A TINY FEAST

BY

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BASED ON A SHORT STORY BY CHRIS ADRIAN
FADE IN:

1. INT. CHILDREN’S ONCOLOGY WARD

Open on a stark, dimly lit hospital room. We see a figure hunched over a small bed with her head in her hands:

TITANIA/TRUDY, early thirties. Deep, emerald eyes. Thin and willowy body. Long chestnut brown hair that falls down to her waistline.

Another figure enters the room:

OBERON/BOB, a tall, built man with broad shoulders. Soft, hazel eyes. Short, honey blonde hair. Scruffy blond beard. Mid-thirties.

OBERON
He’s almost finished. Don’t you want to be there when he wakes up?

TITANIA
You’ll tell him I’m waiting here.

OBERON
He’ll be looking for you. You’d rather rest your terrible ass than comfort him. Do you love him at all?

Titania and Oberon continue to quarrel and flashes of their glowing physiques are revealed as the couples’ argument gets more and more heated. Oberon storms out of the room in a huff. Titania stares out the hospital window into the evening sky, looking out on the park on the hill where her home resides. She reflects back to when she first met the Boy.

2. EXT. THE FAERIES HOME IN THE ENCHANTED FOREST

FLASHBACK

Titania is the Queen of Faeries and is clothed in a magnificent gown weaved together by precious silks and the flowers and leaves of the forest. She is resting, perched on a tree branch. Oberon, the King of Faeries, enters draped in magnificent green garments and presents Titania with a gift to reconcile from their previous quarrel. He is holding a small bundle wrapped in blankets in a basket. Titania looks at Oberon with contempt, and then a look of bewilderment as the bundle begins to cry. The bundle shifts and we see a baby BOY lying inside the small basket. Titania disregards the child and does not accept it as an acceptable gift.

(CONTINUED)
That evening, Titania listens to the soft snoring of the baby Boy. She turns on her side to better look at it and notices its round and smooth face for the first time. The Boy has a troubled face in his sleep. She reaches her hand out to touch his face very lightly. Right away, the boy sighed and lost the troubled look. Titania softens and draws the boy closer to her chest.

3. INT. BOY’S HOSPITAL ROOM

The Boy is sitting in his bed reading a book as Titania sits in the corner of the room with a dissatisfied face.

TITANIA
This place is so ugly.

With the flick of her fingers, the room begins to transform. Ordinary objects in the room like the flowers in the vases and knobs of the doors morph and small, faeries in bright colors of blue, green, yellow, and red emerge and fill the small hospital room. The faeries go to work and pave the drab walls with beautiful gems and stone. The floor is carpeted with fresh green grass with drops of dew. The limp paper stars hanging in the ceiling fade to show a cover of soft, white clouds to hide the suspended ceiling. The beds spread shrinks to reveal a creature of soft fur, BEASTIE, a gentle dog-like animal that was the Boy’s favorite. The Boy squeals with joy as the room becomes a place of familiarity and home.

Suddenly, a party of doctors barge into the room and all of the fairy magic evaporates within a second. With a cheerful face, the doctors review a number of poisons they would use on the Boy. The chemotherapy came in a variety of colors — a straw yellow to a watermelon pink.

Titania is reluctantly interested in the kinds of medications, but Oberon wants to know all about them, constantly repeating what the doctors say or reading information off packets the nurses give them. Oberon claims he will try the mysterious liquid himself, to share the experience with his Boy, but ends up making a less faerie, DOORKNOB, do it in his stead.

Doorknob takes a sip and smacks his lips and describes the taste as rusty. As he is about to take another sip, he suddenly goes mad — tearing at his face, clawing a his face, and there is an obvious churning in his little belly. Oberon knocks him over the head, and it is weeks before he was himself again.

The Boy has a very different response. As the nurses connect the tubes to his body, the poisons settle him down and put him to sleep.
4. INT. CHILDREN’S ONCOLOGY WARD

On a day when the Boy is feeling better, he roams around in the hallway in a little red buggy that he drives by making little puttering noises. Titania slowly follows, pushing his I.V. pole behind him and stooping low to adjust his mask every time it slips off. The two walk down the hallway passing the sea of nurses and doctors heading in different directions. Titania peers in to different hospital rooms as she walks pasts. Time seems to slow down as she observes the families surrounding their sick children and hears laughter and love in the air. She pauses and a look of utter confusion and desperation slowly grows on her face.

    TITANIA
    (whispers to herself)
    I don’t understand. How could something so amazing be so powerless?

5. INT. BOY’S HOSPITAL ROOM

The Boy goes through another round of chemotherapy sessions and can no longer intake solid foods. The nurse hangs a bag of honey colored liquid food to keep him sated. The Boy pleads with his parents for food and begs for a cheese sandwich. Titania protests, but after seeing the pleading look on his face, resigns.

    TITANIA
    You heard him.

With a sweep of her arm, the tiny faeries emerge from the confines of the room and set out in the city to obey their queen’s command. They soon return with loaves under their arms and cheeses balanced on their heads. The room rapidly fills with cheese, loaves of bread, sandwiches, as the bread and cheese are cut and assembled. The Boy takes his pick and feasts upon the variety of choices. Oberon tears up and shouts in joy as the Boy is able to intake the food.

