WE GOT AN A

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

JEFFREY, 40’S, a suit in a vehicle, his daughter beside him. REENA, 7, plays with a jump rope, dangling it out the window.

It falls from her grasp, swinging like a snake in the wind. The fake snake lands atop a sign: ASPARAGUS FOR SALE

Reena, mouth agape, gets her dad’s attention. He spins them back, jets out quick to grab the rope, but something is way off in his world.

That sign, the rope, or both make him stop. He takes it down. His engraved “J” ring glints in the sunshine as he touches the sign in a soft moment before walking on, his shadow on the ground in a beam of light that shrinks to:

INT. SENIOR’S HOME/ROOM - NIGHT

The bottom of a door. It sweeps open to a dimly lit quiet; disturbed by the CARE AID who enters to see ancient CHARLIE HIGGS awake in his bed, his ball cap on.

CARE AID
Mr. Charlie Higgs, are you storing up your sleep meds again?

Charlie’s unyielding eyes face her for a showdown.

CHARLIE
I take them. They just don’t work.

The Care Aid opens his side drawer. Pushes around the random contents, empties a box of Smarties. Zero.

CARE AID
You’re getting good.

CHARLIE
I’ve always been good.

The Care Aid exits. Charlie waves her off “get lost”. His eyes close. He drifts:

CHARLIE’S DREAM:
EXT. ASPARAGUS FARM – DAY

The field has YOUNGER CHARLIE HIGGS, ball cap on, and his son, Jeffrey, early 20s.

CHARLIE
Farm’s not in your blood? Bin good enough for generations till you.

JEFFREY
It is what it is, Dad. You can’t make a zebra into a horse.

CHARLIE
Go. I don’t wanna see you no more.

Jeffrey tries to speak, but can’t. Charlie points his chin up sharply “piss off” he needn’t say.

INT. CHAPLAIN’S OFFICE – DAY

The CHAPLAIN, peers through the window then back at Charlie.

CHAPLAIN

CHARLIE
I still think I was right. He should have stayed. The farm collapsed because of him.

Charlie shakes his head though, in argument with himself.

CHARLIE
Maybe. Thanks.

He gets up to leave. The Chaplain reclines, sighs.

INT. FRONT OFFICE – NIGHT

NIGHT CLERK and Care Aid at desk, ticking boxes on a chart, entering into a computer.

NIGHT CLERK
Why do you think he doesn’t want to take his night meds?

CARE AID
Truth? I think he’s storing them. Plans a quick exit.
NIGHT CLERK
Hm. Got a call from his son. Plans a visit with his granddaughter.

CARE AID
I never knew he had a son.

INT. COMMON ROOM - DAY

LATER:

JEFFREY
No, I should be sorry. Maybe if I--


Charlie to Reena as he writes on a paper.

CHARLIE
So, math is the problem? Let’s see. Ya know the 9 rule? Every 9 times table adds up to 9. 2x9=18 8+1=9, 3x9=27 2+7=9 and so on.

Reena beams at the knowledge as a CRASH initiates a thunderstorm yielding precious-

INT. ROOM - DAY
Rain on the window. Charlie and Jeffrey drink secret shots. Reena plays jumprope, this time actually jumping with it.

Jeffrey skims Reena’s homework paper. Gives a thumbs up.

REENA
Grandpa, WE got an A!

JEFFREY
A for Asparagus. Dad, something happened today that made me think about goin’ back to farming.

Charlie squints, not able to think what, but it’s good.

FADE OUT: