

“Culled in Clay”

Outline

By Byron Dunbar

The following is a summary for a short film. A full script can be written by yours truly if requested, or passed on to other writers if it is optioned.

PREMISE:

Log-Line: A father who disapproves of his son’s artistic ambitions tries destroying the young man’s sculptures but ends up destroyed himself when he becomes one.

Wish List: *Culled in Clay* is closest in tone and content to 1960s *Twilight Zone* stories. It’s also similar to Hideshi Hino comics in that it stars a disturbed artist. And like in old horror radio shows like *Lights Out* and *Suspense*, this tale is told from the perspective of the victim.

Possibilities: I can tell a personal story about the struggle between a young artist and a domineering parent while also delivering a slow-burning, psychological horror story.

Audience Appeal: *The Twilight Zone* (the program which this story is closest to) remains popular with viewers both young and old. It’s also considered the finest example of anthology television, so it’s the perfect series to model this story on.

Story Challenges and Problems: If the father is changed into a sculpture at the story’s climax (the most obvious story beat to place the transformation) it won’t truly be a horror story; it will be a drama featuring a fantasy-horror conclusion. But if the father is changed into a sculpture early in the story, he will be unable to function as an active protagonist. Moreover, if the son is the protagonist, how will I convey the horror of being turned into an immobile statue?

Designing Principal: The son makes a clay sculpture of his father that represents how he envisions his ideal parent. Through unexplained magic realist means, the more love the son puts into making the sculpture, the more his father turns to clay and the more the statue becomes real. Therefore, the father does not fully transform until the story’s climax. This solves the previously cited problems by utilizing the transformation as a ticking clock device, allowing the father to remain a proactive protagonist whilst conveying the horror of his situation.

Best Character: The father’s name is David, while his son’s name is Alec. Both are interesting characters for different reasons, so it will take much deliberation to decide who the correct protagonist is. On the one hand, Alec is shunned by those around him, discarded by society at large, and constantly berated by his father. These qualities make Alec sympathetic, but on the other hand, the story concludes with Alec willingly turning people into sculptures to either

destroy them or bend them to his will. Therefore, presenting him as a sympathetic protagonist who emerges victorious could send the wrong message to viewers.

Meanwhile, David is relatable for different reasons. Like Alec, David was once an artist (specifically a musician) but unlike his son, he gave up his ambitions for his career. Currently, I've found myself in a similar position. I have also had to deal with people who disregard their long-term responsibilities in the name of art. Both these factors make David relatable to me, and if the writer of a story finds a character relatable, this increases the likelihood that the audience will as well. Furthermore, the story shows how David's treatment of his son ultimately motivates Alec to destroy him. Thus, following the story from David's perspective will teach the audience a more positive lesson. Specifically, they will learn to be careful how about they treat others, for that is what creates monsters like Alec, making David the best protagonist for this story.

David's Psychological Weakness: David must learn to balance practicality with passion.

David's Moral Weakness: David needs to guide his son with kindness and understanding.

Story World: This story's time period is indistinct, but it appears to be set at some vague point in the twentieth century; likely the nineteen-seventies. Furthermore, the story takes place in a rural mining community. It's built almost entirely over the rocky caves where the miners go to work. But by the end of the story, Alec has both literally and figuratively converted this world of rock into a world of clay.

David's Desire: David wants to convince his son to accept his responsibilities toward others.

Central Conflict: When Alec works on a sculpture of his ideal father, this sculpture slowly becomes flesh and blood while David himself turns to clay. As the story progresses we learn that Alec is inadvertently replacing the entire community with his own sculpted world. David and Alec compete over which reality will continue to exist.

David's Main Opponent: As David is our protagonist, Alec is his main opponent. Alec wants to continue working on his art, even though David says he's neglecting his responsibilities to do so.

Moral Problem: How do you balance your personal passions with your responsibilities to your community?

Theme: Living a happy life lies within one's ability to balance their responsibilities with their passions.