A doctor enters the room without a hint of a knock. The faeries vanish before his eyes could even register them, but the cheese and bread remain behind. Stacked in sandwiches on the dresser and windowsill, wedged in the light fixtures, piled in the sink and overflowing on to the floor. The doctors have a look of utter astonishment and confusion as they take in the scene before them. Titania looks them straight in the eye and simply shrugs.

    TITANIA
    He was hungry.
The doctor stutters as he relays the next bit of news on the direction of the boy’s treatment. A few hours later, the Boy throws all it up within the hour, the sandwich looking practically unchanged.

6. A FEW WEEKS LATER

The Boy wears a beanie on his head, looking thinner and more ghastly.

BOY
Can’t I have one tiny little feast?

The doctors laugh at him while tousling his hair and leaves behind the dissatisfied, suffering boy. Oberon is silent and brooding, and eventually leaves the room his eyes brimming with tears. Titania looks as if she wants to run away from the entire situation. She takes a deep breath and attempts to distract the boy by pulling a parrot from the folds of her robe. However, the Boy is not hungry for food. He is hungry to be well, to be able to run on the hill of their home, to spend a day not immersed in a mix of hope and hopelessness.

The boy wears Titania down toward the evening. As she is about to give him a small bite of chocolate, Oberon returns to the room with a new look of determination.

OBERON
I have something better.

Oberon clears a space on the bed and puts down a small burlap sack. Very delicately, he reaches into the bag and removes all the ingredients and elements of a tiny feast and lays them on the bed. He starts to chop up a grain-sized carrot and looks up at Titania.

OBERON
It will be faster if you help.

Titania picks up the bag and pulls out ingredient after ingredient. The Boy peers at the feast preparations with a look of wonderment and keeps trying to eat things raw. Oberon slaps his hands away and tells him to be patient. The Boy eventually starts to help as well and the rest of the faeries pop in and join the help. It takes a long time to prepare the feast, but it is the first time Titania and Oberon are working together without a single peep of an argument. When it is done, the Boy devours the entire tiny feast on his own. When finished, he looks around the room as if to ask for more and gives a tiny, satisfied burp.
7. A FEW DAYS LATER

Titania and Oberon are sitting at the Boy’s bedside, not holding hands. Titania moves from her chair to the bed and takes the Boy’s hand. Even in his sleep he pulls it away. The doctors had brought back the morphine for his pain, so he was rarely awake, and was not very happy when he was.

TITANIA
(whispers to Oberon)
What a terrible gift you have given me.

The doctor walks in alone and sits down on the bed where the boy is sweating and tossing in his sleep. Oberon sits in the corner of the room and eyes the doctor warily as Titania feels something unpleasant coming.

DOCTOR
I think it’s time to talk about our goals for Brad.

TITANIA
What else can we do?

DOCTOR
We could make him comfortable.

TITANIA
Isn’t he comfortable? Isn’t he sleeping?

DOCTOR
We could stop doing what isn’t helping, and not do anything that would prolong...the suffering.

Oberon leaps up from his seat and shouts at the doctor in fury, calling him a murderer. The doctor fumbles with his hospital gown and turns to Titania with an expression of pleading and desperation.

DOCTOR
You don’t understand, that’s not what I meant at all!

Titania slowly draws herself up and shakes off every drop of the disguise that hid her glamour. The doctor falls off the bed, and shrinks. She stands before the doctor and leans over and speaks very slowly.

(CONTINUED)
TITANIA
You will do everything mortally possible to save him.

8. A FEW WEEKS LATER

Open on the hallway of the hospital ward. Everything is quiet. In the hospital room, the Boy is lying still in his bed with his eyes closed. The nurses enter and remove the tubes from him and turn off the machines. Oberon is on the floor in the corner of the room in tears as he tries to comfort the wailing Beastie. The glamour of the faeries’ magic is in tatters and elements of both the magical and ordinary room is shown.

TITANIA
We should bring him home.

No one hears her at first. Titania repeats her words and by twos and threes, the faeries begin to repeat Titania’s words. They start to build a bier for him - tearing out cabinets, bending the I.V. pole and ripping up the sheets and blankets. When they finish, the walls and furniture are stripped. Twenty faeries bear the bier and another group of fairies hammer at the doorway to widen the exit. When they are ready, they look to Titania. She nods her head and the procession heads out. Oberon is the last to leave the room, dragged out by Doorknob tugging at his arm.

9. EXT.

There is no longer a disguise to cover the faeries. All of their magical filters fade away as their magic is no longer maintained. The faeries proceed through the hospital halls with their harps, flutes, fiddles and lutes, marching out of the hospital with drums. All mortals and animals alike stare in shock. The faeries head to their home in the park on the hill. They pass the ordinary trees of the park, and then enter into their extraordinary realm of their enchanted forest. The funeral procession marches into the great hall. The hall grows quiet as the sounds of the instruments slowly fade away. The faeries look to Titania to speak, but she has no words to utter.