

PHANTASY

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EXT. FOREST - DAY

FREDDY (10) darts between trees, hot on the trail of a STAGECOACH led by TWO HORSES that clomp the earth.

Somehow, Freddy's remains within striking distance.

The stagecoach barrels toward a fallen tree.

The horses jump and clear the tree but the stagecoach's wheels smash into pieces, bringing it to a sudden halt.

The DRIVER disembarks, unsheathes his sword.

He dashes toward Freddy who also draws his sword.

A swashbuckling sword fight unfolds.

Daring and impressive, Freddy's moves would make Zorro proud.

After a few close calls, the driver admits defeat and scurries off.

Freddy approaches the stagecoach with sword in hand.

He opens the door and finds a bound PRINCESS (13).

He unties her.

PRINCESS

Thank you for saving me.

FREDDY

You're welcome, your highness.

PRINCESS

How can I repay your bravery?

FREDDY

It's okay. You don't have to.

PRINCESS

Brave and humble. Your mother must be very proud of you.

She kisses his cheek, causing him to blush and breath heavy.

PRINCESS (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

FREDDY

I'm fine. I just need to sit--

Freddy faints, falls backward out of the stagecoach onto--

INT. SEVENTH GRADE CLASSROOM - DAY (1995)

--his classroom floor.

Freddy was daydreaming.

His classmates point and laugh.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A parent-teacher meeting between Freddy, his MOTHER (28) and MRS. RAMIREZ (40s).

Freddy's mind wanders as the adults converse.

MOTHER

He shouldn't be punished for using his imagination.

MRS. RAMIREZ

He's not being punished. I simply want him to use his imagination when it's appropriate.

MOTHER

He's a kid. It's always appropriate.

MRS. RAMIREZ

Not when it's affecting his learning environment.

MOTHER

He finishes all his work and gets good grades. What's the problem?

MRS. RAMIREZ

It's not okay for kids like Freddy to disturb the education of the other children.

MOTHER

What do you mean *kids like Freddy*? He's a regular kid with a big imagination. There's nothing wrong with him. I wish you could see that instead of trying to kick him out.

MRS. RAMIREZ

I'm trying to put him on the right path, with the right teachers.

Mother sighs, not satisfied with that response.

FREDDY
Why don't you like me?

MRS. RAMIREZ
Why do you say that?

FREDDY
You're kicking me out.

MRS. RAMIREZ
You're not being kicked out, you're
being transferred to an exciting
new school.

FREDDY
The other kids won't bully me?

MOTHER
That's another thing I wanted to
talk to you about.

MRS. RAMIREZ
Is someone bothering you, Freddy?

A beat. Freddy hangs his head.

FREDDY
I wanna go home.

INT. CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

An old station wagon with fake wood paneling.

Mother drives as Freddy stares out the passenger side window.

FREDDY
Why can't I be normal like the
other kids?

MOTHER
I like your imagination.

FREDDY
Me too but I don't like getting in
trouble with my teachers.

MOTHER
We can try another doctor.

FREDDY
I don't want more medicine.

MOTHER
Yeah, me neither.

The car stops at a red light.

She looks over to him.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Do I ever show up in your dreams?

FREDDY
Sometimes. When I get scared, you
always show up to help me.

Mother smiles.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Can you drop me off at the park?

MOTHER
As long as you don't miss dinner.

FREDDY
I promise.

She points to a bag on the dashboard.

MOTHER
I got you something.

Freddy retrieves a book titled *PHANTASY* -- a heroic knight in
battle on the cover.

FREDDY
Oh cool!

EXT. PARK - DAY

It's empty except for MATILDA (10) who's enjoying the swing.

Freddy scurries past her and sits below his favorite tree.

Matilda swings, intrigued by Freddy.

TREE - LATER

Matilda approaches, candy bar in hand.

MATILDA
You want some?

FREDDY

No.

MATILDA

You sure? It's got peanuts.

FREDDY

I don't like peanuts.

MATILDA

Are you allergic? My cousin Nancy
ate some and her face blew up like
a balloon.

She smiles as if her cousin's medical emergency were the
coolest thing in the world.

Freddy stares at her, befuddled.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Oh well. More for me.

She tries to open the candy bar but fails.

FREDDY

You want some help?

She tosses him the candy bar.

MATILDA

Don't use your mouth.

Freddy tears through the plastic wrapper with his house key.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

You have your own keys?

FREDDY

Yeah, you don't?

MATILDA

My mom says I'm too young.

FREDDY

How do you get inside?

MATILDA

Someone's always home.

FREDDY

Lucky.

MATILDA

What's your name?

FREDDY
Freddy.

MATILDA
My name's Matilda.

FREDDY
Okay.

MATILDA
Push me.

FREDDY
What?

MATILDA
Push me.

FREDDY
I'm not gonna hit a girl.

MATILDA
No, silly. Push me on the swings.

FREDDY
Oh. No, that's okay. I'm gonna read
my book.

Matilda snatches Freddy's book and runs toward the

SWING SET

Freddy chases after her.

FREDDY
Give it back!

She takes cover behind a metal swing set pillar.

MATILDA
Only if you swing with me.

The chase continues.

FREDDY
Stop bullying me!

This catches Matilda off guard. She stops running.

MATILDA
What?

Freddy liberates his book from Matilda's grip.

FREDDY
What did I ever do to you?

MATILDA
I'm sorry, Freddy. I was just
playing around.

Freddy storms off.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
Wait. I'm not a bully.

FREDDY
Leave me alone.

She hurries in front of him and raises her right shirt
sleeve, revealing a bruise.

MATILDA
Look!

FREDDY
You get bullied, too?

MATILDA
Yeah. Now do you believe me? I'm
not a bully.

Freddy lifts his left pant leg, also revealing a bruise.

FREDDY
I got this one last week.
(beat)
Do you wanna be friends?

