AN UNLIKELY RESURRECTION

Written by

Noelle Nelson

2390 C Las Posas Rd, #418
Camarillo, CA 93010
(310) 502-5208
Noelle@noellenelson.com

EXT. LOGAN, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - NIGHT - 1985

A town on its last legs, crippled by closed factories and abandoned farms.

Litter collects in the doorways of failed shops, riddled with graffiti and broken windows. The breeze rattles an empty tin can down the dark street.

At the far edge of town, GOSPEL MUSIC BLASTS from a disaffected BARN; an oasis of vibrant, pulsating life.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

TOWNSPEOPLE crowd the space in front of a makeshift stage, jump up, cry out in ecstasy, sway their arms back and forth.

In their midst, JON FINLEY, nineteen, white-garbed in a tunic and long flowing pants, with lustrous hair to his shoulders - the reluctant spitting image of the classic “JESUS” - receives the adoration of the crowd as he touches a shoulder, a forehead, stoops to kiss a child.

ON THE STAGE:

JACK KAGAN, 40's, Jon’s most recent stepfather, con artist by trade, slick and smarmy despite a crisp white shirt and tie.

Microphone in hand, Jack works the CROWD into a frenzy:

JACK
Do you stand STRONG in your faith?! Do you hear His call in your heart of hearts?! Do you BELIEEEVE?!

CROWD
Amen! I feel you God! Glory! Glory! I believe! Mercy, God!

JACK
Are you ready for a healing?! A healing like none you’ve ever seen before? Are you READY?!

The Crowd roars their readiness.

EXT. LOGAN, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - NIGHT

A police cruiser, “Logan Police - Northern California’s Finest” on its doors, lights flashing, siren off, whips through the deserted streets toward the barn.

INT. POLICE CRUISER

At the wheel, SHERIFF MARTINEZ, 50’s, Latino. By his side, DEPUTY HARRIS, 30’s, Sheriff’s stalwart sidekick.

DEPUTY HARRIS
Makes me sick what folks do in the supposed name of the Lord.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

IN THE CROWD:

Jon lays his hands on an old WOMAN IN RED’s shoulders.

JON
Believe! Be healed!

Jon blows on her forehead, pushes lightly on her shoulders. Woman in Red falls back, arms outstretched. She’s caught by a Townsperson behind her, laid onto the ground in trance.

ON THE STAGE:

JACK
Slain by the spirit! Healed! Who else would be SLAAIIN by the spirit?!

IN THE CROWD:

Jon raises his arms, makes a pushing motion, and twelve Townspeople in front of him drop to the ground in trance, caught by those behind.

ON THE STAGE:

JACK (CONT'D)
Slain! Look upon God’s glory and rejoice! Healed, brothers and sisters, tonight you are healed!!

IN THE CROWD:

From her lookout position at the front door, MIRANDA FINLEY, fifteen, Jon’s sister - innocence personified if looks were all - a “pregnancy bump” beneath her high-waisted gingham dress, spots the police cruiser lights.

She signals Jack “Out of here!”

ON THE STAGE:

Jack STOMPS on the stage, Jon's cue to hightail it.

IN THE CROWD:

Jon hastens to the stage. He crosses his arms in front of himself, into the sleeves of his tunic, plucks the velcroed MINI-BLOOD PELLET hidden there, crushes it between his palms.

ON THE STAGE:

Jon turns toward the Crowd, hands clasped together. He opens his hands, raises his arms. "Blood" trickles from each palm.

CROWD
The Stigmata! A miracle! Holy, Holy! God be praised!

IN THE CROWD:

Sheriff and his Deputy wedge their way in past Miranda.

ON THE STAGE:

JACK
Look! Non-believers come to take our Healer away! Don't let them do it! Resist the Devil's minions!

IN THE CROWD:

SHERIFF MARTINEZ
These people are con artists, not holy men. We're here to protect you!

The Crowd's having none of it. They press against Sheriff and his Deputy; cat-call, hoot and holler. The officers can't move an inch. In the melee, Jack and Jon make their way to the back door.

SHERIFF MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
(above the noise)
Deputy, call for back-up.

DEPUTY HARRIS
Can't Sir! Back-up's out on account she's helping to birth a calf.

EXT. ROAD BEHIND BARN - NIGHT

Jack jumps into the driver's seat of a scratched, dinged-up 21 foot grey and white RV, the motor running.

Jon sprints up into the cabin, turns and hauls Miranda up.

INT. FINLEY RV

In the passenger seat, HELEN FINLEY, grifter, 40's, her classic features still beautiful, clutches sound equipment and wires to her impeccable sweater-set.

Jack hits the accelerator even as Jon slams the cabin door shut. Thrown, Jon skids on his butt.

HELEN
You get blood on that shirt, Jon, you're washing it.

Miranda pulls her "pregnancy bump" out from under her dress.

MIRANDA
This thing itches.

HELEN
Hand it over.

Miranda passes her the "pregnancy bump," giggles.

Helen tosses it back. Extends her hand. Miranda makes a face, gives her mother a stack of credit cards and a man's wallet.

Helen waves the wallet at her:

HELEN (CONT'D)
Miranda, what did I tell you about lifting wallets?

Helen takes the credit cards out of the wallet, chucks the wallet out the RV window.

EXT. ROAD OUT OF LOGAN

THUNK! The wallet hits the asphalt.

The RV speeds down the dark, deserted road.

HELEN (O.S.)
I knew this scam was going to get us in trouble.

JACK (O.S.)
We had a lousy run, that's all.

HELEN (O.S.)
I hate you.

JACK (O.S.)
You didn't hate me last night.

MIRANDA (O.S.)
Eww! TMI.

INT. FINLEY RV - NIGHT

Behind the RV, far in the distance, police cruiser lights flash.

JACK
Oh shit. We've got company.

Helen glances in the rear view mirror.

HELEN
Cut the lights. Turn right.

The RV goes dark.

JACK
There's no road.

MIRANDA (O.S.)
Mom? What's going on?

HELEN
Now!

EXT. WOODED AREA

Jack turns, crashes his way into the woods.

INT. FINLEY RV

Bushes and tree limbs THWAK against the windshield, BANG against the sides of the RV.

Helen bounces in her seat, grips the dash, white-faced. Jack fights to keep the steering wheel steady as the RV hurdles over felled logs and drops into gullies, scrapes against trees.

Jon and Miranda pitch from one side of the RV to the other. Miranda SCREAMS, slides into Jon.

HELEN
Stop! Cut the motor.

EXT. WOODED AREA

The police cruiser zooms by the RV shrouded in darkness, silent, camouflaged by trees and bushes.

HELEN (O.S.)
Just once, I'd like to leave town without a police escort.

MIRANDA (O.S.)
So like can I go to sleep now?

EXT. ROAD OUT OF LOGAN

At an intersection a mile down the road, Sheriff Martinez, outside his open squad car, hands on hips.

Deputy Harris drives up in a cloud of dust.

DEPUTY HARRIS
Nothing, Sheriff. There ain't no other road. It's like that RV disappeared into thin air.

SHERIFF MARTINEZ
Pity the town they land in next.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Wood cupboards above a tile counter, linoleum on the floor. Ruffled curtains frame a window over the double sink.

From the living room television:

TV WEATHERMAN (O.S.)
Good morning, Resurrection, Nevada! You are going to love the weather today. Sunny, a light breeze, highs in the mid-seventies.

At the stove, MARIE HAMILTON, Will and Charlie's foster-mother, late 30's, sturdy and sensible, whose good heart lights up an otherwise plain face, ready for work in her pink "I 'heart' The Buttery Bakery & Cafe" t-shirt and black slacks, stirs a pot of oatmeal.

MARIE
Will! Charlie! Breakfast!

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S BEDROOM

A single bunk bed hugs the wall. Above a scarred wooden dresser, shelves hold action figures and well-used books.

WILL STOKES, twelve year old happy camper despite his autism, pokes at the mound buried under a Superman comforter on the lower bunk: CHARLIE RHODES, inveterate smartass, thirteen year old Black paraplegic, Will's best and only friend.

CHARLIE
Mmpf.

Will pulls the comforter off Charlie. Charlie grabs for it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Gimme!

Will yanks the comforter out of reach. Charlie sits up.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Torturin' a poor defenseless crip.
You outta be ashamed of yourself.

Will lifts Charlie's paralyzed legs, helps him into a WHEELCHAIR with the ease of long practice.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Dragging me through the wormhole
like that--

WILL
(monotone, mechanical)
Wormhole. Hole. Short-cut through.
Space-time. Powered by. Quan-tum en-
tan-gle-ment. Ment.

Will smooths the comforter on his bunk, arranges his pillow. Does the same for Charlie's bed.

Charlie rolls himself to the dresser, yanks a lower drawer open, grabs a clean t-shirt and briefs, heads out.

CHARLIE
(sportscaster voice)
And the legless wonder is first to
the bathroom. The crowd cheers!

Will opens the upper dresser drawer, takes out a clean t-shirt and briefs.

As Will shoves the drawer shut, a small worn "Jesus" doll topples face-forward. Will carefully repositions the doll upright on the dresser, smiles.

WILL
Jesus. Good.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

At the formica table, Marie plops oatmeal into two bowls.

MARIE
Charlie, I have errands to run before work. Your schoolwork is laid out in the dining room. Lunch and dinner are in the fridge.

Charlie opens the fridge, takes out milk and a dish of fruit.

CHARLIE
K.

Marie grabs keys and purse off the counter. Gives Charlie a quick kiss.

MARIE
Try to get Will to study something other than his Bible books.

She's out the door.

MARIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And don't get your brother in trouble, OK?

Charlie rolls his eyes, digs into his oatmeal.

EXT. MAIN STREET - RESURRECTION, NEVADA - DAY

A town struggling to survive, dry and dusty. Charles rolls briskly, Will by his side, past one-story shops and businesses, many of them shuttered, closed, out-of-business.

CHARLIE
Don't worry, we'll be back before Mom gets home.

Charlie spots the SKATEPARK up the street.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I'm off. I won't be long. I'll meet up with you at Clarence's, K?

Will nods, trots off.

EXT. SKATEPARK OFF MAIN STREET

A curved and scooped high-walled remnant of what was once a prosperous town.

A couple of serious teen SKATEBOARDERS go for it.

Near the entrance, KENT RAWLES, thirteen year old bully, flirts with CHRISTY, thirteen, good girl fascinated by all things bad-boy. In the park, Kent's two mains, LENNY and CURT, charter members of the Jackass fan club, jostle each other on their skateboards.

Kent, cigarette in mouth, shows Christy how to smoke.

KENT
Nah. You gotta suck it in.

Christy coughs, waves smoke away from her face.

CHRISTY
Nasty!

Charlie rolls up.

CHARLIE
Whatcha doin' with this loser, Christy? I can show you some real action. No cancer necessary.

Charlie executes a couple of quick snazzy TWIRLS.

KENT
You hittin' on my girl?

Christy giggles, flattered.

CHARLIE
She's not your girl, Kent. She's too smart for that, right Christy?

KENT
Get outta here, gimp.

CHARLIE
Make me.

Kent tosses his cigarette, aims a punch at Charlie! Charlie zips out of his way, spins around Kent, brushes against him. Kent lands butt-first on the ground.

Charlie dives down a ramp, thumbs his nose at Kent as he whizzes back down Main Street.

KENT
This ain't over, freaktard! I'm gonna nail your ass!

INT. COLLECTIBLES & OTHER STUFF SHOP - DAY

A skinny shoebox of a store; shelves of used books, taxidermied animals of all sizes, and a collection of the weird and wonderful.

TUK!TUK!TUK!

Behind the counter, CLARENCE DOBBS, owner, 60's spry British ex-pat in his perpetual bow tie and sweater vest, nails the feathered rump of a chicken-in-taxidermy-process into place with a miniscule mallet.

At the counter, Charlie gawks at the phenomenal image of a RARE CONSTELLATION that swirls in brilliant color on the computer monitor before him.

CHARLIE
PGC 6240. Soft shells. Wow, Clarence! This is rad. Where'd ya get it?

Will rummages through the backpack slung on the back of Charlie's chair.

WILL
(monotone, mechanical)
PGC 6240. Elliptical galaxy. Con-stell-a-tion Hydrus. the Water Snake. Snake. Sn-ake.

Clarence spits out the taxidermy nails held between his lips.

CLARENCE
My Australian astronomer friend at Siding Spring Observatory.

Will retrieves a Bible book, hands it to Clarence. Clarence exchanges Will's book for another:

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Here you are, Will: "Jonah and the Whale." Gripping, positively gripping. You'll enjoy it.

CHARLIE
What I'd give! Heck, who am I kidding. I probably won't even get to go to Space Camp.
(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I'll never get outta this town, much less into space.

CLARENCE
Tut-tut old chap. Where's there's a will, there's a way.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES - SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Institutional green walls host DCS bulletins and "Never Give Up On A Child!" "Nevada Department of Child Services Wants You!" posters.

Ablaze with righteousness, Mrs. Higgenbottom, a sour dumpy 50-something, confronts SUPERVISOR MILLIKIN, mid-forties, a buttoned-up professional.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I have seniority! It should have been me, not her.

SUPERVISOR MILLIKIN
Seniority isn't everything, Mrs. Higgenbottom. Joan Tharpe was the best candidate for Regional Supervisor. You're great at following the rules, but Joan inspires children to be their best.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
What am I supposed to do? Slap happy faces on my evals when the children are acting out?

SUPERVISOR MILLIKIN
No. But you could point out what your fosters are doing right, instead of dwelling on everything they do wrong.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Just throw the rules out the window!

SUPERVISOR MILLIKIN
Advocate for the child, not the system, Mrs. Higgenbottom. That's what Joan does. She leads with her heart.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
The system is the only thing saving these children!
(MORE)

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM (CONT'D)
The rules are there for a reason. That’s the heart I follow. Not some silly sentimentality.

SUPERVISOR MILLIKIN
I don’t like getting into these discussions with you, Mrs. Higgenbottom, because you always have to be right.

Supervisor Millikin rises, puts files in his briefcase.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Aren’t I?

SUPERVISOR MILLIKIN
(sighs)
Technically, yes. The system is for the good of the children. But sometimes, you have to look beyond it.

Dismissed, Mrs. Higgenbottom turns to go.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES - BREAK ROOM

In the empty room, at the counter, MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM stares at a SHEET CAKE decorated with “Congratulations, Joan!”

A cake knife balances atop a nearby stack of “congrats” themed paper plates and napkins.

Mrs. Higgenbottom picks up the knife, considers, then plunges it straight through the “Joan” on the cake. She slashes the rest of the cake into ugly bits.

Satisfied, she wipes the blade clean with a “congrats” napkin. Replaces the once-again pristine knife back on the stack of plates.

INT. COLLECTIBLES & OTHER STUFF SHOP - DAY

At the counter, Charlie holds a TAXIDERMIED POSSUM upright, mouth open. Clarence glues “VAMPIRE TEETH” in place.

CHARLIE
Who'd wanna make this ugly ole thing into a vampire?

Clarence dips a brush into a tin of red paint, applies “BLOOD” to the teeth.

CLARENCE
Mr. Redznick. In the fond hope that it will scare live possums away from Henney-Penney's eggs.

Will roots through a box of newly acquired collectibles. Picks up a petrified animal skull, frowns, sets it back down. Finds a kaleidoscope, peers through it.

