

DENTS

By

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The screen is dark. The soft muffled playing of a guitar begins.

The guitar's headstock fades in, pegs and posts gleaming. A small cross gently swings from a thin chain wrapped around a peg.

Pulling back, the entire guitar comes into view. The fast-moving fingers of JENNIFER "JENNY" BENSON fly across the strings.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Jenny is sitting at the kitchen table. Her father, WILLIAM "BILL" BENSON, walks in.

BILL

That was her favorite song. You play it as well as she did.

JENNY

Thanks.

BILL

She loved takin' old hymns and juicin' 'em up. (laughs) "Holy Goldy Oldies", she called 'em.

Bill walks by, patting her shoulder.

BILL (O.S.)

Why don't you play Mom's other guitar? The acoustic doesn't need a plug-in.

JENNY

This was her favorite. I feel close to her with this one.

Jenny stops playing and snuffles.

JENNY (CONT'D)

It's been over two years and I still cry.

BILL

Me, too. We all miss her.

JENNY

Dad, sometimes I think I hear Sammy cryin' in his room.

Bill wipes an eye.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Yeah. Sammy has his own way of  
workin' through things. I'll, uh,  
talk to him.

Their eyes lock for a moment. Bill stares at the ground.

BILL (CONT'D)

I-I wish your mother were  
here. She'd know what to  
do. She'd make it better.

Jenny lays the guitar down.

JENNY

It'll be okay, Dad.

BILL

I just wish I had the money to fix  
your amp, hon. But with the  
medical bills, the downsizing-

Jenny walks around to rest her head on his shoulder.

JENNY (INTERRUPTING)

It's okay-

BILL

This new job is so far away and  
pays so much less. (beat) But God  
will provide.

Jenny's eyes narrow as the moment disappears.

JENNY

Then He better do it quick.

She straightens up and walks away.

BILL

Jen, don't-

JENNY (INTERRUPTING)

'Night, Dad.

Bill sighs as Jenny leaves.

BILL

Good night, honey.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - SAME DAY

Jenny almost slams the door. She yanks back the covers just a little too hard. Climbing in, she lies scowling at the ceiling.

JENNY

Okay, God. Here's the deal. If  
You are really there, I only need  
two things. A car - and my Mom  
back.

Jenny quickly rubs her eyes.

JENNY CONT'D

You're real to Dad. You were real  
to Mom. Be real to me.

Jenny reaches over and turns off the light.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING - NEXT DAY

An irritating buzz fills the room. The airborne hand of Jenny appears, descending on the clock/radio.

C.G.I. OF THE UNIVERSE

The vastness of space. The barely visible Hand of God moves majestically through the stars towards a small asteroid lazily gliding by.

INT. BEDROOM EARLY MORNING - SAME DAY

The airborne hand smacks the clock repeatedly. Silence and a loud groan.

C.G.I. OF THE UNIVERSE

The Hand of God delicately catches the little asteroid between thumb and forefinger. The asteroid begins to glow with a crackling blue light. The Hand slides the forefinger over it into flicking position, takes aim, and flings the asteroid away.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING - SAME DAY

The bedroom door explodes inward to reveal the pajama-clad figure of **SAMUEL "SAMMY" BENSON**, her 8 year old brother, standing like Superman. He cups his hands to his mouth.

SAMMY

Get up, Jenny! Rise and shine!

Bill's voice floats down the hallway.

BILL (O.S.)

What else, Sammy?

Sammy looks perplexed, then the epiphany dawns. He arches his back, taking a huge breath.

C.G.I. OF THE UNIVERSE

The little asteroid ricochets violently off a huge asteroid and blazes off again.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING - SAME DAY

Sammy jackknives his body and screams.

SAMMY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JENNY!!!

He drops his hands, revealing a huge smile - just nanoseconds before the hurtling pillow erases him. He disappears with a thud.

A rumpled Jenny sits on the edge of the bed, bleary-eyed and bed-headed. She yawns.

JENNY

Thanks, Sammy.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME DAY - MORNING

Sammy sits at the table holding his nose. Bill slides pancakes onto Sammy's plate as Jenny walks in.

SAMMY

But she hit me really hard, Dad!

BILL

And what did I tell you the last time you woke her up like that?

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY  
You told me to duck.

BILL  
And?

Sammy sighs and looks off to the side.

SAMMY  
I forgot to duck.

BILL  
Pancakes, Jen?

JENNY  
Ummm. Yeah. Thanks.

Jenny plops down as Bill bends down to look her in the eye. He cocks his head towards Sammy. Jenny sighs.

JENNY  
Sorry, Sammy. I put a little too much on that one. Didn't mean to hurt you.

Sammy looks up with a grin.

SAMMY  
That's okay, Jenny. Happy Birthday!

BILL  
Happy birthday, honey. Wow. Eighteen. Your mom would be so proud.

JENNY  
And how da ya know that, Dad?

BILL  
Because I am. Very proud.

Jenny smiles, reaching for her fork.

BILL  
Wait! I almost forgot!

Bill runs over to a cupboard. The top shelf is filled with used "Number Candles". He grabs a One, an Eight, and a book of matches. Sammy sings "Happy Birthday" as Bill plants the candles on Jenny's pancakes.

SAMMY  
Blow 'em out, Jenny!

Jenny smiles and gives a quick puff.

C.G.I. OF THE UNIVERSE

The asteroid sizzles close to a planet, banks around it, and roars on.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME DAY - MORNING

SAMMY (CONT'D)  
Awright! Whadcha wish for?

BILL  
She can't tell us, Sammy, or it won't come true.

Jenny scowls.

JENNY  
It doesn't matter one way or the other.

BILL  
Now, hon -

JENNY  
Wishing and praying. They're the same thing, Dad. I wished for a car and I prayed that Mom would get better. Nada twice over.

Sammy looks at Jenny. Bill clears his throat.

BILL  
I know you -

Jenny holds up a hand. Bill sighs, then nods. Sammy breaks the awkward silence by sliding a small, poorly-wrapped box across the table to Jenny. She opens it.

JENNY  
But, Sammy, it's your favorite. I-I can't take this.

SAMMY  
I want you to have 'im. You can put 'im in your car when you get one. Kinda like a mascot or somethin'.

(CONTINUED)

Jenny holds up a smiling blue plastic whale with a large dent in its side.

JENNY

This is really cool, Sammy. I'll take good care of 'im.

Sammy looks at Bill, giggling.

JENNY

What?

BILL

Here.

A small wrapped box slides across the table. Jenny picks it up and shakes it. She unwraps it and pulls out a set of car keys.

JENNY

Oh, Dad! I dunno what to say!  
Where's it at?

BILL

It's out by the barn. But -

Jenny shoves her chair back. Sammy jumps up and flies around the table to bounce off Jenny as she stands up. He disappears with a thud.

BILL (CONT'D)

Now, honey, it isn't what you expect. It's more of a project. We'll have to get it running first -

He's talking to an empty kitchen.

#### C.G.I. OF THE UNIVERSE

The asteroid hurtles towards Earth. Hitting the atmosphere, its blue energy turns a glowing red. The asteroid explodes into a shower of small, red-hot stones which quickly change back to a glowing blue.

#### C.G.I. OF THE CLOUD

The stones disappear into a huge anvil-headed cloud, making it flash with blue lightning.



EXT. SIDE OF THE BARN - SAME DAY - MORNING

Jenny and Sammy skid to a stop. Both are quiet.

SAMMY

Wow. Your very own car, Jenny.

JENNY

Yeah.

SAMMY

And it's blue. Like your whale.

The shot swings to a very dusty, faded blue 1965 Rambler American (the "Car"). Missing hubcaps and spotted with rust, it looks tired. Very tired.

JENNY(O.S.)

Yeah. It's blue. (beat) And it's  
(beat) old.

SAMMY

C'mon. Let's start it up!

Sammy bolts to the passenger side. He leaps into the front seat, producing a cloud of dust. Jenny opens her door slowly. Fanning her hand she slides behind the wheel. The rear view mirror has a dusty disco ball hanging from it.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Start it (cough) up, Jenny!

She turns the key. The starter growls. She pumps the pedal and turns the key. More growling. She stomps the pedal furiously then turns the key. **KABOOM!** Jenny throws her arms over her head and ducks. Sammy goes up, comes down, and falls under the dash. Black smoke billows out of the exhaust.

SAMMY (O.S.)(CONT'D)

Might need some work.

JENNY

Ya think, Sam?!

Bill's face appears in the driver's window. The kids jump again.

BILL

I traded Jeremy Ober some  
bookkeeping work for the car. He's  
had it in his barn "*since disco  
died*".

(CONTINUED)

Pointing at the hanging disco ball, Bill's voice gets softer.

BILL (CONT'D)

I know you hate riding the school bus with the little kids when all your friends have their own rides.

Bill forces a smile and shrugs while trying to explain.

BILL (CONT'D)

It may take awhile before you can drive it to school but-

JENNY

Dad, it's fine. We'll get it running and - and it'll be fine.

SAMMY

I'll get the paper towels and the spray stuff!

Sammy hits the door. Jenny turns to smile at Bill.

JENNY

I'll get the shop vac outta the barn.

Bill opens the door with a flourish and a bow. Sammy is already halfway to the house.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME DAY - AFTERNOON

Jenny and Sammy stare out the rain-streaked window. The kitchen table sports dirty plates and a half-devoured birthday-cake. Bill is sipping coffee.

JENNY

What a weird storm. It came outta nowhere.

Bill laughs and looks at Jenny.

BILL

Take a bath and the phone rings. Wash your car and it rains.

Sammy looks up.

SAMMY

What happens if I clean my room?

Jenny looks at him wild-eyed.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

The world, as we know it, will *END*.

Suddenly, a pounding noise comes from everywhere. The power goes out.

SAMMY

But I didn't clean my room!

BILL(O.S.)

It's hail! Get a flashlight! Get in the basement! Now!

They hurry out. The window shows the Car strobed by flashes of lightening.

C.G.I. OF THE CLOUD

The cloud glows blue as it releases hailstones crackling with blue fire. They hurtle towards the Car.

EXT. SIDE OF THE BARN - SAME DAY - HAIL STORM

Glowing hail slams into the Car. On impact, the crackling blue energy transfers, sliding serpentine around the Car in waves of blue fire that disappear. The hail, rain, and thunder instantly stop. The sun immediately appears, illuminating the Car in an "other-worldly" glow.

EXT. SIDE OF THE BARN - SAME DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

The Benson family walks up to the Car.

BILL

Weird storm. I thought it'd last longer. When it hails like that -

JENNY (INTERRUPTING)

Oh no!

The Car has about thirty little round dents all over it. Jenny runs her hand across the top. Sammy shrugs.

SAMMY

What's a few more dents. Hey, that's what we oughta call it. Dents!

(CONTINUED)

Jenny shrugs as she reaches into her pocket, pulling out the little blue whale. She hands it to Sammy who climbs in to gently hang it from the mirror. Jenny heads towards the barn while Bill pops the hood. He takes off the air cleaner.

BILL

Let's have a look, Dents. Huh. A one barrel. Man, I have a shotgun with more barrels than this thing.

SAMMY (O.S.)

You wanna ride shotgun?

BILL

Wha - no. The carb - never mind.

Bill walks around to sit behind the wheel by Sammy. Jenny approaches the car dragging the shop vac. Inserting the key, Bill pumps the gas.

JENNY

Dad, wait!

Jenny covers her ears and turns away. Sammy covers his ears and dives to the floor. Bill turns the key. The engine purrs to life. He revs it before shutting it off.

BILL

Huh. Who would've thought it'd even run after sitting so long? Atta boy, Dents!

Jenny turns slowly as Sammy gets off the floor. They stare at Bill. His smile fades.

BILL (CONT'D)

What?

EXT. FARMHOUSE - AFTERNOON - NEXT DAY

A school bus stops. The door opens, ejecting a leaping Sammy who flies up the driveway. Jenny steps off and thanks the driver.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME DAY - AFTERNOON

Jenny walks in and trips over Sammy's backpack. She looks up to see a fanny sticking out of the fridge.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY  
SAMUEL WILLIAM BENSON! I almost  
fell over your stuff!

The fanny disappears, replaced by Sammy's face chewing something.

SAMMY  
Sabby. Weelly hungwee!

