THE INFECTIOUS IMAGINATION OF HENRY BRAMBLE

Written by

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1 EXT. HOUSE - DAY

It is late autumn. A majestic Elizabethan house sits on a hill surrounded by trees and beautiful countryside.

2 INT. STUDY, HOUSE - DAY

2

1

GEOFFREY CRANBROOK, a reserved traditionalist in his seventies, sits behind a polished ANTIQUE DESK, dressed in a brown tweed suit. Behind him HUNDREDS OF BOOKS fill the shelf. More have been stacked up in piles around him.

GEOFFREY (V.O.)

I've always loved books ever since I was a boy. I've read all my life, everything and anything, so when I retired I decided to dedicate the rest of my life to writing a book myself, so that I could leave something behind for future generations to enjoy.

He looks down at the blank page on his TYPEWRITER through his well worn gold rimmed spectacles. He twitches his wrinkly nose. His index fingers hover over the keys. He is about to hit a key when the doorbell rings. Geoffrey sighs with frustration and reluctantly stands up.

GEOFFREY (V.O.)

...unfortunately I never quite realised how difficult it was going to be.

3 INT./EXT. HALLWAY/PORCH - DAY

3

A large oak door opens to reveal HENRY BRAMBLE, a grubby 10 year-old boy dressed in a traditional school uniform. A small SUITCASE sits on the ground beside him.

HENRY

Great Uncle Geoffrey, I'm Henry. My Mum says I have to stay with you this evening.

Geoffrey looks up in dismay to see the boy's mother waving at him, before getting back into her CAR and driving away. Henry picks up his suitcase and marches inside.

4 <u>INT. BEDROOM, HOUSE - DAY</u>

4

Geoffrey enters the plain minimalist attic bedroom and throws Henry's suitcase onto the bed. Dust plumes out. Henry appears in the doorway sniffing the musty air, while Geoffrey opens the window to let some fresh air in. **GEOFFREY**

If you need to use the bathroom, then please use the one at the end of the landing on the left.

Henry notices a SLUG sliding across the wooden floor close to the bed. His eyes light up with excitement.

GEOFFREY

It is imperative that I am able to concentrate. I have a very important book to write and must not have any...

Geoffrey notices SLIVER TRAILS on the window and follows them down the wall and across the wooden floor towards the bed.

Henry bends down to stroke the slug but Geoffrey's foot gets there first.

GEOFFREY

...distractions.

Henry jumps as the slug squelches under his foot. He stands up, his eyes and mouth wide open in shock.

GEOFFREY

You are to stay in your room at all times, except for meals or to use the lavatory. Do you understand?

Henry nods.

Geoffrey shuts the door firmly behind him, leaving the boy standing in the middle of the room. Henry sighs, already looking bored.

5 INT. LANDING/STAIRS, HOUSE - DAY

5

The door knob to Henry's bedroom turns slowly. The door creaks open a little, revealing Henry's wide-eyed face.

Henry creeps halfway down the grand staircase and peers through the banisters at the closed study door.

6 INT. STUDY, HOUSE - DAY

6

Geoffrey is sitting at his desk, just staring at the typewriter. His fingers hover over the keys. Eventually he hits the 'A' key but then stops, hesitating. He shakes his head with disapproval and yanks the PAPER out of the typewriter, crunching it up in his bony hands and throwing it into the WASTE PAPER BASKET beside him.

A floorboard creaks. Geoffrey looks up at the study door to see a shadow under it from a pair of small feet. He gets up and strides quickly towards the door.

GEOFFREY

I thought I told you to...

7 INT. HALLWAY, HOUSE - DAY

7

Geoffrey opens the door swiftly, but Henry has gone. His narrowing eyes pan across the hallway. He notices a PICTURE FRAME on the wall is wonky. In it is a PHOTOGRAPH of Geoffrey as a judge in his robe and long wig, shaking hands with the queen outside the high court in London.

Geoffrey steps over to it and straightens the frame. He looks suspiciously around the empty hallway again. Henry is frozen, hiding behind the grandfather clock with his eyes closed. Geoffrey returns to the study, closing the door behind him.

8 EXT. FOREST, MINOITANIGA - DAY

8

Henry opens his eyes hearing the distance sound of cracking and crunching tree branches followed by a frightening roar of some unknown creature. He peers around the tree trunk. Whatever it was, it is moving away.

