

GOD'S GONE FISHING

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. SKY -- DAY 1

Birds fly, gliding on currents of wind, slowly riding downward, then catching another current and rising up higher and higher.

2 EXT. WOODS -- DAY 2

The woods are full of beautiful Virginia creeper and sumac with leaves of deep red and purple. We see walnut trees, hackberry and some stressed cottonwoods whose leaves have turned yellow. The hazelnut leaves are a brilliant yellow. The leaves of a few scattered ash are also starting to turn. A golden leaf falls from a tree and floats. We FOLLOW the leaf to FIND a MAN in an orange jacket walking through the serene environment.

3 EXT. LAKE -- DAY 3

We look out over a small, placid lake surrounded by the woods. Beyond the lake's edge, the man comes to rest beside a tree. He's a big bear of a man, and his wispy hair is a wild mess. He looks out over the lake...

It is late morning. A ten year old boy, ELLIOTT, fishes with a wooden pole off the end of an old dock. His jeans, t-shirt, and Converse sneakers betray that we're in the present day.

Otherwise, it could be 1930. Even 1830.

Elliott is an average-looking kid with a likeable face. He checks the worm on the end of his hook and then throws the line back into the water.

An eight year old girl, SOPHIE, walks along the shore. She pokes at the mud and tall grass with a stick. She has long blond hair and a splash of freckles over her nose. She wears a faded yellow sun dress. She half hums, half sings a song as she walks.

SOPHIE

(singing softly)

Down at the Jordan, John was
baptizing and saving all the
sinners...

An old black Labrador, Gus, walks ahead of her, sniffing the ground.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 (singing softly)
 See him at the seaside, talking
 with the fishermen, and made them
 disciples. Amen, amen, amen...

Gus stops. He's found something.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 What you got there, Gus?

Sophie approaches and Gus backs away, his nose still pointed at his find.

It's a robin, struggling for life. One of its wings is broken, and one of its legs.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 Oh.

She drops to one knee and touches the bird. It flaps to get away from her, but then goes still.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 It's okay, bird.

She picks it up and holds it in her hands. It barely has the strength to struggle

An uncommon splash of white marks the bird's breast. White feathers surrounded by red.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 Poor birdy.

She stands and turns to Elliott.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 Elliott!

ELLIOTT
 What?

SOPHIE
 I found a bird! It's hurt!

He looks over. She holds it up.

ELLIOTT
 Well, put it down! You're gonna catch something!

He goes back to his fishing. Sophie looks down at the bird, sad, concerned. She closes her eyes as if thinking, or praying. When she opens them, the bird has gone still.

She kneels in the tall grass. She looks out over the still water at the opposite bank. It's as if she sees someone. Or some thing. But there's no one there. Then she closes her eyes and bows her head over the robin now resting in her cupped hands.

She breathes deeply. Her lips move in silent prayer. Her right thumb moves gently over the bird's broken wing.

Elliott reels in his empty line and throws it out again. It plops into the water and...

...the robin flutters in Sophie's hands. She opens her eyes.

The bird quickly stands in her hands, both legs whole, and shakes its body and extends its wings. Sophie's face beams with delight.

As she lifts her hands the bird flies out of her hands and up and out across the water. Gus barks.

The bird FLIES above the lake's edge, and above the Man in Orange, who is watching this moment- awestruck...

SOPHIE

Elliott!

ELLIOTT

What?

SOPHIE

The bird!

ELLIOTT

What about it?

SOPHIE

It's flying!

Elliott looks at her. She points to the robin flying joyously around the perimeter of the lake. He sees the bird.

But then his fishing rod tugs. He's got a bite. He snaps the pole back.

ELLIOTT

Got one!

He begins to reel it in.

Sophie, smiling, watches the bird fly. It comes near to her and circles overhead, chirping, and then flies away.

Sophie cups a hand over her eyes and watches until the robin disappears into the bright sky.

SOPHIE

Bye.

And then she looks down and across the lake to the opposite side. She smiles and lifts her hand as if saying "hello" or "goodbye."

The opposite bank is quiet and still. No one is there.

But Sophie sees someone. A friend. She smiles.

ELLIOTT

Sophie, come here! I got a big one!

Sophie turns and runs to her brother. Gus follows. We FIND the man in the orange jacket, as we hear the children laughing and the dog barking. We PUSH-IN on his weathered face, watching the lake, and after a BEAT, he walks, disappearing among the trees.

FADE TO BLACK:

Main titles begin.

FADE IN:

4

INT. ELI'S TRAILER -- DAY

4

A man groans as he rises into a sitting position at the edge of the mattress in the bedroom end of a very messy and very old Airstream mobile home trailer.

We soon recognize this man from the opening scene. He wears old boxers, a wife-beater t-shirt, and black socks.

This is ELI CLAYTON, 64.

He coughs as he reaches out, knocking over a few beer bottles in the process, and he finds the remains of a half-smoked cigar. He strikes a match and lights the cigar stub. His coughing subsides.

He finds his cowboy hat and puts it on.

The titles resume.

5 EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- DAY

5

Eli's 1973 Airstream trailer hasn't moved in years. The tires are flat and grass has grown up underneath. Two small outbuildings are planted nearby. A picnic table and outdoor barbecue grill serve as his dining room. He has two refrigerators outside, pushed against the side of the trailer.

One is fairly new and one is very old.

The canopy is torn, but it gets most of the job done. An American flag flies from the back of the trailer.

Eli steps out into the daylight. He wears his underwear, cowboy hat and cowboy boots. He walks to a line of trees behind the trailer and pees into the trees.

The trailer sits at the end of a long gravel driveway. Across the driveway is the foundation of a large family home. It's not a new foundation. Although rubble and debris have been removed, it is clear from the charring of the concrete and the black earth around the foundation that there was once a home here, and that it burned to the ground.

A long row of yellow rose bushes lines the south end of the foundation, broken only by concrete steps that lead nowhere.

The roses are impeccably tended, the only things, including Eli himself, that appear to be cared for.

6 EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- DAY

6

Eli approaches his old Ford pick-up truck. He's now fully dressed and cleaned up. He wears jeans and a dark plaid shirt.

He opens the truck door and grabs a pair of stem cutters from the seat.

He walks to the row of flower bushes. It only takes him a few seconds to find the most beautifully formed rose.

ELI

There y'are.

He snips the stem. He finds the second prettiest and snips that one, too.

7 EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

7

Eli pulls his truck to a stop near the edge of an old cemetery. Newer tombstones dominate this end of the graveyard.

The main titles end.

Carrying his roses, Eli walks past several tombstones, then stops near a medium-sized stone. Resting on top of the stone is a wilted yellow rose. He looks down at the inscription:

SAVANNAH ROSE CLAYTON - Beloved Wife and Mother - Oct. 21, -
Sept. 17, 1988.

Immediately to the right of Savannah's gravestone is another, smaller stone. It also has a rose on it. It reads: Anson Samuel Clayton - MAY 12, 1980 - Sept. 17, 1988.

He hears the sound of a woman crying. He looks up. Several yards away a young woman, maybe 26 or 27 years old, sits at a grave, weeping. She has long dark hair and a long dark coat. This is ROBIN. She wipes at her cheeks and her crying subsides.

Eli turns back to the stone.

ELI
Mornin', love.

He turns to the other.

ELI (CONT'D)
Mornin', son.

He replaces the wilted flowers with the fresh ones. He looks down at the graves, a sad smile on his face.

8 EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

8

Eli approaches the young woman. She has stopped crying. She wipes the last of her tears away as Eli approaches.

ELI
You alright, ma'am?

She nods and attempts to smile. He turns to go.

ROBIN
I've seen you before. You come here
a lot.

He nods.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

I looked at the stone one time. Was she your wife?

ELI

Yes, ma'am. My boy. He's there, too.

ROBIN

Can I ask you something?

He nods again.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Does it ever get easier?

ELI

(after a moment)

You want me to tell you the truth?
Or you want me to tell you what you want to hear?

She looks away.

ROBIN

Tell me what I want to hear.

ELI

It gets easier. Every day, it gets a little easier.

She nods, sadly, but doesn't look at him. He turns and quietly goes.

9

INT. CAFE -- DAY

9

Eli enters a small town cafe. A little bell over the door announces his arrival. A beautiful Latina, LORENA, 42, is at the register. Her wardrobe is 100% American diner waitress, but her multiple rings, bracelets, and necklaces have the colorful flair of Southern Mexico. One of her necklaces is a silver cross.

LORENA

Morning, Eli.

She smiles and hands him a newspaper. He takes it.

ELI

Lorena.

LORENA

You're late. I kept your breakfast warm.

ELI

Now what if I wanted somethin' different today?

LORENA

You never want something different. In five years you never want nothing different.

She turns to go.

LORENA (CONT'D)

Now go sit down. I don't have time for your nonsense.

ELI

Well, I don't want to talk anyway.

LORENA

Good. Because I don't have time.

She goes. He smiles and starts into the dining area. Four tables and two booths have DINERS of various ages.

As Lorena passes a booth with three rednecks, one of them, NICK, 32, reaches out and touches her butt. The others laugh.

She turns, fire flashing in her eyes.

LORENA (CONT'D)

Stop that! I told you.

NICK

Calm down. It was an accident.

The others snicker.

LORENA

One more time. I throw you out.

She goes. Nick laughs with his friends. Eli watches, his expression hard. He settles into a booth and opens his newspaper.

Lorena approaches Eli's booth with three eggs cooked over easy, two pieces of toast, hash browns, bacon and a steaming cup of black coffee.

He folds up his paper as she begins to set his breakfast in front of him.

ELI
Gracias.

LORENA
De nada. Why are you late?

ELI
Now that's my own business.

LORENA
You go to church today?

ELI
Hell, no.

LORENA
Language.

ELI
This here's my church, Lorena.
'Cause I gotta tell ya, your coffee
is divine.

She smiles, flattered.

LORENA
I get you some pie. If you're nice,
I'll make it warm.

ELI
I'll be nice.

LORENA
I'll make it warm.

She goes, smiling, but she only gets a few feet before redneck Nick grabs her butt again. The others laugh. She turns on them, furious.

LORENA (CONT'D)
Out! You get out!

NICK
Whoa! I'm just playin' with you.

LORENA
I told you. You don't touch me.

NICK
I'm sorry. Look, I can't help
myself--

He goes to get up, but tips the table and his water glass spills. He reaches out to grab it, but - instead - knocks it off the table. It smashes.

LORENA

You get out. I don't want your money.

She bends to begin picking up the glass. Nick smiles, big, and reaches out to grab her butt yet again. But Eli's hand clamps over his forearm.

NICK

Wha--?

ELI

Looks like your pa didn't teach you any manners.

NICK

Old man, you better take your hand off my arm while you still have one.

Nick's free hand curls into a fist.

ELI

Lesson number one.

Nick swings.

Eli catches the redneck's fist in his hand as if it were a baseball. He then brings Nick's other arm down as he raises his own knee. He snaps Nick's elbow over his knee. Nick screams in absolute agony, but the scream is interrupted by Eli's fist slamming into his face.

As Nick's redneck friend, RYAN, 28, begins to rise from the booth, Eli kicks the table, hard, into the booth, cracking the man's ribs. He then grabs Nick by the hair of his head and slams his face down onto the closest table so hard that the wooden tabletop breaks.

He then turns his attention to redneck #2, GARY, 34, who remains seated, his hands up in the air as if he's the victim of a bank robbery. He looks at Eli, terrified.

ELI (CONT'D)

(to Gary)

You gonna make a fuss?

GARY

No. No. No, sir. No.

Lorena watches, wide-eyed. A COOK, 45, stands in front of the swinging kitchen door. His mouth is open.

He holds a dripping spatula.

ELI
 (to Gary)
 You boys stay clear of here from
 now on. You understand?

GARY
 Yes, sir. That--that--that won't
 be a problem. We're just---we're
 just passin' through. Sir.

Eli is suddenly aware that the other customers have seen the whole thing. They all watch him. One TEENAGER has his phone pointed at Eli, filming the whole thing.

ELI
 (to Lorena)
 I'm...I'm sorry about that.

LORENA
 No pie for you.

He awkwardly backs away.

ELI
 (to the customers)
 Y'all go back to your breakfast.
 Everything's okay now. Everything's
 ...fine.
 (to Lorena, softly)
 Sorry.

She nods, silently grateful and maybe even a little aroused.

Eli turns and goes. As he passes his table, he drops a hundred dollar bill near his plate and exits the diner.

Lorena turns to Gary. His hands are still in the air.

LORENA
 You probably ought to call an
 ambulance.

Gary nods, grateful to be given a task. He picks up his phone.

Nick, his broken nose bleeding onto the floor, groans. His groan is echoed by Ryan, who holds his ribs and wheezes like he's been kicked by a bull.

11 EXT. DINER -- DAY

11

Eli crosses the street toward his parked truck. He sees SHERIFF DALE STEARMAN, 47, a thick man with an even thicker mustache, walking quickly toward the diner.

They pass in the street.

STEARMAN

Eli.

ELI

Sheriff.

STEARMAN

I hear there's a ruckus in the diner.

ELI

Just came from there. I sure didn't see anything.

STEARMAN

Must've been a prank call.

ELI

Have a good day, Sheriff.

STEARMAN

You, too, Eli.

Eli hops into his truck as the sheriff slows his pace.

Sheriff Stearman is met near the door of the diner by BARCLAY JENSEN, 78. Barclay's hair is disheveled and his shirt is buttoned up wrong. He is disoriented and clearly senile. His right arm is visibly stiff and his fingers curl inward, perhaps the result of a stroke.

BARCLAY

Have you seen Betty?

STEARMAN

I don't have time for this, Barclay. You go home.

BARCLAY

I want Betty!

Eli drives away. The sheriff enters the diner, followed by Barclay.

12 EXT. CHURCH -- DAY 12

The parking lot of a traditional red brick church is filled with trucks, vans, and cars. Most of the cars are older and well used. We hear the muffled and distant sound of the congregation singing "Come and Dine."

13 INT. CHURCH -- DAY 13

The small church is full. The CONGREGATION sings. We pass over several faces as the collection basket passes. It's a good cross section of all ages, from the elderly to toddlers and even a newborn or two.

The crowd is mostly caucasian, but there are a few black families and more than a few Latino families.

CAMERA PASSES OVER THE HOPKINS FAMILY. Dad is also known as ANDREW, 38. He looks a little uncomfortable in his suit and he mumbles more than sings the hymn. Beside him is ALLISON, a pretty blond who is actually happy to be here, then Elliott, the 10 year old boy from the lake, who is asleep against his mother's shoulder, and finally...

Sophie. She's angelic in a yellow dress that matches her mother's. Sophie smiles as she sings.

As the collection basket passes, Andrew (dutifully, if not enthusiastically) drops a twenty in with the other bills and change. As Allison passes the basket on to Sophie, Elliott stirs and rises. His head collides with the collection basket, almost spilling it. Allison gives him a stern look and Sophie giggles, then clamps a hand over her mouth.

