

The Singing Place

An original screenplay

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Darkness.

A rocker creaks slowly back and forth on a hardwood floor. And as it creaks, there is humming. A rasping, trembling voice hums a rigid pattern.

Four notes, over and over.

Four notes starting low, then rising and falling, on and on as though they will go on forever.

FADE IN:

1 INT. EMPTY BEDROOM - EXTREME CLOSE UP OF WORN SHOES - DAY 1

In ragged time with the humming, a pair of scuffed men's shoes pushes a rocker upward. The sole of the one on the left is built up three inches higher than the one on the right. As they rock, the shoes rise a few inches off the floor...then, come down to rest.

Pushing, rocking, humming...over and over.

SLOW PULL BACK

In a small, shadowed bedroom a forlorn figure sits rocking and humming. His shoulders are hunched and his head hangs down. Though he is not a child, he clutches a large, children's book and a piece of worn blanket folded to perfection, gripping them tightly as though they might fly away. The rocking chair is the only piece of furniture in the room.

Rocking and humming.

This is EDDIE GARTMAN. He is 29 years old, overweight and suffers from severe Down Syndrome. His mop of blond hair is uncombed and his T-shirt and pants look like he slept in them. As he hums, his eyes glance back and forth in a rigid pattern that follows the notes. Right, then left, then right again. This day, there is fear in his eyes. This day, the whole world is changing.

Childhood that isn't childhood lies gently on Eddie's face. Around his eyes are lines of age and sorrow. Little boy, young man, old man.

Lifting one hand from the blanket and book, Eddie rubs his forehead and keeps rubbing. He is afraid, so he rocks and rubs and hums to make it all go away.

Rocking and humming.

(CONTINUED)

The door to the bedroom opens. A harried woman enters. She's 38 years old, and attractive, but life has been hard. In her eyes is the shadow of the worst kind of sorrow, the sorrow of regret. This day, that sorrow is close to the surface. This is JULIE GARTMAN, Eddie's sister.

JULIE

Okay, honey, you ready to go?

No response. Not even a look. His shoulders remain hunched and his head hangs down.

Rocking, humming and rubbing.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Eddie, it's time to go. We have to leave.

Four notes, over and over, with eyes glancing right, then left, then right again.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Sweetie, you can't stay here any longer. Look around. Everything's gone. We've moved it all out.

The only answer she gets is that he stops rubbing and grips the blanket and book tight as though they too might be taken.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Eddie, don't do this to me. I know you can hear me. Now we're going for a ride in the car.

(beat)

On the way, we'll stop and get ice cream. How about that? Does that sound good?

Nothing. It's as though she doesn't exist.

JULIE (CONT'D)

EDDIE, talk to me.

*

She fights back tears and her voice breaks.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Please, Eddie, I need you to help me today.

The rocking and humming stops. Eddie's head lifts, but his eyes stare at nothing.

EDDIE

Can't. Can't-can't.

(CONTINUED)

His sister kneels beside him.

JULIE
Why not, honey? Why can't you?

EDDIE
Mr. Bunley.

JULIE
But Mr. Bunley's right here. He's
going with us.

She shows him the front of his book. On the cover is the picture of a funny, little gnome-like man, dressed in colorful rags and wearing a floppy hat. Beneath his dancing feet is the title: "Mr. Bunley's Happy Singing Place".

With great conviction, Eddie shakes his head back and forth.

EDDIE
Mr. Bunley says "no."

Bending close, Julie lays her head next to his.

JULIE
Sweetie, I know how you feel. I
love this house too. But I can't
leave you here. There's no one to
take care of you. Don't you
understand? Mom isn't here anymore
and I can't afford to keep the place.

Eddie shakes his head back and forth very fast.

EDDIE
MR. BUNLEY SAYS, NO. NO. NO. NO.
CAN'T GO. CAN'T. CAN'T. CAN'T.

JULIE
Oh, God...

She rises and looks down at him.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Eddie, if you don't get out of that
chair and come with me right now,
I'm going to get Alex and Steve and
they're going to carry you out. I
don't want to do that, but I will.
Do you understand me?

He just keeps shaking his head.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE (CONT'D)

They're right outside waiting.

The humming and rocking start again, this time much louder with a stubborn, new persistence, which includes sticking out his jaw, pursing his lips and closing his eyes.

JULIE (CONT'D)

All right, if that's the way you want it.

She leaves the room. The moment she is gone, Eddie huffs out his breath, ballooning his cheeks and starts rubbing his forehead again.

The door opens and Julie returns--this time with two very large, very self-conscious African/American teenage boys.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Here they are, Eddie. Now are you coming or are they going to carry you out? There are lots of people outside and it's going to look pretty funny if we have to carry you like a baby. If you don't want that to happen, you've got to get up right now.

There is no response, so she nods to the teenagers. As they walk reluctantly to the chair, Eddie stops rocking and very slowly stands up

EDDIE

Okay. Okay-okay-okay-okay-okay.
OKAY!

Breathing sighs of relief, the boys withdraw from the room. As soon as they are gone, Eddie pauses, bent over, with his butt still above the chair.

JULIE

No, you don't, don't you sit back down. The haven't left. They're right outside.

With his butt still suspended, Eddie begins to thoroughly brush off his clothes for no apparent reason.

JULIE (CONT'D)

And don't start that either. I know this game. It can go on for 45 minutes. Come on.

(CONTINUED)

As he continues brushing, Julie takes his arm and leads him authoritatively toward the door. He walks with a slight limp.

EDDIE
My chair, my chair.

JULIE
We're going to bring your chair later today. You'll have it with you, I promise.

2 INT. EMPTY LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS 2

Eddie and Julie pass through the living room of a modest Los Angeles home. Like the bedroom, it's empty. There is no furniture. As they head toward the front door, Eddie continues brushing himself.

Just as they're about to go outside, he stops brushing himself and takes one last look at the world he is leaving. As Julie watches him, it's all she can do to hold back the tears.

After a long look, he turns away.

3 EXT. EDDIE'S HOME - DAY 3

Eddie and Julie walk out onto the front porch of his home. On the lawn a yard sale is in progress. Strangers are pawing over the remains of a lifetime. ROSE, the mother of the teenage boys, is managing the sale for Julie.

Eddie is startled by all of it. As though in a daze, he lets Julie lead him off the porch. Slowly, they pass between lamps and couches, around chairs and tables. The shoppers stare at him. A little girl points. Her mother pulls her away.

Eddie walks by boxes filled with memories, things he has known all of his life. His eyes linger, but he doesn't say a word.

Finally, he comes to a table covered with old Christmas ornaments. A sign offers: ANY FOUR \$1. A shabby, artificial tree with faded flocking stands nearby. A tag in the branches reads: \$8 or best offer.

Eddie pauses and stares at the remains of Christmas, then slowly, from a box, he picks up a single, tiny ornament. It's a miniature manger scene.

Holding it close to his eyes, he scrutinizes it, but his hand begins trembling. With the utmost care, he puts the ornament in his shirt pocket and turns away.

(CONTINUED)

Tears are streaming down Julie's face. Rose walks up. There are tears in her eyes, too.

ROSE

Goodbye, Eddie. We love you. We'll come see you on Christmas. I'll bring you some ginger bread cookies.

No answer. As she hugs him, he looks away as though he doesn't know she's there.

Julie leads him toward a ten-year-old Chevy mini-van parked in the drive. They pass a real estate "For Sale" sign. Wiping away tears, she turns to Rose.

JULIE

I'll be back in a couple of hours.

ROSE

You take your time, honey. We'll be right here. Everything's fine. We're praying for both of you.

JULIE

Thanks.

As Eddie climbs in the front passenger seat, he stares back at the furniture and the people...then off down the street. Some of the other houses are decorated for Christmas.

Julie gets in and starts the engine. As the car drives away, Eddie's face is framed in the window. As long as he can, he keeps looking, until the house that he has known forever vanishes into the past.

4 EXT. JAMMED FREEWAY - MORNING 4

Rush hour on the Hollywood Freeway and the steel herd is jammed solid. Julie's mini-van creeps along a foot at a time. "Joy To The World" is playing over the radio. A car in the next lane cuts her off.

5 INT. STATION WAGON - MORNING 5

Julie blasts her horn.

JULIE

JERK.

Unable to stand the music any longer, she turns it off.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Dear God, I hate Christmas.

(CONTINUED)

Taking a deep breath, she struggles for control, then starts talking, mostly to herself.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Eddie, you're gonna love this place. I just know you will. The people are so nice. You'll have lots of friends. And they go on trips--like to the zoo, and movies and Disneyland. Once you're there for awhile, you won't want to leave. That's what all the parents say.

He isn't looking at her, so he doesn't see the tears that start again.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(brokenhearted)

Oh, Eddie, it's so hard. I can't take care of you. I can barely take care of me, I'm such a mess. I don't even know where my next month's rent is coming from. I could be out on the street in a few weeks. Helping Mom at the end, I couldn't keep my job. I've got to find a new one right away. But you're gonna be all right, sweetie. You don't know what this means, but the money from the house is yours. Mom and I set it up so that no matter what happens, you'll always be taken care of.

She wipes her eyes.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Mom picked out a room for you. You're going to come to my apartment and visit every other weekend. As long as I've got an apartment. And we'll be together for Christmas and your birthday, I promise. I'm gonna make sweet potato pie just like mommy did...

But the tears won't let her go on. Suddenly, Eddie's attention jerks up to the sunroof...and he grins.

EDDIE

(jabbing his finger upward)

Hey. Hey-hey-hey-hey. Mr. Bunley. - Mr. Bunley. Up-up-up there. Up there.

(CONTINUED)

Julie shakes her head.

JULIE
Oh God, here we go.

EDDIE
Open it, open it, can-I? Can-I?

This is a game that has been played a hundred times.

JULIE
(exhausted)
Oh, all right.

Julie opens the sun roof. Instantly, all of Eddie's attention focuses on an imaginary friend who seems to have dropped into the mini-van. Eddie laughs loudly.

EDDIE
Ha, ha, ha, ha, look, look, Mr.
Bunley.

JULIE
(mumbling)
Yes, hello to Mr. Bunley.

EDDIE
Uh, oh, uh, oh, jumping, jumping.

He twists around to stare at the back seat.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Mr. Bunley, Mr. Bunley, in-the-back.
In-the-back. Can-I? Can-I?

JULIE
Eddie...

EDDIE
Please...please, please...

JULIE
If you start jumping back and forth
you're gonna get me a ticket.

EDDIE
But Mr. Bunley, Mr. Bunley...

Julie glances in her mirrors. No cops around.

JULIE
God help me, if I could see Mr.
Bunley, I'd strangle that little
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JULIE (CONT'D)
 freak. Whoever wrote that book, I
 want to kill him.

(to Eddie)
 Oh, all right. But you can't crawl
 back and forth. When you're there,
 you sit down and buckle up, do you
 hear me?

Croaking with laughter, Eddie lumbers between the seats. In
 the process, he sticks a leg in front of Julie's face.

JULIE (CONT'D)
 EDDIE, I'M GONNA HAVE AN ACCIDENT.

Now everything turns to chaos, as Eddie begins crawling back
 and forth over the rear seat, yelling and laughing.

JULIE (CONT'D)
 STOP IT, EDDIE. STOP THIS RIGHT
 NOW. I SAID, NO CRAWLING BACK AND
 FORTH.

He crawls to the front again.

EDDIE
 Mr. Bunley tickling. Stop-it-stop-
 stop, stop it-stop-it, Mr. Bunley.

Julie starts sobbing. Eddie screams with laughter. Then,
 suddenly, he's quiet. Crouching on the floor of the back
 seat with his invisible friend, he begins whispering.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 I-know-I-know-I-know-I-know-I-know-I-
 know-I-know-I-know-I-know-I-know.
 (beat)
 Now? Right now? Right-right-right-
 right-now?
 (beat)
 Scared. Scared-scared.

JULIE
 EDDIE, GET OFF THE FLOOR AND BUCKLE
 YOUR SEAT BELT.

EDDIE
 Okay-okay-I do it. I-do-it. I-do-
 it.

Incredibly excited, he grabs his book and stares at it.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Gotta-find it, gotta find it, right,
right, right now.

JULIE
EDDIE, DID YOU HEAR ME? DON'T MAKE
ME STOP THIS CAR.

But the car is already stopped in the traffic. Clutching the book and blanket, suddenly Eddie lunges for the door and throws it open. Julie screams.

JULIE (CONT'D)
EDDIE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

As she twists around trying to grab him, her foot slips from the brake to the gas pedal. The mini-van lurches forward, crashing into the car in front of her.

6 EXT. FREEWAY -- CONTINUOUS

6

Leaping out, Eddie runs through the traffic and up the freeway embankment. The DRIVER Julie hit gets out of his car. Jumping from her car, Julie runs after Eddie.

JULIE
EDDIE, COME BACK...

The DRIVER starts yelling at her.

DRIVER
HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING? GET BACK
HERE.

But Julie doesn't stop. With horns blaring, she runs between the cars.

JULIE
EDDIE!

Eddie is moving with surprising speed. When Julie reaches the embankment, he vanishes into the heavy bushes at the top. Struggling up the slope, Julie reaches the place where Eddie disappeared and pushes through.

7 EXT. SURFACE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

7

JULIE
EDDIE!

But the street in front of her is empty. Her brother is gone.

8 INT. JORGE'S SHABBY STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING

8

Semi-darkness.

A man lies sleeping on a cot. Suddenly, a cheap clock radio goes off with accordion music playing a very loud rendition of "Feliz Navidad." The man groans, reaches over, and pounds the thing to silence. Then, he sits up, bleary-eyed.

This is JORGE MENDOZA. He's 40 years old, but looks a decade older. There is gray in his black hair and his hands are gnarled. Beneath the ravages of a hard life, there is kindness in his eyes that whispers of something very deep and strong.

Trying to wake up, Jorge rubs his face and stares around. His apartment has no furniture except the cot, a metal chair and a work table. But there is much more.

Hanging from the walls and ceiling, is a wonderful collection of patchwork puppets with a distinctly Colombian flair. There are furry monsters, monkeys and dragons, children with big eyes and smiling mouths, a horse, a pig, a dog and many more, all hand-made from a pile of scraps and odd pieces in a corner.

Several puppets are in the early stages of creation on the work table. Near a half finished clown, sits the photograph of a dark, attractive woman holding a little girl. (They are ANA and MARIA.) Next to the picture is a tiny Christmas tree.

Still barely awake, Jorge stumbles through the puppet menagerie to the bathroom.

9 INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

9

Jorge stares in the mirror, his face covered with shaving lather. Over the radio, a mandolin is playing a soulful tune and he is humming along.

CU JORGE'S FACE IN MIRROR

Lifting a razor, he's about to make a stroke, when another face appears beside his. It's fat and furry with a bulbous nose, large eyes and thick glasses. The face stares intently at him.

The humming stops.

JORGE
(in Spanish with
subtitles)
Yes? You want something?

(CONTINUED)

The puppet tilts his head and speaks in a deep, raspy voice.

PUPPET

You are very ugly. Shaving will not help.

JORGE

And I suppose you think you're beautiful?

PUPPET

Yes, very beautiful.

JORGE

I'm glad you like yourself so much. If you don't mind, I'd like a little privacy. I have to get ready for work.

PUPPET

No work today. We're going fishing.

JORGE

We're not going fishing.

PUPPET

But I want to.

JORGE

Well, you can't always have what you want.

PUPPET

Yes, I can.

JORGE

They would fire me. Then what would we eat?

PUPPET

Fish.

JORGE

Stop being so lazy. This is a very important day. You are going to meet a new friend. You won't have to live with me anymore.

PUPPET

That's better than fishing. I like this day already.

JORGE

I thought you would.

(CONTINUED)

PUPPET

Jorge, people who talk to themselves
are crazy. I think you are nuts.

JORGE

And I think you are right. Now go
away.

With a laugh, Jorge walks over and stuffs the fat puppet
into a shopping bag, then continues shaving, humming along
with the music.

10 EXT. JORGE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY 10

Dressed in a work jacket, a simple shirt and trousers, Jorge
Mendoza leaves his apartment building. It's a huge, run-
down complex.

As he walks down the steps, he's carrying a thick manila
envelope and the shopping bag with the puppet in it. Going
to a battered pickup truck, he unlocks the door and slides
in behind the wheel.

11 INT. PICKUP TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS 11

The engine starts with a long squeal of belts. Before he
puts it into gear, Jorge turns to a crucifix hanging from
the mirror. Pulling it to his lips, he kisses it.

JORGE

Thank you, Jesus. You are so good
to me. I do not deserve it.

12 EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF APARTMENT BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS 12

As the pick-up truck drives away, a Spanish Christmas carol
blares from the open window.

13 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY 13

A very distraught Julie Gartman sits at the desk of a woman
POLICE SERGEANT.

POLICE SERGEANT

Ms. Gartman, there's really nothing
more you can do. I'm sure we'll
find your brother. Why don't you go
home and get some rest?

JULIE

That telephone number I gave you--
it's a neighbor's house? Did I tell
you that?

(CONTINUED)

POLICE SERGEANT

You told me.

