

Through An Angel's Eyes

FADE IN:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL FRONT YARD - NIGHT

LAGRANGE, GEORGIA -- 1955

A storm brews in the distance. Lightning flashes.

A TALL MAN wearing a wide-brimmed Stetson hat stands sullen staring at a house. The hat's brim hides his eyes.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

KITCHEN

The room is dark.

A shaded light bulb hangs from the ceiling casting a circle of light over a table cluttered with liquor, beer bottles, and money, where FIVE MEN play poker, filling the air with cigar and cigarette smoke.

They're all near drunk and sport hard, mean faces.

The DEALER holds the cards. He speaks over a cigar to a MAN with a JAGGED SCAR below one eye seated across from him.

DEALER

Bet's to you.

The scarred man studies his hand.

SCARRED MAN

I'm thinkin'.

DEALER

With what?

The scarred man looks up from his cards.

SCARRED MAN

Don't you get sassy with me. I'll cut your damn heart out.

The dealer brings a .45 from his side and rests it on the table in his hand.

The remaining THREE MEN smile coyly.

DEALER

I'm shakin'.

The two men exchange cold stares.

DEALER

Bet's to you. You in, or out?

A gold coin flies from outside the light to the hands pot in the middle of the table.

The men are spooked. They pull their guns.

A wooden match strikes in the dark. The tall man in the Stetson hat lights a cigarette.

The dealer jumps from his seat and turns the hanging light on the intruder whose face is shadowed.

The tall man flips the match. It lands still lit, straight up, atop the gold coin engraved with an angel that slays the devil.

TALL MAN

I'm in.

The men stare from the lit match to its sender.

DEALER

Who are you? A cop?

One MAN takes notice of the uninvited's stature.

MAN

They don't make cops that tall.

DEALER

I'm gonna ask you one more time --  
Who are you?

Thunder rumbles.

TALL MAN

Your destiny.

The men look to each other and laugh.

The scarred man pops a switchblade.

SCARRED MAN

I got your destiny right here, boy.

DEALER

(to scarred man)  
Send him to hell.

TALL MAN

Let's all go together.

The tall man sweeps his open hand across the room.

Pitch blackness and blood-curdling screams surround the burning match.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The house explodes into a ball of fire.

Lightning bolts cross in the sky, the rain pours.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING

A BOY on a bike throws rolled newspapers to yards from a front basket.

FRONT YARD

A MAN, JESS LYNCH, 70, with snow-white hair, picks up his morning paper. He strips the rubber band and opens it to the headline that reads:

"HOUSE EXPLOSION REMAINS A MYSTERY"

Jess turns back to the two-story white-framed house, still reading.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

BEDROOM

BUCK LYNCH, a twelve-year-old boy with average looks and serious eyes, finishes dressing.

KITCHEN

DELL LYNCH, Buck's GRANDMOTHER, is 65 and wears her hair in a tight bun. She takes a pan of biscuits from the oven...

DELL

Buck?!

...and sets them on the stove top, then walks to the door at the foyer.

DELL

Buck!

BUCK'S BEDROOM

Buck ties his black, high-top sneakers.

DELL (O.S.)  
Get on down here! You gonna be late  
for school!

BUCK  
I'm comin', Grandma!

Buck grabs his book satchel.

He runs to a chest of drawers where a statue of a winged angel with outstretched arms rests atop it. Behind the statue a framed picture of another angel watches over two children that cross a footbridge.

Buck drops the satchel, bows his head and clasps his fingers together. He mumbles a prayer, then looks up at the angel.

BUCK  
Amen.

HALLWAY

Buck gingerly opens a closed door...

BEDROOM

...and looks in.

Buck's MOTHER, ESTELLE LYNCH, mid-30's with a pretty face, lies in bed. She turns her head toward the door and smiles.

BUCK  
Didn't know if you were asleep.

ESTELLE  
Not asleep.

Buck walks to the bed.

BUCK  
You all right, Mama? You feel okay?

Estelle pushes the hair off Buck's forehead.

ESTELLE  
Will you quit worrying about me?  
I'm fine.

BUCK  
You're not fine, Mama -- How do you  
feel today?

Estelle looks upon her son's face with a quiet smile.

ESTELLE

So-so.

BUCK

Why don't you try gettin' up? You could sit in your wheelchair. It might make you feel better.

ESTELLE

I don't have the energy -- And where would I go but this room?

BUCK

We need a one-story house.

DELL (O.S.)

Buck!

ESTELLE

We have what we have -- Go on now. You'll be late for school.

BUCK

When I get home we'll watch TV together -- Play a board game or something.

ESTELLE

I'll look forward to it.

DELL (O.S.)

Buck Lynch!

Buck starts for the door.

BUCK

If you need anything you call Grandma.

ESTELLE

I will. Go on.

DELL (O.S.)

Buck!

BUCK

I'm comin', Grandma!

He looks back to his mother.

Estelle smiles and waves goodbye.

KITCHEN

Buck rushes in...

DELL  
You gonna be late.

...grabs a biscuit off the stove.

BUCK  
I'm never late.

DELL  
There's jam on the table.

Buck halves the biscuit with his fingers then scoops the jam with a butter knife and spreads it.

Jess sits at the table reading the morning paper.

BUCK  
What's the news, Granddaddy?

Jess never looks up.

JESS  
It says: "Buck Lynch to be expelled from school if late one more time."

Buck hits the screen door with his sack lunch in one hand, satchel in the other, and biscuit in his mouth.

BUCK  
(over the biscuit)  
I'm never late.

Two cats rush in. The door slams. One cat arches his back and hisses.

DELL  
(to cat)  
Git!

The cat scurries.

Dell walks to the door and stares out.

DELL  
Just not fair... him havin' nobody but us.

Jess looks up from the paper.

JESS  
Our daughter's not dead yet, Dell.

DELL  
Don't you look at me like that,  
Jess Lynch. You know what I mean.

Jess sighs.

JESS  
You'd think a crippling car wreck  
would have been enough for one soul  
to bear in a lifetime.

Dell steps to Jess' side. She touches the hair on the back of his head.

DELL  
You'd think.

Dell looks down at the newspaper's headline.

DELL  
See they still don't know what  
happened at the Callahan house.

JESS  
Don't 'spect nobody cares.

He turns the page.

JESS  
Crime rate's gone straight down  
since them boys left us.

A dinner bell rings from the floor above.

Dell looks to the ceiling.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Buck races down the sidewalk.

A BOY, J.P., Buck's age with a crew-cut and freckles, comes up from behind on a bike.

J.P. slows, pulls alongside Buck.

J.P.  
When you gonna get a bike?

Buck doesn't break stride.

BUCK  
When I want one, J.P.



J.P.  
You don't want one?

BUCK  
Don't have one, do I?

J.P.  
Boy, you crazy.

BUCK  
You looked in a mirror lately?

J.P. laughs.

J.P.  
You wanna go to the picture show  
Saturday? Ten Commandments is on.

BUCK  
I dunno. What's it about?

J.P.  
What's it about?!

He laughs.

J.P.  
Boy, you are crazy!

J.P. speeds away.

Buck knows it was a stupid question.

BUCK  
Damn.

INT. SCHOOL - LATER THAT MORNING

CLASSROOM

MISS ANITA FERKING, mid-40's, old-maid looks and SCHOOL  
TEACHER, peers over the top of her glasses from behind her  
desk and the plaque that bears her name.

MISS FERKING  
You're late.

Buck stands by his desk.

BUCK  
Yes, ma'am.

MISS FERKING  
How many times have you been late  
this week, Buck?

BUCK  
I dunno, Miss Ferking.

Miss Ferking raises her eye brows.

BUCK  
Three times.

MISS FERKING  
And what day is... today?

BUCK  
Wednesday.

The other students laugh.

Miss Ferking scans the room with a frigid stare.

The class quietens.

MISS FERKING  
Why won't you be late tomorrow,  
Buck?

BUCK  
Tomorrow?  
(thinking)  
'cause I'll be on time?

Laughter in the class.

The look.

They quieten.

MISS FERKING  
Because you won't be here, Buck.

Buck's heart sinks.

Miss Ferking writes on a sheet of paper. She folds it and  
holds it out to Buck.

MISS FERKING  
Take this and report to the  
principal's office.

BUCK  
Yes, ma'am.

Buck takes the note, retrieves his satchel and lunch, then starts for the door with his head hung.

Miss Ferking continues with her class.

HOSS, the class BULLY and biggest of the kids, loads a spitball into the rubber band between his fingers.

Buck reaches the door.

Hoss launches the spitball to the side of Buck's face.

BUCK

Ow!

The class goes quiet.

Everyone stares at Buck.

MISS FERKING

(to Buck)

Now what?!

Buck looks at Hoss who returns a mean pair of 'snake eyes.'

BUCK

I... I stepped on my foot.

The class laughs.

Buck stares at Hoss with his own 'snake eyes.'

Hoss drags his middle finger slowly down his face. He mouths, 'bastard boy' to Buck.

Buck takes a step toward Hoss before catching himself.

He leaves, defeated.

I/E. LYNCH RESIDENCE - NIGHT

BUCK'S BEDROOM

Buck stares at the angel atop the chest of drawers, his fingers interlaced under his chin.

BUCK

I was just kiddin' about the Ten Commandments.

(reassuring)

I know about 'em.

Thunder rumbles in the distance.

A gust of wind flaps the window curtains.

BUCK

Amen.

Hard rain begins to fall and blow in.

Buck rushes to the window.

Something outside catches his eye.

The tall man in the Stetson hat stands below his window in the pouring rain, looking up, his face hidden.

Lightning flashes.

Buck's eyes squint.

He looks back to the yard below. The tall man is gone.

Buck sticks his head out the window and looks up and down the street.

The rain drives him back.

He closes the window and draws the curtains.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Buck's hotfooting it down the sidewalk with satchel and lunch in hand.

J.P. comes from behind on his bike.

J.P.

Where you goin'?

BUCK

To school you fool.

J.P.

I thought you got kicked out yesterday?

BUCK

I gotta spend the rest of the week in the principal's office -- Do my studies there.

J.P.

Maybe you'll be there when he calls Miss Ferking in.

Buck doesn't get it.

BUCK  
Why would he do that?

J.P.  
Because she's Anita Ferkin'.

J.P. laughs.

BUCK  
Ha-ha.

J.P.  
Boy, when you gonna get a crew-cut?

BUCK  
When you gonna shut-up?

J.P. speeds away.

J.P.  
Never!

BUCK  
Ditto!

Buck speeds up.

INT. SCHOOL - LATER THAT MORNING

OUTSIDE THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Buck sits at a desk working a math problem outside PRINCIPAL RALEIGH STERN'S private office, his name across the clear glass of the door.

PRINCIPAL STERN'S OFFICE

Principal Stern, an older, balding man, looks at his pocket watch.

AT THE OFFICE DOOR

Principal Stern steps out and addresses Buck.

PRINCIPAL STERN  
You may attend morning break.

Buck closes the book.

BUCK  
Thank you, sir.

Buck stands.

PRINCIPAL STERN  
Be sure you're back in that desk at  
the proper time now.

BUCK  
Yes, sir.

Buck walks away.

PRINCIPAL STERN  
Buck.

Buck turns around.

BUCK  
Sir?

Principal Stern holds one finger up.

PRINCIPAL STERN  
Time... waits for no man.

A beat through Buck's stare.

BUCK  
Thank you, Principal Stern. I'll  
remember that.

PRINCIPAL STERN  
I believe I see a gleam of hope in  
you -- Don't let me down.

BUCK  
No, sir. I wouldn't.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - MINUTES LATER

Buck walks the schoolyard alone.

Hoss and some boys pass a football as others horseplay.

As Buck passes by a group of girls they murmur to themselves  
and giggle.

Buck knows they're laughing at him. He ignores them and walks  
on.

HOSS  
Hey, Buck-duck!

Buck hears, but ignores Hoss, too.

J.P. is standing by Hoss.

J.P.  
Why you callin' him, duck?

HOSS  
Ain't callin' him nothin'. Just  
givin' advice.

Hoss throws the football with full force toward Buck.

J.P.  
Buck! Duck!

The ball hits Buck in the back of his head.

Buck turns to face Hoss and the other boys.

All but J.P. laugh.

J.P.  
I told you to duck!

