

FADE IN

EXT. A LARGE FLAT TV SCREEN - DAY

A t.v. commentator interviewing the excited fans surrounding him. The gallery visible in background is packed with spectators. The English flag (red cross on white) is equally visible, being waved by fans on the gallery as well as by those surrounding the commentator.

Commentator holds the microphone before a fan:

Commentator:

Do you think Rooney will score tonight?

Fan 1: (loudly)

Sure he will. (waves a beer bottle) I can bet five Cobras on that.

Another fan brings his face near the microphone.

Fan 2: (loudly)

And I bet my sexy wife on top of that.

Everybody laugh their heart out. Those on the screen as well as those watching the tv. Those watching tv have beer bottles in their hands too. The camera starts rolling back as the commentator continues:

Commentator:

The barmy army here is willing to bet everything on an English victory tonight. What about you folks out there? What are you going to bet...?

As he speaks the camera rolls back and we see the tv screen is actually a giant flat screen hanging from a cantilever stone of one of the several stone structures of the Stone Henge.

EXT. THE GROUND AROUND STONE HENGE - DAY

As the camera rolls back further we see a panoramic view of the green fields around the StoneHenge in late afternoon. It looks like a picnic ground with scores of people involved in different activities. There is a big gathering in front of the screen as people listen to the commentary. At least three groups of men and young boys playing football separately. At one corner vehicles are parked and more vehicles coming in and people getting out in holiday mood to watch the big game together...

At one corner in front of another stone block a group of women are sitting on a mat spread on the ground. The position in which they are sitting is such that they are able to see the tv screen and the men standing in front of it with their backs turned on them. Most in the group are adults but there and children and toddlers as well. The adult women are

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sitting, eating and chatting while a couple of them are busy feeding their babies milk. There is a teenage girl in the group (Mitchell is her name) who is sitting idle and chewing a straw of grass while listening to the conversation between her mother and her friends. Her eyes are watching her brother and his young and old mates kicking a ball at a distance.

Mitchell's mother:

When will this game start? I doubt whether they will be able to stand on their feet to watch it, the manner they are drinking.

Her friend:

They have to or else how would they thrash those bottles on each other when it all ends.

Mitchell's mother:

I don't care if they thrash on each other. I don't even care if they kill each other. I am worried about the children. What if they get hurt?

Her friend:

You're right. We shouldn't have come you know, with all these kids... but they insisted so much.

Mitchell's mother:

Who is the smart ass to come up with this idea in the first place? (making a face) *watching soccer at Stone Henge...*

Mitchell (chewing the straw):

It's dad.

Mitchell's mother turns to her daughter as her friends chuckles.

Mitchell's mother:

Are you sure?

Mitchell:

Yeah. I heard him saying to Uncle Philip and Kim (imitating his father) '*Enough of pubs guys, we should do it outdoors this time.*' And Kim was jumping like a puppy '*yes dad, yes dad.*'

Mitchell's mother (angrily):

So it's their idea! (looking at her son playing at a distance) This Kim! He is turning into another crazy soccer freak. Is he drinking too Mitchell?

Mitchell:

I haven't seen him yet.

Mitchell's mother:

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Keep an eye on him. I will take the hell out of him if he does.

Her friend:

Oh you can't do anything about it dear. You just don't know when they become 'men'... and start thrashing bottles. Look at my one. Not even fourteen and already picked up by the police twice.

Mitchell's mother:

Why don't you give him a good whack?

Her friend:

Do you think that'll help? No dear. It might just have the opposite effect. What if he runs away, like his father. I don't want to lose him too.

There is silence for a while as the ladies watch the men playing and watching the giant screen.

The commentator's voice is heard:

The action will start in another fifteen minutes ...

The men in front of the tv break out in a song...

A football kicked by one of the boys rolls towards the women and is stopped by Mitchell who picks it up.

Mitchell's brother (who is one of the players – from a distance):

Hey Mitchell give the ball!

Mitchell doesn't. Holding the ball in her hands she keeps looking at the guys while chewing her straw...

Another boy:

Give the ball Mitchell!

Mitchell's mother:

Give it to them Jane.

Her friend:

Don't give. Let them come here and get it.

Two of the boys come running towards Mitchell. As they come near Mitchell gets up with the ball and runs away from them and hides herself behind one of the large stone blocks.

The boys come running inside the spectrum and stopping in the middle looks for Mitchell. Then the two moves in different directions looking for her. A hide and seek

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game ensues and Mitchell successfully manages to evade the boys running from one stone to another...

