Wesley

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FADE IN:

INT. SHARPE HOME - WESLEY'S ROOM - DAY

WESLEY SHARPE (8), light hair and freckles, meticulously lines up wooden blocks, perfectly straight and color coordinated. He turns to a bucket filled with more blocks. Scoops up a handful. When he turns back around, the blocks are stacked into a tall tower.

Wesley gets a frustrated look on his face. Lets out a loud grunt. He takes the blocks down, returns them to their previous position. Adds new blocks. Reaches for more. Turns around and the blocks are stacked up again.

INT. SHARPE HOME - KITCHEN - SAME

MEG SHARPE (30s), same light colored hair as her son and bright blue eyes, stands in her kitchen carving a pumpkin. Oldies plays loudly from a radio on the counter.

She sings along until the phone rings. She sets down her carving tool and picks up the phone.

MEG

(on phone)

Hello?... hi, Jen... no, I'm doing it now. So far so good.

(laughs)

No, haven't cut my fingers off... yet.

Meg turns the radio down, picks up her carving tool and continues her jack-o-lantern masterpiece.

MEG

First place? I dunno about that. I guess we'll see. What time should we meet you at the Halloween Festival... okay... no, I hadn't heard. So it's gonna be Italy this year... no way!... Wesley loves the Leaning Tower of Pisa...

A child's scream interrupts. Panic spreads across Meg's face.

MEG

I gotta call you back, Jen.

Meg puts down the phone and races out of the room.

UPSTAIRS

Meg stops at an open door, peers inside. Sees Wesley playing calmly with his blocks. He has created two, long lines of color coordinated blocks. She watches a moment, then turns to leave.

WESLEY (O.S.)

Something bad is going to happen at the Halloween Festival.

Meg stops in her tracks. Rushes into the --

WESLEY'S ROOM

She stands at the door, stares wildly at Wesley. Wesley focuses on the blocks in front of him, now stacked up in a huge tower that spans halfway to the ceiling.

MEG

Wesley?

As Wesley turns to regard her, the tower crumbles to the floor.

INT. POLICE STATION - OUTSIDE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Meg stands with OFFICER BRAUN (30s), all-American good looks hidden away under a weeks worth of stubble and dark under-eye circles.

They carefully watch Wesley and DR. TANAKA, a slight Asian man in his 50s, through a large observation window.

Dr. Tanaka's lips move, speaking to Wesley. Wesley ignores him, scribbling frantically on a piece of paper.

OFFICER BRAUN

Ms. Sharpe, are you certain --

MEG

Don't "Ms. Sharpe" me. We used to make mud pies together when we were still in diapers.

They hear snickering. Officer Braun glances behind him to find another uniformed man, OFFICER DONNELLY (20s), at his desk doing paperwork.

Uncomfortable, Officer Braun clears his throat and lowers his voice.

OFFICER BRAUN

Kids say crazy stuff all the time. That doesn't mean --

MEG

Not Wesley. You are aware of his condition.

Officer Braun checks to see if the other officer is listening. He is.

OFFICER BRAUN

Yes, ma'am.

Meg narrows her eyes at him.

MEG

He hasn't spoken a single word in his entire eight years of life. The very first thing he says is a warning and you don't think we should heed it?

OFFICER BRAUN

Ms. Sharpe...

He clears his throat again, glances at the other officer who has his nose in his paperwork.

OFFICER BRAUN

Meg... I can't close down the entire Halloween Festival over something you may or may not have heard from your non-verbal, autistic child.

MEG

I heard it!

Officer Braun cringes at the volume of her voice. Dr. Tanaka steps out of the interview room. Holds a drawing.

OFFICER BRAUN

Any luck?

DR. TANAKA

He didn't speak, if that's what you're asking. But he drew this picture.

He hands the drawing to Officer Braun. He looks it over quickly before showing it to Meg. She takes it for a closer look.

MEG

It's the Leaning Tower of Pisa. I read him a book about it once. It's where he goes in his head when he's scared or anxious.

OFFICER BRAUN

How do you know that?

MEG

He's my son. That's how.

INT. MEG'S CAR - DAY

Meg drives the car. Strains to see through the blur of wipers and pouring rain. Glances at Wesley in the rearview mirror.

Wesley meticulously draws out a tick-tack-toe board on the foggy window with his finger. Places an "x" in the center spot. An "o" slowly appears to the left of the x.

He draws a second "x" above the first. An "o" slowly appears below Wesley's first "x", blocking him.

He puts an "x" in the top left hand box. An "o" appears in the top right hand box. Wesley puts an "X" in the bottom right hand corner. Draws a line connecting his $3 \, x's$ diagonally. Smiles.