JENNY  
Get this stuff to your room. I'll  
have dinner ready before Dad gets  
home.

Sammy slides his backpack toward the wall.

SAMMY  
Can I go sit in Dents?

JENNY  
What?

SAMMY  
Can I go sit in Dents?

JENNY  
Sit in what?

SAMMY  
Your car. Dents. That's what I  
named him.

JENNY  
Named it. How do you know it's not  
a girl car?

SAMMY  
Huh. Never thought of that.

JENNY  
Maybe we should call her Ms. Dents.

SAMMY  
But only if it's a girl, right?

JENNY  
Right.

SAMMY  
So can I sit in him...her...it?

Jenny laughs as she moves toward the sink.

JENNY

Yeah.

Sammy bolts out of the kitchen. Jenny yells after him.

JENNY (CONT'D)

But leave the keys where they are.  
And no radio. Don't wear down the  
battery. Sammy?! You hear me?!

SAMMY (O.S.)

Yeah, yeah. Thanks!

INT. OF THE CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy sits behind the wheel, gripping it at "10 & 2". He makes motor noises, braking noises, and back again. He's quickly bored. He taps the wheel. Spying the radio, he bends toward it. Quickly pulling back he sneaks a peek at the house. He ducks down as his hand reaches for the knob.

**(Writer's Note: "DENTS" denotes the actor's image/voice and "DENTS (O.S.)" voice only. "the CAR" will be the physical car itself.)**

DENTS (O.S.)

You're not supposed to do that.

Sammy slams back into the driver's door.

DENTS (O.S.)CONT'D

You promised Jenny you wouldn't.

Sammy claws at the door, falls out, and disappears. His wide eyes pop into view over the seat

SAMMY

How'd-cha-know-'bout-that?!

DENTS (O.S.)

I know quite a bit, actually.  
(beat) C'mon back in. It's okay.

Sammy slowly climbs in, but leaves the door open.

DENTS (O.S.)CONT'D

I suppose you have some questions.

SAMMY

Ya think?! You're a talking car!

(CONTINUED)

DENTS (O.S.)

Well, yes. And you're a talking boy. So?

SAMMY

Cars don't talk!

DENTS (O.S.)

I'm talking, correct?

SAMMY

Yeah.

DENTS (O.S.)

Then obviously cars *DO* talk.

SAMMY

Oh. Well, that makes sense.

He scoots closer to the radio.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

So, who are you?

DENTS (O.S.)

Do you remember the story of "Balaam's donkey"?

Sammy sits up, wrinkling his brow.

SAMMY

That's when the donkey actually talked to the guy, right?

DENTS (O.S.)

Right.

SAMMY

Soooo, you're a donkey?

DENTS (O.S.)

Not quite. I've got more horsepower and I seat six.

Sammy leans close inspecting the radio.

SAMMY

So you are...?

DENTS (O.S.)

Your name for me, I believe, is Dents.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY

Yeah. Umm, is that okay?

DENTS (O.S.)

Personally, I'd like something a bit more "regal", but Dents is appropriate, so yeah, it's okay.

Sammy looks relieved.

SAMMY

This is so cool. A talking car!

DENTS (O.S.)

And I believe I am Jenny's car, correct?

SAMMY

Yeah. You're a birthday present.

DENTS (O.S.)

Thanks for not wrapping me.

Sammy giggles.

SAMMY

Sure. So why ya here?

DENTS (O.S.)

To help Jenny understand. To help her believe again.

SAMMY

So you're from - outer space?

DENTS (O.S.)

Oh, farther up than that. As high as you can go.

SAMMY

Get out! Really?

Dents answers him in a *Star-Wars-Yoda* voice.

DENTS (O.S.)

Ohh, truth it is, young Ben-son-ite.

SAMMY

Ha-ha. That's pretty good. Can you do the Wookiee?

There's a growl-warble like Chewbacca, then a R2D2 beep.

(CONTINUED)



SAMMY (CONT'D)

Oh, I get it. You're like a -  
droid.

DENTS (O.S.)

Whatever helps you understand, kid.

SAMMY

Cool!

DENTS (O.S.)

Say, Sammy. Does your family have  
an old TV or monitor lying around?

SAMMY

I don't think so. But I got a  
tablet'puter for Christmas from  
Uncle Bud. Buuut -

Sammy looks down as his voice gets softer.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

I dropped it in the bathtub after  
Dad told me to keep it away from  
water. It doesn't work anymore  
(beat) but it should be dry by now!

DENTS (O.S.)

Computers and water. Yeah,  
thaaat's a mistake. Do you know  
where it is?

SAMMY

Somewhere in my closet. I think.

DENTS (O.S.)

Go grab it along with some glue.

SAMMY

What for?

DENTS (O.S.)

I'll show you a really cool thing  
God can do with mistakes.

SAMMY

Okay. Be right back!

Sammy bolts out of the Car and sprints for the house.

DENTS (O.S.)

Sammy! The door! You didn't -  
(beat) No problem.

(CONTINUED)

The driver's door clicks shut as Dents chuckles.

DENTS (O.S.) CONT'D  
Yes, Sir. He's quite the kid.  
(beat) Yeah. (beat) I hope she  
does, too, Sir.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME DAY - AFTERNOON

Sammy comes blazing through the room.

JENNY  
Hey! Sammy, don't -

SAMMY(O.S.)  
Sorry! Gotta run!

JENNY  
What did you do now?!

Jenny begins to take off her apron.

SAMMY(O.S.)  
Nothing. I need my tablet'puter.

JENNY  
What for?

SAMMY(O.S.)  
I don't know.

Retying her apron, Jenny turns back to dinner prep.

JENNY  
And that, ladies and gentlemen, is  
what falling does to brain cells.

Sammy comes running in, skids, and falls, disappearing with a thud. Popping up, he yanks open a drawer, rummages quickly, and pulls out a tube of glue.

SAMMY  
Alright! Almost a full tube!

Jenny looks over her shoulder.

JENNY  
What about the tablet?

SAMMY (O.S.)  
I got it. Thanks!

Sammy disappears. As the door slams, Jenny's head pops up.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

Sammy - and glue!

She starts to turn as a timer goes off. She looks towards the door, then at the stove. She sighs and grabs an oven mitt.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I'm sure his hair'll grow back. Just like last time.

INT. OF THE CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy lays the stuff out on the seat.

DENTS (O.S.)

Excellent, Sammy! Here's what we do.

Quick shots of: Sammy applying glue to the dash. Sammy *liberally* applying glue to the back of the tablet. Sammy with glue all over everything. Sammy smashing the tablet down onto the dash.

DENTS (O.S.) CONT'D

Okay, let it dry.

SAMMY

Right. Let it dry.

Quick shots of: Sammy sitting and talking. Sammy lying down and talking. Sammy sitting upside-down in the passenger seat and **talking**.

DENTS (O.S.)

Hey, Sammy. Check this out.

Sammy sits up quickly, his eyes going wide.

DENTS (O.S.)CONT'D

So. Whaddaya think? Can God use mistakes or what?

SAMMY

This - is - AWESOME!

INT. TABLET SHOT - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

The tablet screen shows **DENTS** dressed in a backwards ball cap, a Hawaiian print shirt, and stripped beachcomber shorts. Everything is bright, clashing colors.

DENTS  
Cool, huh?

SAMMY (O.S.)  
Wow!

DENTS  
So, ya wanna talk?

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

SAMMY  
Sure!

DENTS (O.S.)  
You doin' okay? With your mom gone? You seem to be crying yourself to sleep alot.

Sammy is surprised.

SAMMY  
Who says I do?

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents stands, gestures, and folds his arms before pointing back at Sammy.

DENTS  
I do. I mean I just did. I did and I do. And I'm done. (beat)  
Your turn.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy frowns.

SAMMY  
I miss my mom.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Why don't you tell your dad or Jenny?

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY

Ah, they miss her, too, and I don't want to make 'em sad.

DENTS (O.S.)

So you cry by yourself.

SAMMY

Yeah.

Sammy looks at the tablet.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents pulls over an invisible stool. He sits down.

DENTS

Families share things with each other, Sammy. That's what makes 'em families.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy sniffles while rubbing his eyes.

DENTS (O.S.)

Family and friends talk about stuff.

SAMMY

Even the sad stuff?

DENTS (O.S.)

*Especially* the sad stuff.

Sammy nods.

SAMMY

Okay.

A car horn beeps twice.

SAMMY

Dad's home! I gotta go.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents hops off the invisible stool.

DENTS

Sammy, it's nice to meet ya. I'm  
looking forward to meeting Jenny.  
And thanks for this.

Dents runs his hand around the inside of the picture. He  
bends back and looks up.

DENTS (CONT'D)

Nice fish, by the way.

SAMMY (O.S.)

It's not a fish. It's a whale. So  
it's a mammal.

Dents nods his head.

DENTS

Nice mammal, then. I like the  
color and the dent. Fits in  
nicely. Thanks again.

Dents extends his hand.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy hesitantly sticks a finger out to touch the tablet and  
moves it slightly up and down.

SAMMY

I'm glad you're here too,  
Dents. See ya later.

Sammy bolts from the Car.

DENTS (O.S.)

See you later, kiddo. And Sammy,  
don't forget to -

Sammy is long gone.

DENTS (O.S.) CONT'D

Never mind.

The door clicks shut.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME DAY - EARLY EVENING

The Bensons are seated for dinner. Bill watches with concern. Jenny is staring open-mouthed at Sammy who rambles on non-stop.

SAMMY

Oh, and the car is a boy and he's okay with the name Dents even though he'd like something more regal. What does "regal" mean?

BILL

Well, Sammy, "regal" means -

SAMMY (INTERRUPTING)

And then I glued the tablet to the dash like Dents told me to.

Sammy stops to take a breath and a drink.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

And now I can see Dents.

Jenny's eyes go wider as she looks quickly at Bill.

JENNY

I'm so sorry, Dad. I just thought he'd glue his head to something. I didn't think he'd sniff it!

BILL

Jenny, now I don't think -

SAMMY (INTERRUPTING)

He's kinda different looking. But he's nice.

Jenny looks horrified and starts to cry.

JENNY

He's brain-damaged and it's my fault!

BILL

Jen -

SAMMY (INTERRUPTING)

I'm not brain-damaged!

BILL

Sam -

Jenny sobs as she begins to rock in her chair.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry!

BILL

OKAY-EVERYONE-QUIET!

Bill looks sternly at his children.

BILL

Sammy. No more about Dents talking or whatever its doing. It's a car.

SAMMY

But Dad, he -

BILL

I said no more. I mean no more.

Sammy tearfully bolts to his room.

BILL (CONT'D)

And Jenny. (softening) Next time your brother asks for glue, please, please stop him.

Bill smiles. Jenny comes around the table. He stands to hug her.

JENNY

I'm sorry, Dad.

BILL

You're forgiven.

He kisses her lightly on her head.

BILL (CONT'D)

You're still my favorite daughter and your brother's favorite sister.

JENNY

Easy choice. No competition.

BILL

Easy choice. No competition wanted.

Jenny turns and starts to clear off the table.

BILL

Why don't you go see how Sammy's doing? I'll look in on him later when things are a little calmer.

(CONTINUED)



JENNY  
Sure, Dad.

INT. SAMMY'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING - SAME DAY

The room is tornado debris at ground zero. Sammy is curled up in a chair, staring out the window at the Car. A light knock and the door opens. Sammy doesn't turn. Jenny steps in and squashes something that squeaks which makes her jump, squashing something that squawks. Regrouping, she maneuvers through the debris to stand by his chair. Kneeling next to him, she pats his arm.

JENNY  
Hey.

SAMMY  
Hey.

JENNY  
I know you're not brain-damaged.

SAMMY  
Thanks.

She curls up on the floor to look out the window. Jenny nods towards the Car.

JENNY  
So. It's a "he" and he talks.

SAMMY  
Yep.

JENNY  
What does he talk about?

Sammy looks thoughtful.

SAMMY  
You.

JENNY  
Me?!

SAMMY  
Yeah. Dents says he's here to help you believe again.

Sammy turns to Jenny.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY (CONT'D)

And I should let you and Dad know when I'm sad because that's what families do.

JENNY

So the Car is telling you that he's here for me and we should talk.

SAMMY

Yeah. And he's Dents. Not "the Car". He's from a very high place. Wherever that is.

JENNY

Oh-kaaay.

