

STUPIDITY IS THEIR SUPERPOWER

ARNIE & BARNEY

THE WATER QUEST



INTERNATIONAL PRESS BOOK

STUDIO100

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**ARNIE &
BARNEY**
THE WATER QUEST

**STUDIO 100 FILM presents
a STUDIO 100 INTERNATIONAL Production,
in Association with STUDIO ISAR ANIMATION, 3DOUBLES PRODUCCIONES, TELEGAEL**

“ARNIE & BARNEY”

**Director: SEAN HEUSTON
Screenplay: FIN EDQUIST
Co-written by: SHANE DUNDAS, DAVID COLLINS
Story by: FIN EDQUIST, SEAN HEUSTON, ANTOINE MARBACH
Original Score and Songs: CHRISTOPH ZIRNGIBL
Producer: THORSTEN WEGENER
Creative Producer: ANTOINE MARBACH
Executive Producers: MARTIN KRIEGER, DARÍO SÁNCHEZ, PAUL CUMMINS**

With the support of (DFFF) DEUTSCHER FILMFÖRDERFONDS, (FFF) FILMFERNSEHFONDS
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CULTURAL, GOBIERNO DE CANARIAS, CREATIVE EUROPE MEDIA, EFP, GERMAN FILMS, IRISH
FILM INDUSTRY

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1. Synopsis: Arnie & Barney

Logline

Packed with high-energy slapstick and heart, this hilarious animated adventure puts Arnie and Barney, the fan-favorite duo from the *Maya the Bee* universe, center stage for the first time.

Synopsis Short

As a severe drought threatens the meadow, two hopelessly unqualified ants decide to save the day. Arnie and Barney's reckless mission leads them to uncover a sinister water racket run by a hypnotic mosquito and her criminal accomplice. With chaos, imagination and plenty of accidental heroics, the unlikely duo must outsmart the villains and restore the meadow's water, proving that even the smallest misfits can become legends.

Synopsis Medium

Amid a devastating drought, the ant platoon mobilizes to protect their struggling community. But Arnie and Barney - well-meaning yet spectacularly unqualified for heroics - decide to take matters into their own tiny hands.

What begins as a misguided attempt to prove themselves soon spirals into the discovery of a shady water racket threatening the entire meadow. Along the way, they join forces with a mysterious would-be superhero mosquito and stumble from one outrageous mishap to the next.

Through chaos, imagination and pure accidental brilliance, Arnie and Barney do the impossible: they save the meadow and become the most unlikely heroes of all.

Synopsis Long

In the hottest summer the meadow has ever endured, survival becomes a daily struggle. Streams have dried to dust, the grass is brittle, and the once-bustling insect metropolis is on the verge of collapse. For Captain Pantz and his disciplined ant platoon, the mission is urgent and clear: secure water and save the community.

There is only one complication. Arnie and Barney have decided to take charge.

Arnie, a self-declared action hero with boundless confidence and questionable competence, and Barney, a wide-eyed dreamer who prefers comic-book fantasies to practical planning, are the last ants anyone would choose for a rescue mission. Their "training" has consisted largely of sketching themselves as legendary saviors and memorizing heroic catchphrases.

So, when Captain Pantz assigns them the seemingly pointless task of guarding the mysterious “Hole of Infinite Mystery” - a ploy to secretly keep them out of trouble - Arnie and Barney refuse to be sidelined!

Determined to find water for the meadow and impress their captain, they abandon their post and set off to find water - and, if possible, track down their idol SzzKeat Scratchly, a supposedly legendary mosquito superhero straight out of their beloved comics.

But their misguided quest uncovers something far more dangerous than they imagined. Behind the drought lies a calculated scheme: Legs, a smooth-talking centipede mob boss, is hoarding the meadow’s stolen water, while Hypnita, a manipulative mosquito with hypnotic powers, controls the ant platoon under her spell. Together, they are constructing a dam to monopolize the remaining supply and rule the desperate insect world.

Suddenly, the fate of the meadow rests in the tiny, trembling hands of its most unqualified ants.

Teaming up with the real SzzKeat - who turns out to be far more complicated than the legend - Arnie and Barney stumble into a daring rescue mission to break the hypnosis, outsmart the villains and restore the meadow’s water. What follows is a whirlwind of chaotic plans, accidental heroics and imagination-fueled bravery.

Through blunders, boldness and a sometimes-shaky belief in themselves, Arnie and Barney achieve the impossible. They free their platoon. They stop the racket. They save the meadow.

And in doing so, they discover that becoming a legend doesn’t require perfection - only the courage to try.



Key Assets

Arnie & Barney is a turbo-charged comedy adventure bursting from the beloved *Maya the Bee* movie universe - ready to steal the spotlight. Packed with outrageous action, heart, and nonstop laughs, this spin-off delivers big-screen spectacle for families and older kids alike.

Our unlikely heroes? Two ants. With zero plan. But infinite confidence. Arnie and Barney have an unmatched talent for getting into spectacular trouble - and an even more spectacular ability to get out of it in ways no one sees coming.

The unlikely duo is voiced by the iconic Australian comedy team **The Umbilical Brothers**, who also contributed to the screenplay and helped shape the film's distinctive comic style, bringing their signature blend of physical comedy and inventive humor to the characters.

Set in a drought-stricken meadow, this animated comedy adventure combines pop-culture-inspired humor, thrilling escapades and heartfelt storytelling. With its energetic tone and charming heroes, *Arnie & Barney* celebrates friendship, courage and the idea that even the most unlikely characters can rise to extraordinary challenges.



2. Character Descriptions

MAIN CHARACTERS

Arnie and Barney are a comedic duo of loyal yet dim-witted ants from the *Maya the Bee* universe. Best friends with a knack for getting into (and out of) trouble, they're the last ants anyone would expect to lead a rescue mission. Arnie, the self-appointed "action hero" and "smooth talker," partners perfectly with Barney, a daydreaming, free-spirited hippie. Together, they stumble their way through adventure and calamity, discovering that heroism sometimes means simply showing up.

Short form:

Two loyal but clueless ants who believe they're heroes long before they've earned it. Arnie's swagger and Barney's zen-like calm collide in chaotic, funny misadventures. Despite zero qualifications, their friendship and persistence accidentally turn them into the meadow's most unlikely saviors.

