

My Missing Year
Screenplay by
Stephen Foster

Stephen Foster
Round Earth Entertainment
Divaworks@yahoo.com
(c) 2023

ON SCREEN: Ft. Worth/Dallas Texas. 1978.

"Deep in The Heart of Texas" playing as WE swoop in like a mosquito over the buildings of Dallas, to the sleepy cattle town of Ft. Worth.

We zip in on the state fair. Rides are zooming by, kids are strung out on cotton candy and hot dogs. We approach a giant white, wooden roller coaster, a family laughing. We land on the platform where a very short 10 year old boy, DAVID, stands alone, bawling. He holds all the prizes won at the games. He wears coke-bottle glasses, has crooked teeth, and has long, shaggy hair like a girl.

DAVID (V.O.)

You never know what life will hand you. You can never predict what will befall you on this wild-ass Roller Coaster ride. I knew life sucked when I wasn't allowed to ride the Texas Giant at the State Fair because I was 2 inches too short. Everyone in my family got to ride except me. My mother and my YOUNGER sister, Samantha.

The roller coaster comes screaming to a halt and 2 women get off the ride: This is PENNY (28) and SAMANTHA (9). They are laughing their heads off!

DAVID (V.O.)

My mother was young, free and single after my father disappeared under mysterious circumstances. It was my mother, my sister and me against the world...

Push into a small western style bar, simple but not a dive. A place cheap enough for poor folks to cut loose on a Friday night.

DAVID (V.O.)

...My missing year started with my mother's tragic flaw: picking the WRONG man.

Penny, a 4'9" pencil thin red-head, stands at the bar ordering drinks in tight bell bottoms, a loose fitting top and high-heel platform shoes. Her hair floods down her back.

Penny turns around and bumps into a tall 'glass of water' almost knocking him over and spilling her drinks. This is CLIVE.

CLIVE
Woah, Nellie!

PENNY
(smiling)
How did you know my name?

Clive is 27 and looks like a Ken Doll. He steadies her.

CLIVE
Huh?

PENNY
Nell. That's my middle name. Do I know you?

They get a look at each other and the sparks fly.

CLIVE
No, Ummm, I saw you dancing out there and my friend, Mark, said he'd give me \$20, to come talk to you.

PENNY
(laughing)
I'm Penny. Did I spill Mai Thai on you?

He checks his butterfly collar shirt.

CLIVE
No...Umm, you want to dance?

PENNY
Sure. Let me take these drinks back to my friends.

Penny floats away, a butterfly in heat. Clive watches her. She looks back and nods for him to follow. He does.

Penny hands her drink to her friend, a plump little tart named SHELLEY.

The Bee Gees 'How Deep is Your Love' begins to play.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Oh, I love this song!

She grabs Clive's hand and they head to the dance floor. They dance close and real slow.

3 EXT. CLIVE'S CAR - CAPTAINS DEN PARKING LOT - LATER 3

Penny and Clive make out in the backseat of Clive's car. The windows are steamed up. Clive puts his hand down her blouse and she stops him.

CLIVE
Come on, I want you, Penny.

PENNY
No, it's too fast.

He's frustrated. She's frustrated.

CLIVE
Just let me keep kissing you.

PENNY
Ok, but I got to get back to my
cousin, Shelley.

Clive kisses her deep on the mouth. She gives into him willingly, then almost, by accident places her hand on his cock. He moans. She breaks it off.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Enough. I got to get back.

Penny straightens her clothes, opens the door, gets out of the car, stands in the neon glow of the Captain's Den sign.

Clive climbs out like a rejected Lancelot.

CLIVE
So, Penny Nell, how do we put out
this fire?

PENNY
Well, you can call me.

CLIVE
Oh, I will.

PENNY
Let's dance once more before last
call.

They head back into the bar reeling with hungry lust.

Clive and Penny going at it like two cats in heat. They finish in a wild climax, roll off of each other, then grab cigarettes and inhale deeply.

CLIVE

Damn.

PENNY

Wow.

CLIVE

You are incredible.

PENNY

(giggles)

You're no slouch yourself.

CLIVE

I'm glad I called you.

PENNY

No, I called you, remember?

They laugh. They kiss.

CLIVE

I'm glad Mark bribed me to talk to you.

PENNY

I had my eye on you, too. You look just like Lancelot or a Ken doll.

CLIVE

We should get married.

PENNY

What?

CLIVE

I mean...I really like you.

PENNY

But we don't know each other.

CLIVE

Give me time.

PENNY

I don't know about this marriage stuff. I'm single.

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

My last husband was a son of a bitch. And I have kids.

CLIVE

What?

PENNY

Yeah, I have two kids. See, I'm not a perfect catch.

CLIVE

You drive me nuts.

He smashes out his cigarette and kisses her on the mouth. They are at it again.

5

INT. RED LOBSTER - NIGHT

5

Penny and Clive enjoy dinner in a small tucked away booth. The world is their oyster.

CLIVE

I work for the post office.

PENNY

A mailman?

CLIVE

Yeah. Sorta. I'm on disability because I hit my head on an air conditioner and it gave me epilepsy.

PENNY

Oh, that's too bad.

CLIVE

Yeah, it sucks, but I'm getting disability while they figure out what to do with me.

PENNY

I bet you looked so cute in your mailman outfit.

Clive smiles and lights a cigarette.

CLIVE

Just another pretty mailman at your service.

PENNY

I can't wait for you to meet my kids.

CLIVE

Now, I'm nervous. What happened to their dad?

PENNY

He was a drunk, drug pusher who beat the shit out of me and left me with two kids.

6 INT. MARION'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

6

AUNT TAMMY(15) has the Super 8 home movie kit set up and plays movies on the screen for David and Samantha who eat pop corn. They love this.

Up on the tiny screen, a tall, slender man supervises an Easter egg hunt in the backyard. He lifts TODDLER DAVID up in a tree to get a colored egg. LITTLE SAMANTHA at his feet, stumbles around with her Easter basket.

TAMMY

That's your real dad.

David and Samantha just stare at him.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

He got your mom into all kinds of trouble. He nearly ruined her.

BACK TO:

7 INT. RED LOBSTER - NIGHT

7

Penny tries to hold back tears.

PENNY

I don't want to be a bumner.

CLIVE

What an asshole.

PENNY

Well, I thought he was a winner. Besides, I had to get away from my mother, Marion. She was treating me like a slave. But I got two great kids out of it: David and Samantha.

CLIVE

Nice names.

PENNY

They're my little brats! I try not to spoil them too much.

CLIVE

If they are anything like you, they are sweet peas.

PENNY

You'll see. You have any kids?

CLIVE

My son, from my first marriage. I don't see him often. His mother lives in Oak Lawn.

Penny eats her fried shrimp in silence. He reaches his hand across the table and holds hers. She smiles at him.

8

INT. GRANNY & PAPA'S HOUSE - DAY

8

Granny is busy baking a German Chocolate cake while Penny sits at the bar smoking her cigarette. Papa enjoys a rum and coke and cigar.

PENNY

I think I found the one.

PAPA

Who is he?

PENNY

His name is Clive and I can't wait for you to meet him.

PAPA

Don't you think you'd better get back on your feet first?

PENNY

He's a mailman with a steady pay check. I gotta provide for my kids.

GRANNY

We just don't want you to get hurt again.

PENNY

He's nothing like Clint! He's sweet and tender. Like a giant Teddy bear.

PAPA

Teddy bear or not, they still have sharp teeth and claws.

9

INT. MARION'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

9

MARION and SAL sit at the kitchen table playing cards while Penny paces, full of nervous energy as David and Samantha walk out of the kitchen.

David has food on his face and Penny flips.

PENNY

Good lord, what have you got on your face! He's gonna be here any second!

The doorbell rings!

PENNY (CONT'D)

Mama wipe his face!

Penny rushes to answer the door and brings Clive into the living room holding a box of ice creams. David and Samantha stand in front of them like coy kittens.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Kids, I want you to meet Clive.

David and Samantha mutter a shy "hello" to this strange man.

CLIVE

I hope you kids like ice cream.

DAVID

I love ice cream.

He lunges for one.

PENNY

Not, now! We're having supper first.

Marion pipes up.

MARION

Where you taking these brats?

Penny gives her a nasty look that could freeze time.

CLIVE
Asteroid Pizza.

SAMANTHA
I love that place!

Sal lays a card down.

SAL
Gin.

10 EXT. ASTEROID PIZZA - EVENING

10

Clive, Penny, Samantha and David sit at a table with a destroyed everything' pizza in awkward silence.

DAVID
Are you a mailman?

CLIVE
(laughs)
Yes. I have a mailbag, uniform and everything.

Clive smiles at Penny. He likes the kids.

DAVID
Do you like Olivia Newton-John?

CLIVE
Yeah, she's hot but her music is banal.

DAVID
She's my favorite singer.

Penny gives David 'the look.'

PENNY
David is obsessed with her. I don't know why!

SAMANTHA
He never shuts up about her.

DAVID
She's only the greatest thing on the planet. She's bigger than "Star Wars."

They all laugh. The WAITER appears with the bill

WAITER

I'm sorry, sir, your Master Charge
was declined.

CLIVE

(heated)

What the fuck? I want to speak to
the manager.

Penny comes to the rescue.

PENNY

Don't worry about it, Clive. I'll
pay. Besides, there are 3 of us.

Clive passes the bill to Penny. David and Samantha make a
mental note of this awkward exchange.

11 EXT. MARIONS'S HOUSE - FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

11

SUPER: Wedding Day, 1979.

All the family are present at this happy occasion, along with
cousin Shelley, her HUSBAND and KIDS.

Penny is getting the final looks done on her hair by Marion
and adjustments to her dress by Granny.

The step back revealing a radiant Penny who shines in the
summer sun.

MARION

Penny, you look beautiful.

PENNY

Oh, mama.

David and Samantha run out of the house as Penny reaches the
steps. They're dressed in yesterdays finest hand-me-downs.
High on sugar and excitement.

DAVID

Mom! You look just like Olivia
Newton John!

SAMANTHA

She looks prettier than that
seahorse!

Clive appears with Sal.

CLIVE

An angel!

GRANNY

I made the dress from scratch!

Penny hugs Granny. Papa appears with his camera.

PAPA

Let's get one with the kids.

PENNY

Kids, smile pretty!

Papa snaps their wedding pictures. They are dressed in dress clothes for a hot, summer day.

GRANNY

Oh, you look so beautiful together.

DAVID

Can we have cake now?

MARION

Mind your manners. Stop being so selfish. Go tie your tie.

David folds his arms across his chest and sulks.

PENNY

Mama, you don't have to snap at him.

MARION

He's getting too big for his britches.

Granny goes to David and pats his head.

GRANNY

Little man, you want to lick the icing spoon? I saved it for you.

David lights up and hugs her.

MARION

Heidi, you're spoiling him rotten.

