

PLAYLAND PARK

by

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EXT. SKY

The bright blue sky of a sunshiny day slowly wheels down and out of view, puffy white clouds, a large daytime crescent of the beautiful moon.

The only sound is of a young man breathing.

From the top of the screen, a horizon emerges, trees and dry bushes --

A road. An intersection on a narrow two lane highway, white stripes, cracked asphalt, grass and trees --

The sky again. A beautiful blue Texas sky.

FADE TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

MUSIC. A dark-haired young man is speeding along on a small red utility scooter.

He's handsome, and long, and his name is TOGO BELLAMY.

SUPER: SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS  
MARCH 20TH, 1948

He turns expertly down another street, and starts looking down alleyways as he goes.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Two boys, DENNY and DONNY, are carrying a struggling girl by her arms and legs down the alley. Her name is DALE. Red hair, fair features.

She is furiously struggling, her dress flying, but the boys are relentless, and stronger. She shouts. Denny looks around.

DALE

NO!

DENNY

Shut up, you little baby. Or we'll make it worse.

DALE

Stop!

DONNY

Shut up!

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

They reach a large wooden gate, the outside of someone's backyard, with an old white milk truck beside it. The tires are flat and cobwebbed, and the faded sign on the side reads "SUNSHINE DAIRY".

Denny grabs the latch on the truck, and flings open the heavy white door. Dale screams and explodes in a paroxysm, a last-ditch, furious effort --

DALE

NO! NO! DON'T!

She starts to cry as Denny and Donny shove her into the truck.

The back is full of tumbled paper milk containers, some spilled open and putrefying. Mold is everywhere, and scuttling in the dark shelves -- cockroaches. A lot of them.

Big Texas cockroaches.

The boys heave her up and push her onto the awful pile -- she puts her arm out, and it squishes into the mass of rotting milk cartons --

She screams, and fights to get out --

Denny and Donny slam the door. Dale's scream is cut off as the latch clicks and seals.

INT. MILK TRUCK - DAY

Dale is crying in the pitch black rear of the truck. There are awful gelatinous sounds of bursting containers as she struggles to her feet.

She bangs on the door.

DALE

Donny! Denny! Let me out! Let me out!

The back of the truck is silent as a tomb.

She continues to bang on the door.



BUZZY  
Come here, Lynn, you little  
stinkbug. We gotta squish you.

The other boys echo Buzzy, and Lynn has to put on an extra burst of speed to escape the reaching hands --

LYNN  
NO!

He makes it out of the wooded area and into the street, heading up between a row of houses.

Buzzy and the three other boys hit the street less than ten feet behind Lynn, pounding hard.

They're going to catch him.

Lynn is pumping and gasping in a frenzy of desperation, absolute fear driving him on --

Behind him, the four boys suddenly stop running and fall back. Lynn doesn't notice, his breathing loud and panicky.

He looks to his left, and slowly stops running, an immense look of relief on his face.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Togo and Dale pull up alongside Lynn as he comes to a stop and bends over to catch his breath.

Togo glances back at the four boys.

TOGO  
What are you doing, Buzzy? Huh?  
What are you thinking?

Buzzy is breathing hard, doesn't answer. He looks down and turns away. The other boys follow.

TOGO (CONT'D)  
You okay?

LYNN  
Sorta. Thanks.

TOGO  
Can't run forever, you know. But  
you were really cooking. Hop on.  
We gotta go look for Trouble.



ALL THREE  
 (in unison)  
 PRESTON!

Preston hears them, snaps back to reality and slams on his brakes, tires screeching --

EXT. STREET

The bumper of the Hudson taps the left handlebar of Janee's tricycle and rebounds slightly.

She looks at her reflection in the bumper, frozen, her mouth open.

TOGO  
 Preston!

Preston scrambles out of the car, leaping over the door --

PRESTON  
 Janee! You okay?

Togo parks the scooter and walks over to kneel down and check on Janee.

PRESTON (CONT'D)  
 She came right out in front of me!

TOGO  
 You okay, sis?

JANEE  
 Togo! Push me!

He pulls her off the tricycle, picks her up and hugs her.

TOGO  
 No more riding in the street,  
 Janee.

JANEE  
 (pointing)  
 Elma!

TOGO  
 Well, just turn next time. Even if  
 you go over.

PRESTON  
 I'm sorry.

TOGO  
That's all right, Preston. Dale,  
take the Janee. I gotta go get Dad.

He sets Janee down, and she waddles over to take Dale's hand.

                  PRESTON  
Hey, what time?

                  TOGO  
Gotta ask the old folk.

                  PRESTON  
You bringing Phyllis?

                  TOGO  
You bringing Marian?

Togo walks over, and starts the scooter.

                  PRESTON  
Yep. Gonna ride the Rocket.

                  TOGO  
Twice. 'Just for fun', like it  
says on the sign. Bye, guys.

                  DALE  
Bring home ice cream makings!

                  LYNN  
Chocolate chip!

                  JANEE  
Mmmm!

                  ELMA  
Can I come have some? After  
dinner?

                  TOGO  
Only if you promise not to push  
anybody's bike into the road again.

                  ELMA  
I promise.

                  TOGO  
So long, folks.

He roars off down the street.

EXT. PLAYLAND PARK - DAY

From outside the fence, The Rocket Rollercoaster rises into the deep Texas sky, the fastest and wickedest wooden roller coaster ever built.

Togo stands looking up at the Rocket. Then he heads toward a sort of a blockhouse in front of the fence, underneath a sign that reads "FORT SAM HOUSTON MEDICAL CENTER SUBSTATION".

INT. MEDICAL CENTER SUBSTATION - DAY

Togo slowly climbs down grimy steel stairs and walks through the semi-dark basement, full of boilers and piping and moisture.

INT. SUBSTATION CONTROL AREA - DAY

Togo emerges from a narrow corridor of piping and walks into the center of the control area, several consoles fitted with an incredible array of knobs and wheels.

He looks around the empty space, and then walks over to a set of swinging doors with glass panels and peers in.

INT. SUBSTATION SALT WELL ROOM - DAY

Through the grimy safety glass, a figure can be seen shoveling salt from an enormous pile into a large bucket.

As Togo pushes open the door and enters the room, the man walks over to the wall, spins open a port, empties the salt into it, and closes it.

He has white hair at forty-two. A nice-looking man, strong-looking, tall, with glasses. His name is ZILMON BELLAMY.

TOGO

Dad!

ZILMON

Ho! You scared me!

TOGO

Sorry.

ZILMON

Ah, it's that startle thing I got.  
How ya doing?

TOGO  
Came to drive you home.

ZILMON  
Not on that scooter contraption.  
You'd better just head on home.

TOGO  
I'll walk with you.

ZILMON  
All right. Let me check out.

EXT. ALAMO DRIVE -DAY

Togo is wheeling the scooter alongside Zilmon.

ZILMON  
I don't see it.

TOGO  
Dad, they got more business than  
they can handle with rebuilds.  
Everybody's putting in the new  
eights. The straight eight is gonna  
change everything. Preston and  
J.J. are in. And it's money. Just  
a couple of nights a week.

ZILMON  
Togo, it could turn out to be just  
like the Navy. You're too young.  
It's not your time yet.

TOGO  
Dad --

A shout erupts from across the street somewhere. BILL GEORGE  
and his friend BERLY WAYFIELD are walking towards Togo and  
his father. They look big and rough.

BILL  
Buck! Hey Buck! Bu-uuuck!

This elicits a snicker from Berly. Zilmon looks up at the  
first shout, and then turns away nervously.

TOGO  
Who's that?

ZILMON  
Damn Bill George and Berly  
Wayfield.

BILL  
 Bucky-boy! Is that your whelp  
 there? Is that little Buck? Is he  
 the Buck-boy?

Berly howls with laughter. Zilmon's face has turned red.

BILL (CONT'D)  
 I told you I was gonna get you.

BERLY  
 He told you.

BILL  
 And now, I got you.

BERLY  
 Gwine to git yer ass kicked hard.  
 Hee!

The pair of men have crossed the street and drawn closer to Zilmon and Togo.

TOGO  
 You better just leave us alone.

ZILMON  
 Togo --

BILL  
 All right, Buck. Here it comes.

Bill pulls off his shirt, and flexes, hopping from foot to foot. He looks cruel and dangerous.

TOGO  
 Dad --

BERLY  
 Git out the way while your pa gits  
 his balls stomped, boy!

ZILMON  
 Togo, just go on home. Now.

BILL  
 Too late.

Bill reaches out like lightning and backhands Zilmon in the face. Zilmon's glasses fly off and he stumbles backward.

TOGO  
 Dad!

Togo drops the scooter and hits Bill George from the side, hard, like a football tackler. He drives Bill back ten feet, into the street, and then starts throwing punches.

Bill dodges a few, catches a few, and starts to realize he's in a fight.

By then, it's too late. Togo is pouring out a fury of fists, hitting Bill in the face, the gut, the throat --

Bill falls backwards and hits the ground, stunned. Togo kicks him, hard.

TOGO (CONT'D)

You don't ever hit my dad! Hear?

Togo follows Bill as the man scrambles back, aiming kick after kick at him, his power seeming to increase every second, until Bill finally turns and flees at full speed for his life.

Togo turns to Berly, who puts up his hands halfheartedly. Togo shoves him backwards, hard, and soon Berly is fleeing behind Bill.

BILL

I'll kill you for this! I'll kill you!

Togo watches the two men like a hawk, breathing hard. After a moment, he turns back to his father with concern.

TOGO

Dad! You okay?

ZILMON

I'm sorry you had to see that.

TOGO

He hit you!

ZILMON

And you hit him back! I've never seen anything -- you chased two full grown men off like they were little kids.

TOGO

I couldn't let him hit you like that.

ZILMON

Well, howdy. Maybe you are grown up. That was a sight.

TOGO

You okay?

ZILMON

I'm fine.

Togo picks up the scooter, and they smile at each other as they start walking home again.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE - NIGHT

'Truth Or Consequences' is playing on the big wooden radio. Cicadas are singing outside, a light breeze, a beautiful night through the open front door.

From the front porch comes the sound of a hand-cranked ice cream maker.

Zilmon is sitting in an easy chair, reading a book. Lynn and Dale are sitting on the floor, absorbed in the program.

Outside, the cranking stops; after a moment, DEBBIE BELLAMY comes through the door carrying the big steel container.

She's thirty seven, a little overweight, pretty, with red hair and an intelligent face. A Mom.

She smiles brightly at Zilmon.

DEBBIE

Peach, honey.

Zilmon glances up from his book and smiles back at her.

ZILMON

My favorite. Mmm.

A commercial on the radio releases Lynn from his trance; he hurls himself toward the kitchen.

LYNN

Ice cream! Ice cream!

Dale follows, and then Zilmon. Togo comes through the front door, carrying the mixing blades wrapped in a white towel.

He can't get past anybody, stuck at the kitchen entrance, and the blades start to drip.

TOGO

Hey! I'm dripping!

Zilmon turns around and moves aside.

ZILMON

Make room, make room! Here comes  
the ice cream maker himself!

Togo squeezes by. As he does, Trouble the dog darts in through the front door, runs over and licks at the ice cream drips.

TOGO

Dog!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Debbie is dishing ice cream from the steel container into bowls. Togo is standing next to her, washing the blade assembly in the sink.

TOGO

I've got to get going soon.  
Meeting Preston at Playland Park.

Lynn gets the first bowl, and shouts through the first mouthful.

LYNN

Playland Park!

DEBBIE

Well, that's good. Lynn and Dale  
will have a great time.

TOGO

What? But I gotta -- I'm going on  
the scooter.

DEBBIE

No, you're not. Not in the dark.  
It's close enough to walk.

TOGO

But I have to go pick up --

DEBBIE

Phyllis won't mind. She'll  
understand. That's a nice young  
lady, better hold on to her.

Togo finishes the blades and lays them down to dry on a kitchen towel spread on the counter.

TOGO

She is something, huh?

DEBBIE

And don't you just abandon those children in that park.

TOGO

Mom. Uhh. All right.

DEBBIE

And I don't like you zipping around on that contraption. That thing's dangerous.

TOGO

Mom, it only goes twenty-five or so.

DEBBIE

Mm-mm.

TOGO

Besides, that's not how I'm gonna die anyway. I've seen it, you know, in a dream. I'm gonna be flying through the air when it happens, and they're not gonna be able to find me. They'll say I'm somewhere, but I won't be there. I'll be somewhere else. You can bet on that. And I'll be a ghost.

DEBBIE

Togo, you're crazy. And that scooter is crazier.

TOGO

Aw, mom.

LYNN

Crazy!

Debbie gives the biggest bowl to Zilmon, who turns to go back in the living room.

ZILMON

Thanks, darlin'.

DEBBIE

You're welcome. Togo's going to take Lynn and Dale to Playland Park in a little bit, and Ardys is picking up Janee at eight.

ZILMON

Sounds like heaven.

He gives her a secret smile, walks back into the living room.

DEBBIE

Togo, let me get my purse.

She leaves the kitchen; Togo grabs the last bowl and follows her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ZILMON

Watch out for that roller coaster, boy. I watched two sand bags come flying out of those cars yesterday. I heard from a guy who was helping build it last year that Jimmy Johnson drew the whole thing up on a placemat. It's totally experimental.

TOGO

Yeah, it's gonna be great.

Togo sits on a hassock.

