hmm. Not what I was expecting. You want me to upcycle this?

DIDO

No. Can I have it back after this?

LINDA

Of course. I'll see you on the other side.

INT. TESTING FACILITY - DAY

Dido sits in a room surrounded by a few large machines. An odd contraption is on his head. We see him from a distance. The sound is muted as if we are watching him from another room, through glass. He presses buttons on a desk in front of him. We can't see exactly what the assessment consists of.

After a few moments, he turns toward one of the machines and gazes at it admiringly. The machine is very tall. Dido cranes his head back, looking up, and leans back until his chair tips over. He flails, knocking over a row of smaller machines, and suddenly lights are flashing and machines begin beeping warnings. Several people in the room from where we're observing through glass rush frantically through a door to help.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Dido sits in a small chair across the desk from Linda. He looks down with embarrassment. Linda looks at her computer screen and clicks a few times. Then she begins laughing - a small chuckle that builds into a big laugh. Dido looks up in bewilderment.

DIDO

Why are you laughing?

LINDA

It's the results of your assessment.

Still laughing, she gestures for him to lean in and look at the screen. On the screen, there is a photo of Dido, along with the word TINKER.

LINDA (CONT'D)

You're a tinker. That means you repair things. Well we've seen the damage you can do, so I guess it's time for you to learn how to mend.

DIDO

I've never fixed anything before.

LINDA

That reminds me.

She reaches under her desk and retrieves a box, containing Bot-Bot's parts.

LINDA (CONT'D)

I can see how this little guy ended up in pieces. Maybe you'll figure out how to put him back together.

She shoves the box across her desk toward Dido.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Dido carries the box as Linda escorts him into a workshop. There are three work benches. One small bench is occupied by a girl Dido's age, CLARA. She is intently working on a project, but looks up to smile at Dido as he enters. A second small bench sits empty beside her. Across the room at a larger bench, sits their tutor, OSGOOD, a man in his 50s with wild hair, who is building an enormous machine and can't be bothered to acknowledge Dido's presence. Linda leaves Dido here and steps out, closing the door. Dido is unsure what he's supposed to do.

DIDO

Hello, sir. My name--

OSGOOD

Shhh.

DIDO

But I was just won--

OSGOOD

SSHHHHHHH!

Clara looks up from her work.

CLARA

Psst.

She motions toward the empty work bench. Dido walks over and sets his box down.

CLARA (CONT'D)

I'm Clara.

DIDO

My name is Dido.

Clara finishes assembling a small part and enthusiastically dashes over to give the piece to Osgood, who takes the part without looking and attaches it to the machine he is working on. She returns to her seat and starts working with other parts.

DIDO (CONT'D)

Is that the teacher? Is he going to give me some sort of assignment or something? They said I'm a tinker.

CLARA

That's Osgood. He's a master tinker. You'll learn when you're ready to learn.

DIDO

When is that?

CLARA

Just take a seat.

Dido sits. He looks around for a moment then begins sifting through the box of Bot-Bot's parts. Osgood rises, walks over to Dido's bench, and grabs the box, setting it on the floor, and returning to his station without a word.

CLARA (CONT'D)

For the first few days you're just supposed to watch.

Dido looks at Clara assembling part of a machine.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Not me. Him.

Dido turns and watches Osgood. He sighs with boredom. He looks out a window where he sees clouds that seem to drift into the shape of a Ubiq. Time passes as he sits watching while the others continue to work.

INT. WORKSHOP - EVENING

Osgood drops an arm-full of parts onto Dido's workbench, startling Dido out of a daze.

OSGOOD

So you're the kid that caught a Ubiq, huh? Tomorrow morning you start on this.

Clara watches with her jaw agape. Osgood turns out the light over his station and leaves. Dido stares at the pile of parts.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Dido is once again staring at the pile of parts, unsure of what's expected. Clara goofs off, playing with a small drone that she controls with her hand motions.

Osgood enters. As he walks through the door, a mechanical arm removes his hat, and another one hands him a steaming cup of espresso, which he receives in a seemingly habitual motion, and drinks down in one quick gulp. He drops the cup and the mechanical arm catches it before it hits the floor. His actions seem to be on autopilot, and he doesn't even observe his surroundings.

As he enters, Clara tries to hide her drone and pretend she's been working, but she loses control of the drone and it careens toward Osgood as he approaches his workbench. Just as the drone is about to crash into Osgood, he whirls around and puts his hand up, stopping the drone in mid air. He peers at the drone and moves his hand side to side. The drone follows his hand movement.

OSGOOD

Impressive work, Clara. Your sensor controls are getting much more nuanced. But I'd install a failsafe to avoid unexpected electromagnetic interference.

Clara beams with pride. Osgood flicks his wrist and the drone zips back to Clara, who guides it down to land on her bench. Osgood sits down at his bench and begins working. Clara works on the drone. Dido looks back and forth at them and the pile of parts waiting for some instruction. After a few moments Dido speaks up.

DIDO

Excuse me. Mr. Osgood? What am I supposed to be doing with this?

OSGOOD

You already know what to do. You just have to figure out how.

Osgood continues working. Dido looks at Clara.

DIDO

Hey, Clara.  
 (gestures to pile)  
 Do you know what this is?

CLARA

Just start putting things together  
 until you figure it out.

Dido looks at all the parts in front of him. He picks up a small piece and examines it. He puts it down and does the same with another piece. He tries to put the two pieces together. The pieces clearly don't fit together, which makes Clara giggle. Dido turns to glare at her.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Sorry. Just keep trying. You'll get it.

MONTAGE

-In a series of quick shots, Dido unsuccessfully tries putting parts together in various combinations.

-Dido has built something out of the parts. He holds it up for Clara, who grins and shakes her head.

-Osgood shuts off lights at the end of a day.

-A close-up of parts. Dido's hand grabs one piece at a time, before dropping each piece back in the pile.

-Dido has assembled another odd contraption. Clara's drone crashes into it, knocking it over.

-Osgood shuts off lights at the end of another day.

-Dido tries putting parts together in more various combinations

END MONTAGE

Dido now has most of the parts assembled in a way that looks like he's close to figuring something out. He's got one piece in his hand that he can't find a place for. He sets everything down on the bench in frustration. Clara leans over and grabs the spare piece. She deftly attaches it to the rest of Dido's project, and suddenly it lights up and begins whirring. Clara winks at him. Osgood hears the machine whirring and turns to look. He glances at a clock.

OSGOOD

Just in time!

Osgood disappears into an adjacent room and returns with a small paper carton. He pours a liquid from the carton into a hole in the top of Dido's machine, and places a large beaker under a spout on the side of the machine. Osgood whistles, and a mechanical arm swoops in with another shot of espresso. Osgood dumps the espresso into the beaker just as some hot, foamy milk streams out of the spout. Osgood, drinks the concoction, which leaves a frothy white milk mustache on his lip.

OSGOOD (CONT'D)

That's not a bad cappuccino! See if you can adjust for a little more foam next time.

Osgood wipes his lip and gets straight back to his workbench. Dido is stunned. Clara stifles a laugh.

DIDO

You mean this whole time I was just working to give you a coffee break?

OSGOOD

Haven't had a working milk foamer in weeks.

DIDO

You couldn't fix it yourself?

OSGOOD

Of course I could. But doesn't it feel much nicer to fix something for someone else?

DIDO

But I want to build something for me.

OSGOOD

Alright. Didn't you have some sort of busted toy when you arrived? Why don't you repair that next? I think you're ready for that. You're certainly not ready for anything else yet.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Dido has reassembled Bot-Bot to look more or less as he did before - a small, simple, inanimate robot. He looks jealously as Clara plays with her flying, interactive drone. He looks back at the milk foamer he made earlier.

DIDO

Where does the power come from?

CLARA

What?

DIDO

The machines. When I built that one, there wasn't any battery. I didn't plug it in. How was it being powered?

CLARA

Plug it in?

DIDO

Yeah, I don't see any outlets in the walls. Nothing's plugged in. Where is the power coming from?