JULIE

My mother passed away two weeks ago.
I'm just here to take care of things.
We cut off her phone.

POLICE SERGEANT

(gently)

You told me that too.

JULIE

I'm...sorry. I'm not thinking very
well.

POLICE SERGEANT

That's all right.

JULIE

I mean, he's been totally sheltered
all his life. My mother did
everything for him. I'm not even
sure he knows his address. He was
so upset this morning.

(beat)

If anything happens to him...

POLICE SERGEANT

Ms. Gartman, his picture is out to
all of our officers, and it'll be on
television and the Internet in an
hour. We'll find him. Now, you go
home. I'll call as soon as we have
anything.

JULIE

Okay. Okay, thanks. I...guess that's
what I'll do.

Tears fill her eyes. Feeling a hundred years old, Julie
gets up and walks away.

14 EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

14

As Julie walks to her mini-van, she stops, buries her face
in her hands, and sobs.

JULIE

Oh, mom. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.
I'm such a loser. I can't do anything
right. How could someone like you
have a daughter like me?

15 EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY 15

Still blaring Christmas carols, Jorge Mendoza's pickup truck enters the employee parking lot at Children's Memorial Hospital. Pulling into a space at the back, Jorge gets out, taking the shopping bag with him.

16 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER 16

Jorge walks down a long hospital corridor, nodding and smiling to people as he goes. Everyone seems to know him. Finally, he enters an employee locker room.

17 INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 17

Standing at an open locker, Jorge changes into the hospital blues of an orderly. Taped on the door is the same picture of the dark, attractive woman holding the little girl. Jorge kisses it.

JORGE

(in Spanish with
subtitles)

Only one more week -- thank you,
Jesus. We will have such a Christmas
as there never was since God sent
His Son.

Closing the locker, he picks up the shopping bag and walks away.

DISSOLVE
TO:

18 INT. HOSPITAL - MONTAGE - JORGE AT WORK - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - 18
DAY

--changing a bed.

--feeding a child who cannot move his hands.

--cleaning a bathroom on his hands and knees.

No matter what he's doing, Jorge is whistling and happy.

19 INT. GINNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 19

A little girl of five sits in a huge, hospital bed in a private room. Balloons and cards are everywhere. A tiny Christmas tree is on a table.

The child's forehead and eyes are heavily bandaged. This is GINNY. A very tense, young couple dressed in expensive clothes sit beside her.

(CONTINUED)

These are her parents, MR. And MRS. CONLON.

GINNY
Is the doctor coming?

Her mother takes her hand.

MRS. CONLON
Yes, sweetheart. He's just very busy. There are lots of little children in the hospital for him to see.

GINNY
I know.

20 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE GINNY'S ROOM - DAY

20

Outside Ginny's room, Jorge is puttering around a hospital cart. Suddenly, a brisk, young surgeon walks up to the nurses' station and checks a clipboard. This is DR. STEWART. He's about to enter Ginny's room, when an older, kindly, man in his sixties, steps over to him. This is DR. BILL FINNEGAN.

DR. FINNEGAN
(a low voice)
Do you need any help with Ginny?

DR. STEWART
I don't think so, Bill. But thanks for asking.

DR. FINNEGAN
(slightly disappointed)
Okay. Well, I'm here if you need me.

Patting the older man's arm rather condescendingly, the young surgeon enters Ginny's room. A nurse follows him. Jorge and Dr. Finnegan exchange a look.

JORGE
Good morning, Dr. Finnegan.

The older man just nods.

21 INT. GINNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

21

As soon as Dr. Stewart and the nurse enter the room, the tension increases.

DR. STEWART
Mr. and Mrs. Conlon, how is everyone today?

(CONTINUED)

MRS. CONLON
Fine, Dr. Stewart.

He bends over Ginny.

DR. STEWART
How are you feeling, Ginny?

GINNY
Okay.

DR. STEWART
Do your eyes hurt?

GINNY
No, but I still see the sparkly things.

The nurse turns off the light and pulls the blinds.

DR. STEWART
Well, let's get these bandages off and take a look at those beautiful eyes.

With the nurse assisting, he begins removing the bandages.

DR. STEWART (CONT'D)
Okay, just one more piece of gauze.
(beat)
Now keep your eyes closed until I tell you to open them.

ANGLE IN HALLWAY

In the hallway outside the room, Jorge stands beside the cart, trying not to make it obvious that he's watching all that's happening. Dr. Finnegan is nearby doing the same thing.

Slowly, Dr. Stewart removes the last of the gauze.

DR. STEWART (CONT'D)
Okay, Ginny, now open your eyes just a little bit. Everything might be blurry.

She obeys. He holds his hand in front of her.

DR. STEWART (CONT'D)
Can you see my hand?

GINNY
No.

(CONTINUED)

Ginny's mother is biting her lip. Her father looks anguished.

DR. STEWART
Can you see anything...like shadows
or light?

GINNY
(growing frightened)
No, just little sparkly things.

DR. STEWART
Okay, lie back down. It's going to
be all right. Mr. Conlon why don't
you come out in the hall with me.
Mrs. Conlon, maybe you should stay
with Ginny.

The young mother nods. She's crying, but she doesn't make a
sound for fear of frightening her daughter.

GINNY
Mommy?

MRS. CONLON
I'm right here, sweetheart. It's
okay. Everything's fine.

She strokes her daughter's hair.

GINNY
Why can't I see anything?

MRS. CONLON
I don't know, but we're going to
find out. Don't worry.

22 INT. HOSPITAL HALL -- CONTINUOUS

22

Dr. Stewart and Ginny's father stand in the hall not far
from Jorge and Dr. Finnegan. The young man is fighting back
tears.

MR. CONLON
So, what does this mean, doctor?

DR. STEWART
I'm afraid it's not good.

MR. CONLON
She's blind, isn't she?

DR. STEWART
We knew before the surgery there was
a fifty-fifty chance.

(CONTINUED)

Ginny's father stares at the floor.

DR. STEWART (CONT'D)
 Of course, something could still
 happen, but I'm afraid it's unlikely.
 I'm very sorry.
 (beat)
 Why don't you go in and be with her.
 I'll come back in a little while.

23 INT. GINNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

23

Ginny's father walks back into the room. Tears are in his eyes. He looks at his wife and shakes his head.

GINNY
 Mommy, where's daddy?

MR. CONLON
 (trying to make his
 voice sound normal)
 I'm right here, baby.

He sits down on the bed.

GINNY
 Where's Dr. Stewart?

MR. CONLON
 He's coming back in a little while.
 Right now, he wants you to rest.

GINNY
 Why can't I see anything but sparkles?

The mother and father look at each other. Both are crying silently.

MRS. CONLON
 Let's not worry about that right
 now.

GINNY
 I'm scared, mommy.

Her mother holds her.

24 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE GINNY'S ROOM - DAY

24

From the nurses' station, Dr. Finnegan has seen everything. He's about to go into the room, when Jorge pulls the shopping bag from under the cart, walks to the door and knocks softly.

25 INT. GINNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

25

The parents look up. Jorge stands awkwardly.

JORGE
 (with a Spanish accent)
 Excuse me, uhh, Mr. And Mrs. Conlon.
 I'm...a friend of Ginny's.

On hearing his voice, instantly the little girl smiles.

GINNY
 Jorge.

JORGE
 Hi, Ginny.

GINNY
 Jorge cleans my room every day and
 makes everything smell good.

JORGE
 (to the parents)
 I brought a little present. If it's
 all right?

The parents nod. Jorge walks up to the bed.

JORGE (CONT'D)
 So, you got your bandages off. That's
 good. Now everybody can see how
 pretty you are. I've got something
 for you. It's a surprise and it's
 in a paper bag.

GINNY
 What is it?

Out of the bag, he pulls the fat, furry puppet. Then Jorge
 speaks in the raspy puppet voice.

PUPPET
 I'm so glad to be out of that bag.
 He keeps me there all the time.
 Hello, Ginny. Can you guess what I
 am?

Jorge lifts her hand and helps her touch the fur.

GINNY
 You're a furry puppet.

PUPPET
 You are right.

(CONTINUED)

She runs her fingers over its face.

GINNY
You wear glasses.

She hugs the puppet close.

GINNY (CONT'D)
What's his name?

PUPPET
I do not have a name. Lazy old Jorge forgot to give me one. I need a name. You can't go anywhere without a name.

GINNY
Ruffy. I'm gonna call you Ruffy.

PUPPET
I like Ruffy. Ruffy is a very good name. From now on I am Ruffy.

JORGE
I think you should keep him. He doesn't like living with me.

PUPPET
No, I do not like living with him. He makes me work hard all the time. Work. Work. Work. And I never get to play.

Ginny turns toward her mother.

GINNY
Can I keep him, mom?

JORGE
Of course, sweetheart. But be sure to say "thank you".

GINNY
Oh, thank you. I love him. He's my Ruffy.

PUPPET
And I love you too, Ginny. We will be very happy together.

JORGE
I'll come back later to see if he's being good.

(CONTINUED)

Jorge leaves the room. Mrs. Conlon follows him into the hall.

MRS. CONLON
 (with tears in her eyes)
 I don't know how to thank you.
 (beat)
 The doctor doesn't think she'll ever see again.

JORGE
 (with tears in his eyes too)
 I know. I am very sorry. I have been praying for her every day.

MRS. CONLON
 Please, keep praying...for all of us.

JORGE
 (self-conscious)
 I have a little girl too. She loves puppets, so I make them for her.

MRS. CONLON
 (looking back toward her daughter as she plays with the puppet)
 They're so wonderful.

Jorge pulls a small picture from his pocket.

JORGE
 This is my little girl.

MRS. CONLON
 She's very pretty.

JORGE
 You have such a nice little girl, Mrs. Conlon. Don't be afraid. Jesus is with you and he can do anything.

MRS. CONLON
 Thank you. I know he can.

Jorge smiles then turns and pushes the cart away. At the nurse's station, Dr. Finnegan has seen it all.

26 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

26

Clutching his book and blanket, Eddie Gartman walks down a city street. He's enthralled with every sight and sound around him. Suddenly, he sees a man get out of a parked BMW, click on the alarm, and enter a store. Eddie stares, fascinated.

EDDIE

Mr. Bunley-Mr. Bunley. Beep, beep.
Beep beep. Beep beep.

"Beeping" at the top of his lungs, Eddie walks over, sits on the hood and begins bouncing up and down. The alarm shrieks with sixteen different tones and a mechanical voice blares out...

ALARM VOICE

STEP BACK FROM THE VEHICLE. YOU
HAVE BREACHED MY PERIMETER. STEP
BACK IMMEDIATELY. THIS IS YOUR LAST
WARNING.

Eddie is in heaven.

EDDIE

Beep-beep. Beep-beep. Beep-beep.

The BMW owner runs out of the store yelling.

BMW OWNER

HEY, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
GET AWAY FROM MY CAR.

Screaming with laughter, Eddie runs, trailing the blanket like a streamer and yelling at the top of his lungs.

EDDIE

BEEP-BEEP. BEEP-BEEP. BEEP-BEEP.

27 EXT. ANOTHER STREET - MOMENTS LATER

27

Out of breath, but still running and "beeping", Eddie rounds a corner and comes to a screeching halt. He's beside a freeway exit. Cars are streaming past.

EDDIE

Wait-wait-wait-Mr.-Bunley. The-
light-the-light-the-light.

Across from him stands a man in a ratty suit, holding a sign that reads:

(CONTINUED)

HOMELESS TELE-EVANGELIST WILL HEAL YOU FOR FOOD. GOD BLESS YOU. (ALSO A VIETNAM VET SUFFERING FROM PTSD.)

Suddenly, a Jaguar pulls up next to Eddie. The window rolls down and the DRIVER waves a five dollar bill at him. Eddie just stares at it.

JAG DRIVER

Well, are you gonna take it or not?

Eddie takes it. The Jaguar squeals away. Eddie stares at the bill. Suddenly, another car pulls up. Another five is stuck at him.

EDDIE

(yelling excitedly)

Mr.-Bunley-Mr.Bunley. Money place.
Money-money-money-money-money.

More cars stop. Fives, ones. Even half a sandwich. Eddie sticks it in his mouth and grins. The homeless TELE-EVANGELIST stares malevolently at him.

HOMELESS TELE-EVANGELIST

Look, idiot, go find your own corner.
This one's mine.

Chewing the sandwich and trying not to eat the money, which he holds in the same hand, Eddie trudges off. Suddenly, he hears distant music. Coming from a park across the street is the sound of a carousel.

EDDIE

Wait. Listen-listen.

Eddie's eyes grow wide. Lifting the book, he flips pages until he comes to a picture of Mr. Bunley on a carousel horse.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Mr.-Bunley-Bump-bumpa-bumpa-bump-
bumpa-bumpa-bump--Come-on. Come-on.
Come-on.

He runs toward the music.

28 EXT. CAROUSEL - DAY

28

A carousel in a city park has stopped for riders. A line of children and their mothers are waiting. Puffing and out of breath, Eddie rushes straight to the front of the line and starts to push through without paying. The CAROUSEL OPERATOR grabs him.

(CONTINUED)

CAROUSEL OPERATOR

Hey, just a minute, pal. Where do you think you're goin'? You got a lot of people ahead of you here.

EDDIE

Gotta-get-on. Gotta-get-on. Gotta-get-on. Right-now-Right-now-Right-Right-Right-now.

The mother next in line nods to the operator. Rather sullenly, the man mumbles...

CAROUSEL OPERATOR

All right, it's two-fifty. You got two-fifty?

Eddie stares at him as though he were speaking another language.

CAROUSEL OPERATOR (CONT'D)

Money. You gotta have money to ride. Two dollars and fifty cents.

EDDIE

Oh, money, money. Lots of money.

He shoves his whole wad of bills at the man.

CAROUSEL OPERATOR

Okay, now wait a minute, just hang on.

But Eddie doesn't wait. He runs onto the carousel and jumps on a horse. The operator follows and stuffs the extra money back in his pocket.

Eddie barely notices, he's too busy trying to make the horse move. A young mother starts to put her child onto the horse next to him, but Eddie yells...

EDDIE

No-no-no-no. No. NO. Sitting on Mr. Bunley. Sitting-sitting-SITTING. OFF. OFF. OFF. OFF.

Quickly, the mother finds a different one. Finally, the carousel starts turning and the music plays. As it moves faster, Eddie is in heaven. He begins singing at the top of his voice.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

(very loud)

La, la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la. Gonna
find...the-Singing-Place ...the-
Singing-Place. Gonna find the Singing
Place. Me-me-me and Mr. Buunley.

29 INT. HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE'S LUNCH ROOM - AFTERNOON

29

Jorge Mendoza is seated in an employee lunch room finishing a sandwich. A Christmas tree is in the corner and a television is tuned to the news.

Dr. Finnegan enters. Going to a machine, he buys a soft drink, then walks over and sits down with Jorge.

DR. FINNEGAN

Can I join you?

JORGE

(self-conscious at
the attention)

Of course, Dr. Finnegan.

With a slight groan, the older man lowers himself into a chair.

DR. FEINBERG

Did you know that Saint Francis of Assisi called his body Brother Ass? People would ask him how he was doing and he would say, 'I'm very well, but Brother Ass has seen better days.' That's me. Brother Ass has seen better days.

(beat)

I hate getting old, Jorge. I don't recommend it to anyone. Your body starts doing strange things. You sleep when you don't want to and can't sleep when you do. And doctors, oh my God, stay away from those stupid idiots. They'll kill you.

Jorge laughs.

DR. FINNEGAN

Listen, I wanted to tell you how much I appreciated the way you helped Ginny Conlon and her parents this morning. You did something that nobody else in this hospital could have done.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE
(embarrassed)
Ginny is my friend.

DR. FINNEGAN
It appears to me that you have a lot of friends around here. I see your puppets on every floor. It must take a lot of time to make them.

JORGE
I like to do it. It keeps me busy.

DR. FINNEGAN
Look, if you need any material, my niece owns a hobby and craft store. It's full of all kinds of funny junk. And funny people too, if you ask me. I'm sure I could get you a ton of scraps or anything else you might need.

JORGE
Oh, that would be wonderful. I always need scraps. And foam for the heads.

DR. FINNEGAN
Well, you got a lot of people with foam heads right here in this hospital. Just pull one off and take it home. Nobody'll notice the difference. In a few days, I'll bring you a trunk full of junk. How's that?

JORGE
I will be so thankful.

DR. FINNEGAN
You know, I just had one of my brilliant ideas, Jorge. Maybe you could put on a puppet show for the kids stuck here at Christmas. Let me tell you, this is a miserable place to open presents.

Jorge's eyes light up.

JORGE
Could I? I would love to do that. That would be wonderful. When my wife and daughter get here, we could do it together.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JORGE (CONT'D)

They are coming from Colombia. We could tell the Christmas story.

DR. FINNEGAN

Whether it's the Christmas story or any other fairy tale, do whatever you want.

JORGE

The Christmas story isn't a fairy tale, Dr. Finnegan.

DR. FINNEGAN

Yeah, yeah, fine, whatever. Just make 'em laugh. That's all I care about. I'll set it up. So, how's everything going with immigration? I hear it's been a little rough.