Mitchell is hiding behind a particular stone block with the ball held in her hands... Suddenly something falls on the ground in front of her. Mitchell notices – a frog! She looks at the frog... It seems the frog is looking at her too... Then suddenly the frog takes a huge leap and lands on top of the ball held in her hands. Mitchell shrieks but doesn't let the ball fall from her grip. For a couple of seconds the two look at each other eyeball to eyeball... Mitchell hears the frog croaking. A strange noise coming out of its throat as it expands and contracts - something like ballfoot... ballfoot... ballfoot... Then suddenly the frog takes another leap towards her. Mitchell shrieks again... the ball falls from her hands as she moves her head sideways to avoid the collision... The frog sails past her ears and hits the stone pillar. It slides to the ground, lie immobile for a couple of second then gets up again and turns around and looks at the ball... The boys notices the ball rolling out from behind a stone...they come running, picks it up and run back to join their mates... The frog then takes another massive leap and lands on top of the cantilever stone resting between two pillars... Mitchell is already very much shaken and now she is flabbergasted to see at least a dozen frogs sitting in a row on top of the cantilever stone and all croaking the same mantra in a chorus...

Frog chorus (in typical frog voice):  
Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

EXT. A SMALL SHRUB NEAR THE STONE STRUCTURE - DAY

A group of female frogs are sitting under a small shrub and watching Mitchell and the male frogs on top of the cantilever stone chanting ballfoot... ballfoot ...

Female frog 1:  
Poor child. She looks really frightened.

Female frog 2:  
Thank God she is still on her feet. Once I fell on a she human accidentally and she dropped to the ground like a tree trunk.

A youngish female frog (evident from her voice) (laughing out): What happened after that aunt Lugi?

Female frog 2 (Lugi):  
She kept lying there eyes closed. I thought she has died. I felt so bad. But then her husband and son came running, sprinkled water on her and only then she got up.

Youngish female frog (laughing):  
These she humans are so chicken!

Female frog 2 (Lugi):

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But not this one. She seems more surprised than frightened. Look how she is looking at them. As if they are from some other planet.

Female frog 1:

I won't blame her. We ourselves haven't been able to find out why they croak like that whenever they see these he humans kicking that white round thing.

Female frog 2 (Lugi):

You're right. It's still a mystery... And they seem to forget everything else whenever they see that... Luga promised to take me to the slimy rock but just as he saw those humans kicking that white thing he leapt like mad and climbed that rock and look... how he is shouting now. So much energy! And when I tell him to catch a worm from the children he is full of excuses.

Youngish female frog:

What is the meaning of Ballfoot? Is it that white round thing?

Female frog 2 (Lugi):

God knows. I have asked Luga several times. And every time he stares at me blankly as if he doesn't even understand what I am asking.

Female frog 3:

Same with the others. They don't even remember that they have spent hours shouting ballfoot... ballfoot... I think they do it in a kind of trance. They have no control over it.

EXT. CANTILEVER STONE - DAY

The male frogs sitting on it in a row and shouting:

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

FADE OUT ( THE CHANT CONTINUES )

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

FADE IN ( ON THE SCREEN THE WORDS APPEAR )

ENGLAND... MANY CENTURIES AGO... ( CHANT CONTINUES)

EXT. A VILLAGE FIELD - NIGHT

(V.O) Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

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We see a group of frogs standing on the moonlit field and chanting with their heads tilted upwards. All have their eyes wide open.

Frogs: Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

EXT. UNDER THE SHADE OF A ROCK IN THE SAME VILLAGE FIELD - NIGHT

A group of female frogs watching the male frogs that are standing and chanting at a distance.

Female frog1:  
They are at it again.

Female frog 2:  
Yeah... And it will continue - all night... Gone my sleep (sighs)... All day backbreaking work and when its time to rest begins their chorus... Sometimes I just wish to throttle them all. For good.

Female frog1:  
Com'on it's only once in a while they do it.

Female frog2:  
But why? Why do they do that? And why only under the full moon? Whenever you ask them they stare blankly at you as if they know nothing. That's what makes me really angry.

Female frog3:  
Maybe they themselves don't really know?

Female frog2: ( angrily)  
They know everything those lousy prickheads! They just won't tell us.

EXT. THE VILLAGE FIELD - NIGHT

The frogs continue chanting.

Frogs (in a chorus):  
Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

Leaving the frogs the camera pans along the ground then halts for a second on a pair of leather boots... then moves up along the a human leg... along the torso...

(V.O.): Ballfoot... Ballfoot...Ballfoot...The human chant is heard as the camera climbs up the human body; faintly at first and gets louder as it approaches the face.

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The camera finally stops at a human face chanting...

Human face (chanting):  
Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

We see a number of human males (their faces shining under the moonlight) standing side by side looking up to the sky and chanting:  
Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

The camera pans further upwards to the sky and we see the full moon sparkling on a clear dark blue night sky.