Tammy and Uncle PETER arrive, rough-housing each other. Tammy does not look happy.

PETER

Who looks cute in her dress! Ha-ha!

Peter musses Tammy's hair. Tammy whirls on him.

TAMMY

I'm gonna kick your ass. This ugly
tablecloth is scratchy. I can't
breathe!

They follow the rest of the family into the,

LIVING ROOM

The kids rush through the room.

SAL

You kids better act right or I
won't take you out dune-buggy
riding.

SAMANTHA

I don't want to go dune buggy
riding anyway!

She runs off.

MARION

I think it's time to begin!

CLIVE

Wait. David's tie needs fixing

Clive bends down and re-ties David's tie. Samantha comes up
and stands beside them. Clive takes a part of his flower from
his lapel and puts it in Samantha's hair.

Penny looks at this scene with pride and joy. She looks at
Marion and Marion looks over at Granny who beams. A chain of
love.

The wedding takes place with Clive and Penny standing in
front of Papa who officiates the vows. Sal gives Penny away
while the rest of the family converge around the newlyweds.

12

INT. MARION'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

12

The wedding ceremony is over and everyone is partying down.
There are beers, punch and cake. Tammy sneaks puffs of
cigarettes from Peter. Everyone is congratulating the couple.

Peter, a few beers in, stands in the middle and bangs a fork
on a beer can.

PETER

Attention! I am so happy my sister is finally marrying the man of her dreams... I hope he's not a loser...

Marion stands up and shuts Peter down.

MARION

All right, Peter, sit down! Penny and Clive, Sal and I decided that instead of buying you a bunch of crap you don't need, we're giving you as a wedding gift our almost new Subaru.

Penny and Clive smile as if they won the last round on "The Price is Right." The whole family reacts. The kids rush outside to go look at it. Tammy can't believe it. Peter is jealous.

The family follow the kids outside to celebrate the new and generous gift.

13

EXT. MARION'S HOME - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

13

The kids are having a ball playing in the car while Penny, Marion, Sal and Clive observe.

INSERT INT CAR: David is being a backseat driver. Samantha says she knows what she's doing!

CLIVE

(to Sal)

That is very kind of you.

Penny gives Marion and Sal an awkward hug.

PENNY

Mom, that is so sweet.

SAL

Yep. It's in mint condition, and I just had the spark plugs replaced and the oil changed.

MARION

Clive, I don't want you to try and return my daughter. I'm not a pawn shop.

Clive is taken aback for second. Rebounds.

CLIVE

I guess I should have offered you a goat and \$50 like they do in the Ozark's.

They share a moment of tension and then laugh. Clive walks over to the driver's seat and leans down to where Samantha is pretending to drive.

SAMANTHA

Oh, dad, let's drive to the San Diego Zoo!

CLIVE

We'll have to save up for that trip, Samantha.

He musses her curly hair. She checks the rear vision mirror and let's out a scream.

SAMANTHA

Oh, my God, my flowers! You ruined them!

CLIVE

No I didn't. Here let me fix 'em...

Clive opens the car door, but Samantha runs into the house covering her head. Clive looks awkwardly around, as David calls shotgun and slides into the driver's seat.

PAPA

Let's get a shot of you love birds cutting the cake.

14 EXT. COLONIAL APARTMENTS - DAY 14

Penny, Clive, Samantha and David pull up in the Subaru to the new home/bungalow with luggage on the roof.

15 INT. COLONIAL APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT 15

The new family finishes a meal of chicClive fried steak. There is a strained feel in the room. Clive lights a cigarette.

CLIVE

Trisha, that was the best chicken fried steak I've ever eaten.

PENNY

Thank you, honey.

CLIVE
Ok, kids, time to wash the dishes.

A moment of silence. David and Samantha look to Penny. She doesn't know what to say. Finally, Samantha breaks it.

SAMANTHA
Mom never makes us do the dishes.

David folds his hands across his chest in defiance.

CLIVE
I make the money and you two can do
some chores.

PENNY
I'll do them.

Penny stands up and clears the table.

CLIVE
No! Sit down.

Clive stands up, throws his chair to the ground and grabs David violently by the shirt pulling him out of his chair.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
When I say JUMP, you say how high!
You hear me?!

David screams. Samantha and Penny are shocked and stunned.

DAVID
Leave me alone!

Clive slaps David across the head hitting him smack in the ear. David screams bloody murder.

CLIVE
I will NOT raise a son who doesn't
GOD DAMN listen!

He shoves David violently to the kitchen sink and turns on the hot water full blast.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
You afraid to get dirty, you little
wussy?

PENNY
CLIVE!

Clive runs David's hands under the hot water.

DAVID

It burns!

CLIVE

Start doing those fucking dishes or
I'll beat the shit out of you.

David washes the dishes with huge tears in his eyes.

Penny and Samantha stare in silence at the awful situation.

Clive turns, directs his rage at Samantha who has appeared from around the corner, uses Penny as a shield.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(to Samantha)

Your fucking arms broClive?

SAMANTHA

Don't hit me!

CLIVE

Clear this God-damned table or I'll
break your fucking arms. MOVE!

Samantha begins to slowly take the dishes from the table to the sink which David has filled with soapy water.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

I want this kitchen to be spotless.
If I see a spot on those dishes or
a crumb on the counter you will
both get an ass-beating.

David and Samantha continue their chores in silence. Penny lights a cigarette and sits in a huff.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Let go watch "Happy Days."

PENNY

You didn't have to beat him.

CLIVE

We'll talk about this later.

PENNY

No, I want to talk about this NOW!

Penny and Clive exit, carrying their argument into the living room.

Close-up on David and Samantha washing the dishes in confused, dazed silence.

SAMANTHA

I hate him.

DAVID

Me, too.

SAMANTHA

Did he hurt you?

DAVID

I can't hear out of my right ear.

SAMANTHA

I hope she divorces him.

The raging fight continues in the background.

CLIVE (O.S.)

I won't live in a fucking pigsty.

PENNY (O.S.)

It's only the dishes.

CLIVE (O.S.)

I refuse to live like my ex-wife.

PENNY (O.S.)

Don't you ever compare me to that
fat cow ever again!

They continue to scream while the kids do the dishes.

16

INT. COLONIAL APARTMENT/DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

16

David's bedroom is a shrine to Olivia Newton-John.

David sings along with the record. He uses a small baseball bat for a chord-less microphone. He's in a world of his own.

A knock on the door.

Clive opens the door and David stops like a deer in headlights. He drops the baseball bat and pretends to be doing nothing.

DAVID

Hey...

Clive awkwardly holds out a huge, green, leather bound Bible to David like a peace offering.

CLIVE

I'm sorry for exploding.

DAVID
It's okay.

CLIVE
I want you to have this.

David takes the Bible and looks at it strangely.

DAVID
A Bible?

CLIVE
Yeah, it's how I live my life.

Clive opens the front cover and points to the inscription.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
I wrote you a note.

CLOSE UP ON INSCRIPTION:

"Son, I want to give you the word of the TRUTH. Love, Dad"

David reads it and smiles sweetly and awkwardly.

DAVID
Thank you.

CLIVE
Maybe you and your sister can come
to church with me sometime.

DAVID
Yeah, sure.

CLIVE
Ok, well, get back to your Olivia
Newton-John.

He closes the door leaving David alone. David sits down at
his desk and opens the Bible.

17

EXT. HARRISON LANE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FIELD - DAY

17

A dyke P.E. TEACHER blows her whistle and the 5th grade BOYS
line up to play soccer. David stands in the middle of them, a
foot shorter and sucking on his asthma inhaler.

P.E. TEACHER
Alright, let's score a point.

She centers the ball and they kick it down the field. The boys chase it like a pack of wolves.

David attempts to run with them, but he's too slow. He turns around to catch his breath and THWAK! The soccer ball hits him square in the stomach.

David goes down wheezing and gasping for air.

The boys circle around him laughing and calling him names.

18 EXT. COLONIAL APARTMENTS/DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 18

David and Samantha are rocking out to Olivia Newton-John. Samantha is miming the song with the baseball bat. In the background they can hear the sound of Penny and Clive fighting.

The intensity of the fight increases.

David turns up the volume all the way...

19 INT. COLONIAL APARTMENT/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 19

Clive stuffs clothes into a black plastic trash sack while Penny pleads with him and chain-smokes.

PENNY

What the fuck am I gonna do now?

CLIVE

It's not you. I told you. I can't handle this.

PENNY

Handle what? TELL ME!! Why for god's sake?!

CLIVE

I told you my dad had a heart attack and I can't afford to raise your two brats...

He continues to pack.

PENNY

We've only been married 3 months.

CLIVE

I'm sorry.

PENNY

This is about your ex-wife. What did that fat bitch say?

CLIVE

It wasn't Luanne. I just can't do it.

PENNY

Why Clive? Whyyyy?!

Samantha appears at the doorway sleepy-eyed.

SAMANTHA

What's going on?

PENNY

Your dad is leaving us!

Samantha runs from the room.

20

INT. COLONIAL APARTMENT/DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

20

David is asleep with his stuffed monkey when Samantha bursts open the door and flips on the light waking him.

SAMANTHA

Wake up!

DAVID

No!

Samantha pulls his covers off of him.

SAMANTHA

Mom needs us.

David sits up.

DAVID

Huh?

SAMANTHA

Dad is leaving Mom.

DAVID

Why?

SAMANTHA

He's a shit head.

DAVID

What did we do wrong?

SAMANTHA

Nothing. Haven't you heard them fighting? They've been going at it all night.

DAVID

They always fight. I tune them out.

SAMANTHA

Let's go out there and tell him off. I'm going to tell him what I really think of him.

She runs out of the room. David puts on his "Star Wars" robe.

21

INT. COLONIAL APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

21

Clive still packs. Penny stares at him from the couch, chain smoking.

PENNY

What the fuck am I going to do now?

CLIVE

I told you when I married you I had problems. I have epilepsy from Viet Nam.

PENNY

Liar! When I married you, you said you had a job with the post office.

CLIVE

Had! I HAD a job!

PENNY

But you forgot to tell me you HAD gotten fired!

CLIVE

Laid off!

PENNY

Same difference.
(she thinks)
Who is she?

CLIVE

What?

PENNY

Is it that whore, Brenda?

CLIVE
It's NO ONE!

PENNY
Lying sack of dog shit! I saw you
two coming out of the Red Lobster
together. Funny, you never take me
out to fancy places like that!

22 EXT. COLONIAL APARTMENT - NIGHT

22

Penny launches at him and attacks him like feral cat, full
throttle, hitting him on the body and face. He fends her off.

CLIVE
Stop it!

Samantha and David appear...

SAMANTHA
(to Clive)
I want to tell you what I think of
you. You are a mother fucker!

CLIVE
Watch your mouth, young lady.

PENNY
She learned it from you.

SAMANTHA
I always knew you were a liar.

CLIVE
I'm still your father and will beat
your ass red.