Basic Action: David's first plan is to try understanding Alec. But ultimately, he decides that the only solution is to confront his son.

Character Change: As the story ends in confrontation rather than understanding, it arcs on David's inability to change, and thus, his own destruction.

CHARACTERS:

David –

After his wife passed away, David gave up his dreams of becoming a jazz musician to work full-time in the mines. Now David is practical to a fault and lives a joyless life. As it was all to support Alec, this makes David bitter toward him. As such, he is often narrow-minded and condescending in dealing his son. Nevertheless, that bitterness doesn't stop David from putting his absolute all into his career. It pays off, and by the time Alec reaches college, David now runs the mines.

By that point, David's also saved up enough to finance Alec's education. This becomes a source of conflict between them, because in his second year, Alec was kicked out of college. As that's the only post-secondary institution in the area, David tries convincing Alec to find a career that won't require as much education. Alec refuses, desiring only to work on his sculptures.

Although David is jealous that his son goes on creating art (especially given that he had to give up his dreams as an artist to support him), he tries finding a practical application for Alec's passion. David suggests to Alec that he should look into selling his work. But Alec refuses to "commercialize his vision." Still, David insists that Alec needs a steady income. He also points out that spending all his time on art has impeded Alec's social skills to an unhealthy degree, which contributed to the problems he had in college. These are both valid points, but instead of trying to convince his son of them through a loving, reasoned argument, David resorts to berating Alec. Ultimately, this proves disastrous for both of them.

Doctor Hwang –

Doctor Hwang is the sole medical doctor in the community in which *Culled in Clay* takes place. Prior to settling there, he was a world traveler, earning various medical degrees (his major being in psychology) and gleaning vast reserves of knowledge and insights into human nature.

While Hwang's a general practitioner, David specifically hires his services as a psychiatrist to examine Alec. In general, Hwang uses his knowledge to help his patients sort out their flaws, achieve their life goals, and treat people right. Yet Hwang's strengths are also his weaknesses. For Hwang's worldliness sometimes leads him to direct attention away from patients and towards his own self-aggrandizement.

Early in the story, Hwang tries convincing Alec to put his art aside and live a one-hundred percent practical—yet one-hundred percent *meaningless*—life. Worse yet, the session soon derails into a treatise on how smart Hwang considers himself to be. Alec realizes that Hwang is just showing off, which makes him reluctant to listen to anything the man has to say. As a result, Alec walks out on his session, much to David's chagrin.

Jordan –

Jordan is a girl from Alec's former college who is initially repulsed by him. She has lofty moral standards that she not only encourages others to live by, but demands they live by. She's always making sure that everyone is doing right by each other but will launch crusades to destroy others' lives if she feels they're stepping on peoples' toes—especially hers. Although Jordan is frequently promoting justice (and believes she always is), just as often she attacks people who don't deserve it because she either misunderstands them or has set her standards too high.

The chief example of that occurred before this story begins, back when Alec attended college with Jordan. There, she launched a successful campaign to get him expelled. It's never explicitly stated what exactly Alec did to bring this down upon himself, but nonetheless, this rejection is one of the triggering points that has caused Alec to retreat fully into his artwork.

At the beginning of this story, Jordan starts seeing David, supposedly to help him rehabilitate his son. As time goes on, Jordan admits this is because she is “starting to care” about Alec, which she admits confuses her. In the final quarter of the story, it's revealed that these changes are the result of Alec making a sculpture of Jordan, in which he reinvents her as his ideal partner: loving and devoted. This is bad news for David, as this means Jordan is an opponent who seeks to prevent David from stopping Alec.

Alec –

Alec has old-fashioned values which he uses as the basis to make many criticisms of the society in which he lives. He feels his community is judgmental, hurts others (or more importantly, hurts *him*) and never learns from their mistakes. In particular, Alec considers David to be a self-obsessed, superficial drone who seeks to suck the joy from his life. Meanwhile, Alec views Hwang as a conman with no genuine interest in him, who instead, uses him as a sounding board to glorify himself. Conversely, Alec actually holds Jordan in high esteem, given her strength, confidence and strong values. But he also views her as squandering her abilities as a leader to attack those he considers “innocent,” although he's really just concerned with her attacking him.