CHARLIE
Why doesn't he just set a trap?

Will freezes. Cocks his head toward the door.

WILL
Go now, Charlie. Bad. Bad bad.

CHARLIE
Your spidey-sense kickin' in?

Will grabs the wheelchair handles and rushes Charlie to the back of the shop, hides out of sight behind the shelves.

DING! Kent ambles in, followed by Lenny and Curt.

CLARENCE
What can I do for you boys?

KENT
Thought a friend of ours came in here.

CURT
The gimp.

CLARENCE
No one here but myself and Mr. Possum.

The back door clicks shut.

KENT
You lie, old man!

Clarence elbows an antique hatchet that sets a RUBE GOLDBERG MACHINE in motion, and in the few seconds it takes Kent to race to the back door, a stuffed upright GRIZZLY BEAR, claws extended, slides into place in front of the back door.

Kent SCREAMS! Crashes into the bear, falls down.

KENT (CONT'D)
Dammit!

He kicks the bear, slides it away from the door.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND COLLECTIBLES & OTHER STUFF

Kent, Lenny and Curt stare down the alley. No Will. No Charlie.

KENT
Crap.

INT. COLLECTIBLES & OTHER STUFF SHOP

Alone once again, Clarence sets the bear back in place, pats it.

CLARENCE
Who says man's best friend is a dog.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES - FILE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Row upon row of ceiling-high shelves stacked with boxes of DCS case files.

Mrs. Higgenbottom roots through a box labeled "JOAN THARPE: OPEN CASES FOR RE-ASSIGNMENT," rifles through files.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Lead with the heart? Look beyond the system? Pshaw! These are throw-away children; the system is the best chance they have for a normal life. Discipline and order! That's what these children need, not molly-codd--What's this?

She squints at a file document.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM (CONT'D)
The almighty Joan Tharpe messed up! This is the placement that will get my career back on track. Yes!

She slaps the file down hard on the table.

EXT. WOODED AREA, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - DAY

BANG!

Startled, Jon drops the tree limb he attempts to jam beneath the RV's front tire, mired deep in mud. Jack 'supervises'.

JON
What was that?

Helen opens the RV door, toothbrush in a mouth full of foam.

RALPH emerges from the woods, rifle tucked under his arm, his pet PIG sniffs the ground by his side.

RALPH
That was me, telling you to git off mah land.

From behind Helen:

MIRANDA
A pig. Yuuuck.

Jack, hands up in "I mean no harm" position:

JACK
We're trying to do that, Sir. It was dark, we got lost, I--

RALPH
Say, ain't you them healing folks wanted fer stealin' poor trustin' folks money?

The pig sniffs Jon's feet, and up his legs. Jon backs up, slips, slides, and down he goes! Into the mud.

JACK
Oh, no. You must have us confused-

RALPH
I ain't confused. Look at that face. Ain't two Jesuses around that ah know of.

The pig SNORTS all along Jon's prone body.

JON
Get it off me!

RALPH
There's a fat reward on yer heads. Fifteen hundred bucks fer the lot of you. Mah lucky day.

The pig shnuffs at Jon's face. He squirms, tortured.

HELEN
For God’s sake, Jack, do something!

JACK
Fine. I’ll give you two grand and you never saw us.

RALPH
Hand it over, git off mah land, and I won’t even call mah cousin, the Sheriff.

DINGDINGDING!

INT. MORT’S CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

DING!DING!DING!DING!

Will turns the wheel and presses on the pedals as he racks up yet another win on the CAR WARS VIDEOGAME at the rear of the mini-mart stocked with snacks, sodas and sundries.

At the front counter, MORT WALLACE, 50’s, good-natured owner-operator.

Suddenly Will stops mid-game, cocks his head, murmurs:

WILL
Bad.

He turns, sees a TEENAGER in a green sweatshirt stroll down the chips-and-candy aisle.

Will hurries to Mort:

WILL (CONT'D)
Boy. Green sweatshirt. Thief.

Mort hustles out from behind the counter.

MORT
Hey, kid.

Teenager bolts, trips over Charlie who's on his way in.

CHARLIE
Whoa! Dude! Crip alert.

Teenager’s stash of stolen candy and chips tumbles out from beneath his sweatshirt. Like a flash, he’s up and gone.

As Mort retrieves his goods:

MORT
Don’t bother comin’ back! I got a memory for faces.
(to Charlie)
You good?
(to Will)
I dunno how you do it, Will. You’re better than a freakin’ bloodhound. I’ll give you some extra tokens, you earned ‘em.

CHARLIE
Tomorrow, Mort. We gotta get home.

WILL
Blood. Hound. Blood-hound!

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE’S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A detective show plays out on the TV. Will and Charlie pick at the remains of dinner on the coffee table.

KNOCK!

Startled, Charlie rolls out to see who’s at the door.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE’S HOUSE - HALL

Mrs. Higgenbottom, outsized bag and clipboard in hand, stands in the open door.

CHARLIE
We’re not buying any.

Mrs. Higgenbottom purses her lips.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I’m Mrs. Higgenbottom of Child Services. I need to speak to your foster mother--

Mrs. Higgenbottom checks her clipboard.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM (CONT'D)
--Marie Hamilton.

CHARLIE
You’re not our Child Services lady. Miss Joan is.

Mrs. Higgenbottom smirks, pushes her way past Charlie.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Not any more. Where's your foster mother?

CHARLIE
Will? Show this nice lady into the living room. I'll be right back.

Charlie scoots into the kitchen.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

On the wall-phone:

CHARLIE
Mom? You'd better come home quick. Child Services is here!

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE - HALL - NIGHT

Will rolls Charlie with great care in absolute silence, out of their bedroom down the hall toward the living room.

Just out of sight of Marie and Mrs. Higgenbottom, the boys stop, eavesdrop.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM (O.S.)
A complete lack of supervision--

MARIE (O.S.)
Only this last year, since my husband died. For the ten years before that, one of us was with the kids at all times. It's been hard but I'm always home by nine p.m. Always!

IN THE LIVING ROOM:

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
--and neither of the boys attend school--

MARIE
They're home-schooled. Charlie's passed all the standard tests with flying colors, and Will...Will's not testable.

IN THE HALL:

WILL
Test-able. Testable. Not.

CHARLIE
Shh.

IN THE LIVING ROOM:

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I don't care what Miss Joan said, it's against department policy. And department policy is what assures the best possible outcomes for these children. I will be placing each boy in a facility that supports their different needs: Charlie with other physically disabled youths, Will with mentally impaired youths.

Charlie bursts in.

CHARLIE
You can't do that! Will and me, we look out for each other. Like - Sam and Frodo, Chip & Dale, Han & Chewie--

At the living room entrance, Will, hands smashed over his ears, eyes squeezed shut, rocks back and forth.

MARIE
Charlie! Oh honey.

CHARLIE
She can't do this, Mom! It's not right!

MARIE
(anguished)
I'll take care of it. Go back to your room. Take Will with you.

Charlie glares at Mrs. Higgenbottom, tugs at Will's pants-leg.

CHARLIE
Come on dude. Help me get back to our room.

Stiff, robot-like, Will wheels Charlie out.

MARIE
(to Mrs. Higgenbottom)
You don’t understand! You cannot separate these boys. We’ve been a family since they were babies.

IN THE HALL:

Will rolls Charlie to their bedroom at a snail’s pace. Charlie grips the arms of his wheelchair.

CHARLIE
(terse)
Not gonna let this happen.

MARIE (O.S.)
Charlie was found crushed in a car wreck under the bodies of his parents and grandmother. He was only three! He was mute for years.

IN THE LIVING ROOM:

MARIE (CONT'D)
The first person he talked to was Will, who was abandoned on the Sheriff's steps--

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
At eighteen months because he was “odd,” later diagnosed as autistic. Yes, I read the file.

MARIE
With nothing but a blue blankie and a Jesus doll for comfort. Will and Charlie mean everything to each other. And to me! They’re all I have.

Mrs. Higgenbottom gathers her clipboard and bag.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
They’ll get over it. And you are not my concern. I’ll be back as soon as I locate the placements.

Marie collapses onto the couch, sobs.

EXT. COLLECTIBLES & OTHER STUFF SHOP - MORNING

In front of the circa 1930's repurposed house, Will, his expression wooden, his movements jerky, extricates Charlie's wheelchair from the trunk of Marie's second-hand HONDA.

INT. MARIE'S HONDA

MARIE
Gramps will pick you up around noon. Don't give me that look, Charlie. We're lucky he's willing to help.

EXT. COLLECTIBLES & OTHER STUFF SHOP

Charlie tugs at Will's pants-leg to get him to move.

MARIE
Be good. I'll see you later.

INT. COLLECTIBLES & OTHER STUFF SHOP - MORNING

At the counter, Clarence works on a TAXIDERMIED HEN. Charlie digs through a box of GLASS EYES, hands one to Clarence.

Will stands at Charlie's side, statue-like.

CHARLIE
It's the perfect solution! We'd be supervised and educated like Child Services wants, and we could come home on weekends and holidays.

Clarence inserts the eye, discards it. Tries another.

CLARENCE
The eyes must be just right to replicate Henrietta's steely yet tender regard.

CHARLIE
Clarence!

CLARENCE
Boarding schools are expensive, Charlie. Your foster-mother can't afford that. As it is, the only way you'll attend Space Camp is if you win that scholarship you applied for.

CHARLIE
I gotta do something! I can't just let Child Services split us apart.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CHEMISTRY LAB - MORNING

Several long counters fill the center of the room, covered with bunsen burners, test tube stands and glass beakers, tended by a dozen HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN in gloves and goggles.

PRINCIPAL DOBBS, 40's, walks among the students, corrects their efforts.

MR. DOBBS
I'd help you if I could, Marie, you know that. We'd take Charlie in a heartbeat. But Will? I don't even have funding for a dedicated chem teacher, much less special ed.

Marie follows Dobbs to his desk at the front of the class, their backs are to the students.

Unobserved, the students improvise: beakers foam over, fumes drift out of test tubes, a bunsen burner flame jets up.

MR. DOBBS (CONT'D)
Why do you think I'm teaching this class? I'm the principal, for goodness sake.

Dobbs pulls up his goggles, takes off his gloves.

MR. DOBBS (CONT'D)
Look, there's a fellow, Pete Wade, who used to do some special ed tutoring. Maybe he can--

BOOM! Three students gasp in a noxious yellow cloud.

EXT. MRS. WADE'S HOUSE - MORNING

A single-story, white frame house. MRS. WADE sprays bug repellent on the colorful flower beds in her front yard, miniature American flags stuck between each bed.

MRS. WADE
Yes, my son Pete would have loved to work with Will. Special ed was his passion. But once the funding ran out, he had nowhere to go, so he enlisted. And never came home.

MARIE
I’m so sorry. I didn’t know.

MRS. WADE
It’s an honorable death, but it doesn’t hurt any less. I hope you find a way to keep your boys. Children are precious.

INT. THE BUTTERY BAKERY & CAFE - DAY

Noisy, crowded, friendly gathering place.

Two WAITRESSES, in their black slacks, pink “Buttery” t-shirts and brown aprons, take orders, carry trays through the narrow spaces between the tables, serve CUSTOMERS.

Behind the bakery counter, CHERYL LUBBOCK, 50’s, big hair and sequined glasses, taps a waiting CUSTOMER’s order into the computer screen. Marie ties her apron at the waist.

MARIE
Thanks, Cheryl. I owe you.

CHERYL
Any luck?

Cheryl hands the Customer’s order to her.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Here you go, Hon. Enjoy. Next!

Another CUSTOMER steps up to buy baked goods.

MARIE
Not yet. Is Mr. Henderson here?

Cheryl puts the Customer’s order in a bag.

CHERYL
(to Marie)
Mr. Fancy-Pants Attorney? Yup. Usual table, usual meal, usual hearing aid *not* in his ear.

She rings up the Customer’s order, takes the cash offered.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I asked him if he wanted coffee, he said I didn’t look puffy.

She shoots Marie a sexy look.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
You huntin'?

MARIE
No! Nothing like that.

CHERYL
You could do worse.
(to Customer)
Here you go, Hon. Enjoy.

AT MR. HENDERSON'S TABLE:

MR. HENDERSON, attorney, 60's, his suit jacket hung with care on the back of his chair, tie tucked midway down inside his shirt, studies a brief by his plate, half a sandwich in hand.

MARIE
(quietly)
Mr. Henderson? I need to talk to you about something.

MR. HENDERSON
No, I don't need anything, thanks.

MARIE
(a little louder)
I need to talk to you. About Will and Charlie.

MR. HENDERSON
Milk and honey? No, I'm good.

Marie bites her bottom lip. Desperate to be heard above the din, she talks yet a little louder.

MARIE
Child Services says I'm not a good enough foster mom.

MR. HENDERSON
Foster Farms?

MARIE
(yells)
They say I'm an unfit mother!

Dead quiet. All conversations in the Buttery cease. All eyes rivet on Marie. Mr. Henderson stares at her.

Mortified, Marie drops into the chair opposite Mr. Henderson. Gathers her courage:

MARIE (CONT'D)
I need your help, Mr. Henderson. I want to adopt Will and Charlie.

EXT. COLLECTIBLES & OTHER STUFF SHOP - DAY

GRAMPS, Marie's grandfather, 80's, forever stuck in hippie-dom - tie-dye t-shirt, bell-bottoms, pony-tail of white hair - pushes Charlie's wheelchair towards his vintage yellow 1960's Beetle, the rear bumper covered with peace slogans.

Charlie tugs at Will's pant-leg, keeps him moving.

GRAMPS
You spend too much time in that place, your brains are gonna turn to mush.

AT THE BEETLE:

Charlie sits in the front passenger seat.

At the side of the car, Will rocks lightly, rubs his hands along the outside of his thighs.

Gramps struggles to jam the wheelchair into the front boot.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)
You need to be out in nature, trippin' the light fantastic! Groovin' on--Will, gimme a hand.

Nothing. No response.

FROM INSIDE THE BEETLE:

CHARLIE
Will! It's Good Samaritan time. Help Gramps.

AT THE BEETLE:

Will looks at Charlie, looks at Gramps. Expressionless, mechanically, he complies.

EXT. RECTORY - DAY

In front of the modest Church Rectory, crowded with boxes and furniture, REVEREND BOB, 60's, frets as TWO HELPERS load his desk into a U-HAUL.

A small white dog, MUFFY, runs around his legs, yaps at the Helpers. Barks at Marie as she comes up to Reverend Bob.

REVEREND BOB
(to Helpers)
Not like that. Upright! Oh dear.
(to Marie)
Marie. What can I do for you?
(to Helpers)
Fragile! Dishes! They should go on top of a books box, not under.

MARIE
This is probably a bad time, Reverend, but I didn’t know where else to go.

REVEREND BOB
Well, it’s as good a time as any. What with the Church closing, and me having to move back East, who knows when you’ll next have a pastor to talk to. No one wants to shepherd a town in decline.

He scoops up Muffy, pets her absently.

REVEREND BOB (CONT'D)
Our Church used to be filled to the rafters, with people, prayers and song! It seems as people lost their jobs, their homes, they lost their way to the Church...But I digress, you were saying?

MARIE
It’s about my kids.