LYNN

I'm gonna ride the Rocket!

DALE

I'm not. I won't.

ZILMON

Well, that's just fine, Dale. Be your own person. You'll live longer. Than others.

He gives Togo a look.

Debbie returns from a bedroom and hands Togo several dollars.

TOGO

Wow.

DEBBIE

Just -- make it last.

She sits down in a chair next to Zilmon, who leans forward a little, hearing something on the radio --

ZILMON

All right, let's hear the question. Everybody pipe down.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Togo, Lynn and Dale are walking along a barely-lit street, the brightest light shed by the full moon.

Dale and Togo walk side by side, while Lynn zips around them.

LYNN  
Why do we have to take her?

TOGO  
She's the only reason we're going.

LYNN  
Because she's your girlfriend. And you kiss her and stuff.

DALE  
You're such a little kid.

TOGO  
Because she's my girlfriend. And when I kiss her, it feels like fire.

LYNN  
Eww. That's asgusting.

EXT. PHYLLIS CHILD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Togo stands on the porch, waiting. Lynn and Dale are standing down the steps on the sidewalk behind him.

The door opens, and PHYLLIS CHILDS emerges. She's red-headed, green-eyed, and quite beautiful.

TOGO  
Hi.

PHYLLIS  
Hi. I'm ready now. Sorry to make you wait.

TOGO  
Not a problem.

LYNN  
It took like forever.

Dale smacks him on the arm.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
Ow!

TOGO

Shall we go? Sorry, I don't have  
my chariot.

PHYLLIS

I always want to walk with you.

They walk down the steps, and all of them head for the  
street.

LYNN

That really hurt.

DALE

Well, be nice then.

LYNN

Ow.

EXT. NEAR PLAYLAND PARK - NIGHT

Togo and Phyllis hold hands as they walk behind Dale and  
Lynn, who are captivated by the amazing explosion of light  
emanating from the amusement park.

Far to the rear of the park, the lights of the Rocket  
rollercoaster tower over everything else.

A car has just reached the top of the main hill, and is  
inching over the drop. The four stop to watch it.

Screams from the car echo across the park as it plunges.

LYNN

Look at that. Wow. We gotta hurry!

He starts to run.

DALE

Lynn!

TOGO

Lynn! Wait up!

Lynn slows up.

LYNN

Look! We gotta hurry!

TOGO

Okay, okay.

He smiles at Phyllis, and they start to run a little, still holding hands.

Dale speeds up as well, her eyes on the lights of the park.

EXT. PLAYLAND PARK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Togo is pocketing his change as he hands the tickets to the attendant. The four walk through the extremely well-lit, early-psychedelic gate into Playland Park.

                  TOGO  
Where first?

                  LYNN  
What do you mean?

                  DALE  
I'm not going on the roller  
coaster.

                  TOGO  
Not even once?

Dale just shakes her head.

                  TOGO (CONT'D)  
Well, all right. We'll go once  
with Lynn, and you can watch.

                  LYNN  
Why are we not walking?

Phyllis touches Togo on his shoulder, and they lock eyes.

Without another word, they follow Lynn and Dale toward the Rocket.

EXT. ROCKET ROLLERCOASTER - NIGHT

Lynn is sitting forward in the front car, absolute glee on his face. Togo and Phyllis are sitting behind him.

Togo waves at Dale, who is standing at the entrance to the ride.

                  TOGO  
We shall return! Change your mind!

Dale shakes her head no and waves back, a little sadly.

TOGO (CONT'D)

Lynn, are you sure you want the front? You haven't been on this thing before, but I have, and it's got some rough spots.

LYNN

No, I have to be in the front!

TOGO

All right.

PHYLLIS

Hold on tight.

Togo gives her a secret look, and slips his arm around her.

TOGO

Okay.

The airbrake releases, and the car slides smoothly into a long, dark tunnel.

Everything becomes pitch black. Someone in a rear car yells; a girl screams --

When the car emerges from the tunnel, Togo and Phyllis are kissing.

Lynn is gripping the front rail of the car, face working in a manic frenzy.

SNICK-SNICK-SNICK as the drive chain catches the car, which begins to ascend with a jerk.

Togo and Phyllis break their kiss, and smile at each other before looking around at the emerging vista of the city.

Lynn looks around, and then down, and then back up the hill. He slowly becomes a little less gleeful and a little more fearful.

SNICK-SNICK-SNICK and the car climbs past the endless lighted bars to the top of the hill. Togo and Phyllis are holding each other; Lynn looks panicky.

LYNN

This is too high! This is way too high!

TOGO

Hold on, Lynn! Just hold on tight!

LYNN

Wait. Wait -- no -- I don't like  
this! I don't want to go! Togo!

As the car edges over the drop, Lynn's face becomes a rictus of total terror, and a strange keening emits from him.

TOGO

Don't worry, Lynn! You're okay!  
You'll be okay!

The car plunges, and Lynn SCREAMS, a high shriek of a scream that echoes for years as the car disappears into the darkness.

EXT. ROCKET, NEAR THE END OF THE RIDE - NIGHT

Togo and Phyllis are gripping the steel side rings as the riders catch air in the final five waves, laughing.

Lynn has a death-grip on his ring, his white face evidence of the near-death trauma he has experienced -- each time he rises from his seat a little, he yells through gritted teeth.

EXT. ROCKET, LOADING PLATFORM - NIGHT

The car pulls in and stops with a rush of compressed air.

Lynn slowly releases his grip, and his face begins to relax a little.

Behind him, Togo and Phyllis are smiling at each other. Togo brushes her cheek with the back of his hand --

They're in love.

Lynn stumbles weakly up and out of the front seat.

TOGO

Hey, little brother, you all right?

LYNN

I'm alive.

PHYLLIS

Pretty scary, huh.

LYNN

No. I wasn't scared. You were  
scared.



LYNN

I liked it. I want to go again.

DENNY

I want to go.

DONNY

Me, too.

DENSON

Listen, Togo -- why don't you let Dale and Lynn stay with us, and we'll meet you back here in an hour or so? I'm sure you want to take Phyllis over to the Ridee-o.

TOGO

Uh, sure. All right. Thanks.

PHYLLIS

Are you sure, Mr. Ellerbee? We don't mind having Lynn along.

BETTY

You two just head off, now. We'll catch up to you in a little bit.

Phyllis smiles at Betty as she takes Togo's hand. They walk away slowly.

LYNN

Let's go!

BETTY

Wait, boys -- Gene and Bobby want to go on the boats. We'll come back and pick you up in awhile, all right? Be good.

DENNY AND DONNY

We will!

Lynn races ahead of Denny and Donny up the platform. Denson and Betty smile at each other as they walk over to buy tickets for the boys.

EXT. RIDEE-O, PLAYLAND PARK - NIGHT

Togo and Phyllis are just exiting the ride, a little breathless, holding hands.

The moon hangs in the sky, bright and huge. They half-run together down the walkway, and disappear behind a hedge.

EXT. HEDGE - CONTINUOUS

Phyllis pulls Togo in a quick circle and out of sight, and then presses against him with great passion -- he responds.

PHYLLIS

I'm so glad you couldn't get into the navy.

TOGO

Phyl --

PHYLLIS

All right.

They look deeply into each other's eyes, and then begin to kiss again.

EXT. PLAYLAND PARK - NIGHT

Lynn tags after Denny and Donny as they approach an attraction called 'The Hickory Dickory Dock Clock', a oversized and cartoonish grandfather clock with large screens set in the body and face.

An elegantly painted sign on the front reads "HANDS OFF" in friendly letters.

DENNY

Ho hey Lynn, ya gotta see this.

As they pull closer to the giant clock, something is moving inside.

DONNY

White rats. An army of 'em.

Lynn peers past the screens, astonished to see that the interior of the clock is a habitat for large numbers of white rats of all sizes.

The hands of the clock are being turned by a large connected exercise wheel on which several of the rodents are running.

DENNY

Lookit that. See that big one down on the bottom ledge?

Lynn puts his face closer.

DENNY (CONT'D)

That's a momma rat. And do you see what she's doing?

LYNN  
What?

DONNY  
Ewww.

DENNY  
She's got a litter of babies, see  
'em? See what she's doing to 'em?

LYNN  
Licking at them?

DENNY  
Naw, Lynn. She's eating 'em.  
She's eating her own babies.

Lynn reels away from the clock in disgust and shock as the two older boys laugh harshly.

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE, PLAYLAND PARK - NIGHT

Denson, Betty, Bobby, Gene and Dale are walking up to the entrance.

BETTY  
This is it, isn't it? The  
attendant said --

DENSON  
We'll just have to wait awhile.

A door on the side of the building swings open, and Denny and Donny emerge, laughing. A sharp sound of compressed air -- their hair is blown up.

DALE  
Where's Lynn?

Denny and Donny stop laughing, and look at her. Seeing their parents behind Dale, they both straighten up and try to look serious.

DENNY  
I dunno, he's back in there  
somewhere.

DONNY  
He's a little baby.

Without a word, Dale walks over to the ticket attendant, digging in a pocket of her dress. She finds a nickel, takes her ticket, and walks up to the entranceway.

DENSON

Boys, you shouldn't have left him  
in there. Dale, you should let me  
go get him.

Dale turns to look back at Denson -- and then without a word,  
turns back to contemplate the entrance.

She takes a deep breath, and walks in through the narrow  
passageway.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE, PLAYLAND PARK

Dale follows a twisting corridor that leads to a swinging  
blackout door. She hesitates, and then pushes it open.

DALE

Lynn?

She hears muffled sobbing, far away -- she steps into the  
darkness, and lets the door close behind her.

INT. BLACKOUT ROOM, HAUNTED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Not a thing can be seen. Dale steps forward, and as the door  
closes, she hears Lynn more clearly. She begins to shuffle  
toward him in the absolute blackness.

DALE

Lynn?

The crying grows a little louder. She zeroes in on it, her  
footsteps becoming more sure --

DALE (CONT'D)

Lynn, talk to me!

LYNN

I'm over here.

She follows his sounds and finds him sitting somewhere in the  
middle of the endless dark.

DALE

C'mon.

LYNN

They turned me around, and there  
were ghosts, and there's a thing  
that shoots air, and I couldn't  
see, and they just left me here.

DALE  
I know. C'mon.

Various sounds of their cautious progress --

A BLAST OF AIR. Lynn yells.

A FLYING GHOST -- Lynn SCREAMS in terror, and in the dim light shed by the ghost figure, he clutches Dale and tries to hide.

DALE (CONT'D)  
Lynn, it's just a sheet on a wire.  
Don't be scared.

LYNN  
They said -- they said it was a man who had died here, and they let him be the ghost, but that he sometimes takes the little kids --

DALE  
Denny and Donny were just trying to make you scared. You know that.

The light increases as they make their way around a corner and into the main part of the Haunted House.

DALE (CONT'D)  
All right, we're through the worst part. Now, just follow me. Stay close. And don't worry, it's all just machines.

LYNN  
Okay.

They advance into the Haunted House.

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE - NIGHT

As Dale and Lynn emerge from the rear door, a blast of compressed air blows Dale's skirt up.

She ignores it. Holding Lynn's hand, she stalks over to stand in front of Denny.

DALE  
You're a mean boy.

DENSON  
Dale, it's just a show. There's nothing in there to hurt him.

DALE  
We're going to find Togo.

BETTY  
Now, Dale --

DENSON  
Dale, just hold on --

But Dale has already left, walking away from the Ellerbee family with a purpose, towing Lynn behind her.

EXT. OUTSIDE PLAYLAND PARK - NIGHT

Togo has his arm around Phyllis as they slowly stroll along in the darkness, the lights of the park still blazing behind them.

Lynn and Dale are lagging behind, quiet, sad.

LYNN  
I can't believe it's all over.

Togo stops, and swings around to look at him.

TOGO  
I'm sorry, little brother. I should have been there with you. Would'na happened.

DALE  
They're family. You're supposed to be able to trust them.

TOGO  
Yeah, but Denny and Donny just take it all the way, all the time, don't they?

DALE  
Yes. They do.

Togo turns to walk again.

TOGO  
Man. That Rocket.

PHYLLIS  
That thing was so fast.

LYNN  
I loved it. When I grow up, I'm gonna live on a rollercoaster.

DALE  
Barffff. All the time.

LYNN  
Na-uh. Not me. Everybody else  
might throw up, but not me. I'm  
strong.

PHYLLIS  
Yes, you are. I've never made it  
through that Haunted House, not  
ever.

TOGO  
Look at that beautiful moon.

They all look up at the hard brilliance of the full Texas  
moon.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Sunday morning with the Bellamys -- pancakes, eggs, bacon,  
biscuits, orange juice, coffee. Light music from the radio.

The Sunday San Antonio Light is spread around in sections.  
Debbie is reading the The American Weekly supplement, Zilmon  
the front page, Lynn and Dale the comics.

Janee sits on the floor, tracing circles in the carpeting.

Togo is sitting back in a chair, watching his father.

TOGO  
Dad.

ZILMON  
Not now.

TOGO  
Earl's supposed to pick us up at  
noon.

ZILMON  
That's fine. Not a school night.

TOGO  
I can do it. I can do both.

ZILMON  
Not now. You're just gonna have to  
wait.

Togo stands up.

TOGO

I can't wait. I have to make my way. I have -- responsibilities.

ZILMON

Oh, what responsibilities do you have? You're just a kid. You can't even know what that word means. You just get to play all day.

