

THE LAST SKYWRITER IN THE UNIVERSE

FADE IN:

EXT. AIR FIELD - EVERYTOWN - USA - DAY

A small enthralled audience gazes up from stadium seats.

ZOOM. A crop duster biplane shoots past.

MIA TOWNSEND, 8, awe-struck above a sea of heads.

JOHN TOWNSEND, 35, holds Mia on his protective shoulders.

Mia applauds with delight.

EXT. SKY

A red crop duster biplane slices past the field -- loops up --  
twists upside down -- spins.

EXT. FIELD

The crop duster zips past the riveted crowd.

The daredevil PILOT waves to Mia.

Mia waves back.

MIA

Daddy, he waved to me.

The crop duster shoots straight up.

CROWD

Oh!

The crop duster disappears into a white cloud. The sound of  
the crop duster engine fades off.

The crowd waits, eyes fixed up at the sky, mouths agape.

MIA

What's he doing, Daddy?

JOHN

Let's watch and see, Mia.

The crop duster shoots out of the cloud.

MIA

Ooh!

The crop duster darts toward the ground.

The crowd gasps!

WOMAN (O.S.)  
He's not pulling up.

John's face registers fear. He whisks Mia away, still on his shoulders. Pushes through the crowd away from the field.

JOHN  
Don't look, Mia. Cover your ears.

Mia covers her ears.

SCREAMS from the crowd.

CRASH. BOOM.

John takes Mia down from his shoulders.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Let's go, Honey.

He takes Mia's hand, runs to a grassy area filled with cars.

She looks back toward the air field. Smoke fills the air.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Don't look, Sweetheart.

They hurry toward an old black pickup truck. Mia trips. John picks her up. Opens the passenger side door. Mia climbs in.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK

Mia straps her seatbelt on.

John climbs into the driver's side.

JOHN  
I want you to close your eyes until  
I say it's okay to open them. Okay?

Frightened, Mia nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Go ahead.

Mia closes her eyes. John starts the engine.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Keep them closed, now.

John drives out of the area.

The sound of a siren WAILS in the distance.

A fire truck heads towards them. John pulls off to the side.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Don't open your eyes.

The fire truck rumbles past. John drives onto the road. Speeds away. The siren fades.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's okay now, Honey.

Mia squeezes her eyes shut tight.

INT. PEDIATRIC CARE HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT - 27 YEARS LATER

MIA TOWNSEND, 35, with single-minded determination and the strength of a protective mother, sleeps slumped in a chair.

She opens her eyes, disoriented. Rubs her neck. Stretches out kinks in her back and shoulder. Looks at multiple child drawings taped to the walls.

One drawing hangs by a corner.

She fixes the drawing's loose corner to the wall.

NURSE LISA, 27, kind, steps in. Checks on

BENNY TOWNSEND-CLAY, 11, imaginative, filled with hope, sleeps in a bed.

Nurse Lisa places a pulse oximeter on Benny's index finger. Holds a temporal thermometer on his forehead. BEEP. She writes on a chart.

NURSE LISA

He's doing great.

Nurse Lisa sees the worry on Mia's face.

NURSE LISA (CONT'D)

Why don't you go home? Get some sleep in a real bed. We're not going anywhere.

Nurse Lisa leaves.

Mia goes to Benny's bedside. Touches his fuzzy head. Runs her finger over new hair coming in on his eyebrows.

Benny opens his eyes.

MIA  
Look who's awake. How are you  
feeling?

BENNY  
Tired. But not sick tired.

MIA  
Not sick tired.

BENNY  
No.

MIA  
That's wonderful.

BENNY  
Yeah.

He reaches for a sketchbook.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Mom. I need more markers.  
Especially blue and orange.

MIA  
Sure, Honey. I'll bring them in the  
morning.

BENNY  
Thanks.

Mia kisses his head.

INT. HOSPITAL - PEDIATRIC CARE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Benny steps out of a bathroom, strolls past the nurses station.

NURSE LISA (O.S.)  
You think you're prepared, but you  
never are.

He stops and listens.

Nurse Lisa sees Benny. She wipes her eyes. Smiles at Benny.

LISA  
Everything okay, Benny?

Benny gives her the thumbs-up.

INT. PEDIATRIC CARE HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

Benny draws in a sketchpad.

Mia steps in with a plastic bag.

BENNY

Hi, Mom.

Mia takes a box of colored markers from the bag.

MIA

And ...

She takes out a handful of blue and orange markers.

MIA (CONT'D)

How's that?

BENNY

Awesome.

She hands him the markers.

MIA

Why do you need so many blue and orange markers?

BENNY

I want to draw a universe with them.

Draws with the orange marker.

BENNY (CONT'D)

And a planet. This is for the sky. Blue is for the ground.

He switches to the blue marker.

BENNY (CONT'D)

It's in the eleventh dimension.

He sketches in blue.

MIA

There are eleven dimensions? Really?

BENNY

Probably more than that.

MIA

What's the eleventh dimension like?

BENNY  
That's what I have to figure out.

MIA  
I see.

She leans over, watches him draw.

BENNY  
There are many universes. Like soap bubbles that float around, stuck together. And our universe is like the skin on one of the bubbles.

MIA  
Wow.

BENNY  
And we're like flies trapped on the skin of bubble-like fly paper.

MIA  
Sounds like a sticky situation.

BENNY  
Mom.

MIA  
I'm sorry, that was tacky.

BENNY  
Okay, you can stop with the puns now.

Mia laughs. Benny draws.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Is Dad coming?

MIA  
He'll be here later. He's teaching today.

BENNY  
Okay. Cause he didn't come yesterday.

Benny stops sketching. Puts it aside. Draws on another sketchbook page.

MIA  
May I see?

BENNY

It's only a sketch. I have to make many more.

MIA

I still want to see.

BENNY

Okay.

Mia picks up the sketch.

MIA

I like the complimentary colors.

Mia gazes at the drawing.

### **BEGIN MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - DAY

An orange sky with whitish clouds reflect tints of orange and blue from the surface.

The surface glows azure, cobalt and ultramarine blues with pearl white flecks.

Mia stands on the surface. Holds Benny's drawing, gazes in wonder at the reflective light on the ground. The landscape undulates with rolling hills.

WHITE NOISE from far off. Mia Listens. Hears voices in the white noise -- a radio signal.

EDEN (V.O.)

(radio static)

T1, this is Eden. Come in T. Lux.

Radio STATIC.

A man's voice outside the static.

T. LUX (V.O.)

Eden. Is that you?

EDEN (V.O.)

Come in T1. Where are you?

T. LUX (V.O.)

Eden. You're breaking up. Eden.

Radio STATIC.



**END MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. PEDIATRIC CARE HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Benny watches Mia look up from the drawing.

BENNY  
Where'd you go?

MIA  
I was captured by your beautiful  
drawing.

She puts the drawing down on the bed.

BENNY  
When can I go home?

MIA  
Soon.

BENNY  
Maybe today?

MIA  
I don't know, Sweetheart. Let's  
wait to see what Dr. Mark says.

He stops drawing, lies down.

Mia collects his drawings, markers and sketchbook. Places them on a small table next to him.

BENNY  
Mom, do you remember Sarah?

MIA  
Yes. The two of you seemed to hit  
it off.

BENNY  
Yeah. I think she died.

Color drains from Mia's face.

MIA  
What, Honey?

BENNY  
I heard the nurses talking about  
her when I went to the bathroom.

MIA  
Are you sure?

She sits on the bed next to him.

MIA (CONT'D)  
I'm so sorry, Benny.

BENNY  
Can we do something for her family?

MIA  
Of course. What do you want to do?

Benny reaches for his sketchbook. Pulls out a drawing.

BENNY  
I want to give them this.

Hands it to Mia.

ON BENNY'S DRAWING

Benny and Sarah hold hands in front of a giant yellow sun.

BACK TO SCENE

Mia stares at the drawing.

MIA  
I think they would love this.

She puts the drawing down.

BENNY  
She was really strong. She was supposed to beat it. But she didn't. She didn't beat it.

She hugs him.

MIA  
Maybe you misheard what the nurses said.

BENNY  
I want to sleep.

He closes his eyes.

MIA  
Okay, Honey.

She takes in the drawing of Benny and Sarah -- wells up. Places the drawing in the sketchbook.

She pulls out the landscape sketch. Gazes at it.

**BEGIN MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE

Orange and white clouds roll past.

Mia stands in the same spot, shaken. Holds Benny's sketch.

Radio STATIC.

T. LUX (V.O.)  
Eden, this is T1. Over.

Radio STATIC.

Mia heads in the direction of the voice.

T. LUX (V.O.)  
Are you there, Eden?

Mia comes to a small hill. Climbs it.

Eden's voice through the STATIC.

EDEN (V.O.)  
T1 -- this -- E--en. Where--

Radio STATIC.

T. LUX (V.O.)  
Hello.

Mia stands at the top of the hill.

EDEN (V.O.)  
The lilacs. Can you -- sme -- them?

Radio STATIC.

Mia sees a red crop duster biplane at the bottom of the hill in an azure field.

T. LUX (V.O.)  
You're breaking up. Say again. Over.

Radio STATIC.

Mia heads down the hill.

INT. CROP DUSTER COCKPIT - DAY

LUCAS T. Lux, ageless, eccentric old soul, wears overalls under a flak jacket, cowboy hat, goggles. Binoculars hang from his neck.

T. LUX  
Cursed signal.

He switches radio channels.

EXT. RED CROP DUSTER BIPLANE - DAY

Mia approaches. Takes a stance in front of the propeller.

MIA  
Hello.

T. Lux looks up. Stares at her, incredulous.

MIA (CONT'D)  
I'm not sure ...

T. Lux climbs out of the cockpit, stands on the wing. Looks through binoculars. Scans the area.

MIA (CONT'D)  
Hello.

T. LUX  
Shhh. Don't say anything.

THROUGH BINOCULARS

The landscape -- swings to Mia's face staring back.

BACK TO SCENE

T. Lux brings the binoculars down.

T. LUX  
Where'd you hide it?

MIA  
Hide-

T. LUX  
Behind those hills, right?

MIA

I-

T. LUX

Maybe you parked it in a crater on the other side.

MIA

Parked?

T. LUX

Don't try to fool T. Lux. I've been around longer than a soothsayer on the ride of the Valkyries.

She gives him a blank stare.

T. LUX (CONT'D)

Where's your plane?

MIA

Plane?

T. LUX

You like repeating words, don't you? Not a lot going on in the noggin', is there?

MIA

Excuse me?!

T. LUX

This is deep space. You can't just pop in and out like a broken traffic light. You need a vehicle.

Mia staggers, bends over.

T. LUX (CONT'D)

You okay?

He climbs into the cockpit. Emerges with a canister. Climbs down to Mia.

MIA

I don't feel so good.

T. LUX

Drink this.

MIA

What is it?

T. LUX  
Rocket fuel. What do you think it  
is? Water.

She hesitates, looks at his face for reassurance.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
Go on before this place sucks the  
moisture out of you. Stretch you  
right out. Turn your insides into a  
piece of string. Like mozzarella.

MIA  
Not following.

T. LUX  
Drink, lady.

Mia takes the canister, sips.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
More.

She drinks more.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
Take your time.

She takes another sip, hands the canister to him.

MIA  
Is this your plane?

T. LUX  
Busted as it is.

MIA  
I have questions.

He goes to the engine, pulls spark plugs out.

MIA (CONT'D)  
What happened?

T. Lux cleans the spark plugs with a rag from his pocket.

T. LUX  
Don't know. The engine started  
acting like a drunk bird. Almost  
crashed into those woods back  
there.

MIA  
Fearless sparrows drunk on  
fermented berries. They'd smash  
into windows. Some died.

T. Lux places the spark plugs back in the engine.

T. LUX  
What? Hey, don't think you're going  
to steal my plane.

MIA  
I don't want your plane.

T. Lux notices something. Looks through binoculars.

THROUGH BINOCULARS

Small golf ball-size meteorites shower down.

BACK TO SCENE

He brings the binoculars down, concerned.

T. LUX  
Let's go!

MIA  
What?

T. LUX  
There are some things to be afraid  
of. It's about to rain rocks.

He pulls her under the wing.

Benny's drawing slips out of her hand.

She reaches for it. T. Lux pulls her under the wing.

RAT-A-TAT. RAT-A-TAT. Meteorites rain down. Bounce off the  
red crop duster biplane.

Mia and T. Lux huddle close.

MIA  
Are we safe under here?

T. LUX  
Safer than not. Just hope they  
don't get bigger.

MIA  
Right. Hoping.

T. LUX  
Hold on to your bootstraps, Lady.

RA-TA-TA-TA-TA=TA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA. WHIZZZZ. WHIRLLLLLLL. A beachball size meteorite RIPS through the middle of a wing.

THUD.

MIA                    T. LUX  
Oh my God!            Oh, Zwicky!

RA TA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA.

The meteorite shower stops.

T. Lux steps out from under the wing. Mia comes out from under.

MIA  
That was terrifying.

She looks for Benny's drawing. Finds it half under a meteorite. Picks it up.

T. Lux looks at the hole in the wing.

T. LUX  
Someone wants me stuck on this cursed planet.

He scratches his head. He climbs onto the wing.

MIA  
Mia. My name's Mia. Not Lady.

T. Lux scans the red crop duster biplane peppered with divots.

MIA (CONT'D)  
You look familiar. I mean your plane.

T. Lux looks at the cockpit filled with meteorites.

T. LUX  
You know someone named Lucas T. Lux?

MIA  
No.

T. LUX  
Then we never met. Cause I'm him.

He digs out the rocks.



MIA

I want you to meet someone.

T. Lux tosses the rocks off.

Mia steps out of the way. Looks at the drawing.

A meteorite lands by her feet.

Another one flies at her. She ducks.

MIA (CONT'D)

(shouts)

Mr. T. Lux.

T. Lux looks down at her.

MIA (CONT'D)

You almost hit me. Twice.

T. LUX

Then get of the way.

He tosses meteorites from the cockpit.

Mia moves to the other side of the red crop duster biplane.

Radio STATIC.

EDEN'S (RADIO)(V.O.)

T1, this is Eden. Over.

Radio STATIC.

T. Lux scrambles to the radio. Grabs microphone.

Mia eavesdrops.

T. LUX

Eden, this is T1. Over.

EDEN'S VOICE (V.O. RADIO)

Where are you? Over.

T. LUX

It's hard to know. Over.

EDEN'S VOICE (V.O. RADIO)

When are you coming home? Over.

T. LUX

Hard to know that too. Over.

Radio STATIC.

EDEN'S (V.O. RADIO)  
 (faint)  
 The lilacs are almost in bloom.  
 You'll miss them. Over.

T. LUX  
 I'm having trouble with old Croppy  
 here. Over.

Radio STATIC.

EDEN'S (V.O. RADIO)  
 (faint)  
 Pl--ease co--ome--

Radio STATIC.

T. LUX  
 Hello. Eden.

Radio STATIC.

T. Lux throws the radio mic down in frustration.

Mia stands below the cockpit.

MIA  
 Who's Eden?

T. LUX  
 My daughter. She's always in the  
 lilac garden.

Mia holds up Benny's drawing.

MIA  
 My son's drawing.

He squints at it.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 He drew this place.

He tosses meteorites from the cockpit.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 Benny's sick.

He tosses a handful of meteorites.

T. LUX  
 That should do it.

He climbs onto the wing. Inspects the hole. Shakes head.  
Shrugs it off.

MIA  
Mr. T. Lux.

He climbs into the cockpit.

MIA (CONT'D)  
There's a reason I'm here.

T. LUX  
Would you mind moving about fifty  
feet in either direction?

MIA  
I want to talk to you about my son.

T. LUX  
I don't know your son. Now get out  
of the way.

He starts the red crop duster biplane engine. It SPITS,  
SPUTTERS, starts up.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
(shouts)  
You gotta move. You'll get run  
over.

He puts goggles on. Adds power to the engine. The red crop  
duster biplane moves.

Mia runs out of the way.

The red crop duster biplane speeds into the field -- lifts  
off. T. Lux flies past her.

He waves to her.

The red crop duster biplane disappears over distant hills.

Mia looks at the drawing.

MIA  
Now what?

CRASH. BOOM.

She searches the landscape. Something touches her shoulder.

**END MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. PEDIATRIC CARE HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

STEPHEN CLAY, 40, confident, touches Mia's shoulder.

STEPHEN

Sorry I'm late. Students weren't happy about postponing the dig in Ecuador.

Mia looks at him, disoriented.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

You okay?

MIA

Hmm.

They look at Benny sleeping.

MIA (CONT'D)

He's having a good day.

STEPHEN

What did Dr. Mark say?

MIA

He hasn't been in yet.

STEPHEN

What's the hold up?!

MIA

Don't raise your voice, Stephen.

Stephen looks at Benny's drawings peppering the wall. He focuses on one.

ON DRAWING

A simple drawn figure with a baseball cap and baseball glove at a pitcher's mound. A second figure with a baseball cap and bat stands at home plate.

Stephen turns away from the drawing.

STEPHEN

Let's get some coffee. Have you eaten anything today?

MIA

Not yet.

STEPHEN

Come on.

He heads for the door. Mia hesitates, takes in Benny asleep.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Mia and Stephen at a table. Stephen drinks coffee. Mia has a cup of soup in front of her.

STEPHEN

Where's Dr. Mark? Why hasn't he checked in?

MIA

He will.

STEPHEN

Yeah, when yesterday comes again?

Mia looks at her soup. Pushes it aside.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

You have to eat something.

MIA

Please stop.

STEPHEN

Stop what?

MIA

Trying to fix everything.

STEPHEN

If that's what I'm doing, it's a pretty lousy job.

MIA

No kidding.

She smiles. Stephen touches her hand.

DR. MARK BURNS, 45, trimmed gray beard, kind eyes, gentle demeanor, approaches the table.

DR. MARK

Here you both are. I was just by Benny's room. I let him sleep.

Dr. Mark slides into a chair across from Mia and Stephen.

DR. MARK (CONT'D)

Good news.

Mia and Stephen listen with nervous anticipation.

DR. MARK (CONT'D)

It looks like Benny is going to be fine.

Mia and Stephen well up. They hold hands.

DR. MARK (CONT'D)

Now, we still need to run a few more tests, and if all looks good, he'll be able to go home.

STEPHEN

That's amazing news, DR..

DR. MARK

Let's not tell Benny yet.

MIA

Thank you. You're our hero.

DR. MARK

Not me. Benny.

Dr. Mark stands. Stephen shakes his hand. Mia hugs him.

DR. MARK (CONT'D)

All right. You two have a good night.

He heads off. Stephen and Mia hug and cry together.

INT. CEMETERY - DAY

Benny, Mia, and Stephen grieve with Sarah's MOTHER and FATHER and other members of Sarah's family.

Benny holds the drawing he made of him and Sarah. He looks up at Mia. She nods her support.

He places the drawing on top of Sarah's coffin.

INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - DAY

The door opens. Mia, Benny, and Stephen step in. Benny hurries away.

MIA

Benny.

He turns around.

MIA (CONT'D)  
We're very proud of you. It meant a lot to Sarah's family.

BENNY  
Thanks. I'm going to my room now.

MIA  
Aren't you hungry?

BENNY  
No.

STEPHEN  
Hey. What do you say we go by field tomorrow. Your teams playing.

BENNY  
Okay.

Benny disappears down the hall.

Stephen puts his arm around Mia.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Benny, Mia, and Stephen stroll up to spectator stands. They watch a little league game in progress.

A PLAYER stands at the plate. He looks around. Sees Benny.

The ball shoots past him.

UMPIRE (O.S)  
Strike.

PLAYER  
It's Benny.

He drops his bat and runs to Benny.

His team runs out of the dug out to Benny.

They cheer Benny.

EXT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY

Benny and Stephen toss a baseball back and forth. Stephen backs up.

STEPHEN

Let's see what you got.

Benny throws the ball over Stephen's head. It bounces into the street. Stephen runs after the ball.

Benny laughs.

Stephen grabs the ball. Jogs toward Benny.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Are you laughing? Did you? Oh, you did. You did that on purpose.

Stephen chases Benny. Catches him. They tumble and laugh.

INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Mia looks out the window into the backyard. She notices an albino robin on the ground.

MIA

Hello, Sweetheart. Where'd you come from?

She pulls a small pair of binoculars from a counter drawer.

THROUGH BINOCULARS

The albino robin hops along. Pecks at the ground.

Flies onto a lilac tree branch.

INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Mia brings the binoculars from her eyes, gazes at the albino robin in the lilac tree.

MIA

Aren't you proud of yourself? I bet all the boys want you, don't they?

Stephen and Benny run in.

BENNY

I win.

STEPHEN

Yes. But-



BENNY  
No buts, Dad.

MIA  
Both of you, shhhh ... come to the window.

STEPHEN  
What's happening?

MIA  
Slowly.

Benny and Stephen approach the window.

BENNY  
What is it?

MIA  
There, in the tree.

BENNY  
I don't see anything.

STEPHEN  
Will you look at that.

BENNY  
What?

MIA  
It's an albino robin.

Benny sees the albino robin.

BENNY  
Oh, wow.

Mia hands Benny the binoculars.

MIA  
The rarest ones have no pigment in their eyes. They go blind quickly and don't live very long.

BENNY  
How come?

MIA  
They can't see predators.

Benny looks

THROUGH BINOCULARS

The albino robin rests on the lilac tree branch.

BENNY

Its eyes are like red fire.