LATER:

Marie and Reverend Bob sit on the U-Haul “easy-load” deck, a box of tissues between them, Muffy asleep on Reverend Bob’s lap. Marie blows her nose, wipes her reddened eyes.

MARIE (CONT'D)
I don’t know where I’ll get the money for adoption proceedings - which Attorney Henderson says I could lose - but I gave him the go-ahead anyway. What else could I do?

She gropes for another tissue. Holds up the empty box.

MARIE (CONT'D)
And we're out of tissues. Perfect.

REVEREND BOB
Let us pray.

MARIE
For tissues?

REVEREND BOB
For a miracle.

He bows his head, takes Marie's hand.

REVEREND BOB (CONT'D)
Dear Heavenly Father--

Charlie rolls up, panicked, out of breath.

CHARLIE
Mom! Something's wrong with Will.
You gotta come quick!

EXT. REST & SERVICE STATION - NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - DAY

Just off the highway, a trucker's fuel stop and mini-mart.

At a pump, Jon fuels up the dirty, mud-encrusted RV.

INT. REST & SERVICE STATION MINI-MART

At the cashier counter, Jack gets change from the ATTENDANT, his gaze riveted on the small TV SET on the counter. A few CUSTOMERS get coffee, wander the store.

Helen selects snacks, Miranda flips through a celeb magazine.

Jack picks up a freebie newspaper. Front page headline: "Has God deserted Resurrection?" The subheading reads: "Church closes in recession-devastated Nevada town."

Jack grins. This could be good.

ON THE TV:

TV ANCHOR
And in other news, a family of con artists are wanted, last seen fleeing the jurisdiction in a twenty foot RV.

Jack and Helen look at each other. Damn!

TV ANCHOR (CONT'D)
Anyone who sees a grey and white RV with license plate--

EXT. REST & SERVICE STATION

The Finleys pile into the RV and zoom off.

EXT. USED RV LOT - DAY

Shoddy RVs of every size and color sag side by side.

By a large sign - “RV-WRECKS-R-US! No Questions Asked!” - the LOT OWNER, flashes his used-car-salesman patented smile, counts a wad of bills, waves.

The grey-and-white RV left behind, Jack drives off in an even scruffier, powder-blue twenty-footer.

INT. RESURRECTION MEDICAL CENTER AND HOSPITAL - DAY

Neat, white examination room with colorful upbeat wall posters. Medical instruments and supplies on the counter.

At the edge of the examining table, Will rocks back and forth.

Anxious, Marie holds Charlie’s hand tight. They watch DR. NOLAN, forties, dedicated neurosurgeon, check Will’s eyes with an ophthalmoscope.

DR. NOLAN
Nothing abnormal. I’ve seen this before, Marie. It’s stress related.

MARIE
Isn’t there some medicine you can give him?

DR. NOLAN
It won’t help. He’ll pull out of it at some point. Try not to worry.

INT. MARIE’S HONDA - DAY

Forehead creased with anxiety, Marie drives home. In the back, Charlie thumbs through a “Mystery in Space” comic.

In the front passenger seat, Will stares out the window, his hands rub his thighs obsessively.

Ahead, at the side of the road, a deserted PICKUP TRUCK; the words “JESUS IS COMING” scrawled across its rusted tailgate.

Will squints, his eyes widen. Galvanized out of his autistic torpor:

WILL
Mom! Jesus is coming!

Marie swerves, stunned to hear him speak. Rights the car.

MARIE
Uh. OK.

WILL
Heal the sick, raise the dead!

CHARLIE
Glad you’re back, dude.

WILL
No! Jesus coming! Heal sick, raise dead! Heal *us*!

MARIE
Quit jumping around in the car, Will, it makes it hard to drive.

Back into his game:

CHARLIE
Whatever you say.

WILL
Heal us heal us heal us! Mom! Where find Jesus?

MARIE
In Church, Will.

WILL
ChurchChurchChurch. Will and Charlie. Stay together! Church!

EXT. REVEREND BOB’S CHURCH - LATER

Nailed to the Church door, a SIGN: “All services suspended until further notice.”

At the side of the Church, Will stretches on his tiptoes to see through a window. No signs of life. A dark, deserted room with empty pews and a pulpit covered with a dust cloth.

CHARLIE
It’s no use, Will. Reverend Bob’s gone.

Will runs to another window. Same result.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Come on. We’ll try another church.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

A few PARISHIONERS on their knees in the pews. SISTER FRANCINE and SISTER AGNES lead a BOY’S CHOIR through a rehearsal.

Hung above the ornate altar, a Crucifix with a larger-than-life suffering, bloody, thorn-crowned Jesus nailed to it.

Will stares at the Crucifix, distressed.

WILL
(to Charlie)
Bad bad. For Jesus.

A PRIEST joins Will and Charlie.

PRIEST
But good for mankind. That was our Lord’s most holy and sacred moment.

CHARLIE
(mutters)
I’ll pass.

PRIEST
What can I do for you boys?

CHARLIE
Nothing, Father, thanks. We were looking for Jesus but guess we’re a little late. Will? Will!

Will tears his gaze away from the Crucifix.

INT. JEWISH SYNAGOGUE - DAY

In the hushed, dimly lit temple, Will and Charlie watch the RABBI clean holy objects on the altar with great reverence.

RABBI
True, Jesus was a Jew. But I don't think you'll find him here. He left a long time ago.

EXT. JEWISH SYNAGOGUE - DAY

Will and Charlie leave the simple, unadorned building; Will feet dragging, head bowed.

Charlie jerks his wheelchair to a stop.

CHARLIE
You gonna give up that easy? I may not get your Jesus thing, Will - praying to a dude been dead 2000 years. But it is your thing. Like space is mine. Get your Bible book outta my backpack, I got an idea.

EXT. RESURRECTION MAIN STREET - DAY

Will walks at Charlie's side, flips through the pages of his Bible book.

CHARLIE
Maybe if you find the things your pal Jesus did, you'll find him. Like a scavenger hunt.

WILL
Born. In a man-ger.

CHARLIE
K, that's cool. A manger. What else?

Charlie's eye is caught by a CUTE GIRL, twelve; she leans against the wall by the GROCER'S, shuffles tunes on her iPod.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You go on. I'll catch up with you later, Will.

Will shoves his book into Charlie's backpack.

EXT. GROCERY

Charlie bounces his wheelchair in front of Cute Girl, spins around.

CUTE GIRL
(not impressed)
What’re you doing, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Dancin’ to your beat.

CUTE GIRL
You can’t even hear my beat.

CHARLIE
I can *feel* your beat.

His whole upper body swings along with the chair’s movement. Cute Girl shrugs, pushes open the door to the grocery store.

EXT. RESURRECTION RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Will on the lookout for signs of Jesus.

A taxi drives by Will, squeals to a stop a block away. Three elderly women in their Sunday best grunt and push their way out of the car. 60’s PILL-BOX HATS crown their coiffed heads.

MATILDA takes the lead, cane in hand; then BERTHA, arms and hands fluttering; skinny LOUISE brings up the rear.

EXT. CASEY’S HOME

In the small fenced-in yard in front of her unassuming duplex, CASEY, 20’s, knits baby booties for her new-born. BABY sleeps atop a nest of blankets, surrounded by a menagerie of stuffed animals; sheep, puppies, kittens.

CASEY
Aunties! I wasn’t expecting you.

MATILDA
Now don’t get up, Casey. No fuss.
We just stopped by to see the baby.

BERTHA
And bring gifts.

LOUISE
For the baby.

The three crowd around one side of Baby’s nest, ooh and aw.

Will comes to a halt on the sidewalk.

Matilda creaks to her knees, heavy on her cane. She sets a beautifully wrapped gift down at Baby's feet. Bertha kneels next, then Louise, to present their gifts.

WILL
(in awe)
The. Three. Wise. Men.

EXT. RESURRECTION MAIN STREET

Will backtracks to Charlie. Grabs the wheelchair handles, races Charlie to the "Three Wise Men." A rollicking ride; Charlie hangs on tight.

CHARLIE
You're smokin' my treads, dude! And whaddya mean, comin' in like that just when I was about to make my move?

WILL
Charlie! Baby! In a man-ger. Three. Wise. Men. Good good!

CHARLIE
That's cool. Maybe the wise dudes can tell me what's up with girls. Like maybe I need some flash to get their attention. I could get spoke lights, you know? With "Nerd Power" runnin' across the center.

WILL
Gifts! Charlie! Wise Men!

EXT. CASEY'S HOME

Charlie takes in the scene, astounded.

CHARLIE
How about that. Awesome, dude!

Will does an awkward happy dance.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
And you got rhythm! Who knew? Not a lot, but we can work on that.

EXT. RESURRECTION PUBLIC PARK - DAY

A sea of LEGS: joggers run, moms push baby strollers, kids skip rope. At the far side of the park, girls play SOCCER.

CHARLIE
What's so great about legs, anyway? You don't need 'em in space. Did you know there's been a bunch of black astronauts but not a single one like me? I could make history.

Will stops Charlie's chair.

WILL
Charlie. Look.

A HOMELESS MAN in his 50's, tall and proud despite his ragged coat and dirty face, preaches to the PIGEONS at his feet.

HOMELESS MAN
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Homeless Man tosses bits of bread to the birds.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst - I know, you hunger still.

Homeless Man roots in his pockets, extracts another bun.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
What have we here?

WILL
Charlie! Feeds the multi-tudes! Like Jesus. Loaves. The multi. Tudes!

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

CHARLIE
Dude, that's pigeons, not people.

Will's face falls.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
But hey, it's good. Maybe feeding hungry pigeons is like feeding hungry people. You know, I, uh, I'm gonna check out the soccer game. You keep lookin'. Lemme know when you find another Jesus story.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

GIRLS in team t-shirts scissor, pull-back and zig-zag, no holds barred. COACHES and PARENTS yell, cheer.

To one side, half a dozen TEAM-MATES wait their turn. Among them, LEXY, thirteen.

Charlie rolls up right next to her, eyes on the practice:

CHARLIE
Doncha hate watchin', wantin' to play?

LEXY
I'll get my turn.

Charlie looks up at her. She looks over, sees the wheelchair.

LEXY (CONT'D)
(embarrassed)
Sorry, I--

COACH (O.S.)
Lexy! You're up!

LEXY
Gotta go.

EXT. ALL YOU CAN EAT DINER - PARKING LOT - DAY

Cars and trucks parked behind a roped-off area that faces the street. A hand-lettered SIGN proclaims: "Union Local #572 Annual Pie-Eating Contest."

At a long table, RALPH, 50's, Union rep, good-natured hard worker, stands. TWELVE CONTESTANTS, all construction workers, one of them a woman, MARGARET, flank him, six on each side.

In front of each seated Contestant, THREE BERRY PIES.

On a bleacher off to the side, Contestant friends, co-workers and family.

RALPH
This ain't some namby-pamby girl's game. No offense, Margaret.

MARGARET
None taken.

RALPH
We here at Local 572 take pie-eating seriously! And thanks to the ladies, we have some righteous pies.

Applause, several WOMEN in the bleachers stand up, wave.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Now for the ground rules.

Ralph sits, dons glasses, picks up a sheet of paper.

EXT. RESURRECTION MAIN STREET

Will looks into shop windows, people-watches, scans the street, eager for another “Jesus” lead.

EXT. ALL YOU CAN EAT DINER - PARKING LOT - DAY

RALPH
(reads)
Lastly, absolutely NO vomiting. Agreed?

Without realizing it, as they discuss and argue the new rules, Contestants and Ralph assume the exact positions of the TWELVE APOSTLES and JESUS, in Leonardo da Vinci’s classic painting, “THE LAST SUPPER.”

At that precise moment, Will comes upon the parking lot.

Will gasps.

WILL
Last Supper. Oh! Last. Supper!

He bolts.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD

A couple of soccer players trade places with their waiting team-mates. Lexy, out of the game, pouts.

CHARLIE
You wanna go for a ride? Make you feel better.

He grins, pats his thighs.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I’m real good on this thing.

LEXY
No. Like never.

CHARLIE
Come on. Just a little ride around the park.

Will blasts up, grabs Charlie’s chair, zooms off.

WILL
Supper! Last! Last Supper!

CHARLIE
You are the worst wing-man ever.

EXT. ALL YOU CAN EAT DINER - PARKING LOT

RALPH
Ready. Set. Go!

Contestants bury their faces in their pies.

EXT. RESURRECTION PUBLIC PARK

Will makes a bee-line for Main Street, jams Charlie along at break-neck speed without regard for paths or streets, barely misses trees, benches, bushes, people.

CHARLIE
Whoa! Hey dude, slow down.

INTERCUT WITH CONTESTANTS CHOMPING AT PIES.

EXT. ALL YOU CAN EAT DINER

Contestants, faces slathered in berry filling, eyes on Ralph.

RALPH
And the winner is--Margaret!

Contestants cry out, argue the decision - for and against - and once again, fall into DA VINCI’S POSES.

Will skids Charlie’s wheelchair to a halt, points:

CHARLIE
Wow. Whole lot messier than I remember it, but you’re on it, dude! You found another one.

Will hops and skips around Charlie’s chair.

WILL
Jesus coming, coming, coming!

CHARLIE
We better be going home, or else this is gonna be our last supper.

WILL
More finding Jesus!

CHARLIE
Tomorrow. I promise.

Will grabs the handles of Charlie’s chair, whirls him around down Main Street.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I’ll drive myself this time, K?

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND ALL YOU CAN EAT DINER

Charlie whizzes along, Will by his side.

CHARLIE
It’s quicker this way. We gotta get home before Gramps gets there.

WILL
(sharp whisper)
Charlie. Bad. Stop.

CHARLIE
What’re you getting?

WILL
Bad. Hurt. Someone hurt.

Will creeps along the alley. Charlie follows. Will peers around the corner into a side passage.

EXT. SIDE PASSAGE

Kent pins a pale-faced SMALL BOY up against the wall, one arm across his neck.

KENT
You don’t have any money, huh?
We’ll see about that.

With his free hand, Kent digs into Small Boy’s pants pocket.

Lenny and Curt rummage through Small Boy’s dropped book bag, fling books and pencils into the street.

LENNY
Boring! What a loser.

FROM THE ALLEY:

Charlie starts back down the alley.

CHARLIE
Come on. We’ll get help.

WILL
(to Charlie)
David! David and Goliath!

Will looks around frantically for something to throw. Spots a bag of rotten apples in a trash can.

CHARLIE
Will! No!

Will launches an apple. It smashes into yucky bits on Kent’s shoulder! Furious, Kent lets go of Small Boy, who lickety-splits out of there. Kent advances on Will.

KENT
(to Lenny and Curt)
Get the crip.

Will pelts Kent with more apples. Lenny grabs Charlie’s arms, Curt sits on his legs.

KENT (CONT'D)
You’re askin’ for it.

Will runs! Kent chases him, they fall to the ground. Kent punches Will, pummels him. Lenny and Curt cheer Kent on. Will rolls into a ball, head in his arms. Kent gets up, kicks him.

KENT (CONT'D)
Get up, dumbass! Retard!

MORT (O.S.)
What’s going on here?!

Mort rushes up, followed by Small Boy. Kent, Lenny and Curt tear out of there, disappear down the alley.

Charlie hurries over to Will.

Mort helps Will up. Bloody nose, torn clothes, scratched and bruised: Will's a mess.