HOSS  
(to Buck)  
Throw the ball back, butt-head!

Buck picks up the ball and throws it in the opposite direction.

The boys stop laughing. They run toward Buck. J.P. follows.

Hoss and the boys stop just short of Buck.

HOSS  
Go get it!

BUCK  
You go get it!

Hoss punches Buck in his stomach. He falls to the ground.

HOSS  
Get up, bastard boy, and get that  
ball... 'fore I kick you over there  
to it.

Buck stares up at Hoss.

J.P.  
Don't call him that, Hoss.

Hoss balls his fist up at J.P.

HOSS  
You want some, too?!

J.P.

No.

HOSS

Then shut up!

J.P. takes a step back.

HOSS

That's what he is. A bastard boy.  
Ain't got no daddy.

J.P.

Buck -- Get up.

Buck sighs. He rolls to his knees, then stops and stares across the school yard.

On the other side of a chain link fence Buck sees the tall man in the Stetson hat turn and walk away.

HOSS (O.S.)

You gettin' up, bastard boy... or  
what?

Buck's eyes narrow. He jumps to his feet with a clenched fist and pops Hoss right between his eyes.

Hoss falls flat on his back.

BUCK

Getcha own damn ball -- Hoss shit!

Buck looks at the other boys. They all step back.

Hoss sits up and shakes the cobwebs from his head.

J.P. smiles at Buck with admiration.

J.P.

Boy, you really are crazy.

Buck looks back to the fence. The tall man is gone.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - EVENING

KITCHEN

Buck, Dell and Jess eat their supper, quietly.

JESS

(to Buck)

Not sayin' much tonight.



BUCK  
I'm just thinkin'.

JESS  
Thought you did enough of that at  
school?

Dell scolds Jess with her eyes.

Jess presses on.

JESS  
Whatcha got on your mind, Buck?  
Might as well spit it out. You know  
I'll find out anyway.

Buck puts his fork down. He pulls a folded sheet of paper  
from his pocket and holds it out to his grandfather.

BUCK  
You gotta sign this.

Jess takes the paper.

JESS  
What's this?

BUCK  
Note from Miss Ferking.

JESS  
Miss Ferking?

Jess pulls the reading glasses from his shirt pocket.

BUCK  
I been late every day... except  
today.

Jess looks up from the paper.

JESS  
This is dated yesterday.

DELL  
(to Jess)  
We're not supposed to talk about  
such at the table.

JESS  
He handed it to me!

BUCK  
It's too far to walk, Granddaddy!

JESS  
Get up earlier.

DELL  
(to Jess)  
You could drive him.

JESS  
And I do when it rains, but it  
ain't rainin'.  
(to Buck)  
Why's this dated yesterday?

Dell pushes her chair back, disgusted with Jess.

DELL  
Now nobody even knows what they've  
eat.

JESS  
I know what I've eat!

BUCK  
I was supposed to bring it back  
signed today. Principal Stern said  
if I didn't bring it back tomorrow  
I'd have to sit in his office all  
next week.

JESS  
So you lied?

BUCK  
'Bout the note?

JESS  
'Bout being late.

Dell stands -- picks up her plate.

DELL  
(to Jess)  
I had baked a deep-dish for you  
tonight.

JESS  
I'll eat it!

BUCK  
I didn't mean to, Granddaddy. I  
need a bike!

DELL  
 (to Jess)  
 No you won't!

JESS  
 (to Dell)  
 What?!  
 (to Buck)  
 Lyin's got nothin' to do with  
 gettin' somewhere.

Dell picks up Jess' plate.

JESS  
 I'm not through with that.

DELL  
 Yes you are!

The bell rings from the second floor.

Dell sets the dinner plates on the counter.

DELL  
 I'm comin', Estelle!

Jess looks up at Dell as she passes...

JESS  
 Dell?!

...then back to the note. He sighs at Buck.

BUCK  
 I need a bike, Granddaddy.

Jess stares at his grandson for a moment, then pulls out his pocket watch and opens the case.

JESS  
 You know what this is, Buck?

BUCK  
 Your pocket watch.

JESS  
 No. It's a railroad pocket watch,  
 because it has to be precise. I  
 watched my Daddy check this watch  
 every time he heard that train  
 whistle blow, until he passed on  
 and left it to me. Now I do the  
 same thing, and I'm never late. Old  
 habits are hard to break...

(MORE)

JESS (cont'd)  
 especially when they're handed down  
 -- Could be you need this watch  
 now, more than me.

A beat.

BUCK  
 Could I have the bike first?

Jess' stare turns to a smile.

BUCK'S BEDROOM - LATER

Buck is in his pajamas. He stands in front of the angel, his fingers interlaced under his chin.

BUCK  
 It don't have to be a new one. I  
 don't even care if the paint's  
 scratched.

ESTELLE (O.S.)  
 Buck?

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Buck opens the door.

BUCK  
 Yes, Mama?

ESTELLE  
 Thought you'd forgot me.

Buck steps inside.

BUCK  
 Now that's about the silliest thing  
 I ever heard of.

Estelle pats the bed.

Buck lays atop the cover next to her.

Estelle turns to face him. She pushes his hair back.

ESTELLE  
 It was silly of me.

BUCK  
 I'd never forget you, Mama. I'll  
 always take care of you.

Estelle whispers...

ESTELLE  
I know that.

...kisses his cheek.

ESTELLE  
You're my man.

Buck stares at the ceiling.

BUCK  
Mama?

ESTELLE  
Hmmm?

BUCK  
How come you and Daddy never got  
married?

A beat.

ESTELLE  
All this time you've never asked --  
Why now?

BUCK  
I wanted to -- Just didn't.

ESTELLE  
Some men aren't the marrying kind,  
Buck -- Sometimes a woman doesn't  
find that out soon enough.

BUCK  
He didn't love us?

ESTELLE  
He never knew you.

BUCK  
He know of me?

Estelle really doesn't want to discuss it.

ESTELLE  
He didn't want to be a daddy,  
either.

Buck thinks.

BUCK  
Do you miss him?

Estelle's eyes smile.

ESTELLE  
I miss dancing more.

BUCK  
I remember dancing with you.

ESTELLE  
Do you?

Buck nods.

BUCK  
Well where's he...

Estelle puts a finger to Buck's lips.

ESTELLE  
I don't know, Buck -- I haven't  
heard from him in years.

BUCK  
Does he know where we live?

Estelle stares.

ESTELLE  
He knows.

BUCK  
I don't even know what he looks  
like. There's not a picture of him  
anywhere.

ESTELLE  
He looks like you, Buck.

BUCK  
(sarcastic)  
He looks twelve?

Estelle laughs.

ESTELLE  
He's tall.

BUCK  
How tall?

Estelle blows a long breath.

ESTELLE  
Tall, tall.

Buck presses his face into a pillow.

ESTELLE  
Taller than me.

Buck raises his eyes to his mother.

BUCK  
Does he wear a hat?

Estelle turns and lies flat.

ESTELLE  
He used to, sometimes -- No more  
talk about the past. I'm tired.  
Give me a kiss night.

They touch lips, lightly.

Buck starts for the door.

BUCK  
If you need me you just call out.

ESTELLE  
I will. Good night, Buck.

Estelle turns away from Buck, her eyes sad.

ESTELLE  
Sleep tight.

Buck stands in the doorway looking back with his own sadness.

BUCK  
Night, Mama.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LAGRANGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Buck and J.P. exit the theatre with others. The marquee above them reads, The Ten Commandments.

J.P.  
Man! That's the best movie I ever  
seen!

They walk up the street.

BUCK  
It was too long.

J.P. laughs.

J.P.  
You thought it was over at  
intermission.

BUCK  
So? You didn't?

J.P.  
Course not! How could it end like  
that? Charlton Heston hadn't even  
got the Ten Commandments yet...

BUCK  
You mean, Moses.

J.P.  
...or parted the water.

J.P. holds his arms out and stretches them apart.

J.P.  
Behold His mighty Hand!

BUCK  
I liked Yul Brynner best.

They walk on.

J.P.  
Wanna get a shake at the drug  
store?

Buck feels in his pockets and pulls out two nickels. He puts  
them back.

BUCK  
I'm not thirsty.

J.P.  
You will be after you drink the  
shake.

They stop for the traffic light.

BUCK  
I gotta get home.

The light changes. J.P. leaves Buck on the corner.

J.P.  
See ya Monday.

He stops in the middle of the street and shouts back to Buck.



J.P.  
Hey, Buck! You know the Yanks  
clinched yesterday?!

BUCK  
Clinched what?

J.P. laughs.

J.P.  
Boy, go home and read the paper!

Buck looks across the street. He sees the tall man in the Stetson hat standing on the opposite corner.

The light changes.

Buck crosses the street with other pedestrians, his eyes locked on the stranger.

The tall man lights a cigarette then turns and walks down the street ahead of Buck.

Buck follows.

A group of kids run by Buck. They block his vision.

One BOY turns back, his arms outstretched.

BOY  
Behold His mighty Hand!

The boy laughs as he turns and runs to catch up with the others.

The tall man is gone.

Buck stops and looks to both sides of the street for the disappearing stranger.

He walks on and passes an

ALLEY

where the tall man is waiting in the shadows, leaning against the brick wall and smoking a cigarette.

TALL MAN  
Where you headed, Buck?

Buck stops, his stare frozen to the man.

TALL MAN  
Said... where you headed?

Buck stutters.

BUCK

Home.

The man lifts his head. His face breaks into the light.  
He looks mid-30's, clean-shaven, his eyes bright copper.

TALL MAN

Whatcha staring at, boy?

BUCK

Your... your eyes.

The man moves off the wall and takes a long drag.

He takes his free hand and moves it across the cigarette,  
then rubs his palms together.

Buck sees the cigarette is gone. His eyes scan the ground for  
it.

TALL MAN

What's wrong with them?

Buck looks up.

BUCK

With what?

TALL MAN

My eyes.

BUCK

They're different.

He remembers.

BUCK

Hey -- You called me Buck.

TALL MAN

So I did.

BUCK

How do you know my name?

The man stares with no answer.

BUCK

I seen you outside my bedroom  
window -- School, too.

Suddenly it hits Buck.

BUCK  
Are you my daddy?

The tall man's copper eyes take all of Buck in.

TALL MAN  
Do I look like your daddy?

Buck just stares for a moment, absorbed with the stranger.

BUCK  
I was just kiddin' around -- I  
gotta go. I'll be late.

Buck walks away in a quick pace.

The tall man steps out of the alley. He calls out to Buck.

TALL MAN  
That's what it's all about, Buck --  
Time.

Buck spins around.

BUCK  
I'm sick of hearin' about...

The man is gone.

BUCK  
...time.

Buck turns and runs.

I/E. LYNCH RESIDENCE - EVENING

FOYER

Buck stands at the front screen door looking up and down the street that's quiet but for a passing car.

LIVING ROOM

Dell sits in a rocker crocheting.

Jess watches TV. He turns toward the foyer.

JESS  
(to Buck)  
What are you watchin' for?

FOYER

BUCK  
Nothin', Granddaddy.

Buck's eyes drift away.

BUCK'S BEDROOM - MORNING

An alarm clock rings.

Buck's eyes shoot open. He jumps out of bed.

MINUTES LATER

Dressed, Buck grabs his satchel and breaks for the door before remembering and quickly turning back to the angel. He drops his satchel and says a quick prayer.

BUCK  
Please make Mama well. You know I  
don't have a daddy. Amen.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Buck opens the door and looks in.

ESTELLE  
I'm awake.

Buck rushes to his mother.

BUCK  
I gotta go, Mama. I'll be late.

He kisses her cheek and leaves in a rush.

ESTELLE  
You eat a good breakfast now!

KITCHEN

The two cats lie close to the stove.

Dell's at the sink.

Jess reads the morning paper at the table.

A train is heard in the distance.

JESS  
Old 92's barrellin' this mornin'.

He pulls out his pocket watch and looks down at the cats.

JESS  
Yep, she's runnin' late.

Buck races into the kitchen, grabs a biscuit off the stove and steps on one of the cats' tails.

The cat screams then runs away chased by the other.

Jess puts the newspaper down.

JESS  
Boy, you're like a sudden storm!

Buck grabs a glass of milk off the table and guzzles it down.

DELL  
(to Buck)  
Don't forget your jam.

Buck grabs his satchel.