CLARA

I still don't know why you're talking about plugs and walls, but the machines are powered by an electromagnetic force in the atmosphere. It comes from the Ubiqs. You just need to add a converter to turn it into energy. Are you trying to power that thing?

She yanks Bot-Bot from Dido's bench, grabs a small part from a bin, and begins working on Bot-Bot.

DIDO

Wait, the Ubiqs power these machines?

CLARA

The Ubiqs power everything in Moebius. The power is stronger the closer you get to a Ubig of course. That's why we have to recalibrate machines for use in Moebius Top. But The Ubiqs are always around even when you can't see them. So nothing's out of range.

She finishes her task and returns Bot-Bot to Dido, who sets it on his work station. Bot-Bot turns his head slowly side to side and moves his arms up and down.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Is that all it does?

DIDO

I don't know. He never moved on his own before. What else can he do?

CLARA

What did you design him to do?

DIDO

Nothing. I just put him back together.

CLARA

Don't you want to make some... improvements?

She gestures toward a wall of shelves filled with bins full of all kinds of parts. She playfully raises her eyebrows up and down.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY (LATER)

A souped-up Bot-Bot hovers over Dido's work bench. He still has the same basic body and is small enough to fit in a pocket, but has some modifications. A propellor on his head makes him fly, blinking lights flash from his eyes, and he is now making sounds - speaking a cute little computer language that we can't understand, but is expressive enough for us to guess its meaning.

DIDO

Bot-Bot lives!

Bot-Bot squeaks out an excited reply and quickly zooms off, crashing into a wall and falling onto Dido's workbench. Bot-Bot flails for a moment on his back before rocking back to an upright position. He looks sheepishly at Dido. After a brief moment they both laugh, and Bot-Bot begins rolling around the desk using small wheels on his feet.

Suddenly, Osgood appears, sweeping Bot-Bot off the desk into a bin.

OSGOOD

Enough games, kid! You've got your first real repair.

Bot-Bot sounds out with playful indignation from inside the bin.

OSGOOD (CONT'D)

Should be simple. It's a self-induction tea kettle for some crazy old monk in Moebius Top.  
(reading from a form)  
Hilarion the Chronicler.

DIDO

Larry!

OSGOOD

So you know this guy. That explains why he requested an apprentice repair. Here you go.

He plops the broken kettle down on Dido's workbench. It's in bad shape. Osgood walks away and Clara steps over to the bench.

CLARA

Yikes. Looks like a burned out converter. This thing must have been receiving some mega energy.

Dido looks back at the kettle. Etched into the metal is an icon of a Ubiq.

SHORT MONTAGE

-Dido works quietly on the kettle, which is disassembled on his bench. Bot-Bot wheels around, bringing Dido parts as he needs them.

-Dido finishes reassembling the kettle. Bot-Bot cheers.

-Dido is hand-polishing the kettle with a cloth. Bot-Bot wheels into frame, with a polishing wheel spinning on his head in place of the propellor. He helps polish the kettle.

-The kettle is boiling water. It glows to show that the water is ready.

-Dido pours the steaming water into a teacup and smiles.

END MONTAGE

Dido approaches Osgood's workbench with the kettle in his hands.

DIDO

I'd like to return the kettle myself, if that's ok.

EXT. MOEBIUS CITY - DAY

A bus moves rapidly through the city. Through the window we can see Dido watching the city pass. He sees a sign that says "MOEBIUS CITY: EVERYTHING YOU NEED. NOTHING MORE."

INT. LARRY'S RESIDENCE - DAY

Larry sits quietly at his table, reading a book. There is a knock on the door.

Larry opens the door to see Dido holding the kettle.

LARRY

I was just thinking some tea would  
be nice. Come in!

INT. LARRY'S RESIDENCE - DAY (LATER)

Dido and Larry sit at the table sharing tea. Bot-Bot spins in circles showing off for Larry, who laughs with delight. Bot-Bot then starts flying around, getting acquainted with the room.

LARRY

Incredible! So you're really  
finding yourself here in Moebius.

DIDO

I guess so.

LARRY

I sense discontent. I know you must  
be missing your family. You know  
you're welcome to visit with me any  
time.

DIDO

Thanks.

LARRY

Something else on your mind?

DIDO

Well, I did the assessment. And I  
learned that I was a tinker. And  
that's going well. I know more  
about who I am now... You said if I  
could figure that out, I might be  
able to see another Ubig vision,  
and if things aligned it could take  
me there.

LARRY

Ubiq visions are unpredictable, Dido. A few weeks of apprenticing doesn't mean you're in tune with your innermost desire. One can never know that for sure. And if you're not sure... there's no telling where a Ubiq might transport you. It might take you somewhere completely unknown. It would likely be someplace much worse than here. That's if you even ever see another Ubiq up close. And there's certainly no guarantee it would take you back home.

DIDO

I'm not trying to go home. I want to see the toys again.

LARRY

Don't be silly, Dido. Haven't all your needs been met here in Moebius? Why gamble everything away to maybe get some more stuff?

DIDO

But IF I could find another Ubiq... and IF I saw the toys again... maybe that would mean it would really take me there this time.

LARRY

Whatever it shows you, there's just no way of knowing if it will really take you there, or if it's a mirage.

Larry stands and takes their empty teacups to the sink.

LARRY (CONT'D)

But there's no sense arguing. I don't see any Ubigs here, do you? Hey, I just added some repair guides to my collection. Why don't you check those out while I clean up.

Larry begins washing the teacups and humming to himself. Dido despondently heads over to the book pile and searches for the repair guides.

Suddenly, Bot-Bot drops down into his line of vision and makes an urgent noise.

His lights flash and he flies up into the heights above the room. Dido watches him, then looks over to make sure Larry is still pre-occupied with the dishes. He cautiously heads toward the stairs, and begins ascending, peering upward to watch Bot-Bot.

In a few moments, he catches up to Bot-Bot at the very top of the stairs. There is a small landing and a door. Bot-Bot lands on Dido's hand, makes a whistling sound, then turns to look at the door. There is a glow coming from under the door. Dido slowly inches toward it. As he gets close, Bot-Bot begins behaving erratically, spinning, lighting up, and flying helter-skelter.

DIDO

What's gotten into you?

Dido arrives at the door and pushes it open. As it opens, Bot-Bot hurtles through the doorway. Dido runs in after him.

INT. INNER SANCTUM - CONTINUOUS

Dido enters a brightly lit room, filled with plants, as dense as a jungle. He pushes aside some vines and sees a Ubiq, peacefully gliding about among the greenscape.

LARRY (O.S.)

I'm sorry I couldn't tell you,  
Dido.

Dido turns to see that Larry has followed him up. The Ubiq also turns and sees them there. It does not seem frightened.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Please don't rush into something  
you're not ready for.

DIDO

But I think it's ready for me.

Dido leaps toward the Ubiq. It startles, but Dido is able to get his arms around it and hold on tight as it flies up through a window in the ceiling.

LARRY

Dido! Wait!

EXT. MOEBIUS TOP - DAY

Dido and the Ubiq emerge from an opening behind the sculpture at the top of the Ubiq Shrine. Moments later, Bot-Bot flies out behind them, squealing frantically as he chases them.

The Ubiq flies higher and higher. The air whooshes around them with intensity. Dido is holding on for dear life, with his eyes squeezed shut.

They burst through a layer of clouds and are suddenly above all the clouds in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. All is quiet. The Ubiq now floats gently, and Dido opens his eyes and takes in the beauty of this unexpected view. He turns toward the Ubiq, looking directly into its eye. This time there is no vision; just the eye. For the first time, Dido sees the Ubiq as another living being, not just for what he can get from it.

The Ubiq blinks its eye and then begins soaring over the clouds, taking Dido on a joyride. Dido smiles at the wind blowing through his hair and appreciates the beauty around him. The Ubiq twirls and glides, making for a fun ride. For a minute or two, Dido is just in the moment, thinking of nothing besides the ride he's taking.

Bot-Bot finally bursts through the clouds, catching up to them. He hovers in place watching Dido and the Ubiq. The Ubiq slows down and hovers in place. Dido looks into its eye again.