They look at the Car. Sammy turns to Jenny.

SAMMY

You oughta talk to him, Jenny. He'd like that. He's your car.

Jenny looks at Sammy. She touches her head to his.

JENNY

I just might, Sammy.

Jenny kisses his forehead and tousles his hair before leaving. Sammy watches her go, then turns back to the window.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME DAY - MIDNIGHT

Jenny can't sleep. Sitting up in bed, she scowls before flinging back the covers.

EXT. SIDE OF THE BARN - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

Jenny approaches the Car. She pauses next to it, then yanks open the door and slides in behind the wheel.

INT. OF THE CAR - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

She waits in the dark. Nothing. A look of disgust.

JENNY

Yeah. Just what I thought.

Angrily, she smacks the steering wheel.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY CONT'D  
I knew you weren't real!

DENTS (O.S.)  
Hey! Hey! A simple "*Anybody home?*" will work.

Jenny freezes.

DENTS (O.S.) CONT'D  
Someone has issues.

Jenny looks around the car.

JENNY  
You're for real?

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

The tablet glows to life showing Dents in a long night cap and night shirt. He's rubbing his forehead.

DENTS  
You tell me. Easy on the wheel,  
okay?

INT. CAR - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

Jenny looks at the glowing tablet.

JENNY  
You're really here. Dents, right?

DENTS (O.S.)  
That's what Sammy named me. You  
okay with that?

JENNY  
Yeah.

DENTS  
Good.

Silence. Jenny stares straight ahead.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

DENTS  
So, whaddya want to talk about?

INT. CAR - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

Jenny blinks.

JENNY  
What?

DENTS (O.S.)  
I figured you didn't come out this late to listen to the oldies. Do ya wanna talk?

JENNY  
Sure. Sure.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Want me to start?

JENNY  
Sure. Okay.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Why do you think God doesn't care?

Jenny sits back.

JENNY  
Really?

DENTS (O.S.)  
Yeah. Really.

JENNY  
Well. (beat) Life was great. We adopt Sammy. Our family's happy. Then -

Jenny's face and tone take on an edge.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
Mom gets sick. Dad loses his job. Mom dies. Dad loses everything. We have to leave home and move here - to a house nobody wants, in a town where nobody wants to live -

Jenny almost screams as she hits the wheel with both hands.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY (CONT'D)  
and into a life I don't want!

Jenny blows out a breath before looking at the tablet.

INT. TABLET SHOT - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

Dents is rubbing his forehead with both hands.

DENTS  
Now - now that's honesty -  
(Goodness, you're a strong girl!) -  
Thank you.

INT. CAR - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

Jenny jerks her hands off the wheel.

JENNY  
Oh. I'm sorry.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Sooooo, you won't believe because  
life is, ah, "life"?

JENNY  
Well, if God loves me SO much, then  
why is life so - hard?

Jenny sinks back to stare at the roof.

DENTS (O.S.)  
And life is hard because it isn't  
going the way you think it should?

Jenny brings her head forward. She turns towards the tablet.

JENNY  
Yeah. Yeah, that's it exactly.

DENTS (O.S.)  
And you can run your life better  
than anybody else.

JENNY  
Yeah. (beat) I mean -

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents cocks his head.

DENTS

That's a pretty big responsibility.

JENNY (O.S.)

Well at least I'd be looking out for me. And I wouldn't get...

DENTS

You wouldn't what?

INT. CAR - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

Jenny turns to the tablet, her eyes shining.

JENNY

I wouldn't get hurt.

DENTS (O.S.)

Oh. Getting hurt is no fun.

JENNY

Duh! And if I'm supposed to be loved-

DENTS (O.S.)(INTERRUPTING)

You wouldn't ever get hurt. Ever feel any pain. No problems, right?

JENNY

Yeah.

Silence. Then a question.

INT. TABLET SHOT - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

DENTS

You know, there's a place where it's always sunny. No rain, just sunshine. You know what they call it, Jen?

JENNY (O.S.)

What?

DENTS

A desert.

INT. CAR - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

Jenny crosses her arms and glares at the tablet.

JENNY

It's late. I don't wanna talk anymore.

INT. TABLET SHOT - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

Dents yawns while pulling up a sundial wrist watch. He taps it once, moves it over a little before tapping it again. Squinting, he brings it close to his face. He nods.

DENTS

You're right, Jen. It's late. We should probably call it a night. It's been good talkin' to you.

JENNY(O.S.)

Oh. Yeah. You, too.

Dents waves as he turns to walk away. He yawns again.

DENTS

G'night, Jenny. See ya in the mornin'.

INT. CAR - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

The tablet and the Car interior go dark

JENNY

Good night.

EXT. SIDE OF THE BARN - MIDNIGHT - SAME DAY

Jenny gets out, deep in thought, leaving the driver's door open. She walks away, the Car in the background. As Jenny disappears from the shot, the interior glows briefly.

DENTS (O.S.)

It's gotta be a family thing.

The driver's door closes with a soft click.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - AFTERNOON - NEXT DAY

The school bus stops. The door opens to disgorge a slow-moving Sammy. He trudges up the driveway. Jenny thanks the bus driver and easily catches up to him.

JENNY

Sammy - you okay?

SAMMY

Yeah. I think I'll go talk to Dents. That okay?

Sammy continues up the driveway as Jenny stops at the house.

JENNY

Sure. Just -

SAMMY (O.S.)(INTERRUPTING)

I know. No radio.

JENNY

I'll have a batch of cookies ready in about an hour.

SAMMY (O.S.)

Sure. (beat) Thanks.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy opens the car door. Dropping his backpack outside, he gets behind the wheel. He sighs once, then sits still. He leans way back in the seat, throwing a sideways glance at the tablet. Nothing. Sammy clears his throat, sits forward, then throws himself back into the seat while sighing loudly. He glances back at the tablet, then quickly looks ahead.

DENTS (O.S.)

Hey-bacon-what's-shakin'?

SAMMY

Oh. Hi, Dents.

DENTS (O.S.)

Soundin' kinda down there, Sammy. Wanna talk about it?

Sammy sits sideways in the seat, leaning against the driver's door. He doesn't look at Dents.

(CONTINUED)



SAMMY

I think I might'a done a bad thing.

DENTS (O.S.)

Oh-kaaay.

SAMMY

I-I didn't mean to do it. It just kinda happened.

DENTS (O.S.)

Uh-huh.

Silence.

DENTS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Sooo, what exactly did you do?

Sammy looks at the tablet, his eyes brimming with tears.

SAMMY

I lied to my teacher.

DENTS (O.S.)

Ohhhhh. You remember what you heard in Sunday School last week?

SAMMY

Yeah.

DENTS (O.S.)

Whaddya hear?

Sammy fidgets a little bit then rattles it off.

SAMMY

Confess-to-get-blessed.

DENTS (O.S.)

What?

Sammy sits up straighter and says it slower.

SAMMY

Confess to get blessed.

INT. TABLET SHOT - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Dents reaches to his left and pulls over the invisible stool. Plopping down, he waggles a finger in Sammy's direction.

(CONTINUED)

DENTS

I knew you were a smart kid. Okay,  
Sammy, whaddya do?

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy hops over closer to the tablet.

SAMMY

We're all in class - only 30  
minutes to go - and we're studying  
how people got to the United States  
from different countries and stuff.

DENTS (O.S.)

Yeah. Okay.

Sammy gestures like he's giving a speech.

SAMMY

Ms. Schemper is talking about  
Alice's Island, where I guess a  
bunch of people stopped on their  
way in.

DENTS (O.S.)

Yep. With you so far. Oh, and  
it's ELL-

Sammy throws his hands up in frustration.

SAMMY (INTERRUPTING)

Then outta the blue, Ms. Schemper  
starts to ask EACH of us what our  
histories - no, wait - our  
*heritages* are. Like where our  
old-people relatives came from.

Sammy throws out his hands in frustration.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

I don't know! My birth parents - I  
dunno who THEY are let alone their  
old-people relatives!

INT. TABLET SHOT - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Dent puts his elbows on his knees and cups his chin.

(CONTINUED)

DENTS

So you're kinda on the spot, huh?

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy nods his head.

SAMMY

I was gonna say "Americans", but Robbie Goodman said it first and everyone laughed at him.

Sammy looks at the floor mats.

DENTS (O.S.)

So how'd ya get out of it?

SAMMY

Well, I heard Mikey Ramey - the kid behind me, give his answer, so I knew I was next. I looked over on the wall and there's this big map of the world.

Sammy turns as if the map is right in front to him. He points at the imaginary map.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

There's a great big name on the biggest country I could see.

Sammy pauses as if he's still looking at the map.

INT. TABLET SHOT - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Dents leans forward, making a circular motion with his hand.

DENTS

Aaaaaaaaaand?

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy glances down.

SAMMY

I told Ms. Schemper that I was Russian. On my mom's side.

INT. TABLET SHOT - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Dents is still on the invisible stool, but now he's wearing a black Russian hat and a tutu in addition to his regular outfit.

DENTS

Nyeeeeeeet!

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy looks at the tablet and giggles. His grin fades.

SAMMY

THEN she asked me about my father's family.

Sammy shrugs and sighs.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

The next biggest country - was Canada.

INT. TABLET SHOT - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Dents is standing up. He's wearing a mountie's hat, a hockey uniform complete with skates (still has on the tutu) and is holding a hockey stick. He raps the stick twice on the floor.

DENTS

You don't say. That might explain why you like cold weather, eh?!

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy laughs hard enough to tip over. After a few seconds he stops laughing but stays lying on the seat. He quietly sighs as he looks at the roof.

SAMMY

What am I gonna do, Dents?

INT. TABLET SHOT - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Dent sits down on the invisible stool. Leaning forward, he rests the hockey stick against his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

DENTS

Whadda you think you should do?

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy furrows his brow as he slightly waves his hand.

SAMMY

I should tell Ms. Schemper I don't know 'cause I'm adopted.  
(beat) And tell my dad. Ya think I'll get in trouble, Dents?

DENTS (O.S.)

You might. You might not. But the *important* thing is doing the *right* thing.

Sammy throws his arms over the seat top and sits up.

SAMMY

Will I feel better?

INT. TABLET SHOT - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Dents stands up, turning to his left. He looks back over his shoulder at Sammy.

DENTS

Oh, yeah. You're forgiven, baby!  
Doing things the right way, the Book's way, is doing things God's way.

Dents suddenly looks to his left and does a wrist shot. There's the sound of a puck hitting something, a buzzer goes off, then someone off-screen hollers "GOOOOOAL!" as an organ plays. Dents raises his stick, then points it at Sammy.

DENTS (CONT'D)

You're a winner in His eyes, kiddo.  
He loves you, baby!

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Sammy bounces twice as he rebounds across the seat to the driver's door. He pushes it open and falls out, disappearing for a moment before scrambling up to grab his backpack.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY  
Thanks, Dents!

Sammy is seen through the windshield flying toward the house. The driver's door is wide open.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Good bye, eh?! (beat) No, that's okay. Please, let me get that for you.

The door closes with a click.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING - SAME DAY

Sammy is shoveling in dinner. Jenny is lost in thought. Bill notices both.

BILL  
Sammy. Chew, *THEN* swallow. Jen, everything okay, hon? (beat) Jen?

JENNY  
Huh? Oh, I'm fine, Dad. Mind wanderings. A sign of genius, right?

BILL  
That's what I tell 'em at work. Anything I can do?

JENNY  
No. But thanks.

Bill reaches for a piece of bread.

BILL  
Oh, I talked with Gertie at the garage. Tomorrow morning, before you go in to work at 7, please drop off Dents and Gertie'll go over it to make sure everything works. I'll drive in and pick you up when you're done. One-thirty, right?

Jenny nods her head. She plays with her food.

JENNY  
I think he's fine. No need to spend the extra money.

Bill ladles on too much jam.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

It seems like everything works well. I took it for a test drive. But I wanna make sure.

Jenny and Sammy quickly look at each other. Sammy gulps.

SAMMY

So did ya notice anything weird with, uh...Dents?

BILL

Just the tablet glued to the dash.

Bill cocks his head to look at Jenny and then at Sammy.

BILL (CONT'D)

Why did you do that?

Sammy is stunned. His mouth is open but non-functioning. Jenny jumps in.

