

The Door
Screenplay by
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FADE IN:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

A mid sized car drives down the highway in the midst of traffic.

INT. CAR - DAY

SARAH GREEN (mid 30's) drives, and CARL GREEN(11) sits in the passenger seat, sleeping. He wears a knit cap over his bald head, a result of chemotherapy for brain cancer.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The car turns off the freeway and onto a surface street.

EXT. CARL'S HOUSE - DAY

A neat, well kept older home with mature landscaping.

Sarah's car pulls up to the front of the house and stops.

INT. CAR

Sarah turns off the engine, and reaches over to gently shake Carl.

SARAH
Carl honey, wake up.

Carl opens his eyes, sits up and stretches. Looks around.

CARL
Are we here?

SARAH
Yes we are. Let's see if Opa's home.

EXT. CARL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The two of them get out of the car and walk toward the front door.

The front door opens and JOHN MUNDORFF (60), Carl's Grandfather and Sarah's father, comes out. He is affectionately known to Carl as OPA.

Carl sees him, breaks into a wide grin.

CARL
Opa!!

Carl runs towards him as Opa comes down the steps. Opa bends down and Carl rushes into his arms.

Opa lifts him into the air, laughing. Sarah, smiling, comes over to Opa as well.

OPA
Well, 'bout time you two got here.
And how is my favorite grandson?

CARL
I'm your only grandson.

OPA
That's why you're my favorite.
(to Sarah)
How was the trip?

Sarah kisses him on the cheek.

SARAH
Uneventful. Our stuff get here?

OPA
Yesterday morning, right on schedule.
Everything's all set up.

SARAH
Dad, I told you to wait 'til we got here.

OPA
Wasn't a problem.

SARAH
You are so stubborn.

OPA
At least you know you didn't inherit that from your mother.

Sarah smiles.

CARL
(excited)
Which one is my room?

OPA
You, you little monkey, have Oma's old sewing room.

CARL
Can I go see it?

OPA
Sure you can.

Opa sets him down, and Carl goes running into the house.
Opa watches him go in and then turns to Sarah.

OPA (CONT'D)

How is he?

SARAH

Health-wise, he's stable. We'll
know more after he's seen the doctor.

OPA

And Phillip?

SARAH

Carl hasn't said much about his father
leaving. I know it bothers him, but
I really haven't pressed the subject.

OPA

How 'bout you?

SARAH

(bitter)

Honestly Dad, I don't know. How are
you supposed to feel when your husband
of fifteen years walks out on you,
you have to move out of your home
and your only child is going through
Chemotherapy for brain cancer?

OPA

Sarah.

SARAH

Sorry, just venting.

OPA

Reasonable, under the circumstances...
How 'bout we go inside.

The two of them start walking towards the house.

SARAH

Thanks for letting us stay here.

OPA

I'm glad for the company. Since
your mom died, it's been far too
quiet around here. Now the first
thing we need to do is to get you
and Carl settled in.

SARAH

We'll need to contact the school and
the doctors.

OPA

I've already made appointments with the hospital and Carl's new school. I picked up the forms this morning.

SARAH

You've been busy.

OPA

Anything for my favorite child.

SARAH

I'm your only child.

OPA

That's why you're my favorite.

By this time, the two of them have gotten to the front door. Opa opens it and the two of them go in.

Out on the street a white sedan drives by.

EXT. EVAN'S HOUSE - DAY

The sedan pulls up in front of another older house, painted blue with white trim, with a well manicured lawn and plantings.

The driver gets out of the car. He is MICHAEL STANTON (30's).

From the passenger side, EVAN STANTON (11), gets out. He wears a baseball cap that covers his bald head, a side effect from his Chemotherapy.

Evan shuts the door and waits as his father comes around to him. Evan looks up at the house.

MICHAEL

(excited)

Well Evan, what do you think?

EVAN

We're going to live here?

MICHAEL

That's right.

EVAN

But we have the condo.

MICHAEL

I know, but if we live here, the hospital's a lot closer. We won't have to drive so far for you to see your doctor.

EVAN

Cool.

MICHAEL

You really like it?

CARL

Uh huh. When do we move in?

MICHAEL

Next week. The cable company's coming out tomorrow to put in the wiring for the computers.

(teasing)

We wouldn't want you to be without the Internet, now would we?

EVAN

(teasing)

That'd be awful. Can we go inside?

MICHAEL

Sure can. C'mon.

They start walking to the front door.

EVAN

Do I get to choose my room?

MICHAEL

We'll see.

Evan takes Michael's hand as they go up the walk.

EXT. MEDICAL OFFICES - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

A multi-storied, clean and modern office building. The sign over the front door says "Medical Offices"

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM

A small room with an examination table and all sorts of different equipment around the walls. There is a chair to one side of the examination table, occupied by Sarah. Carl sits on the examination table.

The door to the examination room opens up and DR. PARKER (late 30's) comes in, carrying a medical file in his hand. He looks over at Carl and smiles. Sarah stands up.

DR. PARKER

Sorry to keep the two of you waiting so long, but I wanted to get the test results.

Looks over the file for a moment.

DR. PARKER (CONT'D)

I've looked over your file and I believe that the current course of treatment is the best.

(to Sarah)

I see that it's been about three months since his last MRI. I'd like to schedule one fairly soon.

SARAH

Of course. Doctor Parker, do you think that Carl's well enough to go to school? We can't enroll him without his doctor's permission.

Dr. Parker looks at the file for a moment.

DR. PARKER

Well, his immune system seems to be in good shape, and I'd like to see him have as normal a life as possible. I don't see why not, but we'll keep it monitored. If his immune system drops too low, you'll need to make other arrangements.

SARAH

Of course.

Dr. Parker bends down, eye to eye with Carl.

DR. PARKER

Carl, if I give you permission to go to school, I want you to promise to take it easy and not tire yourself out too much. Will you do that for me?

CARL

Okay.

SARAH

What about his chemo?

Dr. Parker stands back up.

DR. PARKER

He can start his next round of treatments in two weeks, but I want to do the MRI first. I'll have the nurse set up an appointment.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

A neighborhood Elementary school.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

An office divided up into several areas. A waiting area is towards the front with a few chairs. It is divided by a counter from the office areas, with desks and file cabinets, and various SECRETARIES and CLERKS sitting behind them.

Seated in the waiting area are Opa and Carl. A pleasant faced CLERK comes up to the counter, carrying some papers that she sets on the counter. The clerk looks over at Opa and Carl.

CLERK

Mr. Mundorff?

Opa stands and goes over to the counter, Carl following close behind him. The clerk smiles.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Everything's all set. Your grandson will be in Mr. Hunt's fifth grade class. His last school just faxed us the last of his records.

OPA

And the bus?

CLERK

Bus eight will pick him up in front of your house at seven fifteen and will drop him off about three twenty, starting tomorrow morning.

OPA

Thank you.

CLERK

You're welcome.

(to Carl)

Why don't I take you to your class now Carl.

CARL

(a little nervous)

Okay.

CLERK

Say good-bye to your grandfather.

Opa bends down and Carl gives him a hug. The clerk comes from behind the counter.

CARL

Bye Opa.

OPA

I'll pick you up out front after school.

CARL

Okay.

CLERK

We'll take good care of him. Come along Carl.

Leading the way, the clerk goes out a side door with Carl beside her. Carl takes a glance back at Opa and Opa waves and smiles.

INT. CLASSROOM

Fifth grade classroom, typical set up. Lots of books in bookcases against the wall. The desks are set up in groups of six, except for one desk that is set by itself, with several books on it.

In front of the room is the teacher's desk and a pair of tables containing the class computers.

About two dozen STUDENTS sit at their desks. All the desks are taken except for the single desk. The teacher sits at his desk.

The teacher is MR. HUNT (late 20's), watching over the kids while they quietly read.

The door opens and the Clerk comes in with Carl, which of course catches the class' attention. Carl looks rather nervous. Mr. Hunt stands and looks Carl over for a moment.

CLERK

Mr. Hunt, this is Carl Green. He's going to be joining your class. He's just moved here from San Francisco.

MR. HUNT

(hesitant)

Oh... Uh, welcome... Carl. Well, let's find you a place to sit.

He comes over to the clerk and Carl while he's talking. He looks over at the classroom for a moment. There is WHISPERING among the students. Mr. Hunt points to the single desk.

MR. HUNT (CONT'D)

Looks like we only have the one empty desk, so I'll have you sit there. Why don't you go over and grab a book. The rest of the class is doing silent reading.

He emphasizes the word 'silent' and the noise level from the students drop off.

CARL

Thank you.

Carl manages a weak smile and walks over to the desk. The students stare at him as he goes by. He gets to the desk, sits in it, picks up a book on the desk and begins to read.

MR. HUNT

(to Clerk)

Can I speak to you outside?

CLERK

(nods)

All right.

MR. HUNT

(to students)

Keep reading quietly class. I'll be right back.

Mr. Hunt and the clerk step out into the

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Mr. Hunt and the clerk close the door behind them. The two of them whisper loudly to one another.

MR. HUNT

What's wrong with him?

CLERK

Brain tumor.

MR. HUNT

And you put him in my class? Why didn't you put him one of the special day classes?

INT. CLASSROOM

The class is reading, staying somewhat quiet. Some of the students give glances over at Carl, who tries to look as unobtrusive as possible.

Through the walls, the conversation between the clerk and Mr. Hunt can be heard.

CLERK (O.S.)

He has cancer Mr. Hunt, he's not emotionally disturbed. And before you ask, his doctors have already given their permission for him to attend school. I'm sorry you don't like the arrangement...

The kids begin to SNICKER during the conversation and Carl buries his head farther in his book, totally embarrassed.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

As before.

CLERK

...but you were the next one on the rotation. You know how this works.

MR. HUNT

I've got twenty four kids in this classroom, I don't have the time or training to take care of a sick kid on top of that. What if--?

CLERK

If you have a problem, Mr. Hunt, I suggest you take it up with Principal Samuelson... I need to get back to my office and you should get back to your class.

The Clerk moves away from Mr. Hunt, and walks down the hallway. Mr. Hunt goes to the door and opens it, and walks into the

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

The SNICKERING stops. Mr. Hunt does not look happy.

MR. HUNT

There are still fifteen minutes of silent reading left, so I don't want any talking.

Mr. Hunt walks back to his desk, sits down and starts going through papers.

Carl keeps his head buried in the book.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

There are a number of STUDENTS of all grades seated down at the tables, eating their lunches. Mr. Hunt is watching the students as they eat. Carl, carrying a tray walks toward an empty spot at a table.

TOMMY (11), one of Carl's classmates, watches as Carl comes towards him. Tommy sticks his foot out and trips Carl, causing him to fall and drop his tray. This triggers LAUGHTER from the other students, and catches Mr. Hunt's attention.

Mr. Hunt comes to Carl and helps him up.

MR. HUNT

What happened?