The eye begins to glow, and once again, Dido sees a vision. It's mostly the same as before: Dido is surrounded by toys, which also fall from the sky above him. But something is a little different. As the toys fall, they crash into the other toys and break into pieces. The Dido in the vision is trying to catch the toys to keep them from breaking.

As Dido watches the vision, he is once again gripped with greed. He doesn't mind that the vision is slightly different. He sees the toys and wants to be there.

DIDO

The vision! It worked! Let's go!

Dido is not sure how to actually pass through a portal. The joy he felt soaring moments ago has turned to frustration that he can't get what he sees. He shakes the Ubiq.

DIDO (CONT'D)

Come on! Take me through!

The Ubiq closes its eye, taking away the vision. Suddenly, it dives downward, plummeting back toward the ground, through the clouds. Dido can see the city far below as they tumble through the air, spiraling uncontrollably.

DIDO (CONT'D)

No! Bring it back!

He screams as they drop, fearing he will smash into the ground. Bot-Bot is chasing after them, trying to catch up. They are all spiraling closer and closer to the city below, and eventually weaving through buildings as they dive. Dido sees the ground rising quickly toward him. He closes his eyes again, preparing for impact.

Bot-Bot makes himself as aerodynamic as possible, straining to catch up. He is gaining on them. It looks as if they will all collide with the ground, but at the last moment, the Ubiq emits a bright flash of light just as Bot-Bot catches them. As quickly as the light appears, it is gone and they have all disappeared.

Moebius City continues on as if nothing has happened.

EXT. THE SLIMES - NIGHT

A rural landscape on the outskirts of a disgusting city. The air is thick and smoggy, with green fog. The city's skyline can be seen in the distance, with dilapidated skyscrapers and smokestacks spewing black smoke. It's like the industrial age never ended, but instead spiraled onward into a filthy inhospitable future.

There is a flash of light in the sky, and Dido, Bot-Bot, and the Ubiq appear, falling through the air not far from the ground. Dido and Bot-Bot land in some bushes. The Ubiq swerves to avoid the ground and flies up and away.

Dogs start barking and men's voices can be heard nearby, seemingly in pursuit of something.

MUCK (O.S.)

There it is!

An arrow sails through the air, striking the Ubiq, and Dido watches as it tumbles to the ground, landing distantly in some trees. Dido is around 50 yards from the trees. He looks toward the source of the voices and sees a small hunting party. A short, round man (named MUCK) is being pulled along by 3 dogs he holds on a leash. A tall thin man (named GRIME) runs beside them carrying a crossbow. Muck and Grime are almost always together and will sometimes be referred to collectively as THE HUNTERS.

Dido looks at them, then looks back toward the trees. He realizes he is closer to the woods than the hunters are. He picks up Bot-Bot, who is still functioning, but dazed. He takes off sprinting toward the trees to find the Ubiq before the hunters can.

Reaching the trees, he can see a faint glow that leads him to the Ubiq. It lies on the forest floor, wounded but still alive. It appears smaller than before, and drained of color, but it is emitting a dim glow. Dido takes off his jacket and wraps it around the Ubiq. He picks it up and runs deeper into the woods.

He can hear the Hunters and their dogs following close behind, searching for the Ubiq. Lanterns cast shafts of light through the trees. Dido weaves in and out, staying a few steps ahead. He can hear their voices.

GRIME (O.S.)

Where is it?

MUCK (O.S.)

I saw it fall over here.

GRIME (O.S.)

It must be near, keep looking.

Dido reaches a small clearing, and runs through it. He can hear the Hunters getting close as he nears the opposite side.

GRIME (CONT'D)

I saw something moving this way.

Dido reaches the trees on the other side of the clearing and dives behind a fallen tree, just as the hunters enter the clearing. They stop and look around. Grime holds his lantern high. The light hits the fallen tree, casting light over it; Dido barely remains out of view.

GRIME (CONT'D)

Search the perimeter. It's here.

Dido is trying to remain still and quiet. It's clear he'll be spotted if he tries to run. He holds his breath and hopes for the best. Bot-Bot looks up at Dido, then raises one arm in a salute before quickly wheeling over the log and into the clearing, creating a diversion. While Bot-Bot twirls and beeps and flashes his lights, Dido understands what he's doing, and seizes the opportunity to sneak away with the Ubiq.

MUCK

What the?

Bot-Bot charges toward Muck. Muck draws his bow and takes aim at Bot-Bot. As Bot-Bot gets close, Muck fires, but Bot-Bot flies straight into the air just in time, avoiding the arrow, which instead fires into the mud, which splashes up, dousing Muck and Grime. While they wipe the mud from their faces, Bot-Bot flies up over the tree tops out of their view.

He is able to catch sight of Dido running with the Ubiq a hundred yards away.

Bot-Bot descends into the clearing and draws the Hunter's attention with a noise. Then he flies as fast as he can in the opposite direction of Dido. The Hunters take the bait and pursue him.

Meanwhile, Dido emerges from the woods into a ramshackle neighborhood on the outskirts of town. The streets are muddy and lined with piles of garbage. Street lights flicker. Dido quickly looks around and sees a gate that is ajar. He opens it, and ducks inside a narrow alley, pulling the gate closed behind him.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Dido notices an open window, down at street level and carefully peeks in. He sees a basement workshop with several rundown machines. He's not sure what they are, but feels comforted by the familiar idea of a machine that needs to be repaired. He tosses the Ubiq through the window and then climbs through it himself.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dido carefully looks around, ensuring no one has seen him. He can hear people passing on the street, so he presses himself against the wall. They pass and he moves more freely. He finds some rags and dropclothes in a corner and makes a bed under a table for the Ubiq. He senses a light shining through the window and hears a noise. He spins around defensively to see Bot-Bot perched on the window sill. Bot-Bot cries out in excitement.

DIDO

Shhhhhh!

Dido grabs Bot-Bot from the window and takes him to the makeshift bed. He whispers to Bot-Bot.

DIDO (CONT'D)

You scared me! Don't do that! But thank you. Did you lose them?

Bot-Bot squeaks in affirmation, proud of himself.

DIDO (CONT'D)

Come here. We'll sleep in the corner and hope no one finds us before morning.

Dido inspects the Ubiq. It is still breathing.

DIDO (CONT'D)

They hurt it, but it's still alive.  
We've got to protect it. When it  
gets better it will take us away  
from this place.

Dido lays down beside the Ubiq, and Bot-Bot scampers into the bed as well. Dido pulls a tarp over the three of them. Bot-Bot snuggles close and makes an affectionate sound, before shutting himself down for the night. Dido lies still with his eyes wide open, afraid to sleep.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - MORNING

Dido is in the same position but has eventually succumbed to sleep. He is startled awake by the voice of a girl roughly his age.

HELPER

Hello boy.

Dido bolts up, hitting his head on the bottom of the table. He rubs his head, then quickly turns and pulls a cloth over the Ubiq to make sure it is hidden. Bot-Bot scurries behind Dido.

HELPER (CONT'D)

I won't hurt you. Cross my heart.

Bot-Bot peaks his head around to look at the girl.

HELPER (CONT'D)

What's that?

DIDO

(panicked)

Nothing!

(then relieved)

Oh, you mean Bot-Bot?

Bot-Bot squeaks hello.

HELPER

Aww, he's cute. Hi Bot-Bot!

Bot-Bot perks up and wheels himself into the open. Helper extends her hand and Bot-Bot instinctively rolls into her hand. She lifts him up face to face and nuzzles him with her nose as if he were a little puppy.

DIDO

Bot-Bot, no! We don't know her.

Bot-Bot obeys Dido by flying up into the air and hovering over them out of her reach.

HELPER

Wow! Where did he come from?

DIDO

He's mine. I made him.

HELPER

You made him?! How?

DIDO

I'm a tinker. I fix machines and things. I was training for it.

Bot-Bot floats back down to Dido's side.

HELPER

Training? Where were you training?

DIDO

Hold on! Enough questions. It's my turn. Who are you?