While some of Alec's criticisms are valid, David is mainly concerned that Alec is cutting himself off from reality and wants him to become independent. Even Jordan makes legitimate points to Alec about how he should conduct himself to earn acceptance from others. Rather than listening, Alec escapes into his artwork to create his own world where all these perceived negative values are inversed. In Alec's work, his community is generally kind, open-minded, and accepting. There, his father is supportive of him, Hwang listens to him, and Jordan *adores* him.

Alec believes that sculpting full time is an opportunity to live in that world forever. The problem is that the world Alec envisions comes at the cost of the good qualities that he refuses to see within his community as it is. Alec's too self-centered to be convinced of that. At least until he experiences his idea of “perfection” in the story's epilogue...

STORY SUMMARY:

In the opening scene, we see a happy young man named David performing jazz at the local pub. A group of miners are there watching him, having just finished work. Through their scuttlebutt, we learn that David is a former miner himself, who recently quit that job because he was offered a less well-paying (but more creatively satisfying) position playing music at the pub. He's able to do this because his wife recently received a lucrative position overseeing the construction work in their community.

David is called aside during his break and receives some bad news. There was an accident at a construction site and his wife was killed. David goes home to see his son, a five-year-old boy named Alec, and explains the situation. Alec goes into shock, while David deliberates upon how he won't be able to support his son on a pub musician's salary. Instead, David goes back to his former boss at the mines and begs for his old job back. The boss grins in satisfaction and rehires David, remarking that he told him that he'd "regret leaving." We cut to Alec, who sits in his room fiddling with playdough. He remains in a state of shock as he molds the playdough into the shape of a woman who might be his mother.

Fifteen years later, we see an older David supervising work at the mines. We learn that his boss has died of old age, and through more than a decade of hard work and dedication, David has taken over his position. Despite all that, David looks haggard and bitter; hardly the happy young man we saw in the opening scene.

After work, David heads home. Like all the buildings in this community, it is made from rocks, but there is a strange concrete structure nearby, which turns out to be Alec's art studio. David knocks on the door, and the now twenty-year-old Alec unlocks it, looking annoyed. He says he's busy working on his sculptures. David replies that it's time for Alec to go see a general practitioner named Doctor Hwang for his weekly therapy session. Alec sees Hwang as insincere, but David insists that these sessions are mandatory, especially following Alec's recent expulsion from college.

Reluctantly, Alec allows David to take him to Hwang's clinic. After checking in with the receptionist, David reads a magazine in the waiting room while Alec sees Hwang in his private office. During the session, Hwang questions Alec on why he insists on doing nothing but working on his sculptures. "When I sculpt, I mold a world where I am accepted," Alec explains. "Where I am respected. Loved, even. A world where there really are happy endings. Where people make mistakes but *learn* from them. I want to spend my life creating that world. I want it to be my career, so I can spend each day in the world as I wish it was rather than the world as it is." Hwang explains to Alec that expecting to have a career making these sculptures is foolish, and that he's running away from his real responsibilities. Hwang goes on to discuss how he's

seen people like Alec before in his travels, and the conversation switches from Alec and his problems to how worldly and sophisticated Hwang considers himself to be.

Alec grows frustrated and walks out of Hwang's office. David follows Alec outside, trying to talk him into returning to the session. When Alec ignores his father, David grabs him by the shoulders, and attempts to force him back into the clinic. Suddenly, a twenty-year-old girl shows up and tells David that the conflict's "not worth it." Her presence surprises both Alec and David; both recognize her. David unhands Alec and lets him scamper off. As he leaves, Alec looks ashamed and deeply uncomfortable; he refuses to even make eye-contact with this newcomer.