BACK TO SCENE

Benny brings the binoculars down.

BENNY

Outside my window. A white robin's  
red fire eyes. The smell of lilac.

MIA

Wow. Beautiful Benny.

BENNY

That's a haiku.

Stephen rubs Benny's fuzzy head.

STEPHEN

I know it is.

Benny looks out the window.

BENNY

Can we protect it from predators?

MIA

We shouldn't interfere with nature.

BENNY

I'm getting my sketchbook.

Benny runs out.

MIA

I think I'm going back to work next  
week.

STEPHEN

Are you sure?

MIA

As long as Benny's healthy.

Stephen puts his arm around Mia. They watch the robin.

MIA (CONT'D)

I want a normal life with our son again. And with my husband.

They look at each other and kiss.

Benny runs in with the sketchbook.

BENNY

Yuck! You're going to scare that robin away. And me too. I'm gonna fly off with it.

MIA

You're not going anywhere.

Mia hugs him. Kisses the top of his head several times.

BENNY

Mom, chill a little.

MIA

No way. I'm not chillin'.

STEPHEN

I'm not chillin' either. I'm chillaxin'.

BENNY

Oh God. What happened to my parents?

Stephen swoops Benny up.

STEPHEN

We're happy you're home.

Mia rubs Benny's head.

BENNY

Help, help. Aliens abducted them.

They laugh. Stephen puts Benny down.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I bet you scared the robin away.

He looks out the window.

BENNY (CONT'D)

He's still there.

MIA

She, Honey.

BENNY  
How can you tell? Oh, there's  
another robin.

Stephen and Benny go to the window. They watch.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
What are they doing?

Stephen gives Mia a knowing grin.

STEPHEN  
Yeah, Honey. What are they doing?

MIA  
They're doing -- it.

STEPHEN  
Looks like *it* to me.

BENNY  
What's it?

STEPHEN  
Maybe they'll build a nest.

MIA  
That would be nice. I'd like her to  
stay for a while.

STEPHEN  
Hey, what do you say we have  
Benny's favorite meal for dinner?

Mia gives Stephen an ironic smile.

BENNY  
Pizza!

MIA  
And salad.

BENNY  
Salad? Yuck.

MIA  
No salad, no pizza. And we're  
eating in our home.

BENNY  
Okay, Mom.

STEPHEN  
Okay, Mom.

BENNY

I'm going to go draw in my room.

Mia and Stephen watch Benny bounce out.

INT. BENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A nightlight illuminates a corner of the room.

Benny sleeps in bed.

The door opens. Mia steps in. She moves to the bed, pulls the blanket over Benny's shoulders.

LIVERPOOL, a black, white, and gray stuffed toy lion lays on the floor. Mia picks up Liverpool, places it on Benny's pillow.

She sees Benny's desk filled with drawings of the orange and blue landscape.

Her eyes fall on an art book with Paul Klee's Kettledrummer painting of death on the cover.

She's mesmerized by the figure's one arm(drumstick) linked to an encircled eye while the other arm(drumstick) isolates in space.

The SOUND OF TYMPANI DRUMS

The Drawing animates:

The mysterious eye fixes on Mia with a searching look.

The TYMPANI sound builds.

She turns the book face down.

The sound stops.

She catches her breath.

One of Benny's drawings grabs her attention. She holds it close to the nightlight.

ON DRAWING

A white robin flies over the orange and blue landscape

-- flame-like orange markings.

**BEGIN MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - NIGHT

The night sky holds billions of stars.

Mia finds herself on top of a blue hill. She scans the area.

MIA

T. Lux. Lucas T. Lux.

(echo)

Lucas. T. Lux. Hello.

(echo)

Hello.

STEPHEN (PRE-LAP)

(whisper)

What's going on?

Mia spins around.

**END MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. BENNY'S BEDROOM- NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Stephen looks at Mia from the doorway.

Mia hands him the drawing.

STEPHEN

Come on.

He steps out. Mia follows, closes the bedroom door.

INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stephen places the drawing on the kitchen table.

Mia steps in.

STEPHEN

I made some tea.

Mia looks at the drawing.

Stephen places a cup of tea in front of her.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

MIA

Yes.

STEPHEN

I'm taking my students on a dig at the end of the semester after all.

MIA

I thought you cancelled it.

STEPHEN

Postponed, but now that Benny's better I thought--

MIA

--I want to get back to work. And we can't leave Benny alone.

STEPHEN

I know. That's why I want to take him with me. He'll love it.

MIA

Stephen, it's in Ecuador.

STEPHEN

Yes.

MIA

No, that's too far.

STEPHEN

It would be great for him. It's only two weeks.

MIA

There are a lot of diseases there.

Mia attaches the drawing to the refrigerator with a magnet.

STEPHEN

We call Dr. Mark and get his opinion. If he's fine with it, we ask Benny if he wants to go.

MIA

I want him home. I want a normal healthy routine with him.

Benny slumps in.

BENNY

Are you two fighting?

MIA

Did we wake you?

BENNY

Yeah.

STEPHEN

Sorry, Buddy.

BENNY

I heard Dr. Mark's name.

Mia and Stephen make eye contact.

STEPHEN

We were just saying how much we  
like Dr. Mark.

Benny sees his drawing on the refrigerator.

MIA

Why don't you go back to bed. We'll  
be quieter.

BENNY

You two are terrible liars.

He slumps out.

Mia gives Stephen a serious look.

MIA

(whispers)  
Ecuador?

Mia strides out.

INT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - GATE SECURITY ENTRANCE - DAY

A line of passengers move through the security check.

A group of diverse archaeology college STUDENTS step in line.

Stephen, Mia, and Benny wait off to the side. Benny wears an orange backpack.

Mia kneels next to Benny.

MIA

I want daily updates. You Skype or  
call every night.

BENNY

Got it covered.



MIA  
Promise?

BENNY  
Promise.

Mia gives Stephen a serious look.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, Mom.

MIA  
I won't worry when I get the first  
call tonight.

Mia hugs Benny.

MIA (CONT'D)  
I love you so much.

BENNY  
I love you, too.

MIA  
Okay. Go.

Benny runs to the line. Swings around. Runs back to Mia.

BENNY  
Mom.

He takes off his backpack. Opens it -- pulls out Liverpool.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
I think you need Liverpool more  
than me. He can keep you company.

MIA  
Are you sure?

BENNY  
Yeah. I wouldn't want to lose him,  
either.

MIA  
Okay.

Benny hands Liverpool to Mia.

BENNY  
Thanks.

He heads back to the security line.

Stephen and Mia hug.

MIA  
I can't believe you talked me into  
this.

STEPHEN  
He's going to have a great time.

MIA  
I know. Please be careful.

Benny gestures toward Stephen.

Stephen and Mia kiss.

Stephen gets in line.

Anxious, Mia watches Benny go through the security check.

Benny waves to her.

She waves back.

INT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - GATE ELEVEN - DAY

The archaeology Students occupy rows of seats.

Benny and Stephen stroll up to the them.

Benny takes in the gate number: "ELEVEN."

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Benny squeezes into the middle seat.

Stephen plops in the aisle seat.

LYONEL, 22, a gentle nerdy archaeology Student, relaxes in  
the window seat.

Benny leans around Lyonel. Peeks out the window.

LYONEL  
Have you been on a plane before?

BENNY  
No.

LYONEL  
You want to switch seats?

Benny's eyes light up.

BENNY  
Dad?

STEPHEN  
You sure, Lyonel?

LYONEL  
No problem.

BENNY  
Awesome. Thanks.

They switch seats.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Benny presses his head against the window. A landscape of mountainous white and orange clouds float by.

INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mia drinks tea with a laptop computer open on the table.

Skype RING.

She answers it.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Benny's face pops on. A room with blue walls in the background.

BENNY  
Hi, Mom. We're here.

MIA  
Hi, Honey.

BENNY  
The plane was awesome.

Stephen comes into the computer screen frame.

MIA  
How are you feeling?

BENNY  
Great.

STEPHEN  
We're all good.

BENNY  
I made you a drawing.

Benny holds a simple sketch of himself riding on a airplane like a cowboy on a horse surrounded by orange puffy clouds.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Can you see it?

MIA  
I guess they didn't have enough seats on the plane.

He takes the drawing away.

BENNY  
Mom.

MIA  
It's beautiful, Sweetheart. Thank you.

BENNY  
Tomorrow we go to the dig site, right Dad?

STEPHEN  
Right.

Benny and Stephen's image freezes.

MIA  
You froze. Hello ... Hello.

STEPHEN  
We can still hear you. Can you hear us?

MIA  
Yes.

BENNY' VOICE  
You're st-uck, Mo--m.

MIA  
Stuck. Yes. You're both frozen.

STEPHEN'S VOICE  
We--ould--et-som--eep.

MIA

What?

BENNY'S VOICE

Goo-d nigh-, o--m-

The Skype window goes dark. She calls back. Skype RING. Watches the screen, anxious. Closes out of Skype. Closes the computer.

EXT. SANTA ELENA, ECUADOR - DIG SITE - DAY

Stephen, Benny, and the students with backpacks, duffel bags, wheelbarrows, shovels and pick axes, survey the area.

STEPHEN

Okay. We think this is a cemetery plot from Las Vagas which flourished between 8800 and 4600 BC.

LYONEL

Nothing like digging up the dead.

BENNY

What if they're zombies?

Lyonel, Zombie-like, creeps toward Benny.

Benny, Zombie-like creeps toward Lyonel.

The Students and Stephen laugh.

STEPHEN

Great. We've got help from the walking dead. Let's stake it out and string it.

Students set up orange-tipped pin stakes.

Benny helps Lyonel spread out a large blue plastic tarp.

They lay out various dig tools: blue-handled trowels, orange-handled pickaxes, small saws, buckets, dustpans, paper and plastic bags.

Other students string sections within the rectangle into grids.

Stephen sets up a Total Station Theodolite surveyor on top of an orange tripod frame.

Benny, zombie-like, holds a pickaxe close to his head. He sways about the outside of the tarp.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
Benny. Put that down. This isn't a  
playground.

Benny puts the pickaxe down.

BENNY  
No fun, Dad.

STEPHEN  
Help Lyonel.

Stephen looks into the Theodolite Surveyor.

EXT. SANTA ELENA, ECUADOR - DIG SITE - DAY - LATER

Students dig in various sections. They fill a wheelbarrow  
with reddish subsoil.

Benny sifts subsoil with a sieve.

Stephen saunters over to Benny.

STEPHEN  
How's it going?

BENNY  
Kinda borrrring. Where's all the  
dead people.

STEPHEN  
When the soil is questioned, it  
will answer.

Stephen strolls off.

Benny smiles at the students working near him.

BENNY  
My dad's kinda corny.

They laugh.

VALERIE, 24, buoyant spirit, digs in a sectioned off area.  
She stops.

VALERIE  
Oh My God. Stephen!

Stephen strides to her.