Matilda smiles.

MATILDA
Heck yeah!
(then, smile fades)
Oh, no. We can't.

FREDDY
Why not?

MATILDA
I'm not from here.

Freddy, disappointed, checks his Casio calculator watch.

FREDDY
Oh, okay. I have to go.

MATILDA

Hang on.

She hands him a business card with an address on the back.

FREDDY

What's this?

MATILDA

It's my dad's business card. That's my address. In case I get lost.

FREDDY

What do I do with it?

MATILDA

Let's be pen pals!

FREDDY

What's that?

MATILDA

You write me a letter and then I write you a letter, and then we keep going.

FREDDY

For how long?

MATILDA

I don't know. I have a lot of pens.

FREDDY

Uh... Okay.

MATILDA

Great!

Matilda kisses him on the cheek and scampers off before Freddy can react.

And as she hurries away, Freddy imagines her wearing the same dress as the princess on page one.

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

Cooties!

Freddy smiles. His first kiss.

INT. FREDDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cartoons on the TV and a bag of chips next to Freddy.

SOUND: Mail sliding through the door slot.

Freddy darts toward the front door, flicks through the letters until he finds the one he's looking for.

INT. FREDDY'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Freddy plops down on his bed and tears open the letter.

The envelope on the bed reveals it's a letter from Matilda.

Freddy laughs and smiles, his eyes devouring every word.

LATER

Freddy jots numerous pages, stuffs them in an envelope and addresses it to Matilda.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

A bounce in Freddy's step as he makes his way to the mailbox at the end of the block -- letter in hand.

He passes a few PIGEONS that SING a happy gospel song.

Freddy motions for them to follow him on his walk.

His personal soundtrack is complimented by a red carpet that unrolls in front of him, leading all the way to the mailbox.

Freddy deposits the letter.

SOUND: Roaring crowd.

Freddy turns to find a huge group of people cheering him on.

MAIL CARRIER (O.S.)
Are you finished?

Freddy continues to enjoy the moment.

MAIL CARRIER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I need you to move, please.

A hand taps Freddy's shoulder, bringing him back to reality.

MAIL CARRIER (CONT'D)
Go dream somewhere else, kid.

FREDDY
Sorry.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Freddy gathers the mail at the front door.
- Freddy reads and writes more letters in his bedroom.
- Freddy deposits letters into the corner mailbox.
- Freddy searches for loose change in the couches.
- Freddy buys stamps.

The shots repeat a couple times, but with each iteration, Freddy ages, until he is 17 years old.

INT. FREDDY'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - DAY

Freddy (17) at his desk in front of a finished letter.

Two words stand out: *I'm sorry*.

He slides the letter into an envelope and scribbles *Matilda* on it with a red sharpie.

With glazed eyes and a tender smile, Freddy extends his arms and reclines in his chair until it tips backward.

A look of relief on Freddy's face.

And before he hits the floor...

FADE TO WHITE:

SUPER: **Thirteen Years Later**INT. FREDDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (**CURRENT DAY**)

ADULT FREDDY (30) shoots up in bed, gasping for air, sweat dripping from his brow.

A KNOCK at his door. It's JAY (29), his roommate.

JAY (O.S.)
Hey man, you alright?

FREDDY
Yeah, I'm fine.

JAY (O.S.)
Can I come in?

Freddy unlocks his bedroom door.

Jay enters.

JAY (CONT'D)
Nightmares again?

FREDDY
Just one.

Freddy sits on his bed.

Jay settles into a desk chair and points to a book on
Freddy's nightstand.

It's *PHANTASY*.

JAY
Maybe you shouldn't read that
before bed.

FREDDY
I've read it a hundred times.

JAY
And every time you have nightmares.

FREDDY
That's not true.

It is, but Jay doesn't want to argue. Instead, he shrugs.

JAY
Yeah, you're right. What do I know?
(then)
But you know who does?

FREDDY
I told you I don't need a shrink.

JAY
She's really good, man.

FREDDY
I'm not sick.

JAY
I didn't say you were.

FREDDY
Even if I wanted to go, it's not
like I could afford it.

JAY
I'll let you borrow the money.

FREDDY
You don't have to do that.

JAY
It's cool, man. No worries.

FREDDY
I'll pay you back as soon as I find
a job.

INT. DR. SILVA'S PRACTICE - DAY

A cozy office, like walking into your grandma's living room.

DR. SILVA (40s) sits across from Freddy, both in chairs.

DR. SILVA
When did the nightmares start?

FREDDY
When I was a kid.

DR. SILVA
How often?

FREDDY
Usually once a week. I'd be in the
middle of a really nice dream and
then all of a sudden it would turn
into a nightmare.

DR. SILVA
Why do you think that is?

FREDDY
Aren't you supposed to know that?

DR. SILVA
I could make something up if it
makes you feel better. But the
point of this session is for you to
open up. I need to understand the
way your mind works.

FREDDY
We might be here a while, doc.

DR. SILVA
I'll worry about the time. Now what
I want is for you to relax and for
us to have a conversation.

FREDDY
What was the question again?

DR. SILVA
Forget about it for now.
(then)
I'd like to talk about your mother.

FREDDY
Don't bring her into this.

DR. SILVA
Why not?

FREDDY
Because the nightmares aren't her
fault. She tried to protect me.

DR. SILVA
From who?

A beat. Freddy's lip quivers.

Dr. Silva scribbles something on her yellow legal pad.

FREDDY
What's that?

DR. SILVA
I'm taking notes.

FREDDY
What did you write?

DR. SILVA
It's part of the process.

FREDDY
Maybe this isn't such a good idea.

DR. SILVA
It's okay if you're not ready to
talk about your mother.
(then)
What do you want to talk about?