MORT (CONT'D)
Geez, kid. Look at you.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Marie cleans Will's bloody nose and face. Applies butterfly band-aids on the cuts.

MARIE
Who did this to you?
(to Charlie)
How could you let this happen?

Charlie throws up his hands.

CHARLIE
Like it's my fault!

WILL
Looking. For Jesus. Sorry, sorry.

Marie takes off Will's shirt. Sees his bruises. She groans. Wipes dirt off him, cleans his scratches.

MARIE
Well, you're not going out looking for Him tomorrow, I guarantee that.

Will shoots a panicked look at Charlie.

MARIE (CONT'D)
(calls out)
You hear that, Gramps?

GRAMPS (O.S.)
Right-e-o.

Marie rinses out her cloth at the sink, washes her hands.

MARIE
Will, go put some fresh clothes on.

As Will obeys her:

CHARLIE
(to Will, sotte voce)
Don’t worry, I got a plan.

Marie wipes her hands. Takes out a pot, pours water in it.

MARIE
Why are you encouraging him with this finding Jesus thing, Charlie? It’s only getting him into trouble.

She bangs a lid on the pot, rips open a packet of macaroni.

CHARLIE
Anything is better than Will shutting down, Mom. It’s like watching him die.

EXT. RESURRECTION MAIN STREET - DUSK

A lone street light flickers. A merchant locks up for the night, nods to the few people that pass by.

JACK (O.S.)
A dying town. Was there ever a prettier sight?

INT. FINLEY RV

From his driver’s seat, Helen by his side, Jack takes in the town.

JACK
Shops going out-of-business, churches closing, condemned properties. This town is ripe for the pickin’ - right, “Jesus”?

JON (O.S.)
Don’t call me that.

Jack spots the STOREFRONT rented for their con:

JACK
And there’s our “House of Holy Healing,” smack dab in the middle of Main Street. God loves a sinner!

HELEN
Amen.

JACK
You guys set up the chairs, I'll fill 'em.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. RESURRECTION BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

STYLISTS, a row of hairdryer-chairs, CLIENTS in various stages of beautification; foil, curlers, blow-dry.

Stylists stop mid-work, clients abandon their magazines, all eyes on Jack as he spins his tale of the "House of Holy Healing" magic.

Jack smiles, flirts, and charms his come-to-a-healing POSTCARDS into the hands of clients and stylists.

EXT. BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

Jack beats it across the street, smile dropped, all business.

Seen through the window inside the beauty parlor, women gossip, "Who is that man?!"

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

By the power tools display area, Jack regales three MALE EMPLOYEES and several CUSTOMERS with an old farmer's joke. Passes out postcards.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

At the counter, Jack mesmerizes several FEMALE POSTAL CLERKS and assorted CUSTOMERS. Hands out cards.

END MONTAGE

EXT. THE BUTTERY BAKERY & CAFE - DAY

Jack notices the "No Soliciters" sign posted on the Cafe's front door, frowns, goes in.

INT. THE BUTTERY BAKERY & CAFE

Busy noon hour. Behind the bakery counter, Marie, her back to CUSTOMERS, on the phone:

MARIE
I have to work late. Cheryl's out sick...I should be home around ten.

Jack tucks a stack of "House of Holy Healing" postcards beside the tips jar on the counter.

MARIE (CONT'D)
There's dinner fixings in the fridge... Thanks, Gramps.

JACK
Miss? I'll have a double chocolate chip cookie. Warm, please.

Marie hangs up the phone. Gets the cookie, heats it up.

JACK (CONT'D)
You look troubled, Miss. Pretty lady like you shouldn't have a care in the world.

Marie grimaces. Jack slides a "healing" postcard across the counter.

JACK (CONT'D)
Come to our healing tonight. Be uplifted. The Lord loves a cheerful heart!

MARIE
Not much to be cheerful about these days.

She hands Jack his cookie.

JACK
Have faith in the Lord. He always comes through.

Jack wags a folded bill in his hand at Marie; the mighty dollar - where all his faith lies.

As Jack leaves, Marie dumps the postcards. All of them.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING - DAY

Helen sets up folding chairs in neat rows. Jon clips work-lights onto a couple of tall poles. Miranda leafs through a magazine.

HELEN
(to Miranda)
The room isn't going to sweep itself.

MIRANDA
Why do I always have to do the dirty work?

JON
You wanna be Jesus? I'll trade you.

INT. MILLER LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kid-friendly living room. Well-worn furniture, old-fashioned TV, scuffed table. Toys, games, stuffed animals - everywhere.

SHEILA MILLER, 40's, earth-mother with a ready laugh and readier hugs, picks up the mess, tosses toys in a basket.

Mrs. Higgenbottom perches at the edge of the couch, knees tight together, clipboard and purse clamped on her lap.

SHEILA
Sorry! I wasn't expecting a visit.

From the laundry room, the dryer BUZZES. Sheila rushes out.

SHEILA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Do you mind? The kids will be home from school any minute, and all heck breaks loose when they do.

Mrs. Higgenbottom looks around with vague disgust.

Sheila returns with laundry, plops down, folds clothes. Mrs. Higgenbottom edges as far away from Sheila as possible.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Tell me about the child you'd like me to foster.

Mrs. Higgenbottom refers to her clipboard:

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Twelve years old, male, diagnosed with mild autism, seventy-five pounds, four foot eleven at last physical.

SHEILA
Right. Well, how about his personality, his likes and dislikes.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
He's autistic. He's twelve.

Awkward.

SHEILA
Uh-uh.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Name's Will Stokes.

Mrs. Higgenbottom’s stiffens as the pile of little boy shorts, socks and Ts grows beside her.

SHEILA
Stokes. That sounds familiar. Wasn't he in foster care with another boy, Chan? No, Charlie! Wheelchair bound, right? Over in Resurrection, if memory serves.

The pile topples into Mrs. Higgenbottom’s lap.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Oops! Sorry.

Sheila retrieves the clothes.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Miss Joan used to talk about those boys all the time. How is she? I heard she got a great promotion.

TOOT! TOOT!

SHEILA (CONT'D)
The school bus!

Sheila greets a six-year-old DOWN’S SYNDROME BOY at the door with a big hug. He proudly waves a crayon drawing.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Beautiful, sweetheart! Sit in your chair and I’ll get your snack.

Down’s Syndrome Boy drags his pint-size chair smack dab in front of Mrs. Higgenbottom. She snatches her feet backwards. He sits. Stares at her.

Mrs. Higgenbottom looks at her watch.

Sheila returns from the kitchen, sandwich in hand. She squats down by Down's Syndrome Boy, feeds him bits of sandwich. The boy's eyes never leave Mrs. Higgenbottom's face.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
I only have room for one child, and we're not equipped for physically disabled kids, so I'm afraid I can't take your two.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I'm not looking to place Charlie. Just Will.

SHEILA
By himself? Oh, I wouldn't be comfortable with that. It's much too traumatic for the kids. Miss Joan said they're like brothers.

TOOT! TOOT!

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Here comes the next one!

Off she goes to the front door.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I can see I'm wasting my time here.

SHEILA
Excuse me?

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Thank you for your time.
(to Down's Syndrome Boy)
Move. I need to get out. Now.

She rises. Down's Syndrome Boy's face lights up with a huge smile. To Mrs. Higgenbottom's horror, he hugs her leg.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING - DAY

Jon and Helen roll a black curtain rack behind a small STAGE erected at the back of the room. It masks the back door.

At the wooden counter by the store entrance, Miranda fills used mini plastic water bottles with water, adds clove oil to each. Tapes "Holy Healing Water" labels on the bottles.

Helen places a large sign, “House of Holy Healing,” in the front window. Worklights and chairs face the stage.

EXT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING - EVENING

Lights blaze in the storefront window, illumine “House of Holy Healing” and “Free Healings Tonight!” signs, in sharp contrast to the dark and dimly lit shops along Main Street.

TOWNSPEOPLE crowd the entrance, shove to get in.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE’S BEDROOM - EVENING

Charlie pushes another pillow under his comforter, pats the whole into “pillow-person” shape.

In the fading light of day, Will slides a window open.

EXT. WILL AND CHARLIE’S HOUSE

Below their open bedroom window, Will helps ease Charlie from the window sill into his wheelchair.

CHARLIE
Told you I had a plan.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

Every seat is taken; latecomers throng the back. Low excited chatter fills the room.

On the stage, seated on a simple folding stool, Jon, in his “Jesus” costume, head down, hands palms up on his thighs.

Jon rises from his meditative posture, eyes and face downcast, his golden hair gleams to his shoulders.

Slowly, Jon raises his arms, lifts his head and eyes skyward. The audience gasps! Jon literally GLOWS.

JON
Dear Heavenly Father, grant us this day thy gift of healing!

Jack bounds on stage, mic in hand.

JACK
Healing! Yes, healing indeed! Tonight, good people of Resurrection, Nevada, tonight there will be no talk of hell or damnation! Tonight there will be-- resurrection!

EXT. RESURRECTION MAIN STREET - EVENING

Will searches the street, shop windows, the few passers-by, for signs of Jesus. Charlie meanders by his side, amuses himself with tricky wheelchair moves.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

Jack gestures toward Jon.

JACK
For tonight, HE comes to uplift! HE comes to heal! HE comes in love! HE comes from The Father. Praise God!

The audience cries out: “Praise God!!” “Jesus!” “God be praised!” They jump up, wave their arms.

EXT. RESURRECTION MAIN STREET

AUDIENCE (O.S.)
Jesus our Savior! Glory to God!

Will glances at Charlie, they’re off like a shot to the source of the exaltations!

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

AT THE DOOR:

Charlie and Will push through, their view hampered by the adult bodies in front of them.

CHARLIE
(to Will)
What’s your spidey-sense sayin’?

Will grimaces, uncomfortable.

WILL
Too much. Good, bad. Bad, good. All mixed up, uh -

Will makes whirling motions with his hands.

CHARLIE
Scrambled. I get it.

Will nods, urgent.

WILL
Wanna leave. Go now.

ON THE STAGE:

JON
Let us pray. Together.

Jon steeples his hands, closes his eyes.

JON (CONT'D)
The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

AT THE DOOR:

Just then, the adults in front of Will shift. He sees Jon.

WILL
(stupified)
Jesus!

ON THE STAGE:

Jon's slow deliberate cadence and well-modulated tones soothe and relax the crowd as they join Jon in the 23rd Psalm.

JON
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

AT THE DOOR:

CHARLIE
Ok, we'll go. Find Jesus.

Will grips Charlie's arm.

WILL
No! Jesus here!

Will thrusts Charlie's wheelchair forward. Bumps into a MAN.

MAN
Hey! Cut that-oh, you're in a wheelchair. Sorry.

Charlie now sees Jon.

CHARLIE
Holy crap.

WOMAN
Watch your mouth, young man.

Will, transfixed, stares at Jesus. The audience around him seems to disappear. He sees nothing but Jesus and a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN on the stage. He hears nothing of what is going on around him or on stage. He exists in a tunnel of SILENCE.

ON THE STAGE:

Jon and Middle-Aged Woman face each other, sideways to the audience; her hands palm down on his hands, raised palms up, waist high. Jon's eyes hold Middle-Aged Woman's eyes captive, with their intense, direct focus as he speaks to her.

Jon grabs Middle-Aged Woman's wrists and yanks on them, once, sharply.

Middle-Aged Woman staggers back. Jon's hold on her wrists keeps her steady.

Her hand flies to her head.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
My migraine. It's gone. Completely gone!

IN THE AUDIENCE:

The audience CHEERS "It's a miracle!" "Lord be praised!" "Hosanna!" break through Will's trance-like state. He's once again aware of the sights and sounds around him and on stage.

ON THE STAGE:

Middle-Aged Woman falls to her knees before Jon. He raises her.

JON
Kneel not to me, but to the Father.

Jack jumps on stage. Turns the now radiant Middle-Aged Woman away from Jon; she toddles, unsteady, down the ramp.

JACK
How about that, folks? What a healing! A miracle, yes!

IN THE AUDIENCE:

CHARLIE
OK, seen enough? Time to go.

WILL
No! Stay. Please?

ON THE STAGE:

Jack runs over to help Helen, disguised in a grey wig, old-lady make-up, and a frumpy dress, bent over with pain in a wheelchair, roll herself up the ramp.

Jon recites the 23rd Psalm, the audience follows his lead, as Helen positions herself to face him.

Jon kneels in front of Helen, arms raised, palms up. Ham that she is, Helen plays it up, places her palms gingerly on his.

Jack motions to the audience to cease their Psalm recital.

JON
(to Helen)
Press down on my hands, Beloved. Feel the energy of Our Heavenly Father flow between us. Strong, pure, healing energy! Do you want to be healed?

Helen nods.

JON (CONT'D)
Say it!

HELEN
(tremulous)
I want to be healed.

JON
Louder!

HELEN
(louder)
I want to be healed!

JON
Say it so our Lord Himself in Heaven can hear you!

HELEN
I want to be healed!!

Jon grabs Helen’s wrists and yanks on them, once, sharply.

JON
Be healed, NOW!

Jon rises, keeps hold of her wrists. Helen, eyes glued on his, slowly lifts herself to a standing position. She takes one wobbly step away from her wheelchair, then another.

HELEN
I can walk! I. Can. Walk!

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Audience members go ballistic: “Praise be to God!” “It’s a miracle!” “Lord be praised!”

Charlie turns his wheelchair around, heads for the door.

CHARLIE
This is so bogus. I’m outta here.

WILL
No! Stay here. Jesus heal us!

Charlie ignores Will.

EXT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

Charlie takes off down the now-empty sidewalk towards home. Will races after him.

WILL
Charlie, no! Come back! Jesus heal us. Stay together!

Charlie does an abrupt about-face, confronts Will.

CHARLIE
Don’t you think I’ve prayed a thousand times for God to heal me? I’ve never gotten so much as a twitch! If there is a God, he sure as heck isn’t looking down on me!

WILL
But Jesus--

CHARLIE
--is just some dumbass story some one made up a long time ago to give people hope. Which has to be the cruelest joke of all! Hope! Where there can’t be any.
(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Face it, Will, I'm a crip, now and forever, and you, you're--ah, forget about it.

Charlie thrusts his wheelchair back in motion.

WILL
(calls after him)
But finding Jesus?

CHARLIE
It was a game, Will! A game to keep you happy.

WILL
(anguished)
NO! Jesus real!

Charlie keeps right on rolling. His face taut with pain, Will hesitates, then bolts back into the House of Holy Healing.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

Will pushes through the people massed at the back of the room, to the front of the "standing room only" area.

ON THE STAGE:

Jon yanks FARMER's wrists.

JON
Be healed, now!

FARMER
My back. The pain is gone! Gone, merciful Heavens, I am HEALED!

The audience claps, cheers, cries out, arms held high.

JON
Not I, but the Father.

Farmer bursts into grateful tears. Jon releases Farmer's wrists.

EXT. SKATEPARK

By the light of streetlamps, Charlie drops and rolls down steep ramps, swings up onto high curved walls only to dive back down again, his pace fast and furious.

The only other occupants of the park, a COUPLE OF SKATEBOARDERS, get out of his way, exit the park.

SKATEBOARDER
(to Charlie)
You're crazy, man. You're gonna get yourself killed.

