

FAIRLAW: (CONT'D)

It's over, Ogden. It's finally over.

And when you're gone, I'll be the one to be there to pick up the pieces. I'll be there to wrap my arms around Lavinia and bring the joy into her life that she so desperately deserves.

Ahhh!... Yes!... And I'll be there to raise your children in your absence and give them the long overdue love and attention that they deserve.

LAIME rushes at FAIRLAW in a fury.

LAIME:

You Bastard! You're dreaming! Lavinia will never turn her back on me.

LAIME swings at FAIRLAW with all his might but FAIRLAW manages to duck out of the way.

FAIRLAW then turns around and punches LAIME right in the jaw and knocks him to the ground.

LAIME sits/lays on the floor, dazed and trying to get his bearings.

FAIRLAW:

(Beginning to exit, confidently.)

Ogden, you're an evil man and you deserved that!

I can't tell you how many years I've wanted to do that.

FAIRLAW gives LAIME a surly "once-over", grunts with finality and exits with head held high.

LAIME is dazed.

BLACKOUT.

END SCENE

ACT I - SCENE 8 - IT'S MINE, I TELL YOU... ALL MINE!

Scene: The lights come up on the home of EFREM DAVENPORT.

CLARA is serving breakfast. This morning she is setting out bowls of cereal at each place.

DAVENPORT is already at his place and reading the morning paper.

NIGEL and TRUDY are in their seats playing together nicely with some little, tiny toys.

Enter LAVINIA.

LAVINIA:
Good morning, Father. Good morning, children.

DAVENPORT:
And a good morning to you, my darling daughter.

NIGEL:
Good morning, Mother. Look what we have!

LAVINIA:
Why, what delightful little toys. Where did you get those?

NIGEL:
Clara gave them to us.

LAVINIA smiles sweetly at CLARA and CLARA returns the smile.

LAVINIA:
Wasn't that sweet of her.

Enter LAIME. (With a black eye)

DAVENPORT stiffens and lifts his newspaper as if to read it. The audience can see DAVENPORT'S facial expressions from the side.

LAVINIA tries to be pleasant, but she too is a bit stiff.

(To LAIME)
Good morning, Ogden.

CHILDREN:

(To LAIME)

Good morning, Father.

LAIME:

(Mumbling bluntly)

Indeed!

LAIME takes his place at the table and immediately opens his paper, ignoring everyone.

CLARA exits to the kitchen

LAVINIA:

(To NIGEL and TRUDY)

Eat your breakfast, my darlings. You don't want to be late for school.

NIGEL takes a spoonful

NIGEL:

Yum! This is really good. What is this?

TRUDY:

(Excited)

It's a new breakfast cereal. Everyone is eating it.

DAVENPORT:

(Tasting the cereal)

I quite agree. This is very tasty.

LAVINIA:

(To DAVENPORT)

The grocer told Clara that he's having trouble keeping it on the shelves. Everyone is purchasing it. Apparently, it's his best selling item.

LAIME puts his paper down to investigate.

DAVENPORT sneers at LAIME and then lifts his newspaper to deliberately ignore him.

LAIME:

Best selling? Indeed! What are you all talking about?

TRUDY:

A new breakfast cereal, Father. Do try it. It's very good.

NIGEL:

(To LAIME)

It's really good with some fruit and milk on it. Clara has served it up with some of Mother's fruit preserves.

LAIME tastes the cereal.

LAIME:

Hmmmm! It does have a rather good flavor.

(DAVENPORT chuckles)

NIGEL:

Yes and look, Father. Each box comes with a wonderful little toy inside.

LAIME sits up in his chair, a bit wide eyed.

Look Father! It moves! All my friends are collecting them.

LAVINIA:

What pleasant little keepsakes for children, don't you think?

LAIME is now suspicious.

LAIME:

Clara? Clara! Where are you?

CLARA enters from the kitchen.

CLARA:

Yes, Mr. Laime.

LAIME:

Where's the package this came in? I want to see it... Now!

CLARA:

(A bit startled by his tone)

Yes Sir, I'll go and get it.

LAIME:

(To himself)

This can't be! Tell me this is not so!

DAVENPORT:

(From behind his newspaper,
with an air of sarcasm.)

What's the matter, my boy? Something wrong?

CLARA returns with the cereal box.
In bold letters it reads "GOOD
CEREAL".

CLARA hands the box to LAIME.
LAIME reads the information on the packaging.

CLARA:

(To LAIME, as if rubbing it
in a bit.)

The company that makes it has come up with something very clever. They have an internal bag that's made from a "waxed paper". It keeps the cereal remarkably fresh and crisp.

LAIME:

Nooooo! Nooooo! This can't be happening.

LAIME looks suspiciously at
DAVENPORT.

(To DAVENPORT)

Did you know about this?

DAVENPORT:

(Lowering his paper and
smiling confidently at
LAIME)

Know about it! I financed it!

LAIME is now looking across the
table at DAVENPORT, with daggers in
his eyes.

LAVINIA, CLARA, and TRUDY realize
that there's about to be real
trouble.

LAVINIA:

(A bit panicked)

Alright, children, it's time for school. Clara, would you,
please see to it that they get off to school promptly?

CLARA:

(Also a bit panicked)

Yes, of course, right away. Come along children. We mustn't
be late. Hurry, now!

TRUDY understands the situation and
moves quickly. She tries to get
NIGEL to go with her.

NIGEL:

(Oblivious)

But, I wasn't finished with my cereal.

TRUDY:
Never mind that now. We need to go.

NIGEL:
Can I take my new toys with me?

TRUDY hurries to retrieve NIGEL'S new toys for him and she and CLARA rush him away.