BUCK  
No time, Grandma. I'll be late.

JESS  
Get up earlier!

Buck hits the door like a whirlwind.

BUCK  
Gotta go!

Del grabs Buck's sack lunch off the counter and runs to the door.

DELL  
Buck! Your lunch!

Buck rushes back and grabs the sack from Dell's hand.

Dell catches Jess' eye with her stare.

Jess gives the paper a firm shake.

JESS  
It ain't rainin'.

INT. MISS FERKING'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Buck takes a seat at his desk. He's out of breath.

The tardy bell rings.

Miss Ferking looks up at the wall clock, then around the classroom. She spots Buck.

MISS FERKING

Well, Buck. That wasn't so hard was it?

BUCK

No, ma'am.

MISS FERKING

And what have we learned?

Buck swallows as he catches his breath.

BUCK

It's all about time, Miss Ferking.

Hoss sits in the back of the room frowning at Buck, rubbing the bruise between his eyes.

BUCK

It's all about time.

I/E. LYNCH RESIDENCE - NIGHT

BUCK'S BEDROOM

Buck lies in bed asleep.

He wakes suddenly and jumps out of bed, rushing to the window and looking out.

STREET

The tall man stands under the street light looking up at Buck. He lights a cigarette and walks away.

BUCK'S BEDROOM

Buck grabs his bathrobe.

EXT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

FRONT PORCH

Buck gently closes the door behind him. He looks down the street in the direction the tall man walked then starts down the steps.

CITY PARK

Buck comes to a small city park.

A Hoot Owl calls out followed by a Whippoorwill.

The tall man in the Stetson hat sits relaxed on a park bench, smoking his cigarette. He lifts his head to Buck, then his eyes to the starlit sky.

TALL MAN  
Beautiful night.

He brings his eyes back to Buck.

TALL MAN  
Wonderful, glorious night.

Buck can't break his stare.

BUCK  
Who are you?

TALL MAN  
Who do you think I am, Buck?

BUCK  
I don't know.

TALL MAN  
Every night, and every day you pray  
to..?

Buck knows there's only one answer.

BUCK  
An angel?

TALL MAN  
An angel.

Buck blinks, stares through his confusion.

BUCK  
You're an angel?

The tall man closes the cigarette up in his hand, then holds it out to Buck, empty.

TALL MAN  
So nice to make your acquaintance.

Reluctantly, Buck takes his hand.

He gasps at the angel's touch.

The tall man opens his hand and pulls it back. He motions Buck to the bench.

TALL MAN

Sit.

Buck sits. He stares down at his open hand.

BUCK

What was that... feeling?

TALL MAN

Just a touch of the spirit.

He smiles at Buck.

TALL MAN

Relayed through me.

Buck slides down the bench, away from the man.

BUCK

You're not an angel.

TALL MAN

Okay -- Why not?

BUCK

You don't have any wings.

TALL MAN

I don't fly.

BUCK

And angels don't smoke cigarettes.

The tall man leans back and crosses his arms.

TALL MAN

Why not?

BUCK

'Cause it's bad for your health --  
And because it's a sin.

TALL MAN

I have no health. And where is that  
written?

BUCK

Grandma says anything bad for your  
health is a sin.



TALL MAN  
That why your grandfather quit?

BUCK  
No, he had a...

TALL MAN  
Heart attack.

Buck has no comeback.

TALL MAN  
You pray to a porcelain angel for  
the relief of your mother's pain  
from the cancer within her body.  
You pray morning, you pray night --  
You pray everyday.

Buck's mouth falls open.

BUCK  
Are you here to make my mother  
well?!

TALL MAN  
I'm here to counsel you.

BUCK  
Whadda you mean?

TALL MAN  
Your life, death... your rebirth,  
is mapped and sealed.

BUCK  
I don't understand. All I prayed  
for was my mother to get well.

TALL MAN  
He, Almighty, has deemed you a  
chosen one. You will flourish in  
the glory of Eden, marked as His  
warrior, as I.

BUCK  
Eden?

TALL MAN  
Paradise.

A beat.

TALL MAN  
Heaven.

Buck's stunned.

BUCK  
I'm gonna be...

TALL MAN  
An angel... and my apprentice.

Buck nods.

BUCK  
I see -- Your name is?

TALL MAN  
Whatever you'd like.

BUCK  
All I know is you're tall.

TALL MAN  
Then call me, Tall Man.

BUCK  
Okay, Mr. Tall Man -- I believe  
you're about two cards short of a  
full deck.

Tall Man listens, amused.

BUCK  
I dunno how you know all you do  
about me, but if you was a real  
angel, you'd make my mother well.

TALL MAN  
All in time, Buck Lynch, all in  
time. Before I leave you, I will  
free your mother from her pain.

BUCK  
If you're an angel, do it now.

Tall Man's stare is certain.

TALL MAN  
It's not time yet.

Buck jumps up.

BUCK  
Time-time-time! Everything's about  
time! Go to bed on time, get up on  
time! Get to school on time!

He shouts.

BUCK  
It's all about time!

Dogs bark.

TALL MAN  
Yes, it is.

Buck flops back on the bench, exasperated.

He turns to Tall Man.

BUCK  
So what's Heaven look like?

TALL MAN  
Would you like to see?

BUCK  
How can I do that?

TALL MAN  
Through my eyes.

Buck stares.

The angel points to his eyes, then Buck's.

TALL MAN  
Close.

Buck closes his eyes.

Tall Man lifts his copper eyes to the stars. They brighten... as does the street light.

Buck gasps.

BUCK  
Oh, my!

Buck, eyes still closed, reaches an open hand to the twinkling sky.

A brilliant shooting star flashes by.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - MORNING

BUCK'S BEDROOM

An alarm clock rings.

Buck wakes, his arm extended in the air. He's confused.

MINUTES LATER

Buck finishes dressing.

DELL (O.S.)

Buck?!

Buck goes to his door and shouts.

BUCK

Okay! I heard you!

KITCHEN

Dell's standing by the stove. She looks over at Jess with a questioning stare that Jess returns.

BUCK'S BEDROOM

Buck picks up his satchel. He walks to the angel on the chest of drawers. He stares at the porcelain figure for a moment, then puts it in the top drawer.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Buck opens the door and looks in.

Estelle sees something different in his face.

ESTELLE

Buck? Are you all right?

BUCK

I didn't sleep good.

ESTELLE

Why not?

BUCK

Just didn't. I'll be late, I gotta go. I'll check on you when I get home.

ESTELLE

(hesitant)

Kisses.

BUCK

Kisses.

Buck closes the door.

Estelle stares.

KITCHEN

Buck grabs his lunch off the counter.

DELL  
 (to Buck)  
 I already jammed your biscuit for  
 you.

BUCK  
 I'm not hungry, Grandma.

He runs for the screen door.

DELL  
 You sick?

Buck throws the door back hard...

BUCK  
 No!

...and runs out.

Dell goes to the door.

Jess lets his paper flop.

JESS  
 Some kind of growin' stage?

Dell stares down the street.

DELL  
 I don't know.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Buck hotfoots it. He looks mad.

J.P. comes up from behind on his bike. He slows as he pulls  
 alongside Buck.

J.P.  
 Better pick it up, Buck. You don't  
 wanna be late.

Buck grabs the back of J.P.'s pants belt. J.P. and the bike  
 come to a halt.

J.P.  
 What are you doin'?!

A SHORT TIME LATER

Buck peddles the bike. J.P. sits atop the handle bars holding Buck's satchel.

J.P.  
You gonna wreck us!

The bike speeds away.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - LATER

Buck walks alone in deep thought.

J.P. talks with some other boys. He sees Buck and leaves the others.

J.P.  
Hey, Buck.

BUCK  
Hey.

J.P.  
What's wrong with you? I've known you since first grade. You ain't never acted like this before.

BUCK  
I'm just thinkin'.

J.P.  
'Bout what?

BUCK  
Stuff.

J.P.  
What kinda stuff?

Buck stops and jerks his head toward J.P.

BUCK  
Stuff-stuff!

J.P.  
Okay-okay!

They walk on.

J.P.  
Just don't be mad at me. Me and you buddies.

BUCK

I know.

Buck stops and turns to his friend

BUCK

J.P. -- You believe in angels?

J.P.

Angels?

HOSS (O.S.)

Hey, Lynch!

Hoss is coming toward the two with a group of boys.

J.P.

Uh-oh.

They face off.

Hoss grinds his fist into his other hand.

HOSS

My brother wants to talk to you.

Hoss' BROTHER pushes his way through the boys to the front. He's taller than the others.

BROTHER

Why don't you try pickin' on me  
instead of my little brother --  
Bastard boy.

Buck looks up at the boy and balls his fist by his side.

INT. SCHOOL - LATER SAME DAY

PRINCIPAL STERN'S OFFICE

Principal Stern sits behind his desk. He pats his fingers together as he thinks. Finally, he holds one finger up.

PRINCIPAL STERN

I will not tolerate bullying, or  
fighting, on school grounds. Is  
that understood?

He addresses Buck, Hoss and Hoss' brother who all sit across from him.

Hoss' brother rubs at the bruise between his eyes.

PRINCIPAL STERN  
Buck Lynch.

BUCK  
Yes, sir?

PRINCIPAL STERN  
I think you owe your fellow  
students an apology.

Buck stares at Principal Stern.

BUCK  
Sir?

PRINCIPAL STERN  
You heard me -- Apologize.

The brothers cut their eyes at Buck with a wry smirk.

Buck gives a long sigh. He turns toward the boys then back to  
Principal Stern.

BUCK  
No, sir.

PRINCIPAL STERN  
What did you say?

Buck's body goes limp in the chair.

BUCK  
Said, no, sir. I won't.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - EVENING

KITCHEN

Buck, Dell and Jess eat their supper.

Jess puts his fork down and stretches back.

JESS  
(to Dell)  
Did you bake a deep-dish?

DELL  
Mr. Johnson's apples looked poorly,  
and his peaches just as bad.  
There's still cake from the other  
night if you want it.



JESS

No... just wanted to make sure  
there weren't a deep-dish loomin'  
about.

He turns to Buck.

JESS

Spit it out.

Buck stops eating.

DELL

Jess?

Jess hands Dell his plate.

JESS

I'm finished, thank you.

Buck reaches into his pocket for the folded note. He holds it  
out to his grandfather.

DELL

(to Jess)

You beat all I ever seen.

Dell takes her and Jess' plate as she leaves the table.

DELL

I'm gonna check on Estelle.

Jess puts his glasses on and reads the note.

Buck stares straight ahead.

Jess lays his glasses and the note on the table.

JESS

What's wrong, son?

BUCK

Hoss and his brother picked on me,  
Granddaddy. I couldn't apologize  
for somethin' I didn't do.

JESS

I believe you, Buck. Plus I know  
those boys' family. The apple don't  
fall far from the tree. What I'm  
askin' is what's wrong with you?  
Why'd you act like that this  
morning?

Buck's hesitant.

BUCK

Last night I dreamed I was talkin'  
to this angel 'bout savin' Mama...  
Then he showed me Heaven, and it  
was like...

Buck pauses.

BUCK

I can't even say what it was like,  
Granddaddy. I don't know if there  
are words for it -- Then I woke up.  
I can't explain it. I just felt...  
cheated.

Jess' love for his grandson sparkles in his eyes.

JESS

I 'spect if I saw Heaven then woke  
up here, I'd feel cheated to --  
I'll talk to Principal Stern  
tomorrow. No need for you to miss  
your school work 'cause of this.

BUCK

Maybe he could let me sit in his  
office again. I'll tell him I'm  
sorry about everything.

JESS

You can tell him you're sorry 'bout  
disruptin' school, but we ain't  
apologizin' to them boys.

Jess puts his reading glasses back in his shirt pocket.

JESS

I whipped their granddaddy for  
messin' with me over fifty-years  
ago on that same playground.

BUCK

Did you get in trouble for it?

JESS

Let's just say it was worth every  
extra log I had to split... and  
then some.

Buck hugs Jess' neck.

BUCK  
I love you, Granddaddy.

Jess' embarrassed by the sudden attention, but he loves it.

JESS  
Go on outside and enjoy the evenin'  
'fore it's bedtime.

Buck, very serious.

BUCK  
You ever have a dream like that?  
See Heaven?

Jess smiles with his eyes.