SAMANTHA
No you won't! You are my Step-
father. You're nothing but a two-
timing asshole. I'm glad you're
leaving! David and I hate you.
Don't we?!

Samantha looks to David who stammers.

Penny and Clive stand looking at each other for a second.

PENNY
What did I do wrong?

CLIVE

It's me. I can't handle you and
your two kids.

He grabs his trash bags and walks away.

23

EXT. CAPTAINS DEN/PENNY'S CAR PARKED - NIGHT

23

Penny's car sits across the street from the Captain's Den. Penny sits in the driver's seat chain smoking while Samantha peers through a pair of binoculars. She's searching through the windows of the bar. Penny sits on pillows to reach the pedals on the car. David hides in the backseat.

PENNY

You see them?

SAMANTHA

No.

PENNY

I know he's there. His car is
outside.

She puts out her cigarette and lights another one.

DAVID

Mamma, are we gonna get ice cream?

PENNY

Shh..I gotta find out if he's with
that whore.

SAMANTHA

David, stop being a scaredy-cat.

DAVID

What If they call the police on us?

PENNY

We're just sitting here minding our
own business. They can't do
anything to us. I don't want you to
say a word to Marion. She'll kick
my ass.

DAVID/SAMANTHA

We won't.

SAMANTHA

I see them!

24 INT. PENNY'S CAR/PARKED - NIGHT

24

Samantha has the binoculars trained on Clive's car! Through the binoculars the silhouette of two people making out in the back seat. Clive and a slutty WOMAN stumble back into the bar. Penny grabs the binoculars and looks for herself.

PENNY

I'll show that piece of dog shit.

She smashes out her cigarette, pulls a huge buck knife out of her macramé handbag. David's eyes grow wide as saucers.

Penny swings open the door with her foot.

DAVID

Mom, let's go to 31 Flavors!

PENNY

You look out for the fuzz.
Samantha, grab the sugar.

Samantha grabs a plastic baggie filled with sugar from the glove compartment and follows her mother.

DAVID

Oh, God.

25 EXT. CAPTAINS DEN/CLIVE'S CAR/PARKED - NIGHT

25

Penny walks nonchalantly up to the car, kneels down and slits the front tire with the knife. We hear the hissing sound of air going out. Suddenly, a car drives down the street. Penny and Samantha duck behind the car. David's eyes peer out of the back door.

PENNY

We gotta work fast. Get the gas tank.

Penny slashes the other tires while Samantha opens the gas tank and pours the sugar inside. They run back to Penny's car.

26 INT. MARION'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

26

Marion stands defiantly with her hands on her hips, takes an inhale of her cigarette and breathes it out with a sigh. She stares Penny down. David and Samantha stand by her side like two dolls.

MARION

I told you not to marry him.

PENNY

But I love him, and I know he loves me.

MARION

Why don't you ever think with your head instead of your puss?

Marion stalks into the kitchen. Penny follows with the kids.

27

INT. MARION'S HOME/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

27

PENNY

Mom, my kids...

Marion pours herself a cup of coffee, slams three heaping scoops of sugar into it.

MARION

Well, Penny Nell, what do you want me to do? Clean up your mess again?

PENNY

I need you to take care of the kids while I get back on my feet.

Marion turns toward Penny with daggers in her eyes.

MARION

Take care of your brats? God-dammit! I'm not running a roadhouse Motel here.

DAVID

We promise to be good.

MARION

Shut up! I have my own three kids to raise and your Uncle dumped Linda on me.

PENNY

It's only a few weeks.

In bursts Tammy sporting a bull-dyke haircut, wearing a Davie Crockett hat and a B.B. gun slung over her back. She grabs David and puts him into a head-lock and gives him a "noogie". David tries to escape but he's no match for her.

TAMMY
I can watch these brats.

DAVID
Ouch, that hurts.

MARION
Tammy, let him go and go outside
and play!

Tammy releases him and punches him on the arm.

TAMMY
I can handle these two brats.

PENNY
Mom, Tammy is almost 16!

TAMMY
Yeah, and I'd like to toughen her
up.
("her" refers to David)

They all think for a second. Marion breaks the silence.

MARION
If Tammy will watch them after
school, they can stay a week until
you find a job. But after that,
they're out.

Tammy does a victory dance. She pumps the B.B. gun.

TAMMY
Kick ass! Come on guys, let's go
shoot the neighbor's poodle who
keeps barking all night.

Tammy runs off with Samantha and David in tow.

28

INT. MARION'S HOME/SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

28

David and Samantha sleep squeezed together in a twin bed.
They are wide awake. Too much excitement, too much sugar.

SAMANTHA
I'm worried about mom.

DAVID
She'll be fine.

SAMANTHA
How do you know?

DAVID
She's like a cat, she always lands
on her feet.

SAMANTHA
You know she's gonna have a baby?

DAVID
What?

SAMANTHA
Yeah, that butthole knocked her up
before he dumped her.

DAVID
God.

He rolls over and tries to sleep while Samantha stares at the
Led Zeppelin poster glowing in the dark.

29

EXT. GRANNY AND PAPA'S HOUSE - DAY

29

Papa polishes his car. Penny exits the house with a couple of
soda's, hands one to Papa.

PENNY
Hi, Papa.

She hugs him.

PAPA
You figure out what you're gonna do
yet?

Penny can't meet Papa's eyes, she shakes her head.

PENNY
Marion will only take them for a
week.

PAPA
I was talking to my Shriner friend
down at the plant... There's a
place...

Suddenly Olivia Newton-John's "Deeper than the Night" song
blares out from inside the house.

PENNY
(yells)
David turn that crap off.
(to Papa)
He's obsessed with that slut.

PENNY (CONT'D)
 (struggling)
 Okay. Yeah... Okay.

30 INT. MASON'S HOME/OFFICE - DAY

30

David and Samantha in their best outfits: David in a stiff blue suit two sizes too small. Samantha in a ruffled, frilly thing that smacks of a toss-out at a white-trash wedding.

They sit in hard wooden chairs, frozen smiles while Penny talks to an ancient Shriner, HENRY. She smokes nervously.

HENRY
 Your Grandfather said they were well-behaved.

PENNY
 They're angels. They never cause trouble.

Penny glances at them and they bump up their smiles to beams. Henry makes a note of this on the yellow pad of paper.

HENRY
 Looking at your financial record, they seem ideal for the Mason's Home, but before we accept them, we have to give them the formal IQ test.

Close up on Samantha in horror at the word "test"

31 I/E. MASON'S HOME/OFFICE - DAY

31

MONTAGE:

Note: Henry will appear in these scenes.

- David and Samantha take the test
- they look at ink blots
- Penny smokes nervously and leans against the car
- they put building blocks together.
- they read a children's book and write out answers.
- they do simple math problems.

David breezes through while Samantha struggles.

32 INT. MASON'S HOME/OFFICE - AFTERNOON

32

Henry reads the test results, looks gravely at Penny.

HENRY

We'll take David but not Samantha.

A silence falls across the room.

PENNY

I can't split my kids up like that!

HENRY

Sorry, she's not intelligent enough.

David stiffens like a wooden soldier. Samantha beams.

33 I/E. PENNY'S CAR - AFTERNOON

33

Penny drives through peak hour traffic. Samantha jumps around the back seat in jubilation while David sits with his arms folded across his chest, pouting.

SAMANTHA

I don't have to go to the orphanage home!

DAVID

You failed the test on purpose.

She hits him.

SAMANTHA

Liar!

DAVID

Ouch!

David pinches Samantha so hard that she screams.

SAMANTHA

Mom, he pinched me!

DAVID

She hit me first!

PENNY

You two STOP FIGHTING before I pull this car over and beat your asses!

She lights a cigarette and turns up the radio.

DAVID

I love this song! Turn it up!

Penny turns up the radio and the kids sing along while Penny thinks.

Suddenly the car hits a patch of gravel and slides all over the road. Penny fights to control the car. The kids are tossed around like laundry in dryer.

The car makes a loud noise and the engine dies. Penny slams on the breaks and they skid to a stop. Penny takes a second to catch her breath.

PENNY

You kids okay?!

SAMANTHA

We're fine!

DAVID

That was fun. It was like Six
Flags!

Penny tries to start the car but it won't start. The kids look at each other. She tries again, nothing. Smoke comes out of the hood.

PENNY

No, no, no, no no!!!!!! Please

Penny tries again. Nothing.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Stay put.

Penny hops out of the car and opens the hood. Then loses her shit. The kids watch from inside the car. Finally she opens the driver's door.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Get your things. We gotta walk to a phone and call Papa to come get us. Don't tell Marion, okay? She'll take the car back. It's the only thing she gave me for my wedding.

DAVID/SAMANTHA

We won't. What if this car doesn't work anymore.

PENNY

Well, I'll just have to borrow Papa's again god damn it!

The kids hop out. Penny lights another cigarette. Penny, David and Samantha walk through the arid landscape.

SAMANTHA
Wanna play slug-bug?

DAVID
Yeah!

They keep watch. Samantha spots one first and slugs him on the arm.

SAMANTHA
Slug Bug Green!

34 INT. MARION'S HOME/BACK PORCH - AFTERNOON

34

Marion sits at a table with a calculator and a pad of paper going through bills. Sal tinkers on a lawnmower. A radio sits on the table. Marion peers at a pleading Penny over her bifocal glasses.

MARION
I'll take her. But she better act like a little lady.

PENNY
She will.

Penny shoots Samantha a quick look.

SAMANTHA
Grandma, this is gonna be fun! I can help you clean house and stuff.

DAVID
(shouting)
This ain't fair!

Tammy bounces in dressed in her Karate outfit.

TAMMY
No one said life was fair, fart face.

She does a round-house kick which sends David to the floor.

TAMMY (CONT'D)
(to Samantha)
Let's leave this wuz behind and go ride my 350 dirt bike.

SAMANTHA

Yeah!

They are off.

MARION

Tammy, you be careful!

PENNY

David, run and play with them.

DAVID

I don't want to. I want to listen
to my Olivia Newton-John records.

Just then, a hippie man, age 22, hobbles up on a pair of
wooden crutches, sits down with a thud. This is UNCLE PETER.

UNCLE PETER

She's a dyke.

DAVID

What?

PETER

A bull-dyke which is the opposite
of what you are, a fag.

PENNY

Peter, don't call him that!

PETER

Well he is. He never plays with
boys he just jumps rope and plays
with Samantha's doll.

DAVID

Leave me alone. Can I go to my
room?

PETER

Are you gonna cry like a tittie
baby?

PENNY

Peter, stop it!
(to David)
Go play!

David stares at her

PENNY (CONT'D)

Don't make me tell you twice.

David meekly goes outside.

PETER
So, when you dumping him off?

PENNY
Tomorrow.

35 INT. PAPA'S CAR/DRIVING - DAY

35

Penny drives like a crazy woman and chain-smokes. She's dressed in her finest and David is dressed in the same too-small-for-him suit.