ARNIE

(Voiced by David Collins)



Arnie is the go-getter of the duo, the ant who genuinely believes he's destined to be a "rescue hero." In his mind, he's the brains of the operation, an action hero waiting for his moment. In reality, however, Arnie's bravado far outweighs his skill - he's just as clumsy and clueless as his friend, but far more deluded about his own coolness. Think of that guy who thinks he's "cool" but... let's just say he's not.

Arnie's overconfidence and grand ideas often lead the pair into misadventures, making him endearing in his cluelessness. Picture him channeling Pretty Fly (For a White Guy) vibes - thinking he's got it all, but hilariously missing the mark.

Short form:

A wannabe action hero convinced he's destined for greatness. Loud bravado, zero competence. Arnie charges into trouble with unearned confidence, dragging Barney along. Deluded, clumsy, and accidentally endearing, he dreams of being a legend while barely managing the basics.

BARNEY

(Voiced by Shane Dundas)



Barney is the dreamy, laid-back counterpoint to Arnie's faux heroism. A true hippie at heart, he's often lost in his imagination, approaching life with a blissful detachment that borders on stoner-esque. Even if a battle erupted around him, Barney would likely take on a defensive stance from the lotus position. His helmet sports a scribbled peace and love symbol, while his crooked antennae and gentle green eyes give him a perpetually mellow look.

With his carefree attitude and flights of fancy, Barney provides the soul of the duo, bringing a touch of Zen that offsets Arnie's unearned confidence.

Short form:

A mellow, hippie dreamer floating through chaos with serene detachment. Barney's imagination outruns his abilities, but his gentle nature and accidental insight balances Arnie's misplaced bravado. Peace-loving, spaced-out, and quietly soulful, he stumbles into heroism without ever meaning to.

SZZKEAT

Collaborative protagonist

(Voiced by Somerset Arnold)



SzzKeat, aka **Bertha**, is a shy, introspective mosquito who prefers a quiet life as a comic book artist. Though introverted, her alter ego - SzzKeat Scratchly, the confident, intrepid detective - comes alive in her comics. When her biggest fans, Arnie and Barney, need help to save the meadow, Bertha must channel her fictional hero's courage and step out of her comfort zone.

SzzKeat is physically small and pixie-like, with an elfin look and a Harajuku-inspired style that reflects her quirky personality. Her British-Scandinavian accent is gentle and syncopated, with a soft, hesitant rhythm. She moves with the huddled posture of someone trying to go unnoticed, shutting out the world around her. Yet, behind her fragile exterior lies a quiet inner strength. As Bertha embraces her alter ego, she begins to discover a growing sense of courage within herself.

Short form:

A shy mosquito and comic-book artist who hides behind her bold alter ego, SzzKeat Scratchly. Small, introverted, and hesitant, Bertha must channel her fictional hero's courage to help Arnie and Barney. Her quiet strength blossoms as she steps beyond her comfort zone.

SNOOP**Collaborative protagonist**

Snoop is a juvenile tardigrade with the body and charm of a chunky, playful puppy and the loyalty of a true companion. Confident, curious, and incredibly intelligent, he bounds through life with an energy that is both endearing and infectious. With six stubby legs, Snoop moves with a joyful, puppy-like clumsiness, adding a sense of warmth and playfulness to every scene.

Despite his cheerful spirit, Snoop's moments of vulnerability reveal a softer side that tugs at the heart. When weakened or endangered, his resilience shines through, inspiring a protective instinct in those around him. His combination of loyalty, innocence, and boundless energy makes Snoop the perfect cuddle-worthy companion, capturing the hearts of both his friends and the audience.

Short form:

A juvenile tardigrade with puppy-like charm, clumsy enthusiasm, and fierce loyalty. Playful, curious, and surprisingly intelligent, Snoop brings warmth and innocence to the team. His moments of vulnerability reveal a tender core, deepening the audience's attachment.

HYPNITA**Antagonist**

(Voiced by Juliette Crosbie)



Hypnita is a sophisticated, vampish mosquito who exudes power and control. Her high-collared, trench coat-like wings and signature sunglasses give her a cold, enigmatic presence, concealing her mesmerizing, hypnotic eyes. Beneath her icy exterior, however, lies a fiercely maternal side, driven by a desperate need to save her kidnapped larvae.

Though she appears ruthless, Hypnita's true motivation - her love for her children - adds depth to her villainy, making her as tragic as she is fearsome. Balancing elegance and menace, she is a commanding antagonist who captivates as much as she terrifies.

Short form:

A seductive, controlled mosquito with hypnotic eyes and a hidden maternal agenda. Her icy elegance masks a desperate drive to save her stolen larvae. Hypnita blends menace and vulnerability, making her a dangerous yet tragic antagonist.

LEGS**Antagonist**

(Voiced by David Cameron)



Legs is a brutish centipede and the cunning mastermind of Loggy Hollow's criminal underworld. Towering over other bugs, he runs a water racket from his shady headquarters at the Loggy Hollow Bar. With a businessman's smooth front, Legs supplies "contraband" water to high-profile insects while secretly draining the town's main supply. In cahoots with the hypnotic mosquito Hypnita, he has orchestrated a scheme to dam the river and divert its flow to his factory, where his Goonbugs bottle the water and resell it to the desperate townsfolk at a steep markup.

Driven by a deep-rooted greed for water and money, which he sees as his birthright due to his species' high-water needs, Legs uses his size and cunning to control Loggy Hollow. With a ruthless edge and a sinister charm, he wields his power to influence politicians and exploit the meadow's fragile ecosystem for his own gain.

Short form:

A towering centipede crime boss running the meadow's water racket. Smooth-talking, ruthless, and driven by greed, he exploits the drought for profit. Legs dominates Loggy Hollow through intimidation, corruption, and a predatory sense of entitlement.

CAPTAIN PANTZ

Supporting Protagonist

(Voiced by Cam Ralph)



Captain Pantz is the strict, no-nonsense leader of the rescue squad and the unfortunate mentor to Arnie and Barney. A true drill sergeant to his core, Pantz towers a head above his misfit recruits and speaks with a neutral American accent that commands authority and precision. With military-grade efficiency in every step, he embodies discipline, following orders and enforcing rules with unwavering dedication. His mantra: there's one way to do things, and that's his way.