Carl looks over at Tommy, who is snickering and then back at Mr. Hunt.

CARL

I guess I tripped.

MR. HUNT

Well, get a broom and clean up the mess and then go get yourself another tray and try to be more careful.

CARL

Yes, Mr. Hunt.

Carl bends down and picks up the tray and begins to place those pieces of food he can on it. Mr. Hunt moves away to his former vantage point, and Tommy has a self-satisfied smile on his face.

EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

School is getting out. Kids are meeting up with their parents, getting on busses. It's organized mayhem.

Waiting for Carl is Opa standing out in front of the school, looking around for Carl.

Carl comes out from the gate, looking around for Opa. Spotting him, Carl runs over to him.

CARL

Opa!

Opa gives him a hug.

OPA

How was school?

CARL
Fine...

OPA
Fine? That's it?

CARL
It's only my first day Opa. I don't really know anybody yet.

OPA
Good point. You like your teacher?

CARL
He's okay.

OPA
Okay...? Well, that's a start.
Ready to go home?

Carl nods.

OPA (CONT'D)
Maybe on the way, we can stop for an ice cream.

CARL
(smiles)
Yeah.

Taking Carl's hand, Opa leads Carl down the sidewalk.

EXT. EVAN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A pleasant day.

INT. EVAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A single bed up against the wall, with a nightstand and lamp to one side. A dresser stands down at the end of the bed. A flatscreen T.V. hangs on the wall, facing the head of the bed.

On the desk, across from the bed, is a desktop computer on it, with all the bells and whistles: printer, camera, scanner, the whole set-up.

Next to the desk is a bare expanse of wall. There are several bookcases against one wall, with a number of boxes stacked next to them.

Michael is under the desk, setting up the computer, while Evan takes books out of the boxes, placing them on the shelves of the bookcases.

Michael crawls out from under the desk, a satisfied smile on his face. He stands and presses the start button on the computer and it BEEPS on.

MICHAEL

(to Evan)

There you go. All set up.

EVAN

Cool.

MICHAEL

You find your schoolbooks yet?

Evan points to several books already on the shelf.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Great, we can start back on your lessons tomorrow.

EVAN

Dad?

MICHAEL

What Evan?

EVAN

Why can't I go to school?

MICHAEL

You know the doctor told us it's not a good idea. Don't you like me being your teacher?

EVAN

It's fine but...

MICHAEL

Come on, out with it.

EVAN

It gets lonely sometimes. I've never played with kids my own age. It's boring playing video games by myself all the time.

MICHAEL

What do you mean 'all the time'?

EVAN

You're a grown-up. That's different.

MICHAEL

Oh, I see. Look, I know it's tough.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Tell you what, I'll talk to the doctor when we see him next week. I can't promise that he'll say it's okay for you to go to school, but maybe he'll say it's okay to have a friend or two over.

EVAN

But I don't know any kids down here.

MICHAEL

Then we'll just have to work on that, won't we?

Evan smiles and nods.

EXT. MEDICAL OFFICES - AFTERNOON

INT. MRI ROOM - AFTERNOON

The large MRI machine dominates the room. There are cabinets and chairs in the room, but not much else.

A MEDICAL TECHNICIAN is working on the controls of the machine. Dr. Parker is watching the images on the computer screen as they occur.

In the machine is Carl dressed in a hospital gown, eyes closed and laying perfectly still. The machine slowly moves for a few moments and then stops. The technician flips a switch and the machine turns off.

Dr. Parker walks over to Carl.

DR. PARKER

Okay Carl, all done.

Carl opens his eyes and sits up.

DR. PARKER (CONT'D)

You did great. How do you feel?

CARL

Okay.

DR. PARKER

Good. You can get dressed and go out into the waiting room. I'll be out there in a minute to talk to your mother.

Carl gets off the MRI table. There is a large bruise on his calf, something that the doctor notices.

DR. PARKER (CONT'D)
Carl, where did you get that bruise?

CARL
(evasive)
Bruise? Oh... I fell down on the
playground.

DR. PARKER
Let me take a closer look at that.

Dr. Parker lifts up Carl and places him back on the table.
He bends down and examines the bruise for a moment. Frowning,
he stands up.

DR. PARKER (CONT'D)
Who kicked you Carl?

CARL
Doctor Parker, please don't tell my
mom!

DR. PARKER
Who did this?

CARL
One of the kids at school.

DR. PARKER
Why?

CARL
They don't like me, because I look
funny and they're scared of me.
They think I'll make them sick if
they get too close.

DR. PARKER
Have you told your teacher?

Carl shakes his head.

DR. PARKER (CONT'D)
Why not?

CARL
He doesn't want me in his class
either. I heard him talking and he
said he didn't want to take care of
a sick kid. Doctor Parker, promise
me you won't say anything, please.

DR. PARKER

All right, but I you have to promise me that if the other kids try and hurt you again, that you go tell an adult. You can't let them bully you like that.

CARL

Okay, I promise.

DR. PARKER

Good. Now, why don't you get dressed and we'll go talk to your mother.

Carl nods, and gets down from the table and crosses over to the door and out, both Dr. Parker and the Medical Technician watch him go.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

Kids can be pretty cruel, can't they?

DR. PARKER

(irked)

So can adults.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A single bed up against the wall, with a nightstand and lamp to one side. A dresser stands down at the end of the bed. A small T.V. is on top of the dresser, facing the head of the bed.

Against the wall, there is a bookcase filled with books on the wall opposite the bed, with a pile of pillows next to it and a bare expanse of wall behind the pillows.

Carl, covers pulled up so that the only thing showing is his knit cap is in bed sleeping.

There is the SOUND of a GENTLE KNOCK on the the closed door of Carl's room and in the next moment, the door opens.

Opa enters the room quietly. He looks over at Carl in the bed, goes over to him, reaches down and shakes him gently.

OPA

(gently)

Hey sleepy head, time to get up.

Carl stirs and groans in protest of being woken up. He turns to face OPA, rubbing his eyes.

CARL

(Sleepily)

What time is it?

OPA
(smiles)
It's time for school.

With a sigh, Carl turns, facing the wall. Opa is a little surprised.

OPA (CONT'D)
C'mon Carl. Breakfast's almost ready.
You need to get up.

Carl sits up, not looking too pleased.

CARL
Do I have to?

OPA
(teasing)
Eat breakfast?

CARL
Go to school.

Opa sits down on the bed, looking a bit concerned.

OPA
Why? You not feeling well?

Opa places his hand on Carl's forehead, checking.

OPA (CONT'D)
You don't have a fever. Why don't
you want to go to school?

Carl looks up at him, but doesn't say anything.

OPA (CONT'D)
Okay young man, out with it. What's
going on?

CARL
The kids at school don't like me.

OPA
That's ridiculous. Of course they
do.

CARL
No, they don't. They call me names.
No one will sit next to me, or play
with me. They tease me because I
don't have any hair and I'm sick.

OPA
Oh, I see.

Opa holds out his arms.

OPA (CONT'D)

Come here.

Carl comes and puts his arms around Opa. Opa comforts him for a moment.

CARL

Can't I stay home with you?

OPA

You know you can't. Now, listen to me.

Carl pulls back so the two of them are looking eye to eye.

OPA (CONT'D)

It's only the second week of school. The other kids are still a little nervous around you. They'll come around. You need to give them a little time.

CARL

When Opa?

OPA

Soon. Besides, you can't solve your problems by running away from them.

CARL

(quietly)

Like my dad did?

This stops Opa cold. He doesn't know what to say to him. Opa gives him another hug.

OPA

You better get ready for school.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

A nice, eat-in style kitchen. The sink, stove and refrigerator and cabinets are along one wall, with counter space connecting them.

A small rectangular table is against the other wall, set with three chairs. Place mats, silverware, plates, and napkins set for three are on the table. There is a plate with toast and a glass of orange juice at each place.

Sarah stands at the stove, cooking breakfast, dressed in long pants with a smock over it.

Opa comes into the kitchen from the dining room. She turns when he comes in.

OPA (CONT'D)

Carl'll be here in a minute.

SARAH

Well he better get a move on. I've got to leave in fifteen minutes.

Opa sits down in his place at the table.

OPA

Why so early?

SARAH

Inventory at the store this morning. Dad, could you take Carl to Chemo this afternoon?

OPA

Sure. What time?

SARAH

Two. You'll have to take him out of school.

OPA

No problem. I'll let the driver know Carl won't be taking the bus home... Carl said that the kids at school are teasing him.

SARAH

I know. He told me the same thing.

Opa takes a sip from his orange juice.

OPA

He also mentioned his dad.

With that, Sarah stops what she's doing.

SARAH

What did he say?

OPA

I told him that "you can't solve your problems by running away" and he said...'like my dad did'. Have you heard from Phillip?

SARAH

No. He's stopped calling. We just seem to argue when he does. I...

Carl comes into the kitchen, carrying a backpack, dressed in a striped shirt, a pair of jeans and sneakers, with the knit cap on his head. Opa gets up from the table and Carl runs into his arms and Opa lifts him up with a laugh.

OPA

There's my big boy.

Sarah turns from the stove with the pan full of eggs and, coming over to the table, begins spooning them out onto one of the plates.

SARAH

Dad, be careful. Remember what your doctor said.

OPA

Oh, he's an old woman.

(to Carl)

I'm picking you up from school today.

CARL

What for?

(realizes)

Oh, Chemo. Yuck.

Sarah moves to another plate, starts putting eggs on it.

SARAH

Dad, put him down, his breakfast is getting cold.

Opa puts him down and Carl goes to over to his place and sits down. Opa sits down as well and Sarah places eggs on the plate in front of him. Sarah moves over to the sink and puts the pan in it and then comes back and sits down.

Carl and Opa start eating. Carl grabs a piece of toast.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'm working late tonight, so you two are on your own for dinner.

CARL

(to Opa, hopeful)

Pizza?!!

OPA

Let's see how you feel after your chemo.

CARL

Okay.

SARAH

You two can figure out what your going to have for dinner later.

(to Carl)

Right now young man, you better eat your breakfast or you're going to miss the bus.

The three of them continue eating.

EXT. CARL'S HOUSE - DAY

Carl and Opa come out the front door. The yellow bus waits at the curb. The SOUND of CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER is heard coming from the bus. The door to the bus is open.

Carl and Opa come down to the bus and Carl goes in. Opa goes up into the bus after him.

INT. BUS - DAY

Carl and Opa stop by the BUS DRIVER.

OPA

(to Bus Driver)

I'm picking Carl up from school, so he won't be riding home today.

BUS DRIVER

Thanks for letting me know Mr. Mundorff.

OPA

(to Carl)

I'll see you this afternoon.

Carl nods, and with backpack in hand heads for an empty seat. Opa goes out the door and the door closes.

Carl gets to a seat occupied by a GIRL about his own age. Carl sits down on the seat, smiles at her.