HELPER

I find you sleeping in our basement and you're the one asking who I am? Who are you?

DIDO

My name is Dido. What's your name?

HELPER

I'm just called Helper.

DIDO

Helper? Okay. So where are we, Helper?

HELPER

In my basement. This is my father's workshop.

DIDO

No, I mean... where ARE we? Where is this?

HELPER

We're in the Slimes. Burough 143.

DIDO  
Is that near Moebius City?

HELPER  
I've never heard of that. The  
Slimes stretch as far as I know of.  
I don't think there's any way to  
leave it. I never have. You're not  
from here?

DIDO  
No.

HELPER  
I didn't think so. Where did you  
come from? How'd you end up here?

DIDO  
You wouldn't believe me.

The Ubig shifts a bit under the tarp and makes a soft  
groaning noise.

HELPER  
Is something under there?

Helper swiftly pulls back the tarp covering the Ubig. Dido  
tries to stop her, but it's too late.

HELPER (CONT'D)  
A Wingheart? It's hurt!

She puts her hand on the Ubig. It slowly and weakly opens its  
eye and looks at the girl. It senses her goodness. If a Ubig  
had a way of smiling, it would be smiling at her. It closes  
its eye and rests again.

DIDO  
It's called a Ubig.

HELPER  
No, we call these Winghearts. These  
are rare. Where did you find it?

DIDO  
That's not so simple to answer. I  
found it where I was before I was  
here.

A voice interrupts them, shouting from the next room.

BUTCHER (O.S.)  
Helper! What's taking so long?

Helper quickly covers up the Ubiq.

HELPER

(to Dido)

Don't go anywhere. I can help you.

(shouting to Butcher)

Coming!

She grabs a tool from a table and rushes to the door, but she's stopped by a large figure in the doorway. Her father, known as BUTCHER, is a burly and gruff man. There's a kind heart inside him, but it's hidden far, far below the surface. He is stern, burdened by his place in this world.

BUTCHER

What's this? Is there someone in the basement?

HELPER

It's just a boy. He's lost.

BUTCHER

Then we better let him find his way. We don't have space for a stray. Get moving boy!

The Butcher turns to leave but hesitates and turns back around. He peers into the corner, noticing the pile of rags where the Ubiq is hidden.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

What's he hiding under there?

HELPER

It's just a toy robot.

BUTCHER

No. Not that.

He strides across the room and unveils the Ubiq.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

A Wingheart.

The Butcher nervously glances around. He dashes to the window and slides a curtain into place over it, then turns to confront Dido.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

Where'd you steal this wingheart?  
What are you doing here? Were you followed?

HELPER

He doesn't mean any harm. He's not from here. I think the wingheart brought him here.

They both turn to look at Dido. Dido and Bot-Bot silently nod their heads in unison.

BUTCHER

What do you mean not from here? Where did you come from, boy?

DIDO

A different world. The heart transported me here. It opened a portal and I fell through. I don't know where we are. I don't have anywhere to go.

BUTCHER

Wait a minute... You mean you experienced inter-dimensional travel through a wingheart?

DIDO

Twice.

BUTCHER

That's impossible. It's been 100 years since there's been a wingheart capable of inter-dimensional travel.

HELPER

The air in the Slimes rendered them powerless. They can fly, but... no more magic. I thought their magic was a fairy tale.

BUTCHER

They're meat.

DIDO

What?

BUTCHER

A rare, exotic delicacy. Valuable. I need to butcher and sell it before someone comes looking for it.

DIDO

No!

HELPER

No!

DIDO (CONT'D)

Nobody knows where I am. Bot-Bot led the Hunters away.

BUTCHER

Hunters?!

DIDO

We lost them deep in the woods.

BUTCHER

This is not good. We're not safe. No. We slaughter the wingheart and send the boy away.

HELPER

But it's hurt! The wingheart isn't healthy.

BUTCHER

I don't care.

HELPER

It will be worth more if it's healthy.

The Butcher pauses to consider this. He looks at the heart and assesses its health.

HELPER (CONT'D)

I can nurse it back to health. It will just take a few weeks. That would pay our rent for a year.

BUTCHER

That's true.

HELPER

Please, papa?

The Butcher clenches his jaw. He knows his daughter is right, but he doesn't like this situation. He breathes a heavy sigh.

BUTCHER

Keep it hidden. Keep it quiet. Get rid of the boy.

HELPER

But he doesn't have anywhere to go!

BUTCHER

That's not our problem.

HELPER

He traveled with the wingheart. He could help it.

BUTCHER

You can handle it without him.

HELPER

Papa!

BUTCHER

We don't have the space. We can't feed an extra mouth. No strays. End of discussion.

With that, the Butcher marches toward the door to leave.

HELPER

He built the robot. He knows how fix your machines.

The Butcher stops in his tracks.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The Butcher sits across from Dido at a rustic kitchen table. He holds Bot-Bot in his hand examining him by poking and prodding. Bot-Bot giggles and shakes, as if ticklish. Helper brings Dido a glass of water and a piece of toast, then sits beside him at the table.

BUTCHER

So you made this?

HELPER

Yes. He's trained as a tinker.

BUTCHER

Let him speak for himself.

(to Dido)

So you're a trained tinker?

The Butcher sets Bot-Bot on the table, and Bot-Bot scurries over to Dido.

DIDO

Training. A tinker in training. But yes, I made Bot-Bot. He was just a toy back at home. He got busted when we transported to Moebius, but I repaired him with some improvements. I gave him power and movement.

BUTCHER

Could you fix something bigger?

DIDO

Sure. I made an espresso machine for Osgood.

BUTCHER

I don't know what most of that means. How about the machines in the basement - did you see those?

DIDO

Yes.

BUTCHER

Could you fix them?

DIDO

I think so. What are they for?

BUTCHER

For my work. I'm a butcher. Since the machines broke, I must do everything by hand. It's slow. Those machines save me time and help me earn more money. If you could get them working, you'd earn your keep.

DIDO

I could do that.

HELPER

So he can stay?

BUTCHER

I'll let you stay for a week. If you prove useful, we'll keep you around after that.

DIDO

Thank you, sir. By the way, my name is Dido. What is your name?

BUTCHER

Our names are not important. Only what we do. Call me Butcher. She is Helper. If you fix the machines, I'll call you Tinker. Until then, you're just Boy.

HELPER

Thank you, papa.

BUTCHER

Don't make me regret this. He stays in the basement. Out of sight. Do not draw attention to us. No one can know we are caring for the Wingheart.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

The Hunters search through the streets. Their dogs are sniffing the ground. They knock over garbage cans into already-towering piles of trash. They approach an old woman in rags, sitting on the sidewalk. She appears to be a beggar, with a bucket beside her for coins.

GRIME

Woman! Have you seen a boy with a wingheart?

OLD WOMAN

I don't recall.

Grime tosses a coin into her bucket as a bribe.

GRIME

How about now? Did you see them?

OLD WOMAN

I would tell you if I had.

Grime thrusts his hand back into her bucket and takes his coin back, along with several other coins, which he puts in his pocket.

MUCK

Grime! This way! The hounds might have a scent.

Grime joins Muck, and as they begin to cross the street, they are cut off by a comically long limousine, which pulls alongside them. It is spewing black smoke into the air, and as it pulls up, its tires send green sludge splashing up on the sidewalk, drenching Muck and Grime. The Old Woman laughs at them. Once the back window of the limo has reached the Hunters, it stops, and the window rolls down. Their BOSS is in the limo. We can't see him, but we hear his voice.

BOSS

Muck! Grime! Have you located the wingheart?

GRIME

Not yet sir.

MUCK

But we're on its trail.

BOSS

I'm losing patience. Don't make me send you back to where I found you.

GRIME

Yessir.

MUCK

We'll find it sir.

BOSS

I don't care what you have to do.  
Just bring me that wingheart.  
Wherever it is.