JORGE

You know about that?

DR. FINNEGAN

My friend, I've been here so long, I know when somebody picks his nose in a restroom. Most of the time I wish didn't know any of it, either. Stuff that goes on here makes a soap opera look tame.

(beat)

So how's it going with the paper-pushing slugs who control our government?

JORGE

(beaming)

We're finally finished. All the papers, mountains and mountains of papers. I have only one more meeting this afternoon.

(proudly)

My wife and little girl have been accepted to come to the United States.

DR. FINNEGAN

Well, congratulations. Nice to hear something good actually got done in our worthless State Department. Look, if the hospital can do anything else to help you, I'm a class A, number one Butt Kicker. You just say the word and butts will go flying.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE

Thank you, Dr. Finnegan. Everyone has done so much already--a job for my wife, letters of recommendation. I am so thankful.

DR. FINNEGAN

All right. Well, let's plan on that Christmas puppet show.

JORGE

(excited)

We will do a show like you have never seen. It will be like my grandparents used to do in Colombia. They were very famous. They traveled with a circus.

Jorge looks at his watch.

JORGE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, it's time for me to go. My last meeting with immigration is at four o'clock.

DR. FINNEGAN

Well, you head on over there and kick a bureaucratic butt for me.

Beaming, Jorge gets up and leaves the room.

Suddenly, something on the television catches Finnegan's eyes. It's a news alert by a grim-faced NEWS ANCHOR.

NEWS ANCHOR

Authorities are searching for 26 year old Eddie Gartman who has been missing since eight o'clock this morning.

Eddie's picture appears on the screen.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Gartman is a special needs individual who is developmentally disabled. He was last seen on the embankment of the 101 freeway in the Silver Lake district. Mr. Gartman is wearing a yellow shirt and jeans. If you have any information please call the police hotline-- (213)555-5512. Needless to say, his family is very worried and we share their concern.

30 EXT. IMMIGRATION SERVICES BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON 30

Carrying the manila envelope that he brought from home, Jorge walks up the steps of an imposing government building. A sign on the front reads: U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES--LOS ANGELES.

31 INT. IMMIGRATION SERVICES - LARGE ROOM - MINUTES LATER 31

Jorge enters a large room filled with rows of desks where people of many nationalities sit talking to case workers.

Making his way down the rows, he comes to a particular desk where a pinch-faced, middle-aged man is seated at a computer. His name-plate reads: MR. STONER. An ugly little Christmas tree squats next to his computer. Jorge is confused.

MR. STONER

Can I help you, sir?

JORGE

I'm looking for Mr. MacNamara.

MR. STONER

Mr. MacNamara is no longer with this office.

JORGE

But he was here a week ago. He's been handling my case.

MR. STONER

I've taken over his responsibilities. My name is Mr. Stoner. What can I do for you?

Jorge pulls out a letter.

JORGE

I got this letter. It said to come in at 4 o'clock today.

Stoner takes the letter, scans it, then turns to his computer and begins punching in numbers.

MR. STONER

Please, sit down.

Jorge sits.

MR. STONER (CONT'D)

You are...Jorge Mendoza?

(CONTINUED)

JORGE

Yes.

MR. STONER

And your wife's name is Ana?

JORGE

That's right. And our daughter is Maria.

Stoner begins scanning screen after screen of information. Suddenly, Jorge is very nervous.

JORGE (CONT'D)

Mr. MacNamara told me everything was ready. My wife and daughter will come in a few days.

No response.

JORGE (CONT'D)

I have copies of all their papers.

He holds up the envelope.

MR. STONER

Please be patient, Mr. Mendoza. There's a flag on your file.

JORGE

(turning pale)

A flag. What does that mean, a flag?

MR. STONER

I don't know. I'm checking.

JORGE

(suddenly very nervous)

My wife and daughter already have their tickets. We've waited for three years.

(holding up the envelope)

I brought the file with me--letters of support, an offer of employment from the hospital where I work, birth certificates, our marriage certificate. She has been interviewed at the U.S. Consulate in Barranquilla and they've both passed their medical examinations. Mr. MacNamara said we were all finished.

Stoner turns away from the computer and stares at him.

(CONTINUED)

MR.STONER

The filing process is complete.
But, I'm afraid I have bad news.
Your wife has been denied entry into
the United States.

Jorge is so stunned he can barely speak.

JORGE

What? But...why?

MR.STONER

Our investigators have concluded
that she is a security risk.

JORGE

A security risk? There must be some
mistake. Do you have the right name?
This is Ana Mendoza.

MR.STONER

I have the correct file.
Unfortunately, the Department of
Homeland Security has determined
that your wife is a member of an
organization with very dangerous
affiliations.

JORGE

That cannot be. My wife is not a
member of an organization. She
is...she is...my wife.

MR.STONER

According to the investigation, she
belongs to the Little Sisters of the
Sacred Heart.

JORGE

But that's only a women's group of
the church. They help orphans.
They go into the countryside and
bring food and clothes to the poor.
They do good things. Wonderful
things. This is a mistake.

Stoner's eyes narrow.

MR.STONER

Apparently, that's not all they do,
Mr. Mendoza. Their activities aide
and abet the terrorist and drug
activities of the Sanchez cartel.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE

No. No, no. No cartels. All they do is help people who are hungry-- who don't have any clothes. They don't have anything to do with drugs.

Stoner turns away.

MR.STONER

In any case, I didn't make this determination. I'm only informing you of it. And the decision is final. Your wife cannot enter the United States.

Suddenly, Jorge is struggling for air.

JORGE

(almost in tears)

But she is a good woman. She loves people. She makes puppets for poor children. That's all, I swear. Please...do not do this to us. We have waited so long and worked so hard.

MR.STONER

It's out of my hands, Mr. Mendoza. Of course, you do have the right to appeal.

JORGE

But that could take years.

MR.STONER

Quite true. And given her...record, I doubt that you would be successful.

JORGE

Her record? Her record of what, making puppets? What am I going to tell her? What am I going to tell our little girl? They were coming for Christmas.

MR.STONER

I'm sorry. All I can say is that your case is closed.

He turns back to his computer. Utterly overwhelmed, Jorge stares at him. Slowly, his eyes fill with tears that he tries to blink away. Finally, clutching the envelope, he gets up and slowly walks back through the rows of desks. For the first time, he looks like an old man.

32 INT. HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM - EVENING

32

Once more, Jorge is at his locker. He's emptying it, throwing the contents into a garbage bag. As he does it, he mumble/sings in Spanish and takes hits from a bottle of tequila. Finally, all that's left is the picture on the door. Ripping it off, he looks at it, then sticks it in his pocket. Carrying the bag, he walks away.

33 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

33

Singing, with the garbage bag slung over his shoulder, Jorge walks a down a hospital corridor toward the main entrance. Dr. Finnegan comes out of an office.

DR. FINNEGAN

Jorge...!

Jorge stops and turns. When he sees the doctor, he grins.

JORGE

Feliz navidad, Dr. Finnegan, feliz navidad.

Then he continues walking. Finnegan catches up with him.

DR. FINNEGAN

Jorge, are you all right?

JORGE

I am very, very fine. I am so wonderful. That is me.

He starts singing again.

DR. FINNEGAN

What's happened?

JORGE

What...has...happened? You want to know what has happened? I will tell you what has happened. No Christmas puppet show. That is what has happened. Canceled. Gone.

DR. FINNEGAN

But why?

JORGE

Because I cannot do it alone. Only two arms. Need four. Don't have them, so...all over.

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN
What about your wife?

JORGE
Not coming.

DR. FINNEGAN
What?

Jorge stops, grins broadly and bends close.

JORGE
You want to hear a very funny joke?
You want to know why she is not
coming? They say she is a very
dangerous person. My wife, Ana
Mendoza. They do not want her in
your country.

(beat)

But they are lying. She is only a
good woman who helps the poor, and
for this they have turned her away.

(beat)

Merry Christmas, Dr. Finnegan. Feliz
navidad.

Still singing, Jorge walks out of the hospital. Too stunned
to speak, Finnegan stares after him.

34 INT. HOSPITAL HR DEPARTMENT - DAY

34

Dr. Finnegan enters the large human resources office. He
goes straight to a desk where an attractive middle-aged woman
is seated. This is JOAN. Dropping into a chair in front of
her, he bends close and speaks low.

DR. FINNEGAN
Joan, has Jorge Mendoza been in here
today?

JOAN
Yes. Just a little while ago.

DR. FINNEGAN
What happened?

JOAN
He quit.

DR. FINNEGAN
Did he say why?

(CONTINUED)

JOAN

He didn't talk to me, but I overheard. He just said he was finished and wasn't coming back. Pam tried to arrange an exit interview, but he refused. All he did was give an address for his last check.

She pauses. It's clear there's something more.

DR. FINNEGAN

Come on, Joan, what is it?

Glancing around, she speaks very quietly.

JOAN

Well, he'd been drinking.

DR. FINNEGAN

Could I see his personnel file?

JOAN

Doctor, you know I can't do that. I'd get into a lot of trouble.

DR. FINNEGAN

You saw him. Something bad has happened. The man needs help.

She hesitates.

DR. FINNEGAN (CONT'D)

I've got two Lakers tickets for you.

JOAN

Are you trying to bribe me, Dr. Finnegan?

DR. FINNEGAN

Only if it'll work.

JOAN

There's no need. I'm worried about Jorge too. He's such a nice man.

She writes something on a post-it note.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Go to your office computer. Here's the password for his HR file. Don't print anything out and don't stay on too long.

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN

I'm gonna give you those tickets anyway.

JOAN

You'd better.

DR. FINNEGAN

Hey, I just had one of my many brilliant ideas. Let me take you to the game.

JOAN

(smiling)

We'll see.

35 EXT. JORGE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

35

A storm is coming. Distant lightning flashes. A powerful offshore wind is blowing in from the ocean, bending palm trees and sending billows of filth into the air.

36 INT. JORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

36

Lying on his cot in his apartment, Jorge barely notices the thunder. He's singing a bawdy song in Spanish and takes long slugs of tequila.

Suddenly, there is a crack and a roar that shakes the whole building. The singing stops and Jorge stares at the ceiling. With slurred words he calls out...

JORGE

So God, is that You? Rumble, rumble, rumble. You are angry like Jorge maybe? I don't think so. People think you are up there. Me? I'm not so sure. You let bad things happen to a good woman like Ana. And to a little girl. Always, I thought you love children.

He takes a long suck on the bottle.

JORGE (CONT'D)

I tell you what I think, God. I think maybe you don't care so much. Too big. Too far away. We pray and pray and it don't mean nothing. How 'bout we make a deal? You don't care, I don't care. And I don't pray no more to you. How 'bout that? You like that deal? So tomorrow I will call Ana and break her heart.

(CONTINUED)

Unsteadily, he gets up, goes to the table and picks up the photograph of his wife and daughter. He starts crying.

JORGE (CONT'D)

You see, Ana? You see what helping people does? Always, you say to me, "Help people. Be kind to people. Do good and Jesus will bless you." So I help, I am kind, I try to do things right and it don't matter. You cannot come. They won't let you. It's just me all by myself...and this damn bunch of ugly puppets.

He stares around the room.

POV JORGE

Suddenly, the puppets are everywhere. They cover the walls, the ceiling, the floor, the stove and the table. Their faces are larger than before and they are leering at him, grinning and laughing.

JORGE (CONT'D)

So...you laugh at Jorge? Go ahead and laugh. Laugh at the stupid man. You want to laugh? I will teach you to laugh.

Pulling out a garbage bag, he begins stumbling around the room, stuffing puppets into it. He grabs them from everywhere, until the room is empty and the bag will barely close. Then, dragging the bag behind him, he rushes out.

The door has just slammed shut when the telephone begins ringing.

37 INT. DR. FINNEGAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

37

Dr. Finnegan stands at his desk with the phone to his ear. Finally, he hangs up. He's very troubled.

38 EXT. JORGE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

38

The wind is blowing much harder and rain is falling as Jorge staggers down the steps of his building and over to his truck. Before he can get to it, he is drenched. Throwing the bag into the back, he wipes the water from his eyes, and fumbles for his keys. By the time he unlocks the door and slides behind the wheel, he looks like a drowned rat. Seeing the Crucifix hanging from the mirror, he jerks it off and stares at it.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE

Five years I work. Five years. I pay for my nephew's school. My sister's medicine. My mother's funeral. My family's food. I try to save money. Only once a year do I see my little girl. Once a year. But you don't care. You don't care about nothing.

Starting the engine, he pulls out, almost hitting a parked car. Then he drives away.

39 EXT. GARISH CITY STREET - NIGHT

39

An exhausted and soaked Eddie Gartman trudges through the rain down a sleazy, Los Angeles boulevard. The garish lights of porn shops and topless clubs reflect in pools of oil-streaked water. Prostitutes call to him from doorways, but stop when they see his face.

Suddenly, a couple of gang-bangers step out from the shadows of a building.

GANG MEMBER #1

Hey, dog, where you goin' in the rain?

Eddie stares at them.

EDDIE

Dog? Dog-dog?

They start laughing.

GANG MEMBER #1

Well, look what we got. We got us a cracker retard. Who let you out, fool?

EDDIE

Dog? Dog-dog?

GANG MEMBER #2

Yeah, you a dog.

They surround him and move in close. Eddie is confused.

EDDIE

Dog? Dog-dog?

GANG MEMBER #2

You know how to bark like a dog?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GANG MEMBER #2 (CONT'D)
Well, do it. Go ahead and bark like
a dog, retard.

EDDIE
(whispering)
Dog?

GANG MEMBER #1
He too stupid to bark like a dog.
Got no brains at all. How much money
you got, fool?

EDDIE
Dog-dog.

GANG MEMBER #1
Don't say that no more. Don't want
to hear no more dog-dog. I said,
how much money you got? You too
stupid to know? Then we better take
a look.

Shaking him down, they pull out what's left of his wad of
bills.

GANG MEMBER #1 (CONT'D)
This is it? This all you got? Bring
dog-dog inside.

One of them grabs Eddie by his mop of hair. With a yell, he
pulls away and runs.

GANG MEMBER #2
GET HIM.

He's surprisingly fast. As he streaks off, the blanket flaps
behind him. The gang chases him down the street.

Not knowing where he's going, Eddie turns down a dark alley.

40 EXT. ALLEY -- CONTINUOUS

40

Instantly, he is flopping over piles on the ground. The
alley is strewn with sleeping men under tarps and boxes. As
he stumbles over them, they curse him. And the gang is right
behind.

But the chase only goes a few more feet. The alley ends in
a wall. Eddie stops and stares like a trapped animal. One
of the gang-bangers grabs him around the neck from behind.

GANG MEMBER #1
Where you goin', fool?

(CONTINUED)

Eddie starts gagging.

GANG MEMBER #2
Gimme that blanket.

He grabs it.

EDDIE
No. No, no, no, no...

With all his strength, Eddie pulls away. They both keep pulling on the blanket until Eddie trips and falls. Then the gang kicks him until he lets loose. A skinny kid covered with tattoos bends down.

GANG MEMBER #3
You stupid little pig-of-brains,
gimme that book.

Eddie clutches it to his chest.

EDDIE
No, no, no. Please-please. Mr.
Bunley.

The gang starts kicking him again. Finally, the book is torn away. Eddie lies with his cheek cut, sobbing.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Mommy, mommy, mommy...

GANG MEMBER #3
(looking at the book
cover)
Mr. Bunley's Happy Singing Place?

The gang jeers.

GANG MEMBER #1
Let's get rid of this garbage.

They throw the book and blanket into a reeking dumpster.

GANG MEMBER #1 (CONT'D)
We need to put this fool in a happy
singing place.

They pick up Eddie. As he screams and struggles, they shove him head-first into the dumpster.

EDDIE
NO-NO-NO-NO-NO-NO...

Then, they slam the lid and walk away.

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE ON DUMPSTER

From inside comes sobbing. Slowly the lid opens a crack and Eddie peeks out. When he sees they're gone, he climbs out with his book and blanket.

HOMELESS MAN

They gone, the dirty little jerks.
You okay?

Eddie doesn't answer. Clutching his book and blanket and sobbing, he hobbles away.

41 EXT. FRIGHTENING STREET - NIGHT 41

Exhausted, and crying, Eddie stumbles down a narrow, frightening street. The wind and rain have picked up again. Trash swirls around him.

EDDIE

MOMMY-MOMMY-MOMMY-MOMMY. MR. BUNLEY.
WHERE-WHERE-WHERE...

There is a blast of thunder and lightning. Eddie yells. Rushing to a deserted loading dock, he crouches down, and crawls underneath.

42 INT. UNDER LOADING DOCK -- CONTINUOUS 42

There he sits, trembling and exhausted, clutching his book and blanket.

EDDIE

Mommy--mommy--mommy.

He feels something in his pocket...and pulls it out.

CU TINY ORNAMENT

It's the tiny Christmas ornament. Holding it close, he pulls the blanket over his head.

43 EXT. PIER ON OCEAN BAY - NIGHT 43

The rain is falling in sweeping sheets and thunder is crashing over an isolated ocean bay as Jorge's pickup truck veers to a stop in a parking lot at a small, deserted pier.