(V.O.): Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

INT. INSIDE A ROOM – NIGHT

(V.O.): Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

The room is lit up with candlelight. Helen, a large middle aged woman holding a baby boy to her breasts, her two daughters Martha (sixteen years old) and Sharla (eight years old) and the very old Witch Mother (wearing an all black full sleeved gown and a large brimmed long cone shaped black hat) – all looking out of the window and watching the men folk standing on the field outside and howling Ballfoot... Ballfoot... looking at the moon above.

Helen's face is very grim and tense.

Helen:  
I feel so nervous Witch mother, whenever they do this.

Witch mother (patting Helen's back):  
Don't you be upset dear. There's nothing to worry.

Helen:  
But I fear Witch Mother, I fear every time they do this. I fear the spell will be over and those days will be back.

Witch Mother (with some determination on her face and voice):  
No! It will never happen! The spell will never be broken! It's simply not possible!

Helen:  
I am not sure Witch Mother, I am not sure. Whenever they howl like this I fear that you must have made some mistake. This spell is not fool proof. It will fall apart some day.

Witch Mother (patting Helen's back again):  
No it won't. Believe me it won't.

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Helen:

But all your spells has wipes out the past completely. Why couldn't this one?

Witch Mother remains silent.

Helen grasping Witch Mother's hands (in a near break down voice):

Tell me witch Mother! Tell me this spell is fool proof!

Witch Mother (taking Helen into her arms):

It is fool proof dear. It is fool proof. Don't you worry.

Sharla (tagging witch mother's gown):

Tell me the story of the spell Witch Mother!

Martha (rebuking her little sis):

How many times you have heard it!

Sharla:

Tell me again Witch Mother!

Martha:

Don't tell witch mother. She has heard that story at least a dozen times from me and Ma.

Sharla:

I want to hear it from Witch Mother!

Witch Mother:

O.k O.k. Let me tell her again. (she pulls Sharla to her lap) It was exactly eight springs ago dear... Your dad was so different then...

INT. HELEN'S COTTAGE – DAY

(V.O. – Witch Mother's voice contd):

...He never used to work. He would sleep till late into the day and after waking up he would order your Ma to bring him food and all sorts of things...

Helen's husband sleeping in his bed... Helen appears with a tray full of food in her hands...

EXT. THE VILLAGE FIELD – DAY

(V.O. – Witch Mother's voice contd):

And then in the afternoons he would go to the field and play Ballfoot with the other men of the village...

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Helen's husband and several other men kicking a ball...

INT. INSIDE HELEN'S COTTAGE – DAY

(V.O. – Witch Mother's voice contd):

Poor Ma of yours. She not only had to do all the housework but also had to go to the field and till the land and of course look after you and your sister. And you two were so naughty then... Your Ma's life had turned into hell...

(V.O.): Child crying...

Helen comes into the room, picks up the child and returns to the kitchen where she finds her elder daughter has messed up with the dough...

EXT. THE VILLAGE FIELD - DAY

(V.O. – Witch Mother's voice contd):

But it was not only your dad who was like that. All the men in Norwich were the same. All afternoon and evening they spent playing that silly ball game, God knew what fun they got from it. Kicking a ball together while the women worked in the fields...

Women working in the field. At a distance they can see their men folk playing with the ball...

EXT. THE VILLAGE FIELD – DUSK

(V.O. – Witch Mother's voice contd):

...Then in the evenings as the sun would set they would all go to their Bup...

Men singing a song and walking towards the Bup... Helen's husband has the ball in his hand.

Men:

Singing a song...

INT. INSIDE THE BUP - NIGHT

(V.O. – Witch Mother's voice contd):

...and drink a kind of wine they called 'Reeb'.... They would get all drunk...

The men drinking heavily and making merry... some dancing...

Men:

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Singing songs ...

EXT. THE VILLAGE FIELD - NIGHT

(V.O. – Witch Mother’s voice contd):  
...and returning home late at night...

Men returning from the Bup... some singing ...some cursing...

Men:  
Singing... Cursing...

INT. HELEN’S ROOM – NIGHT

(V.O. – Witch Mother’s voice contd):  
...they would beat their wives...

Helen’s husband beating Helen as the children are crying...

Helen: Screaming...  
Husband: Cursing...  
Children: Crying...

(V.O. – Witch Mother’s voice contd):  
... It had become a daily routine of sorts. The lives of our women had turned into hell...

INT. HELEN’S ROOM – NIGHT (PRESENT)

Sharla reclining on Witch Mother’s lap

Sharla:  
Tell me about that day Witch mother when you turned them into frogs.

Witch Mother:  
I am coming to it dear. How can I forget that day? The happiest day in my life. For the first time in my life I felt that I have put my spell into a truly worthy cause. Even today the smiles in the faces of our women folk tells me that what I did was right... that it was a good thing to do –

Sharla (impatiently):  
Oh Witch Mother! Tell me how you turned them into frogs -

Witch Mother:  
I am coming to it dear. I am coming to it. It was late at night...