The limo pulls away, spewing black smoke in their faces.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Helper pours steaming water from a kettle into a large tub. The rising steam mimics the smoke at the end of the previous scene. Helper begins cleaning the Ubiq, paying special attention to its wound. It seems to purr as she tends to it. Nearby, Dido and Bot-Bot try to make sense of one of the Butcher's machines. Throughout the following dialogue, Bot-Bot brings part after part to Dido, along with tools he needs. Helper continues tending to the Ubiq.

HELPER

How did you do it?

DIDO

I didn't do anything yet. I'm just figuring out where parts fit.

HELPER

Not the machine. How did you travel with a wingheart?

DIDO

Oh, I don't know exactly. I just saw one, and I chased after it. And there was a flash of light and I was somewhere else.

HELPER

That must have been scary. You're brave.

DIDO

I guess. I wasn't really thinking about being scared.

HELPER

What were you thinking?

DIDO

I was just thinking about the toys.

HELPER

What toys?

DIDO

Oh yeah, the Ubig-- I mean the wingheart-- it showed me a vision. I looked in its eye and I was surrounded by toys. That's why I chased it.

Helper looks at the heart's eye. It is closed.

HELPER

Why did it show you that?

DIDO

It shows you what you want. And if it lines up with what you really need, it will take you there.

HELPER

But it brought you here instead?

DIDO

Well, first it brought me to Moebius.

HELPER

Oh, that's right. And did it show you another vision before you came here?

DIDO

It was the same one.

HELPER

But if it showed you the toys, why did it bring you here?

DIDO

If your heart doesn't line up with your needs, it's unpredictable. It could take you anywhere.

HELPER

Once it gets better, do you think  
it will show you another vision?

DIDO

I hope so.

The Butcher calls from another room.

BUTCHER (O.S.)

Helper! I'm getting hungry!

HELPER

Yes, papa!

DIDO

Your dad scares me. Why is he so  
mean?

HELPER

He's not. He's just looking out for  
us. And he's unhappy. He doesn't  
want to be a butcher.

DIDO

Then why does he do it?

BUTCHER

Helper!

HELPER

I've got to go make dinner.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Later that evening, they all sit around the kitchen table, eating from bowls of porridge Helper has prepared. Bot-Bot sniffs Dido's bowl and backs away in disgust. He notices a tiny mouse scurrying on the floor, and he hovers down to stalk it for fun. Throughout the following dialogue, Bot-Bot can be seen in the background, pursuing the mouse. In contrast to Dido's family dinner back home, here there are no distractions from each other.

BUTCHER

Did the day treat you well?

HELPER

Yes, papa. I treated the  
wingheart's wound. It's still  
sleeping, but I think it will  
recover.

BUTCHER

That's good. Boy, did you fix my machines?

DIDO

Not yet. One of them is close to working, I think.

HELPER

The wingheart shows him visions.

The Butcher stops chewing. He looks at Dido with suspicion.

BUTCHER

He's filling your head with nonsense. The visions are a myth. I've processed dozens of winghearts over the years. Never seen a vision.

HELPER

But it brought him here. It must be true.

BUTCHER

He says it brought him here. We don't know where he really came from.

HELPER

Well, I believe him. What if the magic is real? What if when the heart is healthy, it can show him another vision?

Bot-Bot chases the mouse into a mouse hole. He approaches the hole feeling victorious.

BUTCHER

The boy is here to fix my machines. Not to conjure magic visions. Isn't that right, boy?

Dido swallows his porridge with a gulp.

DIDO

I am fixing the machines. We were just talking.

BUTCHER

Don't give my daughter false hope. There's nothing for us but the Slimes.

Bot-Bot peers into the mouse hole. Suddenly a large mouse pokes its head out, startling Bot-Bot, who squeals with fright, and zooms away erratically, crashing into a wall and falling over. This sudden comical commotion interrupts the conversation and causes everyone at the table to stop and look. The children giggle.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dido is getting ready for bed. Bot-Bot hangs halfway out of the chest pocket of his pajama shirt, holding a toothbrush and brushing Dido's teeth for him.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dido sees a light shining through a crack in Helper's bedroom door, which is slightly ajar. He starts to make his way down the steps to the basement. Halfway down the steps he stops. He hears a noise. He climbs back up the steps and peers down the hall at Helper's door. Is he imagining it? No, he's really hearing the sound of music drifting from her room.

He slowly creeps down the hall. He is surprised to hear singing - a man's voice. It's the Butcher.

He reaches her doorway, and peeks into the room. Helper lies in bed, eyes closed. The Butcher sits at her bedside, turning the crank of a boxy musical instrument, similar to a hurdy-gurdy. He is singing her a lullaby.

BUTCHER

*Once I had a flower,  
Oh and how I did adore her.  
Not just I, but all the birds,  
The fauna, and the flora.  
The grass turned brown and  
withered.  
The leaves all died and fell.  
Amid the night, there rose a light.  
My tears, the flower quelled.  
Oh, still I have a flower.  
I always will adore her.  
And not just I, but all the birds,  
The fauna, and the flora.*

He finishes the song, and leans over to kiss Helper on the forehead. Then he turns his head toward the door where Dido is watching. This catches Dido by surprise and he flees down the hallway and down the stairs to the basement with Bot-Bot following close behind.

The Butcher exits Helper's room just in time to see Bot-Bot round the corner out of sight. The Butcher grimaces.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dido is pressed up against the door, catching his breath after running away from the Butcher. It is dark in the basement, but a single bare lightbulb hanging from the ceiling shines. Dido's attention is drawn to the machine and how the light reflects off a certain incomplete section.

He looks at it closer, and realizes that several gears overlap in a way that resembles a flower with one missing petal. He picks up some stray pieces that lie on the table nearby, and works them into place. He steps back and looks at the completed flower. He presses a button, and the machine starts running. Dido smiles and shuts it off.

He lies down, taking his place in the pile of rags. He can't quite sleep, but he lays still smiling and staring up at the ceiling.

Outside the basement window some shadows pass by. Dido does not notice them.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The Hunters pass by the basement window with their dogs sniffing. They don't pick up the scent. They continue along, tirelessly making their way through the neighborhood. Dido and the heart are safe for now, but the Hunters could be closing in.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Several weeks have passed. Helper paces with the Ubig, which seems to be nearly recovered. Its eye is opened, and it floats around, though it still seems to have a little trouble moving. Dido and Bot-Bot clean and polish the machines. There is a considerable change in the setting. It is cleaner, brighter, hopeful.

The Butcher enters, wiping his hands on his apron.

BUTCHER

Well, Tinker, maybe it wasn't a mistake letting you stay here after all. Business is up with the machines working.

He reaches into his apron pocket and removes a small pouch of coins.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

Helper, head to the market for some fresh bread and vegetables. Tonight, we eat well. We deserve to celebrate.

DIDO

Could I go, too? I'd like to get some fresh air.

BUTCHER

I don't know if it's safe for you to be seen.

HELPER

Please, papa? He's been here for weeks, and there's been no trouble.

DIDO

I told you there's no one who knows I'm here.

BUTCHER

You said there were hunters.

DIDO

Bot-Bot led them away. They don't know where I am.

Bot-Bot puffs up his chest proudly.

HELPER

There hasn't been anyone snooping around. Have you seen any hunters in our burrough, papa?

BUTCHER

I suppose enough time has passed. Alright. You can go. But be cautious. Wear a hood. Don't draw attention to yourself.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Dido and Helper walk through the neighborhood streets on the way back from the market, carrying several bags of groceries. Dido wears a hooded cloak, and carries Bot-Bot in one of his grocery bags. Bot-Bot seems chipper and happy to be out of the basement. He engages his propellor and floats up above them to get a view ahead.

DIDO  
(warning tone)  
Bot-Bot!

Dido glares at Bot-Bot, and points at his grocery bag. Bot-Bot droops in disappointment and floats back down, crawling into Dido's grocery bag to remain safe and out of view.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
The Ubig seems much healthier. Do you think it will be much longer until it's fully healed?

HELPER  
Not much longer.

DIDO  
I don't want your father to sell it.

HELPER  
It's the only reason he agreed to let you stay.

DIDO  
But I fixed his machines, too.

HELPER  
And we're grateful for that.

DIDO  
Why is your father so cold?