FREDDY
I'm not sure. I don't have a whole
lot going on in my life right now.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Freddy spots a WOMAN sitting under his favorite tree.

He pauses, as if she seems familiar.

He continues walking but changes his mind and approaches her.

TREE

She peeks at him and smiles. Freddy doesn't notice.

Upon closer view it's clear the woman is ADULT MATILDA (30).

FREDDY

Do we know each other?

MATILDA

No, I don't think so.

FREDDY

Are you sure?

MATILDA

I'm not from here.

FREDDY

Oh. You just seem so familiar.

MATILDA

Is this how you hit on women?

FREDDY

Is it working?

MATILDA

Nope.

FREDDY

Then no, it's not how I hit on women. To be honest, it's been a while since I flirted with someone.

MATILDA

I'm just messing with you. We actually do know each other.

FREDDY

Did we go to the same school?

MATILDA

Seven years worth of letters and then nothing.

FREDDY

Matilda?

MATILDA
Hi, Freddy.

FREDDY
I knew you looked familiar.

MATILDA
Why did you stop writing?

FREDDY
It's a long story.

MATILDA
I had plenty of time.

FREDDY
(beat)
Do you remember how fun it was to
write each other letters?

MATILDA
Of course.

FREDDY
Can we focus on that? Can you trust
me when I say that things happened
the way they did for a reason?

BOY (O.S.)
Mommy, look!

Matilda gives him a thumbs up.

MATILDA
Good job, buddy. Keep swinging!

FREDDY
Is that your son?

MATILDA
If he's not, I'm going to jail for
a long time.

FREDDY
What's his name?

MATILDA
Let's go find out.

SWING SET

MATILDA
Come here, sweetie.

The boy waddles over to Matilda.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
This is my friend, Freddy.

FREDDY
Hi, kid. What's your name?

ARTHUR
Arthur and I'm four.

He holds up four fingers. Adorable.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
How many are you?

FREDDY
I'm this much.

Freddy flashes both hands three times, signifying thirty.

ARTHUR
You're old.

Matilda laughs.

FREDDY
Tough crowd.

ARTHUR
You wanna play with me?

Freddy looks to Matilda. She nods.

FREDDY
Sure! What do you wanna play?

ARTHUR
Push me!

Freddy lifts Arthur into a swing and pushes him.

FREDDY
So what brings you back after all
these years?

MATILDA
We're just passing through.
Visiting a friend up in North
Hills, but she's still at work so
here we are.

ARTHUR
Higher!

Freddy checks with Matilda. She shakes her head.

FREDDY

Oh man, you're too strong for me. I
can't push you higher.

Arthur giggles.

Freddy enjoys the moment.

And so does Matilda, whose eyes wonder *what could have been*.

She smiles.

EXT. MATILDA'S CAR - LATER

Matilda straps Arthur into his car seat.

Freddy reads Matilda's business card.

MATILDA

So yeah, if you're interested I can
set up an interview.

FREDDY

Okay, cool. I'll let you know.
(then)

I'm glad we got a chance to talk.
We're okay, right?

MATILDA

We're okay, Freddy. And regardless
of what happens with the job, make
sure you stay in touch, okay?

After a quick, awkward hesitation from both sides, they hug.

Freddy smiles as she drives away.

Today was a good day.

INT. FREDDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A fierce Mortal Kombat battle between Freddy and Jay.

They button mash their PS4 controllers.

JAY

Sounds like a sweet gig, man.

FREDDY

You think I should go for it?

JAY

It's up to you. But if it were me,
I'd be packing my bags right now.

FREDDY

I would have to move. What if I
don't like living there?

JAY

It's a big opportunity, man. You
gotta stop psyching yourself out.

INT. FREDDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Freddy at his desk.

He sends Matilda a video chat invitation.

She answers after a few rings.

Her face fills up most of Freddy's laptop screen.

MATILDA

Freddy! What's up?

FREDDY

Hey, I wanted to let you know that
I'm interested in the job.

MATILDA

That's great. Call me at the office
tomorrow morning and we'll set
something up.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Mommy-mommy-mommy-mommy-mommy.

FREDDY

Swing me around.

Matilda swings her laptop around.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Hi Arthur!

Arthur stops screaming, darts over to the laptop and waves.

ARTHUR

Hiiiiii.

Freddy waves back.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Mommy says you're my friend.

FREDDY
Cool! You wanna know a secret?

ARTHUR
Yeah!

FREDDY
If you're quiet, your mommy will
let you eat ice cream.

ARTHUR
With sprinkles?

FREDDY
With sprinkles.

ARTHUR
(whispers)
Okay. I'll be very quiet.

He returns to his toys.

Matilda comes into frame.

MATILDA
(whispers)
I don't have ice cream.

Freddy laughs.

FREDDY
You and your husband did a good job
with him.

MATILDA
I'll make sure to tell him if I
ever see him.

FREDDY
Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to--

MATILDA
No, it's fine. It is what it is.

FREDDY
It must be hard being a single mom.

MATILDA
Only if you let it.

They stare at each other in silence for a few seconds.

A nice moment, capped off with two smiles.

INT. CORNER OFFICE - DAY

LILIAN KNIGHT, an executive with good taste works here.

Freddy sits across from her in a chair half the size of hers.

LILIAN

You have no writing experience.

FREDDY

Not professionally, no.

LILIAN

Then why should I hire you?

FREDDY

Honestly, if I were you, I wouldn't hire me off my resume. But I'm much more than a piece of paper.

LILIAN

I appreciate your candor.

FREDDY

I'm not sure what Matilda saw in me that she would recommend me for an interview, but you said yes, so you must value her opinion.

LILIAN

I do. Which is why I'm going to make you a proposition. I'll give you a week's time and a budget for you to write something. If you wow me, the job's yours.

FREDDY

That sounds great.

LILIAN

Good. Do you have something in mind that you might want to write about?