VALERIE (CONT'D)  
Found something.

Stephen looks closer.

STEPHEN

Okay. Use a pointing trowel, dental pick and brush.

Lyonel and other Students hurry over.

Benny runs over, trips towards Valerie, catches himself.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Careful, Benny.

Valerie digs around the area with a pointing trowel.

BENNY

What is it?

Valerie brushes dirt away. Part of an eye socket emerges.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Whoa.

Excited faces watch Valerie remove more dirt.

STEPHEN

The past is not dead, it's living in us.

Benny gives Stephen a confused look.

Lyonel leans close to Benny's ear.

LYONEL

(whispers)

He likes to sound profound.

VALERIE (O.S.)

Hey, Lyonel.

Valerie brushes dirt off a skull.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I think I found your future lover.

Students laugh.

LYONEL

That's okay. You cadaver if you want.

Students groan.

VALERIE

Yup. Future lover. No bones about it.

BENNY

You guys are worse than my Mom.

STEPHEN

All right everyone, let's carrion.

Students groan.

Benny heads toward the tarp with the tools laid out. He picks up a spade and trowel. Hurries to a spot outside the cordoned-off area.

INT. MIA'S WORKPLACE OFFICE - DAY

Mia scans her desk. A bouquet of flowers live in a blue vase. She reads a card. "Welcome Back, Mia. -- The Office."

Mia powers on a desktop computer.

COWORKER(O.S.)

Knock, knock.

Mia looks up.

COWORKER, 60, compassionate, leans in the doorway.

COWORKER (CONT'D)

Healthy is a godsend.

MIA

The understatement of my life. He's in Ecuador with his father.

COWORKER

Ecuador. Wow.

MIA

He'll be home soon.

COWORKER

I just wanted to say that we missed you and relieved everything worked out.

MIA

Thank You, Alan.



COWORKER

I'll let you get your sea legs  
back.

The Coworker steps away.

Mia stares at the screen. She types, "Santa Elena, Ecuador"  
into the browser.

EXT. SANTA ELENA - ECUADOR - DIG SITE - DAY

Benny scoops dirt away.

He has a moment of lightheadedness. It passes.

He scoops more dirt away. Finds something that looks like  
part of a small thin bone.

BENNY

Dad!

He searches for Stephen.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Dad!

Stephen takes photographs of the skull in Valerie's dig section.

Benny heads over toward Stephen.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Dad. I found something. Come on.

STEPHEN

Hold on a second, Benny.

Stephen takes a photo.

BENNY

Dad!

STEPHEN

All right.

Benny jogs to his dig area.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Slow down, Benny.

Benny walks.

Stephen follows behind.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
This is not sectioned-off. You weren't supposed to interfere with this area.

BENNY  
But I found something. I questioned the soil.

Benny kneels down, points. Stephen kneels next to him.

STEPHEN  
You certainly did.

BENNY  
What is it?

STEPHEN  
Let's find out.

Stephen pulls a dental pick from his shirt pocket.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
Use this. Take the dirt away carefully.

Benny takes the pick. Digs in.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
Go slowly.

The pick scrapes dirt from the bone.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
Wait. Let me see the pick.

BENNY  
I want to do it.

STEPHEN  
I know. Okay. Breath and go slowly. The bone can crumble.

Benny scrapes dirt away with care.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
That's it. Now use this brush.

Benny takes the small brush.

BENNY  
Like when the umpire cleans off home plate.

STEPHEN

But softly.

BENNY brushes the dirt away.

STEVEN'S FANTASY

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Stephen and older Benny, 25 in left field with baseball gloves and a ball.

Benny tosses him the ball. Stephen catches it.

BENNY

I miss doing things with you.  
Simple things.

Stephen throws the ball to Benny. Benny catches it.

Benny tosses the ball. Stephen catches it.

BENNY (CONT'D)

And the talk.

STEPHEN

The talk?

Stephen tosses the ball to Benny. Benny catches it.

BENNY

Yeah, and sex. You know, stuff that happens to twelve-year-olds.

STEPHEN

Sex shouldn't happen to twelve-year-olds.

BENNY

I know why you didn't talk about it. The disease stopped everything.

Benny tosses the ball, Stephen drops it, picks it up.

BENNY (CONT'D)

How would it go? After the game, on the way home, we'd stop for pizza. You'd say, "Benny, do you have any questions?" I'd say, "Yeah, I want to know why Coach always puts me last in the line-up." And you'd say.

STEPHEN

No, Benny. Questions about other things.

BENNY

Is this the talk, Dad?

Stephen tosses the ball. Benny catches it.

STEPHEN

It would've been at home. Not a pizza place.

BENNY

You'd probably start with the mating practices of primitive cultures.

Benny tosses the ball. Stephen catches it.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Do you ever think about it?

STEPHEN

The mating practices of primitive cultures?

BENNY

Funny, Dad.

STEPHEN

Of course. Your Mom was coaching me.

BENNY

Awkward.

STEPHEN

She wanted to make sure we talked about love.

Stephen breaks down.

LYONEL (PRE-LAP)

Professor. You okay?

BENNY (PRE-LAP)

Dad, look.

END STEPHEN'S FANTASY

EXT. SANTA ELENA - DIG SITE - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Students surround Stephen and Benny. Stephen, wipes his eyes.

STEPHEN  
Yes. Wow, Benny.

A skeleton hand attached to a wrist sticks up from the dirt.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
Let's keep going.

Benny digs at the bones with the dental pick.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Benny and Stephen remove dirt.

-- A human skeleton appears.

-- Lyonel helps Benny and Stephen

-- Students watch in awe.

-- A second skeleton under the arm of the first skeleton emerges.

-- Two skeletons face each other in a loving embrace.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

The male skeleton's right hand rests on the woman skeleton's waist. His right leg rests on her pelvis. The female skeleton's arm covers the male skeleton's head.

Benny, Stephen, and the students gaze at the skeletons.

LAURA  
It's so romantic. Like Romeo and Juliet.

LYONEL  
Two craniums, both alike in dignity, in fair Santa Elena, where we lay our bones.

Students laugh.

LAURA  
Benny thinks so. Right Benny?

BENNY  
Who's Romeo and Juliet?

LYONEL  
My lips two blushing mandible's,  
ready stand to smooth that rough  
with a tender --

He CLICKS his teeth together.

More laughter.

INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mia at her laptop. A photograph of two skeletons on the screen.

MIA  
And Benny found them?

The photograph disappears, Benny and Stephen's faces appear on the computer screen.

STEPHEN  
We're calling them Los Amantes. The  
Lovers.

MIA  
Wow.

STEPHEN  
Wow is right.

MIA  
Benny, how are you feeling?

BENNY  
Okay.

MIA  
You look pale. Stephen he looks  
pale.

STEPHEN  
It's been a long day. We both need  
sleep.

MIA  
Maybe you should come home early. I  
don't like the way he looks.

BENNY  
I'm fine, Mom. I'm going to go to  
sleep now.

MIA  
Okay, Sweetheart. I love you.

BENNY  
Love you.

Benny leaves the screen.

STEPHEN  
Amazing, huh? Los Amantes.

MIA  
I'm worried, Stephen. His color  
isn't good.

STEPHEN  
You're seeing us on a computer  
screen.

MIA  
I know ... Please watch him.

STEPHEN  
Like a hawk. I'll call you in the  
morning ... He's fine.

Stephen's image disappears. Mia closes the laptop.

INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia sleeps.

**BEGIN MIA'S DREAM SEQUENCE**

EXT. SKY - DAY

Late afternoon shadows creep across the townscape.

Mia floats over the townscape. She glides down to a

HOSPITAL WINDOW

Mia peers in.

SARAH, 10, effervescent, hangs out with Benny in a lounge  
area. They draw and laugh together.

Sarah's image evaporates. Benny sits alone.

A gust of wind blows Mia away from the hospital.

She glides over a Dutch Colonial home.

Stephen mows the lawn.

She floats down, hovers near Stephen.

MIA

The bird feeder. I forgot.

The wind blows her past Stephen.

MIA (CONT'D)

I need them to stay.

Mia glides to the back of the house. Watches Benny through his bedroom window.

Benny draws.

Mia knocks on the window. Benny notices her, holds a drawing up against the window.

Mia studies Benny's detailed drawing of the orange and blue landscape with a red crop duster biplane.

CRASH. BOOM.

Mia drifts over an airfield. Black smoke obscures her vision. She catches a glimpse of the red crop duster biplane.

Her father, John, runs away from the field with eight-year-old Mia on his shoulders.

The smoke turns orange, forms into clouds.

Mia hovers in a garden surrounded by blossoming lilac trees.

The Sound of CB radio CHIRPS. WHIRLS. -- searches channels.

Radio STATIC.

EDEN, 35, all grace and determination, cuts and collects lilac blossoms.

Mia floats behind a lilac tree. She watches Eden.

EDEN

Where are you, T. LUX?

Eden adds blossoms to a pile on the ground.

Mia hovers over T. Lux on his red crop duster biplane's wing. T. Lux stares at his unconscious body in the cockpit.



T. LUX  
 Oh, Zwicky. What the blazes is  
 going on?

He leans in. Listens to his unconscious body's heartbeat.

LUB-DUB. LUB-DUB. LUB-DUB.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
 Hey. Wake up, T. Lux. We gotta get  
 off this planet. Wait. What am I  
 gonna do if I wake myself up and  
 see myself? Oh Zwicky, I need a  
 navigator.

LUB-DUB. LUB-DUB.

EDEN (V.O.)  
 T1, this is Eden. Come in T. Lux,  
 over. Daddy, this is Eden, over.

T. Lux picks up the radio mic from the red crop duster  
 biplane's dashboard.

Mia holds a lilac bouquet. She watches Eden on the backyard  
 porch fuss with a CB radio.

T. LUX'S (V.O.)  
 Eden?

EDEN  
 T1. Is that you?

Mia floats towards the porch.

T. LUX (V.O.)  
 Eden. It's good to hear your voice.

EDEN  
 When are you coming home?

Mia drifts onto the

PORCH

She observes Eden at the radio.

T. LUX (V.O.)  
 That's a good question. My mission-

Radio STATIC.

EDEN'S (V.O.)  
Hello. T. Lux. Are you there? Over.

Radio STATIC.

Eden looks past Mia, steps off the porch into the garden.

Mia watches Eden cut and collect lilac blossoms. Picks up the CB microphone.

MIA  
T. Lux. Come in. Over.

Radio STATIC. -- WHIRLS.

Mia leans close to the CB radio microphone.

MIA (CONT'D)  
Where are you? Over.

She looks at Eden.

Eden collects blossoms.

EDEN  
We're not happy, Daddy. You've been gone too long.

Mia holds the CB microphone.

T. Lux holds the microphone out from the dashboard.

Eden gathers lilac blossoms.

T. LUX  
What if I can't get home?

MIA  
What are you saying?