Elliott's face turns red with embarrassment. Sophie drops a quarter into the collection basket and passes it on.

Seated behind the pulpit is PASTOR ROBERT JENKINS, a balding man of 55. Jenkins watches the little drama down at the basket with disapproval. He taps his foot as he sings and clasps the hand of his wife, LUCY, 50. Lucy looks like she just stepped out of 1984.

14 EXT. CHURCH -- DAY 14

Pastor Jenkins stands by the open front doors of the little white church. The congregation has already begun spilling out into the parking lot.

Andrew, Allison, and Elliott step out into the sunshine.

JENKINS

Nice to see the Hopkins family today.

ANDREW

It's good to be seen.

ALLISON

Very nice sermon. Thank you.

JENKINS

Thank you.

ALLISON

I'll be thinking about it all week.

They pass by and start down the steps.

ANDREW

(mumbling)

I won't.

ALLISON

Shush now.

ELLIOTT

Time served for the week.

Andrew begins loosening his tie.

ANDREW

Amen to that.

Father and son share a high five. Allison playfully slaps her husband's arm.

ALLISON

Stop it. Behave.

ANDREW

That man bores me to tears.

ALLISON

Quiet. He can hear you.

In the parking lot, Sophie walks beside the wheelchair of MARK MILLER, 10. Mark wears black pants and a matching suitcoat with a white shirt, but no tie. His legs are inert and strangely twisted. His parents, WALTER, 35, and FLORA, walk several feet behind them.

MARK

Or, you know, we could do something else. We could make something.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

My mom has lots of craft stuff. I saw this one guy on Youtube that makes dragons' heads out of paper mache and then hangs them on the wall like hunting trophies.

SOPHIE

That's funny.

MARK

They're awesome. You can paint them all different colors.

Allison calls to her daughter from across the lot.

ALLISON

Sophie! Let's go, sweetheart!

Sophie and Mark stop.

SOPHIE

I gotta go. I'll see you at school.

MARK

Okay. Look up the guy on Youtube.

SOPHIE

I will.

As she goes, Mark's parents, Walter and Flora, smile at her.

FLORA

Bye, Sophie.

SOPHIE

Bye!

FLORA

(to her husband)
She's a sweet girl.

Walter steps up to Mark's wheelchair and begins to push. Mark can't take his eyes away from Sophie.

WALTER

C'mon, Casanova.

MARK

Dad. That's not funny.

WALTER

It's a little funny.

Mark holds up his hand with about an inch between his thumb and forefinger.

MARK

That much.

15 INT. HOPKINS' STATION WAGON -- DAY

15

Sophie climbs into the back seat of her family's Ford station wagon. Elliott is already there.

Her dad and mom are seated and buckled.

ANDREW

(to Allison)

The food ready?

ALLISON

It's all in the fridge, ready to go.

(to Sophie)

How's Mark doing?

SOPHIE

We're going to make paper dragons or something.

ELLIOTT

Cool.

ALLISON

(to Elliott)

Buckle up, young man.

Andrew begins to pull away.

ANDREW

Alright, who wants to go see Grandpa?

There is no response.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Oh, come on.

SOPHIE

I do.

ELLIOTT

You do not.

SOPHIE

Yes, I do.

ELLIOTT
Grandpa doesn't even like us.

ALLISON
Elliott!

ELLIOTT
To visit, I mean.

ALLISON
That's not true.

ANDREW
Your grandpa...he's just a little
grumpy sometimes.

ELLIOTT
Sometimes?

ALLISON
Shush.

SOPHIE
I want to see Gussy.

ANDREW
That's right. Gus needs somebody to
play fetch with. To take him out to
the lake.

ELLIOTT
I love Gus.

ANDREW
Alright, who wants to go see Gus?

"Yays" from everyone.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Okay, then. Gus, we're on our way!

The station wagon passes the Miller's van. Sophie waves to Mark.

16 EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- DAY

16

Mark sits in the back seat of the van with his forehead against the glass as his father puts the wheelchair into the back. He sees Sophie pass in her family's station wagon. He smiles and waves.

As they pass, his attention returns to the basketball court on the next lot. EIGHT BOYS play basketball. Mark watches as they laugh, shout, shoot, and score.

17

EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- DAY

17

Gus approaches the trailer. Eli sits in the shade of his canopy. He sips on a bottle of Budweiser as he dabs at his lightly skinned and bruised knuckles with a ball of cotton that he dips in whiskey.

Gus sits beside him and sniffs.

A car approaches on the gravel driveway. Gus barks. Eli looks up. It's a black Yukon with red and blue lights on top and a Sheriff's emblem on the door.

ELI

Well, hell.

Sheriff Stearman stops and gets out. Gus's barks turn to happy whimpers. Stearman scratches the back of the dog's neck as he approaches.

STEARMAN

(sarcastic)

I like what you've done with the place.

ELI

What brings you all the way out here, Dale?

STEARMAN

I wonder.

Stearman stops a few feet away from Eli. He sighs.

STEARMAN (CONT'D)

Well, you broke that jackass's nose and arm, and a couple of the other jackass's ribs.

ELI

Yes, I did. You gonna arrest me?

STEARMAN

I made them a deal. I told them that if they didn't press charges I'd see that you'd pay the deductibles on their insurance claims and...that I wouldn't arrest them for disorderly conduct and anything else I could think of.

Eli nods.

STEARMAN (CONT'D)

So...can I count on you to do that or are you gonna be a stubborn old goat?

ELI

I reckon I can manage that.

STEARMAN

Alright then. That's taken care of.

Eli gets up and opens the old refrigerator. It's filled with beer and whiskey. Only beer and whiskey.

ELI

You want a beer?

STEARMAN

No, I do not want a beer.

ELI

Whiskey?

STEARMAN

It's not even noon yet and, if you haven't noticed, I'm on duty. And I'm driving.

ELI

Don't get your panties in a bundle. I was just tryin' to...reciprocate.

STEARMAN

Let me get this straight. I don't arrest you and in return I get a beer.

ELI

Or a whiskey.

STEARMAN

You're a piece of work.

Stearman turns to go, then stops. He stares down at the ground.

ELI
You alright, Dale?

Stearman turns to him.

STEARMAN
I'm gonna ask you a question.

ELI
Alright.

STEARMAN
I don't want an answer. Not right now. You think about it, and we'll discuss it over that beer you owe me. And it better be cold.

Eli nods and waits for the question.

STEARMAN (CONT'D)
What happened to you?

Eli doesn't look away. The Sheriff lets the question sink in.

STEARMAN (CONT'D)
You've been a mean, rowdy old bastard so long that most folks in this town don't even remember who you used to be.

ELI
That was a long time ago.

STEARMAN
Not to me. I remember sittin' there with my family listenin' to you preach. You had the spirit in you.

ELI
This subject doesn't interest me. Let's talk about somethin' else.

STEARMAN
Let's talk about why you burned down a perfectly good house. Let's talk about why you walked away from a perfectly good church.

ELI

Thanks for the visit, Dale. You're welcome to leave now.

STEARMAN

One day, and I don't know if you remember, but my brother Bill went up to you and told you that he wanted to be a preacher, just like you. You blessed him that he would. And he did. You inspired him.

Eli grunts and takes a swig of his beer.

STEARMAN (CONT'D)

You used to inspire people. You used to bless people. Now you just hurt people and break things. Savannah...I don't think she'd like to see what I'm looking at right now.

ELI

(a warning)
That's enough.

STEARMAN

You were a great man. You really were. Now you're not even a good one.

Eli sets his bottle down and stands.

STEARMAN (CONT'D)

I'll pray for you.

ELI

You do that. You pray in one hand and then go ahead and empty your bowels into the other. See which one fills up first.

A car pulls in at the end of the driveway and approaches. It is the Hopkins' station wagon. Stearman goes to his Yukon, shaking his head.

STEARMAN

What the hell happened to you?

As the station wagon pulls to a stop, the Sheriff pulls away in his Yukon and heads toward the road.

Sophie and Elliott spill out of the station wagon and greet Gus who jumps and barks and wags his tail like he hasn't seen them in a year.

SOPHIE
Hey, Gussy! Hey, boy!

ELLIOTT
Gus, you good dog.

Sophie scratches Gus's back.

SOPHIE
Good doggie. Yes, you are.

Allison emerges from the car with a plastic covered bowl.

ALLISON
Hi, Daddy!

Eli hasn't moved. He smiles at her.

ANDREW
Hi, Eli.

ELI
What brings you all out here?

ALLISON
Well, if you won't ever come see us, we're just going to have to come see you. Every Sunday. For a picnic.

ELI
Every Sunday, huh?

ANDREW
What's with the Sheriff? He come to arrest you?

ELI
That was one possible outcome.

ANDREW
Oh.

The kids approach.

ELLIOTT
Hey, Grandpa.

Eli grunts and nods.

ELI

Hi, boy.

Elliott produces a fake smile and then turns away. Sophie runs to her grandfather and throws her arms around his waist.

SOPHIE

Hi, Grandpa. I missed you.

Awkwardly, he pats her back.

ELI

Hello there, you. You're growing faster than a weed.

SOPHIE

You always say that.

She laughs.

ELI

Why don't you kids take Gus out to the lake. He needs a run.

ALLISON

After lunch. We've got to put some food into these kids first.

ANDREW

I'm starved.

ALLISON

I made some of Mom's fried chicken. It's not hot, though.

ELI

Just as good cold.

ANDREW

Ain't that the truth.

Allison sees the whiskey bottle out on the table.

ALLISON

(scolding)

Daddy...

She snatches it off the table.

ELI

Well, it's not like you gave me any warning.

The family sits around the picnic table. Their plates are filled with fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, biscuits, etc.

ANDREW

It's going to revolutionize everything. Everything. We'll be able to actually print a kidney. Fully dimensional. Fully functional. Out of tissue grown from the patient's own cells.

ELI

Well, that's somethin'.

ANDREW

It's like science fiction, you know? There was a whole episode about it.

SOPHIE

Mom, can you pass the chicken?

ALLISON

Say the word.

SOPHIE

Please.

ALLISON

Yes, I will.

SOPHIE

Thank you.

ALLISON

You're welcome.

Elliott snickers and nods at the plate of chicken.

ELLIOTT

I'd like to see you heal that.

SOPHIE

You shouldn't say things like that.

ANDREW

What are you talking about?

ELLIOTT

Last week, out by the lake, Sophie found a banged up bird.

ALLISON
Gross. Not at the table.

ELLIOTT
And then she healed it.

ANDREW
She did what?

Eli's face shows he knows this to be true.

SOPHIE
I didn't do it.

ELLIOTT
Well, who did then?

SOPHIE
Jesus did. Jesus healed the bird.
I just prayed for it.

ANDREW
Wait a minute. What?

Eli simply watches this play out before him, silent but listening to every breath.

SOPHIE
Elliott was fishing and I found a little bird. And it was hurt real bad. And so I prayed. And then, all of a sudden, it was all better. And it flew away. And then I saw Jesus.

ALLISON
You saw Jesus?

SOPHIE
Uh huh.

ELLIOTT
That's new. I didn't see anybody.

SOPHIE
Well he was there. I saw him.

ALLISON
I'm sure it wasn't really hurt.
Just stunned or something.

SOPHIE
Nope. Its wing was all bent. And its leg.

ELLIOTT

Looked dead to me. But I didn't see it close.

ANDREW

What did Jesus look like?

SOPHIE

I don't know.

ELLIOTT

Was he all smiley and handsome like the pictures in church?

ALLISON

Stop it.

SOPHIE

He just looked, you know, regular. And he was wearing a red thingy like a...

ELLIOTT

A robe?

ALLISON

Like a sash?

SOPHIE

Yeah! Like a sash.

ANDREW

Probably just a hiker or something.
(to Eli)
You get hikers coming through here?

ELI

Nope.

ANDREW

Or a hunter. Hunter's wear red.

ELI

Orange. If they're smart.

SOPHIE

It was red.

ELLIOTT

I'm tellin' you, there wasn't anybody there. Just me and Sophie.

SOPHIE

And Gus.

ELLIOTT
That's right. And Gus.

ANDREW
Did the hiker say anything, honey?

SOPHIE
It was Jesus. He didn't say anything.

ALLISON
Why didn't you tell us?

SOPHIE
I don't know. It was special. Until Elliott made fun of it. Jerk.

ELLIOTT
What did I do?

ANDREW
Probably a hiker.

ELLIOTT
Could've been both. I mean, I'm sure Jesus liked to hike, right?

ALLISON
Elliott.

ELLIOTT
What? It's not like Jesus had a car or anything.

Eli smiles and takes a drink of his iced tea.

ALLISON
You. Go to your room.

ELLIOTT
That's, like, ten miles away!

19 EXT. LAKE -- DAY

19

Andrew and Elliott sit on folding chairs on the dock, fishing.

Gus trots along the shore nearby.

ANDREW
Did I ever tell you about the time I caught a two foot bass?

ELLIOTT
About a hundred times.

Andrew chuckles.

ANDREW
That thing was huge.

ELLIOTT
I bet I catch a bigger one than you
today.

ANDREW
How much?

ELLIOTT
Seventy eight cents. That's all
I've got.

ANDREW
You're on.

20

EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- DAY

20

Eli and Allison sit near the trailer while Sophie plays near
the foundation of the old house.

ALLISON
What's she doing over there?

ELI
Chasin' frogs, probably.

ALLISON
(Calling to Sophie)
Sophie! Don't touch the frogs!
They'll give you warts.

ELI
Now that's an old wives' tale.

ALLISON
Well, they've got germs, I'm sure.

ELI
Frogs won't give you warts. Toads
won't give you warts. Those boys at
the high school. Now they'll give
you warts. And not where you want
'em.

ALLISON
Don't be gross.

ELI

It's true.

Eli chuckles. He takes a drink of his beer. Something's on Allison's mind.

ALLISON

I miss the house. I wish I could walk through it again.

He grunts.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

I've asked you a hundred times, but I'm going to ask you again. Why'd you burn it down?

He sighs.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

It was a really nice house.

ELI

If I answer, will you stop askin' me?

ALLISON

Yes, I will.

ELI

Alright. Well, I was drinkin' a little too much one night and...seemed like a good idea at the time.

ALLISON

That's the best you can do?

He shrugs.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

But all the furniture and everything.

ELI

I took the pictures and some books and some of your mom's clothes out first. Some of Anson's toys and clothes.

ALLISON

I know. But why?

ELI

I reckon I just couldn't stand to look at it anymore. Too many memories. Fire trucks came. I was still standin' there holdin' the gas can. I told 'em to just let it burn. It was my property. They didn't have no right to splash water on it.

ALLISON

I'm surprised you didn't go to jail.

ELI

Turns out nobody cares all that much if you burn your own house down. As long as you don't try to collect on it. Sheriff didn't even fine me. Said that after losin' my wife and boy, I'd been through enough.