CHARLIE
Like I care!

Alone now, Charlie goes all out, executing wheelies, fast turns, zooms down an embankment at an impossible speed. He spins out of control, hits the ground hard, jets out of his wheelchair and lands with a sickening THUD!

Silence, but for the WHIR of one wheel turning.

JACK (O.S.)
That's all for tonight, folks.

EXT. RESURRECTION MAIN STREET - NIGHT

People disperse from the House of Holy Healing, make their way home. Will jogs home.

As he nears the skatepark, Will stops, cocks his head.

WILL
Bad.

Will looks around. No one. Nothing but a quiet street and the occasional flicker of a streetlamp. Puzzled, Will takes a cautious step forward.

WILL (CONT'D)
Bad. Hurt. Someone hurt.

He takes another couple of steps. The sense of Charlie hurt explodes within his psyche, full-on.

EXT. SKATEPARK

WILL
Charlie! Charlie hurt!

Will follows his intuitive hit, barrels into the skatepark.

WILL (CONT'D)
Charlie! CharlieCharlieCharlie!

Will spots the overturned wheelchair, finds Charlie, unconscious, on the ground. Kneels, reaches out, touches Charlie's head, comes away with BLOOD on his hand.

WILL (CONT'D)
Badbadbadbadbadbadbadbad!

EXT. MORT'S CONVENIENCE STORE

Will sprints to Mort's.

INT. MORT'S CONVENIENCE STORE

At the cash register by the front door, Mort counts the day's take. Will bursts in.

WILL
Charlie hurt! Hurt bad! Get help! Come now!

MORT
Hold your horses, kid. Where? What happened?

Will thrusts his bloody hand at Mort.

WILL
(screams)
Charlie! Hurt! Come! NOW!

Mort slams the cash register shut, grabs his keys.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Will's ear-piercing SCREAMS clash with the cheery room's colorful mix of kid-friendly chairs, tables, and toys.

FRIENDS and RELATIVES of patients cower, run for the exit.

Mort and TWO ORDERLIES attempt to corral Will as, adreneline-fueled, he hurls everything with reach; chairs, tables, magazines, books, glasses, full coffee cups.

Will hits himself, hits the wall, bangs his head against it, rips a framed picture off the wall; glass shatters everywhere!

MARIE (O.S.)
Where is he?!

She runs in, plows through the wreckage, grabs Will's wrists, pushes him up against the wall and wrestles him, clutched tight to her body, into a hold like a human strait-jacket.

All the while, she soothes him with:

MARIE (CONT'D)
It's all right, Will. It's all right. It's gonna be all right, Will. We'll get through this. Charlie will get through this.

Will butts his head into her chest, kicks her, arches his back, thuds his head against the wall, SCREAMS. Marie hangs tight despite the pain of his blows.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Mort! What started this?

MORT
They wouldn't let him see Charlie. He's still in surgery.

MARIE
Tell me what the doctor said.

MORT
Now?

MARIE
I've got this. It's not the first time, you know.

MORT
Ruptured spleen, fractured ribs, broken wrist. They can fix all that. But--

Will slumps, exhausted, in Marie's arms.

MARIE
But what?

MORT
Charlie's got some kinda head injury. Something with his brain. He's in a coma, Marie. The doc said he'll know more when Charlie comes out of it. If he comes out of it. God, Marie, I'm so sorry.

Marie struggles to maintain her composure.

His rage spent, Will, in his normal tone of voice:

WILL
See Charlie now?

INT. HOSPITAL - CHARLIE'S ICU ROOM - MORNING

Charlie, one arm immobilized in a cast, bandages on his head and neck, lies eyes closed, an oxygen mask over his face, hooked up to multiple IVs, surrounded by lit monitors.

At his side, her face tear-stained, Marie holds Charlie's limp hand.

At the foot of the bed, Will stares at his friend, rocks back and forth.

NURSE DAVIES, 40's, an efficient yet motherly sort, breezes in, adjusts an IV, checks a monitor.

Marie releases Charlie's hand, wipes her eyes.

MARIE
Come on, Will. I gotta get to work.

No response.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Will, please.

Will shakes his head.

Nurse Davies makes a notation in Charlie's chart.

NURSE DAVIES
If he wants to stay, Mrs. Hamilton, that's all right. Will's a good boy. We'll keep an eye on him.

MARIE
You know he had an episode yesterday.

WILL
Epi. Sode. Bad. Sorry, sorry.

NURSE DAVIES
It wouldn't have happened if those orderlies knew how to handle autistic rage. I do.

Marie sighs, nods her thanks.

MARIE
(to Will)
I'll get Gramps to pick you up later. As long as you promise not to give him a rough time.

WILL
Pro-mise. Promise.

EXT. HOSPITAL GROUNDS - MORNING

At a payphone, Marie clutches a tear-stained tissue in one hand, the phone in the other.

MARIE
Yes, an accident.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY WITH:

INT. DCS - MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM'S CUBICLE

The sole decoration on her grey cubicle walls is a DCS CALENDAR: "The Promise of A Better Tomorrow," the days entirely populated with round yellow "sad face" stickies.

At her desk, every file lined up just so:

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
(on her phone)
Why am I not surprised? One of them had to end up in the Hospital given your poor supervision.

MARIE
(on the phone)
I'll let you know when he... When Charlie comes home.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
(on her phone)
You do that.

Marie slams the receiver in place, buries her face in her tissue, sobs uncontrollably.

Mrs. Higgenbottom hangs up with a flourish:

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM (CONT'D)
My job just got a whole lot easier!

She slaps a "happy face" stickie on the day's calendar date.

INT. FINLEY RV - DAY

In the cramped RV, Helen, Jack, Miranda and Jon huddle around the dining table covered with Chinese take-out.

Helen snatches the fried rice carton away from Miranda.

HELEN
Quit picking out all the shrimp.

JACK
I came up with a great idea for our next con. All we need is a really good Elvis impersonator.

Miranda licks her fingers.

MIRANDA
I like shrimp.

HELEN
So do other people.
(to Jack)
We've got a perfectly good Jesus impersonator. Let's stick with what works.

Miranda yanks on a book Jon reads as he picks at the food.

MIRANDA
"Advanced Crowd Hypnosis" - boring!

She turns her attention to another take-out carton.

JON
Excuse me if I want to do more than a simple relaxation-suggestion bit, as long as I'm stuck in this grift.

JACK
Stuck? Is that what you call it?

Jack shakes his head, peers into various cartons.

HELEN
(to Jon)
Do you have any idea how hard your stepfather--

MIRANDA
What is he, like number five?

HELEN
You will show some respect, young lady, or else--

MIRANDA
Whatever.

JACK
Where’s the Moo Goo Gai Pan?

Helen shoves a carton towards him. Jack digs in with less-than-expert chopstick technique.

JON
I like getting into character and all that. But this isn’t performing. These people think I’m the real--

JACK
(to Jon)
Suck it up, kid. Your mother graciously accepted the custody of you during your probation - at no small sacrifice to us, I might add - otherwise you’d be someone’s girlfriend in the clink.

Miranda giggles, twirls a lock of Jon’s hair with her finger.

MIRANDA
You got a purty mouth.

Jon yanks his hair away from Miranda.

JON
One stupid joy ride, and I’m Jesus for four years.

HELEN
Two down, two to go.

Helen collects empty cartons, stacks them.

JACK
I wasn’t finished.

HELEN
Unless you’d rather I released you to the state correctional system.

Miranda claps in delight.

MIRANDA
Oh, yes, please do, mother dearest. Then I could work miracles as Saint Teresa, or Bernadette or - better yet -
(total drama queen)
The holy Virgin Mary.

Jon makes the “I’m gonna gag” sign, dives back into his book.

INT. THE BUTTERY BAKERY & CAFE - DAY

Midday bustle; people chatting, clatter of plates, clink of glasses.

Marie sets the day’s special, meatloaf, down in front of Mr. Henderson at his usual table, with his usual brief.

MARIE
Can I bring you anything else?

MR. HENDERSON
No, I’m fine, thanks.

Mr. Henderson picks up his fork. Marie hovers at his table. Mr. Henderson sets down his fork, looks up at her.

MARIE
Any news?

MR. HENDERSON
It’s only been two days, Marie.
These things take time.

MARIE
Course. Sorry. Enjoy your lunch.

BEHIND THE BAKERY COUNTER:

Cheryl loads the counter racks with fresh pastries.

On the phone, at the far corner of the bakery counter, Marie covers her free ear against the noise.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Uhhuh. OK. Thanks for letting me
know.

She hangs up.

MARIE (CONT'D)
(to Cheryl)
No change. Oh God, Cheryl, what if
Charlie never comes out of the
coma? What if he dies?

Marie dissolves into tears, muffles her sobs in her hands.

CHERYL
(to Busboy)
Tommy? Take over the counter for a minute, would you, Hon?

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND “THE BUTTERY”

A DELIVERY DRIVER trucks his boxes of produce in and out of the “Buttery” rear entrance. A HOMELESS guy dumpster-dives.

Marie sobs into her apron. Cheryl holds her by the shoulders, shakes her gently.

CHERYL
Now, don’t you go there, Marie. You gotta get a hold of yourself, be strong for Charlie.

MARIE
How?! I buried my Frank just this past year and now this? And what about Will?

She bursts into fresh tears, Cheryl holds her close.

CHERYL
There, there. It’ll be all right, Hon, you’ll see.

Marie disengages from Cheryl’s hug, blows her nose.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
You want me to get someone to cover for you tonight?

MARIE
No. I need the money. But thanks.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE’S HOUSE - MARIE’S BEDROOM - LATER

At the edge of her bed, one shoe off, the other in her hand, Marie stares at a framed picture on the nightstand of herself with her deceased husband, FRANK.

EXT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING - EVENING

Townsfolk arrive from all directions, eager for tonight’s healing.

Sister Francine and Sister Agnes, in full nun regalia, PICKET SIGNS held high ("Down with False Idols!" "This man is not Jesus!"), stride industriously back and forth, chant:

SISTER FRANCINE
Thou shalt not worship false idols!
Heed the word of the Lord thy God!

SISTER AGNES
Down with false idols! Return to
the true faith!

Excited townsfolk walk past and around the Sisters to get into the House, pay them no mind.

SHERIFF CLARK, Native American, 40's, proud of his badge, his heritage and his country, leans against his police car, a wary eye on the nuns and the townspeople. Mort keeps him company.

SHERIFF CLARK
What these House of Holy Healing
people are doing is no different
than what I've seen on stage in
Vegas.

MORT
Hypnosis?

SHERIFF CLARK
Yeah. These folks here induce pain-
relief instead of getting people to
cluck like chickens. The clucking
and the relief both wear off pretty
quick.

MORT
Well, the town's doing poorly.
People need something to believe
in, otherwise they just lay down
and die.

Sheriff Clark's shoulder-radio squawks.

SHERIFF CLARK
(into radio)
I'm on it.
(to Mort)
Old lady Fisher's cat is stuck up a
tree again. I hate that damn cat.
Catch you later.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

A packed House. The standing-room only folks are lined up four and five deep. Some people sway. Others slump in a trance. Others lie where they slid, “healed,” to the floor.

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Jon clasps MASSIVE DUDE’S hand to his chest with one hand, holds his other hand firmly to Massive Dude’s forehead.

JON
In the Name of the Lord! Be healed!

MASSIVE DUDE
Jesus loves me! I am healed!

Jon releases both of Massive Dude’s hands. Eyes rolled back, Massive Dude crashes, demolishes his chair on the way down.

ON THE STAGE:

JACK
Slain by the Spirit, folks! Slain by the SPPPIIIIRRRIT! Who else is ready to be healed? To be SLLLAAAAIN by the Spirit?!

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Jon raises his arms high, looks to the Heavens, then back to those in front of him, makes a pushing motion. Half a dozen people fall back, “slain.”

The crowd EXPLODES in a delirium of “Praise Jesus!”

Sandwiched with others in the standing-room only area, Miranda, her “pregnancy bump” on prominent display under her gingham costume, bumps into a MIDDLE-AGED MAN caught in the fervor of the Hosannas.

MIRANDA
(demure)
I’m sorry. I’m so clumsy.

Middle-Aged Man sees her belly, smiles.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
It’s OK, little lady.

Jon turns, prayerful and solemn, walks back to the stage.

His attention riveted on Jon, Middle-Aged Man doesn't feel Miranda lift his wallet from his rear pants pocket, expertly extract his credit cards, then replace it.

ON THE STAGE:

Audience members clamor to be chosen. Jack points to a PLUMP WOMAN, 50's, who nods and smiles.

JACK
You!

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE - MARIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Unable to sleep, Marie switches on the bedside lamp, sits up, swings her legs out of the bed. Pulls on her robe.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

ON THE STAGE:

Jon intones the 23rd Psalm as Plump Woman makes her way onto the stage. At Jack's invitation, the audience joins in the recitation.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

At the stove, Marie pours milk into a pan, heats it up.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

ON THE STAGE:

Jon takes Plump Woman's hands, places them palm down on his.

He pins her gaze with his unblinking stare. Jon takes a deep breath, she follows his lead.

JON
Feel the energy of Our Heavenly Father flow between our hands, Beloved. Strong, healing energy! Do you want to be healed?

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Miranda bumps yet another unsuspecting fellow, lifts his wallet, frees it of its credit cards.

JON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Say it!

PLUMP WOMAN (O.S.)
Healed. I want to be healed.

JON (O.S.)
Say it so all the angels in the Heavens above hear you!

ON THE STAGE:

PLUMP WOMAN
I want to be healed!!

EXT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING - NIGHT

By the now deserted entrance to the House, Sisters Francine and Agnes lean against the building, exhausted, their pickets drag by their side.

Sister Francine shakes her head at the “Hosannas” that erupt from within the House.

SISTER FRANCINE
The Devil is mighty, Sister Agnes.

SISTER AGNES
I never thought he’d wear the face of Jesus.

SISTER FRANCINE
Hmpf. The Devil is a master of duplicity and disguise.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

ON THE STAGE:

The 23rd Psalm, set to music, plays softly from a BOOM BOX.

Jack advances to the front of the stage, a good-sized collections basket held in front of him. At the rear of the stage, Jon rests on the stool, eyes downcast.

JACK
Blessed are those who give with an open heart and an open hand, oh Lord. For all is given in thanks for Your wonders and Your love. Praise God!

AUDIENCE MEMBERS
Praise God!

JACK
Give what you can, take what you need! Give generously, and it will return to you ten-fold! Give with a smile in your heart! The Lord loves a cheerful giver!

AUDIENCE MEMBERS
Praise God! Amen!

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Fully dressed, Charlie's backpack on his back, Will opens the bedroom window.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

The collection basket passes through the audience rows. A MAN tosses FIVE DOLLARS in the basket. The WOMAN next to him raises her brow as in: "Really? That's all?" He digs in his wallet, throws in a TWENTY.

A townsperson, MARTHA, sneaks her hand into the basket, crumples some bills in her hand. The WOMAN next to her glares at Martha with pointed disapproval. Shame-faced, Martha drops the bills back into the basket, passes it on.

JACK (O.S.)
As tonight's healing concludes, thank you, good people of Resurrection, thank you for the miracles you called forth tonight!

Audience members compete to put the most money in the basket.

EXT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING - LATER

The healings over, the audience long gone.