Once Alec is gone, a conversation follows between David and the girl. During this discussion, we learn that her name is Jordan. David asks her what she's doing here, and how she even knew Alec had an appointment at the clinic. After all, she's the one who got Alec kicked out of college. Jordan doesn't answer. Instead, she remarks that she's starting to feel "concerned for Alec," although she admits she doesn't know why. David says he feels the same way because "he's focusing on art to the exclusion of everything else." Jordan criticizes David for being "too abrasive" with Alec, and David expresses confusion. "I don't remember you being so...caring, before," he remarks. Jordan just laughs sweetly, and ultimately, the two go off and have a cup of coffee together, while they discuss other ways of reaching this troubled young man.

Meanwhile, Alec arrives back at his studio. It's here that we see his sculptures for the first time. They're each life size and are molded from clay. Alec looks at each one, boiling with frustration, until he happens upon sculptures of what appears to be a family. The "mother" sculpture resembles Jordan (albeit only vaguely) and amongst this family of sculptures, there is an empty space, implying that one is missing. Alec goes into a rage, believing that his father somehow got into his studio and confiscated his "most sacred sculpture." He takes hold of some clay, quickly molds it into a rough likeness of David's face. Then Alec starts berating the sculpted face he's made, although much of what he says makes little sense: "I'm twenty now," Alec seethes. "Ostensibly, I'm still young. Yet everything I once took comfort in has long since wilted and died. Or worse yet, it has been appropriated by the elite. By the order, by the hierarchies. By *you*. You remain the same as always, while I remain the perpetual outcast. Shunned for new reasons, I'll grant you. Yet shunned all the same. This time without my comforts...save for art. And you would take that away from me?" The scene concludes with Alec deciding to continue working on this new sculpture of his father, to mold a body for it. "You'll be my new sacred sculpture," Alec hisses. "You'll be the father who understands."

We cut back to David and Jordan at the coffee shop, where she's just convinced David that the correct thing to do is to encourage Alec to use his artistic talents to go into a practical line of work. She suggests architecture, which makes David uncomfortable for reasons that are lost on Jordan. David excuses himself from the conversation and says he'll "try to find something practical for Alec to sink his teeth into."

When David arrives back home, he tries entering Alec's studio, but finds that the door is locked. Upset, David knocks loudly. When Alec answers the door, David initially tries convincing him to try making clay pottery to sell in the market, but Alec pays no attention to his father's suggestion. Instead, he yells at David for "stealing the sculpture" he was working on. This derails the conversation, and David begins screaming at Alec about how he has no idea what he's talking about. Alec doesn't believe David, and tries slamming the door in his face, but David grabs the door, throws it open, and charges into the studio. He opens his mouth to bellow out something, when he notices the sculpture Alec is working on. It's a kindly version of David, and while it's crude and unfinished, it has the beginnings of a full body now. David goes quiet for a moment. Then in a very unnerved tone, he says, "It looks like me. Only..."

"Only *kind*?" sneers Alec.

That angers David, and he lifts his hand to point aggressively at Alec, but what David sees shocks him into silence. It appears that the tip of David's finger has turned to clay. Alec doesn't notice, and stares at his father in confusion. "What?" he asks. David doesn't reply. Instead, he hides his hand within his coat and excuses himself. Outside, David looks at the tip of his finger once more. He's certain it's turned to clay. "But that's impossible," he thinks.

David decides to get Doctor Hwang to access the situation. When David arrives at the clinic, Hwang dismisses Alec's concerns without even looking at his finger, concluding that David is merely "under stress." David forces Hwang to look at his finger and asks him what he sees. Hwang is disturbed and admits that "some kind of growth" has appeared on David's finger. David asks for further clarification, but Hwang admits he's not sure what the growth is. David flies into a rage and demands that Hwang give him a better explanation. Feeling pressured, Hwang reaffirms that the growth is "likely the result of stress" due to increased strain between him and his son. Hwang advises David to try being more understanding of Alec, and if he does so, "the, er...the growth will recede." David accepts Hwang's explanation, and leaves the clinic.