HELPER  
He's not!

DIDO  
Seems like he only cares about working and butchering, and selling his meat, and working some more.

They walk along quietly for a few seconds.

HELPER  
You know... he gave me a name. Most people in the Slimes don't name their children.

DIDO  
Why is that?

HELPER  
Life is not easy here. We work to survive.

(MORE)

HELPER (CONT'D)

Most people feel it's best not to get attached to anyone or anything. So it's easier if you just call people according to what they do.

DIDO

So that's why he named you Helper?

HELPER

No, Helper is not my name. When he's sure there's no one listening, he calls me Flora.

DIDO

Flora?

FLORA

He does what he does, and he is how he is, because he has to make sure we survive. But don't ever say that he doesn't care.

DIDO

I like it. Flora.

FLORA

It means flower. He says he'd only ever seen one flower in his whole life before he saw me. And now he can look at one every day.

DIDO

Well... That's nice. But still, I can't believe he would slaughter the heart and sell it for money!

FLORA

He works so hard. They're very valuable. It would make our life a little easier.

DIDO

But it's a magic creature! It seems wrong. Shouldn't we let it be free to use its magic?

FLORA

I agree with you. But my father. It's worth too much.

DIDO

But I'm the one who saved it! When we arrived in the Slimes.

(MORE)

DIDO (CONT'D)

The Hunters were after it in the swamp, and I rescued it.

As he's speaking, they pass an alley, and we see Muck poke his head out of the alley, perking up as he overhears the conversation. He also notices Bot-Bot in the grocery bag.

FLORA

You're just hoping to see another vision.

DIDO

So?

Muck creeps along at a distance, following them undetected.

FLORA

So, it seems a little sad.

DIDO

You don't understand. You haven't seen a vision. It's beautiful, and it's all I can think about. Seeing it again. Another chance to go where I want to be.

FLORA

But... the toys? That's all you want? That's all you care about?

DIDO

There were so many of them! Every toy I could ever want. All just for me.

FLORA

That's what I mean. All that stuff and no one to share it with? Seems a little sad is all.

DIDO

So, you think you'd have a better vision?

FLORA

I didn't say that.

DIDO

Well? What do you think your vision would be? What do you want that's so much better than me?

## FLORA

Just to be somewhere else. Away from the Slimes. I hate it here. It's dirty, and dangerous. The overlords horde all the money and build tall buildings to get away from the filth, and from people like us. They don't care as long as they have what they want. So I don't care about having stuff - toys. I don't want to be like them. I just want a simple life. To run in a field of grass that's not filled with garbage. To pick a flower... and to have a mother I could give it to. To have a whole family.

They are arriving home. Muck crouches behind a pile of garbage to watch them. Dido is feeling defensive over Flora's critique of his vision.

## DIDO

Well, I'm the one who sees the visions! Not you. You and your dad said that wasn't even real. There's a reason they work for me. And I want to do it again. As soon as the heart is well, it's taking me away from you!

Muck watches as Dido storms into the house. Flora stands glumly in the street for a moment alone, then quietly enters their home, gently closing the door behind her. Muck greedily rubs his hands together then scurries off to find Grime.

## INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dido, Flora, Butcher, and Bot-Bot sit around the table, eating. The table is uncharacteristically decked out with a large meal - a roast, vegetables, bread and butter. It is modest, though extravagant for this family. Despite the ostensible celebration, spirits seem flat.

Dido and Flora chew silently and avoid looking at each other. The Butcher quietly observes the others, unsure what to make of it. He looks inquisitively at Bot-Bot, who shrugs and turns away.

## INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dido lies awake in his bed of rags. The sound of the Butcher singing a lullaby to Flora can be heard softly drifting from upstairs. It sounds so muffled and distant that it has the effect of making Dido feel sad and lonely. He covers his head with a pillow.

## INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The butcher finishes singing and gives Flora a kiss on the forehead. She looks sad.

BUTCHER

Is something bothering you, Flora?

FLORA

No. It's nothing. I'm just tired.

BUTCHER

You can tell me.

Flora feigns an over-the-top yawn and rolls away from her father. Her eyes remain open, staring blankly.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

Alright. Get your rest. Work has been busy. We've got deliveries to make tomorrow.

Flora doesn't respond. The Butcher slowly rises and walks to the door. He pauses in the doorway and looks back at Flora, wishing she would talk to him. After a moment, he turns to leave, flipping out the light.

FLORA

Goodnight, papa.

BUTCHER

Goodnight, Flora.

## EXT. STREETS - DAY

The Butcher, Dido, Flora, and Bot-Bot are out to make deliveries together. They push a large wooden cart stacked high with meat.

## MONTAGE

They make various deliveries, some to large residences, some to vendor stalls in the market.

END OF MONTAGE

They are now walking home, with an empty cart. Bot-Bot lounges in the cart.

BUTCHER

Not a bad day. At this rate, I should be able to catch up on our rent soon. And once the heart is better, who knows? I might be able to finally expand my operation. Maybe hire an apprentice?

FLORA

That would be wonderful, papa.

BUTCHER

I should thank both you kids for your help. You were right to wait and nurse the wingheart back to health.

Bot-Bot pokes his head out of the cart in search of recognition.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

You too, little robot.

Bot-Bot squeaks with pride then returns to his comfy spot in the cart.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

I never would've thought it was possible.

The Butcher smiles. This is perhaps the first time he's ever smiled in public. It momentarily thaws the tension between Dido and Flora, who both grin in response.

The group has now arrived home. The Butcher stops outside. He notices that their front door is ajar, seemingly busted open by force. He holds his hand out at his side to signal for everyone to stop.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

Wait here.

He grimaces and enters the house. Flora, Dido, and Bot-Bot remain outside. Momentarily, they hear the Butcher's voice from inside.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

(in denial)

No.

He can be heard rushing around inside, and barreling down the stairs to the basement. Clearly something is wrong.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

Noooo!

Bot-Bot springs into action, squealing and flying at a full charge into the house. The kids hesitate, toss a glance toward each other, and then slowly enter.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Flora and Dido enter the house and slowly look around. Everything is in disarray. It has been ransacked, drawers pulled out, tables overturned. They hear a noise coming from the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Flora and Dido enter the basement. They find the Butcher and Bot-Bot already there. The Butcher sits on the floor with his head in his hands. Bot-Bot buzzes to and fro in a panic. The machines have been destroyed. The Ubiq is gone.

BUTCHER

How did they find it?

Flora rushes to her father's side and throws her arms around him, trying to comfort him.

FLORA

It's ok, papa. He can fix the machines again. We'll keep going.

BUTCHER

I can't anymore. I can't go on like this - pushed back down every time I get a glimpse of something better.

FLORA

Oh, papa...

Flora hugs him tight. She's never seen him this distraught. Everyone is silent for several moments.

Dido walks over to one of the machines and starts picking up and inspecting pieces, trying to figure out how to reassemble it. Bot-Bot flies up to him, holding a piece that has been completely broken in two. Flora walks over to Dido's side.

DIDO

I can't fix this. It's too broken.  
A bunch of pieces are smashed or  
completely broken in two.

BUTCHER

Don't waste your time.

DIDO

What do you mean?

BUTCHER

Dido, if I could find another  
wingheart... could you open up  
another portal? Could you travel  
through it again?

Dido and Flora look at each other.

DIDO

Yes, I could.

FLORA

Papa, no!

BUTCHER

Could you take us with you?

DIDO

If we all stood close enough I  
think it would work. It worked with  
Bot-Bot. We both came through  
together.

FLORA

Papa, we don't know where it would  
take us.

BUTCHER

It doesn't matter.

FLORA

But how would we even find another  
heart?

The Butcher stands.

BUTCHER

I know someone. A supplier on the  
black market.

FLORA

Isn't that dangerous?

BUTCHER

There's no other choice. If we have the chance to get away - far, far away - we should take it. I want more than this for you.

Flora returns to his side and they look at each other with a bittersweet smile.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

I'll leave in the morning. Pack me enough food for two days. It's a full day walk to get there, and another day to return. I need to be prepared.