ALLISON

I can still see it. Just like it was still there.

ELI

Sure was pretty.

ALLISON

Yes, it is.

Over near the front steps, Sophie reaches down to pick up a frog. It leaps just before she touches it. She laughs, and follows it.

21

EXT. LAKE -- DAY

21

Andrew and Elliott continue to fish.

ELLIOTT

She really did it, you know.

ANDREW

What's that?

ELLIOTT

Sophie. She really healed that bird. Right over there.

ANDREW

Son, that's impossible.

ELLIOTT

I don't know. Jesus did it. He even brought Lazarus back from the dead.

Andrew wants to say something, but can't.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

What?

ANDREW

That was a long time ago. And sometimes stories are...meant to teach, you know. Like myths. It's not that the things actually happened. Necessarily. But they point us toward something higher. Something better.

ELLIOTT

So Jesus didn't really bring Lazarus back?

Andrew really doesn't want to answer. Fortunately, there's a tug on Elliott's line.

ANDREW

Whoa! You got something!

Elliott turns his attention to the fish.

ELLIOTT

It's a big one!

ANDREW

He's a fighter! Don't let him go!

Gus barks, excited.

22

EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- DAY

22

Sophie continues to chase the frog. She laughs, but then stops.

She sees something ahead, near the trees. She squints, as if watching it take form. She's not afraid.

Eli and Allison continue to talk near the trailer.

ELI

How is Andy treatin' you?

ALLISON

Good. Good. He's a good father.

ELI

What about husband?

ALLISON

We've had a few rough patches,
but...you know what they say. What
doesn't kill you makes you
stronger.

ELI

You know damn well that's not true,
baby girl. Sometimes what doesn't
kill you leaves you crippled and
crazy and cryin' in the corner.

She looks at her father. She nods and attempts a smile.

ALLISON

Can't argue with that.

Back near the foundation, Sophie looks at the trees where the
woods start. It's as if she's listening to someone, someone
she loves. But there's no one there.

She nods as if answering a question.

Allison suddenly notices Sophie in the distance. The little
girl stands with her back to them, her arms at her side. She
is perfectly still.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

What's she doing now?

ELI

Playin' a game probably.

ALLISON

With who?

And then Sophie drops. It's as if someone pulled a support
away. She falls like a rag doll to the ground.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Sophie?

Allison rises. So does Eli.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Sophie!

Allison runs. Eli follows as quickly as he can.

Allison falls to her knees beside her daughter and rolls her over. Sophie's eyes are closed and her mouth is open. She is completely unconscious. Eli arrives.

ELI
Let's get her to the hospital.

ALLISON
Wait. Dad.

Allison feels for a pulse, then puts her hand near Sophie's mouth.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
She's got a pulse. She's breathing.

Eli immediately scoops her up. They start toward the truck.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
What about Andrew? And Elliott? The phones don't work at the lake.

ELI
They'll figure it out.

Allison opens the passenger door to the truck and Eli lays Sophie down on the seat. He goes to the driver's side as Allison gets in and holds Sophie.

Eli starts the engine. The truck's tires spew gravel as Eli speeds away from the trailer.

23 INT. ELI'S TRUCK -- DAY 23

Eli drives like a bat out of hell. Allison runs her fingers through Sophie's hair.

ELI
How's she doing?

ALLISON
Same.
(to Sophie)
Wake up, Sophie. Wake up, honey.

24 EXT. EDGE OF TOWN -- DAY 24

Eli enters town at 70 miles per hour.

25 EXT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE -- DAY 25

Eli's truck skids to a stop at the emergency entrance of St. Joseph's Hospital. Allison steps out holding Sophie and rushes to the entrance. Eli follows.

26 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM ENTRANCE -- DAY 26

Allison enters the emergency room carrying Sophie. Eli is on her heels.

ALLISON

My little girl. She's unconscious.

The middle-aged female CLERK stands and comes around the counter, but Eli has already pulled a gurney from the hallway.

Allison lays Sophie on the gurney and Eli pushes it toward the double doors to the emergency rooms.

An African American SECURITY GUARD, 48, holds the door open for them.

ELI

Comin' through!

27 EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- DAY 27

Andrew and Elliott approach the trailer. Gus follows. The door is open, but the truck is gone. And so are the people.

ANDREW

Allie? Sophie?

ELLIOTT

Grandpa?

They stand near the table holding a string with two fish. Gus sniffs around, trying to solve the mystery.

ANDREW

I guess we're cleaning the fish.

ELLIOTT

Yep.

28 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM -- DAY

28

Sophie lies in a bed, eyes closed. Allison sits beside her bed and holds her daughter's hand. Eli stands nearby. A YOUNG NURSE, 24, checks her I.V. and vitals.

ALLISON

(to Sophie)

You're going to be okay, Sophie.
Everything's going to be okay.

Eli doesn't look so sure.

ELI

I'll go try to get Andy on the
phone.

He exits. Allison turns back to her daughter.

ALLISON

Wake up. Please wake up.

29 EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- DAY

29

Andrew and Elliott hurry to the station wagon. Gus follows, barking.

ELLIOTT

You guard the house, boy! We gotta
go.

Elliott hops in as Andrew speeds away. Gus follows for a few yards and then stops and barks at them as they swerve onto the road.

30 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM -- DAY

30

Eli stands next to Allison, looking down on Sophie. Her eyes flutter open.

ALLISON

There you are. There's my girl.

Sophie's eyes find her grandfather.

SOPHIE

Grandpa?

ELI

I'm here, baby girl.

Eli smiles, but he fights back tears. It is the first time we've seen much emotion from this man.

DOCTOR DAVID RILEY, 55, enters. He's black, tall, and very thin. He smiles at Allison and Eli as he enters, then turns his attention to Sophie.

DR. RILEY

If it isn't Sophie Hopkins. What are you doing in my hospital? You're too healthy to be in here.

He sits.

DR. RILEY (CONT'D)

Do you remember me? I'm Dr. Riley.

SOPHIE

(smiles)

I remember.

ALLISON

She just barely woke up.

DR. RILEY

Well, let's check you out. How do you feel?

SOPHIE

Sleepy.

Allison and the doctor chuckle. The doctor places his stethoscope on her chest.

DR. RILEY

You try to stay awake for me, okay?

SOPHIE

Okay.

DR. RILEY

Give me a deep breath.

31 INT. CONSULTATION ROOM -- DAY

31

Dr. Riley stands in a bare consultation room of the hospital. Allison and Andrew are seated at a small table. Eli stands.

DR. RILEY

She seems perfectly fine. Blood pressure is excellent. Her heart and lungs are functioning normally. No fever.

(MORE)

DR. RILEY (CONT'D)
Blood work looks good so far. I really don't see any reason for concern.

ALLISON
But she passed out. We couldn't wake her.

DR. RILEY
Has it happened before?

ALLISON
No. I don't think so.

DR. RILEY
Maybe she became overheated.

ALLISON
It wasn't that hot.

DR. RILEY
Or dehydrated.

ALLISON
No. She had ice tea and water.

DR. RILEY
Well, I'm going to let her go home. I recommend you just keep an eye on her. Bring her back if she experiences another blackout.

Eli unexpectedly enters the conversation.

ELI
She needs a scan. A brain scan or whatever you call it.

ALLISON
Daddy--

DR. RILEY
A CT scan?

ELI
That's it. You need to look at her brain.

ANDREW
Eli, let's let the doctor--

DR. RILEY
First of all, there's nothing to indicate that--

ELI

I've seen it before. Let's leave it at that.

ANDREW

Will the insurance cover that?

DR. RILEY

I'm not going to authorize a CT scan. I'm not throwing darts into the dark here hoping to hit something. Sophie fainted. It happens to healthy people.

ELI

My granddaughter has a tumor in her head and the sooner we get to work on it, the better chance she'll have.

DR. RILEY

(almost laughs)

Mr. Hopkins--

ELI

Clayton.

(points to Allison)

I'm her father.

DR. RILEY

Mr. Clayton, I'm not sure what television shows you've been watching, but this--

ELI

I don't watch television, Doc. But I did watch my wife fall to the ground just like Sophie did. More than once. And I listened to a headstrong doctor tell me that nothin' was wrong and then I had to go and identify the bodies after the same thing happened while she was drivin' on the highway with my eight year old son! This time, we're not waitin' for an autopsy to find out what's wrong.

DR. RILEY

I'm sorry about your wife--

ELI

And son.

DR. RILEY
 And son. And I think you are most
 certainly in an emotional state--

ELI
 Damn right I am.

DR. RILEY
 --and over reacting. However...

ANDREW
 Will the insurance pay for a scan?

DR. RILEY
 If we don't find anything, it's not
 likely.

ELI
 I'll pay for it.

DR. RILEY
 That could be several thousand--

ELI
 I said I'll pay for it. In advance.
 Put her on the schedule.

Riley looks at Andrew and Allison, who are as surprised as
 the doctor at this turn of events.

DR. RILEY
 Alright. Let's do it.

32 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM -- DAY

32

Sophie lies in bed. Elliott sits next to her. He studies the
 beeping machines.

ELLIOTT
 I wonder what this one does.

SOPHIE
 It happened again.

ELLIOTT
 What happened again?

SOPHIE
 Jesus.

Elliott turns to her.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I saw Jesus again.

ELLIOTT

Right.

SOPHIE

I did. I promise.

ELLIOTT

What happened?

SOPHIE

He just smiled at me, and he told me that I'll be going to Heaven soon, to be with him.

ELLIOTT

Like...what? Like you're going to die.

SOPHIE

He asked me if I understood and I said I did and then he was gone and...I don't know. I guess that's when I fainted.

ELLIOTT

You gonna tell Mom and Dad?

Just then, Mom and Dad enter.

ANDREW

Alright, we're going to take you home!

SOPHIE

Am I okay?

ANDREW

Dr. Riley says you're fine, but he's going to have you come back in a day or two to do another test.

ELLIOTT

Awesome.

SOPHIE

I don't want any more shots.

ELLIOTT

I hate hospitals.

ALLISON

Let's get your things together.
What smells like fish?

ELLIOTT

It's me. I didn't get a chance to--

ALLISON

Go wash your hands. Now.

Elliott groans in exasperation.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

It stinks in here.

Sophie laughs.

33 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- DAY

33

It is almost sunset. Eli gets out of his truck and leans back against the truck bed. He holds an unopened bottle of beer.

He looks at an old wood planked white church. It looks like it hasn't been used in years. It has big double doors and a steeple, but the paint has begun to chip and peel. In some places the wood is bare. Large pieces of plywood have been nailed over the windows. A 2 x 8 board is nailed over the front doors with a sign attached to it that reads: Keep Out! No Trespassing!

The glass on the church's announcement board near the sidewalk has been broken and most of the letters are gone. Still remaining are partial words: "Gosp," "urch, and "Pasto : Rev Eli Cl..."

It's quiet here. There's only the sound of crickets.

His expression is dark, serious, worried. He looks at the dense thicket of trees behind the church. But his eyes soon wander back to the church.

He doesn't approach. He opens his beer, takes a swig, and waits for the sun to set.

34 INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

34

Sophie kneels beside her bed in prayer. Allison kneels next to her. Sophie's bedroom looks like the bedroom of any middle class 8 year old girl in America. Drawings of horses and unicorns and plenty of My Little Pony and Hello Kitty merchandise.

SOPHIE

(in prayer)

...and please bless our family and please bless Grandpa that he'll be happy and safe. And please bless Gus and please bless Mom and Dad that they'll let us have our own dog or cat. Or bird. And please bless Mark that he'll be able to walk again someday and please bless all the poor and all the sick and all the people in jail all the needy people everywhere. In Jesus name and thy will be done and not ours, Amen.

ALLISON

Amen.

Sophie crawls up into bed. Allison tucks her in.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

That was a very nice prayer. But you're not getting a pet. Your dad's allergic.

SOPHIE

I'll keep praying for it anyway.

ALLISON

And I'll keep saying no.

SOPHIE

With God all things are possible.

ALLISON

(laughs)

Not that. Trust me.

SOPHIE

The mustard seed, Mom.

Allison pauses at the door.

ALLISON

What?

SOPHIE

Jesus says that if we have faith even like a tiny mustard seed, we can move a whole big mountain. I don't want to move a whole big mountain. I just want a dog.

(MORE)

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

(smiles)

A little one.

ALLISON

(smiles)

I'm going to leave the door open a bit. You call if you need me.

SOPHIE

I will. Mom?

Allison waits.

ALLISON

Yes?

But Sophie thinks better of it.

SOPHIE

I'll tell you later.

ALLISON

Okay. I love you.

SOPHIE

Love you. Goodnight.

ALLISON

Goodnight.

She turns off the light and goes. Sophie nestles in under the covers. Her expression is thoughtful, serious.

35 EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

35

It is early morning. Eli approaches the graves of his wife and son. He carries fresh yellow roses.

He looks to the grave that the young woman, Robin, visits.

She's not there today.

He places the roses on his wife's and son's headstones and takes away the old ones.

36 INT. HOPKINS' DINING ROOM -- DAY

36

Sophie sits at the table eating a bowl of Fruity Pebbles. Allison is at the kitchen counter making two sack lunches. Elliott enters, his hair still a mess.

ALLISON

We have to be ready to go in ten minutes.

ELLIOTT

Where are my shoes?

ALLISON

It's not my job to keep track of your shoes.

ELLIOTT

I can't find my shoes.

Sophie looks out the window into the back yard. She sees a bird land on the little concrete birdbath in the center of the yard.

SOPHIE

Bird.

Andrew enters, tying his necktie. He sets his cell phone down on the counter.

ANDREW

I'm going to eat lunch with Parker today.

ALLISON

I know.

ANDREW

Okay.

ELLIOTT

Dad, have you seen my shoes?

ANDREW

I've seen them on your feet. Where are they now?

ELLIOTT

I don't know.

ANDREW

Well, you better find them.

Elliott groans in frustration.

37 EXT. HOPKINS' BACK YARD -- DAY 37

Sophie steps out onto the back porch and closes the door behind her. She approaches the birdbath. The little bird doesn't fly away.

SOPHIE
Birdy. Hi, birdy.

Sophie steps right up to the birdbath. She extends her hand to the bird.

38 INT. HOPKINS' DINING ROOM -- DAY 38

Elliott looks under the table. He sees a pair of Converse.

ELLIOTT
Got 'em.

ALLISON
Where were they?

ELLIOTT
Right where I left them.

ALLISON
That's right.

Elliott begins to untie his shoes. He looks out the window and sees Sophie by the birdbath.

39 EXT. HOPKINS' BACK YARD -- DAY 39

The little bird hops up onto Sophie's hand. She laughs, softly.

It chirps. Another bird lands on the birdbath, then another, and another. A fourth bird lands, but not on the birdbath.

It lands on Sophie's shoulder.

