

Walt Disney's Grendel

[An executive on the telephone.]

Hey Walt... You're not Walt? Well, where's Walt? Oh, Forest Lawn... Do you have his number there? Oh, I see. So who's in charge now? Bob Iger? Isn't he the guy who bought Pixar? And he got Indiana Jones and Star Wars too? This should be right up his street then. Think a Pixar animation of Indiana Jones. But with Dragons. And Danes.

Hey Bob? Eugene here. Eugene Slobb. I'm the guy who made the animé version of *Emmanuelle*. Yeah, *Emmanuelle in Coney Island*, that's right.

But forget all that. I got this great idea for a Toon for you. I read this book called *Beowulf*, and sure it needs work but all the basics are there. But here's the twist: it's all seen through the eyes of the monster. Imagine *Godzilla* if it was narrated by *Godzilla*, plagued by all these irritating little people, and however hard he stamped on them, there was always more of them. Nightmare!

But I digress. Park that one in your Sequels Department. This one is all about this monster who lives in a swamp, guy called Grendel. OK, I know what you're thinking, but look, it worked for "Shrek", didn't it? Way I see it, the monster is weird but cute, in a shaggy sort of way. Ugly but beautiful inside, know what I mean? That way we got the PC market. And anyway he loves his mother.

I hear him voiced by Woody Allen, cos he's got this existential angst, but if that's a bit wrinkly for you, you could have Ben Affleck, I suppose.

So Grendel's in this swamp and we can make that kinda cute with singing frogs'n'stuff - comedy reptiles always go down well. His mother hasn't got much to say for herself in the book, but she's warm and huggy in the background. I think we can profitably expand the role and get someone like Judi Dench to VO - she's big since she got BSA Oscar. And she can sort of sing badly in a cute way too.

Cos Grendel's a dreamer, see? He may look like a monster, but he's got the soul of a poet. (There's a bit of Quasimodo here - remember we did that a few years back?) I think he should have a solo:

When you wish upon a star
Makes no difference if you are
Shaggy, squat, with low esteem
You deserve a dream

But his mother has to give him the "Stick to your Own Kind" message. Maybe we can do a flashback about how she had a disastrous affair with a Yeti. And she gets the No Place Like Home number. (Comedy frogs as backing vocals?)

You need the lair necessities
The simple lair necessities
A fire, and some vittles and some bone
Look for the lair necessities
And then you can regress at ease
And one day have a lair of your own

Anyway, Grendel gets eaten up with jealousy by these humans around him, and he creeps up on them to watch them singing and dancing and stuff at night. I see this as a big production number - and he gets carried away by the music - real jazzy stuff - and does this duet with Hrothgar (head honcho, cool dude - maybe Kristofferson? - Shame Louis ain't around). And it goes something like:

Oh-be-doo
I want to be like you
I want to write like you
Recite like you
Swear black is white like you

And during the song Grendel sees the beautiful Wealthew (OK, I know it's a crap name and no-one can pronounce it - how about Wellie?) and he falls in love but she's married to Hrothgar who's real oold, so she's not getting any, and she's drawn to Grendel who's cute in a shaggy sort of way like I said. So you got this conflict of suppressed desire and should they get it on or should they respect the marriage vows. Heart-warming. Who d'you want? Gwyneth Paltrow? Kate Blanchett? Kate Winslet? They're all up for this sort of stuff and virtually interchangeable.

So Grendel is mooning around in the woods (that's next to the swamp) one day and trips over a tree root and falls down a deep hole, and lands on a dragon. Now this is a very old and cynical guy, and he's sort of minded to eat Grendel,

so he sings her a hypnosis song to send him to sleep - all psychedelic eyes and head stuff, right? I think the song goes something like:

Trust in gold
Just in gold
Gold is never growing old
You can keep it in the ground
Sit upon a mighty mound
Trust in gold
Just in gold
Cos gold is something you can hold

And Grendel's about to go to sleep, and be eaten, but his mother makes a rare appearance and bites the d's tail, and G. escapes.

I think there are comedy Danes, too - everyone knows that Danes get drunk, so they should go on guard and fall over a lot. They're led by this guy Hrothulf, who's a villain but not very good at it hence comedy. Did you see that movie they made of the Asterix comics? That's ancient French, not Danes, but what the hell, they're all the same over there, Europe's just a bitty place. So it'll be like the Asterix movies, only funny. But I digress. These Danes should have one of those close harmony numbers, I think. Something like:

The irrelevant Dane patrol
Our behaviour's very droll
Though we should fall out
We fall about
Cos we're out of control
The irrelevant Dane patrol
We love our alcohol
When a gallon of mead
Is what we need
We drink it from the bowl

And Grendel runs rings round them, and eats a few in a tasteful, funny sort of way, to get the audience on his side.

Then there's your villains. I mentioned Hrothulf, who's mainly for laughs. But the main one - I think we're talking Andy Serkiss here or Gary Oldman - is a royal pain in the ass called Beowulf - all biceps and moral purity - you know,

body fascist stuff - and he bullies the old king into wanting to kill Grendel cos you can't have humans fraternising with monsters.

I know what you're asking yourself. Where's the gay angle? How are we going to bring in the Pink Pound? Well, the way I see it, this guy Beowulf may be the villain, but he's hot to trot. Oiled muscles, pecs and abs to die for, dinky little fur posing pouch... what? Not real fur, obviously. And maybe he can have a sidekick called Robin or something, and they can sleep together in a cave, but tastefully, in shadow. Look, as long as he's horny, the queer market will lap it up and to hell with right and wrong. And if they're rooting for the Bad Guy, that gives us Ambiguity and Moral Complexity, and straightway puts us in Oscar territory.

And so Grendel has to fight this fight with Gary Oldman, but he doesn't want to cos he's basically a peaceful sort of type. But he's doing it, and he's doing real bad, but then the dragon appears out of the sky, with Mrs. Grendel riding him cos they've got this kinda comedy SM relationship going, and then Wellie decides that she can't love Hrothgar any more cos he tried to get Grendel killed, and anyway he can't get it up any more, and so the dragon sweeps down, and picks him up and she gets on too, and they all fly off to find a new dawn in - I don't know - Xanadu? OK, so Xanadu's in copyright, we'll figure it out. It can be Palm Beach for all it matters.

So there it is. Finito.

I think it's a humdinger. Whaddya say, Bob? Bob? Bob? Are you there, Bob?