Frowning, the Girl gathers up her books and leaves her seat, going back further on the bus. Carl watches her go and turns back to looking forward. Sadly, he sighs.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

There is the SOUND of CHILDREN PLAYING.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

The kids from Carl's class are playing on the playground and dirt field. A number of the children are playing games with various balls and jump ropes.

Carl, on the outskirts of the group, is playing with a ball by himself.

Watching everything that is going on is Mr. Hunt.

Tommy runs on the field with the other boys, close to where Carl is playing. He darts away from the group of boys and heads over towards Carl.

Tommy grabs the ball from Carl as he runs past and begins dribbling it all around Carl and keeping it from him, laughing. Carl is getting mad and frustrated.

CARL
(exasperated)
Give me my ball Tommy!!

Tommy laughs and dribbles the ball for a moment more and then stops, holding onto the ball.

TOMMY
You want it - here!

With that, Tommy launches the ball at Carl. It hits him squarely in the chest and knocks him down onto the blacktop. Laughing, Tommy runs past Carl and pulls the cap off of Carl's head and throws it onto the field.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Go get it baldy!!!

Mr. Hunt turns in time just to see Tommy pull Carl's cap off and throw it.

MR. HUNT
(shouting)
Tommy!!

Tommy stops running and turns towards Mr. Hunt.

MR. HUNT (CONT'D)
You. Principal's office - now!

With a scowl, Tommy starts walking towards the office. Mr. Hunt turns to one of the girls nearby, DIANE.

MR. HUNT (CONT'D)
Diane, would you get Carl's cap?

Mr. Hunt moves towards Carl and doesn't notice the look of distaste on Diane's face at being asked to pick up the cap, but she moves to get it.

Mr. Hunt gets to Carl, who has gotten to his feet and is wiping the dust from his pants.

Diane has gotten the cap and is on her way over holding it in front of her like it was diseased.

MR. HUNT (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

CARL
I'm okay.

He puts his hand to his head.

CARL (CONT'D)
Where's my cap?

Diane comes over with the cap. Carl takes it from her.

CARL (CONT'D)
(to Diane)
Thank you.

Carl dusts the cap against his leg before putting it back on. Diane moves away without a word.

MR. HUNT
Maybe it would be a good idea for you to sit out for awhile.

CARL
But I... Yes, Mr. Hunt.

Leaving the ball, Carl walks slowly off the playground. Mr. Hunt goes back to watching the other children.

EXT. HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

A sign next to the entrance says "Children's Hospital"

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

A pretty typical waiting room in a hospital. Behind a counter are several NURSES and INTERNS, checking charts.

The waiting area consists of several rows of waiting room chairs. There are several CHILDREN seated there, mostly paired up with one or more PARENTS. Some of the children are ill like Carl and some of them are also bald.

Carl and Opa are seated, waiting their turn. Carl looks extremely bored by the whole thing, while Opa reads a magazine. There are two empty seats next to Carl.

Evan and Michael Stanton come over to where Carl sits. Evan is totally engrossed in a hand held video game that he plays. Not taking his eyes off the game, he sits down next to Carl.

Carl looks over at the game Evan's playing, trying not to be obvious about it.

Michael kneels down next to Evan until they are about eye to eye if Evan was looking at him.

MICHAEL

(to Evan)

I'll check us in. Will you be okay?

EVAN

(not looking up)

I'll be fine.

With a chuckle, Michael stands and heads off to the reception desk. Opa turns to Carl, who is still keeping an eye on the game Evan is playing.

OPA

(to Carl)

I'll be back in a few minutes. Stay put.

CARL

Okay.

Opa gets up and goes down the hall. Carl looks over at the game that Evan is playing so that he can see the screen better, Evan is aware that Carl is looking over, but keeps his attention firmly on what he is doing.

EVAN

(without looking up)

Pretty neat, huh?

CARL

Cool game. I haven't seen seen that one before.

EVAN

It's new. Won't be out 'til Christmas.

CARL

How'd you get it?

EVAN

My dad. He creates video games for his company. He always gets one before it comes out and he gives it to me to try out.

The machine makes the SOUND of ELECTRONIC CHEERING.

EVAN (CONT'D)
(delighted)
Got'cha!

Evan puts down the game and gives out a big sigh of relief, sitting back in the chair.

CARL
Did you win?

EVAN
Yep.
(looks at watch)
Thirty-eight minutes.
(turn to Carl)
I'm Evan.

CARL
Carl.

EVAN
What are you in for?

CARL
Brain tumor. You?

EVAN
Leukemia. You getting Chemo?

Carl nods.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Same here. Does it make you sick too?

CARL
Yeah. I miss school sometimes.

EVAN
I get sick a lot, so I can't go to school. Dad teaches me at home.

CARL
You're lucky. What about your mom?

EVAN
(shrugs)
Never knew her. She died when I was born. It's just my dad and me. How 'bout you?

CARL
I live with my mom and my Opa.

EVAN

Opa? What's that?

CARL

It's German for grandfather.

EVAN

What about your dad?

CARL

He left when I got sick. Said it was too hard on him.

EVAN

Hard on him? You're the one who's sick.

Carl shrugs.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Parents can be so dumb sometimes.

CARL

Yeah, I know. Like when Mom won't tell me what the doctors say. They think I don't know when I'm feeling bad or when the chemo isn't working.

EVAN

Dad's the same way. He thinks I don't have a clue.

CARL

You live in San Diego?

EVAN

(nods)

Just moved down. It was too far to drive to the hospital so often. Dad rented a house in North Park and we moved in about a month ago.

CARL

I live in North Park. What street?

EVAN

Landis and Oregon.

CARL

(excited)

I'm near Oregon and Upas. Are you in the blue house on the corner?

Evan nods.

CARL (CONT'D)

That's just down the street from me.

EVAN

Cool. Maybe you could come over sometimes. It'd be nice to have someone to talk to that isn't a grownup. I don't think my dad would mind.

Just about that time, Michael comes up. He's heard the last part of Evan's conversation.

MICHAEL

Dad wouldn't mind what?

EVAN

(indicates Carl)

Dad, this is Carl. He lives down the street from us. Could he come down to our house sometime? Please? You said if the doctor said it was okay...

MICHAEL

Sure, I don't see why not. It's nice to meet you Carl.

(to Evan)

They're ready for you.

EVAN

(un-enthused)

Oh, great.

Michael produces a piece of paper and a pencil from his pocket and holds it out to Carl, who takes it.

MICHAEL

Write down your phone number and I'll have Evan give you a call and arrange something.

CARL

Thank you.

Carl writes down his number and hands it back to Michael who takes it, putting it in his pocket.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

(to Evan)

Come on Sport.

Evan gets out of the chair and the two of them begin to walk away, Evan taking Michael's hand. Evan looks back, smiles and waves. Carl does the same.

Michael and Evan continue their conversation as they walk away.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
How far did you get with the game?

EVAN
I won.

MICHAEL
How long it take you?

EVAN
Thirty eight minutes.

MICHAEL
Thirty eight minutes? Either you're getting better at this or I'm losing my touch.

Michael and Evan continue on their way. Carl watches them leave.

EXT. EVAN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The street is quiet. Opa and Carl walk up the front steps of the house.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Evan and his Dad are sit at the dining room table. Near to Evan are several textbooks, some open, and writing paper. Evan is writing something down on the paper he is taking off one of the open textbooks.

Michael sits opposite him, working on a laptop computer, but watches as Evan does his homework. The both look up at the SOUND of the DOORBELL.

EVAN
(excited)
I'll get it!

He begins to get out of the chair.

MICHAEL
You stay put. I'll get it.

Evan sits back down. Michael gets up and moves out of the dining room and into

INT. LIVING ROOM

Michael goes over to the front door and opens it, revealing Opa and Carl.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(smiles)

Come in, come in.

Carl and Opa come in to the house and Michael closes the door behind them.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hi Carl.

(to Opa)

Hello, I'm Michael Stanton.

OPA

John Mundorff. Nice to meet you.

The two men shake hands.

MICHAEL

(calls out)

Evan, Carl's here.

From out of the dining room, Evan appears and goes over to the rest of the group.

EVAN

Hi Carl.

CARL

Hi Evan.

MICHAEL

(indicates Opa)

Evan, this is Carl's grandfather.

EVAN

Hi.

OPA

Nice to meet you Evan.

MICHAEL

(to Evan)

Why don't you show Carl your room.

EVAN

Okay dad.

(to Carl)

C'mon.

The two boys go down the hall, Evan leading the way, Opa and Michael watching them go. Michael turns to Opa.

MICHAEL

Thanks for letting Carl come down.

I've never seen Evan so excited.

OPA

Same with Carl. Tell him I'll come
and pick him up around five.

MICHAEL

Will do.

The two of them walk to the door. Michael opens it up.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'll see you then.

Opa goes out the door, Michael closes it behind him.

INT. EVAN'S BEDROOM

The door to the bedroom opens up and Evan, followed by Carl
come in. Carl stops and looks around, and sees the bookcases
stuffed with books.

CARL

Wow, you got a lot of books.

EVAN

I don't get to play outside a lot,
so I read.

Carl looks over at the computer.

CARL

Neat computer.

EVAN

I use it for my homework, but it's
got internet and I've got all sorts
of games on it. I have a lot of
hand games and PlayStation on my TV
with a lot of programs.

(beat)

What do you want to do first?

Carl points to the TV.

CARL

PlayStation.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

It's later in the afternoon. Opa is seated on the couch,
reading a magazine.

Sarah comes out of the kitchen. Looks down at Opa and smiles.

SARAH

Dad, it's almost five.

OPA

I know. I'll leave in a minute.

(looks up)

Mr. Stanton was very nice. You should introduce yourself to him.

SARAH

Oh, I'm sure that we'll meet sooner or later.

OPA

Well, the two of you have a lot in common with both boys going through chemo.

SARAH

(suspicious)

Okay dad, what are you getting at?

OPA

(innocent)

Nothing. All I'm saying is that Mr. Stanton just moved down here. He doesn't know anyone, especially anyone who would understand what he's having to deal with. I think the two of you could help each other out.

SARAH

Is this the part when I say 'You know dad, why don't I go get Carl?'

OPA

I think that's a great idea.

SARAH

(laughs)

I'll be back in a few minutes.

Sarah goes over to the door, opens it and goes out, closing the door behind her.

Opa chuckles and goes back to reading his magazine.

INT. EVAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The DOORBELL RINGS in the empty living room. From the kitchen, Michael comes into the living room and goes over to the door. When he opens it, Sarah is standing there.

MICHAEL

Hello.

SARAH

Mr. Stanton?

MICHAEL

Yes.

SARAH

I'm Sarah Green, Carl's mother.

MICHAEL

Oh. Please come in.

Sarah comes in the door and Michael closes it behind her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I was expecting Mr. Mundorff.

SARAH

I thought I'd come down and pick up Carl instead. Give the two of us a chance to meet.