40 INT. HOPKINS' DINING ROOM -- DAY 40

ELLIOTT
Holy wow.

ANDREW
What is it?

ELLIOTT
Check this out.

ALLISON

What?

ELLIOTT

Sophie.

He points. His parents look out the window.

41 EXT. HOPKINS' BACK YARD -- DAY 41

A dozen birds have now gathered. They hop and chirp happily. Half of them are perched on Sophie herself.

42 INT. HOPKINS' DINING ROOM -- DAY 42

Andrew and Allison watch, mesmerized.

ANDREW

What...in the...?

ELLIOTT

Hell, I'm getting this.

Elliott runs to the counter and grabs his Dad's phone. He quickly finds the camera setting and he begins to record video. He goes to the window.

ALLISON

Look. There's more.

43 EXT. HOPKINS' BACK YARD -- DAY 43

Another dozen or more birds arrive and find their places on or around Sophie. They are mostly sparrows, some blackbirds, a robin. The back door opens and Andrew, Allison, and Elliott creep out.

Elliott points the phone camera at her.

ALLISON

What's going on?

Sophie slowly turns to them, but the birds don't fly away. She looks at her parents with a big bright smile.

She isn't afraid. The birds...like her.

She smiles.

ANDREW
This is...amazing.

ALLISON
Is she feeding them?

ANDREW
No. She's just standing there.

Andrew approaches Sophie, slowly. When he gets too close, the birds screech and fly away. Sophie, full of delight, watches them fly away.

ELLIOTT
Wow.

44 INT. CAFE -- DAY

44

Eli enters the cafe. Lorena is near the register. She gives him a stern look.

ELI
Am I still welcome here?

LORENA
You going to beat anyone up today?

ELI
I don't plan on it.

LORENA
Alright.

She hands him a newspaper.

LORENA (CONT'D)
Sit down. Be good.

Eli wanders to his usual booth and sees that his meal is already waiting for him. He smiles and sits.

Lorena arrives with a pot of coffee. She fills his mug.

LORENA (CONT'D)
Fresh coffee.

ELI
Gracias.

LORENA
De nada.

The front door opens and the bell rings. Barclay Jensen, the town's frustratingly ambulatory senile old man, enters. His hair is disheveled and his shirt is buttoned up wrong. He is anxiously disoriented.

LORENA (CONT'D)
Ay, it's Mr. Jensen.

She goes to him.

LORENA (CONT'D)
Mr. Jensen, are you lost?

BARCLAY
Betty. Are you Betty?

LORENA
No, Mr. Jensen. I'm not Betty. My name is Lorena. I work here.

BARCLAY
(almost belligerent)
I want Betty.

LORENA
You sit right down and I'll get you a coffee. I'll call your wife.

BARCLAY
I want Betty.

LORENA
I know. You sit down now.

She gets him seated. Eli turns his attention to his meal.

45 EXT. SCHOOL -- DAY

45

Allison stops the station wagon in front of the school. Elliott and Sophie climb out.

ELLIOTT
Bye, Mom!

Elliott races toward the school.

SOPHIE
Bye. Love you.

Sophie starts away.

ALLISON
Sophie.

She turns to her mother.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Are you okay, honey?

SOPHIE
I'm okay. After school can I play
with the birds again?

ALLISON
(unsure)
Sure. We're going to see the
doctor first, remember?

SOPHIE
(nods)
And then I can play with the birds?

ALLISON
Yes, honey. If you start feeling
sick or dizzy, you have someone
call me.

SOPHIE
I will.

ALLISON
Okay. Blow me a kiss.

Sophie smiles and blows her a kiss. She blows a kiss back.

Sophie laughs, then turns and goes. Allison watches her enter
the school, concerned.

46 INT. COMPUTER LAB -- DAY 46

Elliott races to a computer and signs in. A teacher, MR.
PEERY, 48, looks up from his computer screen. Elliott's the
only one in the room. He quickly loses interest.

Elliott hurries to open his email.

ELLIOTT
C'mon. C'mon.

47 INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY 47

Sophie finds her seat in the middle of the classroom. 20
other STUDENTS talk and play around her. She sees Mark in his
wheelchair near the front. He waves at her. She smiles and
waves back.

MRS. MITCHELL, 27, a pretty brunette who dresses like a wealthy librarian, enters. The class begins to settle.

48 INT. COMPUTER LAB -- DAY

48

Elliott types furiously then hits enter. He waits. Suddenly...

ELLIOTT

Yes!

He hops up and shouts.

MR. PEERY

Is everything alright, Mr. Hopkins?

ELLIOTT

Yes! It! Is!

Elliott laughs, grabs his bag, points at Mr. Peery and exits the room. Mr. Peery watches him go, then shakes his head.

MR. PEERY

Strange kid.

He goes back to his work.

49 INT. DINER -- DAY

49

Eli throws twelve dollars on the table and starts out. Barclay looks up at him as he approaches.

BARCLAY

Have you seen Betty?

ELI

No, sir. I haven't.

BARCLAY

What's your name?

ELI

I'm Eli Clayton. Don't you remember me?

BARCLAY

Are you an Irishman?

ELI

No, sir.

BARCLAY

Good!

Eli opens the door. Lorena approaches.

LORENA

Eli. You leaving already?

ELI

You need help with Barclay?

BARCLAY

I want Betty.

LORENA

I called. They're on their way.

Eli nods and then moves to go.

BARCLAY

That Betty, she's got all the right stuff in all the right places.

LORENA

(to Eli)

Go on now. I've got work to do. I don't have time for your nonsense.

ELI

I'm goin'.

She turns away. Eli shakes his head. Barclay laughs.

BARCLAY

My wife and Betty. They fight like alley cats.

Eli goes.

BARCLAY (CONT'D)

Hot stuff!

50

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- DAY

50

Sophie kicks a soccer ball with four other KIDS during recess.

Mark sits in his wheelchair and reads a manga comic.

Elliott approaches GARRETT, 11, a fat kid with curly red hair.

ELLIOTT
Hey, Garrett, lemme see your phone.

GARRETT
No cell phones allowed during
school.

ELLIOTT
Just gimme. I gotta check
something.

He reluctantly hands it over.

GARRETT
Don't look up anything dirty. My
dad checks it.

A BOY, 8, kicks the soccer ball far off the field, toward a
row of trees. A well dressed GIRL, 8, groans.

GIRL
Now go get it!

SOPHIE
I'll get it!

Sophie runs for the ball. When she gets to it, she stops, but
doesn't pick it up. She looks into the trees. She sees
something.

BOY
Throw it back!

GIRL
Come on, Sophie! Throw the ball!

But Sophie's back is to them. And she doesn't move.

GIRL (CONT'D)
What's up with her?

BOY
I don't know.

Sophie, near the row of trees, smiles at the unseen person.

She listens.

Elliott watches something on the phone.

ELLIOTT
Holy wow.

He laughs.

51 INT. DINER -- DAY

51

The front door opens and CLOVER JENSEN, 72, enters. She looks just like your grandma. Lorena looks up and smiles, then notices that Barclay is missing.

LORENA

Clover.

CLOVER

I'm here for Barclay.

LORENA

Ay, Dios. He was just here. I turned away for two minutes.

CLOVER

Oh, my. Maybe he's in the restroom.

LORENA

I'll check. I am so sorry.

CLOVER

It's alright, honey. He gets away from me all the time.

Clover takes a cell phone from her bag.

CLOVER (CONT'D)

I'll call the Sheriff and tell him Barclay's loose again.

52 EXT. PLAYGROUND -- DAY

52

BOY

Come on, Sophie!

Sophie turns and walks away, to the left, leaving the ball on the ground.

BOY (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

The boy runs for the ball.

Sophie walks to a chain link fence that marks the playground's territory. She begins to walk along the fenceline, almost as if in a trance.

A man approaches on the sidewalk on the other side of the fence. As he gets closer we see that it is Barclay.

When they meet, Sophie stops. She puts her hand on the fence. Barclay approaches.

SOPHIE

Hi.

BARCLAY

I want Betty.

SOPHIE

My name is Sophie.

BARCLAY

Sophie.

SOPHIE

That's right. Sophie.

Sophie puts her hand on the fence. Her little fingers grasp the chain link. Barclay lifts his hand. His fingers touch hers.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Would you like me to pray for you?

Barclay nods.

BARCLAY

I want Betty.

Sophie closes her eyes and bows her head slightly. Her lips begin to move in silent prayer. Barclay watches her.

Back near the school, Elliott hands the phone back to Garrett.

ELLIOTT

Yes! 467 views! In 3 hours! I am the man!

GARRETT

What? What is it?

Several yards away, Mrs. Mitchell stands from her bench. She sees Sophie on the far side of the playground at the fence with some man.

Mr. Peery approaches and looks over her shoulder.

MR. PEERY

Everything okay?

MRS. MITCHELL

I don't know.

At the fence, Sophie opens her eyes and looks up at Barclay. She smiles. Barclay looks down at her, expressionless.

SOPHIE

Thank you. For letting me pray for you.

Sophie pulls her fingers away from his, smiles at him again, and then turns and walks back toward the school.

He watches her go, then looks around, as if suddenly aware of his surroundings.

Mrs. Mitchell watches Sophie walk away from the man. She sighs.

MR. PEERY

You gotta watch them. Can't take your eyes away.

Mrs. Mitchell nods.

Sophie walks across the grass. A non-athletic boy, LUCAS, backs away from a football ready to kick and accidentally bumps into Sophie. He turns quickly and catches her before she falls.

Her hands grasp his arms.

LUCAS

Oh! Whoa! Sorry! I didn't see you there.

SOPHIE

It's alright.

Sophie smiles and continues on her way. Lucas turns to face the football, held to the ground by a boy, TYSON, 12, a fat kid that looks like every bully you've ever met.

TYSON

Give it everything you got, shrimp.

The bully's ever present FRIENDS stand nearby, laughing through sneers. Lucas runs and kicks the football with all his might. Tyson yanks his hand away as if avoiding a shotgun blast. The ball soars over the heads of the kids in the field. It rises high and all the kids watch as it flies over the tops of the trees over 80 yards away.

Tyson turns to Lucas.

TYSON (CONT'D)

Dude...

The bully's friends look back at Lucas, mouths open. Lucas stares at the empty sky above the trees.

Sophie continues across the grass. She approaches Mark in his wheelchair. He looks up from his comic book and smiles as she approaches. She kneels at his feet and smiles at him.

MARK

Hi, Sophie.

SOPHIE

I found a bird and it was hurt real bad and Jesus healed it.

Mark listens. He doesn't know what to make of this.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

And Jesus told me...

Mark's smile fades.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Can I pray for you? Right now?

MARK

Okay.

Sophie smiles again. She bows her head and begins to move her lips in silent prayer. Mark watches her for a moment, then closes his eyes, too. He bows his head.

Several yards away, Elliott approaches. He's so happy he practically bounces.

ELLIOTT

Sophie! You're not gonna believe this!

He stops when he sees Sophie kneeling beside Mark's wheelchair.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Sophie?

A bird flutters down and lands near Sophie. It chirps. Mark opens his eyes. Sophie lifts her head and looks up at him. She's smiling and there are tears in her eyes.

Mark just looks at her. As she stands, she staggers and almost loses her balance.

SOPHIE

Thank you...for letting me...pray...

Her eyes roll back into her head and she falls.

MARK

Sophie!

Elliott runs to his sister.

ELLIOTT

Sophie!

Elliott rolls his sister over. She is unconscious.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Sophie! Wake up!

Mrs. Mitchell turns to the commotion. She starts toward Sophie.

MRS. MITCHELL

Michael. Something's wrong.

She begins to run. Mr. Peery follows her.

53

EXT. SCHOOL -- DAY

53

Two PARAMEDICS load Sophie into the back of an ambulance. She is still unconscious.

Several CHILDREN are gathered around, watching. Mark, still in his chair, tries to stretch to see over their heads.

The principal, a fat man named WORTHEN, 58, tries to corral the children.

WORTHEN

Alright, kids. Back in the school.
The excitement's over. Sophie's
going to be just fine.

Mr. Peery and Mrs. Mitchell stand near the ambulance. He has his arm around her shoulder, as if she needs comforting.

Elliott tries to climb into the back of the ambulance, but a paramedic stops him.

PARAMEDIC

No friends.

ELLIOTT

I'm her brother.

The paramedic looks at Mrs. Mitchell. She nods.

PARAMEDIC

Alright. Hop in. Buckle up.

The paramedic pulls the door shut and the ambulance pulls away, lights flashing and sirens blaring.

The kids and teachers start to wander back to the school.

Mark watches until the ambulance disappears around the corner.

Unexpectedly, his right foot moves. He looks down, startled.

It was only a half an inch. Maybe only a quarter of an inch, but it moved.

He stares at his foot and strains to move it.

The toe of his shoe moves up. It's quick, and it's barely movement at all, but it is movement.

He stares at his foot in shock.

54

EXT. STREET -- DAY

54

Barclay walks down a quiet residential street. He looks around him, seeming to take everything in.

As he walks he holds his hands up in front of him and studies them. He turns them over.

It's as if he's never seen his hands before.

He approaches a small home near the end of the street. A woman sees him walking toward the house. She stands up from her swing on the front porch. It's Clover.

CLOVER

Barclay?

He continues walking toward her. She descends the steps and goes to him. As she gets closer, she sees that something is different about him.

CLOVER (CONT'D)

Barclay?

They stop near the end of the driveway. He's no longer interested in hands or the surroundings. He looks into her face as if seeing a human being for the first time.

CLOVER (CONT'D)

You found your way home.

BARCLAY
Look at those blue eyes.

CLOVER
Wha...?

She is stunned. His speech is so deliberate. His eyes are so clear.

BARCLAY
Clover.

CLOVER
Yes.

BARCLAY
My god. You are so beautiful.

Tears begin to fill her eyes. She doesn't understand.

CLOVER
Barclay. Have you come back...to me?

BARCLAY
I'm old.

CLOVER
(laughing through tears)
So am I.

BARCLAY
Where have I been?

CLOVER
It doesn't matter, my love.

She buries her face in his chest. He's home.

CLOVER (CONT'D)
It doesn't matter.

He holds her as she weeps. A few falling leaves float down from the trees.

55 INT. AMBULANCE -- DAY

55

The ambulance speeds toward the hospital. Sophie is still unconscious. Elliott holds her hand as the paramedic adjusts her oxygen.

PARAMEDIC
Does she have any allergies?

ELLIOTT
I--I don't think so.

PARAMEDIC
Does she take any medicines at
home?

Elliott shakes his head.

ELLIOTT
Is she going to be okay?

PARAMEDIC
We'll take good care of her.

56 INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM -- DAY 56

Mark wheels himself into a large bathroom at the school. There are six old fashioned urinals and green tile everywhere.

He's alone. He stops in the open space near the sinks and looks down at his feet. He tries to move his feet. His expression looks pained. Nothing happens.