JESS  
I see heaven every time I look at  
your grandmother.

Dell steps in from the foyer.

Jess looks up at her.

JESS  
You eavesdroppin'?

DELL  
Maybe.

JESS  
(to Buck)  
Go on outside now.

Buck leaves by the screen door.

Dell walks over to Jess and kisses him on his cheek.

One of the cats jumps up into Jess' lap.

JESS  
Well, this must be my lucky night.

DELL  
You'll have your deep-dish tomorrow  
night, Jess Lynch.

EXT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Buck walks alongside the house. He spots a bird with a broken wing trying to get airborne.

Concerned for the bird Buck runs to it and picks it up.

TALL MAN (O.S.)  
A true knight.

Buck turns to sound of the familiar voice.

Tall Man sits on the front porch steps.

TALL MAN  
Protector of the weak.

BUCK  
You are real.

Dell steps out and onto the front porch.

Tall Man stands. He's a few feet from Dell.

DELL  
(to Buck)  
Whatcha got in your hands?

BUCK  
Hurt bird.

DELL  
Wash 'em up good when you come in.  
And don't go far. Granddaddy is  
gonna make us some ice cream.

She turns to go back inside.

BUCK  
Grandma?

Dell stops.

BUCK  
Ain't you gonna ask him who he is?

Dell hesitates.

DELL  
You think you got a talkin' bird  
there?

BUCK  
Not the bird, Grandma. The man.

Dell looks around.

Tall Man smiles at Buck.

DELL  
What man?

TALL MAN  
She can't see me.

BUCK  
Don't you hear him?

TALL MAN  
Or hear me either.

Dell points her finger at Buck.

DELL  
Don't! I got enough worry on me  
without you actin' like you're  
seein' things.

TALL MAN  
Tell her you were only kidding  
around.

Buck stares at the angel before turning his eyes to his  
grandmother.

BUCK  
I was just kiddin' with you,  
Grandma -- Just playin' around.

Dell sighs.

DELL  
Thank the Lord -- Stay close to the  
yard. I'll holler for you when the  
ice cream's ready.

BUCK  
Yes, ma'am.

Dell goes back into the house.

Tall Man walks to Buck and looks down at the injured bird.

BUCK  
He's gonna die.

The angel moves his open hand over the bird.

The bird spreads his wings and flies away.

Buck looks into Tall Man's copper eyes.

BUCK  
You cured him.

TALL MAN  
Wasn't his time -- No reason not  
to.

BUCK  
Why couldn't Grandma see you?

TALL MAN  
Only those I have business with can  
ever see, or hear me.

BUCK  
Did last night really happen?

TALL MAN  
Yes.

BUCK  
And you really are an angel?

Tall Man nods.

TALL MAN  
Yes.

BUCK  
You shouldn't have showed me  
heaven. I feel like I'm missin'  
somethin' now.

TALL MAN  
And you are. But I wanted you to  
see -- To know what awaits you.

BUCK  
You're not going to show me the bad  
place, are you?

Tall Man smiles with his eyes.

TALL MAN  
You mean, hell?

Buck nods.

TALL MAN  
Only His angels may see beyond  
those gates and return. But we  
never enter -- It's where the  
fallen take delivery.

BUCK  
Fallen?

TALL MAN  
Read your Bible.

BUCK  
I do.

Tall Man furrows his brow.

BUCK  
Sometimes -- Why are you here?

TALL MAN  
Because it's time for me.

BUCK  
Here?

TALL MAN  
Yes.

BUCK  
You're here to make my mama well?!

TALL MAN  
Didn't I promise to free her from  
her pain when it was time?

BUCK  
You did.

TALL MAN  
I never break a promise.

BUCK  
It's really time?

Tall Man studies Buck's face.

TALL MAN  
Yes, Buck -- It's time.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

FOYER

Buck and Tall Man enter the house through the front screen door.

LIVING ROOM - FOYER

Dell is in her rocker in front of a black and white TV that shows the evening news. She crochets.

Buck stops outside the living room in the foyer with Tall Man beside him.

BUCK  
Whatcha watchin', Grandma?

Dell doesn't look up.

DELL  
Not watchin', crocheting. News is on.

BUCK (O.S.)  
Grandma.

Dell looks up.

DELL  
What?

She stares.

FOYER

Buck knows what she doesn't see.

BUCK  
Tomorrow's gonna be a great day.

He looks up at the angel and smiles.

LIVING ROOM

Dell stares at Buck.

DELL  
Son, are you sure you feel all right?

FOYER

BUCK  
Yes, ma'am. I feel great.

Tall Man looks down at Buck.

TALL MAN  
See to your mother.

Buck runs up the stairs.

STAIRCASE - KITCHEN



Buck passes the open kitchen door on his way up. Jess is at the table cranking the handle on the ice cream maker.

KITCHEN

Jess sees Buck blazing up the stairs.

JESS  
Hey, slow down!

Jess returns to the ice cream and shakes his head.

Tall Man appears inside the kitchen doorway.

Jess looks up from the ice cream. He stares, unsure.

Tall Man smiles.

TALL MAN  
Hello, Jess.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Buck opens the door.

Estelle looks up.

They hear a loud thud.

DELL (O.S.)  
Jess?

Buck and Estelle's eyes lock.

Dell screams.

DELL (O.S.)  
Jess!

Buck bolts from the room.

Estelle covers her mouth. Her eyes glaze with fright.

BUCK (O.S.)  
Granddaddy!

DELL (O.S.)  
Oh, Jess!

Tears roll from Estelle's eyes.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A standing church choir sings, Shall We Gather at the River.

Buck sits on a front pew next to his grandmother. Estelle is in a wheelchair in the aisle beside Buck. They're solemn and dressed in black.

Jess' coffin rests in front of them.

The choir finishes. They sit.

Ceiling fans hang and turn in the sanctuary over the people.

Some use hand-held fans that bear a picture of Jesus.

The PASTOR begins Jess' eulogy.

PASTOR

When Israel saw his son Joseph with his own sons, he asked, "Who are these?" Joseph answered, "They are my sons, whom God has given to me." Israel answered back, "Bring them to me, that I may bless them."

The pastor stares out over the filled pews. He holds up a Bible.

PASTOR

The first mention of 'Grandfather' dates back thousands of years to the Book of Genesis... but its meaning has not changed.

The pastor holds the Bible high and shakes it at the congregation.

PASTOR

Bring them to me that I may bless them!

He brings the Bible down.

PASTOR

Those words are filled with love, folks... and that's what Jess Lynch had for his family -- Love. But it was the title of, "Grandfather," that he cherished most dearly.

The pastor's words fade.

A tear rolls from Buck's eye down his cheek. He lifts his eyes to the hovering winged angel with outstretched arms in a large, stained-glass window.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - LATER

LIVING ROOM - FOYER

The house is filled with people, condolences, and laughter.

A LARGE, HEAVYSET MAN carries Estelle up the stairs in his arms. TWO WOMEN follow.

KITCHEN

The table and counters are lined with food in covered-dishes.

Buck stands by himself, solemn.

Dell stacks a plate high with small sandwiches.

DELL

Have you seen your granddaddy's  
pocket watch?

BUCK

No, ma'am.

DELL

I can't find it anywhere.

She hands Buck the plate of sandwiches.

DELL

Here, run these sandwiches out to  
the living room for me.

Buck hesitates, but takes the plate.

BUCK

How can everybody eat so much? And  
laugh? I don't see anything funny  
about my granddaddy dyin'.

DELL

They're not laughin' at death,  
Buck. They're rejoicin' for your  
granddaddy 'cause they know where  
he is. They're laughin' because  
they're rememberin' good times they  
shared with him.

BUCK

Then I guess they'll laugh their  
heads off when Mama's dead, too.

Buck sets the plate of sandwiches down and runs from the kitchen.

Dell's eyes drop.

FOYER - STAIRS

Buck brushes by the heavyset man as he hits the stairs.

HEAVYSET MAN

What's your hurry, Buck? You  
runnin' late?

Buck stops cold half-way up and turns back to the man.

BUCK

No, I ain't runnin' late!

He turns back, continuing his escape.

The heavyset man smiles.

BEDROOM HALLWAY

Buck's about to enter his room, but he stops instead and walks across the hall to his mother's room.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Buck peeps in.

A WOMAN puts Estelle's black dress on a hanger.

A SECOND WOMAN helps Estelle situate in her bed.

Buck eases the door shut.

BUCK'S BEDROOM

Buck enters his room. He stares at the porcelain angel atop the chest of drawers.

Buck closes the door, never taking his eyes from the angel he knows should be in the drawer.

He steps in front of the figurine and sees the reflection of Tall Man off the glass of the pictured angel, sitting in a chair behind him.

Buck turns quickly.

TALL MAN

Got in the top drawer somehow --  
Knew you'd be missing it.

Buck just stares.

TALL MAN  
Nothing to say?

BUCK  
(sarcastic)  
Where's your cigarette?

Tall Man stands.

TALL MAN  
Looks like I'm fresh out.

BUCK  
You lied to me.

TALL MAN  
Never once.

BEDROOM HALLWAY

One of the women come out of Estelle's room.

BUCK (O.S.)  
You said you'd make my mama well.

The woman hears Buck. She goes to the door and listens.

BUCK'S BEDROOM

TALL MAN  
Never once.

BUCK  
Liar!

TALL MAN  
I said before I left you, I'd take  
your mother's pain.

BEDROOM HALLWAY

The second woman opens Estelle's bedroom door. She stands in the doorway, alarmed at the shouting. The two women look at each other, confused.

BUCK (O.S.)  
Shut up!

Estelle calls to the woman in the doorway.

ESTELLE (O.S.)  
Is that Buck, shouting?

The woman at Buck's door looks to the second woman.

The second woman turns back to Estelle.

SECOND WOMAN

I think he's playing some kind of game or something.

She steps back into the room and closes the door.

BUCK'S BEDROOM

BUCK

You're not a good angel! I know who you are! You're the angel of death!

TALL MAN

My duties vary.

BUCK

You didn't have to take Granddaddy! He wasn't even sick!

TALL MAN

It was his time.

BEDROOM HALLWAY

BUCK (O.S.)

Now you're here to take my mama, ain't you?!

The woman listening is disturbed. She walks quickly to the top of the stairs and calls down them.

WOMAN

Dell!

BUCK'S BEDROOM

TALL MAN

When it's time.

BUCK

No you won't! I'll fight you!

Buck turns and grabs the porcelain angel behind him. He throws it at Tall Man.

Tall Man puts his hand up. The angel slows to a stop in mid-air. He takes it in his hand and sets it on the dresser.

TALL MAN

I hope you're not going to be a  
hard case.

Buck's anger explodes. He rushes to the dresser and grabs the  
porcelain angel, throwing it at the opposite wall.

The angel smashes against the wall and breaks.

The bedroom door shoots open. Dell and the woman that called  
her stand in the doorway.

Buck stands in the room, alone.

EXT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - LATER

The last of the people leave.

The woman who listened at Buck's door fans herself with her  
hand and babbles to the heavyset man.

WOMAN

I'm tellin' you the hairs on my arm  
stood straight up.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

FOYER

Dell closes the front door.

Her weary eyes look to the top of the stairs.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LAGRANGE - DAY

The hanging plaque outside the business reads:

Daniel D. Weissman MD Psychiatry and Spiritualist

INT. DR. WEISSMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DR. DANIEL D. WEISSMAN, mid-40's, with salt and pepper curly  
hair and a bushy mustache, sits behind his desk, reading a  
file.

Buck and Dell sit across from the doctor, waiting.

BUCK

(whispers to Dell)  
We can't afford this, Grandma.

DELL

(whispers back)  
We can't afford not to.

The doctor lays the file down and removes his thick, black-rimmed glasses. He squints.

DR. WEISSMAN

Juju -- Not to be confused with voodoo, which is totally different.

Dell leans forward.

DELL

What?

DR. WEISSMAN

Juju, it's an... African thing. The belief of unseen beings with magical powers.

Dell and Buck stare, confused.

DR. WEISSMAN

I uh... dabble in the occult as a hobby -- The professional word for it is theosophy. Which means direct mystical contact with divine principles.

Dell sits back.

DELL

I'm lost.

BUCK

Me, too.

DR. WEISSMAN

I'm speaking of religious beliefs. Most all recognize the existence of super natural beings -- Angels.