JENNY

It makes it look like I have this great sound system. Just, ah, trying to fit in with the kids at school.

BILL

Oh. Since when did you want to fit in?

JENNY

Like forever, I guess.

Jenny glances quickly at Sammy whose wide-eyes are flicking back and forth between Bill and Jenny.

JENNY CONT'D

So Dad. Don't spend any more money on Dents. It's good. He's perfect.

Bill smiles at her.

BILL

No money's involved, honey. I'm going to reconcile Gertie's books for her. I want you safe when you drive.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

But, Dad -

BILL

Really. It's okay. I want to do this for you.

Jenny shoots a glance at Sammy.

JENNY

Thanks, Dad. That'd be great.

BILL

I've already got the stickers and new plates on Dents. Called in to Abby Jean over at the Insurance Agency so you're covered there.

Bill is examining each finger for excess jam.

BILL (CONT'D)

Monday morning, you and Sammy can drive yourselves to school!

Sammy drops his fork and starts to bail out of his chair.

BILL

Sammy, finish your dinner, then it's homework, and THEN you can horse around.

SAMMY

Ah, Dad! It's Friday night!

Bill gives him a parental look, then turns to smile at Jenny.

BILL

Belated "Happy Birthday", sweetheart.

Jenny forces a smile as she hops around the table to hug him.

JENNY

Thanks, Dad.

She hugs Bill while looking over at Sammy.



EXT. SIDE OF THE BARN - NEXT DAY - EARLY MORNING

Jenny walks briskly up to the Car and climbs in.

INT. CAR - EARLY MORNING - SAME DAY

JENNY

Psst. Dents. It's me.

DENTS (O.S.)

Mmpfph.

JENNY

What?

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents holds up a finger while chewing something, a humongous coffee cup in the other hand. He's dressed in his loud Hawaiian shirt, stripped shorts, and ball cap.

DENTS

Just finishin' up some Ba-Manna bread.

JENNY(O.S.)

Okay.

DENTS

Ba-Manna bread. Get it? Ba-man-

JENNY (INTERRUPTING) (O.S.)

We gotta go. I'll fill you in on the drive into town.

Dents looks a little perturbed and starts to take a swig from his cup.

INT. CAR - EARLY MORNING - SAME DAY

Jenny jams the key into the ignition and fires it up. She throws the column shift into gear, and takes off.

DENTS (O.S.)

AHHHH! How 'bout a warning next time? Goodness, that's hot!

JENNY

Sorry. Kinda in a hurry here.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - EARLY MORNING - SAME DAY

The car bounces over the yard onto the driveway, then out onto the highway.

DENTS (O.S.)

Oh, man. I need this shirt for the big luau next week. Oh yeahhhh, I like pineapple! Aloha, y'all. Shaka, baby!

Dents starts scat singing the Hawaiian War Chant - (with complete orchestral background) - as the Car disappears over the hill.

DENTS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Ba-do-da, do-dadee-dadee-ba-dada...

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

The Car pulls into "Gertie's Great Garage".

JENNY

So you need to lay low until I pick you up Sunday afternoon.

DENTS (O.S.)

Lay low. Got it.

Jenny shuts the Car off and looks pleadingly at the tablet.

JENNY

Please, Dents.

She starts to get out of the Car.

DENTS (O.S.)

I-got-it-I-got-it. Lay low. No problemo, homette.

EXT. GERTIE'S GARAGE - SAME DAY

**GERTRUDE "GERTIE" WILSON** walks out smiling, wiping her hands on a red mechanic's rag.

GERTIE

Hey, Jenny. So this is the new ride, huh?

Jenny takes a few steps away from the Car, turns, and gives an introductory wave at the Car.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

This is Dents.

She turns as if introducing Gertie.

JENNY (CONT'D)

And this is Gertie.

Gertie chuckles and waves her rag at Dents.

GERTIE

Nice to meet ya, Dents.

Jenny back-peddles as she moves towards the sidewalk.

JENNY

I'll come by to pick him up after dinner on Sunday. Keys are in the ignition.

GERTIE

Ya need a ride to work?

JENNY

No. It's just the three blocks and I'm early. But thanks.

Gertie turns to open the door.

GERTIE

Okay. Oh, tell Freda I'll have the chicken special for lunch.

Gertie waves the rag in Jenny's direction as she climbs in and shuts the door. She starts the Car, nods in surprised approval, and drives into the open garage bay.

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

Parking in the service bay, Gertie turns the Car off. Shaking her head, she thinks out loud.

GERTIE

Now how can a car as old and ugly as you run this good?

DENTS (O.S.)

It's a God thing, Gertie.

Gertie grabs the wheel with both hands and freezes. She blows out a long breath and sighs, relaxing slightly.

(CONTINUED)

GERTIE  
I hate these flashbacks. I never  
should've messed with -

DENTS (O.S.)(INTERRUPTING)  
Hey, I'm no flashback!

Gertie immediately stiffens again as her head turns towards  
the tablet.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

The tablet glows on. A hand pops up from the bottom of the  
screen and waves.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Hi. How ya doin'?

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

Gertie swallows hard. She wiggles some fingers slightly.

GERTIE  
Uh. Hi.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Is it okay if I stand up?

GERTIE  
What?

DENTS (O.S.)  
Can I stand up? Jenny told me to  
lay low until she picks me up but  
it's kinda hard to talk like this.  
So...

GERTIE  
So?

DENTS (O.S.)  
Can I stand up?

Gertie looks straight ahead then glances down.

GERTIE  
Sure. (beat) Okay.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents scrambles up. He dusts himself off while looking at Gertie.

DENTS  
Hey. How's it goin'?

GERTIE (O.S.)  
Not really sure.

DENTS  
Feeling a little awkward, are we?

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

Gertie reacts heatedly.

GERTIE  
I'm talking to a honkin' car!  
You - ARE a car right?

DENTS (O.S.)  
Welllll- kinda and kinda not. It's  
kinda complicated.

Gertie's anger disappears.

GERTIE  
Yeah. I s'poes.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents looks up and over as if studying Gertie.

DENTS  
Why are you running from God,  
Gertrude?

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

The question ticks Gertie off. Her anger returns.

GERTIE  
Run from God? Why run from  
somethin' that don't exist?! I  
don't run from nuthin', little man!

(CONTINUED)

DENTS (O.S.)

Oh, He exists.

GERTIE

No! He-does-NOT! He wasn't in the neighborhood Freda & I grew up in. Not in those streets where a lot of my friends got messed up and dead.

Gertie's voice rises.

GERTIE (CONT'D)

Not in a marriage that blew up. He ain't *ANYWHERE* in *MY* life!

The car gets quiet. Dents breaks the silence.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents slowly counts on his fingers while looking at Gertie.

DENTS

There was that cop that pulled you from the burning wreck. There was the hand you felt yanking you back before the drive-by shooting started.

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

Gertie's eyes go wide. Her mouth drops open.

GERTIE

How do-

DENTS (O.S.)(INTERRUPTING)

There was the gun you couldn't get to fire when you wanted to end your life.

GERTIE

No. You can't know that!

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents softly answers her as he lowers his hand.

DENTS

Gertie. He was there. He's here. And He loves you very much.

(CONTINUED)

Dents reaches out and pulls over the invisible stool. Sitting down, he motions gently with his hands.

DENTS (CONT'D)  
Gertie. Would it be okay if, ah,  
we just *talk* for awhile?

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

Gertie blows out a deep breath, eyes shining.

GERTIE  
Yeah. Sure.

She looks down at the tablet, barely nodding.

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
Let's talk.

INT. KITCHEN - LUNCHTIME - SAME DAY

Sammy is at the kitchen table. Jenny slides a sandwich in front of him. There's a knock at the door. Jenny leaves while Sammy attacks the sandwich.

JENNY (O.S.)  
Oh. Hi, Gertie.

GERTIE (O.S.)  
Hi, Jenny.

JENNY (O.S.)  
Is everything okay? It's only been  
about 5 hours.

Jenny and Gertie walk into the kitchen. Sammy waves, his mouth full.

SAMMY  
Pi.

GERTIE  
Hey, Sammy.

JENNY  
Have a seat. Would you like some  
coffee or something?

Gertie sits down, looking antsy.

(CONTINUED)

GERTIE

Ah. Coffee would be great. Black.  
With 5 sugars and 3  
creams. Thanks.

Jenny starts to move away. Gertie looks around nervously,  
then settles in on Sammy who is studying her narrow-eyed  
while slowly chewing. Pinning Gertie with a hard stare, he  
cocks his head and leans forward.

SAMMY

You saw 'im, didn't you?

JENNY

Sammy!

Both Sammy and Jenny focus on Gertie. Gertie lets out a  
sigh of relief then a small, nervous laugh.

GERTIE

You guys have seen 'im, too?

The kids exchange glances. They both nod.

GERTIE (CONT'D)

I am soooo glad to hear that.  
Thought I was losin' it.

Jenny looks towards the front door, pointing her finger.

JENNY

Wait until I get my hands on-

GERTIE

Now, Jenny. He laid low like you  
said. I'm the one who gave him  
permission to stand up.

JENNY

Permis-

SAMMY (INTERRUPTING)

So whaddaya think? Pretty cool,  
huh?

Jenny is completely perplexed.

JENNY

*Stand up?*

GERTIE

He is a unique individual. Or car.  
Or whatever he is.

(CONTINUED)



Gertie looks around.

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
Is your dad here?

JENNY  
No. He's over at the Obers doing  
bookwork. That's how he's paying  
for Dents.

GERTIE  
Oh. Ah, does he know . . .

SAMMY  
Not yet. We're kinda wondering how  
to break it to 'im.

GERTIE  
Yeah, I can see where you'd wanna  
think it through first.

Gertie pats the table then stands up.

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
It might be best if you take me  
back to the garage before your dad  
gets back.

JENNY  
Okay. When we get back I'll call  
him to let him know we got Dents.

Jenny starts to turn and clap her hands.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
Sammy, go-

There's a sound of a door opening.

SAMMY (O.S.) (INTERRUPTING)  
I got shotgun!

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

The Car is heading for town. Gertie is driving. Sammy's in  
the front seat, Jenny's in the back.

SAMMY  
Then we let the glue dry and that's  
when Dents showed up. In person.

(CONTINUED)

GERTIE  
Any idea how he, ah, got in here?

DENTS (O.S.)  
Well why don't you ask me?

Gertie slams on the brakes. The car skids to a stop. The kids look at Gertie.

GERTIE  
Sorry. He still kinda creeps me out.

SAMMY  
Hey, Dents!

DENTS (O.S.)  
Hey, Sammy. Gertie. Jenny.

JENNY  
Hi.

Gertie gets the Car rolling again. She looks down the road, shaking her head.

GERTIE  
I am *never* gonna get used to this.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Clapping his hands quickly, Dents gets an impish grin.

DENTS  
Hey. You guys wanna see what can happen if you trust and believe?

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Gertie raises an eyebrow cautiously as she eyes the tablet.

GERTIE  
Maybe.

Sammy starts clapping his hands.

SAMMY  
Yeah! Go for it, Dents!

DENTS (O.S.)  
We're coming up on that abandoned truck stop. Pull into the back parking lot.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY

C'mon, Gertie. This oughta be great!

Gertie gives a narrow-eyed glare at the tablet, then reluctantly nods.

EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - SAME DAY

The Car pulls into the lot and stops, engine idling.

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

Gertie puts the Car in park before looking down at the tablet.

GERTIE

Okay, Dents. It's your show.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents is in a brightly colored NASCAR racing suit, holding a matching full cover helmet, and a squirt bottle.

DENTS

Okay. Here's the deal. You touch the wheel, it's back to you. You'll be driving, not Him.

Dents takes a deep pull from the bottle, tosses it aside.

DENTS (CONT'D)

Let go and let God, baby -

Dents holds the helmet over his head with both hands, eyes wild, a huge smile on his face.

DENTS (CONT'D)

- and then: HANG ON!

Dents jams the helmet on.

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

The radio light comes on. The motor revs loudly as the shifter drops into Drive. Blue smoke, screaming engine, squealing tires! Gertie, Sammy, and Jenny are slammed backwards, astonished. The first 42 seconds of "the Twist" by Chubby Checkers begins to play - *very loudly*.

EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - SAME DAY

The Car leaves blue tire smoke and black marks in its wake. It streaks through an intricate series of drifts and turns as the music thumps on.