TOGO

I don't play, I work. I work hard. And now a way comes along for me to make a living, and you won't let me do what I need to do.

ZILMON

You're not ready. The answer is no.

TOGO

You won't let me be a man. But I am. I already am.

He storms out of the house, slamming the front door.

DEBBIE

Zilmon, you need to go talk to that boy.

ZILMON

He'll cool off. In the end, he'll see the wisdom of waiting for things.

DEBBIE

Sometimes -- some things can't wait.

Zilmon gives her a look, and then buries himself in the paper.

Debbie sighs, and looks toward the closed front door after her son.

EXT. BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Togo is walking off down the street, into the world.

EXT. DUFFECK HOUSE - DAY

A blonde-headed young man wearing greasy coveralls stands up from behind a well-polished 1938 Hupmobile convertible. His name is J.J. DUFFECK, sixteen, friendly face.

The garage door is open, and standing in it are Togo, Preston, and EARL BROWN, older than the other boys, about twenty or so. He's also wearing coveralls, and is smoking a cigarette.

J.J.  
Looks good to me.

EARL  
Ready to time it?

J.J.  
Sure.

EARL  
Hey, you guys want to cruise with us, take it down the old Texas highway, see what it can do?

PRESTON  
Yeah, sure. That sounds great. Togo?

TOGO  
Well -- why not. Sure.

EARL  
I'll buy the beer. J.J., we should clean the contacts real quick.

J.J.  
I hope getting compression back on five cuts down the vibration a little.

TOGO  
It's that long crankshaft.

EARL  
Hey, nothing wrong with a long crankshaft.

They laugh.

EXT. NOGALITOS ROAD, OLD TEXAS HIGHWAY - DAY

MUSIC PLAYS as the Hupmobile speeds down the two-lane highway. J.J. is driving, with Earl next to him; Preston and Togo are in the rear seat.

Togo watches the rural scrub pass by, the sun in his face, peaceful, happy.

EXT. NOGALITOS ROAD - DAY

As the car is speeding along, the engine suddenly dies, and J.J. pulls the car over to the shoulder.

J.J.  
Damn. What was that?

EARL  
Well, it didn't sound like it blew or anything. I think it's the distributor.

J.J.  
I don't want to work on it here.  
Dangerous.

He looks down the highway.

J.J. (CONT'D)  
There's a gas station about half a mile down. We should just push it there.

EARL  
He might have the tools. Maybe a meter. Wouldn't take long.

Without a word, everyone piles out of the car and starts to push the car. J.J. steers, Togo takes the left rear, Preston the right rear, and Earl the passenger door.

Within moments, they're clipping along.

INT. BILL GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

On a dirty bed in the back bedroom of this nightmarish, squalid hovel, Bill George Junior is sneaking whiskey from a small bottle.

BAM. BAM. The door flexes, and the walls shake with the power of the knock.

BILL JR.

What?

BILL

Open this goddamn door, or I'll  
bust it off the hinges.

Bill Jr. stands up unsteadily, and unlocks the door.

The door flies open, revealing Bill George on a full-fledged drunk.

BILL (CONT'D)

Don't you ever close this door to  
me, you little shit. Your mother  
used to try that.

Bill Jr. looks down at the floor.

Bill Sr. looks up at the ceiling, and then turns and staggers  
out of the room.

Loud vomiting sounds echo through the house, as Bill Sr.  
staggers into the bathroom.

Bill Jr. looks from side to side quickly, a tic that betrays  
a desperate need to escape.

The vomiting continues for awhile as Bill thinks.

The sounds fade.

BILL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(from the bathroom)

You're getting a damned whippin'  
for that, you hear me? Don't you  
ever close a door to me!

Bill George Sr. can be heard staggering to his feet, slamming  
the bathroom door open, unbuckling his belt --

Bill Jr. rabbits. He grabs his wallet and makes a run for  
it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bill Jr. turns the corner and heads for the front door. Bill  
Sr. staggers forward, stepping into one of the many piles of  
vomit in the living room, slips --

Bill Jr. flings open the front door and plunges out into the  
beautiful Texas daylight.

Behind him, Bill Sr. struggles to stand upright, fails, and cries out.

BILL  
Don't you leave! Don't you leave!

EXT. GEORGE HOUSE - DAY

Bill Jr. has made it to the car, an older Ford. He climbs in to the driver's seat, and quickly hotwires the ignition -- he's done this before.

The car starts, and Bill Jr. throws it in gear and guns it just as Bill Sr. makes it to the front porch.

With a spin from one rear wheel, the car lurches off down the street.

Bill Sr. stands drunkenly on the porch, barely able to stand, stains running down his shirt.

BILL  
My boy.

INT. FORD - DAY

Bill Jr. keeps the car on the road with one hand while he searches for something under the seat with the other.

He finds it -- a small bottle of whiskey.

A stoned grin breaks out on his face -- victory! -- and he almost loses control of the car as he unscrews the lid of the bottle.

EXT. FORD - DAY

The Ford leaves a trail of dust as it rips down the residential street.

EXT. NOGALITOS ROAD - DAY

The four young men have the Hupmobile moving along, J.J. steering the car along the flat shoulder of the road.

TOGO  
Hey, J.J. --

J.J.  
Yeah?



PRESTON  
Hey, car comin'.

They all glance back --

EXT. NOGALITOS ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Bill George is trying hard to keep it together as he rockets down the freeway, barely under control.

EXT. NOGALITOS ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Togo turns back to pushing again. J.J. steers the car as far over on the shoulder as he can.

EXT. NOGALITOS ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Bill George sees the four young men pushing the car on the side of the road --

He steers away from them, over corrects, and hurtles directly toward them, trying to get off the shoulder and back on the road --

EXT. NOGALITOS ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Togo looks back one last time, as the Ford driven by Bill George Jr. hits him hard, smashes the left rear fender, rakes the left side of the Hupmobile, hits J.J. hard, breaking the driver's side door off --

EXT. NOGALITOS ROAD - CONTINUOUS

In SLOW MOTION -- Earl and Preston fall away from the other side of the car as J.J. and Togo are catapulted into the blue Texas sky, spinning slowly.

EXT. SKY, TOGO'S P.O.V.

Only the sound of Togo breathing can be heard as the bright blue sky wheels down --

Trees, an intersection, then the cracked asphalt of the highway --

The accident, seen from above -- Bill George Jr.'s car has sheared past the Hupmobile, shock on the faces of Earl and Preston --

The horizon wheels up again, a glimpse of a spinning J.J., trees --

The sky. A beautiful sky of little puffy clouds in the sunshine, wheeling by --

When the road rotates into view again, the accident is far behind, and the ground is much closer.

Everything is upside-down --

CRUNCH.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. NOGALITOS ROAD, TOGO'S P.O.V.

Togo is lying on his back, looking up into the blue. Preston's face looks down on him, saying something -- Togo can barely hear him.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. AMBULANCE, TOGO'S P.O.V.

A young ambulance medic looks down on Togo, worried. Preston is also there, still talking, still inaudible.

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

The TELEPHONE RINGS, at least a couple of times.

Debbie walks into the living room and answers it.

DEBBIE

Yes?

She listens.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Speaking.

She listens for a moment -- then her hand flies up to cover her mouth.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)  
Oh my god. Oh my god.

She struggles not to faint.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)  
Zilmon!

She sinks to the carpet, still holding the phone.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

A bus pulls out from the stop, revealing Zilmon, Debbie, Dale, and Lynn standing in a line, all looking forward, all somewhat dressed up, as if going to church.

ZILMON  
We have to go -- this way.

He turns and leads the family down the sidewalk.

INT. FORT SAM HOUSTON ARMY BASE HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

Dale and Lynn sit in heavy, metal chairs that line the edge of the lobby.

Zilmon and Debbie are arguing with the RECEPTIONIST, an older woman dressed in a nurse's outfit.

ZILMON  
They clearly said this hospital.

RECEPTIONIST  
I've triple-checked now, sir.

ZILMON  
Where else would he be?

Debbie's hand flies to her mouth.

DEBBIE  
Oh.

ZILMON  
What?

DEBBIE

Togo said this would happen. He said when he died, they would say he was somewhere, but he wouldn't be there, but that he would be a --

She stops, horrified at the memory.

RECEPTIONIST

I could try calling Baptist M & S.

ZILMON

Please.

INT. SAN ANTONIO CITY BUS - DAY

Lynn presses his face against the dusty window, watching the streets roll by.

INT. BAPTIST MEDICAL AND SURGICAL HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

Dale and Lynn are again sitting in chairs that line the lobby.

Debbie and Zilmon are leaning together over a counter, speaking with another RECEPTIONIST.

DEBBIE

Can we see him? I need to see him.

ZILMON

Do you know how it happened?

RECEPTIONIST

I don't, sir. Please have a seat, and I'll buzz the attending physician and get him to talk to you.

Debbie and Zilmon continue to stare at her for a moment, and then they slowly turn away to sit down near Dale and Lynn.

INT. BAPTIST M & S, HALLWAY - DAY

Zilmon, Debbie, Dale and Lynn follow a young DOCTOR down a long, white hallway.

Each member of the family glances into every doorway they pass -- and each of them flinches.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE ROOM - DAY

Zilmon and Debbie stand to Togo's left, Dale and Lynn on the other. The Doctor stands at the end of the bed, holding the chart.

Togo is utterly pale, his head wrapped in a heavy bandage with tubes emerging. He's barely breathing.

DOCTOR

We had to operate as soon as he arrived, in an attempt to relieve the swelling. He did not arrive until over an hour after the injury occurred, which is unfortunate in these cases.

DEBBIE

The car -- hit him?

DOCTOR

Yes, but the injuries from the impact are minor. He was thrown a great distance, though, and landed on his head. That injury is severe.

Debbie breaks down. Zilmon takes her by her arms, and walks her from the room. The Doctor helps.

Lynn stands immobile, his eyes fixed on Togo. Dale moves to help her mother; but then turns back to Lynn.

DALE

Are you all right?

LYNN

Sure.

DALE

Let's go.

LYNN

I'm right behind you.

Dale frowns, and leaves the room.

Lynn bends closer to Togo, and whispers.

LYNN (CONT'D)

I know you can hear me.

Togo does not respond.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
 It's a good gag. You got everybody  
 going but me. Mom's getting mad,  
 though. You gotta get up now.

Silence.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
 Togo. Get up. C'mon.

Lynn peers closer at Togo's face, and then reaches over and pinches his nose.

Togo doesn't move at all.

Lynn climbs up on the hospital bed, astride Togo, and peers directly into Togo's face.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
 I know you're faking. I know  
 you're faking! I know you're  
 faking!

He reaches out and lightly slaps Togo's face from either side as he continues to yell --

Lynn is still shouting when a shocked nurse and the young doctor pull him off his brother.

EXT. BUS STOP - LATE AFTERNOON

A bus pulls away to reveal Debbie, Dale and Lynn. Debbie's face is ashen; the kids look lost, and worried about their mother.

INT. BAPTIST M & S WAITING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Zilmon sits alone, hunched over, hands clasped and clenched.

The sound of a door -- he looks up -- nothing.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Debbie sits by the phone, alone, suffering.

It RINGS.

She picks it up and listens for a moment, and then puts the phone down without a word.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, FRONT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Janee and Dale are asleep on the bed on either side of their maternal grandmother, CLIFF BROWN MCGRAW, sleeping also.

She is in her late sixties, and looks a little like one would expect a wild-west frontier grandmother to look.

The bedroom door opens -- Debbie gently steps through and whispers in the dim light.

DEBBIE

Mama? Mama?

Cliff wakes and sits up carefully so as not to wake the girls.

CLIFF

Deb? Is everything all right?

DEBBIE

Mama, Togo's gone.

Cliff slides off the end of the bed, and moves to hug Debbie.

CLIFF

Oh, baby.

Debbie collapses into deep, muffled sobbing as Cliff leads her from the room, glancing back at the two sleeping girls.

The door closes gently, and dampens the sound of Debbie's utter misery.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Zilmon waits for the bus.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO BUSINESS DISTRICT - NIGHT

Zilmon walks alone down a dark street.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Zilmon walks.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, REAR BEDROOM - MORNING

Debbie awakens to a pleasant morning breeze through white cotton curtains.

Her eyes open.

She LEAPS from the bed, runs across the hallway to Togo's room, and flings open the door.

Empty.

She SCREAMS, the primal scream of a mother who has lost her child.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Dale walks in to find Debbie sitting at the kitchen table, with a blank gaze.

She looks terrible.

DALE  
Mama? Where's Lynn and Janie?

DEBBIE  
I don't know.

DALE  
Are we going to be okay?

DEBBIE  
I don't know.

Debbie lapses into silence. Dale watches her mother's face.

INT. RIEBE FUNERAL CHAPEL - DAY

'Nearer My God To Thee' plays on a mournful organ. Debbie and Zilmon are sitting with Dale and Lynn a few rows back. Dale has Janee on her lap.

Debbie's face is hidden by a black veil, and a lowered head.

Zilmon looks very calm.

JANEY GROSS, Dale's fifteen year-old cousin, sits down next to Lynn.

JANEY  
I'm so sorry.

DALE  
Thanks.

JANEY  
Do you want to go sit on the porch?

DALE

Mom?

Debbie does not respond.

DALE (CONT'D)

Dad?