There is an awkward silence between mother and son. The Bee Gee's play on the radio.

BOTH
Mom/David

PENNY
What?

DAVID
Nothing.

PENNY
I love this song.

She turns up the radio.

Suddenly, a Pinto pulls out in front of her. She slams on the horn. On the bumper a sticker reads "I Love Jesus".

PENNY (CONT'D)
(disgusted)
If you keep driving like that
you'll be with him soon!

She passes the WOMAN driver and gives her the bird! David slinks down in the seat embarrassed.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Fucking holy roller.

36 EXT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7 - PAPA'S CAR - DAY

36

Penny parks, checks her lipstick in the rearview mirror. David looks like a sheep being lead to slaughter.

PENNY

I want you to be a good boy for me.
Granny would be very upset with you
if you got kicked out. She's an
Eastern Star.

RHONDA (24), a young round-faced woman appears the drivers
side door.

RHONDA

You must be Penny!

Penny turns on old man enthusiasm. Her voice goes up an
octave and she looks like she's on a sugar high.

PENNY

I am! This is my son, David.

David stares at Rhonda's shit eating grin, exits the car and
bolts across the yard. Tears stream down his face as he runs
with all his might. He starts to have an asthmatic wheeze,
but ignores it.

DAVID

No! I don't want to go!

Rhonda is an old pro at this.

RHONDA

They all do that.

Penny runs after David and gives him his asthma inhaler.

PENNY

You stop that right this second,
young man! You're embarrassing me!
Big boys don't cry.

DAVID

I'm an orphan!

PENNY

No, you'll be able to visit me
every other weekend.

DAVID

But Samantha gets to stay at
grandma's.

Penny squats down and speaks softly to him.

PENNY

I know this is rotten, what Clive
did to us.

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

Tell you what, I'll buy you some ice cream when you come visit, okay?

DAVID

Ok.

Penny straightens his glasses, smooths his hair back in place. She rubs a smudge of dirt off his face.

They walk back to the car where Rhonda waits patiently.

PENNY

Pretend that you're away at a fancy school for very smart boys. I'll come pick you up in two weeks.

Penny grabs his suitcases from the trunk but David pushes them back, fighting against the inevitable.

PENNY (CONT'D)

David stop that! Stop it.

Rhonda steps in, grabs David from behind and pulls him away. Penny tries to give David a hug and a kiss, but he pushes away from her and out of Rhonda's grip.

DAVID

Just go! I hate you!

ON Penny, fighting emotions, humiliation at having to leave her son. Then in a split second her tough exterior returns. She lights a cigarette and heads to the car. When David hears the car door open he spins back.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Don't leave me here! Don't go!

Penny ignores his cries and, without looking back, hops into the car and drives away. David stands in the middle of the driveway, next to Rhonda who holds his tiny suitcase.

Penny walks to the drivers side door, hops in and starts the engine.

CUT TO:

37

INT. PENNY'S CAR/MASON'S DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

37

LOOKING INTO REAR VISION MIRROR FROM BACKSEAT in CU - As Penny drives away, she falls apart.

38 INT. MASON'S COTTAGE 7 - DAY

38

Rhonda and David enter. A long dining room table, in a living room with 70's style furniture and 4 bedroom doors on each side of the room.

RHONDA

You'll like the rest of the boys.
We have you rooming with Timmy.

They stop, barely inside. David, defeated, stands in the middle of the room lost.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

Let me show you your room.

DAVID

I don't want to see it!

Rhonda kneels down. The Boy's heads peeking out of the doors tuck back inside like turtles in shells.

RHONDA

Listen, David, I know this is difficult for you, but it's not all that bad. You can make this hard on yourself or easy. It's your choice.

David puts on his poker face.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

Come with me.

39 INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7 - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

39

A young, blonde kid TIMMY (11), looks out of the window at the vast Texas landscape. He's a sweet looking kid with freckles, dressed in Judy Blume like colors. There is a knock at the door.

RHONDA (O.C.)

Timmy...

TIMMY

(sullen)
Come in.

Rhonda steps into the room with David at her side. David is a foot smaller than Timmy.

RHONDA

Timmy, this is your new roommate,
David.

TIMMY

I told Raymond I don't want a roommate.

RHONDA

We all have to room with someone here at Cottage Seven.

TIMMY

(to David)

Hiya

DAVID

(shyly)

Hi.

RHONDA

Will you help him get started? Make sure you wash up for dinner.

Rhonda leaves them in an awkward moment of silence as Timmy sizes up David.

TIMMY

So, what brings you here?

DAVID

My step-dad dumped my mother and she couldn't afford to keep me.

TIMMY

Yeah, allow me to welcome you to the island of misfit toys. We're all damaged goods here.

DAVID

My mom is gonna take me out as soon as she gets back on her feet.

TIMMY

Yeah. They all say that...

Timmy points to the bed by the window.

TIMMY (CONT'D)

That's your bed, your desk and your closet. We shower at 6:30 am and I'm always first.

DAVID

You don't want the bed by the window?

TIMMY

NO! I don't like windows.

David sits at the desk and rummages through the drawers finding only mouse turds. He quickly dumps his glasses into the empty drawer. Timmy is too self-absorbed to notice.

DAVID

What's it like here?

TIMMY

You can't make a move without someone ratting on you to Rhonda. And make no mistake, Rhonda tells her husband Raymond everything. He's the MEAN one. He'll whip your ass raw if you step out of line.

DAVID

They spank you here?

TIMMY

Only if you don't follow the rules. And there are plenty of them.

DAVID

Oh.

TIMMY

All the boys here hate him. Have you met him yet?

DAVID

No.

TIMMY

He's a bastard. Reminds me of my father.

DAVID

What does he do to you?

TIMMY

Oh, he got in my shit a month ago because I tried to run away. They don't look highly on that, by the way.

DAVID

I wouldn't run away. I have asthma.

A knock on the door.

TIMMY
Who is it?

RHONDA
It's me...

Timmy opens the door and Rhonda stands next to a tall drink of water, RAYMOND, a strapping 6 ft giant built like a Marine with a handlebar moustache.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
Raymond wants to meet David.

Raymond enters the room. David takes a trembling step back.

DAVID
Nice to meet you...

RAYMOND
Sir!

DAVID
What?

RAYMOND
Address me as "sir".

DAVID
Nice to meet you, sir.

RAYMOND
Well, aren't you the runt of the litter? How much do you weigh?

DAVID
I dunno, sir.

RAYMOND
(picks David up)
I'll say 72 pounds!

He plops David down and he practically topples over. Timmy catches him.

RHONDA
Didn't you have glasses?

DAVID
No!

RHONDA
Hmmm...

RAYMOND

We're gonna have to put some meat
on your bones, son. And a neat
haircut, you look like a girl.

Timmy laughs.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Did I say something funny?

TIMMY

No.

RAYMOND

(to DAVID)

Smile.

David grins, displaying his crooked teeth.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Snagglepuss. Those teeth. We'll
have to put braces on those bad
boys.

David's eyes widen.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Ok, boys, wash up for dinner.
Tonight is dining hall.

Raymond and Rhonda leave.

TIMMY

I told you he's an asshole.

40

INT. DINING ROOM/CAFETERIA LINE - EVENING

40

David pushes his tray along the cafeteria line right behind
Timmy. They inch forward. Behind them in line stands the 6
OTHER BOYS living in Cottage #7. Watching their every move is
Raymond and Rhonda.

TIMMY

Be careful, they watch your every
move here. Raymond is mean as a
snake.

DAVID

He scares me.

CAFETERIA LADY plops a big spoonful of green peas on David's
plate.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Oh, none of those for me.

CAFETERIA LADY
I wasn't told to not give you them.

DAVID
But I don't like green peas.

Cafeteria Lady rolls her eyes and hands David back his plate.

TIMMY
Just eat them. They expect us to
eat whatever slop they give us
whether we like it or not.

They slide down the line, put milk on their trays and head
for the table marked "Cottage #7".

41 INT. DINING HALL/COTTAGE SEVEN TABLE - CONTINUOUS 41

The COTTAGE 7 BOYS sit around the table waiting patiently to
eat. MARTY who has steel crutches from childhood Polio stands
out like a sore thumb.

Timmy and David sit down. Rhonda and Raymond sit at the head
and foot of the table.

RAYMOND
Boys, this is our new recruit,
David. Let us give thanks.

They boys bow their heads in prayer. David does the same
keeping one eye open to observe what they do.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
Dear heavenly Father, may this food
nourish our bodies and we give
thanks for bringing us the gift of
David. We bless everyone here and
all our families outside. Amen.

ALL
Amen.

The boys start to talk wildly and dig into their food.

JR a scrawny boy of 10 with a mouth full of mashed potatoes
stutters at David.

JR
Ssss....sooo

RHONDA
JR, don't talk with your mouth full
and slow down when you talk.

JR
SssDavid...where are you from?

JR takes a swig of his milk. All eyes are on David.

RAYMOND
(bellowing)
Wait! Did you forget something?!

All eyes shoot to JR who looks guilty.

JR
My protein powder..

RAYMOND
You get 2 swats with the paddle
when we get home.

JR's lips begin to tremble and he begins to cry.

JR
I'm sorry, Sir. I forgot.

RAYMOND
Well, I guess after tonight's ass
busting, you won't be so quick to
forget.

A dead silence falls around the table. JR picks up an old coffee can with a white label pasted on it "JR's Protein powder" written in magic marker. He puts 2 scoops in his milk and stirs it while he cries.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
Give David some of that. We need to
fatten him up.

JR pushes the can toward David who mimics him by putting two scoops in his milk.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
I expect you to put it in your
milk, too. Don't forget.

David takes a drink from the milk and nearly chokes to death.

TIMMY
Don't worry you'll get used to it.

Just then, a good ole boy MELVIN trots up to the table with a shit eating grin. He is 60 years of Texas pride.

MELVIN

Who is this pip squeak?

David trembles in his chair.

RHONDA

This is David...our new boy.

Melvin eyes David up and down like a hawk.

MELVIN

Send him over to my cottage tomorrow for a haircut. That sheep needs to be sheered.

David touches his hair protectively.

RAYMOND

Will do, Sir!

TIMMY

(whispers to David)

I told you you'd hate it here.

MELVIN

And stay away from Timmy, he's trouble.

He grunts and walks away. David has stopped eating and just stares at his plate.

RAYMOND

You didn't eat your peas.

DAVID

I'm not hungry.

RAYMOND

We eat all they put on our plates, young man.

DAVID

I told the lady in line not to put them on my plate. I don't LIKE them.

RAYMOND

Eat your peas.

David folds his tiny arms across his chest and puts a defiant line across his lips.

DAVID

NO! My momma doesn't make me eat them.

RAYMOND

You want a spanking when we get home?

DAVID

I don't care.

All the boys stare at this battle of wills.