DELL

Well I know there's angels, Dr. Weissman, but one's never visited me.

Dell looks at Buck.

BUCK

I'm tellin' the truth, Grandma.

DELL

Then why didn't I see him, Buck?



DR. WEISSMAN

That one's easy to answer -- He didn't want you to.

DELL

Are you tellin' me this boy actually saw an angel?

BUCK

(to both)

I did!

DR. WEISSMAN

There's actually no way to prove either way. If angels do exist, their folklore has always been to pick those they wish to be seen and heard by. Not to be picked by those that wish to see them.

DELL

But people will think he's crazy... talkin' to thin air like that.

BUCK

I don't see him all the time, Grandma. I haven't seen him since Granddaddy died.

DR. WEISSMAN

Buck, you said you believed your angel was there to heal your mother, but that he took your grandfather instead.

BUCK

Yes, sir.

DR. WEISSMAN

Did he actually say he would heal her?

BUCK

Said he'd take her pain from her before he left.

Buck shrugs.

BUCK

That's all.

DR. WEISSMAN

Hmmm. And she's no better?

BUCK

No, sir.

DR. WEISSMAN

Then I'd say if your angel is real,  
he hasn't left yet.

Dr. Weissman opens a side drawer on his desk.

DR. WEISSMAN

Don't believe they're prone to lie --  
At least not the ones from heaven.

He pulls a brown paper bag from a drawer.

DR. WEISSMAN

So that's what happened to it.

Buck and Dell stare, unsure.

DR. WEISSMAN

Yesterday's lunch.

Dr. Weissman pulls a book from the same drawer and flips  
through the pages.

DR. WEISSMAN

Ah, yes, here it is -- There are  
nine orders of angelic beings. The,  
'Powers' order are angels that deal  
primarily with birth and death. The  
'Angel' order, which is really  
nothing more than its name, are  
just plain old angels. They're the  
ones that are closest to humanity --  
Concerned with human affairs.

Buck and Dell strain trying to understand.

DR. WEISSMAN

You know them basically as,  
guardian angels.

He closes the book.

DR. WEISSMAN

Buck's angel appears to be some  
sort of hybrid.

DELL

Hybrid?

DR. WEISSMAN  
A cross between the two orders I  
just mentioned.

Dell shakes her head.

DR. WEISSMAN  
You don't need a psychiatrist, Buck  
-- Unless you're seeing pink  
elephants.

Buck stares.

DR. WEISSMAN  
You're not, are you?

BUCK  
Sir?

DR. WEISSMAN  
Seeing pink elephants.

BUCK  
Saw one at the fair once. But he  
was painted.

Dr. Weissman smiles.

DR. WEISSMAN  
Those don't count.

DELL  
Well if my grandson don't need to  
see you, and people see Buck  
talkin' to nothin' -- Whadda we do?

Dr. Weissman wags his finger.

DR. WEISSMAN  
If I were you... I'd get  
corroboration.

DELL  
How much is that?

Dr. Weissman laughs.

DR. WEISSMAN  
No-no, corroboration simply means  
you find someone else who sees and  
hears the same thing Buck does.

Buck and Dell stare at Dr. Weissman who...

picks up the brown paper bag.

DR. WEISSMAN  
 (to both)  
 Sandwich?

EXT. COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT

Bright lights and music. A Ferris wheel turns behind the entry banner that reads:

"Troup County Fair Oct. 20 - 23"

Crowds of people, children, enjoy the midway as hawkers call out.

Buck and J.P. share cotton candy on a stick.

J.P.  
 I never knew nobody that went to a psychiatrist before.

Buck doesn't want to talk about it.

BUCK  
 It's not a big deal.

J.P.  
 How you gonna get that... that uh --  
 What was it?

BUCK  
 Corroboration.

J.P.  
 Yeah, that.

BUCK  
 I don't know -- Will you just drop  
 it?!

J.P.  
 Okay!

They walk by a parked ambulance.

J.P.  
 Must be expectin' trouble.

Buck considers the thought.

The boys approach a row of game booths.

A HAWKER spots them.

HAWKER

You! You two with the cotton candy!  
Step up and knock the doll over!

His outstretched arm introduces the booty.

HAWKER

Take your choice of prizes!

J.P.

(to hawker)

How much it cost?

The hawker beckons them.

HAWKER

Come closer, I can't hear you!

Buck and J.P. shrug to each other. They step into the web.

J.P.

How much?

HAWKER

One shiny 'Roosevelt'. One-tenth of  
a dollar getcha three balls.

He points to the wall of cloth-covered bags with painted  
faces.

HAWKER

Knock just one doll over and you're  
a winner!

BUCK

Whadda we win?

The hawker smiles.

HAWKER

Your choice.

Buck looks at the wall of trinkets and stuffed animals.

BUCK

I don't see nothin' I want.

HAWKER

What?! You're at the county fair,  
boy! You gotta see something you  
want!

J.P.  
Go on, Buck. You knock 'em over,  
I'll pick 'em out.

Buck digs into his pocket.

BUCK  
(to J.P.)  
I only got two dimes left.

J.P.  
So? You'll still have a dime.

BUCK  
No. I'm savin' up for a bike.

HAWKER  
You wanted a bike why didn't you  
say so? I got bikes.

Buck scans over the prizes again.

BUCK  
Where?

A shifty smile crosses the hawker's face.

HAWKER  
In a box under the counter.

J.P.  
Betcha have to put it together.

BUCK  
I don't care! I'll put it together!

Buck slaps a dime down.

HAWKER  
The bike cost you two dimes.

BUCK  
You said one dime!

HAWKER  
That's right! One dime, one doll,  
one doll, one choice, from the one-  
dime one-doll box.

BUCK  
What?!

HAWKER

The bike's a two-dime, one-dollar deal. The metal in the bike makes it more expensive. Now are you playin' or not, kid? I got a business to run here.

J.P.

Go ahead, Buck. I wanna see what a twenty-cent bike looks like.

Buck slaps the other dime down.

The hawker grabs the two dimes in a quick swoop.

HAWKER

Smart choice -- Everybody stand back! Give the boy some room!

Buck takes a deep breath. He hurls the first ball. Misses.

He bites down on his lip and hurls the second ball. Misses.

HAWKER

You got one more chance, boy -- Make it good.

J.P.

C'mon, Buck! You can do it!

Buck bites down on his lip and draws back. He closes his eyes as he cuts loose.

The ball strikes a doll knocking it over.

J.P.

You did it, Buck!

Buck's eyes shoot open.

BUCK

I did it! Where's my bike?!

The hawker reaches under the counter.

HAWKER

Right here.

He holds out a small metal bike on a key chain.

HAWKER

One deluxe, metal bike key chain.

J.P.'s mouth falls open.

J.P.  
 (to Buck)  
 Boy! Did you get took!

BUCK  
 I can't ride that! You give me my  
 money back!

HAWKER  
 Never said you could ride it. Said  
 it was metal. Now move on boy,  
 you're gettin' in the way, others  
 wanna play.

A hand suddenly rests on Buck's shoulder.

Buck looks up and into the face of Tall Man.

TALL MAN  
 (to hawker)  
 I think you better give the boy his  
 money back.

The hawker is taken aback at Tall Man's sudden appearance.

HAWKER  
 Who are you, his pa?  
 (gruff)  
 Even if you are, he knew the stakes  
 before he played the game.

Buck's astonished.

BUCK  
 (to hawker)  
 You can see and hear him?

J.P.'s totally confused.

J.P.  
 (to Buck)  
 Who's he talkin' to? And what are  
 you talkin' about?

BUCK  
 The angel's here.

J.P. looks all around him.

TALL MAN  
 (to hawker)  
 Clarence, you're straddling a thin  
 fence to begin with.  
 (MORE)



TALL MAN (cont'd)  
I don't think you want those two  
dimes to be your last straw.

The hawker is confused.

HAWKER  
How do you know my name? What's  
wrong with your eyes?

Tall Man's eyes brighten.

The hawker gasps and takes a step back.

J.P.  
Buck -- What's happening?

BUCK  
You don't wanna know.

The hawker steps forward, his eyes still on Tall Man. His  
hand quivers as he holds the dimes out to Buck.

HAWKER  
Here.

Buck takes the money and hands the key chain back.

HAWKER  
Keep it. I don't want it.

TALL MAN  
(to Buck)  
Let's go.

They turn and walk away.

The hawker breaks out in a sweat. He looks sick.

BUCK  
(to Tall Man)  
Is he gonna die?

J.P.  
Is who gonna die?

Tall Man is gone.

BUCK  
Tall Man?!

J.P. looks all around him.

J.P.  
 Buck, stop it! You're scarin' the  
 crap outta me!

A WOMAN screams.

People scurry toward the hawker's stand.

An UNSEEN MAN calls out from the crowd.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)  
 Somebody get the ambulance!

J.P.  
 C'mon, let's go see what happened!

BUCK  
 No.

J.P.  
 Why not?

BUCK  
 It's the man at the throwin' booth --  
 He's dead.

EXT. LA GRANGE CITY LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

Traffic is light.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Buck sits at a table with a number of open books around him,  
 reading through one.

J.P. takes the latest edition of The LaGrange Daily News from  
 the newspaper area. He walks back to Buck as he reads the  
 front page.

J.P. sets the paper over the book Buck reads.

J.P.  
 Look at this.

J.P. points to the headline.

It reads:

"Carnie Worker Dies of Brain Hemorrhage"

Buck pushes the paper off the book.

J.P.  
 What are you lookin' for?

Buck never lifts his eyes from the book.

BUCK

Help.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - NIGHT

BUCK'S ROOM

The room is dark but for a table light on the night stand.

Buck lies on his bed engrossed in an open book.

He turns pages with illustrations of angels fighting demons during the war in heaven.

Buck stops on a page that shows Michael slaying the devil.

Buck looks up from the book to the unoccupied space on the chest of drawers where the porcelain angel had set.

EXT. TAYLOR'S JEWELRY - AFTERNOON

The front window bears the store's name.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - CONTINUOUS

The OWNER of the store, MR. TOM TAYLOR, an average man in his late 60's with a large pot belly, addresses his customer from behind the counter.

MR. TAYLOR

You're lookin' for what?

Buck pulls a sheet of paper out of his pocket and reads from it.

BUCK

I'm lookin' for one of Henry the Eighth's gold coins -- First issued in 1509.

Mr. Taylor's look answers before he does.

MR. TAYLOR

Are you serious?

Buck is very serious.

BUCK

Yes, sir.

MR. TAYLOR  
Well I ain't got nothin' like that  
here.

Buck's disappointment shows.

MR. TAYLOR  
Let me see what you got there.

He takes the paper and scans over it.

MR. TAYLOR  
What you're lookin' for is a St.  
Michael's medal.

BUCK  
No, sir, I'm lookin' for a coin.

MR. TAYLOR  
For good luck?

BUCK  
It's supposed to protect people --  
Make 'em well.

Mr. Taylor nods.

MR. TAYLOR  
The angel Michael slaying the  
dragon.

BUCK  
No, the devil.

MR. TAYLOR  
Dragon, devil, means the same  
thing. The dragon on the medal  
represents evil, which the charm is  
also used to destroy.

BUCK  
Will it work?

MR. TAYLOR  
They say faith moves mountains.

BUCK  
Sir?

MR. TAYLOR  
You want this for you?

BUCK  
For my mother.

MR. TAYLOR  
Somebody after her?

BUCK  
Not exactly -- She's sick.

Buck drops his head.

BUCK  
She's dying.

Mr. Taylor knows who he's talking to now.

MR. TAYLOR  
You Jess Lynch's grandson?

Buck looks up.

BUCK  
Yes, sir. Guess I still am. He's  
dead.

MR. TAYLOR  
I know -- And you still are.

Mr. Taylor walks to another counter and searches. He pulls a medal on a neck chain from inside the glass enclosure.

MR. TAYLOR  
Your name's...

BUCK  
Buck.

MR. TAYLOR  
That's right -- Buck.

He walks back to Buck with the chain.

MR. TAYLOR  
I bet your grandma still makes the  
best deep-dish around.

BUCK  
Best anywhere.

Mr. Taylor hands the medal to Buck.

MR. TAYLOR  
This is what you're lookin' for --  
Put this around your mama's neck,  
and keep it there.

BUCK  
I will. How much is it?

