

"George, Jimmy Stewart & The Stick"

by

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INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

GEORGE, a ten year old boy who seems a few years younger than his age, is sitting in between his parents, LAURA and PAUL, in front of a large desk. George has a large Stick in his arms. It is about two inches in diameter and two foot long. Laura and Paul look nervous, sitting upright as if they are awaiting the result of an important test, and want to get it over with quickly.

Behind the desk sits a large, balding man with bushy eyebrows, hands clasped together, resting on the desk top. A broad smile is spread across his face; a false, creepy smile which puts no one at ease. A name plaque on the desk reads "MR POTTER - PRINCIPAL".

George eyes the plaque anxiously. He keeps looking from the plaque up to Mr Potter and back again. He seems almost afraid.

After several seconds sitting in silence, grinning, Potter finally speaks.

POTTER

So. Mr and Mrs Bailey. How do you do?

He quickly stands up, extends his hand across the desk for Laura and Paul to shake. They are too far away from the desk to reach, so have to stand up and take a step to be able to shake hands in turn.

POTTER

And this must be George.

Potter looks directly at George. George keeps his eyes fixed to the plaque, doesn't want to look at him. Potter's smile briefly disappears, but quickly comes back.

POTTER

Hello, George.

George doesn't move.

PAUL

Say hello, George.

George still doesn't move.

LAURA

I'm sorry, Mr Potter. He's very shy around strange people.

(quickly)

I mean, people he doesn't know.

POTTER

That's quite alright. We'll get to know each other soon enough.

LAURA  
(excited)  
Does that mean you'll take him  
as a student?

POTTER  
Let's not get ahead of ourselves  
just yet, shall we?

Laura quickly recomposes herself, looks slightly embarrassed.

POTTER  
So, George. Do you like going to  
school?

George continues staring intently at the name plaque, as if fascinated by it.

Potter looks at Paul and Laura in turn. Paul does a small, nervous laugh and smile at Potter. He nudges George gently.

PAUL  
Come on, George. Answer Mr  
Potter's question.

No movement or sign of any life from George.

PAUL  
(firmly)  
George!

POTTER  
No, no. It's okay... You've been  
to a few schools in the past,  
haven't you, George? What  
happened there?

George quickly turns away from the plaque, looks at his Stick. He starts whispering to it animatedly, incomprehensible to anyone else.

Potter looks concerned, gives Laura and Paul a questioning look.

LAURA  
It's... it's like a security  
blanket to him.

Potter laughs.

POTTER  
Oh, I'm afraid that we couldn't  
allow that kind of thing here.

George suddenly turns to face Potter, eyes wide with fear. He yells out:

GEORGE

Help me, Clarence, please! Please!  
I want to live again!

Potter jumps out of his seat, shocked. Paul and Laura give each other a look, seemingly un-surprised by this outburst. Potter, seeing their look, quickly tries to make his reaction look different to how it was. He smooths down his little bit of hair, and leans against the back of his chair.

POTTER

What was that all about, George?

George has gone back to whispering to the Stick.

Paul and Laura stand up from their seats, ready to leave, fearing the worst from the meeting.

PAUL

I'm sorry, Mr Potter. It's a "thing" that he does. The only time he speaks is to quote from James Stewart films, or to talk to that damn Stick.

LAURA

We're sorry to have taken up your time.

They start to leave, George and the Stick close behind them.

POTTER

Now, I haven't given my decision yet, have I?

LAURA

You mean he still may be able to come?

POTTER

(cautiously)  
Well... schools are here to help and educate our young people. I will let you know my decision in due course.

PAUL

Thank you, Mr Potter. Thank you.

Laura and Paul walk out of the office. George stops just inside the room, turns to Potter.

POTTER

Yes, George? Is there something you would like to say?

Laura and Paul turn in fascination to see what is happening.

GEORGE  
 (viciously)  
 This town is no place for any man  
 unless he's willing to crawl to  
 Potter.

EXT. SCHOOL - SAME

Paul is rushing ahead of George and Laura, heading quickly towards where the car is parked. Laura hurries to try to catch up. George dawdles behind, whispering to the Stick.

PAUL  
 Well, you've done it again,  
 George. We may have had a chance  
 there, but you blew it again,  
 didn't you?

LAURA  
 It's not his fault, Paul. Don't  
 take it out on him.

Paul stops abruptly and turns to Laura.

PAUL  
 So who's fault is it, Laura? Is  
 it my fault?