MICHAEL

Well, it's very nice to meet you.

SARAH

Same here. Carl hasn't been any problem, has he?

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

No. As a matter of fact, I haven't heard a peep out of them for about an hour. They're probably playing video games or plotting to take over the world.

SARAH

(smiles)

They're eleven, either one is possible.

MICHAEL

Well then, shall we go see?

SARAH

Lead the way.

The two of them move towards the hallway.

INT. EVAN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Both boys are sitting cross-legged on the floor with a joystick in their hands. On the flat-screen is a race car program, the cars racing down the track being controlled by the joy-sticks. Both boys are excited.

CARL

I'm beating you!

EVAN
No you're not!

Evan moves his joystick and there is a BUZZER that SOUNDS and the game stops.

EVAN (CONT'D)
(triumphant)
I won! That's six games to four.

CARL
One more game, and I'll beat you
this time.

EVAN
You can try.

There is a KNOCK on the door. Both boys look up.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Come in.

The door opens and Michael and Sarah come into the room. Carl gets up and goes over and hugs Sarah.

CARL
Hi Mom!
(to Evan)
Evan, this is my mom.

SARAH
It's nice to meet you Evan.

EVAN
Nice to meet you too.

SARAH
(to Carl)
You ready to go?

CARL
Uh huh. When can I come back?

SARAH
That depends on Mr. Stanton.

MICHAEL
Carl, you're welcome any time. Okay?

Carl nods.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A large and spacious park with a large area of open ground. It's later in the year and some of the leaves on the trees are turning to their autumn colors.

In the open ground area, Opa and Carl are throwing around a Frisbee, having a great time. Opa, a little winded, signals for a time out after throwing the Frisbee to Carl. Carl catches the Frisbee and looks over at Opa.

OPA
(winded)
Time out.

CARL
Just a little more.

OPA
Let's take a break. Have some
consideration for your poor old Opa.

Smiling, Carl runs over to him. Opa puts his arm around his shoulder. They walk towards the shade of one of the trees and sit down when they get there.

OPA (CONT'D)
(groaning)
Oh, that's better.
(to Carl)
Having fun?

Carl nods.

OPA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry Evan couldn't join us.

CARL
Chemo's been making him really sick.
He was in bed all day yesterday.

OPA
Too bad. You've seen a lot of him
over the last couple of months.

CARL
Yeah, he's great. He's my best
friend... Opa, can Evan come with
us when we go trick or treating?

OPA
If he's feeling better, sure.

CARL
Cool. Could you talk to his dad?

OPA

About what?

CARL

About letting Evan come with us.

OPA

You mean you haven't asked him?

Carl shakes his head.

OPA (CONT'D)

Why wouldn't he let him come with us?

CARL

He's afraid that Evan will catch something.

OPA

Oh, I see. A little over protective?

CARL

A lot. Please?

OPA

All right. I'm sure between the two of us we can figure something out.

CARL

(smiles)

Thanks Opa.

Carl leans back against Opa. Opa smiles down at him.

OPA

What do you and Evan do when you go over to his house?

CARL

We play video games. I'm getting pretty good, but Evan's a lot better. We do our homework. A lot a times we just talk.

OPA

About what?

CARL

Oh, Evan asks me about school, about the other kids.

OPA

What do you tell him?

CARL

That the kids don't like me.

OPA

I'm sorry Carl. I thought that after a few weeks--

CARL

It's okay. I don't mind so much any more, now that Evan and I are friends.

OPA

Well, that's good. What else do you talk about?

CARL

Being sick...

(serious)

Opa, what happens when you die?

OPA

That's a pretty heavy subject for an eleven year old.

CARL

I asked mom, but she got all funny and started to cry. Do you know?

OPA

Oh, I don't think anybody really does. Some people who died and then were brought back say that they saw a bright light at the end of a long tunnel and at the end of it were all their family and friends waiting for them.

CARL

Is that what you think?

OPA

Me? Oh, I like to think that it's like walking through a door from one room into another and the person that loves you the most is waiting there for you when the door opens, and that same person takes you by the hand and leads you to the rest of your family and friends.

CARL

Will Oma be there?

OPA

Your Grandmother? Oh yes. As a matter of fact, I expect her to be the one waiting at the door for me when the time comes.

Opa pats Carl's leg.

OPA (CONT'D)

Now, that's enough gloomy talk for one day. You've got the Frisbee and I've caught my breath. You want to throw it around some more?

Carl nods enthusiastically. Opa stands up and Carl does likewise, and with his arm on Carl's shoulder, they head back out to the field.

EXT. EVAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A little after sundown, Halloween. Coming down the sidewalk is Carl and Opa. They turn towards the front porch of the house.

Carl is dressed as a commando, complete with camouflage pants and shirt and a camouflage bandanna around his head like a sweatband. On his face are stripes of camouflage paint. He carries a trick-or-treat bag in his hand.

The two of them get to the front door and ring the bell. Almost immediately the door opens and Evan is standing there. He's dressed as a doctor with surgical scrubs, complete with cap, stethoscope, gloves, and surgical mask.

Carl admires the costume.

CARL

Cool costume. Ready to go?

EVAN

Yeah.

(calls over his
shoulder)

Dad, Carl and his grandfather are here.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Be right there.

EVAN

(to Opa)

Thanks for talking my dad into letting me come.

OPA

No problem. How do you like your costume?

EVAN

It's neat. especially the mask. Now my dad won't worry so much about me catching anything.

About that time, Michael comes to the door, wiping his hands on a dishtowel.

MICHAEL

Sorry for the wait. I was just finishing up the dishes.
(to Carl)
Great costume Carl.

CARL

Thanks, Mr. Stanton.

MICHAEL

(to Opa)
Evan's been bouncing off the walls all afternoon. I could hardly get him to eat his dinner. I hope you know what you're in for.

OPA

I've been through many a Halloween. I know what to expect.

MICHAEL

(to Evan)
You ready?

Evan nods.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Got your bag?

Evan holds up the bag.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Okay, remember, no eating any candy 'til you get back.

EVAN

I won't.

MICHAEL

And don't overdo it. If you get tired...

EVAN

I'll come right back. You want to come with us?

MICHAEL

Well, if I do, who's gonna hand out the candy to the other trick-or-treaters?

Evan breaks into a big grin.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(smiles)

Oh, I see. You just want all the candy for yourself. Go out and get your own.

EVAN

I'll do my best.

Evan goes out the door and joins Carl and the two of them go down the steps. They're really excited.

OPA

(to Michael)

I'll take good care of them.

CARL

(impatient)

C'mon Opa!

OPA

Be right there.

(to Michael)

Duty calls.

MICHAEL

Good luck.

OPA

Thanks.

Opa goes down the steps.

MICHAEL

(Calls down to Evan)

Evan, have fun and behave yourself.

EVAN

(joking)

At the same time?

MICHAEL

Just give it a try.

EVAN

Okay dad.

The three of them move to the sidewalk. Michael smiles and closes the door.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Evan and Carl walk down the sidewalk, with Opa right behind them.

OPA

Where do you boys want to go first?

Carl points to the closest house.

CARL

That one.

OPA

Okay, get going.

Both boys go up the walkway towards the front door.

CARL

(serious)

Okay Evan, when we get to the front door, I'll ring the doorbell and when the door opens you say 'trick or treat' and hold out your bag.

EVAN

I know what to do.

CARL

You've never been trick or treating before.

By this time, they get to the front door. Evan reaches over and rings the doorbell. Evan puts the surgical mask over his mouth.

EVAN

I watch television.

The door opens and a pleasant faced OLDER WOMAN opens the door with a bowl of candy in her hand.

CARL

Trick or Treat!!!

EVAN

(overlap)

Trick or Treat!!!

The Older Woman smiles.

From his vantage point, Opa watch the two boys as the older Woman puts some candy in their bags. Suddenly, he winces and rubs his arm.

INT. EVAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michael is sitting on the couch having a cup of tea and reading a book.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Michael gets up and on the way to the front door grabs the bowl of candy. He opens the door and Carl and Evan are standing there. Opa stands behind them. Evan has lowered his mask and the three of them are grinning.

CARL

Trick or treat!!!

EVAN

(Overlap)

Trick or Treat!!

MICHAEL

(mock surprise)

Well, what have we here?

(to Opa)

How were they?

OPA

Just fine.

MICHAEL

(to Evan)

Did you get a lot of candy?

Evan holds out his bulging sack.

EVAN

See.

MICHAEL

Wow, what a haul. That's good, the neighborhood kids almost wiped me out.

(to Opa)

Would you like to come in for some tea, Mr. Mundorff?

OPA

Thanks, but it's a school day tomorrow, and it's going to take at least three scrubblings to get all the makeup off Carl's face.

(MORE)

OPA (CONT'D)

(to Evan)

Did you have a good time Evan?

EVAN

You bet.

OPA

I'm glad.

(to Carl)

Say good night to Evan, Carl and let's get you home. If I know your mom, she's probably got hot chocolate ready for the both of us.

CARL

See you tomorrow, Evan.

EVAN

Okay. G'night.

Evan comes in the door and over to Michael. Carl and Opa turn and walk down the walk as Michael shuts the door and turns to Evan.

MICHAEL

Okay young man, time to get ready for bed.

Evan looks up at his dad with tears in his eyes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Evan? Evan, what's wrong?

Evan bursts into tears. Confused, Michael goes down on his knees and Evan rushes into his arms, sobbing. Michael comforts him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hey. It's all right. What's the matter? Didn't you have a good time?

Evan nods.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Then why are you crying?

EVAN

(through the tears)

It's... the first time... I've ever felt like... a normal... kid.

He starts sobbing again, Michael holding onto him and comforting him.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The door to the front door opens and Carl, followed by Opa come into the house. Carl still carries his bag of candy.

CARL
(calling out)
Mom, Mom, we're back!!

Opa goes over and sits on the couch with a sigh about the same time as a smiling Sarah comes out of the kitchen.

SARAH
Finally. Did you have a good time?

CARL
It was great. Look at all the candy I got.

Sarah looks in the bag when Carl shows it to her.

SARAH
You really cleaned up. I've got hot chocolate ready for you, but first, you need to get all that paint off your face, so into the bathroom and wash.

CARL
Okay mom.

He starts down the hall.

SARAH
(calling after him)
I put some rags in the bathroom for you to use. Do not use my clean towels. And use soap.

CARL
(from the hall)
I will.

Carl disappears down the hallway and Sarah turns to Opa.

SARAH
(amused)
You look exhausted.

OPA
I'm not as young as I used to be.

SARAH
Who is? How did Evan do?
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

I know Michael was worried about letting him go out tonight.

EVAN

Evan did fine. Both the boys had a great time. You saw how much candy Carl has. I don't think they missed a house in the whole neighborhood.

SARAH

Well, Halloween only comes around once a year.

OPA

Thank goodness for that.

SARAH

Want some cocoa?