As a father figure and veteran squad leader, Pantz has spent years trying to train Arnie and Barney, though he has quietly resigned himself to the fact that they may never meet the standards of a true rescue ant. Despite this, he tolerates their presence, assigning "missions" to keep them busy and preserve his sanity. However, when Pantz leads the squad on a critical mission to investigate the meadow's drying river, he encounters Hypnita, who hypnotizes him and his team into working on her dam project. Suddenly stripped of his autonomy, Pantz faces his worst nightmare - powerless, with his squad under enemy control. Ironically, his only hope lies in Arnie and Barney, his least dependable recruits, whom he must rely on to save him, the squad, and the meadow from the looming drought.

Short form:

A strict drill captain obsessed with discipline and procedure, Pantz sees Arnie and Barney as hopeless cases and keeps them out of the way - until he's hypnotized and must rely on them to save the squad. His authority crumbles, pushing him into unexpected humility.



3. Voice Cast

Arnie	David Collins
Barney	Shane Dundas
SzzKeat (Bertha)	Somerset Arnold
Hypnita	Juliette Crosbie
Legs	David Cameron
Captain Pantz	Cam Ralph
Maya	Juliette Crosbie



4. Production Team

SEAN HEUSTON

Director | VFX Supervisor | Compositing Supervisor

Sean is an acclaimed visual effects supervisor, storyteller and father of three who knows exactly how to make kids laugh!

From Australia to New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Germany, he has lent his expertise to industry giants like Weta, Double Negative and Scanline VFX contributing to some of the biggest blockbusters of all time. With credits on over 50 films and two VES nominations for Outstanding Compositing (*Game of Thrones*, *The Hobbit: Desolation of Smaug*) under his belt, Sean is widely recognized as one of the most skilled artists of his generation.

Known for his leadership and ability to elevate both projects and teams, Sean continues to inspire the next generation of filmmakers through his work, creativity and dedication.

FIN EDQUIST

Screenwriter

Fin Edquist is a Sydney-based writer, script producer and filmmaker. He has written several animated features including the *Maya the Bee* movies (1, 2 and 3), *100% Wolf*, and its sequel *200% Wolf*.

Fin also wrote and directed the psychological thriller *Bad Girl* and has contributed to numerous other animated feature projects. He is the co-creator of the hit TV series *The Secret Daughter* and has served as script-producer on both live action and animated TV series, including the *100% Wolf* spin-off TV show (two seasons), *Rescue: Special Ops* and *Tashi*.

In addition to his work in film and television, Fin has directed commercials as well as several award-winning short films and music videos.

CHRISTOPH ZIRNGIBL

Original Score and Songs

From a Bavarian kid inspired by *Jurassic Park* to an award-winning composer, Christoph Zirngibl gives two hopeless ants the kind of epic, heartfelt music usually reserved for superheroes. The Munich-based composer has scored over 100 films, earning the “Hollywood Music in Media” and “Jerry Goldsmith” awards along the way. His credits span Apple TV, Netflix, TV movies and series, and international features including *Mia and me: The Hero of Centopia*.

For *Arnie & Barney*, he brings his signature blend of live orchestra and genre-bending instinct to the meadow's most inept heroes.

Coming soon: His composition "Every Child Has a Right to Dream" for solo cello and orchestra will appear on the upcoming charity album *Hope*, recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra at Abbey Road Studios, and set for release in May 2026.

THORSTEN WEGENER

Producer

Since 2011, Thorsten Wegener has been driving the development and expansion of cinema related activities at Studio 100 International. In this role, he serves as a producer on film projects and, as director of business operations, and oversees international theatrical distribution.

While studying at the University of Television and Film in Munich (HFF), Wegener worked as a freelance production assistant at Bavaria Films in Munich. His contributions to the "production and media industry" earned him a grant from the Karl-Holzamer Foundation, later followed by a VGF grant from the collecting society for rights to use cinematographic works. Born in Bonn, Wegener joined the Kirch Group/Taurus Film GmbH in 1994, where he led the division for child and youth programs. During this time, he held various producer positions, overseeing both animated feature films and animated TV series such as *Pippi Longstocking*, *Momo* and *Karlsson on the Roof*. From 2000 to 2002, he served as managing director of Victory Films Productions before becoming a producer at Tellux Film/Crossmedia Medienproduktion where he worked on the production and marketing of the animated series *Chi Rho – The Secret*.

Since mid-2007, Wegener has served as head of the program and production department of Studio 100 International, where he oversees the development, production, and acquisition of movie projects for both the national and international market. Following the huge success of the feature film *Maya the Bee – First Flight*, which won the Bavarian Film Award 2015 for "Best Animated Film of the Year 2014", he produced its two sequels *Maya the Bee – The Honey Games* and *Maya the Bee – The Golden Orb* as well as *Princess Emmy*, *Mia and me – The Hero of Centopia*, and *Heidi – Rescue of the Lynx*. He also served as executive producer on *Vic the Viking – The Magic Sword*. In addition, Wegener is a board member of the Animation Section of the Alliance of German Producers – Film & Television (Producers Alliance).

ANTOINE MARBACH

Creative Producer

Antoine Marbach is a creative producer with over 20 years of experience in the international film industry. On *Arnie & Barney* he worked closely with director Sean Heuston, overseeing the project from concept to completion to ensure both creative depth and production excellence. Drawing on his expertise in character-driven storytelling, Marbach collaborated intensively with

Sean Heuston to shape the narrative and core themes while managing the challenges of delivering an animated production on a tight schedule.

Fluent in French, English, and German, he serves as a natural bridge in international co-productions. With a background in managing large international teams and contributing to high-profile productions such as *Game of Thrones* and *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* during his time in visual effects, Marbach brings a distinctive combination of leadership, technical expertise, and over a decade of storytelling experience to his projects.

MARTIN KRIEGER

Executive Producer

Martin Krieger is the CEO of Studio 100 International and its subsidiaries Studio 100 Film and Studio Isar Animation. In this role, he also serves as executive producer on films such as *Heidi - Rescue of the Lynx*, *Maya the Bee – The Golden Orb* and *Giants of La Mancha*.

Before becoming CEO, Krieger built a distinguished career in the media and marketing industry. At Studio 100, he led the global content distribution team, shaping strategy and driving key initiatives, while significantly expanding the company's international YouTube presence. Earlier in his career, he held key marketing roles at The Walt Disney Company and later managed strategic content partnerships at YouTube/Google.