44 INT. JORGE'S TRUCK -- NIGHT 44

Jorge takes a long drink from the bottle. Then, throwing open the door, he almost falls out.

45 EXT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS 45

Pulling the bag of puppets from the back, he heads for the pier.

46 EXT. PIER ON OCEAN BAY -- CONTINUOUS 46

Jorge staggers to the end of the pier. Opening the bag, he begins throwing puppets into the ocean. With each one he yells...

JORGE

(in Spanish with subtitles)

Here, this is for you, God. And this one. And this one. You take everything from me, so you can have these too. She was only helping people...praying for people. You don't care nothing for us.

Finally, the bag is empty. Dozens of puppet heads float in the black raging water beneath the pier. Last of all, Jorge reaches into his pocket and pulls out the crucifix.

JORGE (CONT'D)

So, Jesus, I always believe in you. I believe you died to save us from our sins. I believe you are God and you love us. I believe if I pray you hear me. I think you give me the puppets and tell me how to make them. And I do it. I give them to children. I pray for children, but nothing happens. They stay blind, they can't walk, they just die. And now this happen to my little girl. So I don't believe in you anymore. Goodbye to you, Jesus.

With all his strength, he throws the crucifix out into the darkness. Then, he huddles against the rail, soaked and weeping.

Jorge is about to turn and go, when he hears an odd sound. Gradually, it grows louder. Above the roaring wind and waves, he hears distant singing. Puzzled, he looks out over the ocean...and his eyes grow wide.

POV JORGE

Far away in the black sky, strange lights are swirling. They dance in undulating shafts, floating and weaving in the raging storm. Twisting through them are veins of lightning.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly, the singing is much louder. It is like ten thousand angels joined in a chant of overwhelming majesty and terrifying power. And in that singing, he hears a voice whispering his name.

HEAVENLY VOICE

Jorge Mendoza, Jorge Mendoza...

Jorge stands trembling as the dancing light rushes toward him. When it is directly overhead, it begins to descend.

Jorge turns and runs toward the beach. But he gets only a few feet before he slips and falls. Instantly, the pier is covered with millions of tiny, falling stars. Like rain, they drop around him, bursting into silvery splashes that sing with the music of Heaven.

Choked with terror, Jorge looks up. Above him hangs a pillar of brilliance far greater than all the rest. For a moment, it remains suspended. Then, as the singing rises to a great crescendo, like a white-hot avalanche, it roars straight down.

The pier disintegrates into burning shards and, with a scream, Jorge drops into the ocean.

47 EXT. UNDER WATER - POV JORGE - NIGHT

47

As he sinks in the black water, he looks up.

POV JORGE

Just above the surface drifts the great Pillar of Light. In it is a Hand filled with glory. From between the closed fingers flow streaks of living fire. Sweeping down into the ocean, the hand opens. The palm is pierced with crimson brilliance that flows like blood.

Drowning, Jorge reaches toward it.

The hand grasps his.

There is a flash that turns the black ocean into burning day. Then, everything goes dark.

FADE TO
BLACK:

FADE IN:

48 EXT. OCEAN - ANGLE ON SURFACE OF THE WATER - NIGHT 48

Rain falls on the black ocean. On the glistening surf ride the puppet faces, staring up into an empty sky.

DISSOLVE
TO:

49 EXT. BEACH NEAR PIER -- LATER 49

The storm is over. Jorge lies on his back in the sand half in the water. His eyes are open, staring at nothing. His clothes are soaked and scorched. Each time the surf sweeps in, his legs rise and fall with it. Strewn around him in the moonlight are dozens of puppets.

Suddenly, there is the sound of an engine. Then, headlights appear. A truck stops and shadowy figures get out with flashlights. It's the beach patrol.

BEACH PATROL VOICE #1
Aw, crap, another floater. I hate floaters.

BEACH PATROL VOICE #2
Look at all the puppets. Where the heck did they come from?

One of the men pushes Jorge with a boot. Jorge groans and moves.

BEACH PATROL VOICE #2 (CONT'D)
He's just drunk.

BEACH PATROL VOICE #1
Hey, wake up, pal. No sleepin' on the beach. Get your butt out of here or we'll run you in, which means a lot of paperwork. Come on, get up, get going.

Jorge struggles to his hands and knees, then he pukes, gagging out sea water.

BEACH PATROL VOICE #2
That's right. Get it out...then get out.

Finally, he manages to wobble to his feet. His head is splitting and his eyes won't focus.

POV JORGE

(CONTINUED)

He looks around. The men are like shimmering ghosts in the headlights of the truck.

BEACH PATROL VOICE #2 (CONT'D)

Come on, move.

He staggers across the sand to his truck. Opening the door, he half falls inside. Dizzy and ill, he pulls himself into a sitting position and closes the door.

50 INT. JORGE'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

50

Jorge, he sees something that almost makes him pass out again. The crucifix he threw in the ocean is back, hanging from the mirror.

JORGE

(Spanish with subtitles)

What...?

He's touches it, not sure it's real. The instant he does so, he hears a strange, crackling sound like fire in dry grass. His hand is tingling. Turning it over, he opens it.

CU HIS PALM

Tiny streaks of light flicker across his skin and a drop of crimson shimmers in his palm.

POV JORGE - FLASHING IMAGE

For an instant, he sees an eerie vision...the mysterious hand reaching through the ocean toward him. He yells...and it's gone. His hand looks normal once more.

JORGE (CONT'D)

I'm sick. I've got to get home.

The keys are still in the ignition. Starting the engine, Jorge throws the pickup into gear and drives away.

51 EXT. JORGE'S TRUCK DRIVING ON CITY STREETS - NIGHT

51

Jorge drives like a madman through the streets of the city. It's very late and there are few cars.

52 INT. JORGE'S TRUCK - NIGHT

52

Jorge's clothes are scorched and he reeks of sea water. Sweat pours down his face. Mumbling, he keeps shifting his gaze to the crucifix.

Then, slowly, a new terror begins. He starts hearing voices, soft, ghostly whispers in a language he can't understand.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE
(in Spanish with
subtitles)
Oh, God, what is happening to me? I
am going crazy.

He rubs his eyes.

JORGE (CONT'D)
What is this?

POV JORGE

Around him, the city is changing. The lights in the buildings begin to glow with an unearthly brightness while everything else is growing very dark. Heavy mist appears, making it almost impossible to see ahead.

Suddenly, something huge and black streaks down in front of his truck. It looks like a giant bird, but its wings are far larger than any bird Jorge has ever seen. He yells and slams on his brakes. But as fast as it came, it is lost in the fog.

There is a distant scream.

A moment later, another one of them flashes down in front of him, then vanishes.

Jorge hunches over, trying to look up at the sky through his windshield. What he sees, freezes him.

POV JORGE

High above the fog, hundreds of black creatures with huge wings soar between the buildings. Silently, one after another swoops down in the thick mist.

There is another scream, a woman's scream. Then anguished wails come from everywhere. The things aren't just swooping to the street. Some are flying straight into buildings. They wheel and vanish through a wall as though it were made of smoke.

The fog parts. Dozens of people are passing on the sidewalks and above most of them float black-winged creatures. Like parasites, they are attached. At the end of long arms, are vicious talons that are sunk into every person's back.

As Jorge watches, one of the monsters swoops onto a man. Huge claws strike him, tearing open a fearful gash in his head. The man cries out, but keeps on walking as though nothing has happened. Then, the thing embeds itself in his flesh.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 Angel vultures.

Their attacks don't stop. Over and over, the black wings streak down. After tearing hideous wounds, they attach to their victims. Many of the people writhe in agony, but they don't seem to know what is causing their pain. They just keep walking.

Suddenly, one lands on Jorge's roof. Talons pass through the steel as though it were smoke. But, as they grope for him, they touch the crucifix. There is a crimson flash. With a gagging croak, the thing pulls back and flies away.

As quickly as the hideous vision came, it fades. The darkness brightens, the fog disappears and the black creatures with it. The city looks normal once more.

JORGE (CONT'D)
 Oh, God, oh, God, what have you done
 to me?

53 EXT. CITY STREET -- CONTINUOUS 53

Jorge careens around a corner. Ahead, is Children's Hospital.

54 EXT. CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT 54

Jorge screeches to a stop at the curb, jumps out and rushes toward the hospital entrance. But before he gets there, once more he hears cries and wailing. He looks back.

POV JORGE

Los Angeles is engulfed in black flames. The raging inferno seems to rise to the stars. In the sky, Jorge sees thousands of the winged creatures, soaring and swooping. And from the City of the Angels comes a great, anguished cry.

55 INT. LOBBY OF HOSPITAL - NIGHT 55

Almost out of his mind with terror, Jorge rushes into the lobby of the hospital.

POV JORGE

He sees people, but they're like apparitions moving in slow motion...and none of them see him. He rushes to the front desk, where a woman is seated.

JORGE
 Please, I need help. I got hit by
 lightning.

(CONTINUED)

There is no response. The slow motion ghost behind the desk doesn't seem to know he's there.

JORGE (CONT'D)
Don't you hear me? I need help.
Look at me.

But she doesn't look. She just keeps shuffling papers. Down the hall, he sees a doctor that he knows and runs up to her.

JORGE (CONT'D)
Dr. Anderson, you've got to help me.
I've been hurt.

He tries to grab her arm, but his hand passes straight through. He stares in horror.

JORGE (CONT'D)
(in Spanish with
subtitles)
I know what this is. I am dead. I
don't have a body anymore. I am
dead and this is hell. Oh, Jesus,
forgive me. I didn't mean what I
said. Please, don't leave me here.

As though in a nightmare, Jorge begins wandering down a corridor.

JORGE (CONT'D)
I am dead and what will happen to my
poor wife and little girl? What
will happen to my family? Please,
God, take me out of hell and I will
never get drunk again. I will never
say bad things again.

56 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

56

Suddenly, he freezes.

POV JORGE

Ahead in the corridor is a shimmering brightness. Slowly, it forms into the pillar of light that he saw over the ocean. And then, he hears singing.

JORGE
Oh, no.

Jorge turns to run, but something grasps his shoulder and spins him around. No one is there. He stares at the hovering lights.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE (CONT'D)
 (miserable)
 What do you want from me?

He hears a soft voice.

HEAVENLY VOICE
 Come and see.

Slowly, the light moves into a hospital room. Terrified, Jorge goes to the door and looks in.

57 INT. GINNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

57

It's Ginny's room. The little girl lies asleep on the bed with the ugly puppet in her arms. Her mother is sleeping on a cot beside her.

Then, something else becomes visible. Near the ceiling above the bed in streaming mist hangs one of the hideous black creatures. Its outstretched wings fill the top of the room. Never has Jorge seen a face so vile. The head is shaped like a huge ax with the eyes set wide apart. It has no mouth, but twin serpent tongues flicker in and out from two holes where a mouth should have been.

One of its long arms is hanging down and its talons are buried in the little girl's chest. The other arm dangles to her mother's breast where talons pierce her heart. The thing doesn't move. Its eyes are closed and on its face is a look of ecstasy.

Suddenly, Jorge is filled with a hate so deep that he can barely hold it in. In a teeth-gritting rage, he enters the room. Once more, he hears the crackling sound...and lifts his hand.

CU JORGE'S HAND

Light ripples over his fingers. A drop of crimson brilliance appears in his palm.

He walks up to the bed. Lost in its vile pleasure, the creature isn't aware of him. Slowly, Jorge reaches out and grasps the arm that is attached to the little girl.

Huge, black eyes flash open. From the monster comes a shriek that shakes the room. It pulls its talons from the mother and child and is engulfed in flames. As it burns, it writhes in agony and from it spews black bile.

In a moment, all of it is gone.

(CONTINUED)

Jorge looks down at Ginny. Neither she nor her mother have awakened. He looks at his hand.

POV JORGE

It's covered with blood drenched with brilliance. Bending over the child, he touches her closed eyes with his bloody fingers and whispers her name.

JORGE

Ginny.

She begins to awaken.

GINNY

Mommy.

Her mother stirs. Terrified, Jorge rushes from the room.

MRS. CONLON

What's the matter, Honey.

Ginny sits up.

GINNY

MOMMY.

58 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

58

Drenched with sweat, Jorge runs down the hall. Suddenly, he feels dizzy and ill. He stumbles into a restroom.

59 INT. RESTROOM -- CONTINUOUS

59

Grabbing his face, he cries out in pain.

POV JORGE

The room is filled with blood-red shadows and everything is growing dim. Going to a mirror, he looks at himself. From his eyes, drops of blood are falling like tears.

JORGE

(whispering; Spanish
with subtitles)

Oh, God...oh, God...

Images he has never seen before begin to flash in front of him.

POV JORGE - MONTAGE OF IMAGES

They're like vivid memories, but they're not his own.

(CONTINUED)

1. POV GINNY ON A SWING.

Brilliant sunshine through trees. A little girl laughing. Swinging back and forth...higher and higher.

2. POV GINNY IN A LIVING ROOM

She runs to her father. Strong arms reach down and lift her into the air.

3. POV GINNY - A CAR CRASH

Chaos, people screaming, the world is turning upside down. Stretchers. Blood-red vision. Then flashing lights and sirens.

GINNY'S VOICE (O.S.)
(terrified, echoing)
Mommy, mommy. Where are you? I
can't see...

MONTAGE ENDS.

CU JORGE'S FACE.

POV JORGE

The restroom is growing darker, Jorge whispers the same words.

JORGE
(in Spanish with
subtitles)
I can't see. I'm going blind.

He stumbles out into the hall.

60 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

60

Everything is a fading blur. The ghost-people in the corridor take no notice of him. They're rushing toward Ginny's room. Coming to an elevator, Jorge gropes for the buttons.

POV JORGE

Everything goes pitch black.

JORGE
(in English)
SOMEBODY HELP ME.

The elevator doors open. He falls through onto his knees.

61 INT. ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS 61

The doors close. He searches for the buttons. Finally, he touches one. The elevator drops. The doors open. He staggers out.

JORGE
HELP. HELP.

62 INT. HOSPITAL BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS 62

He's in a deserted, basement storage area. He plunges down a corridor of shelves, knocking over boxes and equipment.

JORGE
HELP ME. I'M BLIND.

Deeper and deeper, he stumbles into the room. Suddenly, he hits a shelf full of huge boxes. There is a tremendous crash as the whole thing comes down on him. Jorge is knocked unconscious to the floor.

FADE TO
BLACK:

FADE IN:

63 EXT. ALLEY AT LOADING DOCK - VERY EARLY MORNING 63

Morning sunlight floods the loading dock where Eddie Gartman is hiding. No one is visible, but Eddie's voice is heard coming from somewhere--and he's having an argument.

EDDIE (O.S.)
No-no-no-no-no-no. Not listening-
not-listening-not-listening. NO.

64 INT. UNDER LOADING DOCK -- CONTINUOUS 64

In cobwebbed shadows strewn with trash, a disheveled Eddie sits with his blanket and book, arguing with the imaginary Mr. Bunley.

EDDIE
Not-going-not-going. Not-not-not-
not-not. Mad-at-Mr.Bunley. Mad-mad-
mad. No-Singing-Place. Scary-place-
and-scary-place-and-scary-place.
Not going. Staying-staying. Hungry.
HUNGRY.

The door to the building next to the loading dock slides open. Eddie grows quiet.

65 EXT. LOADING DOCK - DAY

65

Two WORKMEN walk out of the building. Each is carrying a steaming McDonald's breakfast. The older workman is about to sit down when he remembers something.

OLDER WORKMAN

You got the manifests?

The younger workman groans.

YOUNGER WORKMAN

I left 'em upstairs.

OLDER WORKMAN

Better go get 'em. Truck could get here any minute.

YOUNGER WORKMAN

Yeah, yeah, all right.

OLDER WORKMAN

While you're doin' that I'm gonna hit the john.

Carrying his breakfast, he heads back toward the building. The younger man sets his food on the dock.

OLDER WORKMAN (CONT'D)

Wouldn't leave it there if I was you.

YOUNGER WORKMAN

I'll only be gone a minute. I've spilled it once already.

OLDER WORKMAN

Suit yourself.

When the door closes behind them, Eddie's head pops out. He stares at the container and smiles.

EDDIE

(singing)

I'm lovin' it, I'm lovin' it, I'm lovin' it.

66 EXT. LOADING DOCK - MOMENTS LATER

66

The workmen walk back outside. The younger man's breakfast is gone.

YOUNGER WORKMAN

Hey, where's my food?

(CONTINUED)

OLDER WORKMAN

Told ya.

YOUNGER WORKMAN

You gotta be kidding me. Somebody swiped my breakfast.

OLDER WORKMAN

Got a lot of bums around here.

YOUNGER WORKMAN

I'm gonna find who did this and kick his ass.

67 EXT. ALLEY A DISTANCE AWAY -- MORNING

67

Eddie is scrunched between a wall and a dumpster, stuffing pancakes and sausage into his mouth. While he eats, he mumble/sings...

EDDIE

Lots, lots, lots for me, but none, none, none, for Mr. Buuuunley.

