

Disney  
TIM BURTON'S  
THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

THE  
FULL  
FILM SCRIPT

Production Art, Song Lyrics,  
Directors' Commentary





Jack starts to exit into the wilderness. Sally steps out from behind the tombstone, then she looks up at the off-screen cliff. Sally turns, then she looks down sadly and holds her hands across her heart.

SALLY

Jack, I know how you feel.

Sally walks and exits. Sally staggers between the tombstones, then she drops down to her knees. Sally, kneeling, looks at three tombstones, which have various herbs growing in front of them. The signs on the tombstones read: henbane, witch hazel, deadly nightshade. Sally starts to pick some of the deadly nightshade plants.

INT. DR. FINKELSTEIN'S HOME/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sally drops the nightshade plants into a jar, which sits on a shelf. The lettering on the jar reads: Deadly Nightshade. Sally puts the jar on a shelf. Dr. Finkelstein's shadow crosses on the wall above a staircase. Sally turns and stares at the shadow.

DR. FINKELSTEIN

Sally!

Dr. Finkelstein enters as he rolls down the staircase on his wheelchair.

DR. FINKELSTEIN (CONT'D)

You've come back.

Sally stares at Dr. Finkelstein.

SALLY

I had to.

DR. FINKELSTEIN

For this.

Dr. Finkelstein's arm enters as he holds up Sally's arm.

SALLY

Yes.



Camera moves past Sally to Dr. Finkelstein, who sits in his wheelchair and stares at her.

DR. FINKELSTEIN

Shall we, then?

Sally walks up the staircase. Dr. Finkelstein then follows her up the staircase.

INT. DR. FINKELSTEIN'S HOUSE/LABORATORY - NIGHT

Camera dollies past some test tubes and tables in the laboratory.

DR. FINKELSTEIN

That's twice this month you've slipped deadly . . .

Camera continues to dolly to reveal Sally, strapped to an operating table, and Dr. Finkelstein, who sits beside her in his wheelchair. Dr. Finkelstein has sewn Sally's arm back onto her body.

DR. FINKELSTEIN (CONT'D)

. . . nightshade into my tea and run off.

Sally, strapped to the operating table, smirks at Dr. Finkelstein, who sits in the wheelchair.

SALLY

Three times.

Dr. Finkelstein leans menacingly toward Sally.

DR. FINKELSTEIN

You're mine, you know. I made you with my own two hands.

Sally gestures at Dr. Finkelstein.

SALLY

You can make other creations. I'm restless. I can't help it.

DR. FINKELSTEIN

It's a phase, my dear. It'll pass.

Dr. Finkelstein bites down on a thread as he finishes sewing on Sally's arm. Sally looks at him.

SALLY (CONT'D)  
(slurps soup)

Mmm. See? Scrumptious.

Sally lowers the bowl of soup onto the table. Past Sally, standing and putting the bowl of soup down on the table, to Dr. Finkelstein, who sits in his wheelchair and looks thoughtfully at Sally. Dr. Finkelstein looks down excitedly at the bowl of soup. Dr. Finkelstein lifts the bowl of soup and begins to drink from it. Sally smiles at Dr. Finkelstein.

Dr. Finkelstein slurps soup.

EXT. HALLOWEEN TOWN SQUARE - DUSK

The Mayor, with his pessimistic face turned, lies atop his hearse and stares up despairingly at the sky. The vampires sit on the running board of the hearse and the witches sit in the cab.

MAYOR  
(pessimistic face)

Did anyone think to dredge the lake?

VAMPIRE  
(sighs)

This morning.

ZERO (OFF)  
(barks)

Small Witch, sitting in the hearse driver's seat, looks at Big Witch, who sits in the passenger seat.

BIG WITCH

Hear that?

SMALL WITCH

What?

Big Witch takes off her hat so that she can hear more clearly.

BIG WITCH

Shh.



Zero barks.

The Mayor sits up as he hears Zero barking, then the Mayor's head turns to his optimistic face. One of the vampires stands up.

ANOTHER VAMPIRE

Zero.

Looking through a barred gate to Zero, who enters and flies between the bars in the gate.

Zero barks.

Jack enters driving a Christmas Town snowmobile toward the gate. A huge bag, filled with Christmas memorabilia, is on the snowmobile. The bars on the gate open and Jack drives through the gate.

(Overlapping, indistinct excited chatter and cheering continues under following scene)

KID

Jack's back

Zero flies and exits. Camera cranes down as some creatures enter and excitedly greet Jack. Jack drives the snowmobile across the town square, camera dollying with him, to reveal the Mayor, who stands atop the hearse. Creatures run excitedly alongside the snowmobile.

MAYOR  
(optimistic face)

Where have you been?

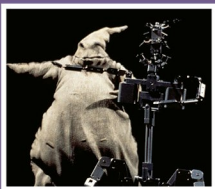
High angle past the Mayor, standing on the roof of the hearse, to Jack, who sits in the snowmobile and gestures at him.