RAYMOND

Apparently, you don't know how things run around here at the Mason's home. When we get back home, you are gonna get spanked after JR.

Raymond laughs.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Looks like we'll line 'em up tonight.

He cracks his knuckles. David stares a hole of fire through him. His first moment of defiance and truth.

42

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7 - BEDROOM - NIGHT

42

David stands by the door shaking, and listens to Raymond spanking JR.

RAYMOND

Count!

WHACK!

JR

One!

Another swat!

JR (CONT'D)

Two! OUCH!

RAYMOND

(pulls the paddle back)
Louder!

WHACK!

JR

Three.

JR starts to bawl like a baby.

RAYMOND

Now say, "I won't forget my protein powder."

SWAT!

JR

(stammering/crying)

Four! I won't forget my pppprotein
ppppowder.

SWAT!

JR (CONT'D)

Five!

RAYMOND

Now, I want you go to stand in the
corner for an hour. No snack for
you. Okay, NEXT!

David darts into the bedroom and shuts the door.

43

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/BEDROOM-BATHROOM - NIGHT

43

David looks at the door handle and there is no lock. He searches for an escape through the window, but it's above the bathtub and too high to reach.

RAYMOND (O.C.)

David, come on out here and let's
get this over with. I want to watch
"Dallas."

David notices the 3 drawers right by the door. He pulls them out creating a lock on the door.

BEDROOM

Raymond walks through the bedroom holding a big wooden paddle in his hand. Rhonda and the boys follow him.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

David, you can't outrun the law.

Raymond notices that the light is on inside the bathroom.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
 You can't hide in there.

Being a hotshot, he tries to open the door and to his surprise, it's blocked by the drawers.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
 David, open this God-damned door.
 RIGHT NOW!

The Boys are stunned. Raymond tries to force the door with his body but it won't budge beyond a crack.

BATHROOM

David is astonished that his little "lock" worked.

DAVID
 I'm not coming out until my mom comes to pick me up!

RAYMOND (O.S.)
 Open the door this second or I'll beat the living shit out of you.

The Boys don't know who they should root for in this war.

DAVID
 It's NOT fair! I shouldn't have to eat something I hate. Call my mom!

BEDROOM

Raymond looks around at the boys and Rhonda and sighs.

RAYMOND
 Ok, kid, you win. Come out and I promise not to spank you.

DAVID (O.C.)
 I don't believe you.

Rhonda steps toward the door.

RHONDA
 Sweetie, Raymond will put the paddle away and we'll talk.

BATHROOM

David thinks and thinks.

DAVID

Swear that you won't beat me when I
come out of here.

RAYMOND (O.C.)

I swear, I only want to talk.

David pushes the drawers back in and slowly opens the door.
He steps sheepishly out: Is Raymond going to murder him?

Raymond doesn't hit him. A small look of victory shines on
David's face.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Come here. Boys, go back to your
rooms. Let's go talk in the living
room.

They head out the door.

44

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

44

Raymond, Rhonda sit on the couch and David stands in front of
them. The paddle rests dormant beside Raymond.

RAYMOND

See, around here you have to obey.

DAVID

But, my mom--

RAYMOND

Your mom is not here. She gave you
to us because she can't raise you.

RHONDA

We are your parents now.

DAVID

I didn't ask to be put here.

RHONDA

Neither did any of these boys. In
time you'll understand. Your mother
is going through a very hard time
and if you act up here, it will
break her heart.

RAYMOND

You seem like a smart kid, but if
you don't follow the rules, you'll
have a really difficult time.

DAVID

I guess...

RAYMOND

Why don't we forget this whole experience?

Just then Timmy comes running out of the bedroom screaming at the top of his lungs. He carries a white tube sock with a bar of soap in it.

TIMMY

Oh, my God I saw him!

All the bedroom doors fly open. Mayhem ensues. Boys run out into the living room swinging the same tube socks.

RAYMOND

At your stations, boys!

Everyone runs to the back window of the cottage looking out a huge field with the Ft. Worth sky blinking in the background.

MARTY

I hope I'm the one who clobbers him.

FRANK

Move out of my way, cripple!

DONALD

I'm gonna smash his skull in!

They stare and stare.

RAYMOND

Frank, get my binoculars.

FRANK runs to Raymond's office.

RHONDA

Are you sure it was him and not a wild animal?

TIMMY

No, it was him. I saw his big eyes peeking in the window. He's gonna kill me.

Timmy begins to cry like a baby. Frank hands Raymond his military issue binoculars. Raymond surveys the field.

DAVID

What's going on?

JR
It's the night knocker-boy.

DAVID
What's that?

DONALD
This crazy kid keeps hopping the fence and coming to Timmy's window, knocks and runs off.

MARTY
And we have our socks filled with soap so we can beat his brains in.

JR
He's been doing it for a month.

Raymond lowers the glasses.

RAYMOND
He's gone. I don't see him. Did you get a better look at him.

TIMMY
Yeah, I was doing my homework and I looked up and there he was. He made a cutting motion across his neck like he was fixing to kill me.

RHONDA
Now if any of you do see him, tell us first before you do anything. I don't want any of you boys to get hurt. Do you hear me?

The Boys groan.

ALL
Yes, Ma'am

RAYMOND
She's right. There is strength in numbers. Let's go back to our rooms and go to bed.

Frank hands David his tube sock.

FRANK
You better sleep with this, just in case. And if you see him.
(Frank demonstrates)
Whoop him upside the head!

David takes it and has a little practice swing before going to his room.

45

INT. MASON'S SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

45

David and Timmy stand by an old wooden teacher's desk while KIDS are practically hanging off the rafters. This is no ordinary class room. It is a playroom with small wooden desks and gymnastic mats rolled up in the corners.

MS GEE (60) enters the room. She has slate grey hair, sharp blue eyes and wears a hip, two-piece workout suit. She claps her hands calling the class to order.

MS. GEE

Alright, settle down. Let's take our seats.

The kids sit in their places. Ms. Gee takes her place at the desk, sips from her coffee mug.

TIMMY

Ms. Gee, this is David.

DAVID

Nice to meet you, Ma'am.

TIMMY

He's my new roommate.

MS. GEE

You can sit down, Timothy.

TIMMY

Yes, Ma'am.

MS. GEE

Class, we have a new student. I'd like you to meet David. I want you all to treat him like your own brother. Tell us about yourself.

DAVID

Huh?

MS. GEE

We want to get to know you.

DAVID

(stammering)

I..I...can't... Can I sit down, please?

MS. GEE

Yes, you can sit next to Timmy, but
come see me after class.

David, thinking he's in trouble, sits down next to Timmy.

DAVID

I messed that up. She hates me.

TIMMY

No, she's great. You'll love her.
We have to try all the activities
they have here - so be ready for
that.

ON David's look of terror.

DAVID

Football?

TIMMY

Uh-huh

DAVID

Well I got asthma.

TIMMY

(sotto voce)

Doesn't matter. You gotta do
EVERYTHING. Band, sports, musicals,
the lot. It's exhausting.

MS. GEE

Okay, so, first, our spelling test.
I'm going to call out words and you
will write them out.

46

INT. MASON'S SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

46

All students have left but David who stands at Ms. Gee's desk
terrified. She grades papers and while she does David begins
to cry. Ms. Gee looks up.

MS. GEE

What's wrong?

DAVID

I know you're going to whip me.

Ms. Gee looks at him with grace and understanding.

MS. GEE

Why would I do that?

DAVID

Coz I didn't talk about myself.

MS. GEE

You seem shy that's all. That's nothing to be ashamed of. You know some of the greatest people were the shiest people.

DAVID

You're not going to spank me?

MS. GEE

No, I never spank anyone. There is no sense in that.

DAVID

Oh, thank you.

MS. GEE

The reason I had you stay after school is because I'm putting together the Christmas talent show called "The Music Machine."

DAVID

I have that record!

MS. GEE

You know the show?

DAVID

I sing along to the record every day.

MS. GEE

I'm looking for tumblers and people to sing in the chorus.

DAVID

Is that like a clown?

MS. GEE

No..no, it's gymnastics.

DAVID

My mamma had my sister and I in gymnastics last year, but we had to move.

MS. GEE

Good. We'll take it as it goes. Timmy is in the show: he's my star tumbler.

DAVID
So, I'm in?

MS. GEE
If you want to be.

DAVID
Thank you.

David leaves and the camera follows him down the hallway.

47 INT. MR MELVIN'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

47

David sits on a high step-stool with a barber's bib around his neck. Mr Melvin's wife, CANDICE hovers with a pair of clippers. Rhonda watches.

MELVIN
That shaggy hair won't fly here. We want our boys to be boys and our girls to be girls.

CLICK! Candace snaps on the clippers and David jumps.

CANDICE
Now, sit still.

MELVIN
HA! You've never met a pair of hair clippers have you? Don't worry pal.
(to Candice)
Standard military cut.

Candice begins to shear him like a sheep.

DAVID
My momma ain't gonna like this.

CANDICE
She won't know until it's too late.

David watches his hair land like fur balls onto the linoleum.

TIMMY
You still look like a girl.

48 INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

48

Halloween decorations are up. The boys, Raymond and Rhonda eat dinner. David sulks in his brisket.

RAYMOND

Don't look so sad. You'll get used to it in 3 days.

DAVID

I look like a bald freak.

RHONDA

No, you look like a nice, young man. The next thing we are going to do is get you some new clothes.

David looks up hopeful and starts to eat.

RAYMOND

David, I want you to do the dishes tonight with Donald.

DONALD

I did them two nights ago, Sir.

RAYMOND

I give the work detail around here, not my recruits.

DONALD

Okay.

49

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/KITCHEN - NIGHT

49

David and DONALD rinse dishes stacked a mile high in the sink. They load them into a huge industrial dishwasher.

DONALD

So, short stuff, you like it here yet?

DAVID

No, I want to run away.

DONALD

Fat chance. They'd only catch you and bring you back.

DAVID

Figures.

Ring! Ring! The phone attached to the wall rings. Rhonda, dressed in a muumuu, dashes out of her "room" to answer it.

RHONDA
Cottage #7. Hi, Penny! Yes, David
is doing the dishes. I'll put him
on.

David looks up excited! Rhonda covers the mouthpiece before
handing it to David.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
Keep it short and don't make a
scene.

DAVID
(grabs the phone)
Hello.

50

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/KITCHEN - NIGHT

50

SPLIT SCREEN with INT. PENNY'S NEW APARTMENT. Penny in her
new MINI-MART work uniform. Her apartment is run-down.

PENNY
Hi, baby!

DAVID
Hi, Mamma...

PENNY
How are you?

DAVID
I'm fine..

PENNY
I miss you!

DAVID
I miss you, too.

PENNY
Are you behaving?

DAVID
Yes, they cut my hair. I look ugly.

PENNY
I bet you look handsome.

DAVID
How are things going with you?

PENNY

Ohhhh. I'm fine! I got a new apartment. It's so cute. You're gonna love it. Only two more weeks until I get to see you.