68 EXT. ROSE'S CAR - DRIVING ON CITY STREET - EARLY MORNING

68

A five-year-old Chevy sedan is driving on a city street.

69 INT. ROSE'S CAR -- MORNING

69

Rose, Julie's neighbor, is behind the wheel of her car. Julie sits exhausted in the passenger seat, with her head against the window.

ROSE

Well, what do you think, honey?

JULIE

I think we've been driving around all night and I'm wasting your time. That's what I think.

ROSE

Don't worry about my time. I've got plenty of that, but I'm not sure I can keep my eyes open much longer.

JULIE

This is stupid. Let's go home. I don't know why I ever thought I could find him.

ROSE

We had to try.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE
If he dies, I'll never forgive myself.

ROSE
Julie, stop talkin' like that. He's not going to die. Somebody'll find him. And I'll bet it'll be soon.

JULIE
Yeah, dead beside a freeway.

ROSE
Don't think such terrible thoughts. We've got to have faith in God. He hasn't forgotten your little brother. He knows exactly where he is and He's taking care of him.

JULIE
(bitterly)
You sound like my mother. No matter what kind of crap happened, she never stopped believing in Jesus. Garbage could be falling all over us and she'd still head off to church. Well, that's not me. I gave up on all of that God stuff a long time ago.

(beat)
If there was a God, he wouldn't have let my father walk out on us. Just packed up and left and we never saw him again. For years, my mom worked two miserable jobs while I took care of Eddie.

ROSE
I know.

JULIE
Yeah, of course you do. You and your family helped us so much. I don't know what we would've done if you hadn't been there.

ROSE
God helps us by using the hands of people, Julie.

JULIE
Yeah, well, the only hands I ever saw were yours. The sad thing is, my mother never stopped loving that sperm donor.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Don't call him that, Julie. He's still your father.

JULIE

No, he isn't. I don't have a father. My mother may have forgiven that jerk, but I never will. Even though she never saw him again, she was praying for him the day she died.

ROSE

Your mother was a wonderful woman. Believing in Jesus made her strong.

JULIE

If there's a God, why would he let my brother be born the way he is? I know why my father left. He just couldn't handle Eddie. And you know what's so horrible? I know exactly how he felt.

Rose looks at her with deep concern.

JULIE (CONT'D)

When I was a teenager, I wanted Eddie to go away and never come back. Sometimes I even wanted him to die.

ROSE

Now that isn't true and you know it. You always loved Eddie. I remember.

JULIE

(weary)

You're right. From the moment they brought him home I loved him. Born on Christmas day. What a gift. Everything turned into craziness.

She stares out the window.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You know what was worst about growing up with Eddie? Going into restaurants. Everyone would be talking and laughing. And then we'd walk in. It would get quiet. People would look at him and then straight at me--like we were both freaks. Then, they'd stare and stare and stare until I'd want to scream.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JULIE (CONT'D)

Thankfully, we couldn't go to restaurants very often. Couldn't afford it.

Her eyes grow soft.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Oh, but, when he was a baby he was so beautiful. Sometimes I thought I was holding an angel. He'd sit on my lap for hours, smiling up at me.

(beat)

And he never stopped smiling...until the day our mother died.

(fighting back tears)

I'll never forget Eddie at her funeral. He loved her more than anything, but when he looked at her in the casket he never said a word...and he never cried. Not a single tear. It was like being there alone. No father, no mother, no brother. I was so lonely. You want to believe in God? That's fine. But it's not for me.

She is crying.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm so sorry, Rose. You drive around all night with me, then I sit here and bitch.

ROSE

There's nothing to apologize for, honey.

JULIE

I'm so tired. I wish I could go to sleep forever.

She closes her eyes. Rose looks at her with compassion, but says nothing.

70 INT. HOSPITAL STORAGE ROOM - DAY

70

Slowly, Jorge Mendoza awakens. He's still under the pile of boxes. With a groan, he pulls himself out and stares around. Then he remembers...and touches his eyes.

JORGE

Was this a dream? Was I that drunk?

(CONTINUED)

Struggling to his feet, he teeters with dizziness. He looks down at his clothes. They're scorched and torn.

JORGE (CONT'D)

Oh God...that part wasn't a dream.

Going to the elevator, he pushes the button.

71 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

71

An elevator door opens and Jorge steps out into a busy corridor. Everything is normal. People stare at his clothes. A YOUNG ORDERLY pushing a cart stops.

YOUNG ORDERLY

Dude, what happened to you?

JORGE

A bad night.

YOUNG ORDERLY

No kidding.

Jorge keeps walking...straight to Ginny's room. He looks inside. It's empty. A nurse comes up to him. Her name tag reads, CRANE.

NURSE CRANE

Can I help you?

Then she sees who it is.

NURSE CRANE (CONT'D)

Jorge?

JORGE

Where's Ginny?

NURSE CRANE

Upstairs in ophthalmology. You look awful. What happened to your clothes?

JORGE

It's a long story. I've got to see her.

NURSE CRANE

I don't think that's possible.

JORGE

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

NURSE CRANE

Look, something weird happened last night. We're not supposed to talk about it. Were you in a fire?

JORGE

She's all right, isn't she?

NURSE CRANE

She's fine. Better than fine.

JORGE

What do you mean?

NURSE CRANE

(speaking low)

Okay, just don't tell anybody where you heard it. The doctors are really freaked out. During the night, Ginny woke up...and she wasn't blind anymore.

JORGE

What?

NURSE CRANE

She could see perfectly. And the story she's telling is making everybody crazy.

JORGE

What kind of story?

NURSE CRANE

That somebody came in the middle of the night and touched her eyes. From that moment, she started seeing.

Jorge is trembling. He turns and walks away.

NURSE CRANE (CONT'D)

Jorge?

He begins walking faster and faster...toward the stairs.

72 INT. ANOTHER HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

72

Jorge rushes out of a stairwell and down a hall, to a door that reads: "Ophthalmology." There, he stops. Very cautiously, he pushes it open and looks inside. Then he enters.

73 INT. OPHTHALMOLOGY LAB -- CONTINUOUS

73

The lab is a large room filled with equipment. At first, it appears deserted. But, then, Jorge hears voices coming from the back. Moving silently down an aisle, he finds a place where he can see without being observed.

Ginny is seated on an examination table. Her parents are with her. They're both overjoyed. Dr. Stewart and several other physicians are completing an examination.

DR. STEWART

Well, I can't explain it, but her eyes are perfect. There's not even any evidence of my surgery.

Mrs. Conlon is crying.

MRS. CONLON

Thank God, oh, thank God.

DR. STEWART

Ginny, why don't you tell, Dr. Feinberg and Dr. Blake what you told me.

GINNY

Okay.

She takes a deep breath.

GINNY (CONT'D)

Well, I was asleep. Then it felt like somebody touched my eyes and everything popped.

DR. FEINBERG

(frowning)
Popped?

DR. STEWART

I think she means flashed.

GINNY

A really big flash.

DR. STEWART

And that's when you called your mother?

She nods.

(CONTINUED)

DR. FEINBERG

And you didn't see anything, Mrs. Conlon?

MRS. CONLON

No. And I woke up right away. We were the only ones in the room, but there was a strange, burned smell in the air. From that moment, she started seeing again.

DR. FEINBERG

And that's all either of you remember?

Both nod.

GINNY

Wait. I just remembered something else.

DR. STEWART

What is it?

GINNY

(with wonder)

He said my name.

DR. STEWART

Who?

GINNY

The man who touched my eyes.

DR. STEWART

So it was a man.

GINNY

Yes, and he said, 'Ginny.'

Jorge's face is covered with sweat. Quickly, he slips out of the room.

74 EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

74

Once out in the hall, he runs to an elevator. The door opens and he bumps into Dr. Finnegan. But this is the last person he wants to see. He runs for the stairs.

DR. FINNEGAN

Jorge?

(beat)

Jorge, wait.

(CONTINUED)

Jorge vanishes into the stairwell. Finnegan hurries after him.

75 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY 75

The front door of the hospital bursts open. Jorge races down the steps to his truck. A parking ticket is on the window. He jumps in and drives off...just as Finnegan rushes out of the building. Finnegan stares after him.

DR. FINNEGAN

You think you can run away from me,
Mr. Mendoza. You don't know who
you're dealing with.

He turns and walks back into the building.

76 EXT. SMALL CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY 76

The truck screeches to a stop in front of a small Catholic church. Jorge gets out and runs inside.

77 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS 77

A light is on over a confessional booth. Jorge heads straight for it. Stepping in, he closes the door.

78 INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH -- CONTINUOUS 78

Covered with sweat and breathing hard, he sits staring at the screen. Through it, he can see the vague form of a priest.

JORGE

(words pour out)
Bless-me-Father-for-I-have-sinned.
It's-been-a-month-since-my-last
confession-and-I-am-in-a-lot-of-
trouble.

PRIEST'S VOICE

What's your trouble, my son?

JORGE

God is after me and you've got to
help me get away.

PRIEST'S VOICE

And why would he be after you?

JORGE

I threw some puppets in the ocean
and after that a crucifix.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST'S VOICE

Why did you do that?

JORGE

The puppets started looking at me funny and I got angry. But this isn't about them. It's about the crucifix. I think that's my big problem.

PRIEST'S VOICE

Why did you throw it in the ocean?

JORGE

I was angry at God too. Also, I was very drunk.

PRIEST'S VOICE

Well, that might explain a little bit.

JORGE

No, it doesn't, Father. A lot of people get drunk and God doesn't blast them with lightning.

PRIEST'S VOICE

God blasted you with lightning?

JORGE

Yes, and blew everything to hell. The whole pier. I fell in and almost drowned.

PRIEST'S VOICE

Wait. Wait. Wait. Slow down, my son. You were on a pier and it got hit by lightning?

JORGE

Yes.

PRIEST'S VOICE

That may not have been God. It might have just been the weather.

JORGE

It wasn't the weather. Does the weather have a big hand in it? When I was drowning, I looked up and I saw God's Hand.

PRIEST'S VOICE

When you were under water?

(CONTINUED)

JORGE

Where else would I be drowning? I'm sorry, Father. I know this sounds crazy. I'm just scared.

PRIEST'S VOICE

There's nothing to be afraid of.

JORGE

That's easy for you to say. God didn't do anything to you.

PRIEST'S VOICE

Did He do something to you besides blast you with lightning?

JORGE

Oh yes. And that's the problem, Father. After I woke up on the beach, I went to a hospital. This is going to sound very strange. But I think I...healed-a-little-blind-girl.

PRIEST'S VOICE

Uhh, you're losing me here.

JORGE

I know it sounds crazy, but she can really see. And she was blind as a rock. I'm sorry about the crucifix. It was a stupid thing to do. One other thing. It came back into my truck by itself and now I'm afraid to touch it. And it gets worse.

PRIEST'S VOICE

It does?

JORGE

(hardly above a whisper)
Much worse. When I healed this little girl...I went blind myself.

PRIEST'S VOICE

My son, I have only one more question. How much did you have to drink this morning?

JORGE

Nothing, I swear it, Father. Well, I don't swear. I promise it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JORGE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

See, what I think is, when I threw
in the crucifix, I got His
attention...

(pointing to the
ceiling)

...and what I need now is something
to make Him leave me alone. Just
give me some penance, Father.
Something really awful. That's what
I need.

PRIEST'S VOICE

I'm going to give you a business
card, my son.

JORGE

A business card?

He slides it under the screen.

PRIEST'S VOICE

It's for a psychiatrist. I want you
to go see him and the church will
pay for it.

JORGE

You think I'm loco?

PRIEST'S VOICE

I think you're...a little disturbed.

JORGE

But hasn't this happened to people
before? Aren't there books about
people who heal other people?

PRIEST'S VOICE

I don't know of any.

JORGE

What about Jesus?

PRIEST'S VOICE

Well, there is that.

JORGE

It could happen again, I can feel
it. And I've got to stop it before
it does. I mean, what if I went
blind while I was driving.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JORGE (CONT'D)
 So I heal a little girl and kill
 fifty people on a sidewalk. You see
 what I mean?

PRIEST'S VOICE
 I do. Yes, I do. My son, you need
 some peace and quiet...

JORGE
 No, what I need is penance.

PRIEST'S VOICE
 All right. Penance.
 (beat)
 I want you to say ten "Hail, Marys"
 each day for a week.

JORGE
 That's it? Seventy "Hail Marys"?

PRIEST'S VOICE
 That, and go to the psychiatrist.

JORGE
 But, that's not nearly enough, Father.
 I get that much for telling a lie.

PRIEST'S VOICE
 Have you ever been to a psychiatrist,
 my son?

JORGE
 No, Father.

PRIEST'S VOICE
 Trust me, it's enough. Now, go in
 peace, your sins are forgiven.

Jorge stares at the screen in frustration.

79 EXT. CITY LIBRARY - ESTABLISHING - DAY 79

Jorge's truck slides into a parking space at the Los Angeles
 Public Library. He gets out and runs up the steps.

80 INT. CITY LIBRARY - DAY 80

Inside, he hurries to the main desk. An austere, female
 LIBRARIAN stares suspiciously at his clothes.

LIBRARIAN
 May I help you, sir?

(CONTINUED)

JORGE
I need some books.

LIBRARIAN
About what?

JORGE
Healing people. You know, touching
them and making them well?

LIBRARIAN
Touching people and making them well?

JORGE
I don't mean, 'how-to-do-it'. Just
books about it. By doctors. You
know...to read?

LIBRARIAN
I suggest that you go to the computer
and see what you can find under the
"H's".

JORGE
(his mouth going dry)
The...computer?

LIBRARIAN
Yes, over there.

She points to a long computer station in the center of the room that is surrounded by grade school children at the terminals. Completely intimidated, Jorge walks toward it.

He stands in front of one of the terminals not knowing what to do. He touches a key. A BOY of ten with thick glasses is watching.

BOY
You don't have to be afraid of it.
It won't explode.
(beat)
What are you looking for?

He moves to Jorge's terminal.

JORGE
Books about healing.

The kid types in the word. The screen fills with data.

BOY
Your category's too broad.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOY (CONT'D)

Be more specific. Homeopathic medicine? Psychological factors in healing? Quantitative research methodology and the healing process. The list goes on and on.

JORGE

(miserably)

Is there something about...touching people and making them well?

The kid stares up at him as though he has just arrived from another planet.

81 EXT. SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

81

Eddie Gartman wends his way through the crowded parking lot of a shopping mall. His book is under his arm and he's wearing the blanket around his head like a large scarf.

Masses of people are heading in the main entrance under a sign that reads, "Christmas Wonderland Sale." As he comes close to the doors, he hears bells and Christmas choir music over loud speakers. He freezes.

EDDIE

Mr. Bunley-Mr. Bunley, a SINGING PLACE!!

Overjoyed, he pushes through the people into the building.

82 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

82

Eddie runs through a crowded store toward the sound of the music.

As he dodges people in the aisles, his blanket snags several delicately stacked displays, pulling them down in crashing heaps. He doesn't even notice. With every step, the choir music and bells are louder. He begins to sing tunelessly at the top of his voice.

EDDIE

LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA...

83 INT. MAIN MALL AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

83

Eddie leaves the store and enters the central mall. It's decorated like a Christmas wonderland with cascading lights, huge snowflakes, giant Christmas trees and life-size reindeer prancing in mid-air. There are elves and mountains of fake presents and candy.

(CONTINUED)

Eddie stares as though he's just entered heaven.

At the center of this incredible world on a huge throne sits a fat, jolly SANTA. There's a long line of parents with children waiting to share their Christmas wishes.

Lines mean nothing to Eddie. Running across the mall he pushes straight through, right up to the throne. As a child is led away, Eddie climbs up and plops down on Santa's lap. He's much larger than any child and Santa almost vanishes beneath him.

SANTA
 (groaning under the
 weight)
 Uhhhh...aren't you a little big for
 this?

Eddie giggles. Santa gets a look at his face and realizes who he's dealing with. This doesn't help the fact that he's being squashed.

SANTA (CONT'D)
 Do we...have a parent...with this
 young man?

No answer from the crowd. A gorgeous, SANTA'S HELPER moves up beside him.

SANTA'S HELPER
 Santa, he didn't sign up for a
 picture.

SANTA
 (grunting)
 Would you...move just a little bit.
 You're crushing Santa's privates.

Santa manages to shift Eddie, who stares at him as though he were an angel.

SANTA (CONT'D)
 Just a little more.
 (beat)
 Okay, good. That's better.
 (beat)
 So...what's your name?

Eddie sticks his face two inches from Santa's and laughs uproariously.

EDDIE
 Christmas-Christmas. Fat-fat-fat-
 fat-fat-fat. Beer.

(CONTINUED)

He reaches down and shakes Santa's stomach with all his might.

SANTA
HEY, HEY. DON'T DO THAT. Santa
doesn't like to have his stomach
shaken.

Eddie laughs in his face again.

EDDIE
Beer. Fat-fat.

SANTA
Yeah, beer, fat, fat. Now what do
you want for Christmas?

No answer.

SANTA (CONT'D)
You want a train or a bicycle...or a
membership in a weight loss program?