Laura shakes her head, upset.

PAUL  
 Is it my fault? Because I'm not  
 at home all of the time? Because  
 I have to work to support this  
 so-called "family"?

LAURA  
 No...

Paul glares at her, then hurries off again to get to the car.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

George is lying in bed. There is a candle burning by his bedside. The light of the flame is the only light in the room.

George is awake, whispering excitedly to the Stick which he has clutched up against his chest, hugging it. He is facing away from the door to his room.

He whispers in such a low voice, and so excitedly that we can not hear what he is saying to the Stick.

The door to George's bedroom slowly creaks open, flooding the bedroom with light from the hallway outside his room.

George quickly shuts his eyes tightly, clutches the Stick closer to himself as Laura walks in to the room.

LAURA

George? Are you awake?

George doesn't respond, keeps his eyes shut. Laura walks over to the bed and leans over him, kisses him softly on the forehead.

LAURA

I love you, baby.

She smiles fondly at him, leans closer to his ear, and whispers to him.

LAURA

Is this the ear you can't hear on?

George opens his eyes slightly.

LAURA

George Bailey, I will love you  
'till the day I die.

George smiles to himself. Laura blows out the candle beside his bed and walks out of the room.

FADE OUT.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Paul is sitting at the breakfast table, reading a newspaper, a bowl of cereal untouched on the table in front of him.

Laura is busying herself making some coffee.

George walks in to the room. He is wearing a school uniform and carrying a back-pack in one hand and his Stick in the other. He stops just inside the kitchen door and smiles.

Paul senses George is there and looks up from his newspaper. He does a double-take as he sees the way that George is dressed. Laura still has her back to him.

PAUL

Laura...

Laura looks at Paul, sees that he is looking at George. She looks at George.

A flash of regret and hurt crosses over her face. Paul goes back to his paper as Laura walks over to George.

She kneels down in front of him, and takes his back-pack away from him.

LAURA  
Georgey, you're not going to  
school today.

George continues to smile at her.

LAURA  
Do you hear me, George? You can't  
go to school at the moment. I  
told you this.

George just smiles.

Tears well up in Laura's eyes. She tries to fight them back.

LAURA  
Come and sit down and have some  
breakfast, then we'll get you  
changed.

George smiles.

LAURA  
George, please!

Paul sighs and puts down his paper angrily.

PAUL  
George! Listen to your Mother and  
come and sit down. Eat your  
breakfast.

GEORGE  
Alright, Mother, old Building and  
Loan pal!

George scurries to the table and tucks in to his breakfast hungrily, not saying another word.

Paul and Laura watch him eat for a moment, then continue with what they were doing.

Suddenly, George looks panicked. He gets up from his seat and rushes back over to the kitchen door, picks up his Stick from where he left it. He climbs back in to his chair at the table, and places the Stick in a seat beside him.

George starts whispering excitedly to the Stick again, incomprehensible to anyone else around him.

Paul and Laura share a look; Paul looks annoyed, while Laura looks worried.

PAUL  
I've had enough of this.

He throws down his newspaper, gets up from the table and grabs the Stick from beside George.

George shrieks, a horrifying, ear-piercing shriek. His eyes fill with tears, his cheeks turn bright red and he starts shaking.

Paul can only watch, unsure what to do.

LAURA  
For God's sake, give him the  
Stick back!

Paul still seems paralyzed, seeing his own son act this way, so Laura snatches the Stick out of his hand, and places it back on the seat next to George. George stops shrieking immediately, and continues his inaudible whispering as if nothing has happened.

Paul storms out of the kitchen into the hallway. He grabs his briefcase and coat and opens the front door to leave. George calls out after him, stopping him in his tracks.

GEORGE  
Pop, do you want a shock? I think  
you're a great guy.

Paul marches out of the house and slams the front door shut behind him, rattling the house. George carries on with his breakfast, humming "Buffalo Girls, Won't You Come Out Tonight" to himself.

Laura watches George eating his breakfast for a moment. George picks up a spoonful of cereal, and tries to feed it to the Stick. Milk dribbles down the Stick on to the floor, cornflakes falling to the ground. He gives a slight embarrassed look to Laura, who in turn turns away from him, towards the sink, not letting him see her hurt face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

George is laying on his front on the floor watching Vertigo. The Stick is laying next to him, as if it is also watching.

Laura walks in to the room, wearing her shoes and coat. She is hiding something behind her back.