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INT: WITCH MOTHER'S ROOM – NIGHT

Witch Mother busy making potion.

(V.O. – Witch Mother's voice):

I was busy making the potion that I had promised the Vicar's wife to cure her husband of his 'hyper spiritual syndrome'...

There is a commotion outside. Witch Mother looks up. Someone knocks the door heavily.

(V.O.):

Open the door Witch mother! Open the door!

Witch Mother opens the door. All the women folk of Norwich have gathered outside. Helen is at the forefront. Blood oozing out of her forehead. Some other women look injured too.

Witch Mother: (worryingly):

What is it dear! What is it! Why are you bleeding!

Helen:

They are beating Annabelle Witch Mother! She'll die! Do something Witch Mother!

Witch Mother:

Who is beating Annabelle? Why?

Helen:

Fatso and all other men. My husband is among them too.

Witch Mother:

But why? Why are they beating her?

Helen:

She dared to go into their Bup Witch Mother! And smashed all their reeb bottles. They got mad and began to beat her... We tried to save her but they had turned into animals Witch mother! They beat us too and drove us away... They are determined to kill her Witch Mother! You must do something! Only you can save her!

Witch Mother goes to a corner of the room and pulls out a long magic wand from her wand basket.

Witch Mother: Come let's go!

Witch Mother and the women come out...

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EXT: THE FIELD IN BETWEEN THE WITCH MOTHER'S COTTAGE AND THE BUP – NIGHT

The women run along the dark field towards the Bup. The light coming out of it can be seen at a distance...

The cry of a woman's voice can be heard, it's coming from inside the Bup...

(V.O. – Woman's voice):  
Help me! Help me!

The women thump at the Bup door.

Helen:  
Open the door! Open the door!

( V.O. - Men's voice from inside):  
Go away bitch! Fuck off!

Helen pounces on the door. So does another two women. But the door wouldn't open.

INT. INSIDE THE BUP – NIGHT

Several men have pinned down Annabelle to the wooden floor and kicking her mercilessly.

The hammering on the door can be heard.

(V.O.) Helen's voice can be heard from outside:  
Open the door bastards! Open the door!

One of the men:  
Fuck off whores!

Annabelle:  
Help me! Help me Helen! They are going to kill me!

EXT: OUTSIDE THE BUP DOOR – NIGHT

Witch Mother:  
Move along girls! Let me handle it!

The women make way for Witch Mother. Witch Mother stands in front of the door and waves her magic wand.

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Witch mother:  
OPEN!

The door bursts open. The men stop hitting Annabelle and look up.

One of the men:  
That fucking witch! Fuck off whore!

The men resume beating Annabelle who screams...

Annabelle:  
HELP ME WITCH MOTHER! SAVE ME!

Witch Mother (boiling with rage) waves her magic wand.

Witch Mother:  
FREEZE!

The men freeze... each in his present position. Witch Mother runs up to Annabelle and brings her out from under the men's legs. She is heavily bruised, beaten black and blue. Her eyes and lips swollen. Blood oozing out from several parts of her body.

Witch Mother (kneeling beside Annabelle):  
Oh dear! What have they done to you!

Witch Mother looks at the men. There is fury in her eyes.

Witch Mother:  
Bustards! I'll teach you some lesson...

She gets up on her feet and starts hitting the freezed men with her wand...

Witch Mother:  
Bustards! Call yourselves men uh! Hitting a helpless woman together! Call yourselves men!... I'll put an end to all this forever! All your drinking and beating your wives... And that bloody game you play... What is it - (looks at the women)

One of the women:  
Ballfoot.

Witch Mother:  
Yes Ballfoot! That silly game you play... You shall never play that game again. You'll have nothing to play with – not even your own balls!

The women look at each other fearfully.

Helen (fear in her voice):

Are you going to make them impotent Witch Mother?

Witch Mother stops thrashing the men and smiles viciously.

Witch Mother:

No dear. I have other plans. These bastards will be out of your lives forever.

The women look at each other again. And within seconds, in front of their terrified eyes, the men turn into frogs one by one...

The women cry out together:

Witch Mother!... What have you done Witch Mother!

Oh Witch mother! What have you done!

Witch Mother:

Listen Women! What have I done is good for all of you. I have put an end to all your miseries... for ever... You should thank me for this.

One of the women:

But they are our husbands Witch Mother!

With mother:

Husbands uh! Good husbands they are! Sleeping all day, doing no work. Drinking and playing a silly game. And on top of that beating you up.... Look what they have done to poor Annabelle.

The Woman:

But they were the fathers of our children Witch Mother!