He tries again. This time, it's his left foot that moves. He looks down, amazed.

MARK
Oh.

57 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE -- DAY 57

Mark energetically wheels into the office and bumps into the school receptionist's desk. This is CAROLYN, 52, a heavy woman with an outdated hairstyle and wardrobe.

Mark's expression is beyond happy. It's joyous.

MARK
I have to go home!

CAROLYN
(bored)
Are you sick?

MARK
No! I don't think so!

58 INT. ANDREW'S OFFICE -- DAY

58

Andrew works at his computer. It's a small office, but well decorated and it has a nice view. Several blueprints and maps are rolled up in the shelves behind him and on the small table in the corner.

On his desk are small sculptures of the Golden Gate Bridge and the Chrysler Building, and a poster of the Sydney Opera House hangs behind him.

PARKER, 38, who looks like he just stepped out of the pages of GQ Magazine, pops his head in.

PARKER

Hey, that video of your little girl
is crazy.

Andrew lifts his gaze.

ANDREW

What?

PARKER

How did she do that?

ANDREW

Do what?

Andrew rises.

PARKER

We're watching it right now.

He follows Parker out.

59 INT. RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

59

Parker and Andrew approach the front reception desk where the young receptionist, ELLEN, 24, and several other EMPLOYEES gather around the large computer monitor.

A Youtube video plays. It is the video of the birds landing on Sophie. Sophie's face beams.

ELLEN

That's amazing. I can't stop
watching this.

ANDREW

What...?

The phone rings. Ellen picks it up.

ELLEN
 (into phone)
 Travis Design, may I help you?
 (listens)
 Just a minute, Mrs. Hopkins.
 (to Andrew)
 Andrew, it's your wife. Line 2.

He walks away, in shock.

PARKER
 How many views?

ELLEN
 Almost five thousand.

60 INT. ANDREW'S OFFICE -- DAY 60

Andrew enters and picks up his phone.

ANDREW
 Hey, hon, did you know--?

He listens.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
 I'll be right there.

61 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- DAY 61

Andrew hurries down a busy hospital hallway, reading room numbers as he walks. Just as he's about to turn into a room, two ORDERLIES roll Sophie out on a gurney. She's conscious now. Allison and Elliott follow beside the gurney.

ANDREW
 How--?

ALLISON
 She's awake now. They're taking her to do the CT scan.

SOPHIE
 Hi, Daddy.

ANDREW
 Hey, Sophie. How are you feeling?

SOPHIE
 I'm okay. I'm tired.

ANDREW

We can go with her, right?
 (to orderlies)
 Can we go with her?

ORDERLY

You can go with her. There's a
 waiting room just two doors down.

62 INT. SCANNING ROOM -- DAY

62

Sophie lies on the bed of a scanning machine. The bed moves
 into the tubular center of the machine.

Sophie is afraid. A technician's voice rises above the hum of
 the scanner.

TECHNICIAN (V.O.)

It's alright, Sophie. This won't
 hurt at all. You just relax, and
 try to be as still as you can.

She obeys.

Allison watches through a glass plate in the next room.

63 INT. WAITING ROOM -- DAY

63

Andrew paces while Elliott sits in a bland hospital waiting
 room. Andrew appears angry.

ELLIOTT

I just sent it to my email and then
 I uploaded it when I got to school.
 It's no big deal!

ANDREW

You should have asked my
 permission. You have to take it
 down.

ELLIOTT

Take it down?! Did you see how many
 hits we've got?

ANDREW

I don't care.

ELLIOTT

That won't do any good anyway. It's already on reddit and all over Facebook and everywhere. People have made copies. It's out there.

ANDREW

Take it down, and get her name off the copies.

ELLIOTT

I can't!

ANDREW

You will!

ELLIOTT

Dad, she's gonna be famous!

ANDREW

I don't want Sophie to be famous! I want her to be well!

At this, Andrew chokes up. He fights back tears.

ELLIOTT

Alright, I'll...do what I can. Let me have your phone.

Andrew hands his phone over and sits. Elliott gets to work.

64

INT. NURSES' STATION -- DAY

64

Dr. Riley stands at the nurses' station. He writes in Sophie's chart. He suddenly winces. His hand goes quickly to his stomach. He bites his lip and waits for the pain to fade. A moment passes and he relaxes. He takes a deep breath. An older nurse, JANICE, 58, approaches.

JANICE

Dr. Riley, the Miller family is in Exam 2.

DR. RILEY

Something wrong with the boy?

JANICE

Not exactly. I told them to make an appointment at your office, but they won't go until they see you.

DR. RILEY

Okay. Be right there.

65

INT. EXAM ROOM -- DAY

65

Dr. Riley enters with a forced smile. Mark is seated in his chair. His parents, Walter and Flora, rise as Riley enters.

DR. RILEY
So tell me what this medical
emergency is all about.

FLORA
He moved his toes this morning.

Riley takes a moment to grasp what he just heard.

DR. RILEY
Which foot?

MARK
Both.

DR. RILEY
Maybe you should show me.

Riley bends down and takes off both of Mark's shoes. Mark strains at first, but nothing happens.

MARK
Just wait. I'll try again.

He strains again. Nothing happens.

DR. RILEY
Mark, I'm not sure what happened,
but your spinal cord injury isn't
something that--

MARK
Wait. I can do this.

Mark tries again. This time the toes move on his right foot.

MARK (CONT'D)
(excited)
You see that?

Dr. Riley is confused.

DR. RILEY
Try the other foot.

Mark strains again, and the toes on his other foot move.

Riley is more confused than ever.

Mark strains one more time. This time he lifts his foot an inch off the foot rest of the wheelchair. He strains again and lifts the other foot.

All eyes are on Mark's feet. It isn't until we look up and see his face that we see the tears in his eyes and joy on his face.

66

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- DAY

66

Flora is seated outside the exam room. Dr. Riley stands with his back to the door.

Elliott stands nearby at a soda machine. He plays with his father's phone as he presses his soda selection on the vending machine and waits. The Pepsi emerges.

FLORA

I don't know if I should be happy about this.

DR. RILEY

Why is that?

FLORA

There was no hope before. But now there is. And what if that hope is taken away from us?

Elliott approaches, his attention on the phone.

DR. RILEY

Listen to me.

DR. RILEY (CONT'D)

I can't explain what happened in there, but severed nerves in the spinal cord cannot regenerate.

The exam room door opens. Riley turns as Walter, Mark's father, backs out of the room, his mouth agape.

WALTER

Flora. You gotta...see...this...

Mark enters the doorway. He walks, with effort. He steadies himself in the doorway. Flora gasps. Elliott looks up and sees Mark standing.

DR. RILEY

That's not possible.

ELLIOTT

No way.

FLORA

He's walking.

WALTER

He's walking! He's standing. Look at him!

Elliott quickly turns his father's phone into camera mode and starts recording. Mark holds the doorframe with both hands.

He motions with his head.

MARK

I want to...the hallway.

Walter quickly moves the chairs aside so that Mark can walk along the wall.

His first step is tentative, but he makes it. He holds the handrail with his left hand.

The nurse, Janice, walks to Riley's side. She watches. Elliott moves to get a better angle on the action.

JANICE

What's happening?

DR. RILEY

This is not possible.

Mark stops to rest. He is exhausted, but ecstatic. Elliott is now only six feet away from Mark, directly in front of him.

MARK

It was Sophie.

FLORA

What?

MARK

Sophie Hopkins.

(to Elliott)

It was your sister. She healed me.

Everyone looks at Elliott as if he might have the answers.

Elliott continues to record. Mark looks right into the camera lens.

MARK (CONT'D)
 Sophie Hopkins healed me.

67 EXT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE -- DAY

67

Elliott exits the hospital as if he's being followed. He stops just outside and puts his back against the wall. He sighs.

He can't believe what he just saw.

He looks down at the phone and replays the footage. It really happened. Mark walked. Elliott pauses the image on Mark's face.

MARK (V.O.)
 Sophie Hopkins healed me.

Elliott looks up to the sky as if expecting an answer. Then he looks down at the phone.

ELLIOTT
 (softly)
 Sorry, Dad.

He fingers fly over the touch screen of the phone.

68 EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

68

Eli pulls his truck into the hospital's parking lot. He turns off the engine. On the passenger side are balloons, flowers, and a teddy bear.

But Eli doesn't move. He looks out at the hospital and sighs.

ELI
 I know we're not exactly on
 speakin' terms, but...I know you
 can hear me.

He is, of course, alone in the truck. He continues with his head unbowed and his eyes open.

ELI (CONT'D)
 You know how I feel about you. I've
 shouted it at you plenty of
 times... but this ain't about
 me...That's a perfect child in
 there. A pure and perfect child
 that's always loved you.
 (MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)
 Just believed in you right from the
 start. Wanted to know everything
 about you.

He takes a deep breath.

ELI (CONT'D)
 Now maybe I'm wrong, but I think I
 know what you're doin' to her...and
 it ain't right. They say God can't
 do no wrong, but you and me both
 know that ain't true. Don't we?

He stares hard into the darkness. Into the nothingness.

ELI (CONT'D)
 You do right by her. I haven't
 prayed in thirty years, but that's
 my prayer. You do right by her.

69 EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE -- NIGHT 69

Eli walks toward the hospital entrance with his arms full of balloons, flowers, and a small teddy bear.

He passes a NURSE going the opposite direction. She smiles at him. He enters.

A van pulls up to the curb. It has a satellite dish and antennae on the top. On its side: Channel 2 News.

70 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- NIGHT 70

Eli approaches Sophie's hospital room with all of her gifts. Elliott sits in a chair just outside the door.

ELLIOTT
 Hey, Grandpa.

ELI
 Son.

ELLIOTT
 Doctor's talking to them.

Eli nods and enters the room.

71 INT. SOPHIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT 71

Eli enters with his balloons and flowers and teddy bear. Dr. Riley stands near the foot of Sophie's bed.

Andrew is seated next to Allison, his arm around her, comforting her. Allison has been crying.

Sophie is in the bed. She's not conscious.

Andrew and Dr. Riley look at Eli. Their expressions are grim. This is not good news.

72 INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA -- NIGHT

72

Eli sits across the table from Andrew in the nearly deserted hospital cafeteria. Andrew has coffee. Eli has nothing.

ANDREW

He says, maybe, if we had caught it earlier...maybe we could have done something.

ELI

They can't take it out?

ANDREW

It's grown...around the stem. He says it's too late. She wouldn't survive the surgery.

73 INT. SOPHIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

73

Allison runs her fingers through Sophie's hair. Sophie's eyes flutter open. She sees her mother and smiles.

SOPHIE

Mommy.

ALLISON

There you are.

Allison leans over and kisses Sophie's forehead.

SOPHIE

What happened?

ALLISON

Everything's fine now. How do you feel?

SOPHIE

Tired. A little.

ALLISON

You just rest. All you want.

Sophie nods weakly. Allison again runs her fingers through her daughter's hair.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Did I ever tell you the story about your hiccups?

SOPHIE

No.

ALLISON

When you were in my belly, every night at bedtime, you'd get the hiccups.

SOPHIE

I did?

ALLISON

Yes.

SOPHIE

Could you hear them?

ALLISON

I could feel them. And every night your dad would put his head on my belly and say, "Hi, Sophie, it's Daddy. I'm sorry you've got the hiccups. I told Mommy not to eat that burrito."

Sophie laughs.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

And then he'd say, "We love you so much. And we can't wait to see you." And then one night you didn't have the hiccups. And that was the night you let me know, in your own little way, that you were ready to come out--

There is noise in the hallway. It sounds like arguing.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

--so that we could hold you.

They hear loud talking in the hallway.

SOPHIE

What's happening?

ALLISON
I don't know.

74 INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA -- NIGHT

74

ELI
How long does she have?

ANDREW
They don't know. If she
rests...maybe a few months. Maybe
less.

Andrew fights back his tears.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
They're going to give her something
...for pain, because...he
said...it's going to start hurting.

75 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- NIGHT

75

Eli and Andrew approach Sophie's room. The nurse, Janice, fights to keep a NEWSWOMAN, 34, and her CAMERAMAN, 29, away from the room. Another nurse, SILVIA, 40, stands at the nurses' station, helpless.

JANICE
I've told you! You can't go in
there! I've called Security!
(to Silvia)
Silvia! Call the police!

Eli and Andrew try to slip into the room.

NEWSWOMAN
Are you related to Sophie Hopkins?
Are you her father?

JANICE
You don't have to talk to them. Go
inside.

ELI
Excuse us.

Eli puts a big hand on the camera's lens and pushes it downward. The cameraman looks away from the viewfinder and into Eli's eyes.

ELI (CONT'D)
 If you come into this room, I'll
 tear your arm off and beat you to
 death with it.

JANICE
 (to cameraman)
 He will!

Eli and Andrew enter the room as two SECURITY GUARDS arrive.

JANICE (CONT'D)
 Finally!

76 INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

76

Eli and Andrew enter Sophie's room. Sophie is awake and sitting up in bed. Allison is at her side. Elliott peeks outside through the blinds.

The television is on, but the volume is turned down. A news reporter, DOLORES CLARK, 34, gives a "Live" on site broadcast.

ALLISON
 (to Andrew)
 The reporters keep trying to get
 in.

ELI
 What the hell's going on?

ELLIOTT
 Look! There's three different
 reporters out there! And, like, a
 hundred people!

Allison picks up the remote for the television and turns up the volume. We see that the on site broadcast is happening near the front doors of the hospital.

DOLORES (V.O.)
 ...little Sophie Hopkins, only
 eight years old, seen first in this
 video uploaded this morning by her
 older brother, Elliott...

Andrew gives Elliott a hard look as the video of the birds landing on Sophie begins the play on the television.

DOLORES

...When we last checked this video had over 154,000 views with comments comparing this little girl to St. Francis of Assisi who it is said would attract birds that would land on him and that they would not fly away. A sign that he was chosen of God.

The image on the television switches to the video images of Mark walking.

DOLORES (CONT'D)

Now here we have footage, also uploaded by Sophie's brother, of a young man identified as Mark Miller, also of Spring Dale, who until today, according to eyewitness reports, was a paraplegic with an irreversible spinal cord injury.

DOLORES (CONT'D)

He was hit by an automobile in front of his home almost three years ago and, as you see, he walked for the first time today.

MARK (V.O.)

Sophie Hopkins healed me.

ANDREW

What...?

Eli watches, transfixed.

DOLORES (V.O.)

People are starting to gather here at the hospital. I've spoken with men and women and children with various injuries and ailments, hoping to be able to see or touch or be blessed by the young girl. Earlier I spoke with Spring Dale resident Barclay Jensen and his wife, Clover, who claim that Sophie Hopkins healed him of advanced Alzheimer's disease.

The image changes to Barclay and Clover on their living room sofa. Clover wipes away tears as Barclay talks.

ELI

That's old man Jensen.

BARCLAY (V.O.)