DAVID

That's nice.

PENNY

I got your sister enrolled in school. They wanted to put her in Special Ed, but I told them she's slow NOT retarded! Oh, I got a job at the Tandy Center in Dallas. You two can go ice skating while I work.

Rhonda has been watching the clock and makes a "time to hang up" sign with her hand.

DAVID

Mamma, I gotta go.

PENNY

Well, I love you, baby, and can't wait to see you. Bye, bye.

David hangs up. Rhonda exits and David resumes chores.

DONALD

That's the hardest part. Being reminded that you are here and they are outside.

David's lips tremble.

51 INT. MASON'S HOME/BEDROOM - LATER

51

David walks into his bedroom, tired from the day and sees some new clothes and shoes laid out. Rhonda appears in the doorway.

RHONDA

You like them?

DAVID

Yeah. Thank you, Rhonda.

RHONDA

Well, try 'em on. Make sure they fit. And that fancy outfit?

(MORE)

RHONDA (CONT'D)

That's your good one for church,
not school, okay?

DAVID

Okay.

Rhonda leaves as David picks up the clothes to try on. OFF
David's emotional reaction...

52

INT. MASON'S THEATER/AUDITORIUM - DAY

52

Ms. Gee has a tumbling mat spread. She has the students doing
back bends and summersaults. A song from "The Music Machine"
plays on the record player.

David stands on the sidelines nervous as a cat at a swimming
pool. Suddenly Timmy does a back hand spring then a flip
through the air landing solidly on his feet.

MS. GEE

That's great, Timmy! You are going
to shine in this play.

TIMMY

Thank you.

MS. GEE

David, I want you to try a back
bend.

David steps up to the mat and does a pretty good backbend.
Timmy steps up and spots him as he kicks his legs up over his
body on his own.

MS. GEE (CONT'D)

I think you'll do great in the
show!

David smiles.

MS. GEE (CONT'D)

Ok, class. Let's turn off the
record player.

The kids roll up the mats, reset the room. Ms. Gee sits at
her desk, pulls out a faded copy of "A Wrinkle in Time".

MS. GEE (CONT'D)

I think we've had enough excitement
for today. I'm going to continue
reading "A Wrinkle in Time."

The students sit. Ms. Gee finds her spot and reads from the book. She adopts an old lady voice.

MS. GEE (CONT'D)
 "Speaking of ways, pet, by the way,
 there is such a thing as a
 tesseract."

David leans in and listens carefully.

53

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/BATHROOM - NIGHT

53

David scrubs a bathtub and the phone rings in the background. Rhonda appears in curlers and a muumuu, passes the phone receiver to David.

SPLIT SCREEN with TIGHT ON Penny on the phone AT WORK in the MINI-MART:

DAVID
 Mom, I need you to bring my record
 of "The Music Machine" the next
 time you come.

PENNY
 Why?

DAVID
 They are doing a Christmas show,
 and I'm in the chorus.

PENNY
 But you can't sing.

DAVID
 I'm also doing gymnastics!

PENNY
 You can't do that! You have asthma.

DAVID
 I got my inhaler.

PENNY
 I don't want anything to happen to
 you.

DAVID
 I'm not a baby.

Rhonda gives him the cut off motion.

PENNY
You are fragile.

DAVID
I gotta go! Remember to bring the
record. I gotta learn my songs.

54 INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/BEDROOM - NIGHT 54

David reads "A Wrinkle in Time" lying on his bed. He puts the book down and stares out of the window toward downtown Ft. Worth. He hears the train whistle in the distance.

DAVID (V.O.)
I was thrust alone into the
darkness on a faraway planet like
Meg in the book "A Wrinkle in
Time." Trying to conform, to fit
in, to find some space where I
could survive in both worlds: my
family and my new home.

David finishes reading and turns out the light.

55 I/E. MASON'S MONTAGE - DAY 55

- SCHOOL: We watch David go through a day in warp speed: band practice, choir, running, homework

- COTTAGE #7: David gets up, makes his bed, takes a bath, eats breakfast, goes to school.

- The Night Knocker reappears - show the Boys running around the cottage with their sock weapons. Raymond in his undies searching the EXT of the cottage. CHAOS

- COTTAGE #7: Eats dinner.

- CHURCH - David attends Church. The Pastor goes on, and on and on...

- COTTAGE #7 - The Cottage Seven boys put up Christmas decorations under Rhonda's supervision.

56 INT. MASON'S SCHOOL/BAND ROOM - DAY 56

Band room decorated with Christmas decorations.

A young blonde teacher, MRS. JENNINGS with a pixie haircut conducts the awful sounding grade school band.

They perform "Silent Night" while she waves her baton like Leonard Bernstein.

David stands behind a huge ass glockenspiel, twin mallets in his tiny hands, waiting his cue. Mrs Jennings points the baton at him and he hits his two notes. She cuts off the band. A look of terror on David's face.

MRS. JENNINGS

That was ok, David, but touch the bells lightly, DON'T POUND!

She raises her baton and motions the girls and boys to start again.

57

I/E. PENNY'S CAR/DRIVING - DAY

57

Penny drives and smokes while David eats French fries and talks with his mouth full.

DAVID

And they put me in "The Music Machine" that they are gonna show at all the Masonic Temples. I'm so lucky I have the record and know the songs.

Penny is miles away from David's chatter. They pull into the driveway.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And my roommate, Timmy, keeps having this night-knocker come to our bedroom window and it scared the dickens outta us.

PENNY

Huh?

DAVID

Mom, what's wrong?!

Tears stream down Penny's face.

PENNY

Your father...

David stops eating and stares coldly out the window.

PENNY (CONT'D)

He won't call me back. I don't think he ever loved us.

DAVID
Aren't you glad to see me?

PENNY
Of course I am, baby. I'm sorry, I
have a lot on my mind.

David starts eating again. Penny turns up the radio which
blares "Blinded By The Light." She changes the station.

PENNY (CONT'D)
I hate that queer song!

58

INT. BROWN TRAIL APARTMENTS - LATER

58

A real shit hole of a room. Penny's put together a living
quarter made up from the remains of her marriage and the
furniture from the old apartment. Items are still in boxes.

PENNY
I'm sorry I couldn't bring all your
toys and stuff here. The rest is
over at grandmas.

David surveys the layout in a walking on eggshells manner.

DAVID
It's alright. Where are my Olivia
Newton-John records?!

Penny snaps and wheels around on him.

PENNY
I don't have room for them. Didn't
you hear me?! Is that all you care
about is that slut, Olivia?

DAVID
I just wanted to make sure they are
safe. That's all. Gosh.

David sits down in a huff and folds his arms across his
chest. Penny walks to the kitchen...

KITCHEN

...and fills a pot with water, opens a box of Macaroni and
Cheese and dumps it into the pot. She turns up the flame on
the stove, lights a cigarette on the burner.

PENNY

Don't you see how hard this is for me? Your dad left us and I had to get a new job. I'm barely making ends meet here.

DAVID

I know...

PENNY

Don't pout.

DAVID

I'm not pouting.

PENNY

Yes, you are. You always pout when you don't get your way.

He unfolds his arms.

DAVID

Can we go to Granny's?

PENNY

Yes, after lunch. I'll drop by Marion's and pick up Samantha.

She stirs the noodles in the pot.

DAVID

Oh, I need my Music Machine record.

PENNY

Your what?

DAVID

The Music Machine. The Mason's Home is performing it and I'm in the choir. Remember, I told you?

PENNY

Oh, yeah, that's great. We'll pick it up at Marion's.

Just then Samantha and Tammy come busting through the door.

TAMMY

Hey, little asshole!

Tammy punches him in the arm and he howls out in pain.

PENNY

Hi, ya'll.

SAMANTHA
Hey, baby brother.

DAVID
Hey.

TAMMY
What ya cookin'?

PENNY
Macaroni and Cheese. Want some?

TAMMY
Gross. That crap breaks me out.
We're going to the mall, wanna
come?

PENNY
I can't believe my little sister is
driving.

TAMMY
Hell yeah, I got my learner's
permit.

PENNY
Aren't you supposed to drive with
an adult.

TAMMY
Hell, they don't know.

PENNY
Just don't get caught.

TAMMY
Hell, I never get caught. That crap
done yet?

59

INT. K-MART - DAY

59

Marion, Samantha, and David enter the store and follow Marion
to the small selection of bras.

MARION
Pick one!

SAMANTHA
Those bras are ugly. I wanted the
one with the bow on it!

MARION

Those were too expensive. I told you that.

DAVID

I want a bra.

MARION

Bras are for girls. Your sister is turning into a woman.

A CUSTOMER browsing stops at hearing this exchange. Marion picks out a suitable bra and pushes it at Samantha.

MARION (CONT'D)

Try this one.

Samantha doesn't take it.

SAMANTHA

Yuk!

Suddenly, Marion slaps Samantha across the face.

Silence then Samantha wails at the top of her lungs.

MARION

You're going to turn into a hussy like your mother. Try it on, now!

Samantha grabs the bra and runs to the change room. David looks around to see if anyone is watching. They are.

60

EXT. PAPA AND GRANNY'S YARD - DAY

60

David and Samantha play, making mud pies.

DAVID

Do you like living at Marion's?

SAMANTHA

It's okay. Big aunt Melba has moved her fat ass into our old room and I'm sleeping in the kitchen next to the bread box.

DAVID

Mom lets you cuss?!

SAMANTHA

No, but everyone in the family does it so why shouldn't I?

DAVID

If I did that at the Mason's home,
they'd beat me.

SAMANTHA

They beat you there?

DAVID

No, not really. We have to follow
the rules.

SAMANTHA

Sounds like a military school.

DAVID

Kinda. Do you see mom a lot?

SAMANTHA

No. She's working all the time.

DAVID

Why does mom always work every time
I visit?! It's not fair.

SAMANTHA

Dunno. And she's still crazy over
Clive.

DAVID

But he's a loser.

SAMANTHA

I know that. She calls his house
and hangs up.

DAVID

I miss the Mason's home.

Oops. Wrong thing to say.

SAMANTHA

What? That hell-hole? Are you being
brainwashed or something?

DAVID

No, I feel safe there.

SAMANTHA

Don't let them rope you in. It's a
cult.

DAVID

I won't.

Samantha turns on the waterworks.

SAMANTHA

I miss you so much.

She throws her arms around David and he stands stiff as soldier. He pats her on the head.

DAVID

I do too.

61

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

61

The kids eat dinner in silence. Timmy and Raymond are missing. Timmy enters, his face red from crying. Raymond follows him looking PISSED.

RAYMOND

(pushes Timmy)

Tell them, boy.

TIMMY

I made it up.

RHONDA

What up?!

TIMMY

I made up the night-knocker.

Shock and horror around the table. Timmy blubbers.

RAYMOND

Tell them why, son.

TIMMY

(stammers)

I was afraid to sleep alone in the last bedroom. I was scared.