OPA

I think I'll pass. I'm going to head for bed. Two eleven year-olds can take a lot out of a person.

SARAH

Are you feeling okay?

Opa gets off the couch and comes over to her.

OPA

Nothing that a good night's sleep won't fix.

He kisses her cheek.

OPA (CONT'D)

Good night.

SARAH

Good night.

OPA

I'll check on our pint sized commando and make sure he's washing behind his ears.

SARAH

Thanks dad. See you in the morning.

Opa goes down the hall, Sarah watching him go.

EXT. CARL'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

INT. OPA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A typical older person's bedroom. A lot of pictures in frames and on the walls and on top of the dresser, some of them black and white pictures and some in faded colors.

A queen sized bed is on one wall across from the dresser. There is a picture in a frame on one of the nightstands on either side of the bed. A closed door leads out to the hallway.

Opa is laying on the bed, covers up to his chest. His head is facing away from the door to his room. He looks peaceful, but is clearly dead.

There is a KNOCK on the door to his room.

SARAH (O.S.)

Dad?

She KNOCKS again.

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

Dad?

The door opens and Sarah enters the room. She sees Opa on the bed and smiles.

SARAH (CONT'D)

C'mon dad, time to get up.

Opa doesn't move. Sarah becomes concerned. She moves over to the bed, and gently shakes his shoulder.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Dad?

She realizes that he has passed away. Saddened, she sits down on the bed and touches his hand, tears forming.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(tearfully)

Oh Dad.

Gently, she takes his hand.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Comfortably furnished with a large sofa and two chairs with a coffee table between, and end tables with a lamp on each end of the sofa. On one of the end tables is a phone.

Sarah comes into the living room from the hall and moves over to the phone. She wipes the tears from her eyes, reaches down and picks it up.

Carl comes down the hall in his Pajamas, rubbing his eyes and yawning. His appearance startles Sarah and she puts down the phone.

CARL
(sleepily)
Mom, Opa didn't wake me up.

Sarah turns to Carl, who notices that she's been crying.

CARL (CONT'D)
(suspicious)
Where's Opa?

Sarah doesn't know what to say.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's a gloomy day. A group of MOURNERS is gathered around an open grave site. A MINISTER is at the head of the grave, an open bible in his hand.

Standing to one side are Sarah and Carl. Next to them are Michael and Evan. Sarah has her arm around Carl's shoulder. All have their heads bowed in silent prayer.

Quietly, the minister closes his book.

MINISTER
Amen.

The mourners and the minister raise their heads. Sarah, Michael, Carl and Evan do the same.

The mourners begin to walk away. Some of them come up and express their condolences to Sarah, who nods. The minister does the same thing. He takes her hand and says a few unheard words to her.

Carl moves down to the open grave and looks in. He just stands there looking for a few moments. Sarah nods to the minister and he also moves away. Finally, Michael, Evan, Carl and Sarah are left alone at the site.

Carl is trying not to cry. Sarah goes over to him.

SARAH
C'mon Carl, it's time to go.

CARL

Okay.
(whispers)
Bye Opa.

He moves off with Sarah. Evan comes over and walks next to him, Michael next to Sarah. They walk towards their cars.

MICHAEL

Is there anything I can do?

SARAH

You've been such a big help already, letting Carl stay over at your house after school.

MICHAEL

Well, I was thinking, You could have the bus drop Carl off at my house. He could stay until you pick him up. I'm home all day and believe it or not I get more done when the boys are together. They keep each other company and I can work.

SARAH

Michael, I can't let you do that.

MICHAEL

It's not a problem. I'm just happy to have Carl there. And since they're both on the same Chemo schedule, I can take him to the doctors when I take Evan.

SARAH

If you're sure. It would help me out a lot.

MICHAEL

Good, then it's settled.

The boys have been following the conversation, looking from one person to the other as they speak. After the conversation ends, Carl and Evan give each other a thumbs up.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's late night and Carl is asleep in his bed. There is the unintelligible SOUND of SARAH'S VOICE speaking. Carl stirs and awakens. He gets out of bed and goes over to his door and opens it quietly, tiptoeing out into the hallway.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Sarah sits at the table, talking on the phone. She is upset at whoever she is talking to, almost to the verge of tears.

SARAH

Phillip... I can't do this by myself.
I need your help...

(beat, listens)

Damn it Phillip, I just buried my
father three days ago and you didn't
even come to the funeral...

(beat, listens)

What about Carl?

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carl is out of sight, listening to the conversation from the living room.

SARAH (O.S.)

He needs you. He needs you here.
He's only eleven years old, he doesn't
understand.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

There are tears in Sarah's eyes as she talks.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Please Phillip. He's your son, you're
his father.

(listening, angry)

It's been hard on all of us! You
can't abandon us like this! He's
your responsibility too!

(listens)

Phillip? Phillip?

Sarah hangs up the phone, upset.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Tears running down his face, Carl, dejectedly goes down the hall towards his room.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carl comes through the door and heads over to his bed. The curtains in his room are drawn back and light comes in through the window.

The light falls on the wall across from his bed which reveals the outline of a door pushing through the wall of the bedroom, stretching the paint.

The outline of the door is about seven and a half feet tall, including the door frame. There is the shape of a doorknob sticking out through the paint as well.

Carl catches sight of the door and turns to look at it curiously. He moves closer and holding out his hand, gingerly touches it. He pulls his hand back, expecting something to happen, but it doesn't.

He runs his hand over the contours of the frame.

CARL

(shouts)

Mom? Mom?!

Carl continues to touch the raised area on the wall. Sarah comes into the room. She's been crying and she wipes away her tears with her hand as she comes in, reaches over and turns on the light.

Sarah sees Carl touching the wall, but she does not see the door-shape pushing out.

SARAH

(Upset)

Carl, what are you doing up? You should be in bed.

CARL

I woke up. Look over here. There's something on the wall.

Sarah comes over and looks at the wall.

SARAH

I don't see anything.

CARL

You don't?

SARAH

No. It looks like a wall. Carl, I'm not really in the mood to play these games with you right now.

CARL

But mom, I'm not playing. It looks like a door coming out of the wall. Really.

SARAH

(unconvinced)

A door, coming out of the wall. You expect me to believe that?

CARL

It's true. It's right there. Can't you see it?

SARAH

(angry and frustrated)

Carl, go to bed! I don't want to hear anything more about a door coming out of the wall. You got me?!

CARL

(quietly)

Yes mom.

Sarah takes one more look at the wall, shakes her head and goes to the door. Carl gets into bed and pulls up the covers. Sarah turns to him.

SARAH

Good night.

She turns the light off on her way out, leaving Carl to look at the outline of the door in the light coming through the window.

EXT. EVAN'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

EVAN (O.S.)

You're kidding?

INT. EVAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carl and Evan sit on the floor, playing a board game set between the two of them.

EVAN (CONT'D)

A door on your wall? Since when?

CARL

About a week ago.

EVAN

What does your mom say about it.

CARL

She can't see it.

EVAN

Why not?

CARL

I dunno, she just doesn't.

EVAN

Well, maybe it's not really there.
Maybe it's part of you being sick.
Chemo can do funny stuff to people.

CARL

Evan, I can touch it, I can feel the
wood and it's pushing out of the
wall.

Evan looks doubtful.

CARL (CONT'D)

You don't believe me either, do you?

EVAN

I don't know. It just sounds kinda
weird.

CARL

I'm not making this up.

EVAN

Okay, what do you think it is?

Carl doesn't say anything for a moment and looks a little
uncomfortable.

EXT. CARL'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Out in front, a car pulls up in front of the house and the
doors open. Carl, Michael and Evan get out of the car and
head up towards the house.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens and Carl and Evan come in with Michael coming
in behind them shutting the door behind him.

CARL

(shouting)

Mom?!

Out of the kitchen and INTO SCENE comes Sarah, drying her
hands on a towel. She smiles.

SARAH

Well, there you are.

MICHAEL

My fault Sarah. the boys wanted to
finish their game.

EVAN

Dad, can I go to Carl's room?

MICHAEL

Only for a few minutes. You've got an appointment, remember?

Evan nods.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Well, go on.

CARL

Come on Evan.

The two boys move swiftly down the hallway. Sarah and Michael watch them leave, smiling.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM

The bedroom is pretty much the same as usual, except for the door on the wall, which is now pushed further out. Wood now shows in a few places and the door knob is fully showing.

Carl, with Evan following closely behind, comes in. Evan stops in the middle of the room and looks around. Carl goes over and stands next to the door, watching Evan look around.

CARL (CONT'D)

(disappointed)

You don't see it, do you?

Evan shakes his head.

EVAN

Sorry.

He comes over and puts his hand on the wall and touches it.

EVAN (CONT'D)

You said you'd tell me what it was.

CARL

Remember before Opa died, I asked him what happened when you died and I told you about it?

Evan nods, and then realization crosses his face and he looks at Carl with a look of horror. He pulls his hand away from the wall.

EVAN

No!

CARL

Evan.

EVAN

That means you're gonna... You're wrong! It's not that! No!

Carl grabs Evan, who tries to get away.

CARL

Listen to me.

EVAN

(resisting)

No, you're not gonna die. You can't. You're gonna get better, we're both going to get better!

Evan begins to struggle less, until he finally stops. Carl lets go of him.

CARL

Evan, I don't know if the door means I'm gonna die, I don't. Maybe it's Opa's way of letting me know that's he's close by, watching over me.

Evan has recovered a bit.

EVAN

But why can't I see it?

CARL

I dunno. Maybe only one person can see it at a time.

EVAN

Aren't you scared of it?

CARL

Not as much as I was. You won't say anything, will you? Promise?

EVAN

I promise.

Michael takes this moment to knock on the open door of the bedroom. Both of the boys turn to the door.

MICHAEL

Hey sport, time to go.

He looks over at the boys serious faces.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You two look serious. What's going on? Deep conversation?

Evan manages a smile.

EVAN

Nothing dad. We were just talking about Carl's school.

MICHAEL

Well come on. We don't want to be late.

EVAN

(to Carl)

See you later?

CARL

You bet.

Evan goes over to his dad, but not before looking at the wall with a frown. Both Michael and Evan go out the door. Carl looks up at the door on his wall.

EXT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Michael and Evan are coming up the walkway towards the front door. Michael is carrying a pie in his hand. Evan goes up and rings the doorbell.

INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Sarah is putting the finishing touches on the table when the SOUND of the DOORBELL RINGING catches her attention.

SARAH

(calls out)

Carl!

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Carl comes out of the hallway heading towards the door.

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

Can you get that?

CARL

(calls out)

Okay mom.

He goes to the door and opens it, revealing Michael and Evan standing there. From the dining room, Sarah comes into the living room, walking towards the front door.

MICHAEL

Hi Carl, are we too early?

SARAH
 (comes up)
 Not at all. Come on in you two.

Evan and Michael enter the house and Michael presents a pie to Sarah with a smile and she takes it.

