

FADE IN:

EXT. GRIMVILLE PARK - NIGHT

Flames dance behind the mischievous eyes of an enormous prosthetic JACK O LANTERN. The words HALLOWEEN FEST 09 form the pumpkin's crooked glowing smile.

CARLA (V.O.)

Halloween.

Behind it rows of refreshment stands, game booths and makeshift haunted houses that stretch for miles.

CROWDS OF COSTUMED KIDS and ADULTS partake in the festivities.

CARLA (V.O.)

My parents can't seem to get enough of it...

A MARCHING BAND all wearing neon skeleton body suits perform a playful melody.

CARLA (V.O.)

I know they say the apple never falls far from the tree...

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A long winding line of rambunctious TEENAGERS all eager to get into the venue.

At the head of the line taking tickets is CARLA COURAGE (12) beanpole thin, dressed in a ballerina outfit, rolls her eyes at the gathering crowd.

CARLA (V.O.)

But I positively, absolutely, hate Halloween.

Her Mom CARMEN COURAGE(35) small in stature, with a no nonsense attitude, wearing a Wonder Woman outfit.

CARMEN

Hey Dracula, no cutting the line, you little...

Carmen reaches for her lasso of truth but a large paw stops her from using it.

The paw belongs to Carla's dad CEDRIC COURAGE (36), ruggedly handsome, mountain of a man dressed as a Teddy bear.

CEDRIC

Now Hun, you promised no lasso.

CARMEN

But...

CEDRIC

Don't let these lil ghouls get to you, okay.

Carmen's anger disappears from her face.

CARMEN

How could I say no to a big Teddy bear.

She kisses him on the cheek.

Some of the teens take advantage of Carla's lax demeanor and rush past Carla without handing over their tickets.

CARMEN

Carla, sweetie you can take a break if you want. We can handle things out here.

Carla happily snatches up her knapsack. She walks away from the melee of teens.

EXT. HOUSE OF MIRRORS - LATER

Carla sits on a barrel in front of an abandoned house of mirrors, less of a crowd than the haunted house.

CARLA (V.O.)

Sure, my last name is Courage but everyone at school calls me scaredy cat.

She reads a thick hardcover book entitled: "HOW TO AVOID ANY PERILOUS SITUATION."

CARLA (V.O.)

Am I careful, yes, but aren't girls supposed to be cautious.

Red eyes fluoresce in the shadows behind her. She lowers her book slowly, her eyes bulging with terror.

CARLA (V.O.)

But of all the things that terrify me what really gets me is nasty, slimy...

She turns around just as the insect stretches out it's polka dotted arm, Carla lets out a startled shriek covering her eyes from the inevitable.

RUBE (O.S.)

Carla, it's just me.

She uncovers her peepers to the sight of RUBE, a chubby boy, same age as Carla, wearing a life sized lady bug costume.

CARLA

Rube!

She pushes him playfully.

RUBE

Sorry bout that. You ready to do some explorin'?

Carla shrugs.

CARLA

I guess.

She follows the lady bug boy.

EXT. GRIMVILLE PARK - LATER

Carla and Rube stroll along the strip of booths and rides. The sound of screaming passengers as a roller coaster dives down a steep drop.

RUBE

What about the Last Ride?

Carla shakes her head.

CARLA

You're kidding right. Do you know how dangerous those things are?

Rube smacks himself in the face.

RUBE

Aw c'mon Carla you got to loosen up a bit and stop wonderin' what if...

CARLA

Because what if can happen, Rube.

Rube sighs, there's no changing her mind.

RUBE

How about...

CARLA

I think we should start heading back.

Carla storms away from the pleading boy.

RUBE

Carla, Carla!

EXT. GRIMVILLE PARK - LATER

On their way back to the house of mirrors, they come across something they haven't seen before...

A dilapidated traveling trailer propped up on blocks by itself behind a circus tent that serves as a horror cinema.

Both Carla and Rube stand mesmerized in it's mystique.

CARLA

Spooky.

RUBE

You're tellin' me.

All of a sudden the trailer door swings open.

KLOP, JINGLE KLOP, JINGLE KLOP.

VOICE (O.S.)

(heavy accent)

Chil-dren...

A whooping cough disrupts the introduction.

MINIERVA a prune faced hag with cobweb hair hobbles through the doorway clutching a worn out walking stick.

MINIERVA

Come, come.

She beckons to them with her bony fingers.

MINIERVA

I Minierva, I show you, I show you future gratis, gratis...

She mumbles something in a foreign language. The kids study the woman quizzically.

MINIERVA

Future I show you free, no money.