In an effort to smooth things over with his son at breakfast the next morning, David tells Alec that he wants to take him to the market later to try selling his artwork. Alec makes a snide remark about how, "Oh, is that what you did with the one you took?" David looks annoyed, but successfully represses this anger. That actually motivates Alec to grow somewhat more cooperative, and he agrees to perhaps try selling his work. He heads into his studio with David to choose some marketable sculptures.

David notices that Alec has also started work on a "kind" version of Doctor Hwang, but David's eye is mainly drawn to the sculpted family we saw earlier, the one with a missing member. David compliments Alec on these sculptures, and remarks upon how they resemble Jordan's family. Alec just shakes his head in disbelief. David lets it go, and says, "Anyway, these're the nicest ones; want to load 'em into the caravan?" Alec refuses. "These sculptures are special," Alec insists. "And you already pawned off *one* of them." David groans and tells Alec to

“stop talking nonsense” then nods toward another family of sculptures. “What about these?” David asks. “The ones that look like the Johnsons.”

Alec refuses, saying that those ones are also special to him, as he’s been trying to remold the Johnsons into the “perfect family.” David loses his temper again, so Alec agrees to load the sculptures of the Johnson family into David’s caravan. Alec also loads some additional unfinished sculptures into the caravan, but these are ones that he clearly didn’t much heart into. Alec hopes to sell the unfinished sculptures at the market.

Upon arriving at the market, patrons only show interest in the sculptures of the Johnsons, and Alec refuses to sell them. “I have no particular desire to debase my art for the masses,” he barks at a potential customer. “These are the same parties, the same *elite*, who would reject me, shun me, *curse* me—if not for my skill. This is the nature of man, and I don’t sculpt for man. I sculpt to *escape* man.” Most of the patrons just burst out laughing at Alec’s absurd statement, but David reacts differently: he flies into a rage. Without thinking, David uses the brute strength he’s built up working in the mines to lift the sculptures of the Johnson family over his head. Then David smashes them all to bits on rocky ground. “I hate you...I *hate* you...” whines Alec, running from the marketplace with tears in his eyes.

David starts after Alec, when screams from the crowd distract him. “The Johnsons!” somebody cries. “The Johnsons!” David looks confused and turns around. A crowd of people are standing around a pile of rubble and dust and are screaming in horror. David looks confused until he notices something horrifying. This crowd is surrounding a *separate* pile of rubble from the one that’s near David’s caravan...the one that David himself created by smashing Alec’s sculptures of the Johnson family. David grows unnerved as he heads back to his caravan and makes his way back home.

Once he gets there, he goes to Alec’s studio and lifts his hand to try opening the door but *screams!* His entire hand has turned to clay! Worse yet, the clay also seems to have spread down his arm. David tries to open the door with his other hand but finds that Alec’s locked it once more. David calls out to son to, “Open the door, we need to talk!” But inside his studio, Alec just continues working on his sculpture of David. When David grows angry at being ignored and starts berating his son, Alec screams “*LEAVE ME ALONE!*” Then he abruptly stops working on the David sculpture, and turns his attention to working on the sculpture of Doctor Hwang.

Outside, David continues screaming in rage at Alec, before falling to his knees, begging to be let in. “There’s something about your sculpting...I think it’s *doing* something to me...” David weeps. When Alec doesn’t reply, David takes a moment to compose himself. “That can’t be happening, it *can’t*...” he repeats to himself.

David gets up onto his feet and breaks into a run. He doesn’t stop running until he arrives at Doctor Hwang’s clinic. The secretary says that David will “need an appointment today” but when David shows her his clay hand she’s too shocked to stop David from forcing his way into

Hwang's office. There, Hwang is sitting in his desk, looking deeply uncomfortable. What's even more curious is that Hwang doesn't react with shock when he sees David's hand. If anything, he just looks resigned. David doesn't notice; he's too concerned with his own problems. "You've got to help me," he pleads, staring at his clay hand.