MICHAEL
 I brought dessert.

SARAH
 (smiles)
 Did you make this yourself?

MICHAEL
 With a little help from Sara Lee.

SARAH
 Thought so.
 (to Carl)
 Why don't you and Evan go to your room and play. Dinner won't be ready for another half hour.

CARL
 Okay mom.

The two boys move down the hall. Michael turns to Sarah.

MICHAEL
 Need some help? I'm not the world's best cook, but I mash a mean potato.

SARAH
 I just happen to need a good potato masher. If you'll follow me to the kitchen, I'm sure I can put you to work.

With Sarah leading the way, the two of them move towards the kitchen.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Carl and Evan are down on the floor playing Battleship. Evan has his back to the wall where the door is.

Carl sneaks glances at the wall and sees that the door is about halfway formed.

CARL
 B three...

EVAN
 Miss... D seven...

CARL
Ouch, hit... B six.

EVAN
Hit...

Michael pokes his head into the room about that time and clears his throat. Evan and Carl look up.

MICHAEL
Hey you two, why don't the give the fleets a rest and come to dinner. There's a turkey out here that's ready to be eaten.

EVAN
Okay dad.
(to Carl)
D eight...

Carl makes a face.

CARL
You sunk my destroyer! Just you wait until after dinner.

The two boys get up and go out the door past Michael. Michael turns and follows behind them.

DINING ROOM

There is a huge spread of food, far more than four people could eat on the table. There is dressing, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce etc. The only thing missing is the turkey.

Sarah comes out of the kitchen, carrying the turkey. She goes over to the head of the table and places the turkey there. About the same time the boys come into the dining room. They stop at two of the chairs and stare at the food.

Carl looks up at his mother.

CARL (CONT'D)
Gee mom, who else is coming?

Michael comes into the dining room.

SARAH
(chuckles)
I guess I did go a little overboard. It's been a long time since I cooked a big, fancy, Thanksgiving dinner.
(to Michael)
Michael, would you carve the bird?

MICHAEL

Sure.

SARAH

Boys, why don't you sit down.

Michael goes to where the turkey is at the head of the table. Sarah goes to her seat and sits. Carl and Evan sit down as well. Michael takes up the carving knife and begins to carve up the bird. The PHONE RINGS.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It never fails. I'll be right back.

Sarah gets up and goes into the

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Going over to the phone, which RINGS again, she picks it up.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

Hello....

(Frowns)

Oh, hello Phillip... What?... sure,
just a minute...

(calls out)

Carl, it's your father...

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SARAH (O.S.)

...he wants to talk to you.

Carl looks apprehensively at Evan, who shrugs.

CARL

Coming.

Carl gets up from the table, reluctantly. Michael continues his carving. Carl goes out into the

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sarah holds out the phone to Carl who takes it.

CARL (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hello.... Hi dad... Happy
Thanksgiving....

(listening)

I'm fine... School's okay... Yeah,
I'm still doing chemo...

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)

(listening)

We were just about to have dinner.
Mom made turkey and mashed potatoes,
dressing....

(beat)

No, Evan and his dad are here...
Evan...? Evan's my best friend...
His dad? What about him? What do
you mean...? I don't understand...
Sure... Okay, bye.

Obviously upset, he looks up at Sarah.

CARL (CONT'D)

He wants to talk to you.

Sarah takes the phone from him.

SARAH

Go sit down. I'll be there in a
minute.

Carl heads for the dining room.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Yes Phillip... No, he's just a
friend... Carl stays at his house
after school until I get home....
Yes, that's all.... Of course I'm
sure. What are you getting at?

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Michael is standing. He's stopped carving the turkey and is
listening. Carl comes into the room and slides into his
seat, looking very upset.

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

I don't have to listen to this.... I
don't have to explain myself to you...
You left us, remember? Phillip,
think what you like!

There is the SOUND of a PHONE SLAMMING Down O.S. Michael
looks grim.

Sarah comes into the dining room, fuming. Michael looks up
at her. She sits at the table.

MICHAEL

You all right?

SARAH
Give me a minute.
(to Carl)
Carl, are you okay?

CARL
I don't feel so good. Can I go to
my room?

Sarah nods. Carl gets up from the table and runs down the hallway towards his room.

Michael clears his throat.

MICHAEL
Maybe we should go.

SARAH
You don't have to. Stay. At least
have some dinner.

MICHAEL
I think that it's best.

SARAH
Michael, I'm so sorry.

MICHAEL
I know. It's not your fault.
(to Evan)
C'mon Evan, let's go home.

EVAN
(to Sarah)
Is Carl going to be okay?

SARAH
He'll be fine. He's just upset.

Evan and Sarah stand and the three of them go into the

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They move to the door. Michael opens it.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Good night Michael, Evan. I'm sorry
about everything. Can I at least
make up a couple plates? There's a
lot of turkey.

MICHAEL
Thank you, but I think Carl needs
you right now.

Sarah nods in agreement.

EVAN

Do you think Carl will want to come over tomorrow?

SARAH

I'm not sure. I'll call you in the morning and let you know. Okay?

EVAN

Okay.

MICHAEL

Good night Sarah. I hope Carl feels better.

SARAH

Thank you Michael. Good night.

Michael and Evan go out the door and Sarah closes it behind them. She looks over at the dining room and then moves towards the hallway.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carl lays on his bed in the dark. There is a KNOCK on the DOOR and then it opens slightly and Sarah sticks her head in.

SARAH

Can I come in?

CARL

(from the bed)

Sure.

Sarah comes in and turns on the light, comes over and sits next to Carl, who is looking towards the wall.

CARL (CONT'D)

Evan go home?

SARAH

Yes. They thought that you might want to be alone.

Carl sits up. It's apparent that he's been crying. She hugs him to her.

CARL

Mom, why did dad act like that?

SARAH

I don't know. I think he's feeling bad about not being here.

CARL

It's my fault, isn't it? If I hadn't gotten sick, dad wouldn't have left.

SARAH

No Carl, it's not your fault.

CARL

Yes it is.

SARAH

No, it's not. Carl, sometimes people can't watch someone they love in pain and know that they can't do anything about it. It's hard for them to feel helpless and so they run away, but they find out it doesn't help. They get angry and say things they don't really mean. Do you understand?

CARL

(nods)

I miss him mom.

SARAH

I know.

She holds him for a moment, kisses his forehead.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You hungry?

Carl shakes his head.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Okay, why don't you rest for awhile. Maybe you'll want something later.

CARL

Okay.

Sarah gets up and Carl lays back down on the bed. Sarah crosses over to the door, stops and turns.

SARAH

You may not believe this now, but your father loves you very much.

Sarah goes out the door and closes it behind him. Carl looks over at the wall. The door has become more distinct.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Sarah comes into the dining room and sits down on one of the chairs and looks over the ruins of her thanksgiving dinner. With a sigh, she gets up and begins clearing off the table.

EXT. SCHOOL - MID MORNING

School is in session.

INT. CLASSROOM

The children are working silently, reading at their desks, Carl included. Carl is seated at the single desk that is set apart from the rest of the students.

Mr. Hunt is seated at his desk, looking over some papers.

Carl doesn't look well. He's pale and is having a hard time seeing what he's reading. He rubs his eyes and his head.

Mr. Hunt looks up from his papers and sees that Carl is having problems. He gets up and goes over to Carl.

MR. HUNT

Carl, are you feeling okay?

Carl looks up at Mr. Hunt. There is pain in his eyes.

CARL

My head hurts.

MR. HUNT

Do you want to go to the nurse's office?

Carl nods. Mr. Hunt turns to Diane, seated nearby.

MR. HUNT (CONT'D)

(to Diane)

Diane, would you go with Carl?

Diane looks at Mr. Hunt and then over at Carl. Obviously not happy with this, she nods and then gets up. Carl does the same.

The two of them go towards the door, Diane following behind him. This gets the rest of the kids to MURMURING amongst themselves, but one sharp look from Mr. Hunt and they quiet down.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

The hall is deserted. Everyone else is in class. The door opens and Carl comes out, followed by Diane.

Carl takes about twenty steps down the hallway and collapses to the floor and begins to shake in a seizure. Horrified, Diane turns and starts running back to the classroom.

DIANE
(shouting)
Mr. Hunt, Mr. Hunt!!

She gets to the door and opens it, running in. Carl is laying on the floor, shaking.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Emergency entrance of Children's Hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Several NURSES, INTERNS, as well as PATIENTS and DOCTORS mill around, doing their duties.

Dr. Parker moves with determined steps down the hall. He passes by the nurse's station where Michael and Evan are talking to a nurse at the desk. Dr. Parker continues down to a particular door, opens it and goes in.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Set up for children, the walls are painted with bright colors and cartoon characters. A bed with the normal assortment of measuring devices for heart rate, Blood pressure etc., along with a TV against the opposite wall and chairs for visitors.

In the bed is Carl, dressed in a hospital gown, looking a bit better than he did at school, but still weak. He has a breathing tube attached to his nose and a Blood pressure and heart rate monitor attached to his index finger.

Sarah sits in a chair next to the bed. She looks concerned and holds Carl's hand. He is awake.

Doctor Parker comes through the door and over to the foot of the bed. Sarah stands up, still holding Carl's hand. He smiles down at Carl.

DR. PARKER
How are you feeling?

CARL
Tired.

SARAH
Is he going to be all right?

DR. PARKER

We need to run some more tests, but
he seems to be stable.

At that moment, Michael and Evan come into the hospital room.
Carl is the first one to notice Evan coming through the door.

CARL

Evan!

Evan rushes over to Carl's bedside.

EVAN

You okay?

Carl nods.

EVAN (CONT'D)

What happened?

CARL

I got dizzy and fainted. They said
I had a seizure, but I don't remember.
How'd you know I was here?

Michael has come up beside Evan.

MICHAEL

When you didn't come over, I called
the school. The nurse told me what
happened and that you were here.

EVAN

When can you go home?

Carl looks up at Dr. Parker.

CARL

Dr. Parker?

DR. PARKER

I want to run a couple more tests.
Possibly tomorrow.

(to Sarah)

Mrs. Green, may I have a word with
you?

SARAH

Of course doctor.

(to Michael)

Michael, could you stay with Carl
for awhile?

Michael looks over at the boys. Evan has pulled out a hand-
held game and is showing it to Carl. Michael smiles.

MICHAEL

No problem. I doubt I could pry the boys apart at this point anyway.

SARAH

Thank you.
(to Carl)
I'll be right back.

CARL

(engrossed in the
game)
Okay mom.

Sarah looks up at Michael, who smiles and shrugs. She walks over to the doctor and the two of them head towards the door.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Small, just enough room for a desk, a bookcase and a couple of file cabinets. Behind the desk is a chair and on the wall are a number of diplomas belonging to Dr. Parker.

There are a couple of chairs in front of the desk. On the desk is a telephone and a box of kleenex.