ZILMON

Sure. Don't get lost. I'll take  
Janee.

Janee hops off her sister's lap and hugs her father.

DALE

Lynn?

LYNN

No way.

Dale and Janey Gross get up, and Dale follows her cousin out and down the aisle toward the exit.

As Dale passes, she nods at barely-known relatives. Brothers and sisters of Zilmon and Debbie and their children, other hardy older folk -- and the Ellerbees, including Denny and Donny, who nod respectfully at Dale as she passes.

She stops when she sees Phyllis Childs. They look at each other for a long moment.

Dale nods mutely to Phyllis, and walks through an archway into the lobby of the funeral home. She looks to her left.

Something makes her stop, as Janey continues on to the porch.

A doorway. Something strange.

Dale turns and walks to the doorway, which is small -- she has to crouch to go through, which she does.

EXT. TEXAS DESERT SCRUBLAND - NIGHT

She emerges from the doorway to stand next to a strange hill, with an entrance to some sort of chamber carved into it.

The circular entrance is ringed by organ keys, and something about it looks vaguely like the entrance to Playland Park.

Dale walks forward, and through the entrance.

INT. ORGAN HOUSE - NIGHT

A very large organ fills one entire side of a large subterranean room. Beneath the keyboard are row after row of heavy wooden drawers.

A table sits in the center of the room. At the table, lying with his head down --

Togo.

DALE

Togo, I can fix you. I just have to find the parts.

Togo remains motionless.

DALE (CONT'D)

Just hold on. I'll fix you.

She runs over to the organ, and starts opening the drawers, pulling out various replacement body parts, lying them on the ground behind her.

She opens drawer after drawer, unable to find what she's looking for.

DALE (CONT'D)

I know I can fix you, Togo. I know I can. I can fix you --

INT. FRONT BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Dale awakens from the nightmare, crying, sitting straight up in her bed.

Her grandmother Cliff stirs, leans up on one elbow, and pats her shoulder.

CLIFF

You had a dream.

DALE

I can't fix him.

CLIFF

No one can, baby. Only god.

DALE

Why would god do this?

CLIFF

I have no idea, honey. He was a good boy. Maybe god needed someone really, really good to do something somewhere else.

DALE

You think?

CLIFF

He was a good boy.

DALE

I can't believe he's gone.

She cries a little harder, and Cliff sits up and puts her arms around her.

CLIFF

Did I ever tell you about when my mother and father died, back in Arkansas?

DALE

No.

CLIFF

Well -- I was about your age, twelve or so. And both of 'em caught the croup one winter, and nothing to help it. They both died within days of each other, and that left me in charge of my nine brothers and sisters.

DALE

Nine? Really? What did you do?

CLIFF

I knew we had family in Denton, so I packed up the wagon with everything we could carry, and we drove to Denton, and they took us in.

DALE

Wasn't that dangerous?

CLIFF

Well, I had my daddy's shotgun.

DALE

You could use a gun?

CLIFF

Well, those were different times. But we made it there, and a couple of years later I met your grandfather, and now here we are. And if all that hadn't of happened, exactly like that, you wouldn'ta never come along, and I can't even stand the thought of that.

DALE

Wow.

CLIFF

Life goes along, and you do what you can, and love everybody around you, and you just have to know that people come into your life and people go out of your life, and the best you can do is show 'em that you love 'em while they're with you, by sticking up for 'em, and helpin' 'em whenever you can, and that's just that. Life.

DALE

I love you, Gran.

CLIFF

I love you, too. Let's get up and go get some ice cream. I've got to get on home soon and make dinner for the boys.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Dale walks into the kitchen in her pajamas. Debbie is sitting at the kitchen table wearing an old housecoat, and smoking a cigarette.

She looks worse, and she won't look at Dale.

DALE

I'm not going to school today?

Debbie doesn't answer.

DALE (CONT'D)

Mama? Are you all right? Where's Janee?

DEBBIE  
How should I know.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAN ANTONIO - DAY

Three and a half year old Janee Bellamy is wandering by herself down busy, grimy streets in a depressed part of town.

She passes by a collapsing warehouse with a corrugated steel door that is open a few feet.

She walks up to it, and peers in.

JANEE  
Hello? Hello? I'm lost.

From out of the darkness, a bitter and angry male voice YELLS at her, and a damaged, alcoholic face suddenly appears, with teeth bared --

FACE  
GET OUTTA HERE BEFORE I TAKE MY  
BELT TO YOU, YOU LITTLE TROLLOP!

Janee screams and runs.

She begins to cry as she runs.

Another man sticks his head out the door, and watches her go.

INT. THE NEAL FAMILY CAR - DAY

MR. NEAL and MRS. NEAL are driving along. In the backseat, three small children, KENNY, LESLIE, and RORY. No seatbelts.

Richard Neal is at least sixty; the car is a nice one, a black Cord, and although his hair has gone salt-and-pepper, he's still handsome.

Betty Neal is pretty, with brown hair, and she's much younger than her husband, not yet thirty.

MRS. NEAL  
Dick, do you think we could drive  
down to Galveston this weekend, and  
see Susan?

MR. NEAL  
I've got lodge on Saturday night.

MRS. NEAL  
Couldn't you skip it? Just once?

MR. NEAL  
Dear, it's the election. The very  
one I can't miss. I might be made  
an Officer Of The Fan.

Mrs. Neal suddenly sits straight up.

MRS. NEAL  
Oh my god!

Mr. Neal slows the car as he looks over to see what Mrs. Neal  
is reacting to.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Janee is running down the street, terrified.

MRS. NEAL  
That's little Janee! From down the  
street! Debbie's daughter!

Mr. Neal pulls over, and Mrs. Neal gets out. She has to run  
to catch Janee, but finally gets hold of her.

MRS. NEAL (CONT'D)  
Janee! What's wrong? How did you  
get all the way out here?

Janee just sobs unintelligibly for a moment, and then  
struggles with her words.

JANEE  
My mama's sick and I'm hungry and I  
got lost.

MRS. NEAL  
Oh, you poor dear. Come with us.  
Come with me, in the front seat,  
there's a girl.

She takes Janee back to the car, and puts her in first.

She gets in and closes the door behind her. Janee moves over  
to sit next to Mr. Neal.

MR. NEAL  
Why hello, little girl. You look  
lost. My, you're very pretty. You  
know that?

He smiles down at her. Janee quiets a little, and looks up at him.

The three children in the back are staring forward, as still as statues, as the car pulls away and down the street.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

DALE

Did she have breakfast?

DEBBIE

She can eat cookies like those damned army brats, I don't care.

DALE

Mama, where's Lynn?

Debbie just takes a puff off her cigarette, and ignores Dale.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY GARBAGE DUMP - DAY

Lynn is looking for the family dog, Trouble. He whistles for him, and walks along the edge of the dump, searching.

LYNN

Trouble! Trouble! Hey dog!

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Lynn walks along, hands in pockets.

LYNN

Trouble! Here boy!

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Lynn walks across dead grass and dirt toward the unpainted swings. He has tears in his eyes.

LYNN

Trouble.

Lynn sits on a swing, and rocks back and forth, head down.

After a moment, he stops and looks up -- his entire body electrifies -- and he BOLTS from the swing.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Lynn is running at full speed. Behind him, sixty yards at most --

Buzzy, and three other boys, gaining on him.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

Lynn is hiding in the thick brush between some spindly pecan trees, trying to stay invisible.

Buzzy and his three friends have spread out, looking for Lynn.

BUZZY  
Lynn-eeeeeee.

Lynn crouches even lower, trying not to breath.

BUZZY (CONT'D)  
You had to know we was lookin' for ya, huh? Soon as we heard Togo was dead and in the dirt.

One of the other boys, PHILBIN, laughs hard.

PHILBIN  
We're gonna make you eat dirt, just like your big brother's doin'.

The other two boys, PURDY and FRY, join in.

PURDY  
Dirt sandwich.

FRY  
Let's bury him, for real. C'mon.

Buzzy laughs hideously.

BUZZY  
You shittin' in your pants yet, Lynnee? You should be.

Lynn can't bear it anymore. He stands up and runs for his life.

PHILBIN  
There he goes!

FRY  
Get him get him get him!

PURDY  
Woooooooooooo!

Lynn is in a full panic, arms and legs pumping. He has a ten yard head start, but it's not enough.

EXT. WOODED AREA

Through the thick grass and dried-up brush, the four boys can be seen mercilessly beating up Lynn.

BUZZY  
Eat it! Eat it!

PHILBIN  
Let's dig him a hole!

FRY  
One more dead kid for the dirt!

PURDY  
Wooooooooo! Get it in there, boy!  
Get him!

CUT TO:

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Dale is still waiting for an answer from Debbie.

DEBBIE  
I have a tapeworm, inside me. It's eating me alive, you know that? A tapeworm. Don't know where it came from.

DALE  
Mama, what are you doing?

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

Dale stares at her mother for a moment, and then runs to answer the door.

EXT. BELLAMY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dale opens the front door.

Mrs. Neal stands outside on the front porch, holding Janee's hand.

DALE

Mrs. Neal? You've got Janee.

MRS. NEAL

Yes I do. And I found her wandering downtown, in a bad part of town, hungry and crying. Is your mother at home?

DALE

She's not feeling right.

MRS. NEAL

Well, that's just no excuse. Someone should be watching this child.

DALE

I can take care of her.

MRS. NEAL

You just tell your father to come see me when he gets off work. I'm keeping her until then.

DALE

He doesn't get off until late.

MRS. NEAL

Well, tomorrow morning then. Meanwhile, she's going to get a bath and some food, and have a nap. You can tell your mother.

DALE

I'm sorry, Mrs. Neal.

MRS. NEAL

It's not your fault, Dale. You're a very responsible girl, with a good head on your shoulders. I know it's been a terrible loss. But your mother has got to know that life goes on. Janee could have been killed.

She turns and marches off with Janee. Dale watches her go.

INT. MEDICAL CENTER SUBSTATION - DAY

Zilmon is shovelling salt into a bucket. He throws the shovel down, picks up the bucket, and walks over to the port.

When he's finished emptying the salt into the port, he seals it -- and then glances at the door.

His face screws up. He lurches behind one of the giant vats, and wedges himself behind it, crumpling to the grimy concrete.

He weeps.

EXT. MEDICAL CENTER SUBSTATION - CONTINUOUS

Outside the substation, the sun is shining, and the sound of the rollercoaster fills the world.

INT. NEAL HOUSE - DAY

Mrs. Neal has returned from the Bellamy house and meets Mr. Neal in the hallway, as he is walking out of the bathroom, drying his hands on a hand towel.

MRS. NEAL  
Where's Janee?

MR. NEAL  
She's in the tub.

MRS. NEAL  
Is she all right?

MR. NEAL  
She's fine.

MRS. NEAL  
Well, I told them.

MR. NEAL  
Well, that's all we can do.

Mrs. Neal walks down the hallway as Mr. Neal turns back to the bathroom.

Kenny Neal, the oldest boy, is watching in perfect stillness from the open door to a dark bedroom, out of sight.

EXT. BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Lynn is lurching slowly up the front sidewalk.  
He is filthy, from head to toe. And he's hurt.  
He knocks on the front door.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dale answers the door, and gives out a small scream when she sees Lynn.

DALE  
Oh Lynn, what happened?

LYNN  
They buried me.

He starts crying.

DALE  
Come in. We'll get you cleaned up.  
Are you bleeding?

LYNN  
Yes.

DALE  
C'mon. Bathtub.

She guides him by his shoulders into the house and toward the bathroom.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Dale guides Lynn firmly toward the bathroom, she glances into the kitchen. Debbie is gone.

As Lynn enters the bathroom, Dale sees that the master bedroom door is closed.

She follows Lynn into the bathroom, and the sound of her turning on the water in the tub echoes off the tile.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE - NIGHT

A clock on the wall marks the time as eleven thirty.

Dale and Lynn are sitting silently next to each other on the couch, wearing grim looks.

The door unlocks, and opens - Zilmon walks into the foyer.

He sees Dale and Lynn, and is taken aback for a moment, as if he has never seen such a thing before.

ZILMON

What in the world are you doing up?  
Your mama's gonna skin you alive!  
You'd best get to bed right now!

DALE

Something's wrong with her.

ZILMON

What do you mean 'something's wrong  
with her'? Where is she?

DALE

In the bedroom. She won't come  
out.

ZILMON

What? With Janee?

DALE

Janee's with Mrs. Neal. She said  
they found Janee walking around  
downtown crying, and that she was  
going to take care of her, and that  
you could come over when you're  
ready to get her back.

Zilmon is speechless. He looks toward the closed bedroom door.

He walks to the door, and turns the knob.

The door opens easily, and the low sounds of Debbie's suffering can be heard.

Zilmon steps into the bedroom and looks around the door.

A low wail can be heard rising from Debbie, an elemental primate expression of overwhelming pain.

Zilmon steps through and closes the door behind him.

Lynn looks at Dale. Dale watches the bedroom door.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Zilmon is dressed neatly and sitting on the couch. Dale and Lynn are also presentable, sitting next to their father.

Mrs. Neal is smiling, her head cocked in a way as to indicate sympathy.

ZILMON

I just can't let you do it, Mrs. Neal. Dale and Lynn both have to go to school, but my sister Minnie lives down near Victoria and offered to take Janee.

MRS. NEAL

It wouldn't be a bother, you know. She's such a wonderful child.