FREDDY

Are you familiar with Jimmy Santos?

LILIAN

Yeah, the guy who wrote Phantasy and then disappeared.

FREDDY
I want to find him and interview
him, exclusively for your website.

LILIAN
I love that word. Exclusive.

INT. CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

Matilda's behind the wheel.

Freddy admires the scenery.

FREDDY
I'm sorry you got sucked into this.

MATILDA
It's part of the job. And I
recommended you so you better not
let me down.

FREDDY
I won't.

He raises his pinky.

MATILDA
The sacred pinky promise. Are you
sure about that?

Freddy nods.

Matilda locks pinkies with Freddy.

EXT./INT. CAR - LATER - TRAVELING

The car veers off the road a bit.

FREDDY
Woh, watch out.

MATILDA
Shut up, stupid.

FREDDY
Don't call me that.

MATILDA
Then stop acting like it.

She punches his shoulder.

FREDDY

Stop.

MATILDA

You gonna cry?

She keeps punching him.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Come on, baby. Cry for me.

Freddy tries to block her punches.

FREDDY

Stop!

MATILDA

Make me, stupid.

FREDDY

I told you not to call me that!

MATILDA

Then stop with your stupid dreams.
You're not a child.

She taps her right cheek.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Man up, Freddy. Take a swing.

FREDDY

I'm not going to hit you.

Matilda's voice now sounds like a MAN's voice.

MATILDA

It's what you want, isn't it?

Matilda slams on the brakes and reaches for Freddy.

He pushes her away and escapes through the window.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Matilda morphs into a LARGE, FACELESS MAN.

A dark void, like a black hole, stares back at Freddy.

MAN

Take a swing, coward.

He barrels toward Freddy.

But Freddy can't move because his legs are stuck to the road.

The man squeezes Freddy's neck.

He struggles to breathe, unable to free himself.

His face whitening with each passing second.

MATILDA (PRE-LAP)

Freddy, wake up!

INT. CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

Freddy opens his eyes, consumed by panic.

He catches his breath and rubs his neck.

MATILDA

Hell of a nightmare. You alright?

INT. DR. SILVA'S PRACTICE - DAY

The same session from page twelve continues.

FREDDY

I told you I'm fine, okay? How many times do I need to say it?

DR. SILVA

As many as it takes.

FREDDY

I was fine when I walked in here and I'll be fine when I walk out. I'm fine.

DR. SILVA

Where do you see yourself in ten years? Do you think fine is going to get you there? Because I don't.

FREDDY

Thanks for the support.

DR. SILVA

I can't help you until you accept that you need help. Now are you ready to do that or should I go make another pot of coffee?

EXT. DINER - DAY

Freddy and Matilda pull into an empty parking spot.

Curious TOWNSFOLK stare.

MATILDA

Is this the right place?

Freddy shuffles through a stack of highlighted pages.

FREDDY

He comes here often according to
this old message board thread.

MATILDA

Well let's get to it, Sherlock.

INT. DINER - DAY

An OLD MAN approaches Freddy and Matilda's table.

OLD MAN

You kids lost?

FREDDY

No, sir. Just grabbing a bite.

OLD MAN

I got my eye on you.

A WAITRESS brings them their drinks, shoos the old man away.

WAITRESS

Don't mind him. He ain't got
nothing better to do.

(then)

Y'all ready to order?

MATILDA

Two cheeseburgers with fries.

WAITRESS

Coming right up.

She gathers the menus.

FREDDY

And if you don't mind, we'd like to
ask you a few questions.

WAITRESS

You a cop or somethin'?

FREDDY

Writer.

WAITRESS

What kinda questions?

MATILDA

We're looking for someone.

FREDDY

Jimmy Santos.

WAITRESS

Doesn't ring a bell.

Her shifty eyes say otherwise.

Freddy sips his lemonade.

FREDDY

Can I pay the bill right now?

WAITRESS

Sure. It's ten dollars.

Freddy hands her a \$50 bill.

FREDDY

Keep the change.

A large tip, the cure for amnesia.

WAITRESS

Lemme see what I can find out.

LATER

They finish their meal.

MATILDA

Still think it's going to work?

FREDDY

It always does in the movies.

MATILDA

Right before the hero gets shot.

FREDDY

Good thing I brought my guns.

He flexes his thin arms.

Matilda shakes her head.

The waitress returns, slips Freddy a piece of paper.

There's an address scribbled on it.

He shows it to Matilda.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Told you.

EXT. BRICK BUILDING - DAY

It's clear by the cobwebs that no one's been here recently.

MATILDA

I don't feel good about this.

FREDDY

Why? It's just a creepy looking building in the middle of nowhere with no cell phone coverage.

MATILDA

What?

She whips out her phone to confirm. Full bars.

She playfully shoves him.

Freddy laughs as he tries the door. Locked.

Matilda looks through the window. Too dark and dusty.

FREDDY

Let's go around back.

Freddy checks the back door, gives it a good shake.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

I could probably push it open.

MATILDA

We're not breaking in.

FREDDY

How else are we getting inside?

Matilda tries the window. It's unlocked.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Don't say a word.

Matilda climbs in and opens the door for Freddy.

INT. BRICK BUILDING - DAY

Artwork, art supplies, notebooks, empty bottles.

Freddy gets a closer look at the art.

FREDDY

This is definitely his work.

Matilda skims through the notebooks.

MATILDA

There's thousands of pages here.

Freddy takes a second to soak it all in.

A nearby notebook catches his eye.

He leafs through it, eyes growing with each passing page.

FREDDY

It's true!

MATILDA

What are you talking about?

FREDDY

The rumor that he wrote a sequel.
It's true! The story's not over!

MATILDA

Looks like we're going to be
coworkers.

FREDDY

We have to find him first.

MATILDA

That shouldn't be too hard.