Witch Mother (angrily):

They don't deserve to be called fathers! Just making love to a woman and making her belly bulge like a ballfoot doesn't make one a father! You have to take responsibility to become a father... You have to feed your children. (Looking at the frogs jumping on the floor) What did these bastards do to feed their children? Nothing! They didn't even till the land! You girls have to do it! You have to grow vegetables, you have to milk the cows, you have to look after the children... And what do you get in return? A good beating at the end of the day. That was your life! But no more... From now on you will have a good life girls! There will be no beatings, no washing their smelly vomits and praying when it will be all over... You will have peace girls, you'll have your own life! Don't you understand?

Helen:

But how can we have children now Witch mother?

Witch Mother:

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Were they the only males in Norwich? There are plenty other males left. The ones that do not drink and do not beat their wives. And do not play that silly ballfoot game. And most importantly they work. I will never cast any spells on them. You girls can have as many children you wish from them. Only you have to be a little generous and learn to share the men between you. You'll get fine children from them. Much better than the one you got from these lousy ballfoots... Look how they are jumping on the floor! Who can tell that they were drinking and beating poor Annabelle a little while back.

Women:

No No Witch Mother! We want our husbands back!

Yes! We want our men back!

Witch Mother:

Why don't you girls understand –

Women:

No Witch Mother! We want them back! Bring them back!

Witch Mother (nervously):

I can't bring them back now. Once a spell is cast it can't be retrieved till its shell life is over. And this spell has a shell life of hundred years... You have to wait for another hundred years... only then a young girl will appear and kiss a descendant of these frogs and turn him to frog again...

Woman:

But we can't wait for another hundred years Witch Mother! We will all be dead by then. Who cares what happens after we are dead. We want them back now! You have to bring them back now!

Other Women:

Yes! Yes! You have to bring them back now Witch mother!

The women move towards Witch Mother.

Witch Mother (frightened):

Well... Well... Let me think.... There is a way out... Each one of you must identify your husbands among these froggies and kiss him. Only then he'll become human again... But beware! If you make any mistake in identifying your man and kiss the wrong frog you yourself will be turned into a she frog!

The women look at each other...

Witch Mother (Contd.):

So be very careful dears. Kiss only if you are one hundred percent sure that it is your husband. Or else DON'T KISS.

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The women look at the frogs jumping on the floor and try to identify their husbands among them... But the confused look on their faces clearly indicates that none is sure. None had the confidence to go ahead and kiss a frog... But then Helen moves forward and squats on the floor, her eyes fixed on a particular smallish looking frog.

Helen:  
This one is mine! He is my old Jonathan!

Witch Mother:  
Are you sure Helen? I can't make any difference -

Helen (looking up at Witch Mother):  
Yes I am sure Witch Mother. This is my Jonathan. I am going to kiss him.

Helen grasps the frog with both hands and picks it up. Witch mother squats beside Helen and holds her shoulders with both hands.

Witch Mother:  
Think again dear! Don't kiss unless you are absolutely sure. You know the consequence if you kiss the wrong one, don't you. You yourself will be turned into one of these slimy creatures.

Helen:  
I am dead sure Witch Mother. This is my Jonathan.

Witch Mother:  
O.k. Go ahead then. Kiss your man. I promise you if it really turns out to be your Jonathan he will be a totally different man. More loyal and obedient than any other man ever born in Norwich. Go ahead dear.

Helen brings the frog (which is now sitting still inside the cusp of her hands) close to her face and looks at its eyes. The frog too looks at her eyes remaining still – as if it has recognized her. Helen closes her eyes, takes a deep breath and kisses the frog on its mouth... Seconds pass... Nothing happens... Helen gets terrified... All the other women in the room including Witch Mother watch with terrible anxiety... Then suddenly the frog jumps out of Helen's hand and lands on the floor... Then in front of the gasping women it turns into Helen's dear old husband...

Ecstatic, Helen jumps on her feet and embraces her husband. Her husband stands confused. Gone is his natural aggression. He looks very timid.

Witch mother (patting Helen on the back):  
Well done Helen Well done! Your confidence has brought your husband back! (then turning to the other women) What about you girls? Your hubbies are waiting for you.

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She looks at the frogs who are now sitting perfectly still on the floor looking at the women. The women look at the frogs then at each other. But none has the guts to identify her husband.

Then suddenly one among them drops on her knees and picks up a frog.

Woman:

This is my Freddie...

She kisses the frog... Seconds pass... Then this frog too jumps down to the floor and transforms into Freddie in front of the gasping women...

Suddenly there is a frenzy among the women. They all begin to identify their husbands... They all squat on the floor and begin catching the frogs with their both hands...

Witch Mother (shouting):

Be careful girls! Be careful! Don't kiss until you are absolutely sure!

But the women were in no mood to listen to her warning. They are all picking up the frogs and kissing the creatures frantically... Within seconds all the women have kissed their prospective husbands...