PAUL CUMMINS

Executive Producer

Paul Cummins is a founder, major shareholder and CEO of Telegael, one of Ireland's leading animation and television studios. Established in 1988, the Telegael group today employs over 80 full-time staff, along with many part-time and contract professionals. He also serves as chairman of Beochan, a dedicated stop motion animation studio near Galway, Ireland. The studio specializes in model and set design and construction, lighting, photography, CGI graphics, compositing and post-production.

In addition, Cummins is chairman of the Stiúideo Telegael Teoranta, the Galway based film and television studios and of iRadio group, Ireland's leading regional radio network targeting the 15-34 audience. A Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland, he has served on the Film Finance Committee of the Irish Audiovisual Federation, and he is a member of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and the Irish Film and Television Academy.

A seven-time EMMY nominee, Cummins won two EMMY Awards, (2004 and 2007) and his productions have received 5 IFTA Awards.

ADDITIONAL CREW

Production Manager	ANITA GRAU
Co-Written by	DAVID COLLINS & SHANE DUNDAS
Story by	FIN EDQUIST, SEAN HEUSTON, ANTOINE MARBACH
Editors	RINGO WALDENBURGER, SEAN HEUSTON, ANTOINE MARBACH
Editing Services	EUMEL FILM GMBH
VFX Supervisor	OLIVER SUMMA
Animation Director	BIEL GIL GOSÁLVEZ
Line Producers	AMÉLIE ZILLIOX, AMY HINTERKIRCHER, BETSABÉ VERA ÁLVAREZ
Development Producer	LORENA BOOTH
CG Supervisors	FLORIAN WITTMANN, OLGA FIDALGO ARES
Layout Supervisor	CHEMA HERNÁNDEZ
Character Designer	MARINA GONZÁLEZ GÓMEZ
Creative Designer	FINLAY HOGG
Supervising Technical Director	SASCHA KREMERS
Pipeline Supervisor	DAVID HARTER
Lighting & Lookdev Supervisor	ALEX BERWECK
Compositing Supervisor	FELIX LASER
Asset Supervisor	DIRK MAUCHE
Telegael Producer	CATHY NÍ FHLAITHEARTA
Production Manager	TREVOR MCCORMACK
Head of Sound	CIARÁN Ó TUAIRISC
Sound Effects Director	EOGHAN Ó RIADA
Recording Mixer	LEO WOLSTENHOLME

5. Production Companies & International Sales Agent

PRODUCTION COMPANIES

Studio 100 International

Studio 100 International is a leading force in children’s and family entertainment, producing and distributing high-quality movies and series that inspire audiences worldwide. Based in Munich, the company oversees beloved global brands including *Maya the Bee*, *Mia and me*, and *Heidi*, and operates its own state-of-the-art animation studio, Studio Isar Animation.

In 2025, Studio 100 International was honored as “International Studio of the Year” at the Animation Magazine Hall of Fame Awards - underscoring its creative excellence and global impact. As part of the Belgian Studio 100 Group, the company contributes to a widely recognized entertainment ecosystem spanning media, brands, and theme parks across Europe.

Studio Isar Animation

Established in 2018 as a wholly owned subsidiary of Studio 100 International, part of the Belgian Studio 100 Group, Studio Isar Animation (SIA) was created to oversee the entire filmmaking process, from initial idea to film distribution. SIA’s primary focus is on creating high-quality CGI films specifically tailored for CHILDREN, driven by their joyous laughter, the bright sparkle in their eyes, and their genuine enthusiasm for the content we produce.

We take immense pride in our globally acclaimed team of CG artists and supervisors who bring our iconic and beloved CG characters and captivating worlds to life. As the in-house production team for Studio 100 Group’s animated feature films and co-productions, SIA manages modelling, texturing, shading, lighting, effects, compositing, and rendering, while also providing expertise for third-party productions.

3Doubles Producciones

Founded by Darío Sánchez in 2017, 3Doubles Producciones is headquartered in Santa Cruz de Tenerife and currently employs over 100 people. In 2020, Mercury Steam owner Ignacio Navas and Aliot Innovation founder José Ángel Olmo joined as partners and in 2023, Viva Kids and Studio 100 International acquired a stake in the company.

The studio’s slate of animated films includes *Inspector Sun and the Curse of the Black Widow*, *The Oglies*, and *My Fairy Troublemaker*. Current projects in production include *SuperKlaus* and *Norbert*.

Telegael

Established in 1988, Multi-Emmy Award-winning Telegael is one of Ireland's leading film and animation studios producing live action and animated content for the international television market and for worldwide cinema release. With studios in An Spidéal, and Baile na hAbhann, Galway, Telegael has co-produced animated and live action series and feature films with partners in the US, France, UK, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, India, China, South Korea, Canada, Australia, Mexico, and the Philippines. Telegael has won 5 IFTA Awards and was named European Animation Investor of the Year at the 2019 Cartoon Forum in Toulouse.

Telegael has co-produced more than 1,250 hours of television programming, its projects have been distributed to over 175 countries and translated into more than 50 languages. Notable films produced by Telegael include *Norm of the North*, *Captain Morten and the Spider Queen*, *Blinky Bill – The Movie*, *The Canterville Ghost*, *Conni*, and *My Freaky Family*.

In 2007 Telegael acquired the Roger Corman film studios in Baile na hAbhann, Galway and later established Beochan, Ireland's only dedicated stop motion animation studio. Beochan specializes in model and set design and construction, lighting, photography, CGI graphics, compositing, and postproduction.

INTERNATIONAL SALES AGENT

Studio 100 Film

Studio 100 Film is an independent sales agency specializing in exceptional family movies. Headquartered in Munich, the company is a subsidiary of Studio 100 International, which was awarded "International Studio of the Year 2025". With over a decade of experience, Studio 100 Film markets and distributes high-quality animation features such as *Arnie & Barney*, *Heidi – Rescue of the Lynx*, *Giants of La Mancha*, the *Maya the Bee* trilogy, and numerous other Studio 100 International titles. The company also manages international sales for carefully selected third-party productions including *Rally – From Paris to the Pyramids*, *North*, and *200% Wolf*. Studio 100 Film focuses on representing a well-selected portfolio of standout films, bringing them to global audiences, and ensuring they receive the recognition they deserve.