An enthusiastic look on her weathered face.

Rube pulls Carla to the side.

RUBE

What ya think?

CARLA

She gives me the chiggers.

RUBE

Cmon Carla.

Finally Carla gives way to Rube's whining.

CARLA

Oh, alright.

They head for the trailer. They are about to enter when Minierva holds up a feeble finger.

MINIERVA

One turn... time, beetle boy, next.

She shows Carla inside then slams the door.

INT. MINIERVA'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Cluttered with trinkets, the walls covered in unfamiliar sanscrit.

In the back of the room ia a shrine built to a looming statue of a mantis.

CARLA

Super spooky.

Carla pulls up a chair at a table with a crystal ball in the centre. Minierva sits opposite her behind the crystal globe.

MINIERVA

I show you. I show you.

She holds out here scraggly hands to her. Carla reluctantly places her palms in her hands.

Minierva chants to the ceiling.

The crystal ball illuminates. Anxious. Carla scans the room.

The room glows bright green then as if someone flicked the off switch. The light snaps off.

The hag curses under her breath. She thumps the crystal like a disobedient child but her efforts are useless.

MINIERVA

I sorry... ball no work for you.

Carla looks befuddled by what Minierva has just told her.

Minierva leads her out the door then flashes a toothless grin at a waiting Rube.

MINIERVA

Bug Bug. you turn... now.

Rube smiles at Carla and rushes inside. The door bangs closed.

EXT. MINIERVA'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Carla fidgets, not comfortable with waiting for Rube.

She tip toes to the back of the trailer and peeks through a murky window. She sees Rube in the same position she was.

Almost immediately, the green light emanates from the windows.

A figure that looks alot like an OLDER RUBE dressed as a chef materializes in the green light.

Again, the light vanishes but this time it's followed by Minierva's sickly cackle.

The glow returns as a green aura drains from Rube and into the crystal ball, slowly returning Minierva's youth to her. Until Rube becomes a wooden doll.

Eyes unblinking, mouth agape Carla's body is frozen with fear.

Slowly, she backtracks and bolts for the house of mirrors.

INT. HOUSE OF MIRRORS - CONTINUOUS

Carla pants heavily. She moves through the dirty mirror.

Carla hangs her head low and bursts into tears.

TAP! TAP! TAP!

Next to Carla's reflection is ghost white Rube still in his lady bug outfit.

CARLA

Rube?

RUBE

(through glass)

Carla got to get us out of here.

More children all dressed in Halloween outfits and all pleading for Carla's help.

Carla shrieks and races out the building.

EXT. HOUSE OF MIRRORS - LATER

Wide eyed, Carla paces back and forth.

CARLA

This can't be real. This can't be for real...

She glances at a puddle of water and there is Rube again.

RUBE

C'mon Carla, I know you can stop her we need you we need ya to be brave for all of us.

Rube words have struck a chord in Carla. Her tears stop, she steels herself.

CARLA

I'll do it but I'll do it my way.

EXT. MINIERVA'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Carla swalllows hard as she stares down Minierva's trashy trailer.

CARLA

Hey you old hag, I know what you did to Rube and all those kids.

The door creaks open immediately. A younger Minierva struts out the door, chuckling to herself.

YOUNG MINIERVA

Because you have no courage... no ambition to afraid to live life but there are other ways to eh skin a cat as they say.

The crystal ball dangles on a chain around her neck.

CARLA

Laugh all you want, you fossil but your crystal ball doesn't work on me.

The crystal ball lights up and covers Minierva and spreads through their surroundings turning everything into a grey ghost town. Carla gasps.

Minierva changes into an almost exact replica of the mantis statue in her trailer.

She roars at Carla blowing back her hair. Carla screams and runs as fast as she can as the mantis gives chase.

Years of avoiding danger come in handy as Carla dodges and spins away from the overgrown insect's attacks.

Carla advances to the rollercoaster as the monster snaps ferociously at her heals.

EXT. ROLLERCOASTER - CONTINUOUS

Carla comes to a total stop at the rollercoaster and faces the beast.

CARLA

Come and get me. Bug Bug.

The Mantis charges forward and Carla dives out the way.

The mantis gets caught between the rollercoaster's beams.

Still timid Carla pulls the crystal orb from it's neck and smashes it on the ground.

Color floods Carla's world again.

Rube's soul re-animates his once wooden body. The other souls scatter to finally rest in peace.

The Mantis monster disintergrates into dust.

RUBE (O.S.)

They said we were doomed but I knew you could do it.

CARLA

Rube!

Carla jumps on Rube in jubilation and plants a big wet one on his cheek