LAURA  
(mostly to herself)  
The only ten year old I know who  
understands this film.

George turns at the sound of her voice and looks towards his mother.

GEORGE  
Where are you going?



Laura smiles slightly.

LAURA

I don't know.

George turns his attention completely to her.

GEORGE

Shopping.

LAURA

No.

George smiles broadly, enjoying his "Vertigo" role-playing game.

GEORGE

Well... anywhere in particular?

Laura starts to laugh as she continues playing with him, glad to have some sort of dialogue going on with her son, even if it is directly stolen from a movie.

LAURA

No, I just thought I'd wander.

George switches off the television and stands up, picking up his Stick with him.

GEORGE

Ah. That's what I was going to do.

LAURA

Oh, yes, I forgot; it's your occupation, isn't it?

GEORGE

Don't you think it's sort of a waste for the two of us to...

LAURA

Wander separately?

They both laugh together.

LAURA

Ah, but only one is a wanderer. Two, together, are always going somewhere.

GEORGE

No... no, I don't think that's necessarily true.

Laura beams at her son, pulls out his coat from behind her back and passes it to him. Laura scruffs up George's hair as he puts on his coat and they walk out of the house together, Stick in tow.

EXT. STREET - DAY

George and Laura are walking down the high street. George is holding the Stick protectively in both hands, looking at it as if he is fearing for it's safety.

Laura is trying not to watch her son, but can't help it - she keeps looking at him through the corner of her eye, concerned.

After a moment, George start whispering to the Stick again. Laura looks troubled, and decides to stop him.

LAURA

How about I go in this shop, and then we get some ice cream?

GEORGE

(enthusiastically)  
With coconuts?

LAURA

Sure. Why not.

She sighs, as if she should have seen that coming.

They walk in to a clothes shop together.

GEORGE

Now we're going to buy you some clothes.

LAURA

Yes, George... we're going to buy me some clothes.

INT. DRESSING ROOM / CLOTHES SHOP - SHORT TIME LATER

Laura has just finished putting on a dress. She straightens it out, and adjusts it so that it fits better. She calls out around the curtain.

LAURA

Georgey! Come and see if you like this dress?

There is no response from outside the changing room.

LAURA

Georgey? See if you think Daddy will like it.

Still not response.

LAURA

George?

She peers around the curtain. George isn't there; just a WOMAN, standing looking impatiently with several items of clothing in her hands. Laura start to panic.

LAURA

Georgey! Where are you?

She rushes out of the changing room, leaving her things behind.

WOMAN

You left your stuff!

Laura ignores her and walks around the store, frantically, looking for George, calling out his name as she does so.

LAURA

George! Come here! Come to me!

There is no sign of him anywhere.

Laura runs out of the shop. Alarms go off in the doorway, set off by the dress.

Outside the shop, she screams:

LAURA

GEORGE!

Looking around, he is no where to be seen. Two SECURITY GUARDS approach her from inside the shop.

SECURITY GUARD

Ma'am? Could you please come back inside?

Laura ignores him.

The Security Guard gently touches her arm to get her attention.

SECURITY GUARD

Excuse me, Ma'am. Please come back inside.

Laura glares at him, at his hand on her arm. The Security Guard removes his hand, put his hands up in apology and backs away a step.

SECURITY GUARD

Please, you need to pay for the dress.

LAURA

(desperately)

My boy.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm sorry?

LAURA

My boy - he's gone.

Laura starts crying.

The Security Guards look at each other, not sure what to do.

SECURITY GUARD 2

We don't want to have to call the police.

LAURA

(screaming)

My Georgey! Where is my little Georgey?

The Woman from the changing room walks out of the shop, tries handing Laura's things to the first Security Guard.

WOMAN

She left these...

The Security Guard ignores the Woman, continues carefully watching Laura, as if worried as to what her next move might be.

Security Guard 2 steps away from Laura, picks up his radio and speaks in to it.

SECURITY GUARD 2

I think we might need the police out here.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - SAME

Inside the classroom, school children are sitting at their desks, talking amongst themselves while waiting for a teacher to turn up. There is a great amount of noise, and things being thrown around the room.

The door to the classroom opens and George strides in confidently, as if he has done this a thousand time. The whole class stop what they are doing and watch him. He walks over to a desk and sits behind it, coat still on, Stick in his hand.

He places the Stick on the desk in front of him carefully and sits, staring straight ahead with a small smile on his face.

