

Sunny Marsh

Keith B. Axon

Title Screen

In the distance, a great Victorian style house is seen surrounded by wetlands. The focus settles on a dilapidated wooden sign with the title “**Sunny Marsh**, Retirement Home” hung upon it. A large frog rests under the sign. He watches intently as a fly buzzes overhead. The fly settles on the “h”. The frog whips out its tongue striking the “h”. It hinges and falls. The fly, unharmed, takes flight again and lands on the “M”. The frog squints with concentration and again whips its tongue. It connects and sticks to the “M”. The frog pulls back as the letter slingshots toward him. It lands directly on the frog burying him into the grass with a loud squeak. The fly nonchalantly buzzes away.

Sunny Marsh Retirement Home-Exterior, Late Evening

A white shuttle bus closes its pneumatic doors and rumbles away revealing Alice, a late seventies, classy Southern woman. She struggles with a huge suitcase and a bagged tennis racquet as she trudges up the path towards the tired white and blue plantation. Benito, a small green frog with reddish spots looks on from the porch. His buddy Emit, a small bumpy brown frog, sits across the steps licking at some flakes of paint that are peeling from the stair railing. He looks to Benito and gives a slurred croak of acknowledgement. Alice pauses at the front door and rings the entrance bell. “You Are My Sunshine” chimes from inside the home. Benito’s eyes grow wide as he watches a fly circle around Alice’s ankle. Benito takes aim and fires his tongue. It misses the fly, but sticks to Alice’s ankle. Immediately his eyes change, taking on a more human appearance, his brain expands like a corn kernel exposed to a hot flame, and along fu Manchu sprouts from his upper lip with a high pitched “sproing”. He releases an unamphibian gagged scream. Alice notices and screams. Benito looks up and screams again, but with more enthusiasm. He stands and pulls at his tongue. It snaps away from the ankle sending him tumbling backward. Alice looks down disgusted as the small frog shakes off the fall and stands bipedal. Benito turns to her with an offended glance. Emit notices the change in his friend and looks towards the source. Alice is frantically rattling at the great bronze door handle as he shoots his tongue and connects with the back of her leg. The door roughly jars open as Alice surges through the opening with her luggage in tow. The door slams shut as Emissions tongue whips back and slaps him in the face. His eyes still retain their dull glare, but immediately the kernel that is his brain does a single “pop”, like an unfinished piece of popcorn and he pulls himself to a standing position. He lets out a small croak that sounds just like his name and proceeds to pick his nose. Benito grimaces at the results, and looks up longingly towards the door handle. He acknowledges his size deficiency and heads towards an open window. Emit stumbles along behind him.

Reception Room/ Activity Room-Interior, Dusk

Benito drops down from an open window in the reception room and lands gracefully. Emit plops down with limp thud as Benito knowingly sidesteps the falling mass. Benito carefully scans the room for his target. He notices Alice standing to his left in the distance talking to someone behind the reception desk. He turns to Emit to relay his find, but Emit is waddling off to the far end of the room. Benito scurries along the wall towards Alice. He shimmies up the side of her enormous suitcase and slows when he reaches the top. Alice has her hand rested, her little finger lightly raised, on the thick rusted handle. Benito looks to see Emit as he jumps up onto a shelf from an open topped aquarium. His goal is a hula bobble girl that stands with a collection of odd decorations. Benito then eases his way across the suitcase. He steps up to her hand and gently grasps her pinky. He gives it a soft lick. Alice quickly pulls her hand away and looks towards her luggage. She sees nothing. Benito is stretched out in an arch, hiding behind the handle, as Emit steps up to the hula girl. He eyes her over for a moment and then embraces her around the waist and gives her a full body lick. He smiles as his eyes dart around looking for some change. Nothing happens. Alice has returned her attention to the nurse and has her hands grasping the side of the desk. Benito leans off the edge stretching to his limit with his tongue leading. He inches slowly closer and almost has his taste, when a voice is heard from the reception desk and Alice suddenly turns. Benito tips forward, barely missing, and falls as Alice walks towards the aquarium. Emit looks on with excitement as Alice passes by. He crouches on the edge of the shelf, ready to pounce, anxiously tapping his fingers. Emit rears back and leaps with arms outstretched. He grins widely and lets out a warrior croak as he flies towards her. He whizzes by Alice's temple, hits the wall, bounces back, and lands in the aquarium with a belly flop splash. Alice, dazed, looks to the shelf to see the hula girl lazily bobbling. Confused, she bends down and peers into the aquarium. Her eyes grow as she sees Emit, cheeks bulging, holding his air, and treading water. A Mandarin-Fish saunters on in front of him. He slips out his tongue and slides it down its side as it passes by. Emit tenses and then opens up as a "shudder" of various colors pass through him like a wave. He steadies himself and then sees Alice's distorted face looking in. He dashes toward her only to smash tongue and face first into the glass, knocking himself out, and leaving him to unconsciously float to the surface. Alice, distraught, rises and catches a green flash run along the floor from her left peripheral. She turns, but sees nothing. From her right she hears a splash, thud, and a scurry. She looks to the aquarium. Emit is no longer there. Alice begins to walk towards the activity room, carefully looking around. She stops suddenly before the entrance and looks in. It is quiet. A single man (Herman) wearing a bowling shirt, sits in large chair in front of the far bay windows. He is mouth open fast asleep and something small and brown is perched upon his balded crown. Alice curiously leans in and squints. Emit leans forward and smugly squints directly back at her. Without losing his gaze he bends down and gives the man's scalp a slow, thorough lick. His eyes roll back, his eyelids flutter shut, and an enormous grin overtakes his face. An odd lump pops up from inside of his head. Alice steps back in shock, as Benito lassos her wrist from an edge of the fireplace. Alice turns and reels with a yelp, breaking his hold. The nurse, whom has just walked up behind her, screams and throws her hands into the air, sending all of her paperwork flying. They look at each other for a moment, panting

heavily, as the forms float to the floor. Alice looks to the fireplace and the activity room. She opens her mouth. She wants to tell the nurse what has been happening, but Benito and Emit are out of sight. She shuts her mouth and offers a sheepish smile. The nurse takes in a full calming breath and then asks for Alice to follow her.