"I...I'm not sure I'm, uh, in the position, the position to do so..." stutters Hwang, sweat trickling down his brow. David demands an explanation. Hwang tells David that if he'll just sit down and speak to him rationally, he'll receive one. David bursts into rage again, and with his flesh-and-blood hand, overturns Hwang's desk. Once he does so, David's rage turns to horror. He sees that Hwang's feet—as well as most of his legs—have turned to clay, forcing him to sit in his chair. "I told reception not to let anyone in..." sighs Hwang. "Not until I figured out what's going on...but at least I know I'm not mad. We're afflicted with the same disease."

"It's not a disease!" cries David. "It's Alec, something to do with his sculptures! When I smashed the ones of the Johnsons in the marketplace today, they turned to *dust!*"

"The, er, the sculptures...I...?" sputters Hwang.

"*NO!* The Johnsons themselves!"

"What...you mean the Johnson family...the real people, I mean, *they* turned to...?"

"*WHO ELSE?*" cries David.

Hwang tells David to calm down. Next, he says that perhaps if they examine a sample of the "infected flesh," they could find a way to prevent the disease from spreading to other parts of their bodies. But as Hwang is conveying his plan to David, he doesn't notice that the clay has started creeping up his legs. It's slow at first, but the time David notices what's going on and warns Hwang, the clay has spread up his knees and reached the doctor's waist. "Oh, my G—" Hwang begins, before the "infection" rapidly zips up his chest, over his neck and turns his mouth to clay. Hwang's terrified eyes turn to lifeless balls of clay as it overtakes his head as well. Now, the doctor is nothing more than a clay sculpture.

David stares at the former doctor, astonished. Then he reenters the reception room but finds that the receptionist has fled in terror. David thinks for a moment before taking off down the street. Out of seemingly nowhere, Jordan appears and asks David what he's doing. David explains to her what happened and shows her his arm as proof. He says that he was considering going to the police in the hopes they could help. But he realized that with such an absurd story, they'll need more convincing, despite his clay arm. To that end, he's heading to the marketplace to get villagers to come with him, as they witnessed the Johnsons burst into debris.

Jordan grimaces. She says that those villagers believe that David cast some kind of spell that turned the Johnsons into dust and that "they've decided to break out the pitchforks 'n torches." They'll likely be at David's home by this point, but Jordan claims to know a secret entrance into Alec's studio. "There's an abandoned mine shaft that's just underneath his studio. Alec uses it when he doesn't want you to know he's home." Jordan goes on to explain that Alec's probably in there hiding from the villagers himself. If they're to solve this problem, they need to find him

and explain what's going on, as it's clear it must have something to do with Alec's sculptures. David agrees, and follows Jordan to a narrow, abandoned mineshaft, but as they make their way through it, something occurs to him.

"How do you know about this entrance, much less where it leads?" asks David. "Even *I* didn't know about it, and I run the mines."

"Alec told me," says Jordan.

"Why'd he tell you?" wonders David. He pauses "Why did you *listen*? You *hate* Alec."

A beat passes. Jordan turns around to face David. A small, thin grin crawls over her face. Then out of nowhere, Jordan reaches out and grabs David's clay hand and *pulls it off his arm!* She scrambles off down the mineshaft with it, as quickly as she can. David screams in a mixture of horror and rage, and advances through the mineshaft after her, screaming to get his "hand" back. When he arrives at the end of the mineshaft, he sees Jordan entering a door. As David follows her inside, he trips and lands flat on his face. Someone steps over to David and stands over him. When David realizes who's staring down at him, he looks disturbed. It's Doctor Hwang, but not as we know him. He has an eerily calm, humble smile—just like the Hwang sculpture we saw Alec working on.

David crawls to his feet and backs up against a wall. He sees that he's in Alec's studio. At the opposite end of the room, he sees Alec's back facing him, as the young man works hard on another sculpture. David sees Jordan casually strut over to Alec, and place David's clay hand on his work desk. Then she puts her arms around Alec and begins nuzzling him affectionately.

"No..." jabbars David. "...you *hate* Alec... you *hate* Alec... you..."