The class start laughing and talking amongst themselves, pointing at their strange visitor, not knowing what is going on.

The door to the classroom opens again and a TEACHER walks in to the room. The class slowly stop talking and go to their seats, rearranging the furniture to more-or-less where it is supposed to be. They continue whispering amongst themselves about the new arrival.

The Teacher walks straight over to the blackboard and starts writing "SOUTH AFRICA" on it in large letters with chalk. She has not noticed George, as she has her back to him. She turns around to face the class.

TEACHER  
 Alright, class. Settle down. I  
 hope you've all done your homework-

She interrupts herself as she notices George, looking at him as if trying to recognize him.

TEACHER  
 And who might you be?

George smiles a big, broad smile at her, but doesn't respond. The Teacher stares at him for a moment.

TEACHER  
 Can we help you?

George continues to not respond. Some of the students start giggling. The Teacher glares at them and they soon stop.

TEACHER  
 I think you're in the wrong class,  
 young man.

GEORGE  
 (proudly)  
 I've been nominated for  
 membership of the National  
 Geographic Society.

The Teacher looks puzzled. She walks out of the classroom, leaving a stern warning to her students.

TEACHER  
 Don't anybody make a sound. I'll  
 be back in a minute.

As soon as she leaves the room, the class erupts with noise.

EXT. SCHOOL - LATER

Outside the school, Laura hurries George away from the building, gently but firmly, a harassed look on her face.

At the school door, the Teacher and Mr Potter watch them leave. Mr Potter shakes his head sadly as he watches them go.

George tries pleading to his mother:

GEORGE  
I'm coming back here and then  
I'll go to college and see what  
they know...

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

George is laying on the floor watching "Harvey", completely engrossed in what is going on on the screen.

Laura watches him from the doorway. She is chewing on her nails, looking deep in thought. She seems to make a decision and quickly approaches the television and switches it off.

LAURA  
(nervously, as if  
trying to convince  
herself as well as George)  
I don't think you should be  
watching the same films over and  
over again, George. You should  
try playing outside or something  
instead.

George stares at her. Slowly, he picks himself up from the floor, picks up the Stick and trudges out of the living room. He pulls himself up the stairs and walks in to his bedroom, closing the door behind him.

Laura watches him go, upset with herself that she has upset her son.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE EVENING

George is laying in bed, with the stick beside him as usual. The candle is burning again; it is half burnt down now. He whispers softly to the Stick. There is a sad tone to his voice, although we still cannot tell what it is that he is saying.

Through the walls and the floor, the sounds of raised voices can be heard. The voices seem to get louder and more intense.

George climbs out of bed, the Stick in tow. He opens his bedroom door quietly and walks in to the hallway outside his room. He picks up a large decorative stone and flings it at a window. The argument stops immediately, and Laura and Paul come running up the stairs. They see what George has done. Paul goes mad

PAUL  
What do you think you're doing?!

LAURA

Why did you do that, George? Are you trying to get in trouble?

GEORGE

(sadly)

No. You see, you make a wish and then try and break some glass.

George slowly walks back in to his room, closes the door behind him, leaving Paul and Laura standing on the stairs not knowing what to do or say.

FADE OUT.

INT. PAUL & LAURA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laura and Paul are fast asleep in bed. The bedroom door slowly opens and George walks in quietly. He holds a tub of light yellow paint in one hand and a paintbrush in the other.

He approaches his mother, being careful not to wake her. Dipping the paintbrush in the pot, he carefully starts to apply some to her hair.

Laura's eyes open wide, sensing someone in the room. She turns over and sees George standing there with paintbrush and pot in his hands. She smiles at him.

LAURA

Hi, Georgey. What's wrong?

Paul starts to stir. He turns to see what is going on.

PAUL

Back to bed, George, come on.

LAURA

What's wrong, George? What are you doing painting at this time of night?

George reaches out and tries to apply more paint to Laura's hair.

Laura quickly moves out of the way. Paul jumps out of bed and grabs the paint and brush from him. He switches on the bedroom light and sees the paint which is already in Laura's hair.

PAUL

What do you think you're playing at, George?

Laura realizes what has happened and pulls at her hair, trying to get the paint off.

Paul takes hold of George and starts to drag him out of the room. George calls back to Laura as he is being taken out:

GEORGE  
The color of your hair... Judy,  
please - it can't matter to you.

Paul practically throws George back on to his bed.