ZILMON

Thank you. You've done enough.

MRS. NEAL

Janee will be up from her nap in a little bit. Dale, would you and Lynn go out back and look for Kenny and Leslie?

DALE

Sure. C'mon, Lynn.

She slides off the couch and Lynn follows her out through the kitchen to the back yard.

MRS. NEAL

Zilmon, you've got a serious problem on your hands.

ZILMON

I don't know what to do. I can't take time from work. Tonight's my only night off. I'd be let go.

MRS. NEAL

If she can't care for her own children, then you need to do something about it. She needs psychiatric care.

ZILMON

We can't afford anything like that.

MRS. NEAL

The state hospitals are free, and very modern. I'm sure they could do something for her.

Zilmon considers this for a moment, head down.

MRS. NEAL (CONT'D)

Well, it can't hurt. And she could get some rest. Dale and Lynn can stay here with us. You could use some peace and quiet yourself.

ZILMON

I'm fine. I'm just fine. There's nothing to be done about it, you just have to go on with things. Life doesn't stop while you're fussing and crying.

MRS. NEAL

Well, just the same. Take care of Debbie.

ZILMON

All right. I'll call 'em when I get back.

He looks up at her.

ZILMON (CONT'D)

Thanks, Mrs. Neal.

MRS. NEAL

Togo was a wonderful boy.

A still-sleepy Janee walks out from the hallway and looks for her father --

ZILMON

Yes, he was. But he's gone. And we all have to get on with it.

JANEE

Hi, daddy. Where's Togo gone?

Zilmon struggles to conceal his shock at her question for a moment, then stands up and walks over to kneel down and hug his daughter.

ZILMON

I'm so glad you're okay, Janee.

Janee looks up at Mrs. Neal.

JANEE

Where's Mama?

ZILMON

Let's go home, baby. We're going on a trip, you and me, to see Aunt Minnie.

JANEE

I get to go on a train!

ZILMON

I borrowed Denson's car.

JANEE

Fast! Fast as the Rocket!

Zilmon takes her hand, and turns to go.

MRS. NEAL

Good luck, Mr. Bellamy.

ZILMON

Thank you, Mrs. Neal.

JANEE

I want Dale to sit with me in the rocket-car!

Zilmon looks away, and then walks out the door, Janee in tow.

Behind Mrs. Neal, Mr. Neal slowly emerges from the hallway, rolling down his sleeves.

He looks - strange.

She turns, and is startled to see him.

MRS. NEAL

Where were you?

INT. GRAY FORD SEDAN HEADING EAST ON US 87 - DAY

Zilmon drives down the highway while Janee bounces around the car, back to front, wedging herself against the rear window --

ZILMON

Janee. Can you sit still just for one minute?

Janee frowns and crawls down into the back seat for a moment.

JANEE

One!

And off she goes, bouncing.

Zilmon just drives.

INT. AUNT MINNIE'S HOUSE, VICTORIA, TEXAS - DAY

AUNT MINNIE is a severe-looking woman with her hair cut in perfectly straight lines, sitting primly in a chair in the living room.

Janee runs down the stairs holding a doll, and races into the living room breathlessly.

JANEE  
Daddy! Daddy!

AUNT MINNIE  
Your father has gone, dear. You're going to stay with me now.

JANEE  
He left without me?

She looks utterly betrayed, and then, from her depths --  
The Sound.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Zilmon is standing in the living room, looking toward the closed bedroom door.

THE TELEPHONE RINGS.

He walks over and picks it up.

ZILMON  
Hello? Hi, Minnie.

He listens.

ZILMON (CONT'D)  
Oh. I'm sorry, Min. I'll come get her, right now. Tell her I'll be there a couple of hours.

He listens.

ZILMON (CONT'D)  
Well, no, the Ellerbees said they'd take her in as well. Closer to home, and Bobby's her age.

All right. I'll see you shortly.  
Thanks for trying.

He hangs up the phone.

He looks at the closed bedroom door again, walks toward it, then hesitates.

He finally walks to the door, and softly knocks.

ZILMON (CONT'D)  
Deb, I gotta go get Janee.

There is no answer.

ZILMON (CONT'D)  
Deb, I'm gonna drive you to the  
hospital tomorrow, before work.  
They'll make you feel better,  
honey. Don't worry.

No answer.

INT. GRAY FORD SEDAN HEADING WEST ON US 87 - EVENING

Janees sits in the front seat with an angry look on her face.  
Zilmon just drives.

JANEE  
You tricked me!

She reaches over and hits him. He flinches.  
And looks a little guilty.

ZILMON  
Well, you're going to the  
Ellerbees. So you're getting what  
you wanted.

She's not mollified.

FADE OUT.

MUSIC PLAYS.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, REAR BEDROOM - MORNING

Zilmon attempts to brush Debbie's hair.

INT. GRAY FORD SEDAN - DAY

Debbie sits in the front seat, looking down at her hands.

Zilmon drives.

From time to time, he glances worriedly at her.

INT. GALVESTON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL, ADMITTING LOBBY - DAY

Zilmon stands and signs admitting papers at a counter.

Debbie sits in a wheelchair, staring down at her lap.

INT. GALVESTON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL, ADMITTING LOBBY

Zilmon waves at Debbie as her wheelchair is backed into an elevator.

She does not acknowledge him.

INT. GRAY FORD SEDAN - DAY

Zilmon drives through the scrubby Texas countryside, alone.

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. GARBAGE DUMP - DAY

Endless hills of fly-strewn rubbish and filth ferment in the sun.

The family's dog, Trouble, emerges from behind one of the hills, sniffing at something.

His fur is stiff and streaked with dirt. He looks well on his way to becoming feral.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, BACK BEDROOM - DAY

Dale and Lynn sit on a bed in the spare bedroom, mostly used as a sewing room. They are talking quietly when Mr. Neal opens the door.

He has rolled up his sleeves.

MR. NEAL

All right. Time for me to give you both a bath.

DALE

We bathe ourselves.

LYNN

I don't ever bathe.

MR. NEAL

Well. That's very - well, I'll get you both towels.

He turns and leaves -- Dale and Lynn exchange glances.

INT. GALVESTON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL, DEBBIE'S ROOM - DAY

Debbie lies in a bed under the covers, dressed in a white gown.

DR. BROPHY, a psychiatrist in his late forties, consults a chart. His young assistant, NURSE SHELDON, stands by the bedside.

DR. BROPHY

Unresponsive. I want her scheduled for ECT this afternoon.

NURSE SHELDON

Yes, doctor.

DR. BROPHY

We'll start with maximum repetition and decrease on improvement.

She looks at him.

NURSE SHELDON

Yes, doctor.

EXT. FORT SAM HOUSTON CENTER SUBSTATION - DAY

A beautiful Texas spring day. The Rocket rollercoaster track arcs into the sky.

A car plunges down the first drop, and ROARS.

INT. SUBSTATION BASEMENT

Zilmon is shovelling salt. He looks exhausted.

He looks over at the swinging doors. No one.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Zilmon is sitting alone at the table.

He's just finished dinner, and is staring off into space.

He seems to remember something -- and a terrible flash of grief passes across his face.

He puts his head in his hands.

INT. ELLERBEE HOUSE, BOBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Three-and-a-half year old Bobby is sleeping in the same bed with Janee, their backs to each other, their eyes open.

JANEE

Bobby?

BOBBY

Yes?

JANEE

Do you know what happened to my big brother?

BOBBY

I heard he died. 'Cause of a car.

JANEE

Oh.

BOBBY

I liked Togo a lot.

JANEE

Me too. Bobby?

BOBBY

Yes?

JANEE

You wouldn't ever trick me, would you?

BOBBY

No. Never.

JANEE

I'm glad. I'm glad you're here.  
You're kind of my brother too. I  
love you.

Bobby smiles a little, and closes his eyes. After a moment,  
Janee closes hers as well.

JANEE (CONT'D)

I miss my mom. I miss my brother.  
I miss everybody.

Bobby turns over, and pats her on the arm.

BOBBY

Things'll get better. You'll see.  
And don't worry. I'm really  
strong. I'll keep you safe.

JANEE

Thank you.

They drift off to sleep.

INT. GALVESTON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL, ADMITTING LOBBY - DAY

The front desk nurse reads from a record book as an orderly  
wheels a very elderly man past the desk and into the  
hospital.

INT. GALVESTON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL, DEBBIE'S ROOM

Debbie's bed is empty.

INT. ELECTROCONVULSIVE TREATMENT ROOM

Debbie lies strapped to a table, every extremity firmly  
bound.

Around her head, a rubber-covered metal crown, with large  
metal contacts secured to either side, connected to large  
cables that arc down behind her.

Her tongue is clamped in a spring-hinged spooled wire device  
that also has a cable connected to it.

Her eyes are wide open. She's terrified.

Next to the table, a black Bakelite-and-steel machine with a label that reads 'REITER' above several dials, knobs, and switches.

Nurse Sheldon is standing by the machine. Doctor Brophy is standing on the other.

He smiles at Debbie.

DR. BROPHY  
Don't worry, Mrs. Bellamy. You'll  
feel much better soon.

Debbie's eyes plead with him. She tries to say something through the device holding her tongue --

DR. BROPHY (CONT'D)  
Let's push it to five seconds,  
please. And - contact.

Nurse Sheldon presses a black button on the top of the machine --

DEBBIE IS SHOCKED INTO A GRAND MAL SEIZURE.

Nurse Sheldon releases the button -- but the seizure continues.

DR. BROPHY (CONT'D)  
As soon as she relaxes, repeat,  
please.

NURSE SHELDON  
Yes, doctor.

Debbie remains locked in a massive convulsion, her body straining helplessly at the restraints.

Finally, she collapses back on the table.

Nurse Sheldon glances at the doctor -- then presses the button again.

DEBBIE HAS ANOTHER INDUCED SEIZURE.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Dale enters the classroom, empty except for the teacher, MRS. LAFFERTY, a pleasant-looking young woman in her twenties.

Mrs. Lafferty looks up when Dale comes in to the room.

MRS. LAFFERTY

Dale. I'm so sorry. Togo was one of my favorites.

DALE

I miss him.

MRS. LAFFERTY

Are you all right?

DALE

My mom's gone into a hospital. A -  
sy - key --

MRS. LAFFERTY

Psychiatric hospital.

DALE

Yes. What do they do?

MRS. LAFFERTY

Well, they talk to people about their problems, and try to help them.

DALE

Does it work?

MRS. LAFFERTY

I'm sure your mother will be just fine.

DALE

Do you know about what's wrong with her?

MRS. LAFFERTY

I know a few things about psychology, as it's called. I've read books and articles about it.

DALE

Could I borrow one of them?

MRS. LAFFERTY

Of course. Anything I can do, Dale.

They look at each other for a moment.

MRS. LAFFERTY (CONT'D)

I know this is very hard for you and your family.

If you ever need anything, anything at all, I want you to come see me, all right?

DALE

All right.

MRS. LAFFERTY

It's almost time for class. I'm glad to see you back.

DALE

I'm glad to be back. Thanks, Mrs. Lafferty.

Mrs. Lafferty smiles at her, as Dale turns to take her seat.

INT. NEAL HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Dale walks in the front door, and heads down the hallway.

She runs into Mr. Neal.

MR. NEAL

Hello, Dale.

DALE

Hello.

MR. NEAL

How was your day at school?

DALE

Just fine, thank you.

She tries to move past him, but he presses himself against her, backing her up against the wall in an obviously sexual fashion.

After a moment, Dale is able to push him away and run for the bedroom, where she slams the door.

Mr. Neal watches her go, a little smile on his face.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, BACK BEDROOM - DAY

Dale sits on the bed, knees pulled up and arms around them, rocking.

THE DOOR OPENS.

It's Kenny. He moves swiftly into the room and closes the door behind him silently.

Dale puts her feet on the floor and assumes a defensive position. She starts to say something --

Kenny puts his finger up to his lips.

KENNY

Listen. You have to make sure you're never alone with him, ever.

DALE

He's your father.

KENNY

My father was a hero, who died at Bataan. You ever heard of that? Mr. Neal was his boss before the war. He's old enough to be my grandfather.

DALE

He was touching me.

KENNY

You can't ever be alone with him, not ever. He'll do it.

DALE

What about your mother?.

KENNY

When he first married mom, I told her about it. She told him.

Kenny turns, and lifts his shirt a little to show the remains of deep welts on his lower back.

KENNY (CONT'D)

If you tell, he'll find a way to get you. Real bad. And he's a good talker.

DALE

What do you do?

KENNY

Don't ever be alone with him. Ever.

She shakes her head.

EXT. NEAL HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

A gorgeous afternoon. The birds are singing, puffy white clouds --

Up the sidewalk and onto the lawn walks an apparition, a filthy, mud-caked figure.

Lynn. He's having trouble walking.

He reaches the door, and knocks with his fist, loudly.

Mrs. Neal opens the door, and sees Lynn. Her hand flies to her mouth to suppress a scream.

MRS. NEAL

Oh my god. Lynn, what happened to you?

LYNN

They got me.

He lowers his head and lets out an anguished sob.

MRS. NEAL

Come inside. We'll get you cleaned up.

She puts her hand on his shoulder a little reluctantly, and pulls him in through the front door.

MRS. NEAL (CONT'D)

Take off your shoes here. You're going to get blood all over the carpet, now, that won't come out.

The door swings shut.