CLARA and the children exit.
LAVINIA sits frozen in her chair.

LAIME:
(To DAVENPORT, grinding his teeth)
How long have you known about this?

DAVENPORT:
(Pretending to be innocent)
Oh, for some time now.

DAVENPORT now sneers sarcastically at LAIME.
I've been involved in it ever since you fired him!
(Speaking with a quiet anger and sarcasm)

You know?... Otto Digby is married to his Sister. You do remember that Digby used to work for me, don't you? Good man, Digby. We've stayed in touch all this time. Pleasant man... very pleasant.

LAIME is now quaking with anger.

LAIME:
(Rising from the table and holding up the cereal box)
This belongs to me! He signed a contract.

DAVENPORT:
Yes, he did. And, if I understand correctly, you were the one that insisted on providing him with a release form because you didn't want any part of his "small" ideas.

LAIME:
(Now furious and beginning to pace)
This product was created at my laboratory with my money.

DAVENPORT:

(Angry)

Correction! I believe it was my money. Exactly when did you ever invest a nickle in that business?

LAIME:

(Looming over DAVENPORT)

The one time I finally invent something totally successful, and it's stolen from me.

DAVENPORT:

(Standing abruptly)

What? Ogden Laime! You've never invented a thing in your life!

(sarcastically)

If you'll recall, I told you to hire him. I did not tell you to fire him.

I also told you to strongly consider his invention suggestions. I did not expect you to discard his suggestions so blatantly. You read his resume, didn't you? Surely you were aware of his strong qualifications.

For God's sake, Ogden! The man worked successfully for Mr. Thomas Edison for quite some time. You have no idea what I had to go through to convince him to agree to leave Edison in order to assist in trying to make something of that place.

You have only yourself to thank for this, Ogden!

But then, I understand Neville has brought that fact to your attention.

(Pointing to LAIME'S black eye)

And I see he did so quite nicely.

With that selfish attitude of yours, I can guarantee that you will never achieve any level of success... Ever!

LAIME suddenly snaps! His body language shows that he's fallen off the edge into insanity.

LAIME:

(With an insane glare.)

Life is full of surprises, Efrem Davenport. There are things that are happening in this world that you have no knowledge of.

LAIME begins to exit, but he turns back for one final statement.

(Crazed)

You are about to find out just what I am truly capable of.

The world will know and understand... And marvel! And the name of Ogden Laime will go down in history, right next to... Jules Verne! I promise you!

FX: FF TO (TRACK 04) The sound of "Heavenly Voices".

LAIME looks heavenward toward the "Voices" and nods with conviction .

PAUSE (TRACK 04)

LAIME exits wildly. LAVINIA becomes quite concerned. She reaches across the table for DAVENPORT'S hand.

LAVINIA:

(Pleadingly)

Oh, Father! I do believe he's gone quite mad.

DAVENPORT tries to hide his concern from LAVINIA, but he too is a bit worried about the situation.

DAVENPORT:

Quite right! Ogden is most certainly not in control of his senses. I'm not sure what he's capable of right now.

BLACKOUT.

END SCENE

INTERMISSION

ACT II - SCENE 1 - OVER THE EDGE

Scene: The "Secret laboratory" of OGDEN LAIME.

There are two compartments, one on each side of the stage. Each has a door on it and is only capable of holding one person in it.

There are knobs, dials, and flashing lights all over the compartments and on a "control box" that sits on a table in the center of the room.

LAIME is totally crazed and busy turning knobs and dials, etc.

Enter PETER and PINKUS. They enter timidly and unsure.

PINKUS:

Mr. Laime? Are you quite alright, Sir? Your actions out in the main laboratory have us all quite concerned.

LAIME:

(Insanely furious)

What are you two doing in here? I've told you that you are never to enter this room. This is my private laboratory!

NO ONE ENTERS THIS ROOM!... NO ONE!!!

PINKUS and PETER stand frozen.

WAIT! On second thought! Perhaps it's best that you are here! You two can document my success.

PETER:

Your success, Sir?

LAIME:

YES! I have decided it's time to reveal my invention to the world!

It's time the whole world found out about my true genius!

Come in, gentlemen! And prepare to be amazed!

PETER and PINKUS carefully and skeptically move a bit forward.

PETER:

Perhaps we should go get Mr. Digby as well, Sir!

LAIME:

(Furious)

DIGBY! THAT... THAT... TRAITOR! THAT... WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING!

LAIME suddenly changes to a sinister calm.

On second thought, why not Digby?

YES! One of you go get Digby, by all means!

PETER looks at PINKUS and they both nod at one another, concerned.

PINKUS exits to go get DIGBY.

Let it be Digby that goes running off to the "Great Mr. Davenport" to tell him of my success!

LAIME lunges forward to look PETER straight in the eye like a madman.

PETER takes a step backward with a wide eyed, concerned look on his face.

LAIME: (CONT'D)

There's justice in that, you know!

PETER just stands there, frozen.

Enter PINKUS with DIGBY.

Ahhhhh! Digby! Come in! Come closer! Observe!

(Surly)

And make sure to inform your good friend, Mr. Davenport, of everything you see.

DIGBY:

Sir? You seem a bit overwrought. Perhaps you should rest awhile.

LAIME:

And give another one of you a chance to steal from me?

NOT A CHANCE!!!

WATCH AND MARVEL, GENTLEMEN!... WATCH AND MARVEL!

PINKUS:

Perhaps you might tell us what we will be marveling at!

LAIME:

Yes! Of course! Let me explain.

Gentlemen? I have developed a method of "invisible human transport!"