T. LUX  
I crashed. Hit my head. I'm unconscious. I'm seeing things.

EDEN  
The lilacs are in full bloom.

T. LUX  
The universe is a tricky place. I used to tell you that.

Eden moves toward the porch with a lilac bouquet.

EDEN

The third thought of the day is the one the universe listens to. I used to write my third thought in my journal.

MIA

Me too.

Eden steps onto the porch.

MIA (CONT'D)

Sometimes Mother's garden smells like death.

EDEN

You know what my third thought was today? Daddy, come home.

MIA

What if God was a rhinoceros?

Mia laughs.

Mia watches lilac petals separate from the larger blossoms.

The petals spin and float down.

T. LUX

It's that sticky dark matter stuff.

It rains lilac petals around T. Lux.

T. LUX (CONT'D)

That crazy scientist Zwicky guy who talked about dark matter. Now it's everywhere.

Eden laughs.

EDEN

Zwicky is a funny name. Zwicky.

Mia laughs.

EDEN (CONT'D)

I think you're Zwicky. Don't get Zwicky on me, Daddy.

T. Lux laughs.

T. LUX

You can't see that stuff, you can't  
smell it either. But it's there  
holding you back.

He cries.

T. LUX (CONT'D)

Things are unravelling, Eden. My  
mission. I'm stuck here.

Lilac petals float down.

He holds out his hand. A lilac petal lands in T. Lux's palm.

A lilac petal lays in Mia's palm.

A petal floats onto Eden's palm.

T. LUX (CONT'D)

I feel real bad, Eden. I wish you  
were with me.

MIA

Just come home. We're waiting.

EDEN

(through static)

No.

Radio WHIRLS. WHISTLES. STATIC.

Bare lilac tree branches stretch toward the ground longing  
for an embrace.

Mia floats down to a room of glass walls, ceiling, and floor  
with Benny's bed in the middle.

Below the floor, the orange and blue Landscape.

Through the walls and ceiling -- infinite space -- stars.

Benny, 8, pale, listens to Stephen and Mia.

MIA

Pancake batter.

STEPHEN

I have no say in the matter.

MIA

That's a matter of opinion.

STEPHEN  
You're mad as a hatter.

MIA  
What if God were a rhinoceros?

BENNY  
Mom, Dad. Can we stop playing this  
game?

Mia and Stephen yield to Benny.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
When can we go home?

MIA  
The doctors need to keep you for a  
little while.

BENNY  
I want to go home.

MIA  
We'll be with you the whole time,  
Honey.

BENNY  
What's wrong with all the other  
kids? Do I have what they have?

MIA  
Don't you worry about that.

BENNY  
You know. I know you know. I can  
tell from your faces. Tell me  
what's wrong with me.

The room descends toward the surface below.

MIA  
They're not sure.

STEPHEN  
That's why we have to stay.

BENNY  
Tell me!

STEPHEN  
Take it easy, Buddy.

The room passes through an orange upper atmosphere.

BENNY  
No. Tell me what's wrong.

MIA  
The DR.'s think-

STEPHEN  
Mia!

MIA  
We can tell him what the tests are  
for.

STEPHEN  
Tell him what?

The room lands on the blue surface.

MIA  
He's not stupid, Stephen. Look  
where we are. Oh God.

STEPHEN  
Keep it together, Mia.

BENNY  
Stop fighting. Just tell me. I can  
handle it.

Mia and Stephen hold eye contact. Mia breaks it, rests next  
to Benny on the bed.

MIA  
There might be a problem with your  
blood.

STEPHEN  
Great!

MIA  
They need to find out exactly  
what's wrong.

STEPHEN  
Everyone is going to help you get  
better.

BENNY  
Is that what's wrong with the other  
kids, something with their blood?

STEPHEN  
Some of them.

BENNY  
Will they die?

Stephen glares at Mia.

MIA  
Sweetheart, no. They're getting  
lots of care.

BENNY  
I have to stay?

MIA  
It's looking like it.

Mia rubs Benny's arm.

BENNY  
I want Liverpool. He won't like  
being alone.

MIA  
(to Stephen)  
His stuffed lion.

STEPHEN  
I know who Liverpool is.

BENNY  
Stop fighting.

Stephen floats away.

CRASH. BOOM.

Mia blanches. She scans the area outside the window.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
What's going to happen to me?

MIA  
Oh. First we're going to have a fun  
night together here. You, me, Dad,  
and Liverpool.

A wind HOWLS outside. Orange clouds swirl and shift.

MIA (CONT'D)  
In the morning the coolest people  
will take us on an adventure to  
find out exactly what's going on.  
And then everyone will help you get  
back to your old self.

BENNY  
I'm only eight.

MIA  
That's ancient. Eight is very old.

BENNY  
No it's not.

She tickles him.

MIA  
Yes, it is. You ancient old eight-  
year-old.

They laugh. Benny has a coughing fit.

The glass room shatters into pieces. The pieces float up into  
a comet's tail -- shoot across the sky.

The sound of T. Lux's red crop duster biplane HUMS past.

CRASH. BOOM.

**END MIA'S DREAM SEQUENCE**

INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia opens her eyes. She drags herself out of bed.

INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - BENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia lumbers in, turns on the light.

Liverpool lays on Benny's bed.

Mia lies down, embraces Liverpool.

INT. BENNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Morning light bleeds through the window blinds.

A phone RINGS from another room.

Mia opens her eyes, Liverpool in her arms.

RING.

She jumps out of bed.



INT. MIA AND STEPHEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Mia picks up the receiver from a wall phone.

MIA

Hello.

She listens.

Her knees buckle.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Mia makes her way down the aisle with her carry-on and a shoulder bag over her shoulder.

Liverpool's head sticks out from the shoulder bag.

Mia finds her seat, lifts her carry-on into the compartment above. An older MAN reaches up to Mia's carry-on.

MIA

I can do it, thank you.

The Man backs off, plops in his seat.

Mia climbs into the window seat. Slides her shoulder bag under the seat. Buckles the seatbelt.

She pulls a magazine out from the seat pocket in front of her, skims the pages, stops on one page.

ON MAGAZINE ARTICLE

A photograph of the Ecuadorian Rainforest with the words, "In the Amazon, the Hope of Medical Research."

BACK TO SCENE

She closes the magazine, shoves it back into the seat pocket.

Takes Liverpool from her shoulder bag. Holds him in her lap. Stares out the window.

**BEGIN MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - DAY

A luminous forest. A small grove of lilac trees in bloom.

The sound of a WATERFALL.

Mia searches the area.

MIA

Benny.

She catches a glimpse of Benny with a life-size gray, black and white Liverpool.

She hurries to him.

Benny and Liverpool disappear behind a large tree.

She searches for Benny and Liverpool, catches a glimpse of Benny and Liverpool near a waterfall.

MIA (CONT'D)

Benny.

Benny and Liverpool disappear under the fall.

Panicked, she runs to the fall, discovers Benny and life-size Liverpool above the waterfall on a ledge.

Liverpool gazes at Mia.

Benny disappears. Liverpool follows Benny.

The sound of T. Lux's crop duster BUZZES above.

Mia glances up.

T. Lux pilots the red crop duster biplane above the trees.

Benny, waves to her from the passenger seat behind T. Lux.

Life-size Liverpool brushes up against Mia.

The red crop duster biplane engine emits black smoke and flames.

Mia watches, paralyzed -- helpless.

The red crop duster biplane plummets toward the surface.

Liverpool lies down, covers his head with his paws.

CRASH. BOOM.

**END MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

The same Flight Attendant extends "goodbye's" at the airplane's entrance. Passengers hurry out.

Mia approaches the Flight Attendant.

MIA  
I'm connecting to Quayaquil.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
After you exit, gate eleven is  
three gates to your left.

MIA  
Eleven.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
Yes.

Mia steps off the airplane.

INT. MIAMI AIRPORT GATE ELEVEN - BOARDING AREA - NIGHT

Anxious Mia, takes out her cellphone, dials.

MIA  
What's happening?

Her chest tightens. She grasps for breaths.

MIA (CONT'D)  
I am breathing, Stephen! Sorry ...  
Yes, the plane is on time. So far.  
You're staying with him, right? ...  
I can rent a car ... I won't be too  
tired ... Who? ... Lyonel. Are you  
sure? ... Okay.

She hangs up, worried.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT ANNOUNCEMENT  
Flight eleven twelve to Quayaquil,  
Ecuador is now boarding.

Mia gets in line with other passengers.

INT. JOSÉ JOAQUIN DE OLMEDO AIRPORT - ECUADOR - NIGHT

Mia steps into the airport arrival gate. She sees Lyonel holding up a sign that reads: Mia Townsend.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Lyonel drives. Mia rests in the passenger side.

MIA  
How long?

LYONEL  
About two hours.

MIA  
Thank you for picking me up.

LYONEL  
No problem. Benny's a great kid.

Mia takes in the passing city lights.

INT. CAR - NIGHT - LATER

Lyonel drives through a pitch black remote area.

Mia stares out the window.

MIA  
Where are we?

LYONEL  
Not sure. Another thirty minutes.

MIA  
I want to go straight to the  
hospital.

LYONEL  
Of course.

POP. FLAP-FLAP-FLAP-FLAP-FLAP.

Mia startles, looks to Lyonel.

Lyonel pulls the car to the side, turns off the engine.

LYONEL (CONT'D)  
Minor setback.

They both climb out of the car.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Lyonel and Mia stare at a flat rear tire.

The sky opens up. A deluge.

LYONEL  
I'll take care of it.

Mia hurries into the car.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The rain rivers off the front window.

Mia opens her shoulder bag. Takes out tissues, wipes her face.

CLUNK. The car trunk shuts.

She pulls Liverpool out, sets him on the dashboard.

Liverpool's black glistening plastic eyes stare at her.

QUICK FLASHES

A mobile with stars and planets hang over infant Benny's crib. Infant Benny, on his back, gazes at Mia.

Mia holds up Liverpool.

Infant Benny stares at Liverpool.

Mia places Liverpool next to Benny.

BACK TO SCENE

Mia brings Liverpool to her lap.

MIA  
No reason to panic, Liverpool.

Lyonel jumps into the car, drenched.

LYONEL  
It's wet out there.

He wipes his face with his shirt, starts the engine.

LYONEL (CONT'D)  
Who's that?

MIA  
Liverpool. Benny's had him since he was a baby.

LYONEL

Cool. My favorite stuffed animal was a monkey. I think he ended up in a box in my parents' attic when I left for college.

MIA

We would never put Liverpool in a box. Would we, Liverpool?

Lyonel turns on the wipers.

LYONEL

I'll get you and Liverpool to Benny.

He pulls onto the road.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT

MIA hurries to the reception desk.

The Receptionist, A WOMAN, 40, looks up from the desk.

RECEPTIONIST

(in Spanish)

Hello. May I help you?