Will peers through the storefront window.

Miranda, cross-legged on the stage, tosses bills from the collection basket over herself, rubs them on her body.

Helen and Jack argue. She slams chairs into place, turns to Jack, arms akimbo. Jack picks up trash, jams it into a trash-bag, gesticulates towards Helen.

From his stool, Jon shakes his head. Gets up, disappears through the black curtain.

Will frowns. He dashes around the corner to the back of the building.

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

Lights come on in the RV, parked by a junker, the only other vehicle in the pot-holed lot. Blues music filters out.

Will hesitates, shifts from one foot to the other.

INT. FINLEY RV - NIGHT

At the dining table, facing the back of the RV, Jon hums as he removes his make-up in front of a lit cosmetic MIRROR.

Will's face appears in the mirror.

JON
Ack!!

WILL
Oh!

Half of Jon's face glows with luminescent paint, the other half is wiped clean.

JON
What are you doing here? How'd you get in?

WILL
Door. Open.

JON
You gotta go.

WILL
Heal Charlie. You Jesus, Charlie in Hospital. Heal Charlie.

JON
Ah, kid. I can't heal anybody. Go!

Jon grabs Will by the shoulders, turns him around, pushes him towards the door.

WILL
(confused)
Come. Heal Charlie.

JON
Really. You gotta go. My mother finds you in here, she'll be very upset.

WILL
Mary?

Jon nudges Will out the door, shuts and locks it, plops back down at the dining table. Removes more make-up. Throws a soiled tissue down in disgust. Into the mirror:

JON
I am so done with this.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

At the kitchen table, Marie sleeps by an empty mug of warm milk, head cradled in her arms.

A car ROARS down the street, raucous teen LAUGHTER.

Startled awake, Marie looks up.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S BEDROOM

At the partially opened bedroom window, his hands on the frame, Will tenses.

He hears the kitchen door THUNK shut.

Will scrambles into his bunk, yanks the comforter over his fully clothed body and Charlie's backpack, just as--

The bedroom door opens. Marie looks in. Satisfied, she closes the door. Will exhales.

Will sits up, pulls the backpack off his back. Holds it close to his chest. Rocks back and forth.

WILL
(softly)
CharlieCharlieCharlieCharlie.

A lone tear straggles down Will's cheek.

INT. HOSPITAL ICU WARD - NURSES' STATION - NIGHT

A RESIDENT DOCTOR hands a chart to Charge Nurse, rubs his eyes.

CHARGE NURSE
Long night?

RESIDENT DOCTOR
Yeah. I'm off for two days though, so--

BREEP! BREEP!

Charlie's monitors blare WARNINGS.

Through the window into Charlie's room, Charlie's body shudders.

Resident Doctor races into Charlie's room. A PASSING NURSE changes course, follows him in.

INT. CHARLIE'S ICU ROOM

Charlie's body shakes violently. Resident Doctor prepares a syringe.

RESIDENT DOCTOR
(to Passing Nurse)
He's seizing! Call Dr. Nolan stat!

INT. HOSPITAL ICU WARD - NURSES' STATION

On the phone:

CHARGE NURSE
Charlie was just taken to MRI. He's going into emergency surgery as soon as they determine the extent and location of the swelling in his brain...Yes, Marie, of course.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marie shakes Will awake. Pulls a coat over her PJs.

MARIE
Hurry! Get dressed. We have to go to the Hospital.

WILL
Charlie bad?

MARIE
Yes, hurry!

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU WARD

In the hall outside Charlie's ICU room, Marie and Will watch TWO ORDERLIES wheel Charlie, on a gurney, back into his ICU room, lift him onto his bed.

Will escapes Marie's hold, runs toward Charlie.

Dr. Nolan catches Will before he gets there.

DR. NOLAN
Not so fast, young man. Charlie needs some rest before he's up for a visit.
(to Marie)
Charlie came through like a trooper.

MARIE
Oh, thank God.

DR. NOLAN
The next few days are critical, though. We successfully drained cerebrospinal fluid from inside Charlie's brain which relieved the pressure, so he probably won't have any more seizures, but he's still in a coma.

Dr. Nolan ruffles Will's hair, releases him.

DR. NOLAN (CONT'D)
(to Will)
How're you holding up?

Will runs to the ICU window into Charlie's room, presses his face and hands up against the window, stares at Charlie, all tubed up.

WILL
Want Jesus. Heal Charlie!

DR. NOLAN
We'll take all the help we can get.

CHERYL (O.S.)
I understand you're worried, Hon, but calling the Hospital every five minutes isn't gonna help.

INT. THE BUTTERY BAKERY & CAFE - DAY

Noon rush. At the kitchen pick-up window, Marie waits beside Cheryl for their orders, glances at the phone behind the counter.

Cheryl hefts her order onto a tray.

CHERYL
It's only been a few hours. You gotta be patient.

Marie gets her order, carries it out, serves a CUSTOMER, removes a salad plate.

MARIE
(to Customer)
Can I get you anything else?

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM (O.S.)
I've been looking for you.

Marie jumps, the salad plate crashes to the floor. She turns to find Mrs. Higgenbottom directly behind her.

MARIE
(to Customer)
Sorry.
(to Mrs. Higgenbottom)
What do you want?

Marie plucks a rag from her apron, cleans up the broken dish, aims for the kitchen. Mrs. Higgenbottom follows.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I've found a placement for Will.

Marie drops the broken pieces into a bin by the kitchen.

MARIE
No.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I'll be by to pick Will up this evening. Have him ready with his things packed.

Mrs. Higgenbottom turns, strides toward the front entrance. Marie grabs her arm.

MARIE
No! You can't do this to me. I've started adoption proceedings.

Nearby Customers cease their conversations, listen up to what promises to be choice entertainment.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I'm child services. I can do anything I want. You could have adopted Will and Charlie any time over the past ten years. I guess they didn't really mean that much to you. And if you think the State would ever let you adopt them now!

She laughs, marches out the entrance.

Cheryl shakes Marie, frozen in shock.

CHERYL
You gonna let her get away with that? That was cruel! You love those kids, you always have.

EXT. THE BUTTERY BAKERY & CAFE

On the sidewalk outside the Buttery, Marie and Mrs. Higgenbottom face off.

MARIE
How dare you! I took on an autistic infant and an emotionally traumatised, paraplegic child when nobody else would! Do you have any idea what it took to raise these kids to be happy, healthy children? I love them! They are my family! And you want to take them away from me? What kind of sad heartless bitch are you?!

Customers on their way in to the Buttery walk gingerly around the two women.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
(cold)
The first rule of fostering is never to get attached. Seems you couldn't even get that right.

MARIE
Ten years isn't fostering, it's parenting! I am their mother. You weren't there holding Charlie through the nights he screamed with pain.
(MORE)

MARIE (CONT'D)
You’re not the one who cradled Will’s five-year-old head when he bloodied it banging against the wall. And the only reason I didn’t adopt them is it never occurred to me I’d need to!

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
And this should matter to me, how?

MARIE
You’re a monster!

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I follow the rules. You don’t. I have no more time to waste. Have Will ready by this evening or the Sheriff will assist me in relieving you of Will’s fosterage.

Her dignity intact, Mrs. Higgenbottom sweeps into her car.

Marie sinks onto the steps at the Buttery entrance, head in her hands, weeps in despair.

Inside the Buttery, the gossip mill churns.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE’S BEDROOM - EVENING

Marie packs the last of Will’s clothes from the dresser into a duffel bag.

Gramps folds Will’s clothes from the bedroom closet into an open cardboard box on the floor.

Rigid, hands balled into fists, Will stands immobile between the two adults.

MARIE
It’s only for a little while, Will. I’ll come get you before you know it.

WILL
Mrs. Hig. Hig. Bad. Badbad.

Marie holds Will’s “Jesus” doll out.

MARIE
Where do you want this?

Will puts the doll into Charlie’s backpack.

The front doorbell RINGS.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Will, go get your things out of the bathroom. Your toothbrush, take what's left of the toothpaste, whatever else you want.

With Will out of the room, Marie clings to Gramps.

MARIE (CONT'D)
How can this be happening?

Gramps strokes her hair, kisses the top of her head.

GRAMPS
Love will prevail. I don't know how, but it will.

EXT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE

Marie, Will - Charlie's backpack clutched to his chest - and Mrs. Higgenbottom gather by Mrs. Higgenbottom's economy SUV.

At the rear of the SUV, Gramps heaves the box of Will's clothes and the duffel bag into the trunk. Slams the lid shut. Stomps over to Marie's car, gets in the passenger side.

MARIE
(to Will)
You be good. I'll see you real soon.

Marie hugs Will, hard. He's unresponsive.

MARIE (CONT'D)
I have to get back to work. I love you.

She hurries to her car.

INT. MARIE'S HONDA

Marie starts the car, brushes tears from her cheeks.

MARIE
I can't watch him leave. This is killing me, Gramps.

Gramps pats her hand, Marie drives off.

EXT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE

From the driver's seat of her SUV:

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Get in the car, Will.

WILL
No.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Get in the car. Now.

WILL
No.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Will. Get. In. The. Car.

WILL
No. First. Go see Charlie.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
What is this nonsense? I am not driving you to the Hospital. We are going to your new placement, and that's final. Now get in the car.

WILL
See Charlie first. First.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
No! I do not make deals with twelve year old boys.

EXT. HOSPITAL

Mrs. Higgenbottom parks in a handicapped space in front of the Hospital, fishes a handicapped sign out of her glove-box.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Twenty minutes. I expect you to be back in twenty minutes, otherwise I'm coming for you.

Will jogs to the Hospital entrance.

Mrs. Higgenbottom yawns. Settles in for a quick cat-nap.

INT. HOSPITAL - CHARLIE'S ICU ROOM

Charlie rests, his coma undisturbed by the electrodes affixed to his body, IVs and other medical paraphenalia.

At the foot of the bed, Will rocks back and forth.

WILL
CharlieCharlieCharlieCharlie. Charlie be healed. Charlie be healed. Charlie--

JON (O.S.)
Be Healed!

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING - EVENING

ON THE STAGE:

An OLD WOMAN straightens her bent back.

OLD WOMAN
I can stand right up! I don't feel no pain! Oh, thank you, Lord!

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Audience members in the packed room jump to their feet, wave their arms, cry "Praise God" "Jesus heals" and "Halleluiah"!

ON THE STAGE:

Jon turns out to the audience, arms outstreched, palms up. His eyelids flutter closed.

JON
Thank you, God. God Almighty. He who is all-powerful, all-healing.

IN THE AUDIENCE:

MR. RAWLES, Kent's father, propels his boy forward. Kent twists and writhes in his father's grip.

MR. RAWLES
Have pity on a poor sinner, Lord! I can't do nothing with this boy. He don't have no respect for anything or anyone, no matter how often I use the belt.

ON THE STAGE:

JON
Do you want a healing, son?

IN THE AUDIENCE:

KENT
Hell, no!

The audience GASPS! Such disrespect!

MR. RAWLES
See? See what I'm talkin' about!

ON THE STAGE:

JACK
If you would, dear Healer, bring some peace to this tormented soul.

Jon shoots a dirty look at Jack. Thanks, pal.

Mr. Rawles drags Kent up on stage, holds him in place opposite Jon.

JACK (CONT'D)
Lets help our dear Healer, friends. Let us recite the twenty-third psalm together, softly. Thank you.

Jack leads the audience in a monotonous, low recitation of the Psalm.

Jon puts both his hands on Kent's shoulders. Gazes deep into Kent's eyes, breathes deeply.

The Psalm drones on. And on.

Despite himself, Kent's breath mirrors Jon's, his shoulders relax. Jon places his hands to either side of Kent's head.

JON
You would not want to not know peace, would you?

KENT
(dreamy)
Huh?

JON
You would not want to not release the anger from your heart.

Jon puts his hands back on Kent's shoulders.

JON (CONT'D)
You would not want to not KNOW PEACE, NOW!

Jon shoves one shoulder back, pulls the other forward.

KENT
Oh!

Kent staggers back into his father’s arms. Shakes his head.

KENT (CONT'D)
What am I doing up here?

Jon nods to Mr. Rawles.

JON
It is done. Go in peace.

Subdued, quiet, Kent obeys.

INT. HOSPITAL - CHARLIE’S ICU ROOM - EVENING

Charlie unchanged, alone in his room, but for the “Jesus” doll Will left on the small cabinet by the bed.

EXT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE - EVENING

Charlie’s backpack on his back, Will exits the hospital, hidden behind a group of NURSES at the end of their shift.

He ducks down low to sneak by Mrs. Higgenbottom’s SUV.

INT. MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM’S SUV

Through the driver window, Will cautiously peeks in.

Mrs. Higgenbottom snores, mouth agape.

Will grins, dashes into town.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

ON THE STAGE:

ARTHUR, sixty-seven with tinnitus, unsure about this whole healing thing but what the heck, places his hands palm down on Jon’s upturned hand, held chest-high.

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Will makes his way through the standing-room-only crowd.

ON THE STAGE:

Gently, Jon touches Arthur’s ear. Jon takes a deep breath, nods to Arthur. Arthur takes a deep breath. And another.

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Will mouths the words as Jon says them:

JON (O.S.)
Feel the energy of Our All-Seeing, All-Loving Father flow between our hands. Powerful, healing energy!

ON THE STAGE:

JON (CONT'D)
Do you want to be healed? Do you want to hear clearly?

Arthur mumbles something.

JON (CONT'D)
Say it so the Devil itself shudders at the conviction of your belief!

ARTHUR
(yells)
I want to be HEALED!

Jon pushes on Arthur’s shoulder at the same time as he tugs hard on Arthur’s hands.

Arthur’s eyes pop in surprise.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I can hear! There ain’t no buzz in mah ears!

IN THE AUDIENCE:

The audience claps, cheers and “Hosanas.”

ON THE STAGE:

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I’m clear as a bell. Oh, man, that is some powerful healing!

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Will murmurs:

WILL
Pow-er. Ful. Heal-ing.

SOAP OPERA ACTRESS (O.S.)
Is he really healed, Doctor? Oh, Doctor. It's a miracle!

INT. MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM'S SUV

Mrs. Higgenbottom wakes up, glances at the time.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Where is that boy? It's been over an hour!

She huffs her way out of the car.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU WARD

At Charge Nurse's desk;

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
What do you mean, he's not here? That's not possible!

Charge Nurse covers the mouthpiece of her phone.

CHARGE NURSE
Would you please keep your voice down. This is a Hospital.
(into phone)
Just a moment, please.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Will Stokes. Twelve year old boy-

CHARGE NURSE
I know exactly who you mean. Will was here, visiting Charlie. Then he left. Please leave. You have no business here.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Why, I! I!

CHARGE NURSE
(into phone)
I'm back...Yes, Doctor.

Mrs. Higgenbottom tromps down the hall, pulls open a patient room door, looks in. No Will. Opens another. No Will.

Charge Nurse runs up, seizes Mrs. Higgenbottom's hand as it lands on another patient room doorknob.

CHARGE NURSE (CONT'D)
Stop harassing my patients. Will is not here. He left some time ago.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Well, he's got to be here someplace.

CHARGE NURSE
No, he doesn't. He has two perfectly good legs and knows how to use them. Leave or I will call security.