Still no answer.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Look, Santa wants to bring you
something for Christmas, but unless
you get off my legs, I'm gonna be
doing it in a wheel chair.
(beat)
Okay, your turn's over. Time to go.

He starts to move Eddie off his lap, but Eddie throws his
arms around his neck with a grip so tight it almost chokes
him.

EDDIE
NO-NO-NO-NO-NO-NO, CAN'T GO, MR.
BUNLEY...

SANTA
(croaking)
HELP. I NEED HELP UP HERE.

Two of Santa's helpers come to his rescue. They try to pull
Eddie off, but he's too strong for them.

SANTA'S HELPER
Come on. Santa's got other children
to talk to.

Still, Eddie hangs on.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE
NO-NO-NO-NO-NO-NO...

SANTA
He's...choking...me.

Santa's face begins turning blue.

SANTA'S HELPER
Here. Look here. Look, what I've
got for you.

The helper holds up a fistful of candy canes. Eddie
stares...then, breaks his choke-hold and reaches for them.
She steps back from the throne and Eddie follows her. Santa
gasps for air.

SANTA
THAT'S IT. I'M FINISHED. I CAN'T
GO THROUGH THIS ANYMORE. CRAPPY
KIDS PEEING ON ME, SNOTTY, LITTLE
BRATS PUKING ON MY BEARD, SNEEZING
THEIR SNOT IN MY MOUTH. AND NOW
THIS. I WAS SAFER IN FOLSOM.

He gets off his throne and starts to leave. The next child
in line begins howling.

CHILD'S FATHER
HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING? YOU CAN'T
LEAVE. WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR AN
HOUR.

SANTA
Watch me, pal.

Santa rushes away. All the kids in the line start howling.
Several fathers go after him.

FATHER #2
HEY, JERK, GET BACK HERE.

It's a near riot.

84 THE MALL -- ANOTHER LOCATION -- MOMENTS LATER

84

Eddie, sucking a fistful of candy canes, his face and hands
covered with goo, wanders through the mall wonderland. The
singing and bells are louder.

Suddenly, ahead, he sees a choir dressed in Edwardian costumes
standing on risers. The first row is playing hand bells
that are laid out on a table.

(CONTINUED)

A large crowd is gathered. Eddie pushes to the front and stares in wonder. He watches the shiny bells as the choir members lift and ring them.

EDDIE
(whispering)
Mr. Bunley-Mr. Bunley-bells-bells-
bells-bells

Moving very close to the table he bends down so that his nose is inches from the shiny metal. This is a little distracting to the musicians.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Bells. Bong-bong-bong-bong-bong-
bong...

For a moment, he's content to watch. But then, a choir member lays down a huge bell...and the temptation is too great. Eddie picks it up. The music is still going.

HANDBELL PLAYER
Hey, hey, put that down.

But, Eddie doesn't put it down. Instead, he picks up another one.

EDDIE
BELLS. BONG-BONG-BONG-BONG-BONG...

He starts ringing them as hard as he can. Quickly, the choral sound turns to chaos.

HANDBELL PLAYER
Gimme the bells.

The man grabs for them. A tug of war starts across the table.

EDDIE
MY BELLS. MY BELLS. MY BELLS. MR.
BUNLEY-HELP-HELP-HELP-HELP-BONG-BONG-
BONG-BONG-BONG...

Finally, Eddie jerks the bells free, knocking over the whole table in the process. Then, he runs straight up the risers through the choir. The singers go flying.

CHOIR MEMBER
GET HIM.

Several try to grab him, but he gets away. A security guard sees and the chase is on. Ringing the bells with all his might, Eddie races up from the risers into the huge decorations.

(CONTINUED)

As he pushes into them, giant snowflakes crash and monstrous reindeer swing free of their moorings.

Soon, everything is falling. It's Christmas in hell.

Eddie loses his large bell, but manages to hang on to the small one. On and on he runs through the mall decorations, leaving a path of destruction behind him.

Everything turns to chaos as people dodge huge, falling elves and candy canes. In the general insanity, Eddie vanishes in the crowd.

85 EXT. SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

85

Fire trucks, police and ambulances shriek to the mall entrance. From a distance, Eddie watches stoically.

EDDIE

Not the Singing Place. NOT-NOT-NOT-NOT.

Then, ringing his little bell, he walks away.

86 INT. I.N.S. BUILDING - MAIN ROOM - DAY

86

The large room of the I.N.S. building is as busy as ever. All the cubicles are filled with people trying to deal with immigration problems. Suddenly, into the room walks Dr. Finnegan. With him is a very stern man in a three-piece suit, carrying a briefcase.

Finnegan stops at a desk and asks a question. The young woman behind the desk points down the row to Mr. Stoner, who is busily at work on his computer. The two men walk up to him.

DR. FINNEGAN

Mr. Stoner?

STONER

Yes?

DR. FINNEGAN

My name is Dr. William Finnegan.
This is my attorney, Mr. Arnold Brill.
I believe you're handling the case
of a Jorge Mendoza.

STONER

I'm sorry, all of our cases are
confidential.

Finnegan towers over him, smiling in the most pleasant way.

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN

Yes, I understand that.

(beat)

Mr. Stoner, before we begin our conversation, I should make you aware that my brother is Mr. Arthur Finnegan, Assistant Secretary of State for South American Affairs in Washington. A faxed letter of instructions from his office is about to be received by the director of your department. It has to do with Mr. Mendoza, Mrs. Mendoza and their daughter.

(beat)

In preparation for the receipt of that letter, why don't you bring up their file on your screen?

Stoner stares at him, wide-eyed.

EXT. JORGE'S BUILDING - ESTABLISHING - EVENING

87 INT. JORGE'S ROOM - CU STACK OF BOOKS ON THE BED - EVENING 87

Jorge lies on his bed, struggling through a book entitled: "HEALERS: FRAUDS, FAKES AND FOOLS--A REPORT OF THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA. Finally, he throws it down.

JORGE

(in Spanish with subtitles)

Nothing. They don't tell me nothing. And they don't tell me nothing, because they don't know nothing.

He gets up and walks over to the work table. On it is an open Bible. He picks it up.

JORGE (CONT'D)

And this! I read this, but it makes me crazy.

(reading from Spanish Bible)

"He took up our sicknesses and carried our sorrows. By his wounds we are healed." That's about God. I am not God.

(looking at the ceiling)

Please, I'm very glad that Ginny got healed, but I don't want to do this no more. Give it to somebody else.

He buries his face in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE (CONT'D)

The father is right. I am loco.
And why am I loco? I talk to puppets
for so many years. Do grown men
talk to puppets? They do not. Only
me. And the puppets talk back. Ha
ha, very much fun until you go loco.

He slams the book shut. Feeling horrible, he gets up, and
walks into the bathroom.

88 INT. JORGE'S BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

88

After dousing his face with water, Jorge stares in the mirror.
He looks awful and feels worse.

JORGE

I am so tired. I need to sleep.

But suddenly, he begins hearing the whispers.

JORGE (CONT'D)

No. No,no,no,no. Go away, leave me
alone.

The whispers grow louder. Then comes the crackling sound
like fire in dry grass. He looks down at his hand. On it
appears the rippling light and the drop of crimson.

JORGE (CONT'D)

STOP IT. STOP IT.

He drenches his hand in water and scrubs it hard with soap,
but it won't go away. It only gets stronger.

JORGE (CONT'D)

Please God, do not do this to me.

Jorge rushes out of the bathroom...

89 INT. JORGE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

89

The whispers grow louder. With them is a new sound. It's
the flapping of mighty wings as though something huge is
flying toward him. He looks up. Staring down at him from
the ceiling is one of the terrifying angel vultures. Its
long arms with talons reach toward him. With a shriek, Jorge
runs out of his apartment.

90 EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF JORGE'S BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

90

Running to his truck, Jorge jumps in and races off.

91 EXT. CITY STREET - EVENING

91

Eddie Gartman is walking down a dark street, arguing with the ever-unseen, Mr. Bunley.

EDDIE

No-no-no-no-no-no. Going-home-going-home-going-home. Where-where? 1126-1126-shut-up-Mr.Bunley. Shut-up-shut-up-1126-1126-something-something.

(covering his ears;
yelling)

WILL-NOT-LISTEN-WILL-NOT-LISTEN-1126-1126...WHERE?

He turns a corner. Down the street, he sees bright lights and hears music. He stands for a moment, not knowing what to do. Then, he looks down at his book of The Singing Place.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

(tired)

Okay. Okay-okay-okay-okay-okay.

Slowly, he shuffles toward the garish lights and sounds.

92 INT. JORGE'S TRUCK - DRIVING ON CITY STREETS - EVENING

92

Jorge drives through the city, as though all hell were after him. He's sweating and trembling.

CU HIS HAND

On the steering wheel his hand glistens. Trickles of blood run from the hole and vanish into the air. From the mirror dangles the crucifix and the whispers echo around him.

93 POV JORGE

93

He turns a corner and screeches to a stop. A block ahead, fifty feet in the air, hovers the beautiful and mysterious Pillar of Light.

JORGE

Oh, God...

And then begins the unearthly singing.

94 EXT. JORGE'S TRUCK ON STREET -- CONTINUOUS

94

He turns down a side street, trying to get away.

95 EXT. STREET NEAR CARNIVAL -- CONTINUOUS 95

But on this street, he is in a crowd. All around him are people heading toward the entrance to a tacky carnival. A banner over the street reads: CHRISTMAS STARLAND.

96 INT. JORGE'S TRUCK ON STREET NEAR CARNIVAL -- NIGHT 96

At that moment his engine dies. He tries, but it won't even turn over.

JORGE

No. NO.

He pounds the steering wheel in frustration. Finally, there's nothing to do but get out.

97 EXT. STREET NEAR CARNIVAL -- CONTINUOUS 97

Desperate, Jorge stares around.

POV JORGE

The city changes. The buildings grow so dark he can barely see their outlines. The only light is the dazzling neon of the carnival. It shimmers in the blackness with a surreal glow. The people heading toward it are a blurred crowd of ghosts glistening in the night.

There is a crimson flash. Jorge looks up. Directly above him blazes the Pillar of Light. Slowly, it begins to descend. Jorge runs. Craning his neck to see the sky, he rushes toward the carnival entrance.

98 EXT. CARNIVAL MIDWAY - EVENING 98

Like a hunted dog, Jorge pushes and stumbles down down the midway...past the twisting rides and games of chance, the food booths and brassy sideshows. A crowd is entering a tent where a BARKER is calling...

CARNIVAL BARKER

SEE THE MERRY CHRISTMAS FREAKS,
STUPENDOUS, STARTLING, TALK TO THE
TWO-HEADED SANTA, FEED RUDOLPH, THE
REINDEER BOY, LAUGH AT ELLIE THE 700
POUND ELF. COME ONE, COME ALL.

The crowd is like smearing smoke. Jorge runs past. Finally, exhausted, he has to stop.

99 EXT. CHRISTMAS MONSTERWORLD FUN HOUSE - EVENING

99

In front of him is a fun house, called Christmas Monsterworld. Bizarre, synthesized, carols blare over loudspeakers. Over the entrance hovers the Pillar of Light.

JORGE

So, here you are. Wherever I run,
you are there. And I am too tired
to run anymore. You bring me to
Monsterworld? Is that where I belong?

The Light drifts down to the entrance then slowly vanishes inside.

JORGE (CONT'D)

You want me to go in there, but you
don't tell me why. I don't want to
go in there. Does that matter to
you? It does not. I am like a rabbit
and you are like a hound. I think
even if I go to hell you will be
waiting. So I go in.

Shaking his head, Jorge drags himself to the entrance and passes inside.

100 INT. MONSTERWORLD FUN HOUSE - VARIOUS ROOMS -- CONTINUOUS

100

He finds himself in a twisting maze of rooms filled with steam and leering, monster faces all in a Christmas motif. With pounding music and screeching recorded laughter, it's like Christmas in a torture chamber.

JORGE

So here I am, Jorge with the monsters.
What am I supposed to do?

He begins wandering, passing through one door after another. And each room is weirder than the last. Finally, he opens a door...and stops.

101 INT. MONSTER MIRROR ROOM -- NIGHT

101

Eddie Gartman is alone in a room of distortion mirrors. Each one is embedded in the mouth of a monster face surrounded with Christmas lights. Thousands of fake stars hang from the ceiling and thick steam swirls. He's enraptured by the music. He dances in circles around and around.

EDDIE

(singing)
Music-music-la-la-la-la-la music-la-
la-la-la-la-la-la...

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly, he sees himself in a mirror and stops. The view is warped and frightening. He steps back and laughs. Then, he moves to the next mirror. It's even more horrible than the last. He doesn't laugh. From mirror to mirror he goes, seeing one distorted image of himself after another.

Finally, at the end of the room hangs a single, undistorted mirror. Eddie stands in front of it...and touches his reflection. Tears are in his eyes.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

(whisper)

Ugly. Ugly.

At the opposite end of the room stands Jorge Mendoza. He has seen it all. Tears are in his eyes too, but they are tears of rage. Slowly, he walks toward a nightmare that only he can see.

POV JORGE

Hanging above Eddie, with its black wings outstretched, is one of the angel vulture. Both its long arms reaching down and its talons are buried in Eddie's back.

Jorge looks down at his hand. It's covered with rippling light. When he reaches Eddie Gartman, he stops. The black-winged creature turns and stares at him. It looks down into his open hand and into its eyes comes terror.

Jorge reaches out and grabs the creature's arm. There is a hideous scream. Fire spreads out from his hand engulfing the monster. The talons pull out of Eddie's back. In a horrible blaze, it disappears.

Then, Jorge reaches out and touches Eddie Gartman's head. Eddie gasps and turns...and their eyes meet.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Who...Who...Who...Who...?

But Jorge can't speak. Eddie begins yelling.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

WHO-WHO-WHO-WHO-WHO?

Then, he turns and runs from the room.

Jorge stands, staring at nothing. Then awful sounds begin clanging in his ears like hammers crashing on steel. He's surrounded by the distortion mirrors. Above him hang the fake stars.

POV JORGE

(CONTINUED)

Slowly, the clanging fades. But instead of the synthesized music of the fun house, strange melodies begin, pinpoints of sound that rise and swirl around him.

As the eerie music grows, every star refracts into a rainbow. It's as though he's standing in another world, a world as seen through Eddie Gartman's eyes. Suddenly, he hears a sing-song voice.

MR. BUNLEY (o.s.)
Eddie, Eddie, come on and get ready,
it's time to find the fun. Eddie,
Eddie, come on and get ready, it's
time to run and run.

Jorge looks around. In a mirror, appears the vague image of a strange, little, man dressed in bright rags. He's dancing and singing. This is MR. BUNLEY as Eddie has always seen him. He looks exactly like his picture in the book.

MR. BUNLEY
There'll be a smile on every face.
I'll pull a rabbit from a vase,
(he does so)
But we have to find The Singing Place,
The Singing Place, The Singing
Place...

Over and over, the song repeats. Jorge rubs his eyes. He feels his forehead. Moving to the undistorted mirror, he stares at himself.

His face doesn't look quite right. Small changes have begun. He hears laughter. Mr. Bunley is in that mirror too, singing his song. Jorge stares at him, then rushes from the room.

102 EXT. CHRISTMAS MONSTERLAND FUN HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER 102

Jorge bursts out of the fun house and stumbles down the steps. Then he runs down the midway. His run is uneven, one of his legs isn't working quite right, but he barely notices.

103 EXT. CARNIVAL MIDWAY -- POV JORGE -- CONTINUOUS 103

It's as though he's entered another reality. Through Eddie's eyes, the carnival is a swirling blizzard of sights and sounds. Rides flash with streaks of fiery color. The neon is a rainbow blur. Music roars. It's all so gorgeously insane, that Jorge laughs wildly.

JORGE
Look at this. Look at this. Look-
look-look-look.

(CONTINUED)

The people no longer appear as ghosts. They're staring at him. Realizing it, he hurries away. But as Jorge moves deeper and deeper into Eddie's surreal world, new images appear. He passes a carousel.

FLASHING IMAGE

104 POV EDDIE - CAROUSEL IN THE PARK - DISTORTED REALITY - DAY 104

Eddie is riding on the carousel in the park. On the horse next to him is Mr. Bunley, laughing. As he laughs, the carousel swirls faster and faster.

IMAGE ENDS

When it's gone, Jorge is left dizzy.

JORGE

Mr. Bunley...oh, my God...

He continues walking. A few steps farther, he passes several gang members playing a game of chance.

FLASHING IMAGE

105 POV EDDIE - ALLEY - DISTORTED REALITY - NIGHT 105

Eddie Gartman is surrounded by gang members with terrifying faces. He swirls, screaming, at the end of the blanket. Then, they rush him, pick him and throw him into the dumpster. Eddie shrieks as he seems to fall into an abyss.

IMAGE ENDS

JORGE

(yelling)

I am in hell.

He stares at the gang members...then turns and runs.

106 EXT. STREET NEAR CARNIVAL -- MOMENTS LATER 106

Jorge runs out of the carnival and down the street to his truck. He fumbles in his pocket for the keys. For some reason, he can't quite remember which one opens the door. Then, once more, he hears the echoing voice.