MIA

Yes. Do you speak English?

RECEPTIONIST

(heavy accent)

Yes.

MIA

My son, Benjamin Clay-Townsend is here.

RECEPTIONIST

Yes.

She looks at her computer.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Room eleven.

The Receptionist comes out from behind the desk.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Down the hall to the end, turn left.

Mia hurries down the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Harsh fluorescent lights. Mia hurries, passes several rooms, She arrives at room eleven, door half ajar.

Mia pushes the door open. Stephen sleeps in a chair.

She takes in Benny hooked up to an intravenous line, and a heart monitor with an oxygen tube under his nose.

Mia turns back into the hallway.

Slides to her knees.

Stephen comes out.

STEPHEN

Mia.

He embraces her. She stiffens.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

He's okay. He's stable.

MIA

He's not okay. He's thousands of miles from home in a strange hospital.

She pulls away from him.

MIA (CONT'D)

I knew. I knew. Why didn't I listen to myself.

STEPHEN

It's not your fault.

She steps into

BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Stephen watches Mia from the doorway go to Benny's side.

She strokes Benny's head, kisses his forehead.

MIA

My sweet boy.

STEPHEN  
You okay here?

She half nods.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
I'm going back to the hotel to  
check on everyone. Take a shower.  
I'll be back in a few hours.

He slumps out.

Mia places Liverpool by Benny's head. She listens to Benny's  
labored breathing.

Benny opens his eyes.

BENNY  
Mom?

MIA  
Hi, Sweetheart.

BENNY  
It's happening again.

MIA  
I know. Look who I brought.

She holds up Liverpool.

He tries to smile, closes his eyes.

MIA (CONT'D)  
We're going to get you home.

Benny sleeps.

Mia takes a folder and tape from her shoulder bag. Pulls out  
several of Benny's landscape drawings from the folder.

-- The orange and blue landscape with rolling hills.

-- An orange and blue landscape surrounded by space and stars.

### **MIA'S FANTASY FLASH**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - DAY

Meteorites rain down on T. Lux's red crop duster biplane.

Mia hovers under the wing with T. Lux.



BACK TO SCENE

She tapes the drawings to a wall.

INT. BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mia sleeps with her head on the bedside.

A NURSE, 30, steps in, checks Benny's vital signs.

Mia opens her eyes, pulls herself up.

NURSE  
Good morning.

MIA  
Good morning.

Mia fixes her hair.

NURSE  
(in Spanish; subtitled)  
You must be Benjamin's Mama.

MIA  
Yes. I would like to speak to the  
DR..

NURSE  
I'm sorry. My English ...

MIA  
(in Spanish; subtitled)  
I would like to speak with the DR..

NURSE  
Si. Wait, please.

The Nurse leaves.

Mia searches her shoulder bag. Pulls out her cellphone, dials.

Several RING TONES.

MIA  
Where are you?

She hangs up.

DR. MARIANA VERA, 45, compassionate, all business, steps in.

DR. VERA  
Hello. You are Mrs. Townsend,  
Benjamin's mother?

MIA  
Yes. How is he?

DR. VERA  
He needs treatment now.

MIA  
Are you an oncologist?

DR. VERA  
Yes.

MIA  
I would like you to speak with our  
DR. at home.

DR. VERA  
Yes, I can do that. What is the  
doctor's name and number?

MIA  
Dr. Mark Burns.

DR. VERA  
Mark Burns. We interned together in  
Boston.

MIA  
Oh my God.

DR. VERA  
Pediatric oncology is a small  
world. I will call him immediately.

Dr. Vera hurries out.

LATER

The Nurse checks sleeping Benny's vital signs.

Mia, worry mixed with anger, paces.

Stephen watches the nurse.

The Nurse opens a window.

NURSE  
(in Spanish; subtitled)  
Fresh air.

STEPHEN

Gracias.

The Nurse leaves.

Mia gazes out the window.

MIA

Why didn't you tell her?

STEPHEN

What?

MIA

About Dr. Mark. When you brought  
Benny here.

STEPHEN

Let's not do this right here.

He gets up. They step into the

HALLWAY

Stephen paces.

STEPHEN

Maybe they were too busy trying to  
stabilize Benny.

MIA

Time's precious.

Mia looks into the room at Benny.

INT. BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Benny opens his eyes, delirious. He watches Mia and Stephen  
argue in the hall. Their images go in and out of focus.

He holds Liverpool, gazes at the drawings taped to the wall.  
The colors in the drawing undulate.

**BEGIN BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - DAY

Benny and full-size Liverpool stroll through the luminous forest.

They come to the forest's edge, step into a

MEADOW

Benny runs into a cobalt blue field.

Liverpool stands at the field's edge.

BENNY  
Come on, Liverpool.

Liverpool dashes across the field.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Where are you going?

Liverpool disappears into the trees.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Liverpool, come back!

Benny runs to the trees.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Liverpool!

Benny peers through the trees.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Liverpool!

Benny plops down.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Where'd you go?

Hundreds of dandelion fluff carry seeds on the air.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Please come back.

Benny pulls himself up, peers into the forest.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Liverpool, come back!

He slogs across the field.

Liverpool runs into the field, jumps on Benny.

They tumble together. Liverpool wrestles Benny to the ground, climbs on top of him. Benny giggles.

Liverpool licks Benny with a long pink cloth tongue.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Okay. Okay.

Liverpool rolls off Benny. Benny sits up.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I have to talk to you about something.

Liverpool's black plastic eyes glisten -- blink.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I have to say goodbye soon ... You want to go with me? I thought Mom and Dad would want you to stay with them.

Liverpool blinks.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Oh, that's cool. Maybe someone will find us like I found the skeletons.

Liverpool's black plastic eyes glisten -- blink.

The dandelion fluff lands around them, embed into the ground.

One by one, embedded dandelion fluff grow up from the ground throughout the meadow into hundreds of Liverpools.

Benny gazes in awe.

All the Liverpools' glistening black plastic eyes blink together once.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Whoa.

Life-size Liverpool nudges Benny.

BENNY (CONT'D)

What? ... A boat of fire? Like Viking warriors. Awesome. I wonder where our spirits will go.

Life-size Liverpool runs behind Benny. Sticks his head between Benny's legs -- flips Benny up onto his back.

They gallop around the field.

The other Liverpools float up, disappear into the clouds.

EXT. LAKE - MAGIC HOUR

A brilliant setting sun sinks behind the horizon.

Mia and Stephen hold each other at the lake's edge.

A boat in a blaze of fire floats into the middle.

Benny and Liverpool's spirits rise out of the flames and float up to the sky.

**END BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Benny, in bed asleep, holds Liverpool on his chest.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Mia and Stephen outside Benny's room.

MIA

I want to take him home where they  
know him.

Dr. Vera approaches them.

DR. VERA

I was able to go over Benjamin's  
medical records with DR. Burns. We  
both agree that Benny needs to  
start treatment immediately.

MIA

He has to stay here?

DR. VERA

It's not a good idea to move him,  
especially on a long trip back to  
Boston.

Mia struggles with her composure.

DR. VERA (CONT'D)

This is best for Benjamin. DR.  
Burns said to call him anytime.

MIA

He prefers Benny to Benjamin.

DR. VERA  
We will do everything in our power  
to help Benny.

STEPHEN  
Thank you, DR.

DR. VERA  
We'll get started today, yes?

Stephen nods.

DR. VERA (CONT'D)  
Mrs. Townsend.

Mia nods.

Dr. Vera steps out.

STEPHEN  
Why don't you come back to the  
hotel and rest?

MIA  
You can go. I know you have to take  
care of your students.

STEPHEN  
Mia. You'll be more helpful to him  
if you're rested.

Mia steps into

BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Stephen follows, goes to Benny's bed, touches the top of  
Benny's head.

STEPHEN  
All right. I'll see you later.

He heads out.

Mia rests next to Benny.

Benny, still asleep, kicks his legs, pulls the covers down.

Mia notices Benny's bluish dusty-colored hands and lips. His  
bluish lips punctuate a pale feverish face.

Benny's eyes pop open.

BENNY  
We want a boat of fire.

MIA  
What, Honey?

BENNY  
Where am I?

MIA  
You're in the hospital.

Recognition crosses Benny's face.

MIA (CONT'D)  
How are you feeling?

BENNY  
Did you see the skeletons?

MIA  
I'll see them when you take me.

Benny looks into Mia's eyes.

BENNY  
I don't want to do this anymore.

MIA  
I know.

BENNY  
They're going to give me the  
medicine again.

MIA  
Yes.

BENNY  
I don't want it.

MIA  
Oh Benny, it's the only way to beat  
this.

BENNY  
I know but--

MIA  
What, Honey?

He gives her a dead-serious stare.



BENNY  
Not this time.

Mia's face turns white.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Don't be mad, okay?

MIA  
How could I be mad at you?

BENNY  
I don't want to feel crappy  
anymore.

MIA  
You'll die if you don't take the  
medicine.

BENNY  
Yes.

MIA  
Yes?! You want to die?!

BENNY  
I can tell. The medicine won't  
matter.

Mia turns away, holds back tears.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
We shouldn't interfere with nature.

The sound of T. Lux's crop duster engine floats through the  
open window.

MIA  
Do you hear that?

She listens.

MIA (CONT'D)  
It's T. Lux's plane flying over us.

BENNY  
Who's T. Lux?

MIA  
He's a pilot in one of those old  
planes. The kind that fly in  
carnivals and air shows. They spin  
and twist and dive. Sometimes they  
write in the sky.

BENNY

I know what you're doing.

MIA

You're taking the medicine. You're going to do what the doctors tell us.

BENNY

No!

MIA

Yes, you are!

BENNY

Mom!

MIA

You're not going anywhere. We're not going to let you die.

She hugs him.

**BEGIN MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - DAY

Mia watches T. Lux work on his red crop duster biplane's engine.

Tree bark covers the hole in the wing. Tied off ropes, hold the bark in place.

MIA

A simple black line on white terrifies me.

T. Lux jumps out of his skin.

T.LUZ

Whoa!

He sees Mia.

T. LUX

You again. Why don't you try sneakin' up on a soul?

MIA

I know who you are.

T. LUX

You're three bats short in that  
belfry of yours.

MIA

Paul Klee. Benny's favorite artist.  
Kettledrummer. The Kettledrummer.  
He likes Paul Klee's stick figures  
and child-like paintings.

T. LUX

You gotta point?

MIA

I saw Kettledrummer in an art book  
after Benny's first diagnosis.

T. Lux loosens a nut under the engine.

Oil spills out.

T. LUX

Blast it.

He tightens the nut.

MIA

Some sounds frighten me. Timpani  
drums go right through my heart. I  
want to run and hide when I hear  
them. I don't go to the symphony.

T. LUX

You're distracting me.

MIA

Your plane engine sounds like  
timpani. Benny has such a rich  
imagination. And this place, this  
is his place. It's not an accident.