RAYMOND

So, Timmy will no longer be here with us. He's moving to Cottage # 5 with Mr. Melvin to learn some discipline.

TIMMY

(sobs hysterically)

I'm so sorry, Rhonda.

RHONDA
That's alright, baby. Well, I guess
we'll have to move David into
Marty's room.

Marty's face lights up like the sun. David looks over at him
mortified. Rooming with a cripple!

62

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/BEDROOM 2 - DAY

62

David carries his paltry belongings into the new bedroom.
Raymond helps him hang clothes.

DAVID
I wish I could stay in a room by
myself.

RAYMOND
I told you, no one is going to stay
in that room alone.

MARTY
You're going to love staying with
me.

DAVID
Yeah, right.

Raymond finishes hanging up the clothes and claps his hands.

RAYMOND
Enough baby talk. Move forward
Christian soldiers. I'll let you
two get acquainted.

Raymond leaves. David shouts after him in a sarcastic tone.

DAVID
Thank you, Mr. Raymond!

David, in a fit of rage, violently begins tossing stuff into
his desk drawers.

MARTY
Why don't you like me?

DAVID
(half-heartedly)
I like you, Marty.

MARTY
It's because I'm a cripple isn't
it?

DAVID
(lying)
No.

MARTY
Oh, come off it! I know all the
kids call me "March of Dimes."

DAVID
No, we don't.

MARTY
Yes, you do. It's not my fault I
have these crutches. My mom took me
swimming in a community pool and I
got polio.

DAVID
Oh...

MARTY
And then after I got sick, she
turned queer and dumped me when her
new girlfriend didn't want me.

DAVID
Dang, that stinks.

MARTY
Can't you PRETEND to like me?

David plops down in his desk chair.

DAVID
Alright! Jesus! I don't want to get
all chummy with you or ANYONE
around here. My mom is gonna get me
out when she saves enough money.

MARTY
Don't hold your breath.

David's angry tears flow and he punches Marty's stomach,
sends him staggering backward onto the floor.

David is shocked and stunned.

DAVID
I'm so sorry...

He attempts to help Marty up, but he's dead weight.

MARTY
Ouch!

A knock on the door.

RAYMOND (O.S.)
What's going on in there?

The door swings open and Raymond sees Marty on the ground.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
What the fuck, Fellas?

MARTY
I just lost control of my crutches
and fell. Help me up!

RAYMOND
Be more careful. This is why we
want David with you.

Raymond lifts Marty up standing him back on his mangled feet.

MARTY
Thank you! David tried to help me
but was too weak to lift me.

RAYMOND
We'll build those spigot arms. Wash
up for dinner.

Raymond leaves the room. David and Marty are now friends.

63

I/E. MASON'S HOME MONTAGE

63

Shots of David doing things that are in line with his new
life:

- making his bed, bouncing a dime on it,
- doing the dishes,
- vacuuming the huge living room floor,
- dusting the furniture
- helping Marty - friendship grows

64

INT. MASON'S THEATER - NIGHT

64

The big night of "The Music Machine" performance

- David sings happily in the choir
- David does his tumbles in the show to perfection.

- Shriner's and Eastern Star audience members applaud enthusiastically

- Ms. Gee stands in the back of the auditorium smiling

65 INT. MASON'S HOME CHURCH - DAY

65

The boys from Cottage #7 sit on a church bench and listen to the old goat PREACHER babble on about the coming of the Lord. When he pronounces S's he whistles through his dentures. He is old as dirt and his sermon twice as dry. Half the audience is falling asleep.

PREACHER

Brethren, you have to decide like Adam and Eve! Do you want the fruits of temptation or the Kingdom of Heaven? The choice is simple: eternal peace or be banished to the fire of the devil?

Donald pulls out a box of matches from his suit coat and David sees them. He keeps his eyes on the Preacher.

DONALD

Let's throw a match on him.

David begins to snicker like 'Muttly.' He attempts to muffle it by bowing his head but...

PREACHER

Brothers and Sisters, let us bow our heads in prayer. Most heavenly Lord, we ask our sins to be washed away...

The muffled laughter grows louder and louder. Rhonda and Raymond shoot David and the row of boys the look of death.

RHONDA

Shhh.

The boys look at David with contempt for ratting them out.

66 INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7/LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

66

Raymond has Donald and David standing in the middle of the room, while he contemplates, and holds the paddle in his hands.

Marty, JR and Frank stand at attention. Raymond wants to set an example! Rhonda looks on with a serious expression.

The Christmas decorations are up and make a weird contrast to the mood in the room.

RAYMOND

I want you both to go grab two encyclopedias from the bookcase over yonder.

Donald and David walk to the bookcase. David eyes the two smallest volumes and grabs them first.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Now, you're going to face the wall and hold the encyclopedias in your outstretched arms. You let those books drop and you get 10 swats.

Raymond points the boys' noses against the wall and places the books in their outstretched palms. They look like twin Christ figures and groan at the weight. They are weak.

An image of Olivia Newton-John singing "Hopelessly Devoted to You" plays out in David's imagination. His lips mouth the words as he holds the volumes in his hands.

Suddenly, Donald drops his encyclopedias on the ground howling in pain.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Alright, weakling, bend over that couch.

Donald bends over the couch as Raymond beats his ass with the paddle.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Count!

DONALD

One! OUCH!

David stands steady as the licks are dealt out and prays he doesn't drop his books.

67

INT. MASON'S THEATER - NIGHT

67

The Christmas recital. The Mason Home School band play a rickety version of "Silent Night" before an audience of Shriners and Eastern Star women.

David stands behind his glockenspiel poised to play his two notes. Mrs. Jennings, back to the audience, conducts.

The big MOMENT is coming. David is growing more and more terrified. Mrs. Jennings waves the baton at David, but he does NOT hit the bells. She waves the baton again, but he stands transfixed.

David's next cue comes and he does NOT play. Mrs. Jennings gives him a look of hell freezing over.

68 INT. MASON'S SCHOOL/BAND ROOM - DAY

68

The kids warm up. David talks to Timmy who is on drums.

DAVID

Maybe she didn't notice. It's just
2 notes.

TIMMY

We ALL noticed. Your ass is grass.
Told you, we have to participate in
every activity they throw at us.

Mrs. Jennings walks out of her office still mad.

MRS. JENNINGS

David, I need to talk to you in my
office. NOW.

David knows he's in deep shit.

69 INT. MASON'S SCHOOL/BAND ROOM HALLWAY - DAY

69

Mrs. Jennings holds the paddle in her hand and turns it over and over while David speaks.

DAVID

I was afraid I was going to play it
wrong and everyone would laugh at
me. I got stage fright.

MRS. JENNINGS

That doesn't cut it, young man, you
embarrassed me! You let your band
members down.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

MRS. JENNINGS

Grab your ankles.

David begins to cry.

DAVID
Don't spank me, please.

MRS. JENNINGS
(yelling)
Grab your ankles, RIGHT NOW!

David bends down and grabs his ankles with his hands. Mrs. Jennings positions herself behind him and BAM! She hits his ass HARD.

The THWAK echoes through the hall and into the band room.

DAVID
OOOOOOOOH!

70 INT. MASON'S SCHOOL/BAND ROOM - DAY 70

The sound of the paddling echoes out into the band room mixed with the sound of DAVID crying out.

71 EXT. MASON'S FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT 71

It's the big Mason's game and the tough HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PLAYERS line up on the wooden benches, watching the game.

CASSANDRA the head cheerleader and her CHEERLEADERS bounce around doing their routine. David is bedazzled and distracted as he...

DAVID fills up plastic drink bottles with water and drops them into a HUGE clunky, wooden crate.

The game continues behind him as he excitedly does his work.

A FOOTBALL PLAYER shouts at him.

FOOTBALL PLAYER #1
Snaggleteeth, get out there!

FOOTBALL PLAYER #2
Yeah, dork, they need water!

Dvid grabs his water carton and rushes into the middle of the field!

It is the middle of the play! Footballers try not to squash this bug on their turf, but David keeps trying to get to the players. He almost get trampled.

The REF blows his whistle. COACH yells from the sidelines.

COACH
Boy, what the hell are you doing?

David looks like a moron with his huge water container.

DAVID
(Suddenly realizes)
They tricked me!

COACH
Get your faggot ass off that field.
Wait until the first down.

David is pissed and marches back to the benches where the row of football players laugh and point at him. David glares at them.

FOOTBALL PLAYER #1
You fell for it!

FOOTBALL PLAYER #2
What a dumb ass. Ha! Ha! Ha!

David ignores them. He slowly removes the bulky straps from his shoulders and drops the drink crate down on the bench.

Without looking back, David walks away. The football players shout at him. The Cheerleaders, except Cassandra, laugh as well.

FOOTBALL PLAYER #1
Hey, retard, the game ain't over.

FOOTBALL PLAYER #2
We need you to serve us water. We are thirsty.

David continues to walk and never turns back.

72

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7 - EVENING

72

David stands defiantly in front of Raymond, who has the paddle in his hand. Rhonda listens to David with compassion on her face.

DAVID
I don't care if you whip me every day for the rest of my life, I am not going back. EVER!

RAYMOND
They are only dumb 8th graders playing a prank on you.

DAVID

I don't care. They were mean to me when I was trying to do a good job. I hate football.

RAYMOND

You got to learn to be a team player, young man.

DAVID

Why?

RAYMOND

Because that is the way the world runs. You have to play along.

DAVID

No, I don't. NO!

Finally, Rhonda pipes up.

RHONDA

Raymond, I think we need to give him a pass on this one.

DAVID

See, she agrees with me.

RAYMOND

I don't want him to turn into a sissy on my watch, Rhonda.

RHONDA

I don't think it would hurt if we found something in sports that he CAN do.

RAYMOND

Alright. Damn! Go to your room. I'll talk to the Coach.

David glides to his room.

73

INT. MASON'S HOME GYM - DAY

73

A gangly group of CHEERLEADERS are stretching out before practice. A leggy blonde with a pixie haircut, CASSANDRA takes center stage.

David stands awkwardly beside her.

CASSANDRA

Okay, girls, we really need to kick this into high gear for the upcoming game against the Devil Pups! Can we do it?

The girls kinda hem and haw with a bored attitude

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Oh, come on! You have to have more pep than that!

CHEERLEADER #1

Cassandra, it's 8am. Are you on speed?

CASSANDRA

Lordy, just sleep your life away. ANYWAY, team, I want to introduce Little David here!

She pushes David forward like a trophy. He smiles broadly. The other girls roll their eyes and try not to laugh.

DAVID

Hi, ya'll.

He takes a bow.

CASSANDRA

Little David will be joining us. Doing gymnastics...rolls, cartwheels and stuff like that. On your feet! Let's try the first cheer.

The cheerleaders line up in formation. David watches them perform in unison.

CHEERLEADERS

Ready, OK! We're up! You're down. When you mess with the Mason's you're upside down.