It's like I woke up. I was standing at a fence, at her school, I don't know how I got there, and she was touching my hand.

ANDREW

That's impossible.

BARCLAY (V.O.)

And she smiled at me and thanked me...she actually thanked me for letting her pray for me...and then she just...walked away.

CLOVER (V.O.)

It's a miracle.

DOLORES (V.O.)

We don't know what to make of all this. We still haven't been able to speak with Sophie or her family.

DOLORES (V.O.)

As we reported earlier, she has been admitted to St. Joseph's Hospital here in Spring Dale. Reports are that she fainted today at school. We're awaiting news--

Allison turns the television off. Eli is speechless. Andrew goes to the side of his daughter's bed.

ANDREW

Sophie...did you really do all those things?

SOPHIE

No.

Andrew is relieved.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Jesus did them. I just prayed for them. I didn't do it. Jesus did.

ANDREW

And...when you prayed for them...how did that make you feel?

SOPHIE

It made me tired. Mr. Jensen only made me a little tired. But Mark...

ANDREW

That's when you fainted.

SOPHIE

Uh huh.

ELI

We gotta get her outa here.

ALLISON

No.

ANDREW

What are you talking about?

ELI

Well, I don't know what's goin' on or how this can be happenin', but if she can heal people...

ANDREW

And if healing people makes her worse...

ELLIOTT

And if a bunch of sick people are coming here to see Sophie...

ALLISON

Oh my.

ELI

We gotta get her the hell out of this hospital.

Just then Sheriff Dale Stearman enters the room after a short knock. All eyes turn to the Sheriff.

STEARMAN

How are you folks?

77

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- NIGHT

77

Sheriff Stearman and two DEPUTIES escort the family out of Sophie's hospital room. Allison pushes Sophie (who wears her hospital gown) in a wheelchair while Eli, Andrew, Elliott, and two hospital SECURITY GUARDS try to clear a way.

About 20 PATIENTS with various ailments have gathered outside the room. They call out to Sophie and try to touch her as she passes.

STEARMAN
Everybody make way!

ELI
Back it up!

ELLIOTT
Coming through!

Dr. Riley forces his way through the small crowd.

DR. RILEY
I highly recommend that you get her
back in that room!

ELI
You're not gonna operate, are you?

DR. RILEY
I already explained. We can't!

ELI
Then write her up for some pills.
And get the hell out of our way!

Riley stops, exasperated. An ELDERLY WOMAN reaches out.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Sophie! Sophie, touch my hand!

Andrew tries to stop the old woman, but Sophie reaches out and her fingers brush the woman's hand.

SOPHIE
I'll pray for you.

ELDERLY WOMAN
She touched me! She touched me!

ELI
(to Allison)
Move!

DR. RILEY
This is a mad house!

The escapees burst through the double doors at the end of the hallway.

A young girl with long dark hair makes her way down the hallway toward the noise. She wears a hospital gown and holds to the rail, her head cocked to one side. It is clear that she is blind. This is PIPER, 9.

The elderly woman passes.

ELDERLY WOMAN
She touched my hand.

PIPER
Is she here? Can you see her?

But the old woman passes without noticing Piper and the noise of the crowd moves outside. Piper stops, disappointed.

78 EXT. HOSPITAL BACK EXIT -- NIGHT

78

The Sheriff, his deputies, and the security guards burst out a back exit of the hospital and rush the family toward their station wagon. A CROWD of over 200 people swarm the area.

Three NEWS CREWS jostle for position. The Sheriff's Yukon is parked directly in front of the wagon.

STEARMAN
Back up, please!

ELI
Back it up!

The crowd desperately calls out for Sophie.

ALLISON
Leave her alone! She's just a
little girl!

ANDREW
I'll start the car.

Andrew runs to the wagon as the others make their way through.

Several hands reach through the crowd to touch Sophie's clothing or her hair as she passes.

ALLISON
Please! Please leave her alone!

As Eli uses his body to make a path for them, he notices someone at the edge of the crowd. It is Lorena.

Lorena, trying to hold her place in the crowd, holds her daughter, PALOMA, 13, at her side. The dark circles under the girl's eyes, her pale skin, and a scarf used to cover her bald head clearly show that Paloma is a late stage cancer patient.

Lorena looks at Eli, pleading.

LORENA

Eli?

He doesn't know what to do or what to say. He looks at the sick little girl.

LORENA (CONT'D)

Please.

ELI

She can't...She can't...

Sophie is aware of what's happening.

SOPHIE

Stop, Mom!

ALLISON

We can't, honey.

SOPHIE

Please stop!

Allison, alarmed, stops. Is something wrong? But Sophie stands up from the chair and makes her way to Lorena and Paloma. Hands reach out from everywhere and touch her.

Sophie looks Paloma in the eyes.

LORENA

Thank you! Thank you!

PALOMA

Will you pray for me?

Sophie nods. She reaches out with both hands and takes the little girl's hands. She bows her head, but the crowd surges.

Andrew, in the car, honks the horn.

STEARMAN

Move back!

As Sophie lifts her head, she swoons and Eli reaches out and scoops her up. He knocks his way through the crowd like a linebacker.

LORENA
(calling)
Thank you!

ELI
Out of the way!

A deputy opens the door for him. He lays his granddaughter down on the back seat and Allison and Elliott climb in. The Sheriff throws a walkie talkie into Andrew's lap.

STEARMAN
Stay on the channel. I'll lead you
out.

ANDREW
Got it.

ELI
I'll follow in my truck.

Allison lightly pats Sophie's face.

ALLISON
Wake up, honey. Wake up.

Sophie's eyes open and she smiles.

ANDREW
(frustrated)
Let's go!

The sheriff turns on his lights and his siren. He starts out. The Hopkins family follows in the wagon. The crowd reluctantly makes way.

A hundred hands touch the station wagon as it pulls away. Deep in the crowd, Lorena holds her daughter.

PALOMA
She prayed for me, Mama.

LORENA
I know, m'hija.

PALOMA
She prayed for me...

79 INT. HOPKINS' STATION WAGON -- NIGHT

79

Andrew drives. Elliott is in the front passenger seat. Allison sits in the back with Sophie's head in her lap.

Andrew follows the Sheriff's Yukon.

ANDREW
That's insanity.

ALLISON
We're okay now.

ANDREW
(to Elliott)
I told you to take that video down!

ELLIOTT
I'm sorry! I didn't know!

The walkie talkie comes to life.

STEARMAN (V.O.)
Andrew, this is Sheriff Stearman.
Do you read me? Over.

ANDREW
(into walkie-talkie)
Um...Yes. This is Andrew. Um.
Over.

STEARMAN (V.O.)
I've got a report that there are
some news people and maybe a
hundred people waiting at your
house. What do you want to do?

Eli's voice breaks in.

ELI (V.O.)
Let's take 'em to my place. They
can spend the night there.

SOPHIE
(smiles weakly)
That's Grandpa.

80 INT. ELI'S TRUCK -- NIGHT

80

Eli speaks into a walkie-talkie.

ELI

Anybody comes on to my property,
I'll shoot 'em.

81 INT. SHERIFF'S YUKON -- NIGHT 81

Sheriff Stearman talks into his radio.

STEARMAN

I have no doubt about that. Over.

82 INT. HOPKINS' STATION WAGON -- NIGHT 82

Sophie smiles and closes her eyes.

SOPHIE

My grandpa.

83 EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT 83

The little caravan makes its way out of town. The Sheriff's Yukon is in the lead, followed by the station wagon, Eli's truck, and a police squad car.

A news van pulls up at the tail end behind the squad car.

84 INT. SHERIFF'S YUKON -- NIGHT 84

The sheriff looks in his rear view mirror and talks into his radio.

STEARMAN

Terry, take care of that problem on
our tail. Over.

DEPUTY (V.O.)

I'm on it. Over.

85 EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT 85

The squad car slows, forcing the news van to slow behind it.

It then turns sideways in the road, blocking both lanes of traffic. The news van stops and the driver sticks an arm out his window in frustration.

The deputy gets out of the squad car and approaches the news van.

Eli tucks Sophie under the covers in his own bed. Sophie still wears her gown from the hospital. Allison and Andrew prepare a bed at the other end.

Elliott turns on the little television on the counter.

Eli tucks a small old teddy bear into Sophie's arm.

ELI

This belonged to my boy. Name was Anson. He'd want you to have it.

SOPHIE

He's cute.

ELI

You can sleep back here with your mom, and your dad and Elliott will sleep up front.

SOPHIE

Where will you sleep?

ELI

I'm gonna put me up a nice big hammock just outside. So nobody can get to the door without gettin' through me. And there's a policeman out by the road just to make sure nobody bothers us tonight.

He starts out.

SOPHIE

Grandpa?

ELI

You just sleep now. Everything'll be fine.

SOPHIE

I love you.

It takes Eli a moment to respond.

ELI

I love you, too, baby girl.

SOPHIE

And Jesus loves you.

Eli doesn't respond.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 He wanted me to tell you that.
 Before I go.

ELI
 Did he now?

She nods.

ELI (CONT'D)
 Where are you goin'?

SOPHIE
 To Heaven. Jesus told me.

He sits on bed.

ELI
 You're not goin' to Heaven. Not for
 a long, long time. Long after I'm
 gone, that's for sure.

SOPHIE
 No, Grandpa. Jesus told me I'm
 going soon. And--

ELI
 --When did he tell you that?

SOPHIE
 At the lake. And by the house. And
 at school.

Eli doesn't know what to say.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 I'm not afraid... but I know you
 are.

Off Eli... at the other end of the trailer, Elliott watches
 the news.

There are images of Mark Miller in his wheelchair, then
 walking in the hospital hallway, then Dr. Riley talking to
 the reporter, Dolores Clark.

DR. RILEY (V.O.)
 I'm sure there is some scientific
 explanation for what has happened
 here. Little girls don't heal
 people. That's nonsense.

DOLORES

How do you explain a stroke victim
with advanced Alzheimer's suddenly--

DR. RILEY

I can't. At present. I'm sure,
given time, we'll get to the bottom
of this. Let's not jump to wild
conclusions.

Back at the bedroom end of the trailer:

SOPHIE

Mom said you used to be a preacher.

ELI

I was.

SOPHIE

She said you used to bless people.

ELI

I did.

SOPHIE

She said Jesus used to talk to you,
too. Can you say something that'll
bless me?

Eli turns away. He looks down at the floor. It's a long
moment before he speaks.

ELI

Baby girl. In heaven, everyone's
alright. Everything that's wrong
down here, it's right up there.
Everyone you love...is there.
Everyone who loves you. People you
didn't even know were watchin' over
you. Your grandma...
(his eyes fill)
why, I bet she can't wait to get
her hands on you. But she can't
have you yet.

He is quiet. She nods.

SOPHIE

Was grandma pretty?

ELI

Oh... you ain't never seen pretty
like that.

Sophie smiles. He laughs and wipes away a tear.

SOPHIE
Thanks, grandpa.

He rises.

ELI
'Night, Sophie.

SOPHIE
'Night.

He stops at the door.

ELI
You stop thinkin' about heaven,
baby girl. You're not goin'
anywhere. You're stayin' right here
with us.

SOPHIE
But Jesus--

ELI
Don't you worry about a thing. If
Jesus wants to take you, he's gonna
have to get through me.

He winks at her, then goes. Sophie watches him go, an unsure expression on her face.

Eli exits the trailer. Allison watches him. Andrew and Elliott are glued to the television. Now someone named Dr. Daniel Wotherspoon - Doctor of Theology - Claremont College talks to the reporter.

WOTHERSPOON (V.O.)
The image of birds descending on a
person is symbolic of the Spirit of
God being bestowed. Remember the
Spirit descending as a dove during
the baptism of Jesus.

87 EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

87

Eli hangs a hammock between two trees. His movements are fast, violent. He's angry.

Allison approaches.

ALLISON
I heard what you said in there.

He continues to work.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Where is this coming from?

ELI
Where's what coming from?

ALLISON
Where's this "I love you" and
tucking her into bed and teddy
bears and "Jesus has to get through
me" coming from?

ELI
She's my granddaughter.

ALLISON
She's the granddaughter that you've
barely paid any attention to for
the past eight years. She's the
granddaughter that you never visit
and that we have to bring out to
see you or you'd never know her at
all.

ELI
Don't raise your voice to me.

ALLISON
Elliott thinks you don't even like
him.

ELI
What?

ALLISON
Well what else would he think? All
you do is grunt at him and tell him
to take the dog for a walk--

ELI
He's my blood. I love the boy.

ALLISON
Then why don't you tell him?! Why
don't you show him?

Elliott turns off the television. He lies in his bed. He's wide awake, and listening. And so is Andrew.

89

EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

89

Eli throws aside the rope of the hammock and turns to his daughter.

ELI

You want to know why I don't? You really want to know?

ALLISON

Yes. I do!

ELI

Every time I look into that boy's face--

ALLISON

His name is Elliott--

ELI

Every time I look into Elliott's face...I see my son...I see Anson.

Eli fights back his emotion.

ELI (CONT'D)

And every time I look at Sophie, I see your mother...Those eyes. She has your mother's eyes. I'm sure you've noticed that.

She doesn't respond.

ELI (CONT'D)

And I know...that if I love them too much that God is going to take them away from me, because that's what He does! Havin' my love is like havin' a disease! Everything I love is gonna die and God's gonna keep me alive to watch!

ALLISON

Please don't--

ELI

God ain't good, Allison. God ain't nice. God's a worse father than I ever was!

ALLISON

Daddy, no...

ELI

And you can pray at Him and sing
for Him and do every thing He says,
but in the end, God is just a
sadistic old bastard that likes to
torture his children!

ALLISON

Don't say that!

ELI

Or maybe He isn't there at all.
Maybe He doesn't give a damn about
any of us! Maybe He's turned his
back on all of us! As far as I'm
concerned, God's gone fishing!

ALLISON

Stop it!

ELI

And I mean what I say! If He takes
that little girl away from us, I
will hate Him until the day I die.

Eli goes to the old refrigerator and throws open the door. He
grabs a whiskey bottle and closes the door.

ALLISON

Daddy, no. Please. Not tonight.

ELI

I'm goin' for a walk.

ALLISON

Daddy.

ELI

I'm goin' for a walk!

Eli walks off into the darkness. Allison watches him go.

90

INT. ELI'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

90

Elliott's eyes are wide open. He heard everything.

And so did Andrew.

And so did Sophie. A tear rolls down Sophie's cheek.

91 EXT. WOODS -- NIGHT 91

Eli walks through the brush. Even his footsteps seem angry.
He takes a swallow of whiskey without even slowing.

92 EXT. LAKE -- NIGHT 92

Eli stops at the lake. He walks out onto the dock. He stops
at the end. He takes an angry drink from the bottle.

ELI

Are you out here?! Show yourself to
me!

Only the crickets respond.