Seconds pass...

Then all of a sudden the transformation begins...

Many of the frogs jump out of the women's hands and turn into their hubbies... while many other drops to the floor as the hands holding them suddenly vanishes as their owners turn into she frogs... much to the joy of their male counterparts who jump in ecstasy...

INT: HELEN'S ROOM – NIGHT

Witch Mother:

So that's the way it all ended. It's a pity that we lost some of our fine women but in the process we gained some truly obedient and hard working men who are ready to do anything their wives tell them to do.

Helen:

Except in full moon nights like this. You just can't stop them from going out in the open when the full moon sparkles in the night sky... They will go out and looking at the moon howl Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

Sharla (reclining on Witch Mother's lap):

But will those froggies become humans again Witch Mother? When that young girl will kiss them?

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Witch Mother:

Yes they will. But that's after another hundred years dear. Who cares what happens after hundred years. We will all be dead by then.

EXT: CLOSE UP OF THE MEN LOOKING AT THE MOON AND HOWLING - NIGHT

Men:

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

INT: HELEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Martha is standing at the window and looking at the men howling. She turns towards Witch Mother.

Martha:

You shouldn't have done this to them Witch mother. You shouldn't have done this to them.

Witch Mother turns grim.

Witch Mother:

Why do you say so Martha?

Martha:

Look how pathetic they look... as if they are yearning for something... something which is so dear to them... You have taken it away from them.

Witch Mother:

And saved your mother from getting beaten up every night. And made her life a lot easier by making your father work... Now she can get some sleep in the afternoons.

Martha:

But what have you done to my dad? He has lost all his manliness. He has turned into a slave... You can't even call him a man now... I feel so sorry for him... It's all because of you. What you did is against the laws of nature Witch Mother. It's against the will of God.

Witch Mother (angrily):

Stop lecturing Martha! What a man your father was! No work, nothing! Only sleeping all day and playing that silly ballgame in the afternoon and beating your mom at night... You call such a person man!

Martha says nothing. She turns her face towards the window and keeps watching the men howling under the full moon.

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Witch Mother gets up from the bed and walks up to Martha. Holding the girl's chin between her fingers she turns her face towards her and looks straight into her eyes. She looks for a few moments... then leaving Martha she walks towards the door leaning on her stick. Helen follows her.

EXT: FIELD OUTSIDE HELEN'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Witch Mother comes out of Helen's cottage and walks along the dark field. Helen too comes out and catches up.

Helen:

Witch Mother what's the matter with Martha? Why does she talk like that?

Witch Mother says nothing and walks along. Helen follows her.

Helen (grasping Witch Mother's arm thus stopping her):

What's the problem with Martha Witch Mother? Is there any possibility that she – that she is the one?

Witch Mother:

No! No! She can't be the one. This spell has a shell life of minimum one hundred years. Only then the girl will come. Not before that.

Helen:

Are you sure Witch Mother? There was no mistake in casting the spell?

Witch Mother:

No. No. I made no mistake. Don't you worry Helen, everything will be all right ... (pauses)... I have a plan for Martha, Helen... The Finch family from Greenwich is coming to visit me tomorrow. Want to thank me for the spell I cast on their young daughter to cure her breathing troubles. Their eldest son Albert is coming too. You've seen him don't you? Came to the fair last summer?

Helen:

Yes I remember! Nice lad. I liked him the moment I saw him.

Witch Mother:

Yes, very nice lad. Hard working. Obedient. Listens to everything his mother says... I'll bring the family to your place in the evening Helen. Tell Martha to wash up properly and make her wear the dress I gave her on her birthday (smiles) I know she doesn't want to wear that dress because I gave it to her... but make her wear that. She will look ravishing in it (smiles again) Albert's mother will like her very much I am sure... and of course (winks) I will cast a little spell on her if required... Oh it'll be great if we can get Martha married in that family!

Helen:

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But will Martha agree Witch Mother? I am not sure – why don't you cast a spell on her too.

Witch mother:

No No Helen. I won't cast any spell on my dear Martha! These spells have side effects you know... Don't you worry dear. I am sure she will like Albert on her own. Our Martha may be a little arrogant but she has a good heart. Once she is married and have children everything will be fine. She'll be a changed girl.

Helen:

Oh Witch Mother! You care so much for us.

Witch Mother (taking Helen in her arms):

You all are my family dear. I love you all.... Now I must go dear. I have to prepare an extra strong potion for old Edward, the normal ones had no effect on him. Poor old man, suffering from such terrible pain can't even lift his back... Good night dear.

Witch mother kisses Helen and moves forward. Helen goes back to her cottage. Witch Mother walks along the field. She looks at the men who were standing not very far away and howling looking at the moon.

(V.O.):

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

Witch Mother walks along...