"Not anymore," says Jordan as she rests her head on Alec's back and grins at David. "In fact, we're kinda dating now..."

"Alec's a genius," agrees Hwang. "An absolute genius! What girl couldn't love him?"

Upon hearing that, David's eyes dart frantically about the room. He sees an empty space where the Hwang sculpture once was. Alec stops sculpting for a moment, then turns around, revealing that he's working on the David sculpture. "I didn't realize what was going on," begins Alec. "Not until Hwang's sculpture turned to flesh-and-blood before my eyes. Then I realized what really happened to my Jordan sculpture." Alec turns, and kisses Jordan tenderly on the lips, then smiles contently at David. "It's because I loved them, you see..." continues Alec. "Not as they were, but as I sculpted them. That's what brought them to life: when I loved them enough. It would've happened with the Johnsons too, if you hadn't destroyed them."

When Alec mentions the Johnsons, David flies into a rage. He screams at Alec ferociously about how the Johnsons themselves were destroyed along with the sculptures. David goes on to berate Alec about how, once his clay sculptures come to life, the person they're based on turns to clay. He orders Alec to cease sculpting entirely. "You'll destroy our entire community!" he bellows.

Alec merely shrugs his shoulders. “Good,” he says. “In your community, I will always be the outcast. The creepy little weirdo. The kid who doesn’t belong. Regardless of the number of years I’ve lived, the amount of greys in my hair, or the abundance of lines etched in my face. Nothing I do shall affect that. Achieving goals, be they in a career, personal growth...even my art. It will affect nothing. Bettering yourself doesn’t matter. Doing the right thing doesn’t matter. Being correct doesn’t matter. All that matters is status, the commonly accepted narrative, the hierarchies. The elite. But now I can change all that. Now I can live in *my* reality.”

Alec picks up a sledgehammer and makes his way to various sculptures he’s made of people he perceives as having wronged him. First, he describes the various ways they’ve hurt him. Then he uses his sledgehammer to smash these sculptures to bits. David desperately tries to talk Alec out of what he’s doing, but Alec refuses to stop. Next, David rushes over to physically restrain his son, but before he can do that, Alec smashes off the arms and legs on the David sculpture. The real David’s arms and legs instantly turn to dust, and he falls to the ground, howling in terror. David begs for Alec to stop and looks surprised when Alec puts down his sledgehammer. “Oh, worry not father...” says Alec, soothingly. “I wouldn’t dream of harming the one who gave me life. I love you *far* too much for that.” Alec turns back to his David sculpture, and resumes working on it. “I just had to stop you from delaying my work. But don’t worry, I’ll make sure to sculpt you some new arms, some new legs...and I’ll put *a lot of love* into them...” We cut to a close-up of David’s eyes as they widen in terror, and the screen fades to black...

We fade into a bright, sunny day in the mining community. But something odd has happened...instead of being built over rock, the town now seems to be forged over clay. The citizens all look very different too. They’re exceedingly happy and all get along, but there’s a dead, soulless look in all of their faces.

As we pan through the community, we see Alec sitting on a throne of clay with Jordan at his side, lording over everyone. Alec looks older, suggesting it’s taken him a long time to replace everyone in the community. He also doesn’t look happy in spite of his success. If anything, he looks bored.

A soulless, dead-eyed version of David emerges from the crowd and prattles on to Alec about how much he loves and supports him. “I know you do, father,” sighs Alec. Warily, Alec breaks off a piece of clay from his throne and molds it into a rough approximation of David. Everyone cheers for Alec and tells him what an amazing sculpture it is. These shallow platitudes annoy Alec, and in rage, he destroys the crude sculpture. Instantly, David turns to dust, but as he shatters, he still praises his son, and the community still cheers for him. “You’re such a great guy!” Jordan declares, and kisses Alec on the cheek. Alec winces and looks away. A note of uncertainty crosses his face. As he sits on his newly sculpted throne, he can’t quite bring himself to smile.

THE END.