ELI (CONT'D)

You showed yourself to Sophie!
(bellowing)

93 SHOW YOURSELF TO ME! 93

He stares at the opposite shore. There is no one. There is
nothing.

ELI

Stop...taking...my family!

He calms for a moment, and takes another drink.

ELI (CONT'D)

Take me.

He throws his head back and shouts into the sky.

ELI (CONT'D)

Take me!

There is no response.

ELI (CONT'D)

TAKE ME!

94 EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- NIGHT 94

Allison stands at the edge of the light. She looks into the
darkness. She hears her father's shouts, faintly.

She turns her back to the darkness and hurries into the
trailer. She closes the door behind her.

95 EXT. LAKE -- NIGHT 95

Eli takes a long drink from the whiskey then smashes the half empty bottle on the dock.

He throws back his head and he shouts into the night. The sound is indescribable. It is a roar filled with the anguish and anger of a lifetime.

96 EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- NIGHT 96

Eli approaches his trailer. He grabs his jacket. He snatches up his truck keys. He grabs a silver Zippo lighter from the table. He grabs another whiskey bottle from the old fridge.

He throws two large gas cans into the back of his truck.

He starts the truck.

His tires throw gravel as he peels out toward the road.

97 EXT. ROAD -- NIGHT 97

The Deputy sits in a dark squad car near Eli's driveway, watching YouTube videos on his car's computer screen. He looks up as Eli turns onto the road and drives off.

Eli waves as he passes. The deputy waves, and goes back to his computer screen. We see what he is watching: the birds landing on Sophie.

DEPUTY

Son of a gun.

98 INT. ELI'S TRUCK -- NIGHT 98

Eli drives. He opens the whiskey bottle and takes a swallow.

99 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM -- NIGHT 99

Dr. Riley, looking frazzled, enters the E.R. It is filled with PATIENTS and STAFF.

DR. RILEY

What in God's name is going on down here?

A head nurse, THERESA, 59, approaches. She looks like a woman capable of handling anything and who's surprised by nothing.

THERESA

These are your patients. They're all here to see you.

DR. RILEY

What's wrong with them?

THERESA

Nothing.

DR. RILEY

What?

THERESA

These are the ones that touched that little girl. They just wanted to show you.

He looks up at the throng of people, several of whom wave and call to him.

THERESA (CONT'D)

They're healed.

Riley can't believe what he sees.

100 INT. ELI'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

100

Sophie wakes with a start. She sits up in bed. Her mother sleeps in the bed beside her.

She is still for a moment, as if listening, then she gets up and walks out of the bedroom area.

She walks to the door. She sees her brother and her father sleeping. She quietly opens the door and exits.

Sophie closes the door softly. She looks around. Everything is dark. The only sounds are crickets and the occasional owl.

She walks toward the road, barefoot.

101 EXT. ROAD -- NIGHT

101

Sophie approaches the road. She sees the police car. She stops.

She turns right and disappears into the trees.

- 102 EXT. ROAD -- NIGHT 102
Sophie emerges from the trees far from her grandfather's driveway. She goes to the road and begins to walk toward town.
- 103 EXT. GAS STATION -- NIGHT 103
Eli pulls his truck into the gas station and skids to a stop.
He hops out and swings his door shut, hard. He takes the pump and begins to fill up his gas cans.
- 104 EXT. STREET -- NIGHT 104
Sophie walks down a more populated street, close to the center of town. Some lights are on, but most of the town is asleep.
There is no one else on the street.
- 105 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT 105
Eli drives his pick-up onto the grass of the old white church where he used to preach.
He looks out at the building and flicks on his high beams so that he can see it better. He takes a drink of whiskey.
He kicks the truck door open.
He slams the tail gate down.
He grabs the gas cans.
- 106 EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE -- NIGHT 106
Sophie approaches the front entrance of the hospital. Although there is some activity over at the emergency room entrance, all is quiet here.
Sophie enters.
- 107 INT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE -- NIGHT 107
Sophie enters an empty lobby. Her bare feet make no noise on the floor. A SECURITY GUARD sits at the reception desk. He reads from a newspaper. He doesn't even notice Sophie as she passes.

She enters an open elevator and pushes a button. The doors close.

108 INT. CHILDREN'S WARD HALLWAY -- NIGHT 108

Sophie emerges from the elevator on the children's ward. The children's artwork and child-friendly posters decorate the walls. All is quiet.

Two NURSES talk at the end of the hallway to the left. Sophie goes straight, past the empty nurses' station and directly to the first room. She walks through the open door.

109 INT. PIPER'S ROOM -- NIGHT 109

Sophie enters a dark hospital room. There are no decorations here.

A girl lies in the bed. She is 9 years old. She's awake. Her eyes are open, but her right eye has a milky look and the left eye wanders. This is Piper, the blind girl we saw earlier in the hallway.

Sophie goes to the side of her bed. Piper knows she's there.

PIPER

Who's there?

SOPHIE

My name's Sophie.

Piper seems concerned.

PIPER

Are you the girl they're talking about? The one who heals people?

SOPHIE

I pray for people. It's Jesus that heals them.

A small smile appears on Piper's face.

PIPER

I prayed for you to come. My name's Piper.

SOPHIE

Would you like for me to pray for you?

PIPER

Yes.

Sophie reaches out and takes Piper's hand.

PIPER (CONT'D)

Wait...They said that you're sick,
too.

SOPHIE

I am.

PIPER

Who's going to heal you? Who's
going to pray for you?

SOPHIE

I'm going home tonight. It's what
Jesus wants.

Piper doesn't like this answer.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I'm going to pray for you now.

Sophie holds her hands. She bows her head and closes her
eyes.

Her lips move in silent prayer.

110 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT

110

Eli throws gasoline on the front doors of the church.

He throws it on the sides of the church.

He pours it along the foundation.

111 INT. PIPER'S ROOM -- NIGHT

111

Sophie continues to pray. Piper suddenly blinks. She
continues to blink. The milkeness in her eye disappears. Her
wandering left eye centers and aligns with her right.

She turns her head and finds Sophie's shape. She continues to
blink as her eyes come alive.

112 PIPER'S P.O.V. AS SOPHIE FINISHES HER PRAYER AND LIFTS HER

HEAD.

At first she is fuzzy and dark, but the image slowly comes into focus and we see Sophie's calm, smiling face with perfect clarity. Piper gasps.

SOPHIE
Thank you for letting me pray for
you.

PIPER
You are so pretty.

SOPHIE
So are you.

PIPER
I've never seen myself.

Sophie smiles.

SOPHIE
Come here.

Sophie takes her hand leads her the small bathroom in her room.

Sophie turns her to the sink.

Piper sees herself for the very first time. Her expression is filled with wonder, surprise, confusion, joy.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
See?

PIPER
I do.

Tears of joy stream down her face.

PIPER (CONT'D)
I do.

113 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT

113

Eli empties the last of the gasoline on the church and hurls the can aside.

He goes back to the truck. He takes a swig of whiskey, then begins to stuff a dirty rag into the mouth of the bottle. He grabs the matches.

114 INT. CHILDREN'S WARD HALLWAY -- NIGHT

114

Sophie and Piper emerge from the hospital room. Piper bursts with joy.

PIPER

The lights! I want to see! I want to see!

Piper runs to turn on the lights. A nurse, BIANCA, 38, rises from the nurses' station.

BIANCA

What are you girls doing out of--

And then she realizes what has happened.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Piper?

Piper turns on the lights.

PIPER

I can see!

Piper twirls in the light. Bianca watches, her mouth open.

Sophie continues down the hallway.

A red headed boy, JAY, 7, steps out of his room in his pajamas. He struggles to hold back his coughs.

SOPHIE

Hi. I'm Sophie.

JAY

I'm Jay.

SOPHIE

Can I pray for you?

He nods. And coughs. She takes his hands.

115 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT

115

Eli stands several yards from the old church. He holds the whiskey bottle in his right hand. The rag hangs from its opening. He holds the lighter in his left hand.

ELI

I will burn you down. You take my wife. You take my boy.

(MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)
 You take everything...I will burn
 you to the ground.

He flicks the top of the lighter, exposing the flint.

ELI (CONT'D)
 You take my granddaughter...

He turns the wheel on the lighter and the flame rises high.

ELI (CONT'D)
 ...I will hate you...I will fight
 you...to the end. Damn you...damn

YOU!

He touches the flame to the rag. It ignites. He throws the bottle and it smashes with a burst of flame on the side of the church, over a small door near the back.

The flames quickly spread. He watches with hateful satisfaction and then...he hears a scream. It comes from inside the church.

A woman tries to open the small door, but the flames drive her back.

Eli runs to the flames.

WOMAN
 Help me!

He tries to approach the door, but it's too hot. He runs to the back of the church and drops to a small window. He tries to look in. He smashes the window with his foot.

He enters.

116 INT. CHURCH BASEMENT -- NIGHT

116

Eli drops to the floor. A filthy bare mattress lies on the floor. There's a torn sleeping bag beside the mattress and a cardboard box that's been turned into a crib. On a ledge nearby are three cans of beans. Two of them are open and empty.

He sees a homeless WOMAN, 42, wearing cheap, dirty clothes. She holds a filthy TODDLER, 2.

WOMAN
 Don't hurt us! Please!

ELI

No, I...

A 5 year old GIRL emerges from the shadows and clutches the woman, clutching her overlarge shirt. Eli is shocked, horrified.

ELI (CONT'D)

Let's get you out of here! Come on!

He grabs the girl and lifts her toward the window.

ELI (CONT'D)

Go on! Through the window!

The girl scrambles out. He turns to the woman.

ELI (CONT'D)

The baby!

She hands him the baby and he lifts the crying child to the window. The little girl takes him.

He then helps the woman up.

ELI (CONT'D)

Come on! You can do it!

He pushes her up and out and then scrambles to pull himself up.

117 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT

117

Eli pulls himself up and out onto the grass. The flames have spread. He looks up and sees the woman and the children disappearing into a line of trees.

ELI

Wait! I'm sorry, I'm...

But they're gone. He stares out into the darkness.

ELI (CONT'D)

Oh god. Oh, dear god.

He looks down at his hands. They tremble.

118 INT. CHILDREN'S WARD HALLWAY -- NIGHT

118

Sophie continues down the hallway as sick CHILDREN emerge from their rooms. She reaches out and takes a YOUNG BOY's hand.

He's a burn victim.

SOPHIE
God bless you.

She moves on and the children begin to reach out to her. She turns to a GIRL, 13, with bandages over both wrists.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Bless you.

A BOY ON ARM CRUTCHES approaches. She touches his arm.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Bless you.

The hall begins to fill with people, but the feeling here is different than before. There is no desperation. Everyone here is quiet, calm, reverent.

Bianca, the nurse, picks up a telephone and dials.

Sophie continues down the hallway, a serene smile on her face.

She touches the arm of a SALLOW LOOKING BOY, 10.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
God bless you.

119 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT

119

The back of the church burns. Eli goes to his truck. He takes a crow bar from the back.

He ascends the front steps.

He wedges the crow bar between the doors and pries loose the board that holds the door closed. He throws the board and the crow bar aside.

He opens the two large doors and spreads them wide.

He enters the burning church.

120 INT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT

120

Eli steps into the church and stops, his form silhouetted against the light of the doorway.

Light from the unboarded windows shines in and illuminates the large wooden cross at the front of the chapel as smoke and fire begin to make their way inside.

Eli looks at the cross. And at the flames above it.

121 INT. CHILDREN'S WARD HALLWAY -- NIGHT 121

Sophie continues down the hallway, blessing the children. She looks ahead and the small crowd parts and she sees Dr. Riley standing in the center of the hallway. He watches her.

122 INT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT 122

Eli walks down the center aisle of the church. He walks through debris and broken glass.

He stops at the end of the pews. There is no altar. There is no longer any pulpit. Only some seats, and the cross.

He looks up at the cross, then down at his hands. Emotion surges over him and he falls to his knees.

He looks up at the cross.

ELI

I'm sorry...please...I'm so sorry.

The fire rages.

But he hears something in the fire.

He hears an answer that only he can hear.

His eyes fill with tears.

ELI (CONT'D)

I know...I know...my pride...

He extends his arms out at his sides, opening his soul to his god.

The church burns. We hear the sound of approaching sirens.

123 INT. CHILDREN'S WARD HALLWAY -- NIGHT 123

Sophie approaches Dr. Riley. Riley slowly drops to one knee so that he can be on her level. His expression is curious, but calm. All his professional arrogance is gone.

SOPHIE
Dr. Riley.

DR. RILEY
How...?

SOPHIE
Do I have to stop?

DR. RILEY
I didn't come to stop you.

SOPHIE
Why did you come?

He can't say it. She looks into his eyes.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
You're sick, too.

DR. RILEY
Yes.

SOPHIE
Very sick.

Riley nods.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
And there's nothing you can do.

DR. RILEY
(so softly)
No.

SOPHIE
And nobody knows.

Riley's eyes fill with tears. He shakes his head. Sophie's eyes fill with tears, too.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Can I pray for you?

DR. RILEY
Please, Sophie...Please pray for me.

Sophie takes Riley's hands in both of hers. She closes her eyes and bows her head. He does the same.

Sophie's lips begin to move in silent prayer.

The other children and nurses gathered around kneel in reverence. They close their eyes and bow their heads. Several clasp their hands together in prayer.

124 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT 124

Fire trucks arrive at the burning church, along with an ambulance and a police car.

125 INT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT 125

Eli watches as the cross catches fire. The chapel fills with flames and smoke, but he doesn't move. He remains on his knees, with his arms outstretched at his sides.

ELI
Thy will be done...

126 INT. CHILDREN'S WARD HALLWAY -- NIGHT 126

Dr. Riley opens his eyes. He lifts his head and looks around at all the children and staff kneeling around them, all praying for him. Tears spill from his eyes.

Sophie lifts her head. She smiles, but she can barely hold her eyes open.

SOPHIE
Thank you...for letting me...pray
for you.

DR. RILEY
Oh, Sophie...

Sophie's eyes roll back and she falls. Riley catches her and pulls her to him. He rises. The other children rise.

DR. RILEY (CONT'D)
Make way, please. She's not well.

The children part and Dr. Riley carries her to the nurses' station. Bianca finds a gurney and rolls it quickly to meet him.

127 INT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT 127

Two FIRE FIGHTERS burst into the church. They see Eli, now collapsed on the floor. They run to him and lift him. He coughs. They drag him out.

128 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT

128

The fire fighters drag Eli from the church. He finds his footing and walks with them, coughing.

FIREMAN

Is there anyone else in the building?

ELI

No. I don't think so.

They lead Eli toward the ambulance.

ELI (CONT'D)

I'm alright. I'm alright.

A young EMT, 28, grabs him.

EMT

I got him.

The fire fighters turn back toward the building as the Fire Chief, SANDERSON, tall, gruff and gaunt, approaches.

ELI

I'm okay.

CHIEF SANDERSON

You want us to let this one burn, too?