6. Movie Facts

Title

Arnie & Barney – The Water Quest

Duration

75 minutes

Production Companies

Studio 100 International (Germany), Studio Isar Animation (Germany), 3Doubles Producciones (Spain), Telegael (Ireland)

Production Countries

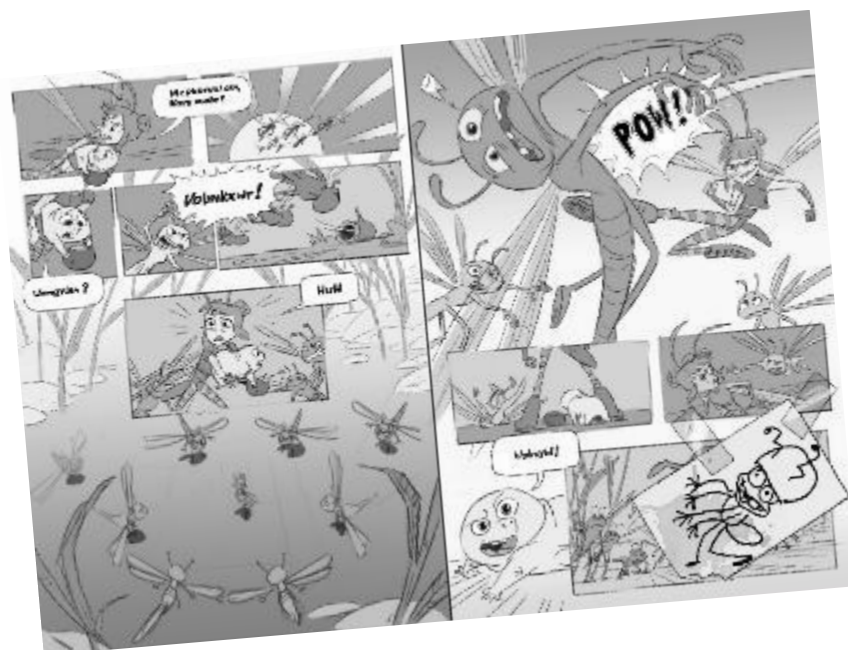
Germany, Spain, Ireland

Production Year

2026

Budget

11.7 million Euro



Billing Block

STUDIO 100 FILM presents a STUDIO 100 INTERNATIONAL Production
In Association with STUDIO ISAR ANIMATION, 3DOUBLES PRODUCCIONES, TELEGAEL
"Arnie & Barney"
Directed by SEAN HEUSTON
Screenplay by FIN EDQUIST Co-written by DAVID COLLINS and SHANE DUNDAS
Producer THORSTEN WEGENER Creative Producer ANTOINE MARBACH
Executive Producers MARTIN KRIEGER, DARÍO SÁNCHEZ, PAUL CUMMINS
Production Manager ANITA GRAU Line Producers VERONIKA HEUSTON, ANNIKA HIRSCH
Development Producer LORENA BOOTH Music by CHRISTOPH ZIRNGIBL Film Editor RINGO WALDENBURGER
VFX Supervisor OLIVER SUMMA Layout Supervisor CHEMA HERNÁNDEZ
Animation Directors BIEL GIL GOSÁLVEZ, MAXI DÍAZ
SIA Line Producers LAURA LANGHAMMER, AMÉLIE ZILLIOX, AMY HINTERKIRCHER
3DP Line Producers ODEI ROCA, BETSABÉ VERA ÁLVAREZ Telegael Producer CATHY NÍ FHLAITHEARTA

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7. Director's Note by Sean Heuston

“What if the craziest, most impossible ideas weren't mistakes - but the key to saving the world?”

With *Arnie & Barney*, I wanted to explore a different kind of hero's journey. Not the polished, confident arc of a natural-born leader - but the messy, unpredictable rise of characters who don't fit the mold.

Set within the familiar world of *Maya the Bee*, this story unfolds in a meadow that has changed. The lush greens have faded. The ground is cracked. Water is scarce. The environment mirrors the emotional landscape of our protagonists: uncertain, unstable, searching for resilience.

Arnie and Barney are far from obvious heroes. They are impulsive, distracted, often ridiculous. They misunderstand situations. They overestimate themselves. They fail - repeatedly. Yet beneath their chaos lies something deeply human: the desire to be taken seriously, to matter, to belong.

What fascinated me most was their imagination. For them, imagination is not escapism, it is perception. When they envision epic danger, the world shifts. When they see themselves as action heroes, reality bends into cinematic spectacle. Comic-book frames erupt. Physics exaggerates. The ordinary becomes mythic.

We used animation not just as a visual tool, but as a psychological one - allowing the audience to step inside their minds. The contrast between grounded environmental reality and heightened fantasy creates a visual language that reflects how children - and dreamers - experience the world: intensely, dramatically, without moderation.

At its emotional core, this film is about self-acceptance. It's about understanding that the qualities others dismiss may be the very traits that hold transformative power. Arnie and Barney do not become heroes by changing who they are. They become heroes by fully embracing it.

The drought backdrop grounds the story in something tangible. Without becoming heavy-handed, it reminds us that imagination and responsibility are not opposites. Creativity can coexist with awareness. Humor can carry urgency.

I hope audiences laugh loudly. But I also hope they recognize something of themselves in these two ants - the insecurity, the bravado, the longing to be seen.

We set out to create a film that feels wild and unpredictable on the surface, yet sincere at its core. A film that celebrates friendship in its most chaotic form. That honors the courage it takes

to think differently. That reminds young audiences that being “too much,” “too strange,” or “too distracted” might simply mean seeing possibilities others overlook.

Because sometimes the world does not need perfect heroes. Sometimes it needs the ones brave enough to imagine something better - and reckless enough to try.

And if this story inspires even one child to trust their own way of seeing the world, then Arnie and Barney have already succeeded.

Let the adventure begin!

Sean Heuston, March 2026
Studio 100 International



8. Producer's Note by Thorsten Wegener

**“Two ants, one mission: Save the meadow. What could possibly go wrong?
(Answer: Maybe everything.)”**

From the outset, *Arnie & Barney* represented a strategic next step within the *Maya the Bee* universe: expanding a globally recognized brand while evolving its tonal and audience positioning.

The franchise has established trust with family audiences worldwide across multiple feature films and territories. This spin-off builds on that equity while targeting toward a slightly older demographic - school-aged children - without losing cross-generational appeal. The result is a film that feels fresh, contemporary and commercially agile, while remaining anchored in a proven universe.