Inside the Car, Gertie and the kids are leaning and swaying.

Suddenly the Car goes into a 180 skid stopping exactly where it started. The Car is in park, the motor off, the music is gone. Silence.

INT. CAR - SAME DAY

Gertie sits ramrod straight, holding herself. Jenny and Sammy are slowly sitting upright. A county sheriff's squad car glides up alongside and stops. Gertie shoots a perturbed look upward while muttering under her breath.

GERTIE

*Thanks, God.*

The squad's window goes down. With a sigh Gertie rolls her window down. The **DEPUTY** nods in greeting.

DEPUTY

Afternoon, Gertie.

Gertie turns her head to give a faint nod.

GERTIE

Afternoon, Glenn.

DEPUTY

Whatcha doin', Gertie?

GERTIE

Oh, just making sure the car's okay.

DEPUTY

And the kids, Gertie?

Gertie eyes get wider. Jenny quickly leans forward.

JENNY

She was giving me a driving lesson, Officer.

GERTIE

Huh? Oh yeah. She heard that I used to race and she was (beat) curious.

(CONTINUED)

Gertie turns in her seat toward Jenny.

GERTIE  
And don't try this at all on the  
highway. Is that clear?

She gives her a quick wink. Jenny suppresses a laugh.

JENNY  
Yes, m'am.

Gertie turns slightly to look at Sammy, her voice getting sterner.

GERTIE  
And that especially goes for you.

SAMMY  
Yes, m'am.

DEPUTY  
Gertie, I'm gonna hafta ask you to  
get outta the car, please.

GERTIE  
Oh, sure, Glenn. Sure.

EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - SAME DAY

Gertie and Deputy stand at the front of the Car. Deputy is surveying the black marks scrawled across the parking lot. He looks closely at Gertie.

DEPUTY  
If I hadn't seen it for myself, I  
never would'a believed it.

The Deputy sticks out his hand.

DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
That is some of the most bodacious  
drivin' I have ever seen!

A stunned Gertie looks at the Deputy's hand, then slowly shakes it.

DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
Man. You've got *great* control,  
Gertie!

Gertie relaxes, managing a smile.

(CONTINUED)

GERTIE

Thanks, Glenn. I-I appreciate that.

DEPUTY

Show me the motor, Gertie. It's gotta be a monster!

GERTIE

Oh. Okay. Sure.

Gertie turns to pop the hood. She meets the wide eyes of the kids and shrugs. She closes her eyes as she lifts the hood.

DEPUTY

That looks like a - is that a 6 cylinder?!

GERTIE

Yep. A 6...it's a...6.

The Deputy points at the motor dumbfounded.

DEPUTY

How -

GERTIE (INTERRUPTING)

A lot of, uh, *internal* modifications, Glenn. Specialty parts that, ah, ya can't get 'round here.

DEPUTY

Specialty parts?

Gertie is scrambling.

GERTIE

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Gives it, ah, *out-of-this-world* performance.

Gertie's eyes are darting back and forth, from motor to Deputy.

DEPUTY

Wow, Gertie. That *is* impressive. Well, you take care now.

They shake hands. Gertie gives him a little wave as the squad pulls away. She puts both hands on the hood and pushes it down to see Jenny and Sammy smiling at her.

(CONTINUED)

DENTS (O.S.)  
Oh, yeah, baby! Outta this world!

Both kids are clapping. A smiling Gertie pats the hood twice and street struts back to the driver's door.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Jenny is at the kitchen table, stirring something in a bowl. Sammy skips in with a huge grin. He's clutching a framed, rectangular board against his chest.

SAMMY  
I have a present for you, Jenny!

JENNY  
Oh, Sammy. The whale is great and it looks really good in Dents.

SAMMY  
But I want you to have *this*!

He hands her the board. Jenny turns it around. Magnetic letters make a sign that says "LET GOD".

SAMMY (CONT'D)  
It's something to help remember today. Ya know, when God did the driving! Cool, huh?!

Jenny looks at Sammy as he hops from one foot to the other.

SAMMY (CONT'D)  
I was gonna put what Dents said - "Let go and let God" - but I couldn't find enough letters.

Jenny hugs Sammy then tousles his hair.

JENNY  
Thanks, Sammy. I'll put it where I can see it when I wake up. Now get cleaned up for dinner. Dad'll be home pretty quick.

Sammy flies out of the kitchen as Jenny stares at the board.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING - SAME DAY

The Bensons are sitting down for the meal. The phone rings. Bill gets up to answer it. Jenny works around the table, setting out the food. Sammy starts to reach for something.

JENNY  
Wait 'til Dad gets back.

SAMMY  
Oh, maaaaan. He could be *hours*.

Sammy collapses back in his chair.

JENNY  
Drama queen.

SAMMY  
I am NOT! (beat) What's a drama queen?

Bill walks back and sits down. He's smiling.

BILL  
Okay. Sammy. It's your turn.

The family bows their heads.

SAMMY  
Dear God. Thank you for this food.  
Thank you for this family. And  
thank you for Dents. Amen.

As the dishes are passed, Bill shakes his head in amazement.

BILL  
That car of yours is remarkable!

Jenny and Sammy exchange glances.

JENNY  
How's that, Dad?

BILL  
I was just talking to Gertie. The  
car checks out A-O-K.

He loads his plate and passes the dish to Jenny.

BILL (CONT'D)  
It doesn't even need a tune-up!  
Gertie said all it might need is a  
set of back tires.

(CONTINUED)



Sammy starts to snicker.

SAMMY

Ya think?!

He gets a withering stare from Jenny.

BILL

But there's nothing that's  
absolutely needed right now. So  
what did you guys do other than  
take Gertie back?

The kids look at each other wide-eyed and shrug.

SAMMY

Nuthin'.

JENNY

Much. Nuthin' much.

SAMMY

Yeah. Much. Lotsa much. Of  
nuthin'.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME DAY - AFTER DINNER

Sammy is hauling dirty dishes to the sink. Jenny is at the counter. Bill is bent over the table looking at a stack of mail.

JENNY

Dad, I'm gonna go to the gravel pit  
on the other side of the  
field. Play Mom's guitar for  
awhile. Then a bunch of kids are  
meeting at Freda's for Cokes.

Jenny shrugs in resignation.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I should get to know 'em, I guess.

SAMMY

Oh-oh-can-I-come-can-I-come?

Bill looks up from the stack of mail and glances at Jenny.

BILL

No, Sammy. It's getting close to  
bedtime. Give your sister some  
time alone on a Saturday night.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY

Ah, Dad!

BILL

Tell ya what. We'll play any game you want- THAT - we can get done in an hour. Your choice.

SAMMY

Really?

Bill winks at Jenny.

BILL

Your call, buddy.

SAMMY

Alright!

Sammy shoots out of the kitchen.

JENNY

Thanks, Dad.

BILL

Have fun, honey. Make a friend. Be back around 11:00 or so, okay? Church tomorrow.

Jenny moves toward the hall.

JENNY

Eleven. Thanks.

Sammy shoots past the kitchen table waving a game case.

SAMMY (O.S.)

I getta be Mario!

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - EARLY EVENING - SAME DAY

The Car pulls into the gravel pit and stops. Jenny gets out, opens the back door, and takes out the guitar. Leaving the back door open, she walks up to lean against the front fender. She starts to play, the sound muffled and barely audible.

DENTS (O.S.)

What is that song? It sounds familiar.

Jenny looks over her shoulder into the Car.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

It was Mom's favorite. She had a special way of playing it.

DENTS (O.S.)

You need a little more volume, young lady. I personally know church mice that burp louder than that.

Jenny laughs as she bends over the strings.

JENNY

It's an electric guitar with no electricity. Whaddaya expect?

DENTS (O.S.)

Ohhhhh, we can fix that!

Suddenly blue lightning zaps from the fender to the Fender. Jenny almost drops the glowing guitar. As the glow disappears she gives the guitar a cautious strum. The sound is full and resounding.

JENNY

Whoa! This is seriously awesome, Dents!

DENTS (O.S.)

You go, girl!

Jenny dives into the song. The guitar is alive, the sound incredible and vibrant.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents is in a "tails" tuxedo, baton in hand. He gets in the "maestro" position.

DENTS

Alright, guys. Let's help her out. And trumpet section - let's not *drown* her out, okay?

He points the baton emphatically.

DENTS (CONT'D)

And that includes you, Gabriel.

He gets up on tiptoes. Looking over his shoulder, he waits - then slashes the baton down.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - EARLY EVENING - SAME DAY

The gravel pit fills with music. The orchestral background swells while the guitar soars. Tears escape from Jennie's closed eyes. The sunset blazes overhead with colors as intense as the music.

The orchestra explodes into the final phrase then stops, leaving Jenny's guitar to slowly end the song. Silence. Jenny cradles the guitar and begins to cry, hugging the guitar closer.

DENTS (O.S.)

So that's your mom's song. It's beautiful.

Jenny sniffles as she looks back into the Car. Wiping her eyes, she gives a small smile.

JENNY

Yeah. It was almost like -

Her voice trails off. She turns away.

DENTS (O.S.)

Like she came back, huh?

Jenny's eyes go wide.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents is back into his "regular" outfit.

DENTS

Everything she meant to you, Jen, is with you. Right now. That part of her never left, kiddo. It never will.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - EARLY EVENING - SAME DAY

Jenny sighs as she walks around the Car to lean against the other front fender, still hugging the guitar. She faces the sunset in silence as the Car's back door closes with a soft click.

EXT. FREDA'S "DROP BY" DINER - EVENING - SAME DAY

A herd of teenagers walk out of Freda's - laughing, talking, kidding, and shoving. They migrate to the parking lot where they scatter. Jenny lags behind the group. **SONNY MORRISON** comes back to her. There's a delightful awkwardness as Sonny walks her to the Car.

SONNY

So...any plans after graduation next summer?

JENNY

Well, if we're still here, I'll probably work here at Freda's in the evenings. I hafta watch Sammy during the day while Dad's at work.

They both slow their walking as they near the Car.

JENNY (CONT'D)

What'll you be doin'?

SONNY

The family business. Working at the Quarry. Our gravel pit isn't very far from your house.

Jenny nods. Sonny forges ahead.

SONNY (CONT'D)

This coming summer I getta drive the old dump truck. Hauling rock'n'gravel from the Pit to the Yard across the road. The old truck's not safe enough to be on the highway. My older brothers get all the good trucks for deliveries.

They stop beside the Car. Jenny digs out her keys.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Glad you could make it tonight.

JENNY

Yeah. It was fun.

Jenny opens the door and slides in.

INT. CAR - EVENING - SAME DAY

She rolls down the window and leans out, her elbow on the window sill.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
Have a good night, Sonny.

SONNY  
You, too.

Jenny reaches for the ignition. Sonny tries to keep the moment alive by ducking his head to look inside.

SONNY (CONT'D)  
So. This is your new car, huh?

JENNY  
Well, he's not new. Well, he's new to me, but not - his name is Dents.

Sonny gives a little two-finger salute to the interior.

SONNY  
Nice to meet you, Dents.

Jenny smiles, then glances at the dash. To her horror, the tablet has begun to glow. Frantically she jabs a finger at it.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Oww!

The tablet dims then starts up again. Jenny quickly pokes it.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Oww! Again!

SONNY  
What was that?

JENNY  
What? Oh, that. It's just some special electronics. It glitches every once in awhile.

Sonny leans in the window while looking at the dash. When their faces are close he glances quickly at her.

SONNY  
Looks - like a computer tablet.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

It does, doesn't it? Actually it's  
a multi-functional  
electro...gadget.

Sonny moves his head just far enough back so he can look at her without bumping noses. He smiles.

SONNY

Multi-functional...gadget?

JENNY

Yeah. He - it - is a combination  
GPS, PC, MP3, and, ah, C3PO.

She smiles brightly. Puzzled, Sonny backs out then points with a grin.

SONNY

Ohhhh, you kidder!

Jenny smiles back and points while starting the car.

JENNY

G'night, Sonny.

SONNY

'Night, Jenny.

Jenny backs out carefully and turns to leave.

DENTS (O.S.)

Why ya bringin' da pain,  
girl? That hurts!

Jenny looks down.

INT. TABLET SHOT - EVENING - SAME DAY

Dents is almost doubled-over, both hands over one eye.

JENNY (O.S.)