JACK

Call a town meeting and I'll tell everyone all about it.

The Mayor's face switches to its pessimistic side. The Mayor stares down at Jack.





## FROM PAPER TO PUPPET

Once a character design was fully approved, the drawings were handed off to sculptors, who were responsible for converting the two-dimensional illustrations into three-dimensional forms. The first step was to sculpt the character, from head to toe, in oil-based clay. "The oil-based clay is the easiest because it's very versatile and can be smoothed out with alcohol," explained Sculptor Greg Dykstra. After the sculpt was approved, a plaster mold was made so identical forms could be replicated.

To make the body, the character's custom-made steel armature was placed into the mold. Liquefied foam latex was then injected to surround the armature and fill in any gaps. After the foam was cured, the body was carefully removed from the mold and taken to the fabrication department. "From that point on, the puppet belongs to my crew," Character Fabrication Supervisor Bonita DeCarlo said. After cleaning up any imperfections from the molding process, "we put on the different paint jobs, or clothing, hair, fur . . . everything else that gives the puppet its full character, and then it goes out for animation."

The movie had about sixty individual characters in all, Director Henry Selick said. "We made as many as three to four duplicates of many of those characters so the total number of puppets on this film is closer to 200."



JACK (CONT'D)  
Doctor. Thank you for coming.

Jack picks up a book.

JACK (CONT'D)  
We need some of these.

Jack's hands hold open the book to a picture of Santa Claus, who flies across the sky with reindeer pulling his sleigh. Jack's finger points at the reindeer.

DR. FINKELSTEIN  
Hmm. Their construction should be exceedingly simple, I think.

Low angle past Dr. Finkelstein to the Mayor, standing atop the podium with his optimistic face turned forward, and Jack.

MAYOR  
(optimistic face)  
How horrible our Christmas will be.

Jack waves his finger at the Mayor.

No.  
JACK

The Mayor switches to his pessimistic face.

How jolly.  
JACK (CONT'D)

Oh. How jolly our Christmas will be.  
MAYOR  
(pessimistic face)

A bone, a stone, and a baseball enter and hit the Mayor.

Oo! Oh! (growls)  
MAYOR (CONT'D)  
(pessimistic face)



INT. DR. FINKELSTEIN'S HOUSE/LABORATORY - NIGHT

Igor's hands hold a lamp. Camera moves back slightly to reveal Igor and Dr. Finkelstein, who sits in his wheelchair. Dr. Finkelstein pulls on a lever.

Dr. Finkelstein sits and Igor stands. Some reindeer skeletons are lying on a table. Huge electrodes shoot electricity into the reindeer skeletons. The reindeer skeletons float up into the air.

Dr. Finkelstein and Igor look up at the reindeer skeletons, which float up into the air. Camera moves in, off Igor and the reindeer skeletons, on Dr. Finkelstein, who flops down on the table. Camera tilts down to reveal the table and a skeleton head, which is on it. Dr. Finkelstein picks up the skeleton head and begins to clean it.

Scene wipes right to left in a clock-shaped pattern.

INT. CHRISTMAS TOWN FACTORY - DAY

An elf rubs down the side of Santa's sleigh. Camera moves back to reveal more elves, who are cleaning Santa's sleigh. Camera holds as reindeer enter and cross.

An elf pushes a Jack-in-the-box head down into its box.

INT. EVIL JACK-IN-THE-BOX - DAY

Looking up out of the Jack-in-the-box at the elf, who peers down into it. The elf closes the Jack-in-the-box's lid, obscuring himself.

The lid of the box opens to reveal the clown. The clown puts a Jack-o'-lantern down inside the box, then he starts to close the lid.

EXT. HALLOWEEN TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Looking over a table, with several evil Jack-in-the-boxes on it, to the Clown, who looks at them.

INT. CHRISTMAS TOWN FACTORY - DAY

An elf uses a machine to fill up stockings, which roll past him on a conveyor belt.



EXT. HALLOWEEN TOWN - DAY

A snake is to the right as the saxophone player looks through some skulls. The saxophone player puts a skull into the mouth of the snake, but the snake bites down on the saxophone player.

INT. CHRISTMAS TOWN FACTORY - DAY

An elf uses a crane to lift a box of toys into the air. The crane swings the bag of toys.

Scene wipes right to left in a clock-shaped pattern.

EXT. HALLOWEEN TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Jack stands and faces toward a pulley, which lowers a coffin toward him.

## MAKING CHRISTMAS

(Part 2)

*This time, this time, this time, this time*

*Making Christmas*

*Making Christmas*

*La la la*

*It's almost here and we can't wait*

*So ring the bells and celebrate*

*'Cause when the full moon starts to climb*

*We'll all sing out*

*"It's Christmastime!"*