The door opens and Dr. Parker enters, followed by Sarah. Dr. Parker indicates one of the chairs and Sarah sits down. She looks very concerned.

Dr. Parker goes behind the desk and sits in his chair. He leans forward, his hands folded in front of him.

DR. PARKER

Mrs. Green, I'm recommending that we take Carl off chemotherapy.

SARAH

He's not getting any better, is he?

DR. PARKER

I'm afraid not. I'm sorry. The chemo's not affecting the tumor the way we had hoped.

SARAH

(tearing up)
Isn't there something you can do?

DR. PARKER

(shakes his head)
We can't remove the tumor surgically, and radiation is unfortunately not an option. I wish I had better news.

SARAH
(Tearfully)
How long?

DR. PARKER
Weeks. A month, maybe two.

Sarah begins to cry. Dr. Parker takes a kleenex out of the box and hands it to her. She takes it and dabs her eyes.

SARAH
I'm sorry. I kept hoping that Carl was getting better. With my dad gone, he's all I have left.
(beat)
What do I do now?

DR. PARKER
We'll give him some medication to make him more comfortable. That's really the best we can do.

SARAH
When can I take him home?

DR. PARKER
Tomorrow. I think home's the best place for him. Going back to school is of course out of the question under the circumstances.

SARAH
I understand. I can take a leave from work so that I can be with him.

DR. PARKER
Mrs. Green, has he shown any symptoms, like blurring vision, headaches or hallucinations?

SARAH
His eyes get tired and he does get headaches sometimes. Oh, and right after my father died, he told me that there was a door coming out of the wall in his bedroom. Of course, I couldn't see anything.

DR. PARKER
Has he had any other episodes like that since then?

Sarah shakes her head.

DR. PARKER (CONT'D)

It's been my experience that, because of the location of the tumor, a patient may manifest hallucinations as well as seizures. I can't promise that he won't have any more of them. We just don't know enough about that part of the brain. Just prepare yourself for more episodes like this before the end.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Evan is sitting on the bed with Carl while Carl plays on the video game. Michael is reading a magazine, seated in one of the chairs, next to the bed.

Sarah comes into the room and Michael looks up at her. She's putting on a brave face, managing a weak smile. She goes over to Carl's bedside.

SARAH

(to Carl)

Good news Carl, the doctor says you can go home tomorrow.

Carl looks up from the game at his mom.

CARL

(smiles)

Cool.

SARAH

And, the doctor thinks that maybe it would be best if you didn't go back to school for awhile.

CARL

Really?

SARAH

Before you start celebrating, I'll be picking up homework from your teacher every Monday. You aren't going to get out of it that easy.

CARL

(disappointed)

For how long?

SARAH

We'll have to see.

She looks over at Michael, who isn't fooled a bit.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Carl is propped up in his bed, playing a hand held video game. Evan is at the foot of the bed playing another game. Finally there is the SOUND of a BEEP and Carl puts his game down and lays back on the pillow. Evan looks up.

EVAN

You win?

CARL

I drowned in the swamp.

EVAN

(grimaces)

Ouch. You gonna play another game?

CARL

No, my eyes hurt a little.

EVAN

You okay?

CARL

A little tired.

(beat)

I'm not going back to school.

EVAN

Your mom tell you that?

CARL

(nods)

Yesterday.

EVAN

You okay about it?

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Michael is coming down the hallway on his way to Carl's room. He gets to the door and stops before he opens it, listening.

CARL (O.S.)

Yeah, it's fine. The kids didn't like me anyway.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

CARL

Mr. Hunt didn't like me either. The first day I was there, he told the lady from the office that he didn't want me in his class.

EVAN

I know, you told me. But you know,
maybe you heard him wrong. Maybe he
didn't mean it.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Michael is still listening, not happy with what he hears.

CARL (O.S.)

I heard it. So did the rest of the
kids. They were laughing at me. I'm
glad I don't have to go back.

Michael opens the door.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carl and Evan are still on the bed. The door opens and
Michael KNOCKS on it as he peeks in. Evan turns to see who
it is. Carl looks up.

MICHAEL

Hi you two.

EVAN

Is it five already?

Michael comes into the room.

MICHAEL

Past. It's time to go Evan. Carl
needs his rest and you have homework
to do. You can come back tomorrow.

EVAN

Okay.
(to Carl)
See ya later.

Evan gets off the bed and goes over to his father.

MICHAEL

(to Carl)
I just got one of my new video games
sent to me. I'll have Evan bring it
over tomorrow.

CARL

Thanks.

MICHAEL

You're welcome.
(to Evan)
C'mon Evan, let's get you home.

Evan and Michael walk towards the door. Evan turns back and waves to Carl, who returns the wave. Michael and Evan go out the bedroom door.

Carl lays back and closes his eyes for a moment and then turns his head and looks over at the wall. The door is almost completely formed.

INT. EVAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The front door opens and Evan and Michael come in, Michael closing the door behind him. Evan starts to move towards the hallway.

MICHAEL
(calls after him)
Evan?

Evan stops and turns.

EVAN
Yes dad?

MICHAEL
Could I talk to you for a minute?

Michael indicates the couch. Evan goes over and sits down on it. Michael sits down on the couch as well.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I need to ask you a question, about Carl.

EVAN
Okay.

MICHAEL
Before I came into Carl's room this afternoon, I heard the two of you talking about Carl's school.

EVAN
Oh.

MICHAEL
Was what he said true?

Evan nods.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Would you tell me everything Carl said?

EVAN
I promised Carl I wouldn't.

MICHAEL
I wouldn't ask you if I didn't think
it was important. Please.

EVAN
Dad, I....

Evan looks up at his dad, torn.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Okay.

EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

The kids are getting out of school. Parents are picking up children and busses are being loaded with kids going home.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Michael stands outside of Mr. Hunt's classroom, waiting. The door is open and a couple of students walk out of the room. After a moment, Mr. Hunt comes out.

MICHAEL
Mr. Hunt?

MR. HUNT
(turns)
Yes?

MICHAEL
My name is Michael Stanton.

MR. HUNT
What can I do for you?

MICHAEL
I'd like to talk to you about one of
your students.

MR. HUNT
Which one?

MICHAEL
Carl Green.

MR. HUNT
Oh. How is he?

MICHAEL
(stern)
Could we go into your classroom?
There are things that I need to say
to you that I'd rather not say in an
open hallway.

MR. HUNT

Certainly.

With Mr. Hunt leading the way, the two men go into the classroom and close the door.

EXT. CARL'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Mr. Hunt, carrying a Christmas-wrapped package comes up the walk to the front door.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carl is in bed, propped up with a number of pillows to make him more comfortable, sipping water through a straw in a glass Sarah is holding as she sits on the bed. Carl looks very thin and weak. A chair is next to the head of the bed.

The SOUND of the DOORBELL RINGING is heard. It catches the attention of Sarah. She looks down at Carl and smiles.

SARAH

That's probably Michael and Evan.

She pulls the straw and glass away and places it on the nightstand.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Do you feel up to seeing them?

Carl nods. Sarah moves out of the room. Carl looks over at the wall.

The door is fully formed now.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The DOORBELL RINGS again, about the time that Sarah gets to the door, coming from the hallway. She goes over to the front door and opens it, revealing Mr. Hunt standing there. Sarah's surprised.

SARAH

Mr. Hunt.

MR. HUNT

Hello Mrs. Green. I'm sorry to disturb you, but I brought this for Carl. It's from the kids in his class.

He holds it out to her and she takes it.

SARAH

Thank you. Would you like to come in?

MR. HUNT

No, I really can't stay. Just tell Carl that I hope he feels better.

SARAH

I will.

Mr. Hunt turns and starts to go down the steps and Sarah shuts the door.

EXT. CARL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mr Hunt comes down the walkway to the sidewalk, at about the same time that Michael and Evan come up. Mr. Hunt looks up and sees them, then lowers his head and walks past them, embarrassed.

EVAN

(to Michael)

Who's that?

MICHAEL

Carl's teacher.

EVAN

Oh. Maybe he's bringing over Carl's homework.

MICHAEL

Probably.

They continue up the walkway to the house.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Carl is resting with his eyes closed when the door opens and Sarah comes in. Carl opens his eyes. Sarah comes over to his bed, with the package in her hand. Carl looks around, expecting someone.

CARL

Who was at the door?

SARAH

Your teacher. He brought you this. He says it's from your class.

CARL

(surprised)

Really?

SARAH

Do you want to open it?

Carl nods. Sarah hands it to him.

The SOUND of the DOORBELL RINGING is heard, which catches both of their attentions.

SARAH (CONT'D)

That will be Michael and Evan.

Sarah exits through the door and Carl begins opening the package.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sarah comes out of the hallway and to the front door and opens it. Standing there are Michael and Evan. She smiles.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Hi you two.

The two of them come in. Michael gives Sarah a peck on the cheek as he comes in. Evan, looking a little paler, turns to Sarah.

EVAN

Can I see Carl?

SARAH

Sure, he's been waiting for you.

Evan goes down the hallway and OUT of SCENE. Michael goes over to the couch and wearily sits down. Sarah looks concerned.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Evan looks a little pale.

Michael looks up at Sarah and she can see that there are tears in his eyes and looks like he is about to cry. She goes over and sits on the couch next to him.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Michael?

Michael puts his head on Sarah's shoulder and begins to sob. Sarah puts her hand on his head and comforts him.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carl is in his bed. On his lap are cards and pictures that he has taken out of the open box. He has one in his hand and is reading it, tears streaming down his face.

Evan comes into the room and sees Carl and becomes concerned. Carl looks up at him and wipes his eyes.

EVAN

Carl, what's wrong?

Evan comes over to Carl's bed.

CARL
They don't hate me.

EVAN
Who?

CARL
The kids in my class.
(indicates cards)
Look, they wrote me get well cards
and Christmas cards, telling me how
much they miss me. I even got one
from Tommy, the kid who used to pick
on me all the time. They hope I'm
feeling better and want to know when
I'm coming back to school.

Evan sits down on Carl's bed and looks at the cards.

EVAN
(quietly strained)
That's great Carl.

Carl notes the strain in his voice. Evan reaches over and
picks up one of the cards and looks at it.

CARL
You okay?

EVAN
Yeah.

CARL
Evan, tell me.

EVAN
I'm never going to get cards like
this. I'm never going to go to a
real school, or play with other kids.

CARL
Sure you will, just as soon as you
get better.

EVAN
(quietly)
I'm not going to get better.

CARL
You're not?

Evan shakes his head.

CARL (CONT'D)

How do you know?

EVAN

I heard the doctor talking to my dad. They didn't know I was listening. I don't have to go in for treatments any more. I'm getting sicker Carl and I'm scared.

CARL

Of dying?

EVAN

Of being alone. When you, you know, your grandfather will be there when that door opens, just like he said.

CARL

I know.