INT. MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM'S SUV - NIGHT

Mrs. Higgenbottom drives through Resurrection, looks for Will.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
That's what I get for being nice. You give these foster kids just a little leeway and it comes back to bite you. Sneaky, conniving little brat! I'll show you who's boss!

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

IN THE AUDIENCE:

A commotion at the rear of the room. Helen, disguised in a dark wig and shabby clothes, supports Miranda, no longer the pregnant innocent; a subtle make-up casts shadows of pain under Miranda's eyes, hollows her cheeks.

Miranda's legs are bound by heavy metal braces, she hobbles forward with the aid of crutches.

Will frowns, puzzled, as the two women pass him.

WILL
(sotte voce)
Bad. No hurt. No pain.

HELEN
(to Jon)
Please! You must heal my daughter! We've driven all day and all night just to see you.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

ON THE STAGE:

Jack looks to Jon. Jon spreads his arms in welcome.

JON
If the Lord so wills, healing shall be done.

IN THE AUDIENCE:

The audience holds its breath as Miranda, alone, suffers her way up the ramp to the stage.

At the edge of the stage, Helen wrings her hands in desperate anticipation.

INT. MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM'S SUV

Parked in front of the Sheriff's office, Mrs. Higgenbottom bangs her head against the steering wheel.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
All my hopes and dreams, dashed! Because of one stupid boy.

She leans back, spent. Spots her worried, screwed up face in the rear-view mirror.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM (CONT'D)
Get a grip, Higgenbottom. You're gonna let one mealy-mouthed moron get the best of you? You're pathetic. Let's go! Hup, two three four, out the door!

INT. RESURRECTION SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The only officer on duty in the dimly lit office, DEPUTY BYRD, pert early-thirties, her blond hair in a pony-tail.

DEPUTY BYRD
I can't file a missing person's report, Ma'am. It's only been a coupla hours.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
It's Will. Will Stokes.

DEPUTY BYRD
Will? Ma'am, he's wherever Charlie is. The two of them, they're--

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Inseparable. Yes, I know! If Will was where Charlie is, I wouldn't be here. What are you, thick in the head?

DEPUTY BYRD
There's no call for that kind of talk, Ma'am.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
There is no need for talk at all. What I need is some action!

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

ON THE STAGE:

Miranda steadies herself onto Jon's stool.

With great care, on his knees before her, Jon removes Miranda's leg braces. The braces CLUNK onto the stage.

IN THE AUDIENCE:

The audience shudders with each clunk.

Will frowns, perturbed.

INT. SHERIFF CLARK'S LIVING ROOM

In the soft light of the TV, Sheriff Clark relaxes on the sofa. His WIFE snoozes, her head on his shoulder. His DOG sleeps, his head on Sheriff's lap.

SHERIFF CLARK
(into the phone)
I'm on it. Tell Marie to stay put in case he goes home.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING - NIGHT

ON THE STAGE:

Miranda's head is thrown back, eyes closed. On his knees, head bowed, Jon spreads his hands on her lower legs.

JACK
(to crowd)
Help our Healer with his holy mission! Help our sister in her misery! Go deep into your hearts and pray!

EXT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

In the open doorway, Marie, in sweats, arms crossed, furious.

MARIE
How dare you show your face here!

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
I still have to take him to his new placement.

MARIE
There is no "him"! There's Will! My boy, that you lost!

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
He's not your boy.

MARIE
He's been my boy for ten years. Safe, sound, whole, well. You had him all of twenty minutes and he's gone, lost, who knows where?!

Neighbors peek out of their doors and windows.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
You really want to do this out here?

MARIE
Yes! I want the whole town to know what kind of an irresponsible arrogant selfish woman you are.

That does it:

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
If you raised him better, he wouldn't have upped and gone like that!
(yells to neighborhood)
Listen up, everybody! Marie Hamilton is an unfit mother and the State is taking her foster kids away from her!

MARIE
Why you!

She lunges at Mrs. Higgenbottom, and the two fall to the ground, hit, scratch, and tear at each other!

EXT. GRAMPS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Compact, craftsman-style home. Wind chimes and plants in macrame holders hang above the front porch.

A "Hollywood Wrestling" re-run blares from within.

At the open door, Gramps, hair unbound, brownie in hand. A haze of incense fills the living room behind him.

SHERIFF CLARK
Is Will here?

Through a bite of brownie:

GRAMPS
Will? No, why?

SHERIFF CLARK
He's missing. I called. You didn't answer.

GRAMPS
My show's on. What's this 'bout Will missing? Is he all right?

SHERIFF CLARK
Answer your phone. If Will calls you or comes here, let me know.

As he goes back to his car:

SHERIFF CLARK (CONT'D)
That brownie'd better be Sara Lee.

A worried look crosses Gramps' face:

GRAMPS
You betcha!

Sheriff's radio squawks:

SHERIFF CLARK (O.S.)
Yeah?...You're kidding.

EXT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE

To the delight of the neighbors gathered on Marie's front lawn, Sheriff Clark forces his way between Marie and Mrs. Higgenbottom, breaks up the fight.

INT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S KITCHEN

At the table, Marie cleans up scrapes on her arm.

Mrs. Higgenbottom holds a bag of frozen peas to her forehead.

SHERIFF CLARK
I should be out finding your son, Marie, not busting up a catfight.

MARIE
I'm sorry.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
(snaps)
He's not her son.

SHERIFF CLARK
Don't start. You're in a heap of trouble here, lady. First you lose the boy, now you get into a fight? That's a lot for me to report. If you're smart, from now on you'll shut up and behave.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
No one talks--

SHERIFF CLARK
Shut. Up. You two are gonna stay here and be civil. I'll call when I have news.

INT. MORT'S CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

The "CLOSED" sign hangs in the window.

By the refrigerated unit, Sheriff Clark hands paper towels to Mort. Mort, on his knees, mops up a spill.

SHERIFF CLARK
Doesn't make sense, Mort. Will wouldn't leave Charlie. No way.

MORT
Unless he had another of those episodes. You shoulda seen him, Sheriff, Will was genuinely out of his mind.

SHERIFF CLARK
Well, all I can do is keep looking.

MORT
Ya try Clarence's?

SHERIFF CLARK
Not yet. Wanna come with?

MORT
Sure.

As he gets up:

MORT (CONT'D)
Oh, my achin' bones.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

ON THE STAGE:

Miranda totters forward on trembling legs, Jon supports Miranda under her forearms, as he walks slowly backwards.

MIRANDA
(dramatic whisper)
I am healed. I am truly. Healed!

IN THE AUDIENCE:

The crowd is delirious!! They hoot, holler, cheer, cry out! Some WOMEN faint, other audience members speak in tongues.

Helen turns on a mighty flood of joyful crocodile tears.

WILL
(sotte voce)
Bad. Good. Badgoodbadgoodgoodbad!

Will, upset by the frenzy around him, takes refuge under the counter by the front entrance.

EXT. COLLECTIBLES & OTHER STUFF SHOP

KNOCK!

SHERIFF CLARK (O.S.)
Clarence, it’s me, Sheriff Clark. Open up.

Clarence opens the door, his favorite pet hen, HILDEGARD, in his arms. The rest of his brood clucks about his feet.

SHERIFF CLARK (CONT'D)
We’re lookin’ for Will Stokes.

CLARENCE
I haven’t seen Will in a couple of days, Sheriff. I wouldn’t expect to, Charlie being in the hospital.

SHERIFF CLARK
Well if you do, call me. Any time.

CLARENCE
Certainly. I hope you find him soon. He’s a right sort.
(to Hildegard)
Like you, Hildegard.

Clarence nuzzles his hen, shuts the door.

MORT
Where to now?

SHERIFF CLARK
God only knows. I’m stumped.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - SIDE CHAPEL - NIGHT

At a small alcove dedicated to the Holy Virgin Mary, Sister Francine lights a candle.

Sister Agnes kneels before the row of candles, prays:

SISTER AGNES
And cast the Devil out of our town, that he no longer fool our good people with the face of your Beloved Son.

Sister Francine drops to her knees beside Sister Agnes.

SISTER FRANCINE
As in get out of Dodge, Holy Mother. Enough already. Amen.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

Healings over, the audience gone. Chairs knocked over and litter on the floor mark the end of the event.

Will crouches on the floor below the counter, hidden.

Helen and Jon stack chairs to one side of the room.

On the stage, Miranda, flat on her back, sings along with the Country music that wails from the boom box.

At the counter, Jack adds Miranda's credit card take of the evening to the bills in a cash box. Shuts the box lid.

JACK
Small town, big givers. Never fails.

HELEN
Let's leave first thing tomorrow morning. Max out those credit cards before people know they're missing.

Jack swings Helen into his arms, they two-step to the music.

Curious, Will peers over the counter-top. Sneaks the cash box down behind the counter, opens it.

WILL
(to himself)
Bad! Bad bad.

JACK (O.S.)
Pearls for my love? Diamonds?

Will stuffs the bills and credit cards into Charlie's backpack.

JON (O.S.)
Can't we stop doing this? Get legit jobs somewhere?

Jack and Helen ignore him.

MIRANDA
Next time I should have fits.

She twists, jerks and drums fists and heels on the stage.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Jon can try to heal me and I kick him in the face.

Fed up, Jon slams the last of the chairs into a stack, stalks off, bangs the back door shut.

Miranda ups the volume on the boom box, caterwauls a Country star imitation. In a world of their own, Jack and Helen slow dance.

Will steals out the front entrance, loaded backpack on his back.

EXT. FINLEY RV

Lights on in the RV. A shower runs.

At the open doorway, Will pauses.

INT. FINLEY RV

IN THE CAB:

Will spots the RV keys in the cupholder by the driver's seat.

Will closes the door, jumps in the driver's seat, scoots the seat forward so his feet reach the pedals.

IN THE BATHROOM:

In the miniscule shower, Jon lathers his hair. He jerks forward as the RV bursts into motion, BANGS his head.

JON
You could give a guy some notice!

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

Helen and Jack dance close. Miranda croons to a country lament.

HELEN
Did you hear that?

Jack dips Helen, a smooth move.

JACK
Probably a car backfiring.

INT. FINLEY RV - NIGHT

IN THE CAB:

Will puts pedal to the metal, grim-faced as he wrestles with the steering wheel and the road.

In jeans and a T-shirt, barefoot, hair wet, Jon stumbles to the front of the RV.

JON
Jesus! What're you doing?! You can't drive this thing!

WILL
Car Wars - dingdingding!!

Jon drops in the passenger seat, hangs on for dear life.

JON
No! Not Car Wars, no Car Wars! Ohmigod, I'm gonna die. Holy Mary, Mother of God, help me!!

Will careens across the road.

WILL
You, Son of God. You help!

INT. SHERIFF CLARK'S PATROL CAR

Sheriff Clark inches down Main Street, looks for Will. From the passenger seat, Mort shines a large flashlight into closed shops, recessed doorways, nooks and crannies.

EXT. RESURRECTION MAIN STREET

The Finley's RV swings around a bend, lurches straight at Sheriff Clark's patrol car!

INT. FINLEY RV

JON
Watch out!!

INT. SHERIFF CLARK'S PATROL CAR

Sheriff Clark jerks the steering wheel to avoid the crash!

SHERIFF CLARK
That guy must be drunk as a skunk.

The patrol car headlights illumine Will's determined face, jutting up above the wheel, Jon's panicked one next to it.

MORT
Crap! That's Will driving!

EXT. RESURRECTION MAIN STREET

Sheriff Clark fishtails into a U-turn, follows the RV.

INT. SHERIFF CLARK'S PATROL CAR

SHERIFF CLARK
(on his radio)
Deputy? Call Marie - yeah, Will's mom - and tell her--

EXT. WILL AND CHARLIE'S HOUSE

Marie flies out of the house. Mrs. Higgenbottom, her clothes torn and dirty, right behind.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Wait for me!

INT. MARIE'S HONDA

Marie turns the key, her car sputters.

Mrs. Higgenbottom throws herself into the passenger seat.

The motor catches, Marie zooms off with the passenger door still open. Mrs. Higgenbottom YELPS! Clutches the dash.

EXT. RESURRECTION - STREETS

The RV wobbles into turns and rumbles down streets at its 60 mph top speed. Sheriff Clark trails behind, siren and color bar on.

EXT. RESURRECTION - STREETS

Will bangs over a curb, narrowly misses a MAN walking his DOG.

Dog-walking Man shakes a fist at the RV.

INT. FINLEY RV

Will spares a glance for the Man and dog.

WILL
Sorry, sorry.

Jon grabs the steering wheel, fights Will for it. Desperate, Will hangs on tight.

WILL (CONT'D)
NO! No no no! Charlie!

Jon thrusts a foot down towards the brake pedal.

JON
Give it up already, kid!

EXT. RESURRECTION - STREETS

In the struggle, the RV slams into a telephone pole, which crashes into the DAIRY QUEEN'S huge PLASTIC ICE CREAM CONE, slices it nearly in half!

Marie's Honda zooms up behind the patrol car on the RV's tail.

INT. MARIE'S HONDA - CONTINUOUS

MARIE
Oh my God, he's gonna get himself killed! And that Jesus fellow with him!

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
No wonder the boy's nuts. Listen to you.

INT. FINLEY RV

Jon tries to pry Will's fingers off the wheel, force his way into the driver's seat.

JON
This is crazy! Let me! I'll drive you there!

Will resists, hunches further over the wheel, grips it hard!

WILL
NOOO!

EXT. RESURRECTION - STREETS

The RV veers off into the DRIVE-THROUGH of the “HAPPY BURGER HABIT,” blasts into the overhang, slams back into the street.

The “Happy Burger Habit” CLOWN image grins from the overhang wedged in the roof of the RV.

INT. FINLEY RV

Jon catapults into the passenger well.

Scared, but intense and not about to quit:

WILL
Sorry, sorry. Gotta get to Charlie!

EXT. RESURRECTION - STREETS

Will sideswipes a row of garbage cans. The cans CLANG into the street, spew garbage everywhere.

Sheriff slaloms to avoid them.

INT. SHERIFF CLARK’S PATROL CAR

SHERIFF CLARK
(into his radio)
Deputy, lay a line of tacks across Third Street at Maple Road.

DEPUTY HARRIS(O.S.)
We only got but halfa street worth of tack strip left, Sheriff. Budget cuts.

SHERIFF CLARK
(into radio)
Lay it north to south, should work.

INT. MARIE’S HONDA - CONTINUOUS

Marie swerves to avoid a garbage can as it reels down the street.

EXT. THIRD STREET AT MAPLE ROAD

A roll of TACK-STRIP in hand, Deputy Harris stares down Third.

DEPUTY HARRIS
How'm I supposed to know North from South when the sun ain't shinin'? No moss on trees, neither. Shoot.

INT. CLARENCE'S CAR

Clarence drives home, with Hildegard in the passenger seat. He peers ahead.

CLARENCE
I believe that's Deputy Harris, Hildy. What on earth is he doing?

EXT. THIRD STREET AT MAPLE ROAD

In the middle of the street, Deputy Harris, his back to Clarence's oncoming car, finishes laying the tack strip.

Clarence slows down. Out his window:

CLARENCE
Deputy! May I be of assistance?

Deputy Harris turns, waves his arms frantically.

Clarence misunderstands, steps on the gas and POP!! POP!! go his front tires, while the RV sails by on the tack-free side of the street, followed by Sheriff Clark and Marie.