INT. GALVESTON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL, DEBBIE'S ROOM - DAY

Sun beams in through clear windows. Debbie is lying in her bed, elevated, talking to Dr. Brophy.

She looks like she has two black eyes. There are red marks on every part of her body that was restrained, especially around her temples.

She looks abused.

DR. BROPHY

I want you to write. I want you to keep a journal, write out your feelings, anything you want, poems, songs, even just words.

DEBBIE

All right.

DR. BROPHY

We'll speak again tomorrow. Try to rest. I've given you some medication.

DEBBIE

I already feel much better.

DR. BROPHY

I'm sure you do, Mrs. Bellamy, I'm sure you do.

EXT. FORT SAM HOUSTON SUBSTATION - LATE AFTERNOON

A car on the Rocket ROARS by, and several screams echo down the track.

Dale stands looking at the Substation.

She walks slowly to the entrance.

INT. SUBSTATION

Dale steps carefully down the dimly-lit, grimy stairs.

INT. OUTSIDE SUBSTATION SALT WELL ROOM

Dale looks through the glass panel of the swinging doors at Zilmon, who is shovelling salt into a bucket.

As she pushes through the doors, Zilmon catches a glimpse of movement, and looks up, startled.

ZILMON

Dale? What are you doing here?

DALE

I want to come home.

ZILMON

You can't. I can't watch you.

DALE  
Then somewhere else. The  
Ellerbees.

ZILMON  
You'd go live with Denny and Donny?  
What's going on?

DALE  
It's just bad there. I can't stand  
it.

ZILMON  
Well, Dale, what am I supposed to  
do? I can't ask Betty to take on  
another.

DALE  
There's Uncle Dick.

ZILMON  
Really? It's really that bad?

DALE  
I can't stand it.

ZILMON  
Look, wait around for awhile, and  
I'll walk you home on my lunch.  
You shouldn't be over here on your  
own, anyway.

EXT. ALAMO DRIVE - EARLY EVENING

Dale walks home with Zilmon.

On the other side of the street, coming the other way --

Bill George Sr., and his friend Berly Wayfield.

Zilmon sees them coming; and then he turns to look straight  
ahead. His body slowly becomes more and more tense as he and  
Dale get closer to being opposite the two men.

EXT. ALAMO DRIVE

Berly Wayfield taps Bill George on the arm.

BERLY  
That's --

Bill George shakes his head tightly, quickly --

BILL  
Shut up. Shut up. Shut.

Bill glances across the street to where Zilmon and Dale are now nearly opposite each other.

Zilmon's fists are clenched and white, and he's walking like a stiff cardboard character.

DALE  
Dad, you okay? Who are those men?

Zilmon just keeps walking. Dale makes eye contact with Bill George -- he quickly looks away.

They pass each other, and Dale keeps looking back at the two men as they recede.

Zilmon's rigid posture increases to the point that he stops.

His entire body is flexed, hard. His teeth are bare and clenched, and he starts shaking. A very small sound emerges from him as he becomes redder and redder.

DALE (CONT'D)  
Dad! What's wrong? Should I get a doctor?

Zilmon slowly releases his physical tension. Within moments, he is breathing heavily, limp, exhausted.

DALE (CONT'D)  
What happened to you? You stay here, I'll go get Uncle Denson!

Zilmon reaches out and places his hand on her arm.

ZILMON  
No, it's okay. I can make it. Just got dizzy. We better get a move on, or I'll be late getting back.

They start walking again; Dale watches Zilmon closely as he trudges down the sidewalk, looking utterly defeated.

Behind them, almost lost in the distance, are Bill and Berly.

Bill glances back.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

In the dark hallway, the large, shadowy figure of Mr. Neal stands outside the closed back bedroom door.

He opens the door. Lynn is sitting on the bed, now in clean clothes, but still pretty beat up.

Mr. Neal enters.

MR. NEAL

Well, Lynn, I heard you had some trouble today. Let's talk about it.

He closes the door.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kenny, Leslie, and Rory Neal are sitting next to each other on the sofa, listening to the radio, when Dale opens the door and comes into the house.

DALE

Hi.

ALL THREE CHILDREN

Hi.

Dale looks at Kenny, who flicks his eyes towards the back bedroom.

She looks in the direction of the bedroom, but heads for the kitchen first.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, KITCHEN

Dale walks in to find Mrs. Neal bustling about, making dinner.

MRS. NEAL

Oh Dale, where have you been? I've been so worried about you! You're just in time for dinner! My special pot roast!

Dale just stands and stares at her for a moment.

DALE

Where's Lynn?

MRS. NEAL

Oh. He's in the back bedroom. He had a rough day. Some boys were quite mean to him. He took quite a lot of cleaning up, let me tell you. Dirt tracked everywhere.

Dale turns and walks abruptly out of the kitchen and strides down the hallway.

MRS. NEAL (CONT'D)

Dale? Is something wrong?

INT. NEAL HOUSE, HALLWAY

Dale reaches the back bedroom and flings open the door.

The light is on, and Mr. Neal is in motion, his back to Dale, attempting to conceal something. Lynn is sitting on the bed in front of Mr. Neal, a guilty look on his face.

MR. NEAL

Oh, hello Dale, Lynn and I were just talking, but it's almost time for dinner now.

He pushes past Dale without looking at her, and walks quickly off down the hallway.

Dale looks at Lynn. He refuses to return her gaze.

She looks behind her, out the door and down the hallway -- a sharp, furious look --

She steps in to the bedroom, and closes the door behind her.

INT. GALVESTON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL, DEBBIE'S ROOM - DAY

Debbie is sitting up in her bed, intensely writing in a notebook.

She looks worse. Haggard and bruised.

As she finishes writing, she looks up suddenly; her eyes fill with tears.

She looks down. Her tears fall on her writing, and streak down the words.

Nurse Sheldon walks into the room, walks over and sits down on the bed next to Debbie, and hugs her.

INT. DEBBIE'S ROOM

Nurse Sheldon and Debbie talk to each other as they sit on the bed.

INT. FORT SAM HOUSTON SUBSTATION - NIGHT

Steam is everywhere.

Zilmon is furiously turning wheels and checking valves, his shirt off, sweating profusely.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Neal has a startled look on her face as she delicately eats bits of pot roast.

Mr. Neal stays focused on his plate as Kenny, Leslie, Rory and Dale stare at him.

Lynn looks like he's ready to bolt.

Mr. Neal looks up.

MR. NEAL

I read in the paper yesterday that they solved the mystery of the woman's leg.

MRS. NEAL

Oh dear, now that's not appropriate dinner conversation.

MR. NEAL

Oh, it was just a hospital mix-up. Amputation, for gangrene. The incinerator was down, and some genius thought he'd just throw it away, and so those two men found it at the city garbage dump. Can you imagine how they felt? Probably thought there was murder involved.

He smile and winks at Dale.

MRS. NEAL

Richard.

MR. NEAL

What? Things like that happen in the world every day. Everything is chaos. The world is darkness and confusion. They'd better just learn that now.

MRS. NEAL

Please. Richard.

MR. NEAL

Did you know, Lynn, that the day before Togo died, another boy, a young Mexican boy about the same age, robbed a store, stole a car, and killed two men trying to get away from the police? He was caught hiding in a closet at his aunt's house. He'll get the chair for sure. One day this boy, the next day Togo, and the next day, who knows -- maybe you?

MRS. NEAL

Richard!

MR. NEAL

It's time they all got used to the hard realities of life, Betty. Life's cheap. People do terrible things to each other. The world is a furnace, and we're here to burn in it.

This shocks the children. Mrs. Neal stops eating and puts down her fork.

MR. NEAL (CONT'D)

Oh, Betty, now don't get in an uproar. I'm just talking. It's in the newspaper, after all.

No one says a word. After an uncomfortable silence, Mr. Neal looks down at his plate, and starts eating again.

MR. NEAL (CONT'D)

Well, at least they figured out where the woman's leg came from. So that's a good thing. Huh?

He chuckles and nods knowingly at Lynn, who seems frozen in his chair.

Mr. Neal begins to eat with gusto.

Everyone else has lost their appetite.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Mrs. Lafferty's class is filling up. Dale enters and walks over to speak to her at her desk.

MRS. LAFFERTY  
Hi, Dale.

DALE  
Mrs. Lafferty, I need to speak to  
you. It's very important.

MRS. LAFFERTY  
What's wrong, Dale?

DALE  
I need to speak to you alone.

MRS. LAFFERTY  
I can't leave right now, Dale,  
class is about to start. Can it  
wait until after class?

DALE  
All right.

MRS. LAFFERTY  
I'll talk to you then. Oh, and I  
brought you some books about  
psychology.

DALE  
Thanks.

Dale takes her seat and looks out through the windows into  
the sunny day, oblivious to the nerd gazing rapturously at  
her from a few rows over.

INT. CLASSROOM

Mrs. Lafferty is standing at the blackboard writing.

MRS. LAFFERTY  
Therefore, the product is  
represented by --

The classroom door opens, and a man beckons from the hallway.

Mrs. Lafferty puts down her chalk, and dusts her hands as she  
walks over to talk to him.

MRS. LAFFERTY (CONT'D)  
Dale Bellamy? Yes, she's here.  
Dale?

She looks over at Dale.

DALE  
Yes ma'am?

MRS. LAFFERTY  
The principal wants to see you.  
You have a visitor.

DALE  
Yes, ma'am.

She stands up and walks to the doorway, pausing to say something to Mrs. Lafferty.

MRS. LAFFERTY  
Whatever it is, we'll discuss it  
right after you're done.

Dale nods, and leaves the classroom with the man.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

PRINCIPAL COURTLAND is a balding man in his fifties, sitting behind his desk as Dale is ushered into his office.

Another man, this one in his fifties, thin and dressed in a worn gray suit, is pacing near the desk. His name is DICK BELLAMY, Dale's uncle.

DICK  
Oh, good. We'd best get goin'. No  
time like the present. Popcorn's  
a'poppin', no time for stoppin'.

PRINCIPAL  
Miss Bellamy, your uncle is here  
for you.

DALE  
Right now?

DICK  
We're off on an adventure.

DALE  
But where?

DICK  
Oh, all sorts a places.

DALE  
But I don't have any clothes.

DICK  
You won't need 'em where we're  
going.

DALE  
What about Lynn?

DICK  
My brother said you needed a place  
to stay. And I got one. On the  
road for a coupla weeks. With me.

PRINCIPAL  
Didn't you know about this, Miss  
Bellamy?

DALE  
Yes sir. I guess I did.

DICK  
And it's off to the races! C'mon,  
kid, I'll teach you how to make a  
million bucks!

The Principal casts him a sharp glance.

DICK (CONT'D)  
The hard way, sister, the hard way.

PRINCIPAL  
Good day, then.

DICK  
Ho-ho-ho! Okay, then, move along!

Dale reluctantly leads the way out of the office. Dick seems  
to actually bounce as he follows her.

INT. OLD DODGE ON A SAN ANTONIO STREET - DAY

DALE  
Where are we going?

DICK  
On a crazy ride, sister, all the  
way around this wide-open state.  
Got some business here and there.

DALE  
We have to pick up Lynn. He can't  
stay there.

DICK

Not another word, he's fine. Thing  
about little Lynn, he can take care  
of himself. Regular little man.  
And we're late! Lateeo, y'know!  
Go-go-go!

Dale gives up, and turns to face the window, watching shops  
and stores go by with a somber gaze.

EXT. NEAL HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

A mud-caked figure stumbles across the front lawn.

Lynn is home from school.

INT. GALVESTON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL, DEBBIE'S ROOM - DAY

Debbie sits on the edge of her bed, feet on the floor,  
looking off into the distance. She sees something.

Something that bothers her.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Zilmon is sitting at the kitchen table in a t-shirt and  
boxers, eating mechanically, with a blank stare.

Something makes him shudder.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

The shadowed figure of Mr. Neal pauses outside the closed  
back bedroom door as he looks behind himself, down the  
hallway --

He turns back, opens the door slowly.

A dark room. He steps inside, and looks around, almost  
closing the door --

He peers at the bed. Lynn is not there.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Mr. Neal walks into the kitchen and kisses his wife.

He then immediately steps to the sink to wash his hands, and  
surreptitiously peers out the kitchen window.

EXT. NEAL HOUSE, BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Kenny, Leslie, Rory, and Lynn are all sitting next to each other on a low brick planter wall, watching Mr. Neal through the kitchen window.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Neal makes eye contact with the children.

He flinches a little, and suppresses a curse.

MRS. NEAL  
What, darling?

MR. NEAL  
Oh, nothing. When will dinner be ready?

MRS. NEAL  
Not for at least an hour, silly.

MR. NEAL  
Sorry, darling. I'm just a little bit distracted today.

MRS. NEAL  
Well, after all you're an important man, an Officer Of The Fan.

MR. NEAL  
Unconfirmed.

MRS. NEAL  
I know you'll make it.

MR. NEAL  
Thank you, dear.

He turns back to the sink and grimaces out the kitchen window.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO WEALTHY RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Dick is driving an ancient green jalopy past expensive houses at high speed, wearing a sporty hat with a small feather.

DALE  
Slow down!

DICK  
Wait -- wait --

He slams on the brakes. Dale goes flying into the dashboard, and tumbles down into the floor of the car.

As Dale struggles to get back in her seat, Dick grabs a camera from the backseat, gets out, and runs around the car.