ELI

No. Save it. Please.

The firemen spray water on the roof.

129 INT. ELI'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

129

Allison's cell phone rings beside her head. She finally wakes with a start and grabs the phone.

ALLISON

(into phone)

Hello?... What?!

She looks around, stunned. Sophie's not with her.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

No. We'll be right there.

She runs to Andrew and shakes him.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 Wake up! Sophie's at the hospital!
 We gotta go!

ANDREW
 What?

ALLISON
 Get up!

Elliott stirs and sits up.

130 INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT

130

Allison, Andrew, and Elliott arrive at the intensive care unit of the hospital. They look as though they just crawled out of bed, which they did.

There are more STAFF MEMBERS than usual, and even a few visitors from the children's ward and the emergency room.

Piper, the formerly blind girl, watches, concerned.

The family approaches Sophie's room.

ALLISON
 Sophie? Where's Sophie?

The visitors part for her. The door opens to Sophie's room and Dr. Riley motions to them.

DR. RILEY
 Come in, Allison. Andrew.

Elliott follows his parents into the room. The door closes.

131 INT. SOPHIE'S INTENSIVE CARE ROOM -- NIGHT

131

Sophie is unconscious. She's hooked up to an I.V. and various wires. A tube is now in her throat, helping her breath. A monitor beeps with every heartbeat.

When she sees her daughter, Allison gasps.

ALLISON
 Oh, Sophie.

ANDREW
 What happened?

DR. RILEY
 She came back to the hospital.

ALLISON

What? How?

DR. RILEY

We don't know. She just showed up and started...blessing people. I was with her when she collapsed.

ANDREW

Why the tubes?

ALLISON

She'll just wake up in a while. Like before.

Riley sighs.

DR. RILEY

I'm sorry, but...Sophie may not wake up again.

ALLISON

What?

Andrew puts an arm around his wife.

ANDREW

That can't be.

ELLIOTT

Sophie's not going to wake up?

DR. RILEY

Her body is shutting down.

DR. RILEY (CONT'D)

Her systems are failing. It's like her brain is just turning everything off.

ELLIOTT

Sophie's going to die?

DR. RILEY

I'm sorry. It's happening so fast. I didn't see this coming. I've... never seen anything like this.

Elliott's eyes fill with tears. Andrew pulls his son to his side.

ALLISON

How long does she have?

DR. RILEY
I don't know. But you should stay
with her.

Andrew nods.

DR. RILEY (CONT'D)
Don't give up hope. She's an
amazing little girl. We're going to
do everything we can for her.

ALLISON
Thank you.

DR. RILEY
Excuse me. I have to go speak with
the nurse.

He goes. Andrew, Allison, and Elliott all go to the side of
Sophie's bed.

132 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- NIGHT

132

Eli watches the fire. It looks like the fire fighters have it
under control. At least some of the building will survive.

His phone rings. He answers.

ELI
It's me.

133 INT. SOPHIE'S INTENSIVE CARE ROOM -- NIGHT

133

Andrew, Allison, and Elliott all sit at Sophie's bedside. The
beeping of the heart monitor is lighter now, and the beeps
farther apart.

ALLISON
(to Elliott)
Is there anything you want to say
to her?

Elliott nods.

ELLIOTT
I'm sorry, Sophie...for all the
times I was mean to you. Or that I
teased you. I didn't mean anything
by it. I love you. And I don't
want you to go.

Andrew squeezes his son's hand.

ANDREW

Let's pray.

Allison looks at him, surprised. She gives him a questioning look.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I know...I don't have a lot of faith. Not like you. I don't know much of anything about God, but...I know what I feel. And I know I feel Him here, now, in this room. And I think we ought to...

Allison nods. They bow their heads.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Dear Lord, we thank you for bringing this wonderful little girl into our lives...

The heart monitor stops beeping.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

...please don't take her from us...

The monitor flatlines. The beep extends, and doesn't stop. Allison gasps.

ALLISON

No!

ANDREW

Please don't take her from us!

Dr. Riley and a team of NURSES rush in.

DR. RILEY

Back up, we got her.

Andrew, Allison, and Elliott step back and give them room to work.

Riley barks orders as the staff tries to resuscitate Sophie. A male I.C. NURSE rolls a cart next to the doctor. Riley pulls defibrillator pads from the cart.

DR. RILEY (CONT'D)

Clear!

He places the pads on Sophie's small body. The violence of the shock lifts her midsection from the bed.

I.C. NURSE

No response.

Another nurse cranks up the power.

DR. RILEY

Clear.

He shocks Sophie again. The I.C. Nurse reads the monitor.

I.C. NURSE

Nothing.

The other nurse turns up the power to its maximum.

DR. RILEY

Clear!

He places the paddles on Sophie's little chest and gives her a final shock. Her body lifts, then goes limp. And still.

The I.C. nurse checks Sophie's vitals. He turns to Riley and shakes his head.

Riley, defeated, looks down at Sophie's body. He has never wanted to save a patient any more than he wants to save Sophie.

But he can't. He turns to Allison and Andrew. He shakes his head.

Allison disintegrates in sobs. Elliott cries. Andrew puts his arms around his family and they grieve together.

DR. RILEY (CONT'D)

Time of death. 2:47 a.m.

The intensive care team slowly and methodically begins to unplug their machinery.

134 INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT 134

The nurses begin to exit the room and wheel their carts out.

The visitors know the outcome from the expressions on the staff's faces.

135 INT. SOPHIE'S INTENSIVE CARE ROOM -- NIGHT 135

Dr. Riley goes to the grieving family.

DR. RILEY
I'm so very sorry.

Andrew, unable to speak, nods through his tears.

DR. RILEY (CONT'D)
Stay with her as long as you want.

Riley exits the room.

136 INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT

136

The elevator doors open and Eli steps into the reception area of the intensive care unit. The room is full, but the people are beginning to disperse. They all appear dejected.

He sees Dr. Riley and approaches. Riley looks up.

DR. RILEY
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Eli sees the last of the nurses leave Sophie's room and he sees Allison, Andrew, and Elliott huddled together near the foot of her bed.

He goes to the room.

Piper can watch no more. She turns away.

137 INT. SOPHIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

137

Eli steps through the doorway and stops. He looks at the motionless body of his granddaughter in the bed. Allison notices him.

ALLISON
Daddy.

ELI
I'm here.

ANDREW
It just happened. She never woke up.

Eli nods and wipes a small tear from his eye. He walks to the side of Sophie's bed and looks down on her.

ELI
Can I have a minute alone with her?

Allison nods.

ALLISON
Sure, Daddy. Sure.

ANDREW
Come on. Let's wait outside.

Andrew, Allison, and Elliott exit quietly.

138 INT. HOSPITAL LAB -- NIGHT 138

Dr. Riley enters the hospital laboratory. He turns on the lights. He's alone. He opens a cabinet, finds a syringe and opens the package. He rolls up his sleeve and begins to take a sample of his own blood.

139 INT. SOPHIE'S INTENSIVE CARE ROOM -- NIGHT 139

Eli sits in the chair beside Sophie's bed. He reaches out and takes Sophie's hand in his.

ELI
I was sick. For so long. I was
dead, baby girl. Like Lazarus.

His grip on her hand tightens.

ELI (CONT'D)
I'm back. He brought me back to
you.

And then...

ELI (CONT'D)
You brought me back to Him.

He wipes away a falling tear.

ELI (CONT'D)
Now where did you go?

140 INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT 140

Elliott hears something and goes to the window. He looks out.

ELLIOTT
Oh wow. Mom. Dad. You gotta see
this.

They pay no attention. Andrew holds Allison close. In the distance is the faint sound of singing.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Come look. I think it's for
Sophie.

Andrew pulls away and rises. He goes to the window and looks out.

ANDREW

Oh my...

Allison goes to his side. She looks out and down.

At least 200 people have gathered on the front lawn of the hospital. Some have brought balloons or flowers, but all have brought candles. A small choir in everyday clothes has begun a hymn, "There's Power in the Blood." Others in the crowd join in.

ALLISON

They don't know yet.

141 INT. HOSPITAL LAB -- NIGHT 141

Dr. Riley places the tube of his blood in the spinner. As it spins, he takes a photo from his wallet. The photo is of him and his wife and his two teenaged boys.

He looks at the photo.

142 INT. SOPHIE'S INTENSIVE CARE ROOM -- NIGHT 142

Eli holds his granddaughter's hand.

ELI

Don't give up on me. I know you're
gonna be watchin' down on me. I'm
going to be the man I should have
been. I promise you that.

She looks so pale now. So lifeless. His gaze moves from Sophie's face to the small wooden cross on the wall over her bed.

He rises out of the chair and kneels on both knees at Sophie's bedside. He takes her hand in both of his.

ELI (CONT'D)

(softly)
Forgive me.

He bows his head.

ELI (CONT'D)
Please, Lord. Forgive me.

His lips begin to move in silent prayer.

143 EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE -- NIGHT 143

The crowd sings and they raise their candles.

144 INT. HOSPITAL LAB -- NIGHT 144

Dr. Riley puts a sample of his blood under a microscope. He adjusts the focus.

He can't believe what he sees.

He puts another slide under the microscope and adjusts it.

It's the same. And then another. The same. He sits back in his chair, practically in shock.

DR. RILEY
Oh, God. Oh thank you.

He sighs as if the weight of a thousand pounds has just been lifted.

He looks at the photo of his family. The older nurse, Theresa, opens the lab door and looks in.

THERESA
Dr. Riley? Is everything alright?

DR. RILEY
Everything is just fine, Theresa.
Thank you.

She nods and goes. Riley's expression clouds. By his expression alone we can read his thoughts. He's thinking of his healer and the lifeless little body down the hall.

145 INT. SOPHIE'S INTENSIVE CARE ROOM -- NIGHT 145

Eli finishes his prayer. He stands and looks down on Sophie's body. He leans down and kisses her hand, then places it on her midsection.

ELI
I'll see you soon, baby girl.

146 INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT 146

Eli exits Sophie's room. He goes to Allison, Andrew, and Elliott at the window.

Allison turns to him, crying. He holds his daughter. Elliott joins them in the embrace. Then Andrew.

147 EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE -- NIGHT 147

Piper exits the hospital and approaches the crowd keeping vigil. She goes to those at the front of the crowd. It is Mark and his parents. They, along with others, hold candles.

The singing softens, then stops. Everyone looks to the little girl.

She stops in front of Mark. He looks at her. She shakes her head as tears spill from her eyes.

The crowd looks down and away. They understand. An OLD WOMAN blows out her candle. The others do the same.

148 INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT 148

Eli still holds Allison, Andrew, and Elliott in an embrace. He looks out the window and watches as a hundred tiny lights are extinguished, one by one, leaving only darkness.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

149 EXT. OLD CHURCH -- DAY 149

As the upbeat devotional song "Your Grace is Enough" plays, we see Eli, leaning against his truck outside of his old church. He watches as a HOUSE PAINTER, at the top of a ladder near the rear door, puts the final touches of fresh white paint on the restoration. The fire damage has been repaired. New windows gleam in the morning sun. The church is beautiful again.

A new cross gleams at the top of the restored steeple.

Eli pushes away from the truck and approaches the church. He passes the refurbished Welcome and Announcements sign near the sidewalk. New letters have been arranged behind a clean pane of glass: "Sunday Worship 10 a.m."

And below, in fresh white letters: "Pastor Eli Clayton."

Eli approaches the closed front doors.

He pauses and takes a deep breath.

He turns the knob and opens the doors.

150 INT. OLD CHURCH -- DAY

150

Eli stands, unmoving, in the open doorway. His form is silhouetted against the bright light of day behind him.

And then he enters.

He walks slowly down the center aisle and we soon become aware that he is not alone in the chapel. In fact, the room is full. Families, dressed in their Sunday best, fill the pews to overflowing. They were waiting for him.

As Eli passes, the congregation watches. We see not only Allison, Andrew, and Elliott on the front row, but - scattered throughout the chapel - Sheriff Stearman, Dr. Riley, Piper and her mother, Lorena and her daughter, Mark and his family, all the people that were touched by Sophie.

Eli takes his place at the pulpit. He clutches it, then runs his hand along the smooth wood surface. He looks out at his congregation. His expression says it all: he never thought he'd look out at the world from behind a pulpit again. He looks at Elliott on the front row and he smiles.

ELI

Praise God.

Elliott smiles and nods. Several in the audience respond with smiles and "Praise the Lord," "Amen," etc.

ELI (CONT'D)

Let's pray.

151 EXT. ELI'S TRAILER -- DAY

151

It's a beautiful morning. Elliott, Gus at his feet, selects the three best roses from the blooming bushes and clips the stems.

Eli emerges from the Airstream. He seems cheerful.

ELLIOTT

I got 'em, Grandpa!

ELI

Good work. Climb in.

Elliott holds the truck door open as Gus jumps up and in.

152 EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

152

The cemetery is quiet and still. The only sound is the chirping of birds.

Eli's pick-up approaches and stops in its usual place.

He and Elliott climb out of his truck. Gus jumps out and follows as they walk to the graves. Elliott carries the roses.

ELLIOTT
Can I do it today?

ELI
Sure.

Elliott replaces the faded flowers with the fresh ones.

ELI (CONT'D)
Mornin', love.

ELLIOTT
Mornin', Grandma.

They turn to Anson's headstone.

ELI
Mornin', son.

ELLIOTT
Mornin', Anson.

He places the final rose on a new headstone, Sophie's. Fresh grass has begun to grow on the grave.

ELI
Mornin', baby girl.

ELLIOTT
Mornin', Sophie.

Robin, the young widow, is at her husband's grave, seated near the stone. She notices Eli and Elliott, and she watches them.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
I'll leave you alone for a minute,
Grandpa.

Eli smiles and nods. Elliott picks up a stick and throws it. Gus chases. Elliott walks away.

Eli drops to one knee in front of Sophie's headstone.

He bows his head as if in prayer.

The young widow respectfully looks away.

Elliott, near the truck, takes the stick from Gus's mouth and throws it again. Gus chases after it.

A bird approaches and lands on the headstone near Eli. He looks up. It is a robin. On its breast is an unusual splash of white feathers.

ELI

You come to pray with me, bird?

The bird doesn't fly away.

The young widow turns her gaze back to Eli. She watches, curious, as Eli bows his head in silent prayer.

The hymn "Here I Am, Lord" begins to play.

Three more birds arrive. One of them lands on Eli's shoulder.

He doesn't move. He continues to pray, as if unaware.

Elliott looks back at his grandfather and sees what's happening. He instinctively pulls his phone from his pocket. But he stops himself.

He puts the phone back in his pocket and watches as other birds arrive and land on Eli's shoulders and arms and on the back of his neck.

The young widow doesn't move. She and Elliott only watch, in quiet reverence, as the birds join Eli at Sophie's grave.

FADE TO BLACK:

153	OMITTED	153
154	THE END	154