MR. TAYLOR  
One large bowl of that deep-dish  
next time your grandma makes it.  
And don't think I'll forget about  
it.

He pats his large belly.

MR. TAYLOR  
'Cause I won't -- You tell your  
grandma I expect an invite.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - LATER SAME DAY

KITCHEN

Buck comes in by the screen door.

He takes a seat at the table and examines the medal.

Dell's washing pans at the sink. She knows Buck's there but  
doesn't look up.

DELL  
There's fresh pound cake, but it  
needs to cool-a-spell 'fore you cut  
it.

Buck can't take his eyes off the medal.

BUCK  
When you gonna make another deep-  
dish, Grandma?

Dell stops washing.

DELL  
I don't know. Haven't made one  
since...

She catches herself and returns to the pans.

DELL  
If you're wantin' one I'll make it.

BUCK  
It's not for me. It's for Mr.  
Taylor, down at the jewelry store.

Dell stops washing and turns to Buck.

DELL  
Old Tom Taylor? Why's he wantin' my  
deep-dish?

She returns to the pan and scrubs harder.

DELL  
He needn't think 'cause Jess is  
gone I'm...

BUCK  
He traded me this medal for a bowl  
of your deep-dish -- Said it was  
the best he ever tasted.

The words make Dell remember. She softens.

DELL  
He did?

BUCK  
Yes, ma'am.

Dell rinses the pan and puts it in the drainer.

BUCK  
You know Mr. Taylor?

Dell turns toward Buck, her eyes going back in time.

DELL  
He courted me awhile long time ago,  
before I met your granddaddy. They  
worked together down at the  
railroad yard back then -- He's the  
one introduced me to my Jess.

BUCK  
Oh.

Dell fights back the tears that well in her eyes.

She dries her hands as she walks toward Buck.

DELL  
What medal you talkin' about?

Buck holds it up for Dell to see.

BUCK  
This one -- It's the angel Michael,  
slayin' the devil during the war in  
heaven.

Dell takes the medal in her hand and examines it.

DELL  
Looks like a dragon to me.

BUCK  
It's the same thing.

DELL  
Whatcha want it for?

BUCK  
It's for Mama to wear. To protect  
her and make her well.

Dell takes a seat at the table, and Buck's hand.

DELL  
Buck, I want you to listen to me --  
You got to stop this angel stuff --  
Get it outta your head.

BUCK  
If I don't stop him he's gonna take  
her, Grandma. I know who he is now.  
He's the angel of death.

DELL  
Buck, there is no angel. It's all  
in your head.

BUCK  
It's not, Grandma.

DELL  
Your mama's sick and you know that.

Tears roll from Buck's eyes.

BUCK  
I know but...

DELL  
She don't have a long time to live,  
son. I wish she did... but she  
don't.

Buck wipes the tears from his face. He holds the necklace up.

BUCK  
That's why I got this.



## ESTELLE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Estelle lies in bed studying the design of the medal on the necklace around her neck with a hand held mirror.

ESTELLE  
It's a... what?

Buck stands alongside Dell, beside the bed.

BUCK  
A St. Michael's medal.

ESTELLE  
It's kind of... scary looking.

BUCK  
It's 'cause the dragon's supposed  
to be the devil.

Estelle puts the mirror down.

ESTELLE  
Buck, I don't think I want to wear  
this.

BUCK  
You gotta wear it, Mama! It's to  
keep you safe!

Estelle looks from Buck to Dell.

ESTELLE  
Safe from what?

Buck waits for his grandmother to bail him out.

DELL  
It's just a good-luck charm, honey.  
That's all it is.

BUCK  
Please don't take it off, Mama.

ESTELLE  
I declare. How you worry about me --  
All right -- I won't take it off.

Buck sighs with relief.

DELL  
I got to get supper on.  
(to Estelle)  
You take your medicine?

ESTELLE

I took it.

DELL

All right then.

Dell leaves.

Buck backpedals to the door.

BUCK

I'm gonna bring my supper up here  
and eat with you tonight.

ESTELLE

No you're not!

Buck stops in his tracks.

BUCK

Why not?!

ESTELLE

Come here, Buck.

Buck sighs and ambles back.

Estelle pats the bed.

ESTELLE

Sit down.

Buck does more of a flop than a sit. He knows what's coming.

ESTELLE

Your grandmother is not going to  
sit in that kitchen and eat alone.

BUCK

You eat alone.

ESTELLE

Are you going to carry me down  
those stairs? Bring me back up?

BUCK

I would if I could.

ESTELLE

I know you would. But you can't.  
And I can't walk down them, or back  
up.

Buck's eyes drift away.

BUCK

All right.

Estelle lifts Buck's chin, bringing his eyes back to her's.

ESTELLE

What, is wrong?

A tear rolls down Buck's cheek.

BUCK

I'm just worried about you.

Estelle sighs.

ESTELLE

Buck...

She pauses, looking for the right words.

ESTELLE

Life is not always kind to us.  
Things happen to people.

Buck wipes his tears away.

BUCK

Bad things.

ESTELLE

Good things, too.

BUCK

Like what?

ESTELLE

You. You've been a blessing in my  
life. And what would your  
grandmother have if she didn't have  
you in hers?

Buck's eyes well with tears.

BUCK

She'd have you.

Estelle flashes a weak smile.

ESTELLE

I'm dying, Buck -- You know that.

For a long moment their eyes do the only talking.

ESTELLE

Come here.

Estelle pulls her son close to her and kisses his cheek.

Buck lifts his head.

BUCK

Granddaddy used to tell me to never  
give up.

He looks into his mother's eyes.

BUCK

He should have told you too.

KITCHEN - LATER

Dell stands at the screen door, sullen, looking out at the  
autumn leaves that fall.

A train blows its horn in the distance.

She glances over at Jess' chair where one of the cats is  
curled-up asleep.

A cool breeze hits her. She pulls her sweater tight, then  
closes the door.

BUCK'S BEDROOM

Buck stands in front of the chest of drawers. He stares at  
the framed picture of the angel guarding the children.

His eyes drop to the top drawer. He opens it and takes out  
the broken pieces of the porcelain angel and holds them in  
his hands.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Estelle clutches the medal at the end of the necklace. She  
stares out her window, then grimaces from a wince of pain.

EXT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The large tree in the front yard sheds its colored leaves  
with every gust of wind until...

TIME LAPSE - DAY

...it's bare of its foliage.

A Christmas wreath adorns the front door.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

A small Christmas tree occupies a corner of the room.

DR. HOLDER, a thin man in his 60's, closes his medical bag.

Estelle lies in her bed. She looks frail and weak.

ESTELLE

You have to be the only doctor left  
in LaGrange that still makes house  
calls.

Dr. Holder turns toward his patient.

DR. HOLDER

Could be I am the only doctor left  
in LaGrange.

He smiles.

Estelle manages a weak reciprocal.

ESTELLE

You're the best one -- I know that.

Dr. Holder searches for his words.

DR. HOLDER

Estelle -- I know you don't want  
to, but I could make you a lot more  
comfortable in the hospital.

ESTELLE

No. I don't want to die in a  
hospital.

The doctor nods his understanding.

DR. HOLDER

Is the medication controlling your  
pain?

ESTELLE

Not as much as it used to.

DR. HOLDER

More severe?

ESTELLE

(nods)  
Sometimes.

DR. HOLDER  
Having a nurse close by would take care of that.

ESTELLE  
They make house calls, too?

DR. HOLDER  
(smiles)  
I'm going to leave a new prescription with the pharmacy. Buck can pick it up tomorrow.

ESTELLE  
Dr. Holder, if it's real expensive...

DR. HOLDER  
I don't want to hear that.

The doctor picks up his bag and starts for the door.

DR. HOLDER  
Felix Holmes fills what I tell him to if he wants my patients' business.

At the door he turns back to Estelle.

DR. HOLDER  
And he does.

ESTELLE  
Thank you, Dr. Holder.

DR. HOLDER  
I'll check back in on you next week. If you need me before then... have Dell call.

FOYER

Dr. Holder comes down the staircase to the waiting Dell and Buck.

DR. HOLDER  
Buck, school out for the holidays?

BUCK  
Yes, sir.

DR. HOLDER  
When I was a boy it seemed like Christmas would never get here.

He looks at Dell.

DR. HOLDER  
 Now they come so quick I can't  
 remember one from the other.  
 (to Buck)  
 Need a minute with your  
 grandmother.

Buck looks at Dell, he doesn't want to leave.

DELL  
 Go on now.

BUCK  
 I'll be outside.

Buck takes a jacket from the coat tree.

EXT. LYNCH RESIDENCE

FRONT PORCH

Buck closes the door behind him. He's worried.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE

FOYER

DR. HOLDER  
 I'm going to call a prescription in  
 for Morphine.

DELL  
 Morphine?

DR. HOLDER  
 She needs it. You can pick it up  
 tomorrow. It'll be in liquid form.  
 Just dispense it with a dropper  
 under her tongue -- I mentioned the  
 hospital again, but she wants to  
 spend her time left, here... at her  
 home.

DELL  
 How long...

DR. HOLDER  
 Few weeks.

DELL  
 Oh, my Jesus.

DR. HOLDER  
Don't hesitate to call if you need  
me.

EXT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Holder pulls the front door closed behind him.

Buck leans against the large tree. He watches the doctor  
drive away.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

FOYER - KITCHEN

Buck comes in quietly.

He stands in the foyer looking into the kitchen at Dell  
who...

has her back turned to him as she cries at the sink.

Buck looks to the top of the stairs.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Buck walks in and closes the door.

Estelle turns to him.

ESTELLE  
What is it? What's wrong, Buck?

A beat.

BUCK  
He'll be comin' for you any time  
now -- I know it.

LATER

Buck sits on the edge of the bed. Estelle listens...

BUCK  
And that's the last time I saw him --  
But I know he's comin' back.

Estelle strokes Buck's hair.

ESTELLE  
He said you'd be an angel one day?

Buck nods.



ESTELLE

Did you tell him you were already  
my angel?

BUCK

You don't believe me, do you?

Estelle forces a smile.

ESTELLE

I don't know, Buck -- What does  
grandma say about it?

BUCK

She don't believe me either --  
Nobody does.

Estelle lifts Buck's face to meet his eyes.

ESTELLE

I believe you -- You wouldn't say  
it if it weren't so.

Buck shakes his head.

BUCK

No. I wouldn't -- Promise me you  
won't ever take the medal off.

Estelle clutches the medal tight.

ESTELLE

I won't take it off -- I promise.

BUCK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Buck sleeps.

He wakes.

Shadows from the streetlight pattern the wall the chest of  
drawers sits against.

The porcelain angel, flawed with cracks and glued back  
together, bathes in the light.

Buck stares at it.

A shadow on the wall suddenly moves.

Buck turns quickly to the opposite wall, but there's nothing  
there.

He hears the floor creak in the bedroom hallway.

Buck jumps from the bed and rushes to the door.

BEDROOM HALLWAY

Dell's in the hallway. She's bundled in a heavy bathrobe with a tied scarf covering her head as Buck bursts from his room.

DELL

Land sakes! Are you tryin' to scare me to death?!

BUCK

I heard a noise.

DELL

It was just me. Now go back to bed and be quiet 'fore you wake your mother.

It hits Buck.

BUCK

Mama.

Buck hurries to her door.

DELL

Buck, don't wake her up!

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Buck throws the door open.

BUCK

Mama?

Estelle stirs from sleep.

ESTELLE

What? What's wrong?

Dell steps in.

DELL

Heat's out, honey, that's all. I'll call Gibsons in the morning -- You warm enough?

ESTELLE

I'm fine.

DELL

Go back to sleep. Buck was just worried you was cold.

BUCK  
Night, Mama.

Estelle's eyes close.

ESTELLE  
Night.

BEDROOM HALLWAY

Dell gently pulls the door shut.

BUCK  
I'm sorry, Grandma.

Dell nods.

DELL  
Get back under the covers. It's  
freezing out here.

BUCK'S BEDROOM

Buck closes the door. He stares at the repaired angel, then  
gets into bed.

He lies on his back and closes his eyes.

Buck turns in his sleep. His eyes open.

A shadowed figure sitting in a chair against the wall, moves.

Buck jumps from the bed and backs against the wall.

Tall Man moves his face into the light that pours into the  
window from the street.

TALL MAN  
See you fixed it.

Buck stares, almost unable to speak.

BUCK  
Wha-what?

Tall man stands.

TALL MAN  
The angel -- You fixed it.

Buck nods.

BUCK

I did.

Tall Man's stare is filled with concern.

TALL MAN

Your mother wears Michael's legacy.

BUCK

You've been in her room?

TALL MAN

Why does she wear the image?

BUCK

I gave it to her. To protect her from you.

TALL MAN

It has great power.

BUCK

I hope so.

TALL MAN

Not that one -- This one.

Tall Man flips a gold coin to Buck that passes through the light streaming into the room.

Buck catches it.

Tall Man is gone.

Buck looks down at the gold coin in his hand that bears the image of Michael slaying the devil.

The coin disintegrates in his hand.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Buck bursts into the bedroom.

Tall Man stands over Estelle.

Estelle wakes. She screams hysterically.

BUCK'S BEDROOM

The sound of cats screaming in the hallway.

Buck sits straight up in bed, in a sweat, out of breath.

He hears heavy steps outside his room.

DELL (O.S.)

Git!

Buck rushes to the door...

BEDROOM HALLWAY

...and into the hallway.

The cats scamper.

Dell's half bent-over holding a pillow. She puts a hand to her back and straightens.

DELL

(to Buck)

This will be one night I ain't likely to forget.

She sees Buck is covered in sweat.

ESTELLE (O.S.)

Mama?

DELL

It's all right, Estelle. Just them dang cats fightin', that's all.

Dell goes to Buck and touches his pajama top.

DELL

You're soakin' wet.

BUCK

I had a bad dream.

A beat through Dell's concern.

DELL

Get changed.

The cats scream, fight downstairs.

ESTELLE (O.S.)

Mama?!

DELL

I hear 'em! I'm fixin' to throw 'em out! Just go back to sleep!

ESTELLE (O.S.)

I'm trying!

DELL  
(to Buck)  
And you go back to bed.

Dell starts for the stairs, turning back to Buck as she walks with a warning finger.

DELL  
And stay there.

Dell moves down the stairs...

DELL  
Lord if I make it through this  
night.

...and fades into the dark.

BUCK  
A-men.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

Buck and Dell maneuver a bed mattress through the doorway.

ESTELLE  
There's really no need for this.

Buck tugs on his end of the mattress.

BUCK  
Yes there is.

The mattress is in.

Dell catches her breath.

ESTELLE  
I just don't see the need. I'd call  
out if I needed someone.

BUCK  
You would if you could. I'm gonna  
make sure I'm here if you can't.

DELL  
Buck's right, Estelle.

Buck assembles the bed frame.

BUCK  
There's plenty room on the other  
side of your night stand. And  
that's that!

Estelle gives up the argument during a sudden flash of pain she hides.

ESTELLE  
That's that.

THAT NIGHT...

Buck lies in the bed next to Estelle, watching TV.

Estelle dozes.

ESTELLE  
Turn the TV off, Buck.

BUCK  
Just two more minutes -- This goes  
off at eleven.

Buck hears something. His eyes shoot to the bedroom door. He stares, his body still.

Buck eases out of bed.

Estelle wakes from slumber.

ESTELLE  
Buck? What...

BUCK  
Shhhhh...

Buck stands at the door. He waits, then turns the knob slowly.

BEDROOM HALLWAY

Buck eases into the hallway. There's a sudden creak in the staircase.

He steps back to the bedroom doorway.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

ESTELLE  
Please don't wake your grandmother.

Buck whispers.

BUCK  
I won't -- It's the cats again.  
I'll put 'em out.

BEDROOM HALLWAY

Buck eases the door shut.

STAIRS

Buck gingerly takes one step at the time. He finds a creaking step and stops before he continues.

FOYER

Buck stands at the foot of the stairs in the dark.

A light glows from the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Buck peers in from the corner of the wall and sees the TV is on with the sound turned low.

FOYER

He back-steps to the umbrella stand at the door and pulls out a long, sharp-tipped one.

LIVING ROOM

Buck's eyes are like saucers as he holds the umbrella out like a lance.

His hand trembles as he turns the TV off.

Sighing relief he turns just as a passing car's headlights shoot through the window lighting Tall Man's figure resting in a chair.

Buck jumps back, startled.

The TV comes on again.

Tall Man sits in the glow in his Stetson hat, grim-faced.

TALL MAN  
I was watching that.

The umbrella drops to the floor.

TALL MAN  
Expecting rain?

Tall Man stands.

Buck's frozen in place. He lifts his eyes to meet with the angel's.



TALL MAN

You need to prepare yourself, Buck.  
Your mother's time is close.

BUCK

No it's not. The doctor said...

The TV goes black.

Buck looks all around him.

Tall Man is gone.

STAIRS

Buck runs up the stairs...

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

...bursts into the room.

Dell is giving Estelle morphine. She steps back.

ESTELLE

Buck? Where were you?

DELL

Didn't you hear her call out, son?  
Where have you been?

BUCK

I thought I heard something. When I  
went downstairs the TV was on -- I  
turned it off and came back up.

DELL

TV went out on me last night. Won't  
even come on.

ESTELLE

You've been gone over an hour.

BUCK

(to Dell)  
The TV works!  
(to both)  
Honest!  
(to Estelle)  
I was only gone a couple of  
minutes, Mama! Look at the clock.

Buck looks at the clock. It reads ten past midnight.

DELL  
When you gonna stop tellin' them  
stories, Buck?

Buck's eyes drop.

ESTELLE  
I need to sleep, Mama. I'm not  
feeling very good.

DELL  
The medicine should help you rest.  
I'll call Dr. Holder first thing in  
the morning.

Estelle moans and turns away.

Dell motions Buck to the hall.

BEDROOM HALLWAY

Dell closes the door. She carries a disturbed look as she  
turns to Buck.

DELL  
Where were you, Buck?

BUCK  
I told you the truth, Grandma --  
Least most of it.

DELL  
Let's hear the rest.

BUCK  
The angel was downstairs.

DELL  
The angel?

Buck nods.

BUCK  
I don't know what happened to the  
hour. I was only gone a few minutes  
-- He probably did somethin' to the  
time. He's always talkin' about it.

Dell holds her stare.

BUCK  
You don't believe me, do you?

DELL  
I want to believe you, Buck.

BUCK  
But you don't.

A beat.

DELL  
Tell me what your angel said.

BUCK  
Told me to prepare myself -- That  
Mama's time was close.

DELL  
You didn't need an angel to tell  
you that, Buck. You could have just  
asked me -- But you don't need  
anyone to tell you that -- You  
already know it.

Buck's face becomes stern, his eyes defiant.

BUCK  
No -- I won't let him take her.

Dell has no words to offer.

BUCK  
I won't!

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CHRISTMAS EVE NIGHT

KITCHEN

Dell stacks the dinner dishes at the sink. She breaks down  
and cries, silently.

Dell regains her composure and wipes at her tears with the  
apron she wears.

There's a knock on the back door.

Dell pulls the door curtain back. Tom Taylor smiles from the  
other side.

Dell hesitates at first, then opens the door.

MR. TAYLOR  
Dell -- May I come in?

DELL  
Tom, I don't have any deep-dish...

MR. TAYLOR  
Just for a minute?

Dell relents -- opens the door.

Tom steps in.

MR. TAYLOR  
Jess came into the store a few  
months back.

He pulls Jess' pocket watch from his jacket.

MR. TAYLOR  
He left this to be engraved.

DELL  
So that's what happened to it.

Dell takes the watch and opens the case to read the  
inscription.

MR. TAYLOR  
He meant it to be a present for  
Buck -- Figured you'd want to wrap  
it.

Dell closes the case.

DELL  
I don't know what to say.

Mr. Taylor smiles.

MR. TAYLOR  
How 'bout, merry Christmas?

Dell stares at the pocket watch, then brings it to her lips  
and kisses it.

DELL  
Merry Christmas, Tom -- Thank you.

Mr. Taylor nods.

MR. TAYLOR  
Merry Christmas, Dell.

He leaves.

Dell puts the watch in her apron pocket and walks into the

LIVING ROOM

where Buck sits by the Christmas tree, checking names and pulling presents.

BUCK  
I'm gettin' the presents sorted for  
in the morning.

DELL  
Why don't we open them tonight?

BUCK  
Tonight?

DELL  
Let your mother rest in the  
morning.

BUCK  
But she always likes to get up  
early Christmas morning.

Dell manages a smile.

DELL  
Let's let her rest this one.

A beat through Buck's thoughts.

BUCK  
Can I take her soup to her now?

DELL  
I'll get it ready -- First get your  
jacket and run out to the garage.  
Bring in the bag of oranges I left  
in the car. I don't want 'em to  
freeze out there tonight.

Buck looks down at the present he holds.

BUCK  
Grandma -- Did you know if you pray  
hard enough, nothing's impossible?

Buck's words take Dell aback.

DELL  
I guess I do -- I'm the one that  
told you that.

Buck nods. He lifts his eyes to his grandmother.

BUCK  
I just wanted to see if you  
remembered.

Buck leaving the room as Dell confides to herself.

DELL  
Guess I needed reminding.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Buck opens the side door and flips the light switch. Before him is a...

brand new red bicycle with ribbon tied in a bow around the handle bars.

Buck admires it, touches it. He takes the Christmas card taped to the seat and reads it.

The card is signed:

"Merry Christmas, Buck -- Granddaddy"

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

KITCHEN

Buck pushes the door open, the bike by his side.

Dell, at the sink, smiles.

BUCK  
Can I bring it in? Please?

Dell wipes at her snuffle.

DELL  
Of course you can.

Buck wheels the bike in and lets it rest on the kickstand.

BUCK  
Now I won't be late for school  
anymore -- I know you got it for  
me, but you put Granddaddy's name  
on the card.

DELL  
It was money from your granddaddy's  
insurance that bought it -- He  
wanted to buy you a bike more than  
you wanted one -- No one else name  
needed to be on that card.

Dell turns to her stove.

DELL  
Your mama's soup's ready.

DELL  
You tell her you got your bike --  
That's the best present you could  
give her right now.

ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

Buck pushes the door open and walks in, tray in hand.

Estelle's smiling, laughing at the TV program.

ESTELLE  
I'm not hungry, just set it down  
somewhere.

BUCK  
But you gotta eat to keep your  
strength up.

ESTELLE  
Not now.

She pats the bed.

ESTELLE  
Sit with me and watch, The  
Honeymooners.  
(laughs)  
They're doing, Twas the Night  
Before Christmas.

She looks at Buck.

ESTELLE  
Do you remember that poem?

Buck sets the tray on his bed.

BUCK  
Granddaddy used to recite it every  
Christmas Eve.

ESTELLE  
Yes he did.

She turns back to the TV with a smile, a laugh.

ESTELLE  
He would have loved the show  
tonight.

Buck's not sure what's happening.

BUCK  
Mama?

ESTELLE  
Hmmm?

BUCK  
You seem... different.

ESTELLE  
I just feel good.  
(laughs)  
They are so funny!

BUCK  
You feel good?

Estelle's eyes meet Buck's.

ESTELLE  
I do -- I feel good.

Buck smiles.

BUCK  
I got my bike.

ESTELLE  
You like it?

BUCK  
Mama, of course I like it. I love  
it!

ESTELLE  
I wish Daddy could see the look on  
your face -- He loved you so.

BUCK  
I know. I loved him, too.

Estelle's eyes find the TV again.

ESTELLE  
Daddy -- I'll be seeing him again  
soon.



BUCK  
Don't say that!

Estelle laughs. She turns back to Buck.

ESTELLE  
What?

BUCK  
I said, don't say that.

Estelle motions to the dresser with nervous fingers.

ESTELLE  
Get my medicine for me.

BUCK  
Is it time for it?

Estelle grows more anxious with each moment.

ESTELLE  
Get it now. I need it.

Buck goes to the dresser topped with medicine bottles.

BUCK  
Which one?

ESTELLE  
The morphine. Quick!

BUCK  
Which one is it?!

ESTELLE  
Mother!

BUCK  
Just tell me which one!

ESTELLE  
Mother!

BUCK  
Oh, God.

ESTELLE  
Mother!

Dell bursts into the room.

DELL  
What's wrong?!

Estelle shakes. She points.

ESTELLE  
My medicine!