Oh, Dents! I'm sorry! I  
freaked. I didn't know what else  
to do.

DENTS

Yeah, yeah. It's funny until  
somebody loses an eye.

He bolts upright and drops his hands. He's wearing a black eye patch. Quickly, he puts on a plumed pirate's tri-cornered hat while brandishing a cutlass.

(CONTINUED)

DENTS (CONT'D)  
Arrghh. I should just be glad,  
lass, that ya didn't try to keel  
haul me-ah.

INT. CAR - EVENING - SAME DAY

Jenny smirks and shakes her head.

JENNY  
And I thought Sammy was a drama  
queen.

SONNY (O.S.)  
Jenny! Wait up!

Jenny's head shoots up to see Sonny jogging towards the Car.  
She hisses at Dents.

JENNY  
Dents. Dents! Get outta here!

DENTS (O.S.)  
Arrgh, young lassie, not until-

Jenny quickly pokes the tablet.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Oww! O-kay-o-kay!

Sonny can be seen through the windshield walking around the  
front of the Car. Jenny frantically pokes the tablet twice  
more.

DENTS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Oww! Uhh!-that's gonna leave a  
mark.

The tablet goes dark just before Sonny puts his hands on the  
driver's door.

SONNY  
I forgot to ask. Can I save ya a  
seat tomorrow at church?

JENNY  
Yeah. Sure. Thanks, Sonny.

Sonny steps away with a small wave.



EXT. FREDA'S "DROP BY" DINER - EVENING - SAME DAY

The Car pulls out into the street. A faint interior glow can be seen as the tablet comes on.

JENNY (O.S.)  
Oh, Dents! Look, I'm sorry-

DENTS (O.S.)(INTERRUPTING)  
You've got some *serious* issues,  
young lady. We are gonna talk!

The Car is almost out of sight.

JENNY (O.S.)  
I'm really sorry, okay?

The Car's turn signal comes on.

DENTS (O.S.)  
Now I have TWO eye patches! Jenny?  
Jenny?! Where are ya, girl?!

The brake lights flash as the Car turns and disappears, leaving just an empty street.

JENNY (O.S.)  
Drama queen.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING - NEXT DAY

Bill and Sammy are seated at the kitchen table. Bill is engrossed in the paper. Sammy is pouring milk on and near his cereal. A sleepy Jenny shuffles in, hugging her pillow. She sits down with a groan and buries her face.

BILL  
Late night, kiddo? I thought you  
were home pretty close to 11:00.

JENNY  
I couldn't sleep. The french fries  
finally went to sleep at one.

She yawns tiredly.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
The Cokes fell asleep about two.

Bill reaches for a piece of toast.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Well, Sunday School isn't until nine-thirty. You can grab a quick nap, if you want.

JENNY

Is it okay if I don't sit with you guys in church?

Bill raises his eyebrows. Sammy stops eating.

JENNY (CONT'D)

No. No. It's nothing to - last night Sonny asked me to sit with him.

Bill's eyebrows go a little higher, his smile growing bigger.

BILL

So it's kinda like a - church date?

Jenny's eyes pop open. Sammy starts to giggle.

JENNY

Nothing like- no, it's not - we're just - sitting.

Sammy hops out of his seat and stands beside Jenny, an impish look on his face. Then he starts in.

SAMMY

"Sonny and Jenny sittin' in a tree."

BILL

Sammy, leave her alone.

SAMMY

"K-I-S-S-I-N-G."

Bill shakes his head and reaches for the Sunday paper. Jenny glares at her brother.

BILL

Sammy. Don't.

Sammy is oblivious to the impending doom. He bends over slightly, leaning in while wiggling his behind to the rhyme.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY

"First comes love, then comes marriage."

Bill shakes his head as he pops open the Sunday paper that fills the screen.

SAMMY (CONT'D) (O.S.)

"Then comes Jenny with a-"

There's a muffled smack, then a loud "thud". Bill looks over the top of the paper. Jenny is looking at the floor and re-hugging the pillow. She looks up at Bill.

JENNY

Sorry, Dad.

Bill smiles at her and continues reading.

Jenny glances down at the floor again.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Sorry, Sam.

She gets up and shuffles off. Bill turns a page while a small hand gropes into view, trying to grip the table top. Bill reads while shaking his head, speaking slowly and distinctly.

BILL

What did you forget to do?

The hand disappears followed by a soft groan.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Jenny is lounging on the couch with a book. Bill is typing on a laptop. Sammy is sprawled across the floor. He groans dramatically and very slowly rolls over twice, groaning the whole time.

SAMMY

I am soooooooo bored! Sunday afternoons are soooooooo long.

Jenny doesn't look up.

JENNY

Go count corn stalks.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Jenny.

Sammy's groaning stops for a comment.

SAMMY

There is nuthin' to do!

Bill closes the laptop.

BILL

Okay. Check the chairs and the sofa for change.

Sammy sits up, his pout still in place.

SAMMY

How's that gonna help?

BILL

If we have enough change, we'll get some night crawlers and go fishin'.

Sammy explodes off the floor. He dives toward the sofa.

BILL (CONT'D)

You better move, Jen.

Jenny rolls off the sofa just as Sammy yanks out a cushion.

BILL (CONT'D)

And put everything back like you found it, Sam. You wanna come along, honey?

JENNY

Naw. It's a guy thing. Go ahead. I've got a good book.

SAMMY (O.S.)

I've got 37-cents so far! Oh wait- I got more in my room!

Sammy thunders past Jenny who does a matador move.

JENNY

I've got some change in my room if you need it.

BILL

Nah, I have enough money. I'm just trying to get some of the energy out of him before we go. (beat) Your brother doesn't fish quietly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Jenny is asleep on the sofa. There's a loud knock at the door. Then another. Jenny comes awake. Another knock. She sits up and stretches. She moves toward the door.

JENNY  
Coming! Almost there!

Opening the door, she sees Deputy.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
Hi. Can I help you?

DEPUTY  
Are you Jenny Benson?

Jenny is still trying to wake up.

JENNY  
Yeah.

DEPUTY  
Uh, your father -

JENNY (INTERRUPTING)  
Oh, he's not here. He went fishing with my brother a couple of hours ago.

Deputy nods while taking a deep breath.

DEPUTY  
I know, m'am. Your father and brother were in an accident.

JENNY  
Wha-

DEPUTY  
Now, now, we think they're both gonna be okay, but they're in the hospital.

JENNY  
How bad is it?

DEPUTY  
Your brother has some bumps and bruises.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

And my dad?

Deputy looks down and rolls his hat around in his hands.

DEPUTY

He took the brunt of it. Witnesses say he turned the car to protect your brother. Impact was on the driver's side.

Deputy looks up to see Jenny crying.

DEPUTY (CONT'D)

He, ah, he got hit pretty hard.

JENNY

Okay.

Jenny turns, walking away, leaving Deputy standing in the doorway.

DEPUTY

M'am, do you want me to take you to the hospital? It's no problem at all.

JENNY (O.S.)

No. No. Thanks.

Jenny has left. Deputy waits for a moment, then looks down the hall.

DEPUTY

Okay, m'am. I'll - okay.

Deputy reaches in and pulls the door closed.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Jenny sits in a waiting area, vacantly staring. Gertie hurries by, almost missing her. She comes over but Jenny doesn't notice.

GERTIE

Hey, Jen.

Jenny comes back to the present.

JENNY

Hey, Gertie.

(CONTINUED)

Gertie sits down gingerly. She leans forward, hands on knees, rocking slightly.

GERTIE  
How ya doin'?

JENNY  
I've been through worse. Dad and Sammy are still alive. That's a plus.

Gertie sits back a little.

GERTIE  
How bad they hurt?

Jenny flutters one hand slightly.

JENNY  
Sammy's just banged up and sore. The crash and the seat belt beat him up pretty good.

GERTIE  
And your dad?

Jenny swallows hard and takes a breath.

JENNY  
He, ah, his side took the hit. The doctor said something about being incredibly lucky. He said Dad should be in a lot worse shape.

Jenny tiredly sighs.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
He's got a broken leg and ribs. Something's wrong with his shoulder and, ah, his spleen.

GERTIE  
You seen 'em yet?

JENNY  
Just Sammy. He's kinda out of it. They gave him some stuff so he doesn't move around too much.

GERTIE  
I'll betcha *that* took the whole medicine cabinet.

Jenny gives a tired smile.

(CONTINUED)

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
Ya seen your dad?

Jenny shakes her head.

JENNY  
He's outta surgery. They said  
they'd let me know when I can see  
him.

Jenny slouches back. She stares ahead, her voice flat,  
emotionless.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
And I was starting to believe that  
God could be trusted. Dents  
showing up. The guitar  
thing. Good things were  
happening. But -

Jenny sits up straighter to look at Gertie, a hardness in  
her voice.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
- life shows up. And God doesn't.

Gertie leans in toward Jenny.

GERTIE  
Jen - I believed the same thing for  
years. Lotsa years. But I'm  
thinkin' maybe it ain't a true  
picture of things. Especially of  
God.

Gertie sighs and brushes a hand over her head.

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
I spent almost five hours in your  
car, just talkin' with Dents. He  
told me things, Jenny, things I  
didn't know. Where God was workin'  
in my life, takin' care of me . . .

Gertie looks down, then locks eyes with Jenny.

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
. . . lovin' me, Jenny. He was  
there whether I cared or not.

JENNY  
So trust Him, right? When He lets  
this happen? Sorry, Gertie. I  
don't see it.

(CONTINUED)



Gertie pauses then shakes her head.

GERTIE

Shoot, Jenny. I don't have a honkin' clue why this happened to Bill and Sammy. But I know God still loves me, you, and them. Even in a world-class cruddy time like this.

Jenny stands to look out a window.

JENNY

And how do ya know this, Gertie?

Gertie joins her by the window.

GERTIE

I've seen some bad, ugly things. I've thought bad, ugly things (beat) and I've *done* some bad, ugly things.

Gertie turns to see Jenny watching at her.

GERTIE (CONT'D)

And for the first time in my life, I can see that He was there.

Gertie taps her chest.

GERTIE (CONT'D)

In every dark and nasty place of my life, I was never outta His reach. Or His care. He was there with me, Jenny - just like He's here now. With us.

The clicking of shoes announces the DOCTOR.

DOCTOR

Ms. Benson, your dad is awake and would like to see you.

Jenny starts to follow Doctor then stops.

JENNY

Would you come with me, Gertie?

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - EVENING - SAME DAY

Gertie walks Jenny to the Car.

GERTIE

Ya heard me promise your Dad I'd  
look in on ya until he's up and  
around. I don't wanna crowd ya,  
but it seems like the thing to do.

Jenny nods. Gertie fumbles in her shirt pocket for a  
business card.

GERTIE (CONT'D)

My number's on there. Give me a  
call if you need anything. Day or  
night. Okay?

Jenny nods.

GERTIE (CONT'D)

Jenny, I can drive ya home. (beat)  
What am I thinkin'? Dents can  
drive you home.

Jenny looks up angrily.

JENNY

I'll drive myself. No Dents. No -  
anybody.

Gertie holds up her hands and steps back. Jenny sighs.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Gertie. I shouldn't  
snap at you. I -

Her voice trails off as she opens the door.

GERTIE

Hey. It's okay. You gotta lot to  
think about.

JENNY

I'm really -

GERTIE (INTERRUPTING)

It's okay. I'll call you  
tomorrow. Get some sleep, huh?

Jenny gets into the Car and pulls away.

INT. CAR - EVENING - SAME DAY

Jenny is driving, her fatigue evident. A glow comes from the dash.

DENTS (O.S.)

Jenny?

JENNY

Go away.

DENTS (O.S.)

Jen.

JENNY

"Believe. Just trust." (beat) Oh, yeah. Why didn't you or Him do anything to stop it?

DENTS (O.S.)

Jenny -

Jenny's head snaps down to the tablet, her voice sharp.

JENNY

I should be thankful they're still alive, right?

She smacks the steering wheel with a hand.

JENNY (CONT'D)

So "*thank you, Dents*" and "*thank you, God*". Thanks for nothing!

Jenny's voice rises.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Being busted up is SOOO much better, right? More hospital bills! No work! No income! No car! Yeah. Thanks so much! Everything is GREAT!

Jenny lets out a ragged sigh.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Just...great.