She grabs some receipts off a nearby table.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Looks like he always goes to the
same store.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Freddy and Matilda return to find one of their tires slashed.

FREDDY
Oh come on!

MATILDA
We must've been followed.

FREDDY
That damn waitress.

Freddy kicks the slashed tire.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Closed. The waitress is inside, cleaning up.

Freddy bangs on the door.

Matilda stands guard.

FREDDY
Open the door.

The waitress hurries to the door but doesn't unlock it.

WAITRESS
We're closed.

FREDDY
You set us up.

WAITRESS
What are you talking about?

FREDDY
You slashed our tire.

WAITRESS
Don't be ridiculous.

FREDDY
Open the door.

WAITRESS
Go away or I'm calling the cops.

FREDDY
Do it. Hell, I'll call them.

Freddy grabs his phone and begins to dial.

WAITRESS
Wait. Don't.

She opens the door.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
There's something you should know.

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

The waitress turns off the lights.

They huddle near the back.

FREDDY
Start talking.

WAITRESS
Shh. Keep your voice down.

MATILDA
What's going on?

WAITRESS
You gotta go. You're not safe here.

FREDDY
Why did you send us out there if
it's not safe?

WAITRESS
I didn't think they'd go after you.
You seemed harmless.

MATILDA
We are. So why would they come
after us?

WAITRESS
There's things going on here that
you don't need to know about.

FREDDY
We're just trying to find Jimmy.
That's all we care about.

WAITRESS
Whoever did it wanted to scare you
out of town.

FREDDY
We're not going until we find
Jimmy. He wasn't at his studio.

WAITRESS
He wasn't?

MATILDA

When's the last time you saw him?

WAITRESS

Now that you mention it, it has been a couple weeks since he came 'round these parts.

Matilda pulls a receipt from her pocket.

MATILDA

Where's the Sunrise Mini Mart?

WAITRESS

That's in the next town. 'Bout four miles from here.

INT. CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

On the road toward Sunrise Mini Mart. Matilda's driving.

FREDDY

This makes no sense. Why would he drive four miles when they've got their own store in town?

MATILDA

You don't think he's involved in something illegal, do you?

FREDDY

The man's a writer, not a criminal.

MATILDA

I didn't mean anything by it. I know you're a big fan of his.

FREDDY

I'm more than just a fan. His book got me through some tough times.

(then)

Remember when we first met, you snatched a book out of my hands?

Freddy reaches for a bag in the back seat.

He pulls out his childhood copy of *PHANTASY*.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

This was the book.

A beat, understanding how much this means to Freddy:

MATILDA
We're going to find him.

EXT. SUNRISE MINI MART - NIGHT

They park their car and head inside.

A POLICE CAR drives by and parks across the street.

The OFFICER (50s) keeps an eye on them.

It's obvious they were being followed this whole time.

INT. SUNRISE MINI MART - NIGHT

A mom-and-pop shop.

Freddy and Matilda approach the female CASHIER (60s).

CASHIER
Howdy, folks.

MATILDA
Hello.

CASHIER
Y'all new in town?

FREDDY
No, ma'am, we're actually looking
for someone.

CASHIER
And who might you be?

MATILDA
We're reporters, working on a story
about Jimmy Santos.

CASHIER
Jimmy's gonna be in the papers?

FREDDY
If we can find him.

MATILDA
You think you could help us?

CASHIER
Well sure, anything for Jimmy.

FREDDY

Do you know where he lives?

CASHIER

I'm afraid not. Only time I see him is when he comes in for his favorite drink.

FREDDY

When was the last time you saw him?

CASHIER

Must'a been a couple weeks.

MATILDA

Did he say anything out of the ordinary before he left?

CASHIER

He didn't say much. Seemed like something was on his mind.

Matilda pulls out the receipt from earlier.

MATILDA

The last time he was here, he bought fishing line.

CASHIER

(excited)

You think that's a clue like on those television programs?

FREDDY

Maybe. Where do people fish around here?

CASHIER

There's a lake near the abandoned summer camp a few miles west of here. Just go back the way you came and hang a left on Willis Road.

INT. CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

This time Freddy's behind the wheel.

MATILDA

It's getting late. We should find a place to stay.

FREDDY

What if he's out there?

MATILDA

It'll be easier to find him in daylight.

FREDDY

You're right. Check your phone. See if there's a place nearby.

Matilda grabs her phone from her canvas messenger bag.

MATILDA

My mom was trying to call me.

FREDDY

Something wrong?

MATILDA

I don't know, she didn't leave a voicemail. Do you mind if I call her back right now?

FREDDY

No, go for it.

Matilda dials her mom's number.

MATILDA

Everything okay, mom?

(listens)

Is he still awake?

(listens)

No, it's okay. Let him sleep.

(listens)

I'll call him in the morning.

(listens)

I will. Okay. Good night.

She hangs up.

FREDDY

All good?

MATILDA

Arthur wanted to talk to me, but he fell asleep ten minutes ago.

FREDDY

I'm sorry this is taking time away from your son.

MATILDA

It's part of the job.

Sadness envelops her face.

FREDDY
You really miss him.

MATILDA
He's my world.

Then, out of darkness, POLICE LIGHTS flash behind them.

FREDDY
Where the hell did he come from?

MATILDA
You weren't speeding, were you?

FREDDY
I don't think so. I'm sure it's
just a routine stop.

MATILDA
At night in the middle of nowhere?

FREDDY
Try to relax. The last thing we
need right now is a confrontation.

The officer saunters over to Freddy's window.

OFFICER
License and registration.

Freddy hands him the documents.

FREDDY
Is something wrong, officer?

OFFICER
I'll ask the questions.
(then)
What are you folks up to tonight?

FREDDY
We're looking for a hotel.

OFFICER
At this time of night? You and your
lady friend take your sins
elsewhere.