EVAN

I don't have a grandfather or a grandmother, or brothers and sisters or aunts and uncles. Who's going to be waiting for me?

CARL

I will.

EVAN

(tearfully)
You promise?

CARL

(nods)
Promise. I'll be there, when the door opens. Okay?

Evan nods.

EXT. HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

The sun has just gone down. On the house are Christmas lights, just going on.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM

The cards from Carl's classmates are taped onto the wall so Carl can see them.

On top of the dresser across from his bed is a small artificial tree complete with ornaments and tinsel.

Sarah fiddles with the tree, getting the ornaments just right. She stops and looks at the tree, then reaches over and turns on the lights on. The tree sparkles with lots of little lights.

Carl is laying down on his bed watching what his mother is doing. He looks very weak.

Smiling, Sarah turns around.

SARAH
What do you think?

CARL
It's nice.

SARAH
Not a bad piece of work, if I do say
so.

Sarah comes over to Carl and sits next to him on the chair.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Need anything.

Carl looks over at the wall. The door is fully formed and there is a little light escaping around the edges. Carl looks up at his mother. He looks a little better than he did a few moments ago.

CARL
Mom, remember when we'd get in the
car and drive around and look at all
the Christmas lights?

SARAH
Of course I do.

CARL
I want to see the Christmas lights
mom. I want to go and see them
tonight.

SARAH
I'm not sure that's a good idea. I
really don't think you're strong
enough.

CARL
But I want to see them.

SARAH
Carl, that's crazy. You're too sick.
The doctor said--

CARL
Mom, please.

SARAH
I don't know. I...

Carl looks up at her with tears in his eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(finally)
I'll see what I can do.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

It's dark and the street is quiet.

The front door opens and Michael comes out carrying Carl, who is wrapped in several blankets. Carl is wearing his cap. Evan comes out right behind him, with Sarah bringing up the rear, locking the door behind her.

Michael moves towards the car.

MICHAEL
Evan, get the back door.

EVAN
Okay dad.

Evan goes on ahead of his dad and opens up the back seat of the car. Michael gingerly puts Carl into the back seat and Evan shuts the door. Michael goes to the driver's side and gets in. Sarah and Evan do the same.

The car starts up and backs down the driveway.

INT. CAR

Evan is sitting next to Carl with his arm over Carl's shoulder, supporting him.

MICHAEL
(to Carl and Evan)
Are you warm enough back there, boys?

CARL
Yes sir.

EVAN
It's fine dad.

MICHAEL
Where do you want to go first?

SARAH

I think I know.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A residential street that looks like a fairyland. Almost every house is brightly decorated with strings of lights on Roofs, yards, and eaves. There are animated decorations on the lawns.

There are cars and people on the street taking in the sights, including Michael's car.

INT. CAR

Michael is driving down the street and taking in the sights. Evan is excited as he looks all around at the lights. Carl looks out the window.

MICHAEL

This is amazing.

SARAH

(to Carl)

Carl, can you see the lights?

CARL

Yes Mom. They're so beautiful.

Evan points over to a particular house.

EVAN

Look at that house Carl.

The two of them look over at a particularly lit-up house. Carl smiles.

EVAN (CONT'D)

This is so cool.

Carl continues to look out the window, smiling. A tear runs down his face.

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sarah opens the door to Carl's bedroom and Michael, carrying Carl in his arms goes over to the bed. Sarah takes off the blankets and between the two of them, get him into bed and put the covers up to his chest.

Evan comes into the room and watches Michael and Sarah put Carl into his bed. His glance goes over to the wall, but he can't see anything. He then looks over at Carl who has seen him looking at the wall.

Sarah leans over and kisses him on the forehead.

SARAH
Now young man, you get some rest.

CARL
I will mom, I promise.

SARAH
You need anything?

CARL
I'm okay.

MICHAEL
Pleasant dreams Carl.

CARL
Thank you Mr. Stanton.

MICHAEL
Say good night Evan. Carl needs to rest.

Michael and Sarah move towards the door. Evan comes over to Carl and gives him a hug.

CARL
(whispers)
Goodbye Evan.

Evan looks at Carl, understanding what he means. Carl manages a weak smile.

EVAN
(whispers)
Soon?

Carl nods.

EVAN (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Remember your promise.

CARL
I will. You're my best friend. I'll see ya.

EVAN
See ya.
(tears up a little)
Carl...

CARL
(smiles)
It's okay. You won't be alone.
I'll be close by.

Evan nods and gets up, joining his dad. Taking Evan's hand, the two of them go to the door. Evan looks over his shoulder at Carl, who raises his hand in a wave as Evan and his dad exit the bedroom.

Sarah goes over to the Christmas tree and is about to turn the lights off.

CARL (CONT'D)
Mom?

SARAH
(turns)
Yes Carl?

CARL
Could you leave the lights on for a little while longer?

SARAH
Sure. Good night Carl.

CARL
Good night. I love you mom.

SARAH
I love you too. Get some sleep.

Sarah goes to the door and turns out the light. The Christmas tree is the only light in the room. Carl looks over at the wall. There is light coming from around the edges of the door.

CARL
(Whispers)
I'm ready Opa.

CARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is late night in Carl's room, and Carl is asleep in his bed. The SOUND of a SOFT CREAKING is heard and a sliver of light falls on Carl's face. Carl opens his eyes and squints into the light.

The door that has been emerging from the wall is opening and a bright light emanates from it. As Carl watches, the door opens fully, filling Carl's bedroom with light. Carl raises himself on his elbow and watches the door open.

A low mist comes out of the door and into the room. Carl shields his eyes from the light.

A figure moves from the light, moving from far away towards the opening of the door.

Carl sees the figure coming and recognizes who it is.

CARL (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 Opa?

Opa is standing at the opening of the door, dressed as he always dressed, with a big smile on his face. He kneels down and opens his arms.

CARL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 (Joyous)
 Opa!

From OFF SCREEN, Carl comes running into Opa's arms, but it is a Carl dressed in sneakers, jeans and a striped shirt, but instead of a cap, a full head of hair.

Carl hugs Opa tightly as Opa wraps his arms around Carl lifting him into the air as he stands. Opa looks over Carl's shoulder.

Carl lays peacefully in his bed.

Opa smiles sadly for a moment. He then sets Carl on the floor and straightens up. Carl looks up at him, smiling and he smiles back.

Taking Carl's hand, Opa leads him towards the source of the light. The door closes silently after them, and then, having shut, fades slowly away leaving a blank wall and Carl laying in his bed, a peaceful smile on his face.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's afternoon and Sarah, Evan and Michael stand beside Carl's open grave site. All three are dressed in black. Evan stands next to his dad holding a red rose, his dad's hand on his shoulder. Sarah is silently weeping.

Set apart from the three of them is PHILLIP (mid 30's), Carl's father. He is also dressed in somber clothing.

After a moment, Evan walks over to the open grave and throws the rose onto the casket. Overcome, he turns and runs over to his dad. Michael picks him up and holds him while he silently cries.

Sarah, and Michael walk away from the grave, Michael carries Evan. Phillip moves over to intercept the group. Sarah sees him.

SARAH
(to Michael)
I'll catch up to you. Wait for me.

MICHAEL
Are you sure you want to do this?

SARAH
I owe it to Carl, don't you think?

Michael nods. Sarah stops and allows Phillip to catch up with her as Michael and Evan continue walking. She turns to face him.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Hello Phillip.

PHILLIP
Sarah.

SARAH
Thank you for coming.

PHILLIP
He was my son too.

SARAH
I know.

PHILLIP
How are you?

SARAH
I'll be fine.

PHILLIP
Sarah, I'm... I'm so sorry, about--

SARAH
No, don't apologize. I understand, I really do. It was hard for all of us. We just handled it differently.

PHILLIP
(angry)
Don't judge me Sarah!

SARAH
(calmly)
I'm not. You did what you had to do.

PHILLIP

What happens now? What about us?

SARAH

Carl's gone, Phillip. There is no 'us' anymore.

PHILLIP

You're still my wife.

SARAH

Not for long. I've moved on with my life.

PHILLIP

(indicates Michael)

With your 'boy scout' over there?

SARAH

Michael was there when Carl and I needed him. Over the past few months, we've gotten very close. He needs me now, you don't.

PHILLIP

Sarah.

SARAH

There's nothing more to say. Goodbye.

She turns and walks away from him, leaving him there, standing. After a few steps, she stops and turns back to him.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Phillip, Carl loved you very much. I thought you should know that.

That being said, she turns and continues on her way. She gets to the car and Michael hugs her and the three of them get into the car.

Phillip turns and goes back to the grave site. Putting his face in his hands, he weeps bitterly.

EXT. EVAN'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

INT. EVAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The door opens and Michael comes in, carrying Evan, who has his arms wrapped around his dad's neck, his head on his dad's shoulder.

After shutting the door, Michael crosses over to the couch and sits on it, still holding Evan, rocking him slightly, comforting him for a few moments.

MICHAEL

Why don't you go lay down for awhile
and I'll make us some hot chocolate.
Would you like that?

Evan nods and then straightens up and gets off of his dad's lap. There are tears in Evan's eyes and on his cheeks. Michael gently wipes the tears away with his thumbs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I know we're going to miss him, but
Carl's with his grandfather now, and
he doesn't hurt anymore. You believe
that don't you?

EVAN

(nods)
Is Carl's mom gonna be okay?

MICHAEL

She just wants to be alone right
now. We'll see her later for dinner.

Evan nods.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Now, you go lay down and I'll bring
you the hot chocolate when it's done.

Evan nods again and then heads down towards his room, Michael watching after him, tears forming in his eyes. He turns away from watching Evan and wipes the tears out of his eyes as well.

INT. EVAN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Evan opens the door and goes into the room. It's dark because of the shades being down, so Evan turns on the light. He comes over to the bed and sits down on it, head down, dejected.

He lifts up his head and sees something that catches his attention.

The outline of a door is pushing it's way out of the wall, stretching the paint as it did in Carl's room. Evan looks at it curiously and stands up.

He goes over to the window and opens the shade so that the light streams in. It doesn't change anything, the door's outline is still there.

Frightened, he moves quickly towards the door to his room, keeping one eye on the emerging door as he moves, staying as far away from it as he can.

EVAN

Dad?!

Evan gets to the door of his room.

EVAN (CONT'D)

(Calls down the hall)

Dad?!

MICHAEL (O.S.)

What is it Evan?

Evan is about to answer him when realization hits him. Smiling, he turns his attention back to the hallway.

EVAN

(calls down the hall)

Could I get some of those little marshmallows in my hot chocolate?

MICHAEL (O.S.)

No problem.

Evan turns back to the door on the wall. Still smiling, he walks over to it and runs his fingers over the bulge forming under the paint.

EVAN

I won't be alone, will I Carl? You'll be there, waiting for me, just like you promised.

(whispers)

I'm not scared anymore.

Evan runs his fingers over the frame.

FADE OUT