The tablet glow disappears as Jenny stares ahead.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - LATE MORNING - NEXT DAY

Sunlight pours into the room. Jenny is asleep, fully dressed and sprawled on top of the covers. The clock-radio shows 11:23.

Jenny awakes and sits up with a start. She sees the board with the "LET GOD". In anger she reaches behind her for a pillow. She flings it with a yell.

It hits on the right edge of the board and bounces off, taking a letter with it. The board says "LET GO". A confused look replaces the scowl. She holds up a hand and moves it quickly as if trying to erase the words. She points frantically at the board.

JENNY

No! No you don't! Leave me alone!

Jumping out of bed, she dashes for the door and into the hall.

INT. ENTRY WAY - LATE MORNING -SAME DAY

Jenny runs through the house and bolts outside.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

She runs away from the barn and Dents. She looks at the Car, pointing at it as she runs.

JENNY

No! Leave me alone!

Jenny sprints into the cornfield.

EXT. CORNFIELD - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

She runs down a row wildly, blindly as tears stream down her face. Finally exhausted, she drops to her knees. Looking up at the sky she sobs, shaking her fist. Her handshaking slows. She slowly puts her hands on the ground. Hanging her head, she continues to cry.

EXT. QUARRY YARD - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

WORKER hops out of a beat-up, poorly maintained dump truck over-filled with rock and gravel. He begins to walk the hundred yards to the office trailer. Halfway there, he stops, turns, and walks back to the truck.

INT. GERTIE'S GREATER GARAGE - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Gertie is punching numbers on her cellphone. No answer.

GERTIE

Jenny. You okay, kid?

Jamming the cellphone into a pocket, she moves towards the door.

EXT. CORNFIELD - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Jenny sits back on her heels. She stares ahead. Turning her head to the sky, she exhales deeply.

JENNY

Okay, God. Dad says You're there.  
Dents says You're there.

She scowls as she shakes her head.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Even Gertie says You're there. I  
wanna believe. That this life  
makes sense. I wanna believe...

Her voice catches as her eyes begin shining with tears.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I wanna believe You love me. And  
You've got this - You've got it all  
under control. For my  
good. Because You love me. I - I  
wanna believe.

Jenny blinks a few times while sniffing. She rubs dirty hands over her eyes and blows out a breath.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Be real to me, God. I want you to  
be real. Let me believe. Please.

Getting up wearily, she walks forward, slowly pushing away corn leaves.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Jenny walks out of the cornfield to stand at the edge of the gravel pit. Across the road she sees a man walking back to a beat-up dump truck. She looks down the steep twenty foot incline of sand, rock, and dirt, then gingerly starts down the pit wall. Only a few feet into the descent her foot slides, spinning her around. Sliding down on her heels, a foot digs in, flipping her face forward. She tumbles and rolls to the floor of the pit where her head bounces off a rock. She goes limp, a bloody mark on her temple. Unconscious and face down in the dirt, she's directly in line with the dump truck parked across the road.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Worker opens the driver's door of the dump truck and stands on the running boards, reaching in to get his lunch box on the floorboard. He lifts the lunch box across the cab. It hits the brake-lock. The truck starts to roll. Worker tries to get behind the wheel and falls, bouncing off the open door and rolling clear. He watches in horror as the dump truck rolls backward, slowly picking up speed.

EXT. SIDE OF THE BARN - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

A shot of the Car by the barn.

INT. CAR - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

The tablet glows to life.

INT. TABLET SHOT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Dents looks over from talking to someone off-screen.

DENTS

Jen - Jenny?!

Things begin to happen *VERY* quickly...

INT. CAR - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

The motor immediately revs as the shift lever slams down into Drive.

(CONTINUED)

DENTS (O.S.)  
JENNY!!!

EXT. FARMHOUSE - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

The Car digs out, throwing grass and mud, flying around the barn towards the cornfield, engine screaming.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Gertie's car is about to turn into the Bensons' driveway. She hits the brakes when she sees the Car speeding toward the cornfield.

GERTIE (O.S.)  
Dents?!

INT. GERTIE'S CAR - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Gertie watches as the Car disappears into the cornfield. Gertie floors the gas, squealing down the highway.

GERTIE  
What in the -

EXT. CORNFIELD - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

The Car is blitzing through the green corn, leaving a wake of shattered stalks.

INT. TABLET SHOT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Dents is standing in a linebacker stance as he begins a "Tony Stark/Iron Man" transformation. A blue glow surrounds him as gleaming silver battle armor clicks into place, changing him from quirky friend to Heavenly warrior. As the battle crown snaps down, Dents' fists begin to crackle with sparking blue energy.

INT. GERTIE'S CAR - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Gertie speeds down the highway, keeping up with the Car. When the Car is seen, it has glowing blue fire crawling around it in bands. Gertie sees the Car rushing towards the edge of the pit and its 20 ft drop.

(CONTINUED)

GERTIE  
Dents! NO!

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

The Car explodes through the corn, leaping off the pit edge. Slow motion shows corn, rock, and dirt flying, the wheels spinning as blue fire twists and writhes around the Car.

INT. TABLET SHOT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Dents is standing slightly sideways, legs flexed, one arm forward, as if holding chariot reins. Both fists crackle with blue fire. His face contorts into a battle cry.

INT. MARV'S CAR - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Gertie watches the Car flying through the air.

GERTIE  
Ohhhhh -

Out the corner of her eye, she catches the rolling bulk of the dump truck as it reaches the road, just 50 yards ahead of her.

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
MOMMAAAAAA!

Gertie slams on the brakes.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Gertie's car squeals sideways to a stop as the dump truck shoots by in front of her. She flings the door open and jumps out. She spots Jenny.

GERTIE  
JENNY!

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

The Car is roaring across the gravel pit in a plume of dust and gravel. It streaks toward the dump truck which has cleared the road and is starting to hurtle down the entrance of the pit.



INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

In slow motion, Dents roars as he begins a powerful, over-the-shoulder punch, his fist engulfed in blue fire. The punching arm is almost fully extended when . . .

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

**BAM!!!** The Car slams into the dump truck fender with the fury of a pitbull. The Car's grill and hood crushes back to the front tires, the back wheels keep spinning, pushing, clawing for traction. The air is filled with flying metal, glass, dirt, and rocks.

Gertie is running towards Jenny yelling her name.

Jenny comes to. She groggily looks up. She screams.

JENNY

DENTS!

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents is pushing with all his might, both hands blazing with blue fire. He's bleeding badly from a gash just beneath the battle crown. His armor is tarnished and dented. A growl of rage escapes through clenched teeth.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Blue fire begins to crackle and seethe where the two machines are locked.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents fires two quick, blazing-blue haymakers at the screen then pushes again, wild eyed and roaring.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

The dump truck is turning! The Car keeps attacking, wheels clawing, unrelenting, unyielding.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Just Dents' shoulders and face are visible. His face is streaked with dirt, blood, and sweat. One eye is swollen shut, the other wide and wild. His upper lip is bleeding and puffy. A cheek gash is bleeding as well as the head cut. Blue fire is whipping through the air around him. He screams an earth-shaking roar.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

The dump truck is now fully sideways and slowing down, a huge cloud of dust and dirt rolling before it.

The Car quickly drives backwards away from the truck, its right front tire dragging at an angle, the other tire flat. It moves rapidly, erratically, back to Jenny, a mere 30 yards away. The dump truck is still coming. The Car slides to a stop, sitting sideways between Jenny and the dump truck. The passenger door flies open.

JENNY

Dents?!

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

A battered Dents smiles weakly, breathing hard.

DENTS

Believe, Jenny. Believe and trust. God loves you. Always.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Jenny reaches for the Car.

JENNY

Dents, NO!

In the background, the dump truck slides towards them, only 15 yards away and closing. It catches in a hole and starts to tip over, its load of rock and gravel beginning to spill.

INT. TABLET SHOT - SAME DAY

Dents smiles.

(CONTINUED)

DENTS

Good bye, Jenny.

He glances over his right shoulder.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - LATE MORNING - SAME DAY

Blue flames writhing around it, the Car flies at the dump truck which now is almost over on its side, the rock and gravel beginning to fly out of the box. The Car throws itself sideways as it flips up in the air. It slams into the box with a huge burst of blue light, using its roof, hood, and trunk to seal up the box. The impact stops the dump truck in place. The dump truck slowly falls completely upside down, crushing the Car under the load of rock and gravel, just a mere 10 yards from Jenny.

A faint shimmer of crackling blue flame runs quickly around the base of the pile then goes out. There is only silence as Gertie runs up to Jenny.

Gertie kneels next to her, shielding her as the dust washes over them.

Pulling back, a high view shows Worker running down the entrance to the gravel pit towards them.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON - NEXT DAY

Gertie walks to the Bensons' front door. She's carrying a big paper bag. She knocks and the door opens immediately to reveal Jenny with a small bandage on her temple and an arm in a sling.

JENNY

Hi, Gertie. Saw you pullin' in.

GERTIE

Hey. How ya feelin', kiddo?

Jenny raises her sling arm out and away from her body.

JENNY

The doctor says another week. I don't really need it, but I'm more comfortable with it on.

Gertie smiles and nods.

(CONTINUED)

GERTIE

And here's your daily meal from Sis at the "Drop By". As always, "no charge". Freda was always more like Mom. I took after Dad.

Jenny shakes her head.

JENNY

If I would've known how well-fed we'd be, I would've fallen down weeks ago.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON - NEXT DAY

Gertie looks for a place to put the bag. Casserole dishes, salads, pies, and cakes are everywhere.

GERTIE

Still gettin' the goodies from folks in town.

JENNY

If there were any more churches in town we'd hafta open a cafeteria to use it all.

Gertie waves her hand majestically around the kitchen as she thunders in her best "theatre voice".

GERTIE

"Though the churches be but little, their ovens are fierce!"

Jenny looks puzzled.

JENNY

What?

Gertie blushes with a laugh. Looking at the floor she peeks up at Jenny.

GERTIE

It's a small-town translation of Shakespeare. "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Act 3, Scene 2, I think.

Jenny looks surprised.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY  
You know Shakespeare?

Gertie makes a space on the table.

GERTIE  
Well, not *personally*! I'm not  
that old, Jen.

JENNY  
Oh. No. No, I meant -

GERTIE (INTERRUPTING)  
I know, I know. Just givin'  
ya grief.

Gertie pulls out a chair and plops down.

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
I saved up some money and tried  
college for awhile. Met a boy who  
was really into Shakespeare.

Gertie's look goes vacant, her voice softer.

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
Howie. He could recite whole works  
from memory. He loved that  
stuff. And he was just that,  
too. Little and fierce.

JENNY  
So what happened to him?

Gertie comes back to the present, sitting a little  
straighter in her chair.

MARV  
Well, I married him. Then he left.

JENNY  
I'm sorry, Gertie.

GERTIE  
Yeah, well, talkin' to Dents helped  
me put it in perspective. I'm  
lettin' go of it, a little at a  
time. I've been readin' the  
Book. It's helpin' me understand  
stuff.

Jenny pulls up a chair as she blinks back tears.

JENNY

I wish I could talk to Dents again.  
I really miss him, Gertie.

Gertie is doing the same. She nods.

GERTIE

Yeah. Me, too. He was a unique...  
Dents. (beat) I hate to admit it,  
but I really liked that shirt of  
his.

Gertie's smile fades into a more serious look.

GERTIE (CONT'D)

You, ah, good with...everything?

JENNY

Yeah. Some days are better'n  
others, but yeah. I've been  
talkin' to God a lot. And you're  
right. The Book helps me  
understand.

GERTIE

Glad to hear that. Dents would've  
loved to hear that, too.

JENNY

Yeah.

Sammy comes running in and skids to a stop by the table,  
just barely remaining upright. He has one arm in a sling  
like Jenny.

SAMMY

Hey, Gertie!

GERTIE

Hey, Sammy. How are-

SAMMY (INTERRUPTING)

Did Freda send us more stuff?

Gertie laughs and holds out the bag.

GERTIE

Cheeseburgers, chili cheese fries,  
and three bags of cheese puffs.

SAMMY

All right!

(CONTINUED)

Sammy flips his arm out of the sling, grabbing the bag from Gertie.

JENNY

*Samuel Benson!* Put that arm back  
in that sling! The doctor said  
another week.