MR.BUNLEY (o.s.)

Eddie, Eddie, come on and get ready.
It's time to find the fun. Eddie,
Eddie, come on and get ready we'll
run and run and run.

(CONTINUED)

Jorge turns. In the dark glass of a store window, he sees the reflection of Mr. Bunley. Rushing up to it, he pounds on the leering face.

JORGE
I AM NOT-NOT EDDIE. LEAVE ME ALONE.

The face vanishes. Jorge staggers back to his truck and gets in.

107 INT. JORGE'S TRUCK - NIGHT 107

As he sits behind the wheel, another vivid memory begins.

FLASHING IMAGE:

108 POV EDDIE - HIS LIVING ROOM - DISTORTED REALITY - NIGHT 108

Eddie Gartman sits on a couch in his living room. Beside him is his mother. There is a wonderful glow around her. She is old, but still very beautiful. She's reading the Mr. Bunley book to him.

EDDIE'S MOTHER
Eddie, Eddie, aren't we glad we got ready. We've run and run and run. Eddie, Eddie, aren't we glad we got ready. We've had so very much fun.

She closes the book.

EDDIE (O.S.)
(echoing)
Mommy-Mommy-Mommy-read-it-read-it-read-it again. Please-please-please-please...

But as he speaks, the smiling mother slowly fades away.

IMAGE ENDS.

JORGE
No. Don't-don't. Don't-don't-don't. Come back. COME BACK.

Jorge fights back tears.

JORGE (CONT'D)
Gone. Gone-gone.

Struggling against deep sobs, he starts the truck.

109 EXT. TRUCK ON STREET -- CONTINUOUS 109

Slowly, he pulls out into the traffic and drives away.

110 EXT. ANOTHER CITY STREET - NIGHT 110

An exhausted and terrified Eddie Gartman rushes down a street several blocks from the carnival. Leaning against a building, he holds his head and groans.

EDDIE

Mommy. Mommy-mommy. My head. Hurts-hurts...it hurts.

CU EDDIE'S FACE

Subtle changes have begun. His face isn't quite as misshapen as it was and his body is a little slimmer. But the changes are causing pain. He sees an old phone booth across the street.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Call. Call-call-call mommy.

He runs through the traffic toward it. Cars almost hit him. Horns blare, but he doesn't notice.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Got to, got to.

But when he gets inside there is no phone. In frustration, he pounds on the glass. Finally, he slumps to the floor and sobs.

111 EXT. JORGE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 111

A late model Mercedes pulls up and parks outside Jorge's apartment building. Dr. Finnegan gets out. He looks at a small piece of paper with an address on it, then walks toward the entrance.

112 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 112

Finnegan moves down a hall, checking apartment numbers. Finally, he comes to Jorge's door. He's about to knock, when he hears a voice inside yelling at someone in Spanish.

JORGE (o.s.)

(Spanish with subtitles)

NO. GET-GET AWAY. LEAVE ME ALONE.
YOU'RE NOT...YOU'RE NOT-NOT REAL.
STOP-STOP THAT SINGING.

Deeply concerned, Finnegan knocks.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE (o.s.) (CONT'D)
Who-who's there?

DR. FINNEGAN
Jorge?

JORGE (o.s.)
What?

DR. FINNEGAN
It's Bill Finnegan from the hospital.
I was worried about you this morning.
Thought I'd drop by and see how you
were doing.

JORGE (o.s.)
I'm-I'm fine. Please. Please-please.
Go. Away.

DR. FINNEGAN
Jorge...

JORGE (O.S.)
I SAID-SAID GO...AWAY.

Finnegan stares at the door. Jorge's voice is very strange.
His concern deepens. He turns and walks back down the hall.

113 INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - NIGHT

113

Finnegan hurries up to an apartment door marked "Manager"
and knocks on it. A woman answers.

MANAGER
Yes?

DR. FINNEGAN
(showing identification)
Good evening. I'm Dr. William
Finnegan from Children's Hospital.
A person is ill in 312 and can't
open the door. Will you open it for
me, please?

MANAGER
Sure. Let me get the key.

114 INT. HALL OUTSIDE JORGE'S DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

114

Finnegan and the manager walk up to Jorge's door. She inserts
the key and opens it.

(CONTINUED)

MANAGER

If you need anything else, let me know.

DR. FINNEGAN

Thank you.

115 INT. JORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

115

Jorge is just coming out of the bathroom, when he sees the door open. He rushes to a corner of the room.

JORGE

No. No-no.

He keeps his back turned so his face is not visible. Finnegan enters and shuts the door. Mr. Bunley's song echoes distantly, but only Jorge can hear it. He stands in the corner hugging himself.

DR. FINNEGAN

I'm sorry to go to the manager, Jorge, but something's wrong and I want to help you.

JORGE

Can't...can't...do...nothing.

DR. FINNEGAN

I'm sure I can, if you'll let me. What's going on here? Turn around and let me look at you.

Finnegan walks over and takes hold of Jorge's shoulder. Slowly, Jorge turns toward him.

116 CU JORGE'S FACE

116

The deformities of Down's Syndrome are beginning to distort his face. The transformation is advanced, but still far from complete.

Finnegan stares.

DR. FINNEGAN

My God, what's happened to you?

Suddenly, Mr. Bunley's song grows very loud and insistent in Jorge's ears.

MR. BUNLEY (o.s.)

...I'll put a smile on every face,
but we've GOT TO FIND THE SINGING
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR.BUNLEY (o.s.) (CONT'D)
PLACE, THE SINGING PLACE, THE SINGING
PLACE.

JORGE
SHUT-SHUT UP.

DR. FINNEGAN
What?

With a snarl of rage, Jorge rushes into the bathroom...

117 INT. JORGE'S BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

117

...and up to the mirror. Mr. Bunley's face is in it. Jorge smashes the glass with his fist, but the face remains in the fragments and the echoing song continues.

JORGE
(yelling)
LEAVE-LEAVE ME ALONE. I AM NOT-NOT-
NOT EDDIE.

Dr. Finnegan has entered the bathroom behind him. He's very shaken. He pulls Jorge from the mirror.

DR. FINNEGAN
We've got to get you to a hospital.

Jorge backs away.

JORGE
NO. No-no-no-no-no-no...

Jorge stares straight into his eyes.

JORGE (CONT'D)
Won't-do, won't-do...any...good.

Suddenly, he holds his head in his hands and groans.

FLASHING IMAGE:

118 EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - POV JORGE - DISTORTED REALITY - DAY

118

Crashing sounds. Terrifying, skewed images. For a moment, Jorge sees people moving furniture out of the house as though in a swirling rush.

JORGE
STOP. STOP-STOP-STOP.

FLASHING IMAGES END

119 INT. JORGE'S BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

119

JORGE

Oh, God. Sad-sad. So sad. Scared.

Jorge pushes past Finnegan into the other room.

120 INT. JORGE'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

120

DR. FINNEGAN

I'm calling an ambulance.

The doctor pulls out a cell phone. Jorge grabs him.

JORGE

No. Listen-listen. Please...

(desperately struggling
for words)

Hospital. In-in the hospital...

(beat)

The little girl.

(beat)

Name. Name-name.

(beat)

What...is...it?

(beat)

Ginny. Ginny-Ginny.

(beat)

Remember?

Finnegan stares at him.

DR. FINNEGAN

Ginny Conlon?

JORGE

Blind. Can't-can't see. Yes. Yes.

Her.

(beat)

I touched. Her.

(pointing to his eyes)

I touched-touched. Her.

DR. FINNEGAN

What?

JORGE

(a terrible struggle)

I...TOUCHED HER...HER EYES.

He touches his own eyes.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE (CONT'D)

ME. I DID IT.

(beat)

In. In-in...the room. Her room.
Hers.

(beat)

I...did it.

(beat)

Then, after-after...went blind.
Blind-blind. My...self.

(beat)

Ginny...she sees.

DR. FINNEGAN

What are you saying?

Jorge grabs one of the books on healing and pounds his finger on it over and over.

JORGE

TOUCHED. TOUCHED-TOUCHED-TOUCHED-
TOUCHED...

Finnegan stares at the book, then back at him.

DR. FINNEGAN

You're telling me that you're the
one who healed her?

Jorge nods over and over.

JORGE

Yes. Yes. Yes. Then blind. Me.
Her on my-my eyes. Later. After-
after. See again.

DR. FINNEGAN

I don't understand.

JORGE

Her, her blind. Then, me, me, me.

DR. FINNEGAN

You're saying...that when she was
healed...you became blind?

JORGE

(touching his own
eyes)

Yes-yes-yes-yes. Now again. New
this one. The same.

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN

This is insanity. Jorge, I don't know what's happened to you, but, you're very ill. If you don't come with me right now, I'm calling for help.

JORGE

Oh, God...Jesus-Jesus help me.

Jorge holds his head and sits down in a chair. Another flashing image begins.

FLASHING IMAGE:

121 INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - POV JORGE - DISTORTED REALITY - DAY 121

Eddie is in his empty bedroom...humming four notes over and over. Rocking in the chair.

CU JULIE'S FACE

She bends close. Her voice echoes.

JULIE

Eddie, if you don't come right now, I'm going to get Alex and Steve from next door and they're going to carry you out.

FLASHING IMAGE ENDS.

122 INT. JORGE'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS 122

Julie's face is replaced by that of Dr. Finnegan.

DR. FINNEGAN

Jorge...

Tears are in Jorge's eyes.

JORGE

Okay. Okay-okay-okay-okay...

Jorge looks up at him.

JORGE (CONT'D)

See-things...things...they-see.

DR. FINNEGAN

Come on, let's go.

Dr. Finnegan pulls him to his feet and tries to lead him from the room.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE
 NO. No. No. Help...me. Help
 me...find-find him.

DR. FINNEGAN
 What?

JORGE
 Find. Him. One I-I-I touched.
 (beat)
 Lost. Lost-lost.
 (beat)
 Please.

DR. FINNEGAN
 (incredibly shaken)
 You...touched someone else? That's
 why you think you're like this?

Jorge nods vehemently.

JORGE
 Like Ginny-Ginny. Help
 me...while...I...can still...think.

DR. FINNEGAN
 Who was this person?

Jorge closes his eyes in desperate concentration.

JORGE
 Name. Eddie. Eddie...something-
 something.

DR. FINNEGAN
 You don't know his name?

JORGE
 Eddie... Gart. Man. Gart...man.

DR. FINNEGAN
 Where is he?

JORGE
 Looking-for...Looking-for...the-
 Singing-Place. Can't-find. Looking.
 Looking. Looking. Looking.

DR. FINNEGAN
 Where does this Eddie Gartman live?

FLASHING IMAGE:

123 EXT. FRONT OF EDDIE'S HOUSE - POV JORGE- DAY 123

Suddenly, before his eyes flashes the front of Eddie's house.

FLASHING IMAGE ENDS.

JORGE

Live...lives...

(beat)

1126-1126--someplace-someplace...

Mr. Bunley's song comes again.

MR. BUNLEY (O.S.)

Eddie, Eddie, come on and get ready,
it's time to find the fun. Eddie,
Eddie come on and get ready, we'll
run and run and run...

JORGE

Shut-up-shut-up-Mr. Bunley. 1126-
1126...

(tremendous struggle)

France...France...

(beat)

Franc...iosa.

Jorge's face freezes.

FLASHING IMAGE:

124 EXT. CITY STREET - POV JORGE - EDDIE'S VIEW RUNNING ACROSS THE STREET -- NIGHT 124

Headlights. Blurring arcs of color. Cars almost hit him as he runs.

JORGE (O.S.)

(yelling)

LOOK-OUT-LOOK-OUT-LOOK-OUT-LOOK-
OUT.

FLASHING IMAGE ENDS.

125 INT. JORGE'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS 125

With sweat dripping from his face, Jorge stares at Dr. Finnegan.

JORGE

Almost died. Almost...died.

Please...please-please...find him.

Finnegan stares at his face.

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN
Your face is changing more.

JORGE
No time-time...

DR. FINNEGAN
All right, we'll go look for this
person as long as you agree to go to
the hospital afterward.

Jorge nods.

126 EXT. EDDIE GARTMAN'S STREET - NIGHT 126

Dr. Finnegan's Mercedes moves slowly down Eddie Gartman's street.

127 INT. FINNEGAN'S MERCEDES -- NIGHT 127

Finnegan looks at the house numbers.

DR. FINNEGAN
Okay, that's it over there. 1126
Franciosa.

A light is on in the living room. Jorge stares at the house and smiles. The transformation of his face and body are almost complete.

JORGE
Yes. Yes-yes-yes-yes-yes...

128 EXT. EDDIE GARTMAN'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS 128

The car pulls into the driveway and stops. Jumping out, Jorge runs up to the front door and tries to open it, but it's locked. Finnegan joins him and rings the bell. The porch light comes on and an exhausted Julie Gartman appears.

JULIE
Yes?

JORGE
(overjoyed)
Julie. Julie-Julie-Julie-Julie...

JULIE
Do I know you?

JORGE
Julie-Julie-Julie.

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN

We're sorry to bother you. We're looking for someone named Eddie Gartman.

JULIE

That's my brother. But he's not here. He ran away yesterday and we can't find him.

DR. FINNEGAN

Does your brother have...Down's Syndrome?

JULIE

Yes.

DR. FINNEGAN

And your name is Julie?

JULIE

Julie Gartman.

DR. FINNEGAN

I'm Dr. Finnegan from Children's Hospital. This is Jorge Mendoza. Have you ever seen him before?

JULIE

No, but maybe he knows my brother. Eddie went to a workshop for awhile.

DR. FINNEGAN

Ms. Gartman, do you mind if we come in?

Before she can fully open the door, Jorge pushes past.

129 INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

129

JULIE

I'm sorry I can't ask you to sit down. My mother passed away and I've sold everything.

Jorge stares around.

FLASHING IMAGE:

130 POV JORGE - EDDIE'S REALITY

130

Suddenly, he's seeing the room as Eddie remembers it--filled with warm furniture. Jorge begins walking around, touching things that no one else can see. Tears come to his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE
 (full of emotion)
 Home.
 (beat)
 Home. Home. Home.

In a rocking chair, he sees Eddie's mother. The warm glow is all around her.

JORGE (CONT'D)
 Mommy. Mommy, my turn. My turn.
 Back-and-forth-back-and-forth-back-
 and-forth...

Julie stares at Jorge. It's the eeriest thing she's ever seen.

JULIE
 That's where my mother used to sit.
 That's what my brother used to say
 to her.

Jorge walks into the bedroom.

131 INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

131

As before, the rocking chair is the only piece of furniture left. He sits down in it and begins to rock and hum--the same four notes that Eddie hummed...over and over.

JULIE
 What is going on here?

DR. FINNEGAN
 I'm not sure, Ms. Gartman, but I
 think it's very important for us to
 find your brother as soon as possible.

JULIE
 The police have been searching since
 yesterday. I drove around all last
 night myself. No one can find him.

DR. FINNEGAN
 Was his picture on television?

JULIE
 Yes.

DR. FINNEGAN
 I saw it. Do you mind if we look
 for him together?

(CONTINUED)

JULIE
No, but what good will it do?

DR. FINNEGAN
Jorge may be able to help us.

132 EXT. EDDIE GARTMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

132

Julie, Dr. Finnegan and Jorge leave the house and head toward Dr. Finnegan's car. Suddenly, Jorge stops and stares at Julie's mini-van.

JORGE
(very disturbed)
No. No-no-no-no. Going-going away.

Walking over, he touches the car window.

JORGE (CONT'D)
Inside. Riding-riding-riding. Eddie
scared. Scared-scared.

Dr. Finnegan looks at Julie.

JULIE
I was taking my brother to live in a
group home, when he got out of the
car and ran off. But how does he
know that?

DR. FINNEGAN
Maybe we should retrace the route
you took. Do you mind if we use
your car?

JULIE
I don't understand.

DR. FINNEGAN
I don't either, but I think we have
to try this.

Julie opens the door. Jorge doesn't want to get in.

JORGE
(to Julie)
No. Don't-don't-don't. Scared...
scared.

JULIE
(trembling)
Oh, God...

Finnegan grabs Jorge's shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN

Jorge, listen to me. You are not Eddie. We are looking for Eddie. You've got to help us find him. Do you understand?

Jorge stares at him. Finally, they get him into the car. A very shaken Julie Gartman gets in behind the wheel.

133 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

133

Hugging his book and blanket, Eddie Gartman rushes down a city street. His face is continuing the incredible change. It still bears some of the marks of the past, but they're diminishing.

EDDIE

(calling)

Mr. Bunley. Mr. Bunley, where are you? I hear you, but I can't see you anymore.

Suddenly, he hears music and stops. It's the carillon of a great cathedral.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

(a whisper)

The Singing Place.

(beat;louder)

The Singing Place.

(yelling)

THE SINGING PLACE. WE FOUND IT.

In the distance, he sees a lighted spire...and begins running toward it.

134 INT. JULIE'S CAR ON FREEWAY -- NIGHT

134

Julie, Dr. Finnegan and Jorge are riding on the freeway. Jorge sits huddled against the door, staring out the window.