Dell rushes to the dresser and grabs the bottle.

She administers the dosage to Estelle.

Estelle labors hard with her breath.

ESTELLE  
More.

Dell stares down at her daughter.

DELL  
Honey...

ESTELLE  
More!

Buck's scared.

BUCK  
Mama, stop it!

DELL  
She's hurtin', Buck!

Estelle grabs Dell's clothing.

ESTELLE  
Please!

DELL  
Alright, honey, alright. Just calm  
down. I'll get it.

ESTELLE  
Just hurry!

Dell' wipes the back of her trembling hand across her forehead then draws the dosage and gives it to Estelle.

After a moment Estelle's breathing slows. She relaxes and closes her eyes.

Buck and Dell sit on the corner of the bed. Buck takes his mother's hand.

BUCK  
Mama?

DELL  
Shhhh, let her rest.

Estelle's eyes open. She looks past her son and mother.

ESTELLE  
Who's that man?

Buck doesn't turn. He knows. His eyes drop.

Dell turns quickly to an empty doorway, then back.

DELL  
What man, honey?

ESTELLE  
The tall man in the doorway.

Dell gently strokes Estelle's forehead.

DELL  
There's no one there, baby.

Buck sighs through his despair.

BUCK  
Yes there is.

Estelle raises a weak hand and points.

ESTELLE  
He's right there -- So tall.

Dell turns again. Buck follows.

Tall Man stands inside the doorway.

TALL MAN  
The hour has come, Buck.

BUCK  
No!

Dell's confused.

Buck jumps up.

BUCK  
You get out of here!

ESTELLE  
Who is he, Buck?

Dell's panicked.

DELL  
 Jesus in heaven! Tell me who you're  
 talkin' to!

BUCK  
 It's the angel -- He's here.

Estelle stares at the man.

ESTELLE  
 You're an angel?

Dell gasps, her eyes frightened, her hand to her mouth.

TALL MAN  
 Yes, Estelle. I've come to take you  
 home.

ESTELLE  
 I'll see Daddy?

TALL MAN  
 You'll see everyone. They're all  
 waiting for you.

BUCK  
 No! She's wearing Michael's medal!

Buck turns to his mother. He lifts the medal from her neck to  
 show Tall Man.

BUCK  
 You see?! She's protected! You  
 can't touch her!

Dell falls to her knees and begins to pray.

TALL MAN  
 (to Buck)  
 I knew you were gonna be a hard  
 case -- Take the medal from her --  
 Relieve her suffering.

ESTELLE  
 I'll take it off.

BUCK  
 No, Mama! He'll take you from me!

ESTELLE  
 (to Tall Man)  
 Can't we go now?

TALL MAN  
That's up to Buck.

BUCK  
Then she stays! And you leave!

ESTELLE  
Why is it up to Buck? Don't I have  
a say?

TALL MAN  
No one has a say. But in your case,  
Buck must let you go. Prove himself  
worthy of what awaits him.

Dell prays on.

BUCK  
I told you he said I'm gonna be an  
angel someday.  
(to Tall Man - hateful)  
Like him.

ESTELLE  
You really are?

TALL MAN  
He is.

BUCK  
If I am it won't be like you.

TALL MAN  
It will.

BUCK  
It won't!

TALL MAN  
We'll see -- Ecclesiastes 3 verse  
2: "There's a time to be born..."

ESTELLE  
I know that one -- "And a time to  
die."

TALL MAN  
(to Buck)  
It's your problem with time in  
general that needs resolving.

BUCK  
And it's your problem with who you  
are you need to resolve!

TALL MAN  
What do you mean?

BUCK  
You heal a bird then take a life.  
You're a hybrid! Dr. Weissman said  
so!

TALL MAN  
I'm not a hybrid.

BUCK  
You are! You can't be a death angel  
and give life too!

TALL MAN  
My duties vary -- Now take the  
medal from her neck and free her.

Dell prays harder, louder.

BUCK  
I won't!

TALL MAN  
Because you love her?

Tears stream down Buck's face.

BUCK  
She's my mother! I don't have  
anyone left but her and Grandma!

Suddenly, Buck, Dell and Estelle, freeze in place.

An OLD, WINGED ANGEL, RAGUEL, taller than Tall Man, his hair  
and long beard snow white, appears.

TALL MAN  
(softly - to Buck)  
Yes you do.

RAGUEL  
(to Tall Man)  
What are you doing?

TALL MAN  
Hello, Raguel.

RAGUEL  
The old woman is praying so hard  
He, Himself, sent me.

TALL MAN

This is...

RAGUEL

I know who he is.

Tall Man shrugs.

TALL MAN

I have a lot to make up for.

RAGUEL

You achieved salvation. Your debt is to Him, not them. You're a death angel. Act like one!

TALL MAN

The boy says I'm a hybrid.

RAGUEL

Well a change of order is definitely possible. We can't have a death angel that won't perform. The population would explode! Now get on with your business here. I'm too busy to have to do my job and yours.

TALL MAN

There's a problem.

RAGUEL

What?!

TALL MAN

Estelle. She wears Michael's medal.

Raguel looks upon the necklace.

RAGUEL

So?

TALL MAN

The boy, Buck, thinks it protects her -- I... lead him to believe it does.

RAGUEL

You what?

TALL MAN

If I take her with the necklace on, I'll be damned -- First angelic rule -- An angel can't lie.

RAGUEL

I know -- I wrote it -- So take the necklace from her.

TALL MAN

The boy needs to do it. It's the only way he'll understand they're only given so much time.

RAGUEL

What makes you think he'd remove the necklace?

TALL MAN

It's the one factor that allows him to remove his mother's pain, free her spirit, and understand the difference between selfish, and true love.

A beat through Raguel's stare.

RAGUEL

You'll have to answer to council for all of this -- How do you ever expect to get your wings?

Tall Man's confident.

TALL MAN

I'll make it up.

RAGUEL

You can start with the boy. We'll move his time up. A few months difference won't matter either way in his case.

A book appears in Raguel's hands titled:

Apprentice Schedule

He flips through the book.

RAGUEL

Ah, here it is. Buck Lynch, scheduled this spring for a...

TALL MAN

Bicycle accident.



RAGUEL

Exactly. Amounts to no more than you beginning the boy's training earlier than scheduled, that's all.

TALL MAN

Good. He's already one up on that anyway.

RAGUEL

What do you mean?

TALL MAN

His training. I've already told him what awaits him. Even showed him Heaven.

RAGUEL

You can't train someone before their dead! Or even tell them about it! It's not permissible! It's in the book! And when did Heaven become a sideshow?!

TALL MAN

A glimpse of Heaven would save a lot more souls than just reading a book ever would.

RAGUEL

I knew making you the boy's mentor would be a mistake.

Raguel looks up.

RAGUEL

But who listens to me? The boy is no longer your apprentice, or a candidate for order.

Tall Man nods.

TALL MAN

That sounds appropriate.

RAGUEL

You planned this, didn't you?

TALL MAN

The boy's a hard case. He would have never have fit in.

Raguel stares smugly.

RAGUEL  
Still doing parlor tricks?

Tall Man shrugs.

TALL MAN  
Disappearing hand stuff -- That's  
about it.

RAGUEL  
Make this mess disappear -- I'll  
deal with you later.

Raguel vanishes.

Tall Man looks upon Buck and Estelle with loving eyes,  
then...

walks to Estelle's dresser and removes a black and white  
photograph of a young man in a Stetson hat from inside his  
jacket. He places it under clothing in a drawer then...

repositions himself in front of Buck and waves an open hand  
across the room.

The three reanimate.

BUCK  
Get out of here!

Dell prays harder, louder.

Tall Man shakes his head.

TALL MAN  
Not without your mother.

ESTELLE  
Let me go, Buck

BUCK  
I can't!

Estelle winces.

ESTELLE  
I'm beginning to hurt again.

BUCK  
I'll give you more medicine.

TALL MAN  
The medicine won't help her. She's  
past her time for living.

BUCK  
I won't let her go!

TALL MAN  
Then she'll suffer.

Estelle grimaces.

ESTELLE  
Oh! It hurts!

BUCK  
(to Tall Man)  
Don't let her hurt anymore!

ESTELLE  
Oh! God help me. Please!

TALL MAN  
Help her -- Let her go.

Estelle reaches out to her son.

ESTELLE  
Please, Buck!

Buck takes his mother's hand, his tears flowing.

BUCK  
But what will I do without you?

TALL MAN  
The time until you see her again is  
no more than the blink of an eye.

Buck stares, helpless, but calm and resolved.

BUCK  
Just take the pain from her --  
Please.

Tall Man moves his open hand across Estelle.

Estelle's face glows.

Dell stops praying. She lifts her head.

The cats run into the room and jump on Estelle's bed. She reaches out and strokes them.

ESTELLE  
I don't hurt anymore.

Dell stares at Tall Man.

DELL  
Oh, my Lord.

Buck's expression is one of sudden concern.

TALL MAN  
Your grandmother's not leaving you,  
Buck. I'm just giving you your...  
corroboration -- The necklace.

Buck removes the medal from around his mother's neck.

ESTELLE  
I'll be waiting for you, Buck -- I  
promise.

TALL MAN  
All you've learned, and all you've  
seen, will leave your memory with  
me. In exchange, I leave you, Buck,  
the gift of inner peace, an  
understanding of time, and the  
certainty of what awaits you.

Buck and Dell kneel beside Estelle's bed.

Dell strokes her daughter's hair and smiles though the tears  
welled up in her eyes.

Buck kisses his mother's cheek.

BUCK  
I'll always love you, Mama.

Estelle's face glows as she assures her son and mother.

ESTELLE  
In the blink of an eye.

TALL MAN  
Would you care to see Heaven,  
Grandmother?

DELL  
How could I do that?

Buck stares up at Tall Man and answers for him.

BUCK  
Through angels' eyes.

Tall Man's copper eyes smile at all three.

TALL MAN  
Merry Christmas.

BUCK - DELL - ESTELLE  
(overlapping)  
Merry Christmas.

The room is pierced by streams of white light that spin faster and faster until the room is completely consumed.

EXT. CEMENTARY - PRESENT DAY CHRISTMAS EVE - AFTERNOON

The sun shines bright.

A sixty ish Buck Lynch stands in front of the graves of his grandparents' and mother, holding his three-year-old GRANDSON, JESS.

Buck's WIFE, his age, finishes arranging poinsettias around the headstones.

A large masonry statue of a winged angel with outstretched arms resides over the graves.

CHILD JESS  
Let's go, Granddaddy! We're gonna miss Santa Claus!

Buck's wife holds her arms out to the boy.

WIFE  
Come here, Jess. Come to Grandma.

She takes the boy.

WIFE  
Santa doesn't come 'till tonight.

A four-year-old girl, ESTELLE tugs at Buck's pants.

CHILD ESTELLE  
Let's go, Granddaddy. I'm scared of the angel.

Buck strokes his granddaughter's hair.

BUCK  
There's nothing to be scared of, Estelle -- Nothing at all.

Buck stares at his mother's headstone and rubs the St. Michael's medal around his neck between thumb and finger.

Buck's wife lays her head against his shoulder.

BUCK  
 Long time ago... but I still miss  
 her.

His eyes turn to his grandparents' graves.

BUCK  
 Miss them all.

A train rumbles in the distance, its horn blaring.

Buck pulls a pocket watch from his pants pocket and opens the case. It's engraved:

"Old habits and hand-me-downs"

"Granddaddy -- Christmas 1955"

BUCK  
 Old 92's barrellin', Granddaddy --  
 Right on time.

Buck closes the watch.

BUCK (V.O.)  
 Many years have passed since the  
 Christmas of 1955, but the memories  
 of that time will always be with  
 me.

INT. LYNCH RESIDENCE - MORNING - 1955

BUCK'S BEDROOM

Buck straightens a framed black and white photograph of a man wearing a Stetson hat by the porcelain angel.

BUCK (V.O.)  
 It was the Christmas, Mama found  
 peace. I got Granddaddy's pocket  
 watch; and a mislaid picture of my  
 father in his Stetson hat... turned  
 up.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING

Buck pedals his bike, fast.

He passes J.P. like he's standing still.

A train marked '92' barrels down the tracks, passing Buck.

BUCK (V.O.)  
And I was never-ever late for  
school, again.

FADE OUT.