Sammy is already chewing cheese puffs as he reaches deeper into the bag.

SAMMY

Anybody want a cheeseburger?

Gertie looks at Jenny with sympathy.

GERTIE

Ask the wind not to blow, huh?

JENNY

Let me get some plates and then you  
can pass 'em out.

Jenny picks up a casserole dish and moves toward the kitchen counter. Gertie slides things around on the table to make room for the plates. She notices Sammy with his head in the bag. She barks out an order.

GERTIE

Sammy! Go help Jenny with those  
plates! Now, compadre!

Sammy scrambles over to the counter, eyes wide. Jenny looks at Sammy then glances over at Gertie who flashes a big grin and winks. Jenny hands Sammy the silverware.

JENNY

I'll get the plates.

Sammy takes the silverware and tentatively approaches the table. Gertie smiles as she holds out her hand.

GERTIE

I'll do the forks.

Sammy relaxes. Jenny comes over with the plates, glasses, and a pitcher of lemonade. When everything is ready, Jenny nods at Sammy.

JENNY

Okay, Sam. Your turn.

SAMMY  
Let's let Gertie do it!

GERTIE  
Do what?

Sammy holds out his hand as if offering a precious gift.

SAMMY  
You getta pray for the meal!

Gertie blinks a couple of times.

JENNY  
No. It's Sammy's -

GERTIE (INTERRUPTING)  
Nah. It's okay. I, ah, I wanna  
get the hang of this.

Jenny nods. Jenny and Sammy bow their heads, closing their eyes. Gertie watches them then self-consciously does the same.

GERTIE  
God. Thanks for this food. Ah.  
Thanks for the Benson family. It's  
nice - to know 'em better. And,  
ah, thanks for caring. And for  
being there. And  
here. Ah. Thanks.

Gertie looks up. Both Jenny and Sammy still have their heads down.

GERTIE (CONT'D)  
That's it. I'm done.

Sammy's head pops up, his hands reaching for a cheeseburger.

SAMMY  
Great job, Gertie!

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

The meal is almost done. Gertie finishes a pull on her lemonade.

GERTIE  
So when's your dad comin' home?

(CONTINUED)



JENNY  
Tomorrow. Finally.

GERTIE  
Want me to pick him up for  
ya? It's not a problem.

Jenny and Sammy shoot a glance at each other.

JENNY  
Actually, Gertie, we were gonna ask  
you to do that and then stay for  
dinner.

Gertie's surprised smile gives her answer.

GERTIE  
That'd be - that'd be really nice.  
Beats microwave meals any day or  
bumming a meal offa Freda. Thanks.

Sammy drops his burger onto his plate.

SAMMY  
Yeah, we're gonna need your help.  
We've decided to tell Dad about  
Dents.

Gertie's smile freezes. She looks at Sammy who gives her a big nodding smile while grabbing some chili-cheese fries. Jenny raises her eyebrows and nods. Gertie's smile melts.

GERTIE  
It was hard enough to believe that  
Dents was Dents when Dents was  
here! But now that he's gone . . .

JENNY  
And that's why we need you, Gertie.  
You saw what we saw. You're a  
witness.

Gertie cocks her head and holds her hands out as if trying to stop something.

GERTIE  
Now. Now, kids. I like y'all.  
Really, I do. But this might be  
more of a - family thing, ya know?

SAMMY  
Awww. It's easy, Gertie. Just  
tell Dad whatcha saw. What you and  
Dents talked about. See. Easy.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

Just talk to Dad like you did to me  
at the hospital, Gertie.

Gertie reaches for her lemonade but doesn't pick it up. Slowly she turns the glass with her fingertips. Sammy stops chewing. The only sound is the clicking of ice cubes in the turning glass. Gertie lifts the glass, takes a long pull then sets it down firmly.

GERTIE

It's all true. And ya can't be  
afraid of the truth. It's the one  
thing in life that's rock solid.

She glances at Sammy, then Jenny.

GERTIE (CONT'D)

Yeah. I'm in.

Gertie smiles at Jenny. Sammy throws both hands up in celebration, one of those hands still holding two french fries drenched in chili-cheese. These same two fries fly over Sammy's head on a trajectory for the living room. Sammy's smile instantly disappears. His head swivels to watch the ill-fated landing of the fries on carpet. His shocked face spins back to the table just as Gertie's and Jenny's smiling faces turn his way. Both smiles instantly disappear.

JENNY

What...did...you...do?

SAMMY

Huh?

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING - SAME DAY

The table is bare. Gertie stands by it, finishing off a cup of coffee. Jenny walks over as she raises the coffee carafe.

JENNY

A refill, Gertie?

Gertie shakes her head.

GERTIE

No thanks, Jen. I better get  
goin'. Gotta have Tom's pickup done  
by 10 tomorrow. (beat) Thanks for  
dinner -

(CONTINUED)

Gertie smiles while pointing a finger at Jenny.

GERTIE (CONT'D)

And the conspiracy. I'll have your  
dad here by the time you get home  
tomorrow.

Gertie waves as she heads for the door.

JENNY

See ya tomorrow.

SAMMY (O.S.)

See ya later, Gertie!

Gertie turns towards the living room.

GERTIE

See ya, Sammy.

Sammy pops up about eight feet behind the table with a rag  
and a spray bottle in his hand.

SAMMY

I can walk ya to your car.

JENNY

Not until that stain is completely  
gone, Samuel William!

Sammy blows out a blast of disgust and disappears from  
sight. Gertie pauses as she goes by the electric guitar  
standing in the corner.

GERTIE

Whose is this?

Gertie stoops down to inspect it. She gently picks it up.

JENNY (O.S.)

It was my mom's.

GERTIE

This is a great old guitar. It's a  
classic. Do you play it?

Jenny walks over.

JENNY

Yeah. I feel closer to her when I  
do.

SAMMY (O.S.)  
She's really good, too! Let's hear  
you play, Jenny.

Jenny turns slightly.

JENNY  
Keep cleaning, Sammy.

SAMMY (O.S.)  
Ah, maaaaan.

Gertie looks around.

GERTIE  
Where's your amp?

JENNY  
Oh, ah, it broke awhile back. I've  
been trying to save up for a new  
one.

Gertie straightens up with a small smile.

GERTIE  
Huh. Well, see ya tomorrow.

She calls back over his shoulder.

GERTIE  
Hey, Sammy!

SAMMY (O.S.)  
Yeah, Gertie?

GERTIE  
When ya get down to wood, ya better  
stop.

SAMMY (O.S.)  
That's not funny, Gertie.

Gertie laughs as she pulls the door open, speaking to  
herself.

GERTIE  
Yeah. It is.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON - NEXT DAY

The school bus stops at the driveway. The doors are barely open before Sammy leaps out, his arm sling flapping behind him. Pumping both arms, he runs for the house. Jenny hurries behind him.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

The outside door bursts open as Sammy jettisons his backpack.

SAMMY

Dad! Dad!

BILL (O.S.)

Hey, Son!

Bill is sitting at the table. Sammy runs around the table, slips, and disappears with a "thud". Bill turns gingerly in his chair, reaching with his opposite good arm. Sammy pops up and almost dives into Bill who lets out a yelp of pain. Sammy jumps back wide-eyed.

SAMMY

I'm sorry, Dad. I'm sorry!

Bill's grimace turns to a tight smile.

BILL

It's okay, Sammy. Still a little sore. We might hav'ta hug a little gentler for the next couple of weeks

Bill opens up his good side, holding out his arm.

BILL (CONT'D)

How 'bout a good, slow snuggle?

Sammy grins and walks around the chair to tenderly hug his dad.

SAMMY

Works for me, Dad.

BILL

Love ya, Sammy.

SAMMY

Love ya, Dad.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY (O.S.)

Dad!

Jenny comes running in. Sammy instantly jumps out away from the table, landing in a super hero pose, straight-arming his hand.

SAMMY

STOP!!!

A surprised Jenny freezes.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

He's still a little sore. Take my spot.

Jenny softly cries as she hugs Bill. His eyes start to tear-up as well.

JENNY

Love ya, Dad.

BILL

Love ya, honey.

Sammy reaches around Jenny so he's hugging them both. All three heads come together - a Kodak moment. Bill raises his head and clears his throat.

BILL (CONT'D)

Oh, it's good to be home! Hey, anything exciting happen while I was gone?

SAMMY

Well, we've been eatin' real well 'cause Freda's been givin' us dinner - every night!

Bill taps Sammy's tummy as Sammy giggles.

BILL

Really?!

SAMMY

Uh-huh. Oh, and Gertie's comin' over for dinner tonight!

Jenny kisses Bill on his head. She moves towards the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY  
Coffee, Dad?

Jenny leaves as Sammy pulls up a chair at the table.

BILL  
Sure. And don't bother with  
dinner. Gertie said Freda has a  
whole "Welcome Home" fish fry ready  
to go. She'll bring it with her  
tonight.

JENNY (O.S.)  
Gertie let it slip that Freda might  
have more than a casual interest in  
you, Dad.

Bill looks a little flustered.

BILL  
Well. No. Now, Jen.

JENNY (O.S.)  
You know what they say about the  
quickest way to a man's heart.

Sammy chimes in.

SAMMY  
Through his chest!

Bill snorts a painful laugh. Sammy doesn't get it.

BILL  
No, Sammy. It's through his  
stomach.

SAMMY  
His stomach?! But the heart is way  
up -

JENNY (O.S.) (INTERRUPTING)  
Don't worry, Sam.

Jenny brings over a cup and puts it in front of Bill.

JENNY (CONT'D)  
You'll figure it out later.

Sipping coffee, Bill gives Jenny an impish grin.

JENNY

What?

BILL

Why don't you play Mom's guitar for me. Play her song. Please.

Jenny shrugs and nods. She walks towards the guitar.

JENNY (O.S.)

I think I pretty well - what is THIS?!

BILL

Gertie heard you didn't have an amp, so she's giving you her old one. The guitar cord should be sitting there on top.

Jenny rolls the amp close to the kitchen table, her eyes wide.

BILL (CONT'D)

Gertie brought it with her this afternoon. She tried it all out. Works good. And she really likes your guitar. Says it "plays sweet".

Jenny runs her hand over the amp.

JENNY

Gertie plays?

BILL

Yeah. She used too. She's pretty good. I guess she was in a rock band in college. Says that's how she met some guy named Howie.

SAMMY

Wow. Gertie plays. And she's (beat) old.

BILL

That's the thing with older folks, kids. They've lived a lotta life before ever meeting you.

Jenny ducks under the guitar strap, holding the power cord out to Sammy.

(CONTINUED)



JENNY

Go plug this in, will ya?

Jenny carefully pushes in the guitar cord. Sammy starts hopping from one foot to the other.

SAMMY

Go ahead, Jenny. Let 'er rip!

Jenny flips the switch. The red light comes on. Bending over the guitar, she positions her fingers.

BILL

Wait, hon.

Jenny's head pops up to see Bill holding something.

BILL (CONT'D)

Here. Gertie went by the salvage yard. She wanted you to have this, too.

It's the blue plastic whale that hung from Dents' mirror. Jenny lets it dangle from her fingers. She looks up with glistening eyes and a smile.

JENNY

I've got just the place for it.

She gently places it around a tuner next to the small, golden cross.

JENNY (CONT'D)

This way it'll remind me every time I play.

Bill cocks his head and smiles. Jenny smiles at Sammy.

JENNY (CONT'D)

It'll remind me of Dents. And Mom.

Jenny looks over at her dad.

JENNY (CONT'D)

And to trust.

Sammy grins at Jenny while holding up his finger.

SAMMY

Aaaaaaaa-men!

Jenny begins "Mom's Song".

(CONTINUED)

DENTS (O.S.)

And amen to your amen, kiddo!

Sammy freezes. He slowly looks over at the gently swinging blue whale.

DENTS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'll catch up with you later,  
Sammy. Trust and obey, baby! See  
ya!

The shot moves back and goes around the table. Bill nods gently to the music. Sammy stares at the whale. The shot closes in on Jenny, moving tighter onto the guitar and her fingers. As the orchestra joins the music, the shot travels slowly past fast moving fingers to the tuner where a blue whale gently swings next to a sparkling cross.

The shot closes on the whale's head. The eye suddenly fills with crackling blue fire. Then the thin black line of the whale's smile gets longer, curving upwards into a even bigger grin.

FADE OUT