Alice's Bedroom, Night

Alice, readied for bed, flips off the light switch and exits her bathroom. She sits down on her bed and contemplates the day for a moment. She then turns off the bed side lamp, slips beneath the sheets, and pulls them to her chest. The setting sun still gently illuminates the room thru the open window blinds. Alice closes her eyes and drifts to sleep. Through the darkness a faint tongue lapping is heard and then an "Emit" croak. Alice's eyes slowly blink open and focus as a dark figure rises and covers her view. The moon light seeping through the window blinds reveals Benito as he leans in. He is larger and his body has become more defined. He is standing next to her face looking down at her. An eager grin rests on his face. "Hello sweets." He says congenially in a croaky voice. The ceiling light suddenly flashes on as Emit swings from the chain. Benito looks over as Emit releases the chain and flies across the room crashing through the bed side lamp. Alice jumps to her feet sending Benito tumbling down the sheets to the foot of the bed.

Hallway Chase, Night

She wildly runs out of her room and in her despair flees down the hallway away from the exit. Benito follows closely behind and Emit races along behind him. As she runs she throws over everything in an attempt to lose her attackers. First a side table with a potted plant and lamp. Benito avoids this easily, but Emit catches a face full of leaves. Alice then topples a wheelchair. Benito dives through the spokes as it crashes towards him. Emit runs around it, making up ground between himself and his comrade. Finally, Alice flips a medicine cart, sending cups and pills bouncing erratically. Benito slows and braces himself for the medicinal shrapnel as Emit rumbles in and smashes into him from behind, sending them both tumbling through the barrage of pills. Alice makes a sharp left towards the light as the hallway dead ends, and plows through the swinging kitchen doors.

Kitchen Fight, Night

Alice runs across the kitchen. She looks frantically for an exit, but with no results. Conceding, Alice sits down at the far end of the kitchen with her back to the cabinets. She throws her head back in frustration, banging into the counter top. A metal colander falls, bounces off of the counter and lands directly on top of her head. Alice peers up at it and a look of determination covers her face as she realizes what she needs to do. She stands and arms herself with a spatula and a cookie sheet shield. She readies herself as the kitchen doors swing open and Benito strolls in with a John Wayne swagger. Emit runs around him in a full charge as he scrambles in after Alice. He hops onto the center island, takes three long strides and then leaps from the countertop, sprawled out, towards Alice with his tongue readied. She swings the spatula with a quick back hand, slapping Emit out of the air. He smashes through a window above the sink and disappears

into the night. Alice glares down towards Benito and signals for him to “come, fight”. He hustles up to the island and neatly hops on top. He struts towards her and stops at the edge, grinning the whole time. He gives Alice a sultry wink. She responds with raised eyebrows, but then furrows her brow and swings at him with her spatula. Benito ducks, whips his tongue, and sends the spatula flying across the kitchen. Alice brings the cookie sheet up to block herself as she inches towards a frying pan left on the stove. Benito hits the shield with a few quick machine gun tongue lashings. Alice holds. She takes a breath and then lunges forward and snatches up the frying pan, takes aim, and overly exerts a strong side swing. Benito leaps towards her. The pan comes around too low and Benito slaps onto Alice’s face in a full mouth kiss. Alice drops her weapons and goes to pull him off when her fright fades into delight. They kiss, and then part. Alice holds Benito out in front of her and offers a girly smile. Benito’s grin grows from ear to ear. He suddenly begins to glow a strong greenish/white that begins at his core and emanates outward. Alice drops him to the tiles. In a brilliant burst of pixels Benito becomes an old man dressed in a green tennis outfit. He has white hair and a glorious mustache. He offers his hand out to Alice with a charming glow. She accepts and they embrace.

Backyard Exterior, Llama Pen, Dawn

Emit is lying unconscious on the ground. Suddenly he snaps to a sitting position and looks around dizzily. Something draws his attention. He struggles to his feet and walks on. He comes across an old horizontal wooden fence and leans on the bottom plank with his arms rested under his chin. His eyes grow enormous with excitement as he peers into the field to see a whole pack of llamas silhouetted by the morning sun. Emit is startled by a snorting sound close by. He looks over and then jumps on to and proceeds to climb up the end post. He perches on the top and smiles contently as he gets ready to pounce on to the llama butt that looms before him.

Backyard, Marsh road, Dawn

Benito and Alice come bounding down the back porch steps, hand in hand, and love struck. They make their way towards the dirt path that runs along the marsh and the wooden fence. An uncaged llama suddenly hums and high heel gallops up to them. Benito and Alice gawk up together at the llama that stands humming down at them. The llama happily shakes his head and lets out a loud snort that sounds just like the name: “Emit”. Benito gives a good chuckle that Emit joins in on. He climbs up in to Emit’s saddle and again offers his hand to Alice. She looks up to him with a smile, but questioningly. Benito grabs a hold of Alice’s hand from his seat and helps her climb and settle in behind him. Benito takes the reins and gives Emit a sharp heel kick start. Emit stutters, then surges forward, and eventually finds a pleasant pace. The unlikely three stroll down the marshy path as it dies into the horizon of the rising sun.
End.