(V.O. - men):

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

(V.O. – frogs):

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

Witch Mother hears the frogs' chorus. She looks down and notices a group of frogs standing in a row on the ground near her feet and croaking...

Frogs (croaking):

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

Witch Mother looks for a moment then kicks at the frogs...

Witch Mothers:

Bastards!

The impact of the kick sends the frogs flying... One of them lands on a tree trunk a couple of yards away and continues to croak looking at Witch Mother...

Frog (croaking):

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Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

Witch Mother notices the frog and moving forward swings her stick on its direction... But she misses... The frog jumps aside and continues to croak as if taunting Witch mother.

Frog (croaking):

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

Witch Mother swings her stick again and this time she is successful in thrashing the frog. The frog falls off the trunk and lies immobile. Witch Mother smiles viciously... But in a moment the frog turns around and takes a giant leap towards Witch Mother... and lands right on top of her nose.

Witch Mother (screams):

AAAAGGGHHHH!!!

She tries to pull the frog out of her nose but the frog holds on tightly terrifying her. After much effort she finally succeeds in pulling it off... Dropping her stick she runs away as fast as possible...

The frogs group again and croak with renewed vigour...

Frogs (Croaking):

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

The men howl too under the full moon...

Men:

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

INT: HELEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Martha watches the men from her window and listens to their howling...

(V.O.):

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

Helen drops on the bed. Sharma and the baby boy are already asleep.

Helen:

How long will you watch them howling Martha? Put off the candle and go to sleep.

Helen yawns and closes her eyes. Martha blows out the candle and lies down. Helen has already started to snore... The noise of her snoring mingles with the ongoing chant of the men outside...

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(V.O.):  
Helen's snore and the men's chant...

Martha closes her eyes...

FADE OUT – THE SCREEN GETS DARK

(V.O.): Helen's snore fades and the men's howl gets louder...

FADE IN

Martha is dreaming...

Far away in the dark several blurry figures playing with a ball... Someone among them kicks the ball and it comes rolling forward... Its size increases as it comes nearer...

Martha appears and picks it up... The men shout at Martha.

Men:

Give the ball Martha... Give the ball...

Martha doesn't. The men come running towards her. Martha bursts out in laughter and runs away holding the ball in her hands... the men chase Martha...

Martha is running... She looks back. The men are still chasing her. They are closing in. A well built tall man his face covered in a black mask is leading the pack... Martha runs faster...

She looks back again... The men are only a few yards away... Martha shrieks out in laughter and keeps running...

The masked man's hand falls on her shoulder – Martha turns around... She notices the pair of eyes through the hole in the mask... Losing her balance she falls to the ground but does not let her ball go... She lies on her back and keeps laughing hysterically as the men swoop down on her in slow motion howling....

Men:

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

Martha:

Laughing hysterically...

She presses the ball tightly to her breasts pushing them further up. The upper parts of her breasts are bulging out of her tight dress as if she is carrying not one but three ballfoots on her chest...

The men's faces (the masked face in front) come closer... and closer... and closer... very near to her chest...

Men (chanting):

Ballfoot... Ballfoot... Ballfoot...

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Martha:  
Laughing like mad...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT: HELEN'S ROOM – DAY

(V.O.): Rooster calling...

The first rays of the sun fall on Martha's face. Martha opens her eyes... Helen is still soaring...

Martha gets up from the bed and opens the door. She finds her dad sleeping on the wet grass just outside the door. She pulls him up.

Martha:  
Get up daddy! Get up! Come inside.

Martha helps her dad stand on his feet and drags him inside. Still dozing and reclining on his daughter Jonathan gets to his bed and drops on it. But then Helen opens her eyes and notices her husband.

Helen (shouts):  
Who told you to bring him inside! Is this time for his sleep?

She gets up from her bed and moving towards her husband pulls him up by the collar. Martha tries to stop her mother...

Martha:  
Com'on Ma! Let him sleep!

Helen (still shouting):  
No! He can't sleep now! All night he howled like a jackal and now he wants to sleep uh? Come you lousy night owl... you will milk the cow now...

Martha:  
Ma – Please! Have some pity on him! Don't you see how sleepy he is? How can he milk the cow now? He can barely keep his eyes open!

Helen looks around the room then leaving his husband - who drops to the bed and continues to doze – goes to a corner of the room, picks up a pitcher and coming back to Jonathan pours cold water on him...

The cold water has the desired effect. Jonathan jumps up. Helen holds him by the collar and drags him out of the room... A frustrated Martha drops to her dad's bed.

A while later Helen returns and shuts the door with a bang.

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Helen (to Martha):

Have some more sleep dear. Let him finish milking the cow.

She drops to her bed and in a matter of seconds begins to snore. Martha keeps sitting on her dad's bed...

A little later the bellowing of a cow is heard...

(V.O.):

Cow bellowing...