PAUL  
We'll deal with you in the morning.

He walks out of the room, slamming the door shut behind him.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Laura is at the front door, putting on her coat. She is wearing a hat to cover up her hair. She opens the door to leave just as George comes down the stairs with his Stick. He sees Laura about to leave and picks up his coat to go with her.

LAURA  
No, George. You stay here with  
Daddy - I'm going to the  
hairdressers.

GEORGE  
It should be back from your  
face - with a bun at the neck.

Laura quickly walks out of the house.

George is about to continue on towards the kitchen when he sees Paul in the living room, looking out of the window, watching Laura leaving. George stands in the doorway watching his father.

As soon as Paul is sure that Laura is out of sight, he turns to George.

PAUL  
Get your coat on. We're going out.

INT/EXT. CAR - DAY

Paul and George are driving in the car in total silence. Paul keeps looking at George as if he wants to say something to him, but soon changes his mind, really not sure what he wants to say.

George looks out of the window, watching the world go by. He picks up the Stick so that it can "look" out of the window as well.



INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - DAY

George is sitting uncomfortably on DR GRANT's couch. He is squeezed up against one end of it, the Stick clutched in his hands. There is no one else in the room. George looks around at various posters and certificates on the wall. A year planner grabs his attention and holds on to it.

The door to the office opens and Dr Grant and Paul can be seen through the doorway. Paul shakes the Doctor's hand and walks away. Grant walks in to the office and smiles at George. George doesn't notice - he is too busy staring at the year planner.

DR GRANT

George?

George doesn't respond, so Grant walks in to his line of vision, blocking his view of the planner. George continues to stare straight through him. Grant moves so that his eyes are level with George's. George still doesn't seem to see him.

DR GRANT

That's fine.

Grant turns to face the planner.

DR GRANT

You want to see it better?

He unhooks the planner from the wall and takes it over to George so that George can see it better. George's eyes follow it all the way from the wall to where Grant places it on his knee.

George traces his finger along the dates, as if trying to find something. His finger stops on May 20th.

GEORGE

Somewhere in here I was born...

He moves his hand along the planner and stops again at July 2nd.

GEORGE

...and here I died and it was only a moment for you...

He turns to face Grant melodramatically.

GEORGE

...you took no notice.

Grant clears his throat slightly, scratches behind his ear.

DR GRANT

Well, George, I'm here to take notice now. Will you talk to me, George?

George continues to stare at the year planner. Suddenly, he picks up the Stick and starts to whisper to it again.

DR GRANT

Can you tell me what you just said to your friend, George?

George carries on ignoring Grant, keeps on talking to the Stick.

DR GRANT

What do you like to do, George? What kind of fun things do you like to do?

GEORGE

Oh, well, you know what I've always talked about...

DR GRANT

What's that? What have you always talked about?

GEORGE

Build things - design new buildings - plan modern cities - all that stuff I was talking about.

DR GRANT

I see.

INT. WAITING ROOM - LATER

Paul is sitting in the waiting room, looking annoyed. He keeps glancing at his watch as if he has to be somewhere.

The RECEPTIONIST watches him, unsure about his nervous behavior. Paul sees her looking at him. She smiles and looks away.

Eventually, the door to the doctor's room opens and Dr Grant and George walk out together.

Paul gets up and rushes over to them.

DR GRANT

Mr Bailey. Could I perhaps have a word with you in private?

PAUL

Uh...  
                   (glances at his  
                   watch again)  
 ...yes, I guess so.

Paul turns to George.

PAUL

You sit down here and, er... do  
 what you do. Just don't move.

George walks to the corner of the room and sits in the seat furthest in to the corner. He starts talking to the Stick as Paul and Grant walk in to Grant's office.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

The front door opens and Paul and George walk in, George clutching the Stick very tightly. As she sees the door opening, Laura rushes to greet them.

LAURA

Where have you been? I've been  
 worried sick!

PAUL

We just went out for a little while.

LAURA

I've been trying to ring you all  
 morning - where have you been?

PAUL

I've had the phone switched off.  
 George, go up to your room, please.

George smiles at Laura sweetly and starts walking up the stairs.

LAURA

Where have you been, Paul? I was  
 about ready to call the police  
 in case you'd had an accident or  
 something.

Paul leads Laura in to the living room and sits her down on the sofa. George, unseen by Paul and Laura, sits down on the stairs and listens to what is being said.

PAUL

(cautiously)  
 I took George to see a psychiatrist.