JULIE

How does he know my brother the way he does? I mean, every word, every look.

DR. FINNEGAN

I can't answer that. All I can tell you is that he may have seen him tonight.

135 POV JORGE

135

He watches the rainbow lights of the traffic and hears the eerie, clanging, music of the city.

JORGE
 Lights. Lights. Colors. Every-
 everywhere. Music.
 (beat)
 So-so-so beautiful...
 (beat)
 No words, no words, no words.
 (beat)
 Scared.

JULIE
 What is he saying?

DR. FINNEGAN
 I think he's saying that your brother
 lives in a world that only he can
 see--filled with light and color,
 but he has no words to tell you about
 it. And he's very frightened and
 lonely.

JULIE
 When I took him out yesterday morning,
 he didn't seem frightened. He just
 seemed stubborn like usual.
 (beat)
 But maybe that's the way I wanted to
 see him. Maybe I've never really
 seen him at all.

Deeply troubled, Julie looks at Jorge. Suddenly, Jorge's attention jerks up to the sunroof, and a huge smile comes to his face.

JORGE
 (jabbing his finger
 upward)
 Hey. Hey-hey-hey-hey. Mr. Bunley.
 Mr. Bunley.

136 POV JORGE

136

The little man is outside on the roof in a halo of light, pounding to get in. Julie shakes her head.

JULIE
 That's exactly what my brother said
 before he ran away.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JULIE (CONT'D)

He has this imaginary friend, Mr. Bunley, from a book he loves.

DR. FINNEGAN

Do what you did then.

JORGE

Up-up-up-up there. Can-I? Can-I?

JULIE

This is so weird.

She opens the window.

137 POV JORGE

137

Instantly, Mr. Bunley slides into the car, but only Jorge can see him. Jorge laughs very loudly.

MR. BUNLEY

(singing; over and over)

Eddie, Eddie, it's time to get ready, we'll find a place to play. Eddie, Eddie, it's time to get ready, we've got to run away.

Mr. Bunley jumps into the back seat, motioning for him to follow.

JORGE

In the back. Can I? Can I?

JULIE

(with tears in her eyes)

It's like he was riding with us yesterday morning.

DR. FINNEGAN

He's seeing things we can't see. Tell him exactly what you told Eddie.

JULIE

Okay...but...don't start crawling around.

Jorge lumbers over the seat. Now everything turns to chaos as Mr. Bunley and Jorge crawl back and forth through the mini-van.

DR. FINNEGAN

Keep talking to him the way you did.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE
Eddie, please. I'm going to have a
wreck. Stop it.

Mr. Bunley is tickling him.

JORGE
Mr. Bunley's tickling. Stop-it-
stop-it-stop-it-stop-it-stop-it.

JULIE
Oh, God...

Jorge screams with laughter, then suddenly, he's quiet. He
crouches on the floor with Mr. Bunley.

MR. BUNLEY
(urgent)
Eddie, Eddie...It's time to get ready.
We've got to run away.

JORGE
I-know-I-know-I-know-I-know-I-know-I-
know-I-know-I-know. Now? Right
now? Right-right-right-now?

Mr. Bunley nods very seriously.

JORGE (CONT'D)
Scared. Scared-scared.

MR. BUNLEY
There'll be a smile on every face.
I'll pull a rabbit from a vase. But
we have to find The Singing Place.
The Singing Place. The Singing Place.

JORGE
(whispering)
Okay-okay-I'll do it. I'll-do-it-
I'll-do-it. Find The Singing-Place.

JULIE
What did he say?

DR. FINNEGAN
Find The Singing Place. Do you know
what that means?

JULIE
It's the name of his favorite book.

Julie stares at Finnegan.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. That's what Eddie called my mother's church. She sang in the choir.

DR. FINNEGAN

When was the last time he was there?

JULIE

A week ago for her funeral.

DR. FINNEGAN

Is it far away?

JULIE

No, it's very close.

She exits the freeway.

138 EXT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

138

Gasping for air, Eddie Gartman runs up the steps of the huge cathedral. Somewhere inside, a choir is singing.

EDDIE

We found it. We found it. Mr. Bunley, where are you?

High above, the carillon begins again. Eddie looks up enraptured.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

It's so beautiful.

Slowly, he enters the church.

139 INT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

139

He stands inside, listening. As he looks toward the front, tears begin running down his cheeks.

EDDIE

(whispering)
Mommy...where are you?

Suddenly, he hears Mr. Bunley's distant, echoing voice.

MR. BUNLEY (O.S.)

We'll put a smile on every face.
But we've got to find the Singing
Place...the Singing Place...the
Singing Place...

Eddie walks over to the stairs leading up the bell tower.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE

Mr. Bunley, are you up there?

He begins to climb the spiral staircase.

140 EXT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 140

Julie's mini-van stops in front of the cathedral. The carillon is still playing.

141 INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT 141

Jorge stares at the church. In his mind he hears even more lovely music, almost as though angels are singing.

JULIE

Why didn't I think of this. Of course, he'd try to come here. He loved the choir and the bells.

142 POV JORGE - EDDIE'S REALITY 142

Wonderful, colored lights are everywhere.

ANGLE ON CATHEDRAL STAIRS

Mr. Bunley is standing on the steps of the church, motioning for Jorge to follow him.

JORGE

(thrilled)

This-this-is-it. Okay-okay-okay-okay. Here-here now.

143 EXT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT 143

Jorge jumps out of the car, runs up the steps and disappears into the building. Dr. Finnegan and Julie get out.

144 INT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT 144

Jorge stands inside the majestic cathedral.

145 POV JORGE - EDDIE'S REALITY 145

Through Eddie's eyes, he sees the room filled with a mist of silvery light and shadow. It's as though the music of Heaven is flowing everywhere.

JORGE

(whispering)

Mommy. Mommy.

(CONTINUED)

For a moment, at the front appears a closed casket surrounded with candles.

JORGE (CONT'D)

Mommy...

Jorge starts to walk toward it, but, suddenly, Mr. Bunley calls to him.

MR. BUNLEY (O.S.)

(over and over)

Eddie, Eddie, come on and get ready, there's nowhere left to stay. Eddie, Eddie, come on and get ready, it's time to fly away.

Jorge turns and looks.

POV JORGE

Mr. Bunley is on the spiral staircase leading up to the bell tower. He begins to climb. Jorge follows.

146 EXT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

146

Outside, Julie Gartman is about to enter through the great doors of the building, when Dr. Finnegan stops her.

DR. FINNEGAN

Ms. Gartman--Julie--wait.

She turns toward him.

DR. FINNEGAN (CONT'D)

Before you go in, there's something you should know.

(beat)

I...don't know what you'll find in there.

JULIE

What do you mean?

DR. FINNEGAN

(struggling desperately for words)

I'm a surgeon. In my practice, I've seen cases that were hopeless, where there was nothing anyone could do. Yet...something happened. I never wanted to call them miracles. I was afraid of the word, but that's what they were.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN (CONT'D)

There were times in the operating room where I could almost feel...someone...present...as though an invisible hand were guiding mine.

JULIE

I don't understand what you're saying?

DR. FINNEGAN

I'm saying...there may be a world outside the one we see...and sometimes it reaches through and touches ours.

(beat)

When you walk into that church--if your brother is there--there's a chance you'll see him as you never have before.

JULIE

What do you mean?

DR. FINNEGAN

Maybe nothing. Maybe we've made a mistake and wasted your time. I don't know.

(beat)

You said your mother came here often. Did she...pray for Eddie?

JULIE

Every day of her life.

DR. FINNEGAN

Then...as you go in...remember those prayers.

With a strange look, Julie enters the church. Dr. Finnegan follows her.

147 INT. TOP OF BELL TOWER - NIGHT

147

The carillon has stopped playing, but the unseen choir still sings. Jorge reaches the top of the spiral staircase and steps into the moonlit tower.

148 POV JORGE

148

Silver mist is everywhere. He stands for a moment, enraptured, listening to the music in his mind and singing with it.

(CONTINUED)

JORGE
 La-la-la-la-la-la. Music-music-music.
 La-la-la la-la.

Then he turns.

Someone is looking at him. Eddie Gartman stands a few feet away. Their eyes meet. The transformation is finished.

EDDIE
 It was you. You were the one...in
 the room with the mirrors.

But there is no recognition in Jorge's eyes. He starts singing once more.

JORGE
 La-la-la-la-la-la-la....

Suddenly, Eddie hears someone calling to him from inside the church below.

JULIE (o.s.)
 Eddie. Eddie. Are you up there?

He looks down and sees Julie.

149 INT. CATHEDRAL - BOTTOM OF TOWER - POV JULIE - NIGHT

149

Julie sees her brother high above, but his face is in the shadows.

EDDIE
 Julie.

JULIE
 Eddie, oh thank God.

She starts to cry.

JULIE (CONT'D)
 I've been looking for you everywhere.
 Please...come down right now.

Slowly, Eddie Gartman begins descending. As he makes his way down the stairs, his face remains hidden. But the closer he gets, the more Julie can see that he has changed. His body is no longer deformed and there is no limp.

JULIE (CONT'D)
 Eddie, is that you? What's happened?

Then a few steps from the bottom, his face enters the light.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE
 (whispering)
 Julie...

She sees. But she can't believe what she sees.

JULIE
 (hardly able to breathe)
 My God, my God, my God...

EDDIE
 I...was in a room of mirrors and
 stars. A man came in. Something
 happened. He touched my head and I
 started to wake up.

He stares around.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 The lights and music. Nothing
 is...soft anymore.

Julie is frozen, staring at him. Slowly, Eddie leaves the
 stairs and looks toward the front of the church.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 Mommy...was in this place... down at
 the front...with candles all around.
 But she's gone now, isn't she?

Julie is crying silently.

JULIE
 Yes.

EDDIE
 I remember...but it's like a dream.
 (beat)
 Will she ever come back?

Julie shakes her head. As Eddie looks toward the front,
 slowly, the tears begin to fall. The lost tears. The tears
 that could never come.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 Before she left...did she know...that
 I loved her?

JULIE
 (whispering)
 Yes. Oh, yes, she knew.

She walks over and takes him in her arms. They cry together.

150 INT. TOP OF BELL TOWER - NIGHT

150

Jorge stands in the bell tower singing softly. He looks down. On the floor at his feet are Eddie's book and blanket. He picks them up. Then, he hears Mr. Bunley's echoing song.

MR. BUNLEY (o.s.)
Eddie, Eddie, come on and get ready.
It's time to have some fun. Eddie,
Eddie, come on and get ready, we'll
run and run and run.

Jorge looks out. Mr. Bunley is on the roof, motioning for him to follow.

MR. BUNLEY (CONT'D)
There'll be a smile on every face.
I'll pull a rabbit from a vase. But
we have to fly to The Singing Place,
The Singing Place, The Singing Place.

Jorge starts to climb out onto the roof. Down below, Dr. Finnegan sees and yells.

DR. FINNEGAN
JORGE, NO. DON'T GO OUT THERE.

But Jorge doesn't hear. All he hears is the music in his mind. Dr. Finnegan rushes up the stairs.

151 EXT. ROOF OF CATHEDRAL - POV JORGE - NIGHT

151

As though in a dream, Jorge follows Mr. Bunley across the roof of the Cathedral. The stars over the city seem to swirl, as though the depths of the universe are sweeping down to earth.

Dr. Finnegan reaches the top of the bell tower and climbs out after him.

DR. FINNEGAN
JORGE, COME BACK.

Jorge stands at the edge of the roof, staring out at the sky. Another step and he will fall to his death.

152 POV JORGE

152

Mr. Bunley's face hovers beyond in the darkness.

MR. BUNLEY
(over and over)
Eddie, Eddie, come on and get ready,
it's time...to jump...and fly.

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN

JORGE...

Jorge smiles. As he struggles across the roof, Finnegan yells...

DR. FINNEGAN (CONT'D)

JORGE, TURN AROUND AND LOOK AT ME.

But he doesn't. He's about to step into the air. Suddenly, there's a whisper of thunder and a distant flash of lightning.

His eyes grow wide.

POV JORGE

Mr. Bunley disappears. Out of the universe fall shafts of brilliance that move toward him. In them is a great Pillar of Golden Light.

Closer and closer it comes, until it's directly above.

Slowly, it descends. In it is One whose Body seems made of Light. From Him streams overwhelming glory. Drawing close...He reaches out his hand.

In his palm there is a hole that flows with blood. He lifts it. Gently, onto Jorge's face fall drops of Crimson drenched with the Love of God.

Tears come into Jorge's eyes. Whispering music is all around him. A transformation begins. One by one, the misshapen features vanish away.

Across the roof, Dr. Finnegan is walking very carefully toward him.

POV FINNEGAN

All he sees is Jorge reaching up with both his hands into the darkness.

DR. FINNEGAN (CONT'D)

Jorge...

Slowly, Jorge turns...and their eyes meet. All the marks of what had happened are gone. His face is what it was. Jorge looks down toward the ground. On the steps of the church, looking up at him are Eddie and Julie Gartman.

DISSOLVE
TO:

153 EXT. PIER ON OCEAN BAY - LATE AFTERNOON

153

The sun is setting. Jorge Mendoza is standing alone on the broken pier. As he listens to the roar of the surf, he is in deep thought.

Behind him a distance away, Dr. Finnegan's Mercedes pulls into the parking lot. Finnegan gets out with a package. He joins Jorge on the pier. For a moment, both men remain silent. Then...

DR. FINNEGAN

You wrecked a good pier.

JORGE

Yes, and I'm glad the city doesn't know who did it.

DR. FINNEGAN

How are you feeling?

JORGE

I'm fine.

But there is sadness in his eyes.

JORGE (CONT'D)

I just want to remember this place when I'm gone.

DR. FINNEGAN

This came to the hospital for you.

Jorge takes the package and opens it. Inside is the 'Mr. Bunley' book.

JORGE

He was an ugly little man. I think it's time for Mr. Bunley to go for a swim with my puppets.

He sails the book out into the ocean.

JORGE (CONT'D)

Did you talk to them?

DR. FINNEGAN

They're leaving for Chicago the day after Christmas.

JORGE

And what are they telling people?

(CONTINUED)

DR. FINNEGAN

The police were told that Eddie was found by his sister. The neighbors believe he's going to a residential home out of state. No one who knew him before will see him. He'll have a new life.

Jorge looks out at the horizon.

JORGE

I hope he'll be happy. The world he lost was beautiful, but so lonely. And this one is so hard.

DR. FINNEGAN

He isn't lonely anymore.

(beat)

Will it ever come back to you, Jorge?

Jorge shakes his head, sadly.

JORGE

I don't think so.

DR. FINNEGAN

How do you know?

JORGE

I could feel it when it left. I don't think it's ever in one person for very long. It's too much for anyone except Jesus.

DR. FINNEGAN

Those flying things you saw. I haven't been able to sleep very well since you told me about them.

JORGE

They're real, Dr. Finnegan. When we are in pain it gives them pleasure. But Jesus is stronger than they are. I wish you believed in him, Doctor.

DR. FINNEGAN

Well, someday maybe I will. But speaking of that, Christmas is the day after tomorrow. I wonder if you'd reconsider doing that puppet show?

(CONTINUED)

JORGE

My plane leaves tomorrow night.
Even if I was here I couldn't do it
alone.

DR. FINNEGAN

I thought you'd say that, so I brought
you some help.

Finnegan points toward the parking lot. Jorge turns and
looks.

Standing beside the car, is a dark, attractive woman holding
a little girl. The little girl refuses to be held any longer.
She runs toward her father.

For a moment, Jorge stares as though in a dream...then the
tears come.

JORGE

(whispering)

Oh, God...thank you.

He sweeps his daughter into his arms and then runs to his
wife. Dr. Finnegan turns back toward the ocean and smiles.

DISSOLVE
TO:

MONTAGE BEGINS:

Christmas day. An unseen choir is singing.

154 INT. HOSPITAL WARD -- DAY

154

A hospital ward filled with children is decorated for
Christmas with snowflakes, teddy bears and stockings. In
the corner is a large tree. Under it are many presents.
The children, doctors and nurses (including Dr. Finnegan)
are all watching a wonderful puppet show.

A little girl named Maria sits with a little girl named Ginny
and her parents, while the puppets tell the story of the
greatest miracle, the first Christmas long ago.

155 INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

155

The cathedral is decorated for Christmas. A crowd is
gathered. They're listening to the choir sing.

In a pew toward the front sit Julie and Eddie Gartman. Eddie
is enraptured by the music. He is looking up at the great
crucifix that hangs over the altar.

(CONTINUED)

Julie watches him, then looks where he is looking...at the face of Jesus. Her eyes fill with tears.

CU EDDIE'S FACE

As Eddie listens, suddenly, the singing seems to deepen. It's almost as though he is hearing a choir of angels. A strange look comes into his eyes.

He stares down at his hand.

CU EDDIE'S HAND

Across it ripples a faint glow. He turns it over. In his palm appears the image of a hole pierced with liquid light. Slowly, the color deepens into crimson and the light becomes a drop of blood.

FADE OUT.

Dedicated to the memory of Virginia
May Luck, whose life was so limited
but who touched so many with her
love.