At its core, the project leverages one of the most reliable formats in global animation: the buddy comedy. The dynamic between Arnie and Barney is fast, physical and dialogue-driven - creating humor that translates internationally. Physical comedy and exaggerated action sequences travel particularly well across markets, making the film accessible beyond language barriers and adaptable across dubbing territories.

At the same time, the narrative integrates meaningful thematic framing. The drought setting introduces environmental stakes that resonate strongly in today's marketplace. Importantly, this dimension is fully embedded within the adventure structure - it enhances emotional engagement without compromising entertainment value. Families increasingly look for content that combines fun with substance, and *Arnie & Barney* delivers both in balance.

Visually, the film stands out within the competitive family animation landscape. The stylized transitions into comic-book and action-film aesthetics create a distinctive brand signature and provide marketing advantages across trailers, posters and digital campaigns. The tonal contrast to the traditional lush *Maya the Bee* setting signals evolution while remaining within a recognizable and trusted framework.

From a portfolio perspective, *Arnie & Barney* demonstrates franchise scalability. The expanded world-building, supporting characters and tonal flexibility open clear pathways for sequels, spin-offs, and multi-platform storytelling opportunities. The characters themselves have strong identity value, making them suitable for licensing, consumer products and ancillary exploitation across key markets.

In addition, the film's brisk pacing and dense comedy support strong repeat-viewing potential - an important driver for both theatrical and streaming performance.

Ultimately, the film delivers on four essential pillars for international performance:

- Strong comedic identity
- Emotional accessibility
- Contemporary thematic relevance
- Franchise expansion capability

And most importantly, it remains highly entertaining. Because in today's market, differentiation matters - but so does joy.

Arnie & Barney confidently offers both.

Thorsten Wegener, March 2026
Studio 100 International



9. Bringing Arnie and Barney to Life: The Umbilical Brothers

The Umbilical Brothers are an international comedy phenomenon from Australia, celebrated worldwide for their uniquely inventive blend of physical theatre, vocal wizardry, and razor-sharp timing. Named among Entertainment Weekly’s “100 Most Creative People in Entertainment,” **David Collins** and **Shane Dundas** have built a global reputation for pushing the boundaries of live comedy. From sold-out theatre tours across Europe, the US and Australia to high-profile television appearances including The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, their work consistently captivates audiences of all ages with its originality and infectious energy.

Renowned for creating entire worlds using nothing but their bodies and voices, The Umbilical Brothers have mastered a performance style that combines cinematic sound effects, elastic facial expressions, and precision movement. This extraordinary skill set made them the perfect creative partners for *Arnie & Barney*. Since 2014, Collins and Dundas have served not only as the voices of the two lovable leads, but also as their full performance references, physically embodying Arnie and Barney’s distinct personalities to shape every nuance of character and comedy.

And their contribution goes even further: the dynamic duo has played an active role in developing the script, enriching the film with their unmistakable humor, inventive gags, and heartfelt warmth. Their creative DNA runs through the movie, ensuring that *Arnie & Barney* delivers comedy that feels fresh, character-driven, and universally entertaining.



10. The Legacy: Expanding the World of *Maya the Bee*

Arnie & Barney builds on a global legacy that spans five decades. First introduced to international audiences through the iconic 1970s animated television series, *Maya the Bee* quickly became a cultural phenomenon and one of the most beloved children's properties worldwide. In 2013 the brand was successfully reimagined through a contemporary CGI television series, introducing Maya and her meadow friends to a new generation. This year, Maya celebrates her 50th anniversary - a testament to the enduring strength, recognition, and emotional connection of the brand across territories and generations.

Building on this foundation, Arnie and Barney were introduced to cinema audiences in three internationally released and commercially successful feature films *Maya the Bee – First Flight* (2014), *Maya the Bee – The Honey Games* (2017), and *Maya the Bee – The Golden Orb* (2021). Within these theatrical adventures, the two members of the ant squad quickly emerged as standout characters, their comedic dynamic resonating strongly with audiences. Over the course of the trilogy, the cinematic universe was carefully expanded and emotionally anchored for contemporary family viewers.



As the franchise has grown alongside its audience, *Arnie & Barney* reflects that natural evolution. Designed as a spin-off targeting school-aged children and families, the film benefits from exceptional brand recognition while confidently stepping into a slightly more sophisticated tonal space. Through layered storytelling and subtle pop-culture references, it strengthens its four-quadrant appeal: children delight in the visual comedy and character-driven chaos, while parents appreciate and enjoy the additional layers of humor. This proven dual-address strategy ensures a shared cinematic experience across generations.

By expanding a trusted universe while refreshing its tone, *Arnie & Barney* honors its origins and confidently opens the next chapter. The spin-off stands as both a natural continuation of the *Maya the Bee* legacy and a bold, independent adventure allowing its beloved comic duo to take center stage.

11. The Project in a Nutshell

A proven franchise universe

Arnie & Barney expands the internationally successful *Maya the Bee* feature film universe, building on over a decade of global brand recognition and audience trust. The spin-off benefits from established awareness while introducing a fresh tonal direction that broadens demographic reach.

A globally translatable buddy comedy

At its core, the film is a high-energy buddy adventure driven by physical comedy, visual gags, and fast-paced dialogue. The dynamic between two unlikely heroes creates universally accessible humor that travels across territories and cultures.

Comedy remains one of the most reliable genres in international family entertainment - and *Arnie & Barney* delivers it confidently.

Contemporary environmental relevance

Set against a drought threatening the meadow's survival, the film integrates timely environmental themes in an organic and entertaining way. Water scarcity, responsibility, and community resilience provide emotional stakes without compromising the comedic tone.

The result: meaningful entertainment with global resonance. Because: **Water is Life!**

Distinctive visual identity

While rooted in the *Maya the Bee* universe, the film introduces a visually differentiated aesthetic. Stylized transitions into comic-book and action-movie sequences bring the protagonists' imagination to life and create a dynamic cinematic signature.

This visual flexibility enhances marketing materials, trailers, and promotional campaigns with standout imagery.

Cross-generational appeal

Designed for school-aged children while maintaining layered humor for parents, *Arnie & Barney* delivers a true shared family viewing experience. Subtle pop-culture references and character-driven wit strengthen its four-quadrant positioning.