MATILDA
What's that supposed to mean?

OFFICER
Did I tell you to talk?

MATILDA
I don't need your permission.

OFFICER
Keep your woman in check, boy.

MATILDA
What?

FREDDY
Sir, there's no need for that.
She's my friend and coworker.

OFFICER
I don't know what you folks are up
to, but you best not be sticking
your nose where it don't belong.

FREDDY
I understand, officer.

OFFICER
Thing is, I don't think you do.

The officer pulls out a large knife.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Next time it won't be your tire
that gets slashed.
(to Matilda)
Would hate to ruin that pretty face
of yours.

MATILDA
Go to hell.

Uh-oh. The officer clomps over to Matilda's door.

FREDDY
What are you doing?

Freddy exits the car and follows the officer.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Don't touch her!

The officer grabs Freddy and SLAMS him onto the hood.

OFFICER
Do you wanna die tonight?

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Freddy and Matilda in the backseat, handcuffed.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

A concrete shoebox. Two metal benches.

The officer slams the holding cell door.

LOU (40s), the town drunk, wakes up in the process.

LOU

Keep it down.

OFFICER

Shut up, Lou. Go back to sleep.

The officer leaves.

Matilda and Freddy sit on the bench opposite Lou.

LOU

You in here for drinkin' too?

FREDDY

No. I'm not sure why we're here.

LOU

That Chuck sure is greedy.

FREDDY

Is that the cop's name?

Lou nods.

MATILDA

Why do you say he's greedy?

Lou makes sure no officers are nearby.

LOU

He's gonna come in here wantin' money. It's a scam.

MATILDA

How much?

LOU

As much as you'll give up.

FREDDY

What if we don't pay?

LOU
Then you and that bench gonna spend
a lot of time together.

LATER

Chuck checks in on Matilda and Freddy.

CHUCK
(to Freddy)
Looks like you got a warrant on
your record.

FREDDY
What are you talking about? I don't
have a warrant.

CHUCK
You callin' me a liar, boy?

FREDDY
I'm not your boy, Chuck.

Chuck gives Lou a dirty look.

Lou lowers his head.

CHUCK
What else you blabber about?

LOU
Nothin'. I swear.

FREDDY
Why's it matter if we know your
name? It's not like you extort
money from outsiders, right?

Chuck snarls at Lou.

CHUCK
I'll deal with you later.
(to Freddy)
You must think you're a big shot.

FREDDY
So how does this work? We give you
a couple hundred bucks and we go on
our way?

CHUCK
Five thousand dollars.

MATILDA

What!?

CHUCK

Each.

FREDDY

You're insane.

CHUCK

So I've heard.

MATILDA

We don't have ten thousand dollars.

CHUCK

You're in luck, it's buy one, get one free week.

FREDDY

You know damn well no one's ever paid full price. So let's stop wasting each other's time and get to the real number.

CHUCK

You know, I kinda like you. I still wanna punch you in the mouth, but at least I'd apologize after.

(smirks)

Two thousand dollars and you're free to go.

FREDDY

I need to make a call.

Chuck pulls a cordless phone from his back pocket.

CHUCK

Well would you look at that, I just so happen to have a phone on me.

FEW MINUTES LATER

Freddy hands the phone back to Chuck.

FREDDY

You'll get the cash in the morning.

INT. HOLDING CELL - DAY

Chuck bangs on the holding cell bars.

CHUCK
Rise and shine, ladies.

LOU
Keep it down.

CHUCK
Shut up, Lou!

Matilda and Freddy stretch and grimace.

Matilda slept on the bench, Freddy on the floor next to her.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
(imitating Dr. MLK Jr.)
Free at last, free at last, thank
God almighty, you are free at last.

MATILDA
That's really inappropriate.

CHUCK
Get out before I change my mind.
And y'all better head straight back
to where you came from.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

As Freddy and Matilda walk out, they're greeted by Jay.

JAY
What's up, Bonnie and Clyde?

INT. JAY'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

Jay's driving. Freddy in the front, Matilda in the back.

FREDDY
...And then you showed up. That's
the whole story.

JAY
Damn, man. That's messed up.
(to Matilda)
It's nice to finally meet you.
Freddy always spoke highly of you.

FREDDY
Dude.

MATILDA
Yeah? What did he say?

FREDDY
Oh hey my favorite song.

Freddy turns up the volume. It's a commercial.

JAY
Smooth.

MATILDA
Freddy spoke highly of you too.

JAY
Did he?

MATILDA
No, it just felt like the right
thing to say.

Jay laughs.

JAY
(to Freddy)
I like her.

Freddy turns to Matilda.

FREDDY
I guess she's okay.

They smile at each other.

Jeez, kiss her already!

JAY
But seriously, you never mentioned
me in your letters?

FREDDY
She's messing with you. Of course I
mentioned my best friend.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - DAY

Jay drives up behind Freddy's car. Right where he left it.

INT. JAY'S CAR - DAY

Matilda exits the car, leaving Freddy and Jay behind.

MATILDA
I'll be right back.

Freddy spots her in the side-view mirror making a phone call.

JAY
You should ask her out.

FREDDY
She's got a kid.

JAY
So what?

FREDDY
I'm not ready to be a father.

JAY
It's just a date, man. One step at a time. How old's the kid?

FREDDY
Four-year-old boy.

JAY
That's perfect. He's not old enough to hate you for dating his mom.

FREDDY
Yeah, maybe.

JAY
All I know is you gotta get back out there, man. It's been too long since you've been on a date. Besides, you'd make a great dad.

FREDDY
You really think so?

JAY
Only one way to find out.

INT. DR. SILVA'S PRACTICE - DAY

Back to the session from before.

DR. SILVA
Why did you feel worthless?

FREDDY
Because he said my dream was a waste of time.