They have formed a pyramid with Cassandra on top. She calls out to David!

CASSANDRA

Don't just stand there. Do a cartwheel in front of us.

David takes a hit off his inhaler and does a very wobbly attempt of a cartwheel in front of the girls.

He misjudges his distance and hits a girl square in the nose with his foot. She howls out in pain.

CHEERLEADER #1

Oooooo!

The pyramid comes crashing down! David stands terrified.

DAVID

Oh, Peggy, I'm so sorry.

CHEERLEADER #1

Idiot!

Cassandra and the rest of the girls tend to her bleeding noes.

CASSANDRA

It will all be OK!

74

INT. SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT

74

The kids on the bus are singing "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall". They are on the way to the Big Game.

David is now dressed in a male version of a cheerleading uniform. He and Marty sit in the back row. Marty's metal crutches clank against the seat in the pitch black night.

MARTY

My parents gave me up because I'm a freak. They were high up in the Shriners. The Mason's home is the only place I fit in.

DAVID

I'm getting out soon. My mom is getting her life back together. I want her to be like Olivia Newton-John at the end of "Grease."

MARTY

My parents are strict Baptists and forbid movies.

DAVID

It's the best movie. She's a plain Jane goody-goody and at the end of the movie, she turns into this really sexy lady with a cigarette hanging from her mouth and a big hair and John Travolta falls madly in love with her.

MARTY

Is that why you have a crush on
Cassandra?

DAVID

I do not!

MARTY

Bullshit, Tom Thumb. You follow her
around like a puppy dog.

DAVID

She's nice..

MARTY

David has a crush. David has a...

David clasps his hand across Marty's mouth.

DAVID

Shut up. Don't say anything
otherwise I'll tell Raymond you wet
the bed last night!

Marty's eyes widen.

MARTY

I promise...

They ride along in silence as the kids continue to sing.
David stares longingly at Cassandra who flirts with a
football player.

75

INT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7 - DAY

75

David vacuums the living room. The telephone on the kitchen
wall rings. Rhonda exits her bedroom and answers it.

RHONDA

David! David! It's for you!

She places the phone on the top of housing and returns to her
bedroom. David shuts off the vacuum cleaner and picks up the
phone.

DAVID

Hello?

PENNY (V.O.)

Hey, baby, it's mamma!

SPLIT SCREEN FOR PHONE CALL: Penny is at home after work.
She's in her uniform and smoking a cigarette.

DAVID

Hi, mom!

PENNY

Honey, I've got some good news!

DAVID

What?

PENNY

Your dad has taken me back!

David looks as if he were dropped off a hundred story building. He tries to catch his breath.

DAVID

Oh...

PENNY

I know! Isn't it great! We'll be a family again!

DAVID

When do I get out of here?

PENNY

Well, that's the thing. He wants us to live together first without you and Samantha so we can work things out.

DAVID

Oh.

PENNY

But Samantha is going to come stay there with you.

DAVID

But, I thought she was too dumb.

PENNY

Your dad and I talked to the home and since we are a family again, they will take her.

DAVID

Oh.

END SPLIT SCREEN

Rhonda opens her bedroom door and points to her watch.

PENNY (V.O.)
I'm so excited, baby.

DAVID
Mom, I got to go.

PENNY (V.O.)
Ok, I love you. See you this weekend.

76

INT. MASON'S RECREATION - DAY

76

David is setting up pins in the basement bowling lane while Samantha cries crocodile tears.

SAMANTHA
I hate it here. My den mother is the Wicked Witch of the West. She beats me.

DAVID
You have to follow the rules.

SAMANTHA
I'm going to run away!

DAVID
They will catch you.

SAMANTHA
How can you stand it?

DAVID
I'm used to it. It's nice once you get used to their rules.

SAMANTHA
I can't believe mom put me in this hell hole so she could be with her precious Clive.

DAVID
Are they really getting back together?

SAMANTHA
Yes! Don't you listen to me?

DAVID
Yeah...

SAMANTHA

They are working out their crap together and mom is having another baby.

David is stunned. They walk back to the school building.

DAVID

Gee. I thought she had eaten too many Big Macs.

SAMANTHA

They are having a ball while we are rotting in here.

DAVID

Wanna play knock and run?

Samantha grins.

SAMANTHA

Yeah...

77

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

77

David sits at his table with the boys and he sees Samantha sitting at another table across the room. He gives her a small wave. She gives him the finger.

The Den Mother sees this and bends Samantha's finger back. Samantha lets out a scream so loud it could be heard around the world.

DEN MOTHER

Out you go, Miss Priss.

She snatches Samantha out of her chair and marches her screaming at the top of her lungs out of the dining hall.

78

EXT. ASTEROID BURGER - EVENING

78

Penny, Clive, Samantha and David are having an awkward dinner. It's obvious that Penny is pregnant.

CLIVE

David, you are growing up.

DAVID

I'm still the shortest in class.

SAMANTHA

I hate that place! They beat me!

PENNY
Stop exaggerating!

SAMANTHA
It's true. Ain't it, David!?

DAVID
I guess.

CLIVE
Well, maybe we can go to church
this weekend together.

Penny shoots daggers at him.

PENNY
Can't we, please, not discuss that?

CLIVE
It might help.

SAMANTHA
When do we get to come live with
you?

CLIVE
Your mother and I need time to work
stuff out.

SAMANTHA
But it's been forever AND we have
to go to summer school. I hate
school.

DAVID
I'm in the school play. I like it!

SAMANTHA
Smarty pants.

Clive opens his wallet and pulls out two laminated cards,
hands them to the kids. David nearly jumps out of his seat.

DAVID
Oh my God! Season passes to 6 Flags
Over Texas! Thank you!

He gets up and gives Clive a huge hug.

SAMANTHA
Thanks, Dad.

She gives him a snake-like hug.

PENNY

Clive, you said you were gonna wait till they came home for good.

CLIVE

I couldn't wait. Why can't we have Christmas in July?

PENNY

Oh, you...

She smiles at him.

79

INT. MASON'S SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

79

Samantha and David stand outside 5th and 6th grade classes.

DAVID

You will love, Ms. Gee. She's like Granny.

SAMANTHA

I'm not a bookworm like you.

DAVID

She doesn't make you read. She let's you do gymnastics instead.

SAMANTHA

My stomach hurts. I drank a bottle of Pepto Bismol.

Suddenly the 6th grade door opens and MISS TREADWAY stands in the doorway. She's a jolly, mammoth of a woman with yellow crooked teeth wearing brown oblong glasses.

MISS TREADWAY

Good morning! You're here early.

The other kids gather.

DAVID

I'm an early bird.

MISS TREADWAY

I like that. I'm Miss Treadway. I teach 6th grade. Who is this?

DAVID

This is my sister, Samantha. She's in Ms. Gee's class.

MISS TREADWAY
 (to Samantha)
 You have such pretty hair. You
 could be on TV in one of those
 Breck commercials.

David nudges Samantha who gets the hint.

SAMANTHA
 Thank you, Miss Treadway.

MISS TREADWAY
 Well, everyone come on in. I see
 Ms. Gee coming down the hall.

Ms. Gee ambles down the hall. Samantha looks like she's going
 to barf.

MS. GEE
 Hello, Miss Treadway.

They smile at each other welcoming back the new school year.

DAVID
 Ms. Gee. this is my sister,
 Samantha!

MS. GEE
 Oh, how wonderful. Can you do cart-
 wheels?

SAMANTHA
 Yes! And a back hand-spring.

MS. GEE
 Can you sing?

SAMANTHA
 I dunno.

MS. GEE
 I'm doing the fall production. I
 have the record on my desk.

She ushers a happy Samantha into her room. Miss Treadwell
 ushers David and the other students into the class room.

80

INT. ARLINGTON HOME KITCHEN - DAY

80

The family is eating breakfast. Penny is 7 months pregnant.

PENNY
 Your father has a new job!

CLIVE
I'm working at the VA helping the elderly.

DAVID
Can we go see Xanadu?

CLIVE
What is that?

PENNY
It's that new god-damned Olivia Newton-John movie.

CLIVE
(mock surprise)
She has a new movie?!

SAMANTHA
David won't stop playing the record. It's pathetic.

Clive pulls five dollars from his wallet, hands it to David.

CLIVE
Here, son, go spend the day at the movies!

David and Samantha's eyes light up! Score.

SAMANTHA
But when do we get to come live with you?

Clive and Penny look at each other.

PENNY
We still need to get settled.

David stands up all full of 11 year old excitement!

DAVID
Come on, let's get our bikes and go to movies!

He grabs Samantha's hand and runs to the bedroom.

81 EXT. MASON'S HOME - DAY

81

David walks home from school. As he nears Cottage #7, he sees Penny chatting with Rhonda and rushes to her, hugging her tightly.

DAVID

Mom!

PENNY

We've come to take you home, baby!

David's mouth drops open wide enough to catch flies.

DAVID

But...

He turns to where Penny is looking... It's Clive.

CLIVE

We decided it was time for you and
your sister to come back.

David looks helplessly at Raymond and Rhonda.

DAVID

(weakly)

I need to pack my things...

CLIVE

We packed them already.

David is shocked, paralyzed. He begins to weep.

DAVID

What do I do with my school books?

RHONDA

I'll take care of them.

Rhonda takes the books and lays them on the table.

PENNY

We got to go. Clive needs the car
for work.

Rhonda bends down and hugs David.

RHONDA

You did really great here. We will
miss you.

DAVID

Tell everyone goodbye for me.

RHONDA

I will.

Rhonda stands and releases David to Clive and Penny.

82 EXT. MASON'S COTTAGE #7 - DAY

82

David, Clive and Penny get into the car.

Samantha is waiting excitedly in the backseat.

SAMANTHA

Yippee. We are free!

David gets into the backseat in a rote, numb fashion.

Clive starts the car and they begin to drive off.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Turn on the radio!

Clive turns on the radio and "Magic" plays.

David stares out the back window as all the boys in Cottage #7 return from school and watch him pull away. They wave and yell goodbye.

Tears stream down David's face as he tries to hide them under a mask of indifference and hatred.

83 EXT. SIX FLAGS OVER TEXAS - DAY

83

An aerial shot of David and Samantha running, weaving in and out of people to get to the wooden roller coaster, 'The Judge Roy Scream.'

David's VO carries over...

DAVID (V.O.)

The odyssey of my missing year ended as abruptly as it started: with "a tesseract", a wrinkle in time. Sucked away in a mad-dash rush. Pulled up by the roots! I never saw any of them again. I grew into an independent boy on that wild planet. These are my memories of those forgotten minutes of time.

They rush through the turnstiles toward the front car, slip inside and the coaster pulls out.

The coaster goes up the first big hill chugging, chugging. David and Samantha have their hands in the air.

The coaster crests the first hill and begins to drop and they both scream in excitement! Freeze frame on the two of them.

FADE OUT