Universal values

- The power of imagination: What if your wildest, most ridiculous ideas were the key to saving the world? Thinking outside the box, or beyond any rational thinking, can create real change.
- Self-confidence: You don't have to be "normal" to be a hero. Arnie, Barney, and SzzKeat are all misfits in their own way, yet they become the only ones who can save the meadow.
- Teamwork & friendship: Even if Arnie and Barney drive each other crazy, they complete each other. Their journey proves that true friendship means accepting and believing in one another's strengths.

Strong theatrical entertainment value

- Fast-paced adventure structure
- Emotional character arcs centered on self-acceptance
- Memorable supporting characters
- High replay potential driven by comedy

Franchise expansion potential

The expanded world-building, distinctive tone and strong character pairing provide clear opportunities for further instalments, serialized content, and ancillary exploitation.



12. Fun Facts & Easter Eggs

Hidden tributes, cinematic homages and playful secrets

Arnie & Barney is packed with loving tributes to film history, pop culture and animation traditions. From subtle visual gags to musical references and hidden character cameos, the film is full of details waiting to be discovered. A deep dive with director Sean Heuston and creative producer Antoine Marbach reveals some of the secrets in the film.

A post-credit surprise

Attentive fans who stay through the end credits are rewarded with a special treat: Arnie and Barney **finally perform their own song - the “Arnie & Barney Song”**. The duo is incredibly proud of it, as performing their own song in a film has always been one of their dreams.

Another track featured in the end credits is **“The Book of Life”**, performed by German singer **Celena Pieper**. She is, known for her role as Anna in the German stage production of Disney’s *Frozen – The Musical (Die Eiskönigin – Das Musical)* and for her appearance on *The Voice of Germany* as a member of Team Fanta.

The film’s score, composed by **Christopher Zirngibl**, also includes numerous musical homages - particularly to 1970s detective TV shows such as *Starsky & Hutch* as well as the classic orchestral style associated with *James Bond* films.

A mythical finale

The climactic finale of the film plays with epic cinematic imagery.

To restore water to the meadow, Arnie and Barney ultimately rely on the mysterious **“Hole of Infinite Mystery”** hidden inside their helmets. What appears to the audience as pure emptiness - a void of negative space - becomes the key to solving the crisis.

Visually, the scene makes use of dramatic **“God Ray” lighting**, with clouds parting and sunlight breaking through as the ants stand triumphantly on top of a rock. The moment intentionally echoes iconic cinematic imagery from *The Lion King*, and cinephiles might also recognize similarities to the legendary final moments of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

In another playful visual wink, the composition briefly resembles the historic photograph **“Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima”**, with the characters striking a heroic pose.

A dance scene with an ‘80s twist

One particularly memorable moment features Arnie breaking into a spontaneous dance, soon joined by Barney. Their moves were inspired by the iconic and hugely famous choreography

from the **1980s pop hit “Thriller” by Michael Jackson featuring zombies** - an amusing parallel to the hypnotized ant squad, who shuffle around like the living dead.

Villains with style

The villain Hypnita leads a hypnotic mosquito squad whose appearance and choreography deliberately evoke the iconic female band from **Robert Palmer’s music video “Addicted to Love”**.

Just moments later in the film, when Arnie and Barney themselves fall under Hypnita’s hypnotic spell on the dam, beams shoot from their eyes - a visual reference inspired by the classic **1980s arcade game Galaga**.

The sequence culminates in a surreal moment where hypnotized characters begin to resemble Arnie and Barney themselves, reflecting the duo’s playful, childlike worldview spreading through the others.

Movie references hidden throughout the adventure

Throughout the film, numerous scenes pay tribute to classic cinema:

- Shock waves rippling across the ground mirror the famous **T-Rex arrival scene in Jurassic Park**.
- A mosquito attack sequence in front of **Loggy Hollow** recalls the helicopter assault from **Apocalypse Now**.
- The chaotic neon-lit design of **Loggy Hollow** draws inspiration from the futuristic world of **Blade Runner**.
- A clever split-screen moment separating Arnie and Barney nods to **The Rules of Attraction**, followed by a cross-fade homage to **Highlander**.
- The design of the **water factory** action sequence channels the dynamic environmental choreography found in the **Jackie Chan films**, where everyday objects - ladders, tables and railings become part of the fight.

Even the villains’ headquarters follows a long-standing cinematic tradition: **many memorable movie villains often operate from bars or nightclubs** - and Legs is no exception.

Old-school animation tributes

The film also celebrates the history of animation.

When Arnie and Barney pack up their hole by simply **folding it away**, the gag directly references classic **2D cartoon logic** seen in shows such as *The Pink Panther*, *Mickey Mouse* and *Looney Tunes*.

A universe of insects

The opening sequence takes viewers into space - emphasizing just how tiny insects (and humans) are within the vast universe.

Visually, the cosmos itself forms a **sphere**, mirrored in this sequence by a **water bubble** that becomes central to the story - a “sphere within a sphere.”

The ultraviolet color palette used in the opening was chosen deliberately: **many insects actually perceive the world in ultraviolet light**, giving the sequence a biological as well as stylistic foundation.

The high-speed chase featuring SzzKeat pursued by dragonflies also plays a clear homage to the iconic trench-run style dogfights from the original **Star Wars** film.

Celebrating the world of *Maya the Bee*

As a spin-off from the beloved *Maya the Bee* franchise - with Maya celebrating her **50th anniversary this year** (in Germany*) - the film includes numerous hidden appearances of fan-favorite characters.

Maya and her loyal friend Willi appear eight times throughout the movie, inviting and encouraging attentive viewers/fans to spot each cameo.

Their first appearance comes when **Arnie and Barney wear masks of Maya and Willi** - a playful homage to the classic 1970s *Maya the Bee* television series.

Their final tribute occurs near the end of the film, when **Maya (and Willi) float on the water inside blooming flowers**.

Environmental details

The film also subtly addresses contemporary environmental issues. References to **microplastics** appear several times throughout the story - from moments when characters become entangled in plastic debris, plastic objects littering the meadows, and when animals are shown struggling with pollution.