The car comes to a sudden halt, jolting both Wesley and Meg.

MEG

Sorry. Red light.

Wesley turns to the window to find the tick-tack-toe game smeared away. Through the clear spot, he can see a large grassy area across the street. Booths and canopies are being set up. A large banner hangs between two trees, reading: "Halloween Festival".

Wesley lets out a series of grunts. Meg checks on him in the rearview mirror.

MEG

I know. It's okay. We're not going.

The light changes to green and Meg powers through the intersection.

EXT. CITY PARK - HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL - DAY

Two men, CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1 and #2, step back to admire their handiwork. Before them lies an eight foot replica of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Construction Worker #1 smiles proudly while Construction Worker #2 skews his head to one side, then the other.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #2 Is it just me, or is it leaning?

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1
They wouldn't call it the "Leaning
Tower of Pisa" if it didn't lean,
now would they?

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #2
But is it safe? This thing must
weigh a ton. There's gonna be
kids all over this place in a few
hours.

Construction Worker #1 points to a thick wire cable that runs from the top of the tower to a nearby tree.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1 Stainless Steel wire rope. Got a breaking weight of twenty-one hundred pounds. It would take an act of God to bring this thing down.

Construction Worker #2 finally cracks a smile. Now he's impressed, too.

EXT. SHARPE HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY

A light mist falls as Meg gets out of the car. She promptly opens an umbrella, then opens the back passenger door. Wesley steps out, takes the umbrella, walks up the driveway, careful to step over every crack in the cement.

INT. SHARPE HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Meg stands at the stove preparing dinner. She stirs the contents of a pot with one hand and holds the phone to her ear with the other.

MEG
(on phone)
C'mon, pick up... hey, Jen, listen,
I'm not gonna be able to make it
(MORE)

MEG (cont'd)

tonight... I know, but something came up... no, I can't really talk about it...

She glances over her shoulder at Wesley. He sits at the island with a huge bowl of Halloween candy in front of him. There are several empty candy wrappers beside the bowl.

MEG

Hold on a minute...

Meg sets down the phone, goes over to Wesley, upset.

MEG

These are for the trick-or-treaters. What have I always told you about candy before dinner?

She picks up the bowl and tip toes to place it on top of the refrigerator. Scoops up the candy wrappers and tosses them into the trash can. Goes back to the stove, picks up the phone.

MEG

Okay, sorry. Listen, why don't you guys skip the festival, too. Come over here. Wesley and Clover could have a play date. We've got lots of candy...

Meg glances over her shoulder again. To her utter dismay, the bowl of candy is in front of Wesley again, more candy wrappers scattered on the countertop.

She gasps, drops the phone. Wesley sits, staring into the almost empty bowl of candy. Emotionless. Like a living, breathing statue.

Meg keeps a careful eye on Wesley as she kneels to pick up the phone.

MEG

(on phone)

I have to go.

She clicks the phone off, sets it down.

INT. POLICE STATION - OFFICER BRAUN'S OFFICE - EVENING

Officer Braun sits at his desk, watches a recording of Dr. Tanaka's session with Wesley on his computer monitor.

DR. TANAKA

(on monitor)

What's going to happen at the Halloween Festival, Wesley?

Wesley doesn't reply. His head slowly turns toward the camera. His lips unmoving.

WESLEY (V.O.)

He's going to die.

Officer Braun stares at the screen in dismay.

OFFICER DONNELLY (O.S.)

Heading out...

Officer Braun starts. Turns to find Officer Donnelly standing in the doorway.

OFFICER DONNELLY

You coming?

OFFICER BRAUN

Take a look at this.

Officer Donnelly enters, stands beside Officer Braun. Officer Braun rewinds the video. This time Wesley turns to the camera but there is no audio.

OFFICER BRAUN

Wait. He said... something...

He turns up the volume. Rewinds the video. Plays. Still no voice.

OFFICER DONNELLY

When I start hearing things, I know it's time to go home.

He pats Officer Braun on the back and heads out.

INT. SHARPE HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Meg stands in the same spot, stares at the candy bowl. Wesley is no longer in his chair at the island. Looks like she's afraid to move.

Finally she makes a move for the bowl. About to touch it when $\ensuremath{^{--}}$

The phone rings. She jumps slightly. Answers the phone.

MEG

Jen, I can't talk right now.

INTERCUT - KITCHEN / OFFICER BRAUN'S OFFICE

Officer Braun sits at his desk, stares at his computer screen and the paused image of Wesley facing the camera.

OFFICER BRAUN

Meg?

MEG

Connor?