Henry breathes a sigh of relief and steps back onto the trail just as a dozen little elf-like creatures with little parsnip noses and SPEARS come running across the path ahead. RAYGO RATTLEGUM catches a glimpse of something in the corner of his eye, stopping suddenly. He turns to face Henry, gob smacked.

Raygo is less than four foot tall and dressed in clothes made from animal skins. He is carrying an assortment of unusual equipment that dangle from his belt and a small RUCKSACK made from animal hide.

HENRY

What was that?

The elf doesn't answer. Henry steps forward holding out his hand.

HENRY

I'm Henry.

The elf takes a step back pointing his spear in defence.

HENRY

I'm not going to hurt you.

Raygo studies the boy with suspicion before tentatively shaking the boy's hand.

RAYGO

Raygo Rattlegum and what may I ask are you?

Henry wipes a smear of dung from his palm that has transferred from Raygo's grubby hands.

HENRY

What am I? I'm a boy.

RAYGO

Curious! I've never heard of a boy before. Where on Minoitaniga are you from?

HENRY

I'm not. I'm from Tunbridge Wells
...in England.

RAYGO

Where?

HENRY

My Uncle's lost his imagination. I thought I might find some here.

RAYGO

Don't be ridiculous. You're no match for the Voydarkatron!

HENRY

What's a Voydarkatron?

There is a roar in the distance. The little man freezes, suddenly on guard.

RAYGO

That, is a Voydarkatron. It feeds on imagination.

HENRY

That's silly, how can something eat imagination?

RAYGO

Very easily in fact! You see the Voydarkatron has a slobbering slimy trunk, that stretches over your face and sucks your brain out of your eye sockets.

Raygo makes a sucking noise in Henry's ear trying to scare him. Henry screws his face up in disgust.

HENRY

But if a Voydarkatron sucks out your imagination, how do you get it back?

RAYGO

Voydarkatron blood! Just one drop on the victim's tongue and their imagination is instantly restored.

Henry thinks about this for a moment.

HENRY

Do you think you could help me?

The little man bursts into laughter and starts to walk off, but he eventually stops and looks back astounded.

RAYGO

You're serious?

9 EXT. FOREST, MINOITANIGA - DAY

9

Raygo and Henry approach a old wooden SIGN that is stuck in a muddy PUDDLE in the middle of a small clearing.

It reads: Warning - Hungry Voydarkatrons ahead. Raygo pulls out a large NET from his bag and hands it to Henry.

RAYGO

Here take this.

He positions him behind a nearby tree.

RAYGO

When I distract the Voydarkatron, throw the net over him and I'll collect a drop of blood.

HENRY

But what if I miss?

RAYGO

You mustn't.

Henry swallows nervously as Raygo pulls out a sculpted HORN and placing his lips carefully around the end, blows hard. A perfect imitation of a Voydarkatron echoes into the forest.

RAYGO

That's their distress call, now get ready.

Within seconds Henry can hear a Voydarkatron bounding through the forest. He looks around the tree, trying to get a glimpse of it. Suddenly it appears. Henry is petrified by what he sees.

RAYGO

Come on little fellow this way.

As it approaches Raygo, its short fat trunk expands and vibrates as the most frightening gurgling growling noise comes out, spraying him with saliva.

RAYGO

Wait for it Henry.

Raygo starts backing up. The Voydarkatron thumps forward so that its back is almost turned to Henry.

RAYGO

One more step now, that's it, okay now Henry NOW!

Henry is about to throw the net when a human hand suddenly grabs his shoulder and pulls him around.

10 <u>INT. STUDY, HOUSE - DAY</u>

10

Geoffrey pulls Henry around to face him, snatching the knitted blanket out of the boy's hand.

GEOFFREY

I thought I told you to stay in your room!

He places it back over the arm chair.

HENRY

You don't understand. I have to save Raygo from the Voydarkatron.

Geoffrey spins around shaking his finger at Henry.

GEOFFREY

Stop this childish nonsense at once! Can't you see I'm trying to concentrate?

Henry peers around him to see a blank sheet of paper still in the typewriter and a pile of screwed up pieces of paper in and around the overflowing bin.

HENRY

But you haven't even written anything!

Geoffrey is stuck for words, his face turning red with embarrassment and anger.

GEOFFREY

Get out, get out, GET OUT!

He pushes the boy out of the room and locks the study door behind him. He leans against the door, a nervous wreck.

11

11 EXT. FOREST, MINOITANIGA - DAY

Henry runs back to the clearing to find the warning sign has been knocked over and the puddle gone. In its place are giant muddy VOYDARKARTON FOOT PRINTS.

He looks down to see he is standing in one of the giant imprints. SLIME sticks to the bottom of his shoe.

A strange groaning sound echoes through the forest. Further ahead, through the MISTY trees, is the silhouette of Raygo, swaying slightly from side to side.

HENRY

Raygo?

Henry runs over to him. He is moving very oddly.

HENRY

Raygo what's wrong?

Henry pulls him around by his shoulder. Two hollow black voids have replaced Raygo's eyes. DRIBBLE runs out of his open mouth. Horrified, Henry stumbles back in shock.

12 INT. HALLWAY, HOUSE - DAY

12

Henry falls against the wall. The framed picture of Geoffrey shaking hands with the Queen falls off the wall and SMASHES onto the wooden floor. The study door bursts open. Geoffrey rushes over to see the picture has been ruined.

GEOFFREY

What have you done? You idiot!

Geoffrey hits Henry across the face with the back of his hand. Henry holds his burning cheek with shock. His eyes well up.

GEOFFREY

Henry I ...

Geoffrey tries to touch Henry gently on the shoulder but he backs away and runs up the stairs slamming his bedroom door behind. Geoffrey is devastated.

12.1 INT. BEDROOM, HOUSE - EVENING

12.1

Henry is sitting in the middle of the bed clutching his knees up to his chest and his head dipped downwards. The door knocks.

GEOFFREY

Henry, I have some food for you.

Henry looks up at the door and sniffs, wiping the tears away from his cheek.

HENRY

Go away!

12.2 INT. LANDING, HOUSE - EVENING

12.2

Geoffrey drops his head with regret and solemnly walks away leaving a tray of food outside the door.

Moments later the landing lights go off.

12.3 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

12.3

The Elizabethan house is bathed in moonlight.

13 INT. GEOFFREY'S BEDROOM, HOUSE - DAWN

13

The ticking bedside clock reads 6:30 am. Geoffrey is snoring lightly. A distant door slams waking him suddenly. He sits up.

Geoffrey pulls aside the curtain to see Henry running down the garden and disappearing into the woods at the back of the house. He knocks on the glass.

GEOFFREY

Henry, come back here at once!

14 EXT. WOODS, HOUSE/FOREST, MINOITANIGA - DAY

14

In his dressing gown, Geoffrey enters the autumn woodland.

GEOFFREY

Henry? Where are you boy?

The normal English woodland sounds slowly become more exotic and unworldly. He looks up at the trees with unease.

Henry screams in the distance.

GEOFFREY

Henry?!

Geoffrey runs deeper into the forest.

15 <u>EXT. FOREST, MINOITANIGA - DAY</u>

15

Geoffrey comes into the clearing to see Henry dangling by his face from the Voydarkatron's trunk.

GEOFFREY

What on earth ... I mean ... good lord Henry!

He looks around the forest floor and picking up a large rock, hurls it at the creature with all of his strength.

GEOFFREY

Leave him alone you beast!

It hits the back of its head. The creature drops Henry who gasps for breath, rubbing his streaming red eyes.

GEOFFREY

Henry run!

Henry scrambles behind a large tree, as the Voydarkatron turns to face Geoffrey, who gulps and backs into a tree.

The Voydarkatron sizes him up before sucking the rock up into his trunk and then spitting it out at Geoffrey with an incredible force.

Geoffrey flinches to the right as the rock embeds itself into the tree trunk millimetres from his ear. Geoffrey faints.

The Voydarkatron turns back to find Henry has disappeared.

Henry waits nervously behind the large tree listening intently as the Voydarkatron eventually moves away. Henry cautiously peers round the tree to see his Uncle lying unconscious on the ground.

HENRY

(whispering loudly)
Uncle Geoffrey are you alright?

Geoffrey starts to come round and sitting up, looks over at his nephew as a large blob of saliva drops onto Henry's shoulder. Geoffrey's face fills with terror.

GEOFFREY

Henry behind you!

Henry whips round in horror only to be blasted sideways by the force of the Voydarkatron's roar. Henry tries desperately to scramble away, but the creature stomps forward towering over the boy.