* International 50-year anniversary in 2025

Character inspirations

Many of the film's characters were designed and shaped by distinctive creative influences:

- **SzzKeat** – inspired by Japanese and Asian aesthetics (Habuka style), she reflects the introspective creativity of modern teenagers. Her hairstyle looks as though she's always wearing headphones, and she prefers to communicate through drawing and storytelling.
- **Hypnita** – her dark, stylish appearance echoes the sleek and gothic look associated with **Kate Beckinsale in the *Underworld* films**.
- **Legs** – the criminal mastermind centipede draws inspiration from the cockney gangsters of **Guy Ritchie's *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels***.
- **Snoop** – as an insect's unusual pet, the team chose a **tardigrade**, also known as a water bear - a microscopic creature capable of surviving extreme droughts.
- **Derp** - the elderly mole cricket who runs the launderette, is a playful homage to **Mr. Miyagi from *The Karate Kid*** - and even delivers the famous **Wilhelm scream**.

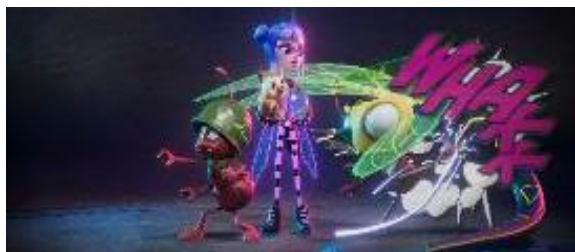
A film made by movie lovers

As director Sean Heuston and creative producer Antoine Marbach explain, the film's references were never intended as simple gimmicks. Instead, they serve as small love letters to the **films, music and pop culture** that shaped and inspired the creative team.

For attentive viewers, *Arnie & Barney* offers more than just a fast-paced adventure - it's also a **playful treasure hunt** filled with cinematic tributes, visual nods and hidden details waiting to be discovered throughout the meadow.



13. Stills



01: Arnie and Barney fight enemies alongside their comic book hero SzzKeat Scratchly – in their imagination!



02: The ant squad realizes that Arnie and Barney spilled their last drop of water.



03: Arnie and Barney imitate Maya and Willy as they defend themselves against Captain Pantz.



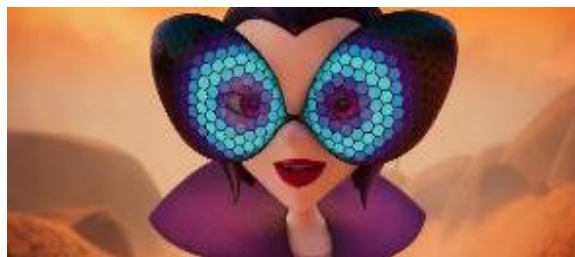
04: Arnie and Barney are ordered to search for water.



05: The ants spot Hypnita.



06: Hypnita charms Captain Pantz.



07: Now no one can resist Hypnita's hypnotic gaze.



08: Arnie checks for water.



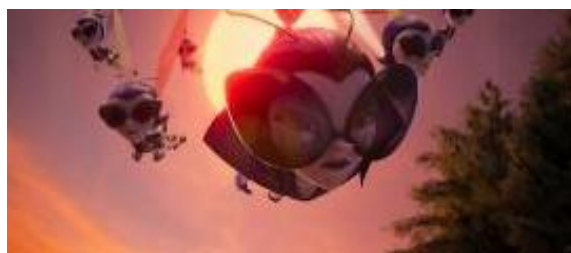
09: Arnie and Barney travel through a ... wormhole.



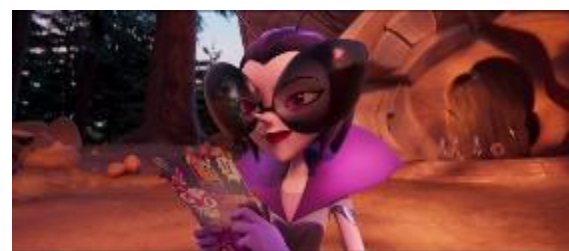
10: A band discovers the two ants on their way to a gig in Loggy Hollow.



11: The band members are not sure about those lunatics Arnie and Barney tagging along with them.



12: Just before the gate to Loggy Hollow, Hypnita and the mosquitoes attack.



13: Hypnita finds the SzzKeat Scratchly comic book.



14: In Loggy Hollow, Arnie and Barney set out to find SzzKeat Scratchly.



15: They even meet Maya and Willy in Loggy Hollow.



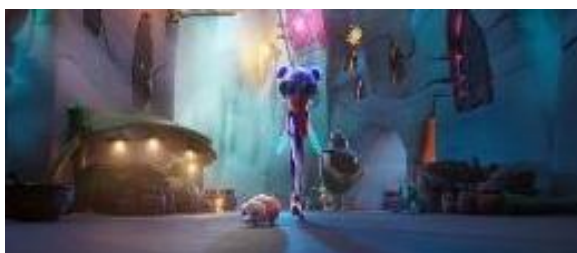
16: After finding SzzKeat/Bertha, they try to guess who could be behind the missing water.



17: Arnie and Barney face off against underworld boss Legs.



18: Arnie and Barney are forced to work in a secret water factory.



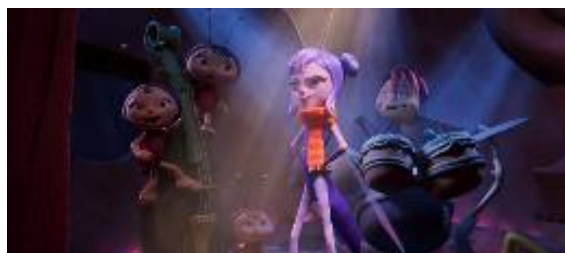
19: SzzKeat/Bertha and Snoop try to find a trail leading to the water.



20: Arnie and Barney finally understand Legs's perfidious plan with the water.



21: SzzKeat rescues Arnie and Barney from the water factory.



22: After their escape, they end up in the bar during the band's performance.



23: SzzKeat/Bertha, Snoop and Arnie and Barney must cross parched meadow in search of the water.



24: Arnie and Barney can't believe that SzzKeat and Hynnita know each other.



25: Arnie, Barney, and Snoop are desperate after their plan to climb the dam failed.



26: The villains are celebrating their victory and controlling the water.



27: Hypnita with her guards.



28: SzzKeat, Arnie and Barney oppose Hypnita and Legs.



29: Hypnita and Bertha finally making peace.



30: Game over for Legs.



31: Arnie and Barney with their big idea to open the dam.



32: Finally, Hypnita's larvae are free again!



33: Everybody is happy, the drought is over.



34: Arnie and Barney got their own comic from SzzKeat.



END