He flings opens Dale's door. She half-tumbles out, stands up, and brushes herself off.

A group of five kids of different ages are playing on the well-manicured lawn. They are staring at Dick and Dale with astonishment.

DICK (CONT'D)

All right, go over there and play with those kids.

He waves.

DICK (CONT'D)

Hi kids! Just a picture, whaddya say?

He shoves Dale, who stumbles over to the group of kids, looks at them with bewilderment, and turns around.

DICK (CONT'D)

Poifect! A million dollars!

He takes the picture.

DICK (CONT'D)

Thanks, kids! C'mon, Dale, we gotta fly! So long!

He reaches forward and grabs Dale's arm, pulling her toward the car.

She resists.

DALE

What are you doing?

He glares at her.

DICK

Do you want to be around when their old man comes out?

Dale glares back, then moves toward the car.

DICK (CONT'D)

Gotta go-go-go! Hiyo, Silver! C'mon big fella! Away!

He doffs his hat and darts for the car.

EXT. OLD MEXICO TAVERN, ON THE TEXAS HIGHWAY - DAY

Dick leans over a dining table in this dirty spoon, showing the photo of Dale and the children to a half-drunk giant of a man, unshaven and gross-looking. His name is FRED SCHILLER.

Dale sits back in a chair to one side, tense, never taking her eyes off Fred.

DICK

Whaddya think about my place, huh?  
And just look at those kids!

FRED

You still owe me money.

DICK

And that's what I got for you,  
right here, right now. But I want  
in on the game, see? I need some  
action.

Fred looks at Dale.

FRED

Your dad's a crazy man.

She stares back at him.

DICK

Lissen lissen lissen -- she don't  
talk much, my girl. So whaddya  
say?

FRED

What about her?

DICK

Well, I tell you what -- I'm so  
loaded, I'll throw in a sawbuck for  
a room. She can stay there.

Fred swills from his bottle.

FRED

You better pay up tonight. Or  
trouble.

DICK

Why, I'm as good as gold. Worth a million dollars. Solid silver Dick, that's me.

Fred drinks again.

FRED

Not for long, hey? Maybe you want to bet her tonight?

Dick looks away and coughs. Fred looks at Dale.

FRED (CONT'D)

Hope you can take care of yourself. Your pop is playing with fire.

Dale glares at Dick.

INT. PRIVATE GAMBLING HOUSE, NEAR AUSTIN - NIGHT

Dale is lying in bed in a seedy dark room, perfectly awake.

Outside, the sounds of men drinking and gambling, swearing profusely, fighting.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Dale is startled as the door swings open, and a drunken Dick stumbles into the room.

He closes the door behind him, and staggers to the end of the bed, staring at Dale, who pretends to be asleep.

DICK

I lost everything. Everything. Except for you.

He stumbles around the bed, sits down heavily, and taking off his pants and shirt, slides into bed with Dale.

She's facing away from him.

He slowly edges toward her until his body touches hers --

DALE

What are you doing? What's wrong with you? Get back on your side!

A sour look passes across Dick's drunken face.

He turns away angrily, leaving her alone.

Dale stares out into the dark room, a desperate look on her face.

She wipes away a tear.

INT. ANCIENT GREEN JALOPY - DAY

Dick drives along the highway, occasionally glancing at Dale sitting in the passenger seat.

She's writing a letter, balancing the paper on an empty clipboard.

He looks a little worried.

EXT. TEXAS HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The green car speeds down the asphalt through the Texas prairie.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

Mrs. Neal is making dinner.

She opens the oven and pulls out a pan of roasted chicken.

MRS. NEAL  
Dinner's ready! Everyone!

Kenny, Leslie, and Rory come in through the back door of the kitchen.

Kenny looks around. A worried look passes across his face.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Neal is quietly closing the door to the back bedroom.

He walks lightly to the master bedroom and slips inside.

INT. NEAL HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

KENNY  
Where's Lynn? He was helping you.

MRS. NEAL  
He went to the bathroom. Haven't seen him since.

Kenny turns away from his mother and heads for the hallway --

Lynn appears in the kitchen entranceway.

Lynn looks at Mrs. Neal, then looks at Kenny.

MRS. NEAL (CONT'D)  
 There you are. Oh, you're just  
 going to love this. I baked a  
 cherry pie for dessert.

Lynn says nothing. He puts his head down, and stiffly walks  
 to the back door.

He opens it and goes outside, leaving the door partially  
 open.

MRS. NEAL (CONT'D)  
 Well, such behavior. I don't think  
 that was called for.

Kenny, Leslie, and Rory are all watching the back door, but  
 they turn and look at their mother when she says this.

Mr. Neal appears in the kitchen entranceway.

All three children immediately focus their attention on him,  
 and edge away into a corner of the kitchen nearest the door.

MRS. NEAL (CONT'D)  
 Cherry pie. Just for you, honey.

MR. NEAL  
 Mmmm. Can't wait.

MRS. NEAL  
 And the roasted chicken is the best  
 ever. IGA has the best meats,  
 that's just the god's honest truth,  
 worth the drive --

LYNN BURSTS INTO THE KITCHEN WITH A GARDEN HOSE SPRAYING FULL  
 BLAST.

He shouts as he sprays from side to side, aiming mercilessly  
 at Mr. and Mrs. Neal, and the dinner, and the counter, and  
 the cherry pie.

LYNN  
 You're all dirty! You're all  
 dirty! Dirty! You're dirty!

Mr. Neal escapes down the hallway, leaving his wife to fend  
 for herself.

Mrs. Neal is helpless, shocked, and paralyzed as Lynn mercilessly directs the spray at the counter, cupboards and her with wide sweeping strokes.

The cherry pie has disintegrated, and bits of it are streaking down the walls.

The kids are in a corner of the kitchen, behind and to one side of Lynn, untouched, looking at him with awe.

INT. GALVESTON STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL, TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Brophy is sitting on a stool holding a clipboard, talking to Debbie, who is wearing a white dress and slippers.

Nurse Sheldon stands on the other side of the bed, a sympathetic look on her face.

Debbie looks better. The marks have faded, her eyes are clear, and she listens to Dr. Brophy with rapt attention, nodding from time to time, and responding.

Nurse Sheldon places a reassuring hand on Debbie's shoulder. Debbie looks back, and they smile at each other.

INT. FORT SAM HOUSTON SUBSTATION - NIGHT

Zilmon is sitting on an overturned bucket, reading a book on his break. The salt piles stretch out behind him.

A telephone rings.

He looks up, astonished for a moment, then seems to remember where he is -

INT. SUBSTATION OFFICE - NIGHT

Zilmon opens the door to the tiny, grubby office, walks in, and picks up the phone.

ZILMON

Hello?

He listens.

ZILMON (CONT'D)

What? All right. Let me call my supervisor. I'll be right over.

He hangs up, then picks up and dials a number. He waits.

ZILMON (CONT'D)

Mr. Siefert, I'm sorry to call like this, but I need to leave. My son is missing.

He listens.

ZILMON (CONT'D)

No, the other son. He's supposed to be with our neighbors. He's run away.

He listens.

ZILMON (CONT'D)

Will do. I'll get back as soon as we find him. Thank you, sir.

He hangs up.

EXT. SUBSTATION - NIGHT

Zilmon walks out the front door of the substation, and jogs off down the road.

After a moment, a figure emerges from some bushes next to the substation.

It's Lynn.

He steps into the road and looks in the direction his father went.

When he's certain he's alone -- he turns back to the substation, and looks up.

The figure of the Rocket rollercoaster looms in the night sky.

A single light under the flags at the top of the first big climb shines down on the four rollercoaster cars perched on the edge of the drop.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, GARAGE - NIGHT

Zilmon is standing inside the dimly-lit garage, looking down at Togo's red utility scooter.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

A flashlight is taped to the handlebars of the scooter.

Zilmon is speeding along, looking from side to side.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Zilmon stops the scooter in front of an alleyway behind some stores. He peers into the darkness.

ZILMON

Lynn?

No answer. Zilmon drives away.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Zilmon stops.

ZILMON

Lynn?

No answer. Zilmon accelerates off down the pitch-black street.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAN ANTONIO - EARLY MORNING

Zilmon drives slowly along an empty downtown street, looking down each alleyway between the buildings.

ZILMON

Lynn!

His voice is hoarse.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Zilmon sits with his head in his hands next to the telephone.

THE TELEPHONE RINGS.

He comes alive, and leaps for the receiver --

ZILMON

Hello?

He listens, and then hangs his head.

ZILMON (CONT'D)

Okay, Dick. But I have to get off the line. Lynn's missing. I'm waiting for a call.

He hangs up. After a moment, he puts his head back in his hands.

INT. ANCIENT GREEN JALOPY - DAY

Dick slides into the driver's seat. He looks at Dale in the passenger seat.

DICK  
He said sure. But he had to get off the phone. He said Lynn's missing.

DALE  
Lynn?

DICK  
Yeah, I don't know. He hung up. Lynn's missing.

DALE  
I have to get home. Now.

DICK  
My pleasure.

Dale gives him a look that makes him wince.

She gazes out the window as Dick starts up the car.

DALE  
I bet I know where he is.

EXT. CITY GARBAGE DUMP - DAY

Lynn is furtively searching through the piles of garbage and debris for something.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Another beautiful Texas day, trees blowing in the breeze, birds singing, butterflies.

Buzzy is sitting on the edge of the curb, looking off down the street.

He's tapping his foot, and half-singing to himself.

From behind him --

Lynn. Holding a three-foot two-by-four.

He swings it directly at Buzzy's head --

THUMP. The two-by-four connects, and Buzzy keels over face-first into the street.

Lynn towers over him from behind.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Buzzy moves weakly, and attempts to turn over --

THUMP. Lynn hits Buzzy once more, and this time, Buzzy lies completely still.

Lynn waits over him, watching.

After a moment, Lynn looks around to see if anyone has seen -- fear and guilt flash across his face, and he lowers the wood and steps away from Buzzy.

Buzzy lies motionless, unconscious on the edge of the street.

EXT. BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Dick's ancient green jalopy pulls up to the curb. Dale hops out. Before she can even turn to close the door, Dick floors it.

The door slams itself shut as Dick speeds off down the residential street in a cloud of dirt and exhaust.

Dale just looks relieved.

She turns back to the house, and looks things over. The lawn is unmowed. Everything looks dusty, and older.

She pulls the letter she was writing from her coat pocket, and carefully places it in the outgoing mail bracket on the mailbox.

She puts the flag up, and then with a firm gaze, strides up the walk.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM

Dale opens the door without knocking. Zilmon rises from his chair next to the phone with astonishment; he's forgotten his conversation with Dick.

Father and daughter look at each other for a moment. Zilmon is haggard and bent. Dale is wearing the same clothing she left school in.

Dale flies to him and hugs him, buries her face in his shirt, and cries.

ZILMON

Dale Jay -- Molly Cottontail --  
what's the matter? Are you all  
right? Did something happen?

She looks at him, tears streaming down her face, and seems about to say something.

Then she wipes her tears, and gets control of herself.

DALE

You're going to be late for work.

ZILMON

I can't go to work. Lynn's  
missing. The police are supposed  
to call.

DALE

They're not going to find him. But  
I can.

ZILMON

Tell me where he is.

DALE

No. It's something I have to do  
alone.

ZILMON

Why?

DALE

Because it's my fault. I left him  
there. I left him there alone.

ZILMON

I don't understand.

DALE

Go to work. I'll have him back  
home tonight, I promise.

ZILMON

Dale. The police.

DALE

Go to work. I have to do this. I  
have to fix things.

Zilmon looks at her, and shrugs.

DALE (CONT'D)

Take a shower, first, though.

ZILMON

All right, Molly.

He pats her on the head as he wearily heads for the bathroom.

INT. FORT SAM HOUSTON MEDICAL CENTER SUBSTATION

Zilmon shovels salt into a bucket.

He looks up at the swinging doors --

EXT. SAN ANTONIO RESIDENTIAL STREET - EARLY EVENING

Dale has cleaned up and put fresh clothes on, and she strides purposefully down the street, as if she knows exactly where she's going.

She turns a corner, and sees an odd thing -- an ambulance, and a large group of neighbors and passerby.

A police car pulls past her, lights blazing. She walks closer.

Dale sees Preston, Togo's friend, and walks over to him.

DALE

Hi, Preston.

PRESTON

Oh, Dale. I -- I --

DALE

It wasn't your fault.

PRESTON

I'm sorry.

DALE

I miss him.

PRESTON

I miss him too.

DALE  
What happened?

PRESTON  
This guy just came out of nowhere --

DALE  
No, I mean here --

PRESTON  
Oh. Don't know. Kid was just  
laying in the street. Somebody  
found him. Buzzy. You know him.

DALE  
Did he faint?

PRESTON  
Uh, looks like someone hit him in  
the head. Real hard.

Dale draws in her breath.

PRESTON (CONT'D)  
Buzzy used to pick on Lynn, didn't  
he? Pretty bad, especially since  
Togo --

He pauses, and they look at each other --

DALE  
I have to go. Bye.

She leaves, ducking off through the crowd. Preston watches  
her go.

PRESTON  
Bye. I'm sorry.

But Dale has disappeared.

Preston watches the ambulance drivers load a gurney with  
Buzzy strapped to it into the back.

A police officer walks up to the crowd. Preston turns away.

EXT. FORT SAM HOUSTON SUBSTATION - NIGHT

Dale stands in front of the substation, looking at the front  
doors.

She looks up at the top of the Rocket, and the four cars  
underneath the dimmed lights.

EXT. PLAYLAND PARK FENCE NEAR SUBSTATION - NIGHT

Dale is halfway up the chain link fence, near a section next to a tree on the inside.

EXT. INSIDE PLAYLAND PARK

Dale lets go of a tree limb and drops to the ground, hits hard.

Her skirt is ripped and she looks scratched up.

She gets up, brushes herself off, and walks underneath the heavy wooden trestles of the Rocket.

EXT. INSIDE THE ROCKET ROLLERCOASTER - NIGHT

Dale has climbed up a low part of the track, just before the climb. She pulls herself up on to the track bed.

She balances on the track and steps across to stand on the slatted wooden walkway that rises next to the tracks.

Dale stands there for a moment, looking up the vast hill of wood. A bright sliver of a moon hangs in the clear Texas sky at the peak, almost as if she could climb to it.

It's a beautiful night. She sighs.

And begins to climb, treading the planked walkway up the side of the track.

EXT. MIDWAY UP

Dale climbs carefully, trying not to look to either side, holding on to the railing.

She stops to look up the hill at the crescent moon. It looks a little bigger, somehow.

EXT. NEAR THE TOP

She's fighting panic, struggling with each step, clutching the railing, trying not to look down.

The light breeze roils her red hair. She keeps moving, slowly, and then --

She reaches the top. The city lights stretch into the distance; it looks like she's a mile high.

The last car looks empty as she climbs the final few feet.

DALE

Lynn?

No answer. She moves to the next car --

DALE (CONT'D)

Lynn?

Lynn's head pops up from the front car.

LYNN

Leave me alone!

Dale says nothing, she just moves up toward the front car carefully, still trying hard not to look.

LYNN (CONT'D)

You can't stay here. It's dangerous for girls.

DALE

I can if I want. I climbed all the way up here to find you.

She climbs into the front car with Lynn, who crosses his arms and frowns deeply.

LYNN

This is my car.

DALE

Well, you have to share for awhile.

They fall silent for a moment. Dale looks up at the moon, and smells the breeze.

DALE (CONT'D)

It's a beautiful night. It's nice up here.

LYNN

It was. Until you got here.

DALE

Dad hasn't slept since you've been gone, do you know that?

Lynn looks uncomfortable, but says nothing.

DALE (CONT'D)

Did anybody see you hit Buzzy?

LYNN

No.

Dale raises her eyebrows.

LYNN (CONT'D)

I didn't hit Buzzy.

Dale looks out over the distant lights, and then up to the stars.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Do they know?

DALE

I don't think so.

LYNN

Are you going to tell?

DALE

No.

Lynn hides a look of vast relief.

DALE (CONT'D)

You have to come home, Lynn.

LYNN

No. I live on the rollercoaster now.

DALE

But you have to eat.

LYNN

That's the best part. I found a way in to the concession stand near the front. They got everything, hot dogs and old popcorn and candy and soda. I sneak down at night.

DALE

That's pretty brave.

LYNN

I'm never gonna leave.

DALE

Your family misses you.

LYNN

I don't have a family. You all just left me there.

He's tearing up.

DALE

Lynn, I'm sorry. I should have forced Dick to take you with us.

LYNN

It's too late now. I ruined a whole house, and then I killed a guy, and now I have to live here.

DALE

Buzzy's going to be fine. And Mr. Neal deserved every bit of it. Besides, he's about to have other problems. It's time to come home. We need you.

LYNN

We're not allowed to go home. Don't you know that? No one's there. Everyone's gone.

DALE

I'm here. And Dad's home, waiting for us right now.

LYNN

I'm not going.

DALE

I'm not leaving until you come with me. You're my brother. It's my job to stick up for you.

LYNN

Well, I'm not going.

DALE

Well, fine. We'll just stay up here.

LYNN

You can do what you want. I'm going down for dinner. You should know, though, it's a lot scarier going down. A lot. Especially in the dark.

DALE

Will you bring me something?

LYNN

Yeah, sure.

EXT. ROCKET ROLLERCOASTER HILL - MORNING

Dale is sleeping curled up in the front seat of the first car. Lynn is in the back seat, surrounded by various wrappers.

It's a gorgeous San Antonio morning. The park looks fresh and new.

A DIESEL ENGINE STARTS UP.

Dale lifts her head -- and then sits up.

DALE

Lynn?

Lynn stirs. Then, suddenly, he sits bolt upright.

LYNN

We slept too long! It's morning!

DALE

What do you mean?

LYNN

That's the rollercoaster engine!

AN OMINOUS CLANKING SOUND.

LYNN (CONT'D)

That's the --

THE ROLLERCOASTER CARS PITCH FORWARD SUDDENLY, and both Dale and Lynn clutch at the metal side-handles, the only restraints on the cars.

DALE

What's happening?

LYNN

We're going over!

DALE

No! Stop it!

THE CAR PLUNGES OVER THE DROP.

DALE (CONT'D)

No! I don't want to go!

Dale's scream echoes through the park.

EXT. ROCKET ROLLERCOASTER

Dale is clutching the side rail in a death grip, her body braced against the back of the seat as the car roars down the track.

Her body floats up a little off the seat on a rise in the track, and she gives out a little suppressed scream.

Behind her, Lynn starts laughing.

EXT. ROCKET ROLLERCOASTER

Dale endures the last five waves in the track, yelling through gritted teeth as she rises off the seat each time.

EXT. ROCKET, LOADING PLATFORM

The ATTENDANT is sitting at the control station as the car comes into the platform, and brakes to a halt.

He is utterly astonished, and stares at them.

Dale is relaxed and laughing the laugh of the living, of the survivor.

Lynn is smiling at her, and as they exit the car, he gives her a hug.

LYNN  
Okay. I'll go.

They hold hands and walk down the entranceway ramp.

The Attendant starts to yell out something -- and stops himself.

He shakes his head, and smiles.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING

Lynn and Dale walk along the street. Lynn has his hands in his pockets.

LYNN  
Dale?

DALE  
Yeah?

LYNN  
Where do you think Togo is?

DALE  
Inside you and me.

LYNN  
You don't think he's in heaven?

DALE  
There too.

Dale turns at the corner.

LYNN  
Wrong way.

DALE  
Detour.

EXT. CITY GARBAGE DUMP - DAY

Dale and Lynn stop and stand in front of the endless, fetid piles, waving off flies.

DALE WHISTLES. Sort of loud.

A moment passes, they wait --

Nothing.

DALE WHISTLES AGAIN, this time quite loudly.

Lynn gives her a respectful look.

Trouble the dog comes bounding out from the piles, and jumps up on Lynn, who reacts by shrinking away --

LYNN  
Oh god! He smells awful!

DALE  
Pee-yewww! Trouble! You smell so bad! Let's go! Go!

They walk towards home, Trouble cheerfully tagging along.

DALE (CONT'D)  
You got to wash him.

LYNN  
Why me?

DALE  
He's your dog now.

Lynn walks along, thinks for a moment.

LYNN  
He's my dog now.

EXT. BELLAMY HOUSE - DAY

Lynn and Dale stand frozen in front of their house. Trouble bounds from behind them into the yard.

DALE  
C'mon.

She takes Lynn by the hand, and they walk up the sidewalk to the front door. Dale lifts her hand to knock --

THE DOOR OPENS.

Standing behind it -- Debbie, holding Janee.

DEBBIE  
It's Lynn! They're home!

From somewhere inside the house --

ZILMON (V.O.)  
What?

DEBBIE  
Oh, Lynn, we liked to have died  
with you running away like that.  
What were you thinking?

She kisses Janee and sets her down, then steps outside, kneels down, and hugs Lynn and Dale.

Janee walks forward and hugs the back of Debbie.

Zilmon steps forward, and sees Lynn hugging Debbie --

He hides his eyes with his hand, struggling not to break down.

The three children hug their mother, and the four of them rock slowly back and forth.

Dale pulls back a little to speak --

DALE  
You're home!

DEBBIE

I'm home. Came on the bus this morning.

JANEE

The bus! Fast!

LYNN

Are we allowed to come back home now?

DEBBIE

You're allowed. I'm sorry.

DALE

Are you okay?

DEBBIE

The doctors and nurses were very good. They really helped me. Everything's going to be fine now.

LYNN

You look different.

Debbie hugs him tightly, then looks at him.

DEBBIE

Do you want home-made vanilla ice cream tonight?

LYNN

Yeah!

Trouble the dog suddenly appears, barging in past Debbie and her children and bounding into the house --

ALL

Oh!

DEBBIE

That dog smells the worst, and someone had better --

LYNN

He's my dog, I'll wash him. I'll do it right now.

Debbie hugs her three children close again.

INT. BELLAMY HOUSE - NIGHT

Zilmon is listening to the radio, reading a book. Dale sits near him, reading a textbook -- 'Modern Psychology'.

Debbie enters from the porch, carrying the steel ice cream container.

Lynn walks in behind her, closely followed by Trouble the dog, balancing the ice-cream paddle on a white towel.

Zilmon and Dale look up from their books. The first good moment in a long time.

Lynn nearly drops the paddle, and Trouble happily cleans up the resulting drips.

EXT. BELLAMY HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

Dale is out in the front yard, watching Janee tool around on her tricycle.

DALE

Careful.

JANEE

Fast!

Dale sees something happening down the street, and walks over to stand next to the mailbox.

Several police cars have pulled up at a house, about eight houses down on the other side of the street.

Several uniformed officers and a plainclothes detective get out, walk up to the door, and knock.

Lynn walks up and stands next to Dale.

LYNN

What's going on?

DALE

I wrote a letter.

The door has opened, and the police enter the home.

LYNN

I hope Kenny and Leslie are all right. I hope they get him.

DALE

Me, too. He needs to be studied.

Janee wheels up behind them to see what the fuss is all about.

JANEE  
Togo push me!

Lynn looks down at Janee.

LYNN  
Okay. Just a minute, Janee.

DALE  
We could go to Playland Park  
tomorrow. Janee'd love the planes.

LYNN  
All right.

JANEE  
Planes! Fast!

Lynn turns to push Janee on the tricycle. Dale turns to look at them.

DALE  
We could ask Phyllis. If she wants  
to go.

Lynn stops pushing for a moment, and looks up at Dale.

LYNN  
Sure.

Dale smiles at him.

JANEE  
Is it a real plane?

DALE  
It's a kid plane.

JANEE  
I want to fly the plane! How fast  
does it go? Can we take Bobby?

DALE  
That'd be fun. We'll ask.

INT. PHYLLIS CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Phyllis is lying on her bed next to an open window, looking out at the beautiful day.

She's crying, tears streaming down her face. Her hands are folded across her pelvis, palms down.

A framed picture of Togo watches her from her nightstand.

THE TELEPHONE RINGS.

EXT. PLAYLAND PARK, NEXT TO THE PLANE RIDE - DAY

MUSIC.

Janee and Bobby are sharing a wicked-fast looking rocket ship; Janee is driving, and clearly in heaven.

Zilmon stands with his arm around Debbie. They're smiling, and look for the moment like they're doing okay. They exchange small talk with Betty and Denson Ellerbee.

Dale is talking to Phyllis Childs, who looks very pretty today indeed.

Lynn is acting tough with Denny and Donny and Gene Ellerbee, putting his hands on his hips and puffing his chest out a little.

DONNY

Lynn, ya ready to ride the Rocket?

Lynn glances over at Dale, who looks back at him.

LYNN

Till the day I die.

DALE

I call front seat.

Denny and Donny are a little put out by this unexpected bravado from Dale.

Preston walks up to the group; everyone greets him, and Preston shakes hands with Zilmon and Denson.

Then he greets Phyllis. The energy radiating between them is evident. Dale observes this with a curious look on her face, but no one else seems to notice.

PULL BACK to view the whole of Playland Park. The Rocket is roaring, the rides are all whirling, the air electric with laughter and screams and excited talking --

FADE TO:

INT. HOME OFFICE, 2008 - DAY

Dale as a grown woman sixty years later holds a framed photo of Togo, studying it.

The office is nice, walled with books, and the desk is strewn with notebooks and other working materials. She's very active.

On the bookshelf in front of her are titles that reveal what Dale has grown up to be -- *Trapped In The Mirror*, *The Dance Of Deception*, *Compassionate Child Rearing*, and dozens of other psychology texts.

Her sister Janee appears in the doorway.

JANEE

Dale. Hey.

DALE

Hi.

JANEE

The kids are ready to sing.

DALE

Okay. I'm coming.

JANEE

Thinking about Togo?

DALE

Yeah. I read the article about Playland Park. It's all gone. Everything.

JANEE

Well, the Rocket's up in Pennsylvania. If you want to go.

DALE

Oh, I'm there. I'm missing him today. Wish he were here. He'd love this, Janee.

JANEE

He's here.

They look at each other, and Dale puts the photo back in its place on the desk, and rises from the chair to pat Janee on the arm.

DALE

Yes he is.

Dale follows Janee into the hallway.

EXT. DALE'S HOME - DAY

Janee and Dale emerge to a large well-tended yard full of children having fun, shouting and running around.

It's another perfect, sunny Texas day. The sky is blue and deep, filled with puffy white clouds, and a large daytime crescent of the beautiful moon.

FADE TO BLACK.