Henry rolls onto his back, grabbing the edges of the Voydarkatron's trunk before it can attach itself to his face.

HENRY

Uncle Geoffrey help me!

Geoffrey struggles to his feet and with all his strength, snaps off a BRANCH from a fallen tree and charging at the creature.

Henry's arms are quickly loosing strength, as the creatures slimy inner trunk drops down to suck Henry's face.

At the very last moment, Geoffrey lances the splintered branch into the side of the Voydarkatron's head. It's body goes rigid, it's face confused. Geoffrey pulls Henry clear.

The creature stumbles backwards. Its eyes dilate as the giant beast topples lifelessly to the ground with an almighty thud, letting out its final breath.

Henry and Geoffrey stare in amazement.

The silence is broken by a groan from behind. Geoffrey and Henry spin round to see Raygo still swaying like a zombie.

HENRY

The blood!

Henry pulls away from his Uncle and cautiously approaches the Voydarkatron's carcass. He collects a drop of BLOOD onto his finger from the tip of the lanced tree branch and hurries back to Raygo, dripping a drop into his mouth.

Henry watches in amazement as the black voids in Raygo's eye sockets start to shrink leaving normal closed eyelids.

HENRY

Raygo?

He is unresponsive. Henry touches him gently. Raygo's eyes jolt open with alarm.

RAYGO

Help, help, I'm being attacked!

HENRY

(grabbing Raygo)
It's okay Raygo, its dead. Uncle
Geoffrey saved us!

Henry points out the Voydarkatron slumped lifelessly on the ground behind them. Raygo looks confused.

RAYGO

But that's impossible. How could your Uncle have saved us if he has no imagination?

Confused Henry turns to face his uncle to find he has no eyes.

16

16 INT. STUDY, HOUSE - NIGHT

Geoffrey wakes with fright, having been slumped over his typewriter. The type keys have made marks on his wrinkly cheek. He sits up, wincing, holding his back. He looks disorientated as he straightens his spectacles. Eventually he struggles to his feet.

17 INT. BEDROOM, HOUSE - NIGHT

17

Geoffrey quietly opens the door letting light from the landing spill into the room. Henry is fast asleep. An empty dinner plate sits on the wooden floor beside the bed.

Geoffrey sits down in the chair next to Henry. His heavy wrinkly eyes wander around the room as he realises that the world he was just dreaming about has been created from objects in Henry's bedroom - The decorative horn above the door, the ETCHING OF AN ELEPHANT AT WAR on the wall, a couple of old TEA CHESTS in the corner with 'Gum tree rattles from Raygo & Company' stamped on the side and the silver SLUG TRAILS still running across the floor boards.

He nods to himself before stroking the boy's head, getting up and quietly leaving the room.

18 INT. STUDY, HOUSE - NIGHT

18

Geoffrey sits down at his desk and types: "Henry Bramble was an extraordinary boy with an incredible imagination." He pauses to review it briefly. A warm smile forms on his face. He continues to type faster and faster. The sound of typing keys echo around the house.

19 EXT./INT. PORCH/HALLWAY - DAY

19

Henry's MOTHER pulls the doorbell looking nervous. Geoffrey eventually answers. He is still dressed in his pyjamas with a tea cosy on his head, sweating and out of breath. Henry's Mother is dumbstruck.

MOTHER

Uncle Geoffrey, are you alright?

GEOFFREY

Yes quite alright!

She looks past Geoffrey to see an upturned chair in the middle of the hallway.

MOTHER

(concerned)

Where's Henry?

Henry comes running down the stairs with excitement also wearing a tea cosy on his head and waving a wooden ruler around as if it was a sword.

HENRY

Quick, the guardians of Minoitaniga are going to...

Henry looks through the doorway.

HENRY

Mother!

He runs past Geoffrey and hugs her with a big grin.

GEOFFREY

Would you mind awfully if Henry could visit again?

She is speechless. Geoffrey hands her Henry's suitcase with a warm smile and ruffles the boy's hair.

GEOFFREY

Have a think about it.

He watches fondly as Henry and his mother walk back up the driveway towards their car.

GEOFFREY (V.O.)

Over one remarkable evening with one exceptional little boy, I learned to imagine all over again.

As they reach the top of the driveway, Henry turns and waves a final goodbye to his Great Uncle. Geoffrey waves back before heading back inside.

THE END.