Laura looks at him, disbelieving.

LAURA  
Therapy? You think our child  
needs therapy?

PAUL  
He's got a problem, Laura.

LAURA  
(starting to raise  
her voice)  
He doesn't need therapy!

Paul makes waving motions with his hands, trying to get her to lower her voice.

PAUL  
He won't speak - or haven't you  
noticed?

Laura glares at him, getting angry.

PAUL  
It's not right the way he only  
quotes old films or talks to that  
stick of his.

LAURA  
(firmly)  
He does NOT need therapy.

Paul sighs.

PAUL  
He's a freak, Laura.

Laura slaps Paul hard across the face. She stands up and yells at him.

LAURA  
Don't you ever call my son a  
freak again.

PAUL  
Alright, maybe freak was a bit  
harsh. He's a... he's an  
embarrassment.

Paul looks almost embarrassed saying it.

Laura walks out of the living room. As she does so, George runs up the stairs in to his room, slamming the door hard behind him.

Paul calls out after her:

PAUL

He needs help, Laura - you need to see that. If you can't, maybe you need help too.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

George is laying in bed, eyes wide open, Stick beside him. The candle is virtually burnt out beside his bed.

The door to his room opens slowly and Laura walks in. She walks over to George and kisses him gently on the forehead.

LAURA

Goodnight, Georgey.

She starts walking back to the bedroom door when George calls out after her:

GEORGE

You believe that I love you?

Laura stops in her tracks, turns and goes back to George. George turns to face her, looking her straight in the eyes as they speak.

LAURA

Of course I do, Georgey. And I love you too - more than you'll ever know.

GEORGE

And if you lose me, you'll know that I loved you and wanted to go on loving you?

LAURA

Why are you saying this George? Is something wrong?

George turns away from her again. Upset, Laura walks out of the room, closing the door behind her. A tear trickles down George's face as the candle burns itself out. He pulls the Stick closer to himself.

FADE OUT.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Paul is asleep on the sofa in the living room, a blanket pulled over him, a cushion as a make-shift pillow.

His peaceful slumber is suddenly interrupted by the sound of Laura screaming loudly from upstairs. Paul rushes out of the room and up the stairs. Laura runs out of George's bedroom, meeting him on the stair landing.

Laura starts hitting Paul over and over.

LAURA

What have you done? What have you done?

Paul looks stunned, trying to stop Laura from hitting him.

PAUL

What is it? What's wrong?

LAURA

You hated him! You hated your son!  
What have you done?

Paul moves Laura to one side and walks in to George's bedroom.

The bed is empty. There is no George. All that remains on the bed is the Stick.

PAUL

Oh God. Oh God.

Paul runs out of the bedroom and down the stairs towards the telephone in the living room. Laura chases quickly behind him.

LAURA

He embarrassed you, you said so yourself - what have you done to him?

Paul dials 911.

PAUL

(into telephone)

My son - my son has disappeared.  
Please help us...

LAURA

How could you do something like this?

Paul tries to cover up Laura's mouth with his hand as he tries to talk to the operator on the telephone.

PAUL

(into telephone)

We woke up this morning and found him gone.

LAURA

You took him away! What have you done to him?

PAUL  
(into telephone)  
What?... Sorry I couldn't hear  
you... my wife, she's obviously  
very upset...

Laura starts hitting Paul again, but collapses, exhausted,  
sobbing.

FADE OUT.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The living room is full of people. Paul is sitting on the  
sofa with his head in his hands. Two Detectives, PRICE and  
STOKES, stand over him, questioning him.

Laura is seated on a chair across the other side of the  
room, glaring at Paul. Her face is red, and her eyes  
puffing and blotches from crying.

A CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATOR is unpacking various pieces of  
equipment from her case.

PRICE  
So you had a fight with your son  
last night?

Paul sighs.

PAUL  
No - I've told you - I had a  
fight with my wife, but it was  
about our son.

STOKES  
What about your son?

Paul looks down at his feet, ashamed to answer the question.

LAURA  
Tell them, Paul - tell them what  
you said.

PAUL  
I said... I said some things I  
didn't mean.

The CSI walks out of the room with her equipment to  
examine the bedroom.

STOKES  
What exactly did you say?

PAUL  
It doesn't matter - I was upset,  
I said some things which I regret  
saying now.

PRICE

Your wife says you called your  
soon -

(consults his notebook)  
- a "freak" and an "embarrassment."  
Is this correct?