T. LUX

I don't know what you're talking  
about.

She glares at him.

MIA

Stay away from my son.

T. Lux climbs into the cockpit.

MIA (CONT'D)

Stay way from Benny.

The engine starts up. SPUTTERS. The propeller spins.

**END MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

BACK TO SCENE

In Benny's hospital room, Mia watches Benny mumble in his sleep.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Stephen works on a laptop at a small table.

Mia dries her hair with a towel.

STEPHEN

I've arranged flights for all my students to return early.

MIA

Will you take me back to the hospital?

STEPHEN

Why don't you get some sleep?

MIA

I'll sleep when our son is better.

She steps into the bathroom with the towel.

Stephen runs a cable from his camera up to the computer. Uploads photographs.

LATER

Mia steps out of the bathroom with her hair up.

MIA

We have to talk about what Benny said.

STEPHEN

There's nothing to talk about. He's eleven.

MIA

Dignity.

STEPHEN

What?

MIA

Do you have to do that now?

Stephen, reluctant, frustration on his face, closes the cover. Looks at Mia.

MIA (CONT'D)

We should talk as a family.

STEPHEN

No.

MIA

No?

STEPHEN

It's not up for discussion.

MIA

You're being a jerk.

STEPHEN

What, Mia? Are you really entertaining the idea of stopping his treatment?

MIA

Of course not.

STEPHEN

Then what are we doing?

MIA

He's going to be twelve. He's made a decision about his life. We can't ignore him.

STEPHEN

We're not ignoring him. We're ignoring the absurd notion of giving up.

He turns back to the computer, flips open the cover.

MIA

It's easy for us to say.

STEPHEN

He'll fight like he did the first time. We'll help him through it.

MIA

What if he doesn't fight?

STEPHEN

Sounds like you don't want to fight.

She slams the lid of his computer down.

MIA

Don't you dare say that to me. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't-

STEPHEN

Stop!

She trembles with rage.

Stephen opens the computer.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I have to finish this.

MIA

If Benny gives up, it won't matter what the doctors do for him.

She glares at him.

MIA (CONT'D)

Stephen!

She grabs her purse.

MIA (CONT'D)

I'm disgusted with you.

She heads for the door.

STEPHEN

Where are you going?

MIA

To the hospital. Where else?

STEPHEN

Wait. I'll take you.

MIA

No. Take care of your students. That seems to be the priority.

She SLAMS the door behind her.

Stephen stares at the door, stunned.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Benny lies in bed. He stares at the landscape drawings taped to the wall.

The walls and ceiling turn orange. The floor turns blue.

**BEGIN BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - DAY

Benny, arms extended like a skydiver, glides down toward the orange and blue landscape.

BENNY

Awesome!

The ground closes in.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Wait. No parachute!

His body speeds toward the ground. Closes his eyes. Hits the ground -- bounces up. Opens eyes.

BENNY (CONT'D)

What?

Comes back down. Bounces. Lands on his feet, delighted.

BENNY (CONT'D)

How can I do that again?

He jumps up and down, trampoline-like under his feet.

The albino robin flies past him.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I know you.

Benny runs after the robin.

The albino robin lands on a large rock.

Benny approaches with care.

The robin CHIRPS. Flies off.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Hey, where are you going?

Benny watches the robin fly away.

He rests on the rock. Looks around. Sees a dig site in front of him, goes to it.

Gazes at The Lover skeletons. The skeletons animate. Rise up.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Whoa.

They CLICK-CLACK toward a ridge.

RIDGE

Benny follows the Lovers Skeletons. They stop and stare out.

Benny steps near them.

One skeleton points toward a distant forest.

Benny sees T. Lux's Crop duster at the edge of the forest.

The skeletons CLICK-CLACK away from Benny.

Benny watches them. Turns back, heads toward T. Lux's red crop duster biplane.

FOREST EDGE

A large red toolbox on the ground. T. Lux works under the red crop duster biplane. He patches a crack in the chassis.

Benny bounces toward the red crop duster biplane.

BENNY

Hi.

T. Lux, startles, bumps his head.

T. LUX

Ow.

Rubs his head. Looks out from under the red crop duster biplane.

T. LUX (CONT'D)

Who are you?

Benny bounces up and down.

BENNY

Benny.



T. LUX  
Stay still, will ya? You're making  
me crazy.

BENNY  
I can't help it. It's like a  
trampoline.

Benny bounces around.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Woo hoo!

T. Lux climbs out from under.

Runs to Benny, grasps him by the shoulders, holds him down.

T. LUX  
Stop.

BENNY  
Okay.

He lets Benny go.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
What's wrong with your plane?

T. LUX  
Won't stay up in the air.

BENNY  
Why don't you fix it?

T. LUX  
Been tryin'.

T. Lux crawls under the front of the red crop duster biplane.

BENNY  
Can I help?

T. LUX  
You know mechanical things about  
planes?

BENNY  
No. I could hand you tools.

T. LUX  
Hand me that wrench, then.

BENNY  
Thanks, uhm-

T. LUX  
T. Lux. Lucas T. Lux.

Benny reaches into the tool box.

BENNY  
My Dad has a red tool box.

Pulls out a wrench. Hands it to T. Lux.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Here you go, Mr. T. Lux.

T. LUX  
You have a mother named Mia?

BENNY  
How'd you know?

T. LUX  
Connecting the dots, Kid.

T. Lux loosens nuts around the propeller.

BENNY  
Did you meet her at the hospital?

T. LUX  
Never been to no hospital.

BENNY  
This isn't earth, is it?

He bounces around the red crop duster biplane.

T. LUX  
Kid, I can't concentrate if you act like an out-of-control Ping-Pong ball.

BENNY  
Ping, ping, ping, POOOOONG!

He takes a giant leap. Comes back down. Falls to the ground.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Ha ha.

T. LUX  
C'mere.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
Help me with this.

Benny strolls over.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
Take that end.

Benny and T. Lux each take a side of the propeller.

BENNY  
What are we doing?

T. LUX  
We're gonna take the propeller off  
so I can investigate the mechanism.  
Ready?

Benny nods.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
It's a little heavy. One - two -  
three.

They lift the propeller off, lower it to the ground.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
Good job, kid.

T. Lux takes a small step-ladder by the side of the red crop duster biplane.

BENNY  
Are you a carnival flyer?

T. LUX  
No, kid. You ask a lot of  
questions.

BENNY  
Usually I don't.

T. Lux places the step-ladder in front of the red crop duster biplane. Steps up. Studies the mechanism.

T. LUX  
Hand me that ratchet.

Benny reaches into the tool box. Pulls out a ratchet wrench.

BENNY  
This?

T. LUX  
That's it.

Benny hands it to him.

T. Lux CRANKS the ratchet. He stops.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
Let me ask you a question.

BENNY  
Okay.

T. LUX  
You recognize this place?

BENNY  
No.

T. LUX  
You draw?

BENNY  
Yeah.

T. LUX  
You draw this place?

BENNY  
No.

Benny sees a large metal hex nut on the ground. Picks it up.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Does this belong in the engine.

T. Lux scratches his head.

**END BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Mia strides to the taxi stand.

Lyonel steps out of the hotel, sees Mia.

LYONEL  
Mrs. Townsend.

He hurries to her.

LYONEL (CONT'D)  
How's Benny?

MIA  
I'm on my way to him now.

LYONEL  
I can give you a ride.

MIA  
If it's not out of your way.

Lyonel leads the way.

INT. CAR - DAY

Lyonel drives.

Mia stares out the window -- a landscape blur passes.

LYONEL  
We'll be passing the dig site on  
the way. Do you want to see what  
Benny discovered?

MIA  
I saw photos.

LYONEL  
Not the same. It's pretty special.

MIA  
I told Benny I'd wait until he  
showed me.

LYONEL  
I know how all this goes.

She looks at him, confused.

LYONEL (CONT'D)  
Remission. Ten years now. I think  
I'm safe.

MIA  
That's wonderful.

LYONEL  
Yeah. Benny's a fighter.

Mia wells up.

MIA  
Maybe I should see it.

Lyonel turns to Mia with an encouraging smile.

EXT. DIG SITE - DAY

Mia and Lyonel gaze at The Lover skeletons.

Laura, Valerie, and other students approach Mia.

LAURA  
Benny's Mom?

Mia nods.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
Tell Benny we're thinking of him.

Mia's cellphone RINGS.

Mia pulls the phone from her shoulder bag, answers.

MIA  
(in phone)  
When Stephen?

She hangs up, distraught.

MIA (CONT'D)  
Can you take me now, Lyonel?

LYONEL  
Sure.

She hurries away with Lyonel.

The students watch with concern.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mia steps in.

Dr. Vera looks at Benny's bluish dust-colored hands. She checks his feet.

Mia holds herself up against the door.

DR. VERA  
This is very sudden. Benny's blood  
cell count skyrocketed overnight.  
We need to do a CT scan.

MIA  
Please do whatever you can.

DR. VERA  
We might need to induce a coma.

Mia looks at Dr. Vera, terrified.

The Nurse comes in, unhooks Benny from the monitors, wheels his bed out.

DR. VERA (CONT'D)  
We will do everything in our power  
for Benny.

She touches Mia's arm and follows Benny out.

Mia collapses in a chair, in shock.

She sees the blue and orange landscape drawing on the floor, picks it up, puts it back on the wall.

Stephen runs in.

STEPHEN  
Where is he?

MIA  
Oh, Stephen.

They embrace.

INT. HOSPITAL - CT SCAN ROOM - DAY

Benny lies on the motorized CT scan platform. It rises and slides into the scanner's donut hole.

**BEGIN BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - DAY

Benny lies under T. Lux's red crop duster biplane wing.

He inspects the mended hole in the wing from the meteorite.

BENNY  
Maybe I'm dreaming.

T. LUX  
This ain't a dream, Kid.

T. Lux greases the propellor mechanism with an oil can.

BENNY  
Maybe we're dead.

He climbs out from under the wing.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
I was sick. Maybe I died already.

T. LUX  
Listen, Kid. I'm not dead. And if  
you're dead, I'm talking to a  
ghost.

T. Lux wipes excess oil from the red crop duster biplane's nose.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
You know what the problem with that  
is?

BENNY  
No, Sir.

T. LUX  
I don't believe in that  
supernatural stuff. I'll tell you  
what I do believe in.

BENNY  
What?

T. LUX  
What's happening now. In this  
moment. And this one.

BENNY  
And this one, and this one, and  
this one.

Benny bounces.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Trampolineeeeeeeen!

SWISH CLICK. SWISH CLICK.

T. LUX  
Oh, Zwicky.

Benny stops jumping.

BENNY  
You're not very happy, are you?

T. LUX  
I've had better days.

BENNY  
Me too. I've had better days. But  
this place is awesome.



T. LUX  
Help me with the propeller.

They each take one end of the propeller.

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
Not so awesome when you're stuck  
here.