INT. CLARENCE'S CAR

Clarence climbs up, over and around the CAR SEATS to catch Hildegard. The hen scampers about, distressed.

CLARENCE
Oh, stop jumping around like a chicken with its head cut off!

INT. SHERIFF CLARK'S PATROL CAR

SHERIFF CLARK
I gotta get that boy a compass.
(into his radio)
Deputy! Cut across Pine and barricade the Hospital entrance with your vehicle. Now!

EXT. THIRD STREET AT MAPLE ROAD

Deputy Harris roars off.

INT. SHERIFF CLARK'S PATROL CAR

MORT
Better tell him to get out of the car.

Sheriff Clark shoots Mort a look.

SHERIFF CLARK
(into radio)
Deputy, once you're in position exit the vehicle and step--

DEPUTY HARRIS (O.S.)
AAACK!!!

EXT. HOSPITAL VEHICLE ENTRANCE

The RV charges straight at Deputy's patrol car! Deputy Harris bolts out of the car!

INT. FINLEY RV

His face pinched with dogged determination, Will whiteknuckles the steering wheel! Jon SCREAMS!!

EXT. HOSPITAL VEHICLE ENTRANCE

Will jumps the RV onto the sidewalk, collides with the front end of Deputy's patrol car, sends it spinning around, smashes into a FIRE HYDRANT. Water geysers up! The RV shudders to a stop.

INT. RV

Will yanks Jon out of the RV, drags him into the hospital.

JON
OK, I'm coming! Let go of me!

EXT. HOSPITAL

Sheriff Clark pulls up behind the RV. Deputy Harris stands, stunned.

SHERIFF CLARK
Deputy, get the lead out. See if anyone else is in the RV. Turn the thing off. Call Water and Power.

Marie gets out of her car, shaken.

MARIE
(to Sheriff Clark)
Is he alive?

SHERIFF CLARK
Yup. Ran into the Hospital with Jesus.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
You're all a bunch of nuts.

SHERIFF CLARK
Let's go.

MARIE
(to Mrs. Higgenbottom)
You stay here.

Mrs. Higgenbottom opens her mouth to reply.

MARIE (CONT'D)
I'll sic the Sheriff on you.

For once, Mrs. Higgenbottom is speechless.

INT. HOSPITAL - CHARLIE'S ICU ROOM

Charlie lies unchanged, his monitors blink - the only light in the dim, quiet room. At the foot of his bed, Will and Jon keep their voices low.

WILL
Heal Charlie.

Jon hangs his head.

JON
You don't get it, do you? I can't.

WILL
(monotone)
The Lord. Is my. Shepherd. I shall. Not. Want. He mak-eth. Me to lie. Down. In green pas-tures. He lead-

JON
I know the words, kid. I use it as a hypnotic induction, that's all.

WILL
You. Would not. Want. To not. Be healed? Say it. Be. Healed. Louder. Say it! Be. Be. Healed.

In despair, Jon sinks down to the floor, his back against the wall. Will joins him.

JON
Some people say that Jesus could see the health in a person, no matter what their disease was.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU WARD

Sheriff Clark pushes the door to Charlie's room open a couple of inches, Marie and Mort right behind him, along with a worried Charge Nurse and Orderlies.

Sheriff Clark raises his hand as in "Be quiet and hold."

JON (O.S.)
That Jesus believed so strongly in the Holy Spirit within them, he could call on it, and the person would be healed.

INT. CHARLIE'S ICU ROOM

JON
I'm sorry, but I can't do that. I'm just a guy, not Jesus.

WILL
But you good. Good good.

JON
Maybe. I'd like to think so.

SHERIFF CLARK (O.S.)
Visiting hours are over. Let's go.

Marie rushes past Sheriff Clark, grabs Will in a fierce hug.

MARIE
You scared me half to death. Losing both of you would be more than I could bear. Let's go home.

Sheriff Clark cuffs Jon.

SHERIFF CLARK
Not possible, Marie. I need Will down at the station. He stole an RV, busted a police car and more.
(to Jon)
And you are coming with me.

WILL
(pleads)
Please. Will stay. With Charlie. Tonight. Please?

SHERIFF CLARK
(to Marie)
You'll bring him in first thing tomorrow morning?

MARIE
Yes, I will.

SHERIFF CLARK
(to Will)
You don't budge from this room until Marie comes to get you.
(to Charge Nurse)
I'm counting on you and your orderlies to see to it.

Charge Nurse nods.

Will hands Charlie's backpack to Sheriff Clark. He opens the backpack; credit cards and dollar bills fall out.

SHERIFF CLARK (CONT'D)
What's all this?

WILL
Bad. From Jesus father. And mother. Bad. Thief. Steal from people.

Jon heaves a sigh.

JON
I can explain.

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND THE HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING - NIGHT

Helen, Jack and Miranda stare at the empty parking place their RV formerly occupied.

HELEN
He wouldn’t.

JACK
He damn well better not have.

MIRANDA
This is so lame. Now what?

Jack and Helen look at each other. Two minds, one thought: they race back into the House.

INT. HOUSE OF HOLY HEALING

At the counter, Jack stares into the empty cash box.

JACK
I’m gonna kill him.

SHERIFF CLARK (O.S.)
But not tonight.

Sheriff Clark, hands on hips, Deputy Harris by his side:

SHERIFF CLARK (CONT'D)
You really should keep your front door locked. Makes it too easy to come and go.

Deputy Harris catches Miranda by the arm as she attempts to flee, cuffs her. She protests vigorously.

SHERIFF CLARK (CONT'D)
Or not.

HELEN
Where’s Jon? Where’s our RV?

SHERIFF CLARK
Your son’s safe. He’s in good hands. You two, however, will be spending the night in our finest public establishment - the Resurrection City Jail.

JACK
Be reasonable Sheriff, times are hard! You can't fault a man for trying to make a living.

SHERIFF CLARK
With stolen credit cards?

Sheriff shakes his head, cuffs Jack.

Helen lays her hand on Sheriff's arm, smiles at him, all charm:

HELEN
A simple misunderstanding, Sheriff. We're not thieves. We hadn't finished processing those cards, that's all. We're healers, bringers of the Light, we give people hope in their time of trouble.

Sheriff Clark snatches Helen's hand off his arm, slaps the cuffs on her.

SHERIFF CLARK
That's a line of bull, lady, and you know it. You run a heartless con, preying on people's misery. You disgust me. Faith can’t be faked.

INT. HOSPITAL - CHARLIE’S ICU ROOM - NIGHT

Alone with Charlie in his comatose state, Will places the “Jesus” doll on Charlie’s chest. He holds Charlie’s hand. Closes his eyes, prays.

WILL
Jesus. Charlie good. Good good. Heal Charlie, Jesus. Please. Heal Charlie. HealCharlieHealCharlie...

LATER:

Will paces around Charlie’s bed, from one side to the other. His feet drag as he loses hope.

WILL (CONT'D)
Charlie good. Jesus love good. Love Charlie. Will love Charlie. Heal Charlie, Jesus. Pleaseplease...

LATER:

At the foot of Charlie’s bed, hands laid on Charlie’s feet, his eyes wet with tears, at the end of his rope;

WILL (CONT'D)
Be healed, Charlie! Be healed! Be healedBehealedBehealed! Want to be healed, Charlie. Jesus heals!

LATER:

Faint rays of dawn rouse Will, curled on Charlie’s bed.

Charlie’s hand TWITCHES once, twice. Will’s eyes pop open: movement!

Will scrambles to the head of the bed.

WILL (CONT'D)
Charlie!CharlieCharlieCharlie! Be healed! Jesus good, Charlie healed!

Nurse Davies bustles in.

NURSE DAVIES
Get off the bed, Will. You’re disrupting the sensors.

She pulls Will off the bed, re-calibrates the sensors.

WILL
Be healed! Be healed!

Charlie’s eyelids flutter.

CHARLIE
(croaks)
Dude. Quit yelling.

WILL
(ecstatic)
CharlieCharlieCharlieCharlie!

Nurse Davies dashes out of the room.

NURSE DAVIES (O.S.)
Dr. Nolan!

EXT. RESURRECTION SHERIFF’S OFFICE - DAY

Deputy Byrd eases Jack and Helen, cuffed, into a police department-issue Jeep; Sheriff Martinez at the wheel.

Miranda, also cuffed, wriggles and twists against Deputy Harris’ firm grip.

MIRANDA
I’m innocent! I’m their slave! I have to do whatever they want or they beat me! Chain me! Whip me!
(yells to Helen and Jack)
Perverts!
(MORE)

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
(to Deputy Harris)
Don’t let them take me back to Logan. I’m scared! You’ll protect me, won’t you?

SHERIFF MARTINEZ
(to Deputy Harris)
Missed her calling, that one. Shoulda been in the movies.

Sheriff Clark comes out of the Office, hands paperwork to Sheriff Martinez.

SHERIFF MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
Thanks for the collar.

SHERIFF CLARK
Always appreciate a chance to do less paperwork.

HELEN
What about my son?

SHERIFF CLARK
Smart kid. Laid out your con for us and made a deal with the D.A. I expect he’s halfway to - who knows? Texas? Saudi Arabia?

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

A panel above the bus driver’s seat reads: “Relax your way to Hollywood, CA”

Passengers sleep, check their email, play cards, chat.

Next to Jon, a bright-eyed, eighteen-year-old BUBBLY GIRL.

BUBBLY GIRL
I got voted “best actress” twice in our high school drama class! So of course I have to go to Hollywood! It’s my life’s calling. Why are you going?

JON
I’ve been acting for a couple of years, now.

BUBBLY GIRL
Really! In what?

JON
It’s a kind of a, uh, variety show.

BUBBLY GIRL
Ohmigod, I could so do variety! I’m like, um. What is variety, anyway?

INT. HOSPITAL - CHARLIE’S ICU ROOM - DAY

To one side of Charlie’s bed, raised to sitting level, Marie and Will. At the other, Dr. Nolan checks Charlie’s vitals.

CHARLIE
Weird dreams, Doc! Like Jesus was here, only he wasn’t--

DR. NOLAN
Blink for me. Follow my pen. Look left. Look right.

Charlie blinks and looks without hesitation.

CHARLIE
--and then the Sheriff barged in, and--

DR. NOLAN
You’re doing great.

CHARLIE
Good. Cause I’m ready to--

WILL
Charlie. Come home now?

CHARLIE
What he said.

Dr. Nolan pats Will’s shoulder.

DR. NOLAN
Soon, Will.
(to Marie)
I need to keep Charlie a few more days for observation, but so far, so good.

WILL
Goodgoodgoodgoodgood!

Dr. Nolan strips off his gloves, trashes them.

DR. NOLAN
(to Marie)
We don't know why people come out of a coma - or why they don't. Sometimes prayer seems to help. I'm glad it did this time.

Marie squeezes Charlie's hand, kisses his forehead.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES - SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Supervisor Millikin glares at Mrs. Higgenbottom.

SUPERVISOR MILLIKIN
You have brought shame to this department, Mrs. Higgenbottom. You will never be allowed to work with a living child again. Ever.

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
But it wasn't my--

SUPERVISOR MILLIKIN
I don't want to hear it. Sheriff Clark's report was devastating.

On the verge of tears;

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Am I fired?

SUPERVISOR MILLIKIN
Oh, no. We have a special assignment for you. Of course, if you don't like it, you can always quit.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES - BASEMENT - DAY

Alone in the middle of a dark, windowless room, with a single flickering flourescent, lined with floor to ceiling filing cabinets, and tables laden with untidy bins of documents to file, Mrs. Higgenbottom sinks into the one rickety chair.

In a dull, beaten voice;

MRS. HIGGENBOTTOM
Hup, two three four.

INT. THE BUTTERY BAKERY & CAFE - DAY

The noon-time rush over, Marie, Will, Mort, Clarence, Cheryl and Mr. Henderson share a large table.

Sheriff Clark buys a pastry at the bakery counter.

MORT
Hey, Sheriff! Pull up a chair. We're having a little victory celebration.

Sheriff plunks himself down, pats Will on the back.

SHERIFF CLARK
Got us a regular hero, here.

Marie beams.

WILL
(bashful)
Good good.

SHERIFF CLARK
Good, good - you bet. Still gotta do your five hundred hours of community service, though. Reparations.

WILL
Clean park. Pick up. Litter. Leaves. Good!

Charlie rolls in, excited, waves a piece of paper:

CHARLIE
I got it! I won the scholarship! I'm going to Space Camp! Woohoo!!

MARIE
Honey, that's great! I'm so happy for you.

CLARENCE
Well done, Charlie.

CHARLIE
A whole month of nothin' but starin' at stars.
(to Will)
You OK with that, dude?

WILL
Good. Good good!

MORT
Some of us have been talking, Sheriff. That's a lot of money the town forked over to those grifters. Maybe we could put it to good use, and restore the church ourselves.

SHERIFF CLARK
Be good for the town. Might encourage other businesses to come here.

MR. HENDERSON
I may be able to persuade our local bankers to help.

CHERYL
And we could hire us a new preacher. A nice young one, with some juice in him.

MARIE
Cheryl!

CHERYL
What? Couldn't hurt!

They all laugh.

EXT. REVEREND BOB'S CHURCH - DAY

SUPER: Three months later

Hung above the door of the re-furbished, freshly painted church, a BANNER: "Grand Opening this Sunday! The Good Church, where God is honored in every human being. Welcome!"

INT. REVEREND BOB'S CHURCH - DAY

Packed pews. Prayerful CONGREGANTS, among them Marie, Mort with Marie's hand in his, Clarence, Cheryl, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Rawles, Kent with his head and eyes downcast, Will and Charlie.

At his podium on the dais, REVEREND MIKE, an enthusiastic 30-something.

REVEREND MIKE
And so it is, and so we let it be. Amen.

CONGREGANTS
Amen.

REVEREND MIKE
Before we conclude the service, I've asked Charlie to say a few words.

Charlie rolls his new electric wheelchair up to the dais. Its brightly colored led-light spokes flash "Nerd Power!"

CHARLIE
Thanks, Reverend Mike.
(to Congregants)
I didn't believe in God any more. Kinda feel funny sayin' that, being up here. But I thought God had forgotten all about me. Then, the most amazing thing happened. Will prayed me right out of my coma - and back into believing in God. Not only that, Will's faith brought our whole family back together - when it looked like we'd be split apart forever. Will's like the Superman of faith and hope and prayer. He doesn't always speak it like we do, but that doesn't mean that the love of God isn't in Will's heart. Cause it is. And Will's got a big big heart.
(to Will)
Will?

REVEREND MIKE
Stand up, son.

Marie squeezes Will's hand, nods at him. Will stands.

CHARLIE
I will never forget what you did for me, dude. Thank you. Now get on over here and help me down this aisle!

Congregants rise, applaud as Will and Charlie roll towards the exit, smiles plastered on both their faces.

EXT. REVEREND BOB'S CHURCH

Happy Congregants stream out of the Church, stop to greet Will and Charlie, surrounded by well-wishers.

Main Street is lively once again. Stores have re-opened their doors. People come and go with renewed energy and vigor.

Satisfied, Sheriff Clark leans against his patrol car.

SHERIFF CLARK
(to himself)
Yup. Now that's what I call - a resurrection.

THE END.