Martha (to herself):

What is it? Why is she crying?

Martha runs out of the room...

EXT: THE FIELD OUTSIDE HELEN'S COTTAGE – DAY

Martha runs to the barn on the backside of the house and notices her father sitting crouched beside the cow. The cow is bellowing furiously and kicking one of her hind legs. Martha runs to see what's happening... She notices her father dozing, his head fallen to his chest. Inside his clinched fists are the cows nipples – stretched like a rubber band... The cow is bellowing like mad in pain and kicking her hind leg.... Luckily the kicks are missing her father by a whisker...

Martha (shaking her father):

Wake up Dad! Wake up! What are you doing! You'll kill yourself!

Martha frees the cow's nipples from her dad clutches and drags him to the fence and makes him recline on it. Jonathan keeps dozing in sitting position reclining on the fence, legs apart, head fallen to the chest. Martha gets back to the cow and squatting beside the still crying poor bovine, pats it's nipples with great affection...

Martha:

Sorry dear, I am so sorry. It really hurt didn't it?

The cow gets silent and Martha starts milking again... The milk falls on the wooden pail beneath...

(V.O. – Helen's voice):

What are you doing over there Martha? Where's your father?

Martha (to herself):

There she comes again...

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She looks back. Helen is approaching. She notices her husband. Furious she runs towards Martha and picks up the milk pail which is half filled with milk. Lifting the pail with both hands she comes to her husband and pours the milk over him...

Martha comes running...

Martha:

What have you done mother! You wasted the milk!

Helen:

Shut up! Who told you to milk the cow! It's his job (kicking her husband) Go milk it!

Jonathan gets up, picks up the pail and walking up to the cow starts milking it again.

Meanwhile mother and daughter quarrels...

Martha:

How can you be so cruel Mother? Don't you have any heart?

Helen:

Don't you lecture me Martha! Now go and wash yourself! Witch Mother is bringing the Finch family of Greenwich in the evening. I want you to look good in front of them. Put on the dress Witch mother gave you on your birthday.

Martha:

Why? Why should I look good in front of them?

Helen:

Don't argue! Do what I told you!

Martha looks at her mother suspiciously.

Martha (narrowing her eyes):

Are you planning to marry me off mother? With that elder son of theirs?

Helen:

He is a good boy.

Martha bursts out in laughter.

Martha (laughing):

Yeah! Good boy he is! Spineless weakling! Still suckling his mother's milk! You want me to marry him! Ha Ha Ha...

Helen (shouts):

Stop it Martha! Stop it!

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Martha keeps laughing...

Martha (short of breath):

Oh Mother! How can you even think of it! I am going to marry that worm? Ha Ha Ha...

Helen steps forward and pulls Martha by her hair. Martha stops laughing.

Helen (looking straight into Martha – in a cold voice):

I want you to marry that Finch boy Martha. And you are going to marry him. That's what Witch Mother wants too.

Martha (furious):

You and your Witch Mother! To hell with both of you! She has no business messing my life, I'll not let her evil designs work on me!

Helen (stunned):

What! – What did you say!

Martha:

She is evil! She has evil designs on me! On all the men! On everybody –

Helen let loose Martha's hair and looks around searching for something...

Helen (mumbling):

You... You bitch... I'll... I'll...

Her eyes fall on a piece of log lying on the ground. She picks it up...

Helen (mad with rage):

How dare you call Witch Mother evil! How dare you!

Helen starts thrashing Martha with the log. Martha covers her head with both hands and screams as the log falls on her back in rapid succession... Jonathan keeps milking the cow as if he has heard nothing...

Helen (screaming):

You bitch... You arrogant little bitch! ... I'll kill you! I'll kill you today!

Sharla comes running... seeing her mother hitting her elder sister she jumps in and tries to pull her mother away... But her mother gives her a whack too... she moves away.

Helen continues to beat Martha with the log...

Helen cursing...

Martha screaming...

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Sharla runs to her dad who is busy milking the cow.

Sharla:

Daddy! Mom will kill Martha! Do something!

Jonathan stops pulling the cow's nipples and looks back. Sharla pushes him.

Sharla:

Do something daddy! Do something!

Jonathan gets up, walks up to the mother and daughter and with his right hand stops the log from falling on Martha's back. He pulls it away from his wife's hand and hurls it away. Helen pounces on Jonathan but he gives her a shove. Helen stumbles to the ground. Jonathan gets back to the cow and resumes milking...

Helen is stunned. This is the first time since his conversion that he has put a hand on her. She mumbles in shock and rage...

Helen (at a loss of words):

You... You... How dare....

Martha is stunned too. But the look on her face clearly indicates that she has highly appreciated this rare show of masculinity by her father. She lifts herself up from the ground and leaves the barn.

# TRUNCATED

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