BENNY  
Good thing I came along. Right, Mr.  
T. Lux? To help you get unstuck.

They lift and fit it into place.

T. LUX  
Call me Lucas. Hand me that ratchet  
again.

BENNY  
Does your plane have a name?

Benny hands him the ratchet.

T. LUX  
The Valkyrie.

He tightens bolts around the propeller.

BENNY  
Valerie?

T. LUX  
Valkyrie.

BENNY  
What's that?

T. LUX  
A female spirit that chooses who  
dies in battle.

SWISH CLICK. SWISH CLICK.

BENNY  
If I was in a battle I'd choose to  
die myself. I wouldn't let a girl  
choose it for me.

SWISH CLICK. SWISH CLICK.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
 Take me. I'm ready to die.  
 (to T. Lux)  
 Like this, Lucas.

Benny puffs out his chest. Throws his arms back. Lifts up head.

T. LUX  
 You're as wacky as your mother.

SWISH CLICK. SWISH CLICK. (PREL-LAP)

**END BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Benny in a medically induced coma.

SWISH CLICK. SWISH CLICK. A ventilator helps him breath.

Mia sways by Benny's bedside.

**BEGIN BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - DAY

T. Lux tosses the ratchet wrench into the toolbox.

T. LUX  
 Let's take a break. We got some  
 thinking to do.

T. Lux rests on the ground in front of the red crop duster biplane. Benny plops down next to T. Lux.

BENNY  
 What do you write in the sky?

T. LUX  
 "Gus's Central Diner now open."

A neon sign appears in the sky:

"Gus's Central Diner Now Open."

BENNY  
 Whoa.

T. LUX  
 Or, "New Instant Folgers tastes  
 good as fresh perked."

A second sign appears:

"New Instant Folgers Tastes Good As Fresh Perked."

T. LUX (CONT'D)  
 And crop dusting. Used to spray the  
 farms, and you know what? I'm the  
 last skywriter in the universe.

BENNY  
 No way.

T. Lux takes a drink of water from a canister on the ground.  
 He yawns, puts the canister down.

T. LUX  
 Have some water.

He closes his eyes.

Benny takes a drink of water from the canister.

T. Lux snores.

Benny climbs into the red crop duster biplane's

COCKPIT

He grabs the steering wheel.

BENNY  
 Look Mom, no hands.

He throws his hands in the air.

SWISH. CLICK. SWISH. CLICK. (PRE-LAP)

**END BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM (BACK TO SCENE)

SWISH CLICK. SWISH CLICK. The ventilator breathes for Benny.

Mia kneels next to Benny's head.

MIA

We love you so much, Honey. Don't  
give up.

She kisses the back of his hand.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Stephen waits with Lyonel and several other students.

LYONEL

What can we do, Professor?

STEPHEN

I don't know.

LYONEL

When I was sick, it was really  
helpful to know that people were  
thinking of me.

STEPHEN

Benny knows.

LYONEL

Can we see him?

Stephen touches Lyonel's shoulder, paces.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mia holds Benny's hand.

Stephen steps in.

STEPHEN

Mia. The students came to see  
Benny.

MIA

It's not a good time.

STEPHEN

They're flying back tonight.

Mia places Liverpool by Benny's head.

**BEGIN BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - MEADOW - DAY

Benny strolls with life size Liverpool.

BENNY

Maybe there's a place in the universe where dead children go.

Liverpool blinks his plastic black eyes.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Yes. And their stuffed animals. Oh, Zwicky! Maybe we go to the eleventh bazillion billionth dimension. Someplace impossible to picture.

Liverpool blinks.

BENNY (CONT'D)

No, I'm not afraid to die.

Liverpool rubs his head in Benny's chest.

Benny scratches Liverpool's head.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Mom and Dad are afraid enough for us.

Liverpool rolls on his back.

BENNY (CONT'D)

It's okay. Everyone makes it out to be scary 'cause they don't know. 'Cause it's hard to say good-bye and people love each other and we don't want to stop feeling that.

Liverpool jumps on Benny.

Licks Benny's face with his pink cloth tongue.

BENNY (CONT'D)

(laughing)  
Stop, stop.

Liverpool jumps off, runs around Benny.

**END BENNY'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The Students around Benny's bed. Lyonel moves close to Benny.

Mia and Stephen watch from the back.

LYONEL

Benny. We're all here. I know what  
you're going through.

Benny unconscious.

LYONEL (CONT'D)

You're a fighter. I know you are.  
Don't give up.

Laura touches Benny's hand.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mia, in a chair, sleeps with her head on Benny's bed.

Stephen steps in, sees the drawing on the floor. Picks it up.

Mia opens her eyes.

MIA

It fell again.

Stephen puts the drawing on the bed.

Mia stares at the drawing.

**BEGIN MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

EXT. ORANGE AND BLUE LANDSCAPE - DAY

Mia sees Benny and Liverpool by T. Lux's red crop duster biplane.

BENNY

I'm sorry, Liverpool. T. Lux says  
there's no room for you. You're  
better off with Mom and Dad,  
anyway.

Liverpool lowers his head.

Cloth tears form in Liverpool's eyes.

Benny hugs him.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
It's okay, Liverpool.

The albino robin lands near the red crop duster biplane.  
The sound of the red crop duster biplane engine starts up.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
I have to go.

Mia waves, tries to move toward Benny -- feet won't move.  
Liverpool chases after the albino robin.  
The albino robin flies up.  
Liverpool leaps into the air, grabs it in his mouth.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Liverpool, no!

Benny runs to Liverpool.

T. LUX (O.S.)  
Let's go, Kid.

BENNY  
Spit it out.

Liverpool stares at Benny with the bird in his mouth.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Liverpool!

Benny pries Liverpool's jaw open. Reaches in, pulls out the half-conscious albino robin.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
She has a family, Liverpool. What  
would they do without her?

He places the albino robin on the ground. It trembles.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
(to Liverpool)  
I know why you did that. I'm still  
going with Lucas.

Liverpool lowers his head.

The albino robin opens its eyes.

Dandelion fluff floats from the air to the ground.

MIA

Benny.

T. Lux sees something in the distance. Climbs out of the cockpit, brings his binoculars to his eyes.

THROUGH BINOCULARS

A meteorite storm heads toward them.

BACK TO SCENE

T. Lux brings the binoculars down, climbs into the cockpit.

T. LUX

We gotta go, kid.

Benny looks at everyone.

ALBINO ROBIN

Nobody wants to say goodbye to someone they love.

The albino robin perks up.

T. LUX

Kid. Benny. You comin' or what?

MIA

Benny, please.

Benny hesitates.

The meteorite shower moves closer.

T. LUX

It's now or never.

T. Lux revs the engine.

Benny looks at Mia, Liverpool, and T. Lux.

BENNY

I have to go.

Benny climbs onto the seat behind T. Lux.

MIA

Come down from there.

BENNY

I can't.



MIA  
Why not?

BENNY  
I don't want to.

T. Lux turns on the radio: The Ride of the Valkyries plays.

MIA  
Don't leave me, Benny.

BENNY  
I've made up my mind. I'm going  
with Lucas.

MIA  
Listen to me, Sweetheart. He  
doesn't have your best interest at  
heart.

BENNY  
I like him.

MIA  
I know. But where is he taking you?

BENNY  
To the carnival.

MIA  
I don't want you to go. Liverpool  
doesn't want you to go. Sarah  
wouldn't want you to go.

BENNY  
Maybe I'll find Sarah at the  
carnival.

MIA  
We want you here with us.

She steps in front of the red crop duster biplane.

**END MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM (BACK TO SCENE)

Mia rests her head next to Benny.

MIA  
(whispers)  
Stay with us. Please.

Stephen looks at a drawing taped to the wall.

ON DRAWING

Benny and Stephen play catch with a baseball on an blue ground and orange sky.

BACK TO SCENE

Mia sees Stephen stare at Benny's drawing.

He wells up.

Mia takes Stephen's hand.

**BEGIN MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

Mia and Stephen together. A baseball rolls along the ground next to T. Lux's red crop duster biplane.

Mia and Stephen appears.

STEPHEN

Benny. I want to tell you something.

T. LUX

Can't wait no longer, Kid.

STEPHEN

The greatest moment in my life was when I held you in my arms after you were born.

T. Lux engages the red crop duster biplane's throttle.

MIA

No. No. T. Lux, stop. Don't take him from me.

The red crop duster biplane rolls away, gains speed.

The meteorites rain down.

The red crop duster biplane lifts off.

A meteorite slams into the red crop duster biplane propeller.

MIA (CONT'D)

No!

CRASH. BOOM. T. Lux's red crop duster biplane crashes.

Mia and Stephen run to the red crop duster biplane.

The engine in flames -- black smoke.

T. Lux unconscious in the cockpit.

Benny half-conscious in the passenger seat behind T. Lux.

Stephen climbs onto the wing.

He pulls Benny out of the red crop duster biplane, hands him down to Mia.

Mia carries Benny away from the red crop duster biplane.

Stephen tries to pull T. Lux from the cockpit.

Mia rests Benny on the ground.

Flames lick up -- overwhelm Stephen.

Mia looks back at Stephen.

MIA (CONT'D)

Stephen, get away from there.

Stephen jumps off the red crop duster biplane.

The flames engulf the red crop duster biplane.

Stephen backs away, kneels next to Mia and Benny. They look at the red crop duster biplane ablaze.

The red crop duster biplane dematerializes, ghost-like.

Benny opens his eyes.

BENNY

Mom?

MIA

Oh my god. Oh my god.

She hugs him. Liverpool runs to Benny, licks him with his pink cloth tongue.

**END MIA'S FANTASY SEQUENCE**

INT. BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Stephen and Mia, each hold one of Benny's hands. The breathing tube no longer down Benny's throat.

Mia hears the sound of T. Lux's red crop duster biplane.

The sound fades away.

INT. BENNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dr. Vera checks Benny's vital signs.

Mia and Stephen watch.

Benny opens his eyes.

DR. VERA  
Hello, young man.

Benny smiles.

Mia squeezes Stephens hand.

Dr. Vera steps aside.

Mia goes to Benny.

BENNY  
(soft)  
Mom.

MIA  
Hi, Sweetheart.

She kisses his forehead.

Stephen moves close to Mia and Benny.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FIELD - DAY (SIX YEARS LATER)

The Principal stands at a podium.

PRINCIPAL  
Benjamin Clay-Townsend.

Benny, 18, steps onto the stage. Shakes the Principal's hand, collects his diploma.

He looks into the audience.

AUDIENCE

Mia and Stephen jump up.

MIA/STEPHEN

Yay, Benny! Wooooooooooooooooo!

Mia waves Liverpool in her hand.

Benny gives them a big smile.

A skywriter soars above the field finishes writing the "!" on  
"Congratulations!"

Benny and the students throw their caps into the air.

FADE OUT.

**THE END**