OFFICER BRAUN

Is Wesley there with you?

MEG

Of course he is. Where else would he be?

OFFICER BRAUN

Listen, we recorded his session with Dr. Tanaka today. I was watching it over and I heard... or at least I think I heard something. Has Wesley said anything else since you've been home?

MEG

So you believe me now?

Meg exits the kitchen. Looks around the darkened living room before heading --

UPSTAIRS

A door at the end of the hall is slightly ajar.

OFFICER BRAUN

Just answer the question.

MEG

What did you hear?

OFFICER BRAUN

I shouldn't say... I haven't been sleeping well. I could've...

Meg pushes the door open. Looks around the room. Wesley is no where to be found. The window is open, causing the curtain to blow in the gentle evening breeze.

MEG

Oh, my God! He's gone!

OFFICER BRAUN

What do you mean gone? Did you look everywhere?

MEG

He's not in his room. The window is open. He never opens the window. Oh, my God!

Officer Braun leaps out of his chair. Grabs his jacket on his way out the door.

OFFICER BRAUN

Meg, calm down. Where would he go?

MEG

I don't know. He's never --

MEG (V.O.)

Wesley loves the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

FLASH TO:

Officer Braun hands Meg Wesley's drawing of the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

BACK TO SCENE

MEG (V.O.)

It's where he goes in his head when he's scared or anxious.

Realization washes over Meg's face.

MEG

(on phone)

The Halloween Festival.

EXT. CITY PARK - HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL - NIGHT

Flood lights are mounted on trees, aimed down at the festival below. At one booth, children giggle as they bob for apples in a giant cauldron. At another booth, blindfolded children reach into bowls filled with spaghetti, jello and other various wiggly, jiggly foods.

In the distance, a family stands in awe beside the Leaning Tower of Pisa replica. A LITTLE GIRL points to the very top.

LITTLE GIRL

Daddy, what's that boy doing up there?

The DAD looks up but doesn't see anything. Turns to his wife, JEN.

DAD

Jen, no more sweets for Clover. She's hallucinating.

The threads of the cable connecting the tower to the tree begin to shred. The tower jerks ever so slightly. The family doesn't seem to notice. They move on to an equally large replica of the Eiffel Tower.

Wesley takes their place in front of the Leaning Tower.

INT. OFFICER BRAUN'S SQUAD CAR - NIGHT

Officer Braun drives with SIREN and LIGHTS on, determination and a hint of fear on his face.

EXT. CITY PARK - HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL - NIGHT

Wesley stares up at the Leaning Tower replica. In awe. Another thread on the wire snaps. Tower shifts more. A police SIREN sounds faintly in the background.

Jen catches sight of Wesley, pulls away from her husband and daughter. Moves toward Wesley with caution.

JEN

Wesley?

Wesley doesn't pay her any attention.

JEN

I thought your mom said she wasn't coming? Where is she?

She takes another cautious step toward Wesley as the police SIREN gets louder. Distracted, she watches as a SQUAD CAR races through the parking lot. The driver's door opens and Officer Braun races out.

OFFICER BRAUN

Wesley!

JEN

What's going on?

Officer Braun runs as fast as he can toward Wesley. The wire snaps. The tower comes tumbling down. Officer Braun grabs hold of Wesley. They fall to the ground, Officer Braun taking the brunt of the tower as it pins his legs to the ground.

INT. HOSPITAL - EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

Officer Braun lies in a hospital bed, both his legs in restrictive, thigh-high casts. Eyes closed.

A knock on the door draws his attention. He opens his eyes to find Meg and Wesley standing in the doorway.

MEG

We didn't mean to bother you. I just wanted to thank you.

OFFICER BRAUN

Come in.

Officer Braun struggles to sit upright, grimaces in pain. Meg ushers Wesley into the room. They stand beside the hospital bed.

OFFICER BRAUN

I'm just glad he's okay.

MEG

How are you?

Meg glances at his casts. Makes a face as if she can feel his pain.

OFFICER BRAUN

I've been shot before. This is nothing.

Wesley stares aimlessly at something across the room. Meg smooths his hair. Kisses the top of his head.

MEG

Well, we won't keep you. You should rest.

Meg turns to leave. Officer Braun takes her hand.

OFFICER BRAUN

How is he? Has he spoken at all since...?

Meg shakes her head. Eyes fill with tears and sadness. Suddenly Wesley begins to tremble, emits a low-pitched grunting sound.

MEG

Wesley? What is it?

With wide, terrified eyes, Wesley points across the room. Standing on the other side of the bed is a LITTLE BOY, face pale and lifeless. His black eyes stare pointedly at Wesley.

FADE OUT