DR. SILVA

And that's why you never pursued a writing career?

FREDDY

I tried not to believe him. But the more I thought about it, the more I convinced myself that maybe he was right. I let him get in my head.

Freddy avoids eye contact, bothered by the ugly memory.

DR. SILVA

If you hadn't given up, what kind of stories would you write?

FREDDY

Fantasy.

DR. SILVA

Like Lord of the Rings? That sort of thing?

FREDDY

Yeah, kind of.

DR. SILVA

Do you have a favorite book?

FREDDY

Phantasy, but spelled with a P-H.

DR. SILVA

Clever. And why is it your favorite?

FREDDY

It reminds me of my mom. There's a character in it that's a lot like her. She has a son, too.

DR. SILVA

And does he remind you of anyone?

Freddy half-smiles.

FREDDY

You're good, doc.

DR. SILVA

Do you know what I do when I enjoy a book? I email the author to say thanks and to let them know how much I appreciate their work.

FREDDY

What do they say?

DR. SILVA

They're glad to know that something they wrote matters to someone.

(then)

You know it's not too late, right?

FREDDY

For what?

DR. SILVA

You're only thirty. You can still be a writer if you want. I know it's a cliché but life is short. So before it's too late, you need to start taking chances.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - DAY

Matilda returns to the car.

FREDDY

Everything alright?

MATILDA

Yeah, everything's fine. I'm looking forward to getting home.

FREDDY

You wanna go back?

MATILDA

Show's over, Freddy.

FREDDY

But we haven't found Jimmy.

MATILDA

We got arrested and scammed out of two thousand dollars.

FREDDY

I didn't come this far to give up.

MATILDA

It's not safe here.

FREDDY

I don't care. I'm not leaving until I find him.

MATILDA

Fine, stay. But I'm going home.
 (to Jay)
 Can you give me a ride?

JAY

Um...

FREDDY

It's okay. Take her.

JAY

You sure about this?

MATILDA

Now's not the time to be a hero. I
 don't want you to get hurt.

FREDDY

I appreciate the concern, but I
 have to do this. I'll regret it
 forever if I quit. You can stay or
 you can go. It's up to you.

MATILDA

(beat)
 Let's go, Jay.

A dejected Freddy exits Jay's car.

INT. - FREDDY'S CAR - DAY

Jay drives by, taps the horn once.

Freddy watches for a bit as they drive away.

But then something inside of him clicks.

He shifts into drive and races after them.

He catches up and honks his horn.

Both cars pull over.

Freddy darts over to Matilda's window.

MATILDA

What's wrong?

FREDDY

Don't go.

MATILDA

We just went through this.

FREDDY

Please. I can't do it without you.

MATILDA

Freddy, don't do this. Don't guilt me into staying.

FREDDY

I need you. And I want you to need me. I don't know if it's weird for me to do this but I can't let you slip away. I don't wanna make the same mistake twice.

MATILDA

What are you saying?

FREDDY

I'm saying I've never felt as good as I do when I'm near you, and I don't want that to end.

MATILDA

You know I have a son.

FREDDY

And I can't wait to see him again.

Matilda opens her door.

Freddy steps back.

MATILDA

Come here.

Freddy gets closer.

She stares directly into his soul.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

That boy back home is my life. I've been hurt before and I don't want to get hurt again.

FREDDY

That won't happen.

MATILDA

Promise me.

Freddy places his hand on Matilda's cheek.

Complete honesty in his eyes.

FREDDY
I promise.

Matilda smiles.

MATILDA
Good. Now kiss me, dummy.

Freddy pulls her close.

They kiss. Finally!

Jay pokes his head out through the passenger's window.

JAY
Wait, what just happened?

EXT. WILLIS ROAD - DAY

Both cars drive down Willis Road, through the woods.

The winding road comes to an end.

They park and exit their vehicles.

JAY
No one said hiking would be involved.

MATILDA
Not a fan of the outdoors?

JAY
I'm more of a beach guy.

Freddy kicks some dirt in Jay's direction.

FREDDY
Pretend it's sand.

Jay kicks dirt back toward Freddy.

MATILDA
I'm gonna put you both in time-out if you don't stop.

JAY
Sorry, mom.

MATILDA
Let's go, before the sun goes down.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Matilda and Freddy lead the way.

Jay lags behind.

JAY

Is this what exercise feels like?

MATILDA

Do you need a break?

JAY

No, I'm good. Keep going.

Matilda and Freddy continue walking.

Jay sits on a nearby rock.

JAY (CONT'D)

I'm right behind you guys.

EXT. CAMP EVERGREEN - DAY

Matilda and Freddy arrive at the entrance.

FISHING LINE stretches across their path. Low and hidden.

They don't notice it until it's too late: CLINK! CLANK!

Glass bottles tumble and roll toward them.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Don't move.

Freddy and Matilda instinctively raise their arms.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You following me?

FREDDY

We're looking for someone.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Who?

FREDDY

A man named Jimmy Santos.

JIMMY SANTOS (48) creeps out from a nearby cabin.

A rifle pointed at Freddy and Matilda.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

It's you.

JIMMY

I don't appreciate being followed.

FREDDY

We're not here to cause trouble.

JIMMY

What do you want?

FREDDY

We just want to talk to you.

Jay slogs up the path and speaks before he sees Jimmy.

JAY

Hey what was that noise?

Jimmy aims his rifle at Jay.

JAY (CONT'D)

Woh, hey, don't shoot.

MATILDA

He's with us.

JIMMY

Get up here.

Jay creeps over to Freddy and Matilda, arms raised.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Who are you?

FREDDY

My name's Freddy, this is Matilda and that's Jay. We're reporters.

JAY

Except me. I'm an accountant. So you can count on me to cooperate.

MATILDA

Really?

JAY

Just trying to liven up the mood.

MATILDA

Maybe wait until we don't have a rifle pointed at us.