The Butcher exits the basement.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Flora is preparing sandwiches and other food for her father's journey. Bot-Bot assists her. Flora hears a noise in the hall and peeks around the corner.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She sees her father using a crowbar to pull up a floorboard. A lantern sits beside him. He picks it up and shines it into the gap in the floorboards. He reaches down and pulls out a box. From the box, he removes a secret stash of money - a bag of coins. He also removes a knife from the box. He lifts a pant leg and fastens the knife to his calf.

Flora watches silently. She knows those coins represent every bit of money he has. She is worried about him.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Flora returns to making the sandwiches. A single tear streams down her face. Bot-Bot grabs a handkerchief and wipes her tear. She laughs self-consciously at his attention.

Dido enters the kitchen. Flora tries to compose herself.

DIDO

Can I help?

Flora nods. He joins her at her side, assisting her in packing the food. She sheds another tear, and Dido notices.

DIDO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about what I said  
yesterday.

FLORA

It's not that. I'm just worried  
about papa. You don't understand  
the Slimes. He's traveling alone by  
foot, with all the money he has. It  
won't be safe.

Dido places his hand on her shoulder. She responds by hugging  
him. He returns the hug, and Bot-Bot nuzzles up to them,  
making it a group hug.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

All the houses are dark, except the Butcher's. Through the  
windows, his lantern can be seen moving room to room  
preparing for the journey.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Early the following morning, the sun is up. The Butcher  
emerges from his home. He tosses a bag into his cart, and  
covers it with a blanket. He grabs the handles of the cart  
and begins to push.

FLORA (O.S.)

Papa, wait!

He turns and sees that Flora, Dido, and Bot-Bot have all  
followed him outside. Dido wears a backpack.

BUTCHER

We already said goodbye. You two  
should lay low until I return.

DIDO

We're coming too.

The Butcher opens his mouth to speak. But Flora interrupts  
before he can.

FLORA

Don't say no. You're not safe  
traveling alone.

DIDO

Plus there's no need for you to make a return trip with a hidden wingheart. As soon as we have the heart, we can do what we need to do.

FLORA

There will be people who want to steal your money on the way there, and other's who will steal the wingheart on the way back.

Bot-Bot chimes in, flying right up to the Butcher and rambling defiantly in his computer language. The Butcher silently nods to accept their companionship.

BUTCHER

I guess we better get going, then.

DIDO

But if you don't take us you'll have to--

FLORA

--Dido! He said yes.

DIDO

He did? Oh, I had a longer argument ready to go.

BUTCHER

Feel free to say it, but we're losing time on the road.

DIDO

No, we can go.

The Butcher puts a hand on each of the kids' heads and playfully tussles their hair.

BUTCHER

It's a long walk. Let's get started

EXT. ON THE ROAD - DAY

Bot-Bot and the Butcher have warmed to each other. Bot-Bot rides on his shoulder. The Butcher whistles to him, and Bot-Bot tries to repeat the melodies. The two are laughing and enjoying each others' company.

Dido and Flora walk along, several paces behind.

DIDO  
Can I ask you a question?

FLORA  
(playfully)  
You just did!

DIDO  
I mean... something that might be  
hard to talk about?

FLORA  
Okay.

DIDO  
The other day, when you talked  
about what you'd like to see in a  
vision, you mentioned picking a  
flower for your mother. Where is  
she?

FLORA  
I never knew her.

DIDO  
What happened to her?

FLORA  
Papa doesn't like to talk about it.  
Whenever I've asked, he changes the  
subject. But I like to dream about  
her, and imagine what she would be  
like. What are your parents like?

DIDO  
They're fine, I guess. Just regular  
grown-ups.

FLORA  
Do you miss them?

DIDO  
Sure I do. But it's not how things  
are with you and your dad. They  
don't sing me songs to say good  
night. They probably haven't even  
noticed I'm gone.

FLORA  
I'm sure that's not true. Anyone  
who knows you would miss you if you  
were gone.

Dido smiles timidly.

FLORA (CONT'D)

I didn't know you'd heard papa singing.

DIDO

Oh... yeah, I overheard him one night.

FLORA

You know... at first you thought papa wasn't very kind. I know he puts on a tough face. And it's kind of hard to get him to open up. But underneath, he's got a big heart. He loves me a lot. And he cares about you, too.

DIDO

Really?

She laughs.

FLORA

You've got to learn to look beneath the surface. To what's in someone's heart. People can be surprising. I bet it's the same for your parents. I wish I could meet them.

DIDO

My parents?

FLORA

Yes, your parents!

DIDO

I do miss our house. And the old fields around it. It smells a lot better than the Slimes.

BUTCHER

Kids!

Bot-Bot mimics the Butcher, calling out with a squeak that sounds similar to "kids!"

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

We've been walking for quite a while. You should rest your legs. Climb in the cart, and I'll push you for a while.

He stops, and the kids climb into the cart. Bot-Bot pulls a blanket over them, and joins them in the cart. The Butcher continues pushing, with the kids now riding in the cart.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. MARKET - DUSK

The kids have fallen asleep in the cart and the Butcher has pushed them the whole way to the market. As the Butcher approaches, we see some small, rustic vendor stands, people living in tents, shifty-looking people lurking about, and a group of people gathered around a bonfire.

The Butcher pushes the cart to a stop under a tree, slightly removed from all this. Coming to a stop rouses Bot-Bot, who quickly looks around and then squeaks and shakes Dido. Dido and Flora wake up and look around in confusion until they gain their bearings.

FLORA

Are we here?

BUTCHER

I decided not to wake you. I've never seen so many friendly strangers as I did while pushing a cart of sleeping children.

DIDO

Where's the heart?

BUTCHER

Let's keep that quiet. There's no telling who's lurking in this market. There's only one person I need to find.

FLORA

So what are we waiting for?

BUTCHER

I'm really glad you both joined me. You helped me avoid suspicion on the road. In a place like this, on the other hand, nothing raises suspicion as much as the presence of children.

FLORA

But we're here to help you.

BUTCHER

The best way to help now is by staying out of sight. There's a small clearing just beyond these trees. You all can wait safely there. I'll find the heart, meet you there, and we'll see if this whole plan works.

He hugs Flora. While in the hug, Flora looks to Dido and extends an arm. The Butcher notices, and pulls Dido in to a group hug.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

I'll take the cart and keep the wingheart under the blanket. You two stay out of sight until I return.

FLORA

I love you, papa.

BUTCHER

I love you, Flora.

The Butcher catches himself calling her "Flora" in public and shoots a worried glance at Dido.

FLORA

It's fine. He knows my name.

BUTCHER

I guess that makes him like family, then. I'll be back as soon as I can.

The Butcher pushes the cart into the market. The kids slink into the trees. Bot-Bot remains at the tree, flying up onto a tree branch to keep watch.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Dido and Flora sit quietly on a fallen log. Dido begins humming quietly. It is the melody from the lullaby he's heard the Butcher sing. Flora joins in, then sings the lullaby with slightly different words.

FLORA

*Once I lost a flower,  
And oh how I did mourn her.  
Not just I, but all the birds,  
The flora, and the fauna.*

(MORE)

FLORA (CONT'D)

*The grass turned brown and  
withered.  
The leaves fell in the wind  
I'd pay the toll, or sell my soul  
To have her back again.  
Oh, once I lost a flower.  
And I will always mourn her.  
And not just I, but all the birds,  
The flora, and the fauna.*

DIDO

Those are different words.

FLORA

It's how he used to sing it. When I  
was a baby. He doesn't know I  
remember. I think it's about my  
mother.

They both sit silently for a moment. Then Dido sings a line  
from the version of the lullaby he has heard.

DIDO

*Amid the night, there rose a light.  
My tears, the flower quelled.*  
(speaking again)  
That must be you.

Suddenly, they hear a rustling sound and tense up, their eyes  
darting toward the trees. Bot-Bot emerges from the trees, and  
stops in the clearing. He makes a small "ta-da" sound and  
gestures behind him. The Butcher emerges from the trees,  
pushing his cart. In the cart, they see a large mound covered  
by the blanket. Flora rushes to hug her father.