Paul looks over at Laura. The Detectives follow his look.

LAURA

As far as I'm concerned, I'm no  
longer his wife.

Laura gets up to walk out of the room. Paul jumps up from  
his seat to go after her.

PAUL

What are you saying, Laura?

The Detectives hold him back from approaching her any  
further.

LAURA

It's over, Paul. It's over.

She leaves the room.

The CSI re-enters the room holding George's stick.

CSI

Have you guys seen this?

STOKES

Woah - where was that found?

CSI

The child's bed.

The Detectives and CSI look at Paul.

PRICE

You ever hit your child, Mr Bailey?

PAUL

What? No! Never!

STOKES

Can you explain why this large  
stick was found in his bed?

Paul sighs.

PAUL

It was... it was his friend, I  
guess. He used to talk to it.

The Detectives give each other a look, as if to say  
they've heard it all before.



STOKES  
(to CSI)  
Any blood on it?

CSI  
Nothing immediately apparent.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

Sitting in the dining room alone, Laura has put "It's A Wonderful Life" on, without the sound. Tears stream down her face as she closes her eyes and starts to pray.

LAURA  
Help my son George today. Help  
him, dear Father. I love him,  
dear Lord. Watch over him today.

A female police officer, ELLIOTT, quietly walks in to the room, careful not to disturb Laura.

LAURA  
Dear Father in Heaven, I'm not a  
praying woman, but if you're up  
there and you can hear me, show  
me the way. I'm at the end of my  
rope. Show me the way, God.

Laura senses the officer's presence, and opens her eyes. She smiles slightly at Elliott and wipes her eyes.

LAURA  
(indicating the television)  
It was his favorite.

Elliott nods and smiles back at Laura.

LAURA  
After watching it so many time,  
you can't help but memorize the  
words yourself without really  
realizing it.

Elliott hands Laura a tissue.

ELLIOTT  
Here.

LAURA  
Thank you.

She dries her eyes.

ELLIOTT  
I'm sure everything will be  
fine - we're doing our best to  
find him.

LAURA

I think I've been too hard on Paul.

ELLIOTT

How do you mean?

LAURA

George can be a handful, you know - it can be frustrating at times, him not talking and everything. But Paul would never hurt him. I was just mad at him for the things he said.

ELLIOTT

It's not surprising, given the circumstances.

LAURA

I guess I'm just more patient with George - sometimes I probably even encourage him.

ELLIOTT

You're his mother - that's what mothers do.

Laura smiles.

LAURA

Do you have children?

ELLIOTT

Two - both boys.

The front door can be heard opening and closing again. Elliott goes to see who it is at the door.

Laura turns up the sound on the television.

JAMES STEWART (ON TV)

What is it that you want, Mary?  
What do you want? You want the moon? Just say the word and I'll throw a lasso around it and pull it down.

A voice off-screen joins in with the television - it is George.

GEORGE(OFF)

Hey, that's a pretty good idea.  
I'll give you the moon, Mary.

Laura slowly turns away from the screen, as if unsure whether to believe it is him or not.

Seeing that it is George she runs over to him, tears flowing down her cheeks.

LAURA

George!

Hugging him fiercely, she sobs against his shoulder.

LAURA

Oh, George, George, George.

George pulls away from the hug, looking over at the kitchen doorway. Laura follows his look and sees Paul, standing in the doorway, George's Stick held out in front of him, tears also in his eyes.

GEORGE

Well, are you coming in or aren't you?

PAUL

Well, I'll come in for a minute, but I didn't tell anybody I was coming over her.

Paul holds the Stick out towards George for George to take, almost like a peace offering.

George takes the stick from him, looks at it and promptly drops it. He runs over to the doorway and throws his arms around Paul. Laura joins them, and they all embrace together, each crying.

FADE OUT.

INT/EXT. CAR - DAY

Caption: "2 months later"

Inside the car, Paul is driving, with Laura in the passenger seat. George sits in the back, dressed in a school uniform. A back-pack is on the seat beside him.

PAUL

Looking forward to your first day, George?

GEORGE

Yeah!

Paul smiles at Laura, who smiles back at him. She puts her hand out to him, and he takes it, wrapping his fingers in hers.

LAURA

(whispering)

One step at a time. We'll get there, one step at a time.

As the car continues driving down the road, we see that George's Stick is in the boot of the car.

FADE TO BLACK.