FLORA

Papa! Is that--

The Butcher nods, and pulls back the blanket. The Ubig is  
bound to the cart.

BUTCHER

How does this work?

Dido approaches.

DIDO

I don't think it likes being tied  
up. We'll have to free it to tap  
into its magic.

GRIME (O.S.)

Not so fast.

Everyone turns toward this unexpected voice. They see Muck and Grime, standing at the edge of the trees.

GRIME (CONT'D)

I thought I recognized that little robot.

Bot-Bot cowers behind the Butcher.

MUCK

(rhetorically)

Didn't we already take a wingheart from these people?

GRIME

I guess they didn't learn their lesson. We're always watching. We're always hunting. No wingheart goes unnoticed by us.

MUCK

And our boss pays us handsomely for each one we bring him.

GRIME

And he never questions how we find them. Whatever it takes.

MUCK

Their carelessness will be our reward.

BUTCHER

Please. You can have the wingheart. We'll set it free to go with you. Just let us go.

GRIME

No need to free it. We'll take care of it.

Grime raises his crossbow, pointing it at the Ubiq. As he releases the arrow, Bot-Bot dives in the way, knocking the arrow off course. It strikes the cart instead. Instantaneously, everyone springs into action. The Butcher charges the Hunters. Flora frees the heart, which flutters off into the woods. Dido runs after it. Flora doesn't want to leave her father, so she crouches to hide behind the cart. Bot-Bot lies injured on the ground.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The Ubig soars between trees, fleeing the danger. Dido pursues it as fast as he can run.

After a minute of pursuit, they come to a steep rock wall. The Ubig whirls around to face him, much like the first time he encountered one back home. Dido glances side to side, only now realizing that he was chasing the heart alone. Flora and the Butcher are nowhere to be seen.

He turns back to the heart. It blinks its eye and begins to glow softly. Dido's heart races in his chest. He gazes into the eye. He will be shown another vision.

Once again, Dido sees a vision of himself surrounded by toys. This time, the version of himself he sees in the vision does not look happy to be there. Toys fall to the ground busting to pieces all around him.

The real Dido pulls back, shaking himself into attention.

DIDO

No!

He extends his hand to the heart.

DIDO (CONT'D)

Please come with me. They need our help.

The Ubig nods. Without hesitation, Dido begins running back toward the clearing. The Ubig follows him.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

They arrive back to the clearing, where the Butcher still struggles with the Hunters. Bot-Bot lies on the ground near Dido. Flora still hides behind the cart.

Dido motions to Flora to join him at the edge of the clearing. As she sneaks over, he grabs Bot-Bot and quickly twists and turns a few parts, getting him back into shape.

Meanwhile, the Butcher manages to pin Muck under the cart.

DIDO

Get him, Bot-Bot!

Bot-Bot flies into action charging directly at Grime. He strikes Grime on the head, knocking him over, unconscious. Bot-Bot squeals victoriously.

The Butcher and Bot-Bot join Dido and Flora with the Ubiq at the edge of the clearing. They all embrace.

FLORA

Okay, Dido. Time to work your magic.

DIDO

No.

They all look at him with bewilderment.

DIDO (CONT'D)

I don't have any magic. In fact I'm pretty sure I'm bad luck when it comes to these flying hearts. And you're right about my vision. It's your turn.

Everyone looks to Flora. She turns to the heart, and slowly approaches it.

She looks into its eye, and it begins to glow for her. She sees a vision of herself running through a beautiful green meadow, like the ones where Dido lived. In fact, as she continues watching she sees herself run up to Dido, who is smiling and waiting for her, with his parents at his side. They all embrace her.

Suddenly the vision vanishes. Back in the clearing we see that Muck and Grime have both come to and ambushed them. Grime has grabbed the heart. The Butcher takes hold of Grime, prying him off the heart and throwing him to the ground.

BUTCHER

Go!

The Butcher pushes Muck away. Grime is back on his feet. The Butcher spreads his arms wide and tackles both the Hunters. The three men tussle, wrestling each other in a blur of body parts. The Butcher shouts to the kids.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

You've got to go without me! It's your only chance.

FLORA

Papa, no! I can't leave you!

BUTCHER

You must! It's the only way! We can't all make it, but I can save you.

Flora starts toward her father. Dido grabs her hand.

DIDO  
He's right, Flora.

FLORA  
Papa, I love you!

BUTCHER  
I love you, Flora!

Muck breaks free from the scuffle, and runs toward the kids and the heart.

DIDO  
Flora, now!

He pulls her close and they turn to face the Ubig. It begins to glow. Muck is quickly approaching. They hear the Butcher begins to sing vigorously, as he continues struggling with Grime.

BUTCHER  
*Once I lost a flower,  
And oh how I did mourn her.*

The Ubig is growing brighter. Flora has tears in her eyes. Muck has nearly reached them.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)  
*Not just I, but all the birds,  
The flora, and the fauna.*

Bot-Bot screams as loud as he can. He sacrifices himself, colliding with Muck and pushing him back, just as the Ubig flashes white.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

When the light fades, Dido and Flora are huddled together, with their heads down and their arms around each other. At first all we can see are them, and we're not sure where they are. It is completely silent, as if our hearing is gone. Then slowly, we begin to hear the sound of birds chirping.

Dido and Flora raise their heads and look around.

DIDO  
I'm home!

Indeed, he is back in the pasture in about the same spot where he was when the first Ubig whisked him away to Moebius.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
I can't believe it! How did you  
bring us here?

Flora is speechless and in shock. Dido hugs her.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
Come on, my house is over here.

Dido takes Flora by the hand and leads her through the fields. He notices a patch of wildflowers and stops.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
Look.

He bends down and picks a flower for her, and hands it to her. She is still in shock. She has never been somewhere with this much natural beauty. She is amazed by the grass and the flowers and the blue skies, but she's also filled with sadness over the sacrifice her father just made for her. She takes the flower and tears well in her eyes.

They continue walking in silence through the fields. Along the way they pass by the animals from the opening sequence - a family of ducks near a pond, two young goats frolicking and playing, some sheep lounging in the shade, a bull watching from a distant hill.

As they make their way up a hill, a magpie flies overhead and perches in a tree. The kids come over the crest of the hill, and we see that it is the tree under which Dido first played.

Dido's father sits under the tree, holding one of Dido's busted action figures, and idly moving its arms with a forlorn look on his face.

DIDO (CONT'D)  
Dad?

FATHER  
Dido!

His father stands, and Dido walks to him and gives him a hug.

FATHER (CONT'D)  
Where have you been?

DIDO  
I'll explain it all later. This is  
Flora.

His father turns to Flora, who waves.

FATHER

Hello.  
 (shouting toward the  
 house)  
 Martha! Come quick!

We can see their house in the distance, up the hill. Dido's mother pokes her head out the back door. Her eyes are red and bloodshot from crying. She squints into the distance and can't believe her eyes. Her head perks up and she bursts out in joyful tears as she begins running as fast as she can toward the others.

She quickly reaches them and wraps her arms around Dido in a deep embrace.

MOTHER

I'm so sorry.

DIDO

For what?

MOTHER

We were so worried.

FATHER

We thought you ran away.

MOTHER

I thought it was my fault.

DIDO

No. No, I'm okay. Thanks to Flora.

Dido's mother turns to look at Flora.

MOTHER

Thank you for bringing him back to us.

Flora smiles. She holds the flower out to Dido's mother.

FLORA

Here.

Dido's mother accepts the flower, placing it behind her ear.

FLORA (CONT'D)

I told you they missed you!

DIDO

Can we head inside? I've got a lot to tell you about.

MOTHER

Of course.

She takes Dido's hand.

FLORA

Could I hold your hand, too?

Dido's mother reaches out her other hand. Flora grabs it and smiles. Dido's father places a hand on Dido's head and they all begin walking together, back toward the house.

Hovering just over the treetops, a Ubiq watches them. After a moment, it turns and flies into the distance until it disappears from sight.

FADE OUT.

**THE END**