JAY
Good call.

JIMMY
That's enough. What do you want?

FREDDY
We want to talk to you about
Phantasy.

Jimmy lowers his rifle.

JIMMY
You know about Phantasy?

FREDDY
It's my favorite book.

JIMMY
You're not just saying that?

JAY
He's telling the truth.

JIMMY
Put your arms down.

They do as they're told.

JAY
Oh thank God.

MATILDA
We won't take up much of your time.

JIMMY
You got ten minutes. Follow me.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

They all sit on the dirt, overlooking the tranquil lake.

JIMMY
Alright, ask your questions.

FREDDY
Why did you only publish one book?

JIMMY
I said all I needed to say.

FREDDY

So the rumors about a sequel aren't true?

JIMMY

Is this on or off the record?

FREDDY

It's all on the record.

JIMMY

Then, no. There is no sequel.

FREDDY

If a sequel did exist, what would stop you from publishing it?

JIMMY

I don't think people care.

FREDDY

Why do you say that?

JIMMY

It's been years since I've gotten fan mail. My agent pretty much forgot all about me. No one cares.

FREDDY

That's not true. We got arrested trying to find you.

JIMMY

Well that's just dumb.

(then)

Any more questions?

FREDDY

What's the sequel about?

JIMMY

I told you there's no sequel.

FREDDY

Off the record.

JIMMY

It's about an old man searching for the love of his life.

FREDDY

Does he find her?

JIMMY

No. But he tried really hard.

A beat. Matilda picks up on the sadness in his words.

MATILDA

She's real, isn't she?

Jimmy sighs, nods his head.

JIMMY

We dated in high school. When I came home from summer with my grandparents, I went to her house and it was empty. I never heard from her again.

(then, to Freddy)

You know, you kinda look like her.

FREDDY

What was her name?

JIMMY

Elizabeth.

This catches Freddy off guard.

He reaches for Matilda's bag, takes out his copy of *PHANTASY*.

He flips it open to the dedication page.

He shows the page to Jimmy. It reads: **For E.G. Always.**

FREDDY

Did you dedicate the book to her?

JIMMY

Yeah, that's her. E.G.

Freddy and Jay's eyes meet.

They're thinking the same thing. E for Elizabeth and G for...

FREDDY

What does the G stand for?

JIMMY

Gomez.

Freddy's speechless.

JAY

No way.

JIMMY
What? What's going on?

FREDDY
That's my mother's name.

Complete silence.

MATILDA
Maybe it's a coincidence.

FREDDY
When was the last time you saw her?

JIMMY
4th of July. 1984. I'll never
forget it.

JAY
(to Freddy)
Dude.

FREDDY
And on that day, were you two, um,
you know... (intimate)

JIMMY
Why are you asking me that?

FREDDY
Because I was born April 17, 1985.

JIMMY
(*finally* getting it)
Wait, you don't think--

FREDDY
I think you're my father.

INT. DR. SILVA'S PRACTICE - DAY

The final part of the session.

DR. SILVA
I want you to close your eyes.

FREDDY
What for?

DR. SILVA
Trust me. This will help. Now keep
them closed and take a few deep
breaths. In and out. Slowly.

Freddy closes his eyes, inhales and exhales.

DR. SILVA (CONT'D)

Good.

FREDDY

Can I open my eyes?

DR. SILVA

Not yet. I want you to clear your mind. Forget about any recent troubles in your life. They don't matter right now.

Freddy, eyes closed, seems at peace in the moment.

DR. SILVA (CONT'D)

Now I want you to take me back to when you were ten years old.

Freddy opens his eyes.

FREDDY

I don't want to.

DR. SILVA

You need to face your problems head on in order to conquer them.

FREDDY

I already told you what happened.

DR. SILVA

But now I want ten-year-old Freddy to tell me. Remember, you're in a safe place. Everything you say stays between us.

FREDDY

I'll try.

DR. SILVA

That's all I ask for.

Freddy closes his eyes again.

DR. SILVA (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's begin. Tell me what happened the night of the accident.

FREDDY

It wasn't an accident.

The pain in Freddy's face is evident even with closed eyes.

DR. SILVA
Try to relax.

FREDDY
I can't do this.

Freddy opens his eyes, breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Still gathered by the lake, piecing everything together.

FREDDY
Why didn't she tell me it was you?

JIMMY
She didn't know.

FREDDY
That's impossible.

JIMMY
It's not. My real name is Miguel
Santiago.

FREDDY
Well if she didn't know, then why
did she give me your book?

JIMMY
It was a best-seller. Lots of
people bought it.

FREDDY
Okay then, but that still doesn't
explain why you left her.

JIMMY
I told you, I came back that summer
and she was gone. I would've
married her if I had the chance.

FREDDY
You should've kept looking for her.

JIMMY
I tried. But there's only so much
heartbreak a man can take.

FREDDY
And so you just gave up?

JIMMY
If that's what you want to call it.

FREDDY
What happens now?

A beat.

JIMMY
Your ten minutes are up.

Sudden silence.

Anger, confusion and sadness slap Freddy across the face.

He storms off, followed by Jay and Matilda.

Jimmy stays seated, staring off into the distance.

JAY
Unbelievable. He finds out you're
his son and that's how he reacts?

MATILDA
Maybe he just needs some time.

SOUND: Jimmy loading his rifle.

They turn to see Jimmy pointing the rifle at his face.

Freddy runs back to Jimmy.

FREDDY
Hey! Stop! What are you doing?

Jimmy aims the rifle at Freddy.

JIMMY
Stay back.

FREDDY
Put that thing down.

JIMMY
Go home, Freddy. Let me do this.
It's time.

Freddy takes a step toward Jimmy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Get back!

FREDDY

What do you mean it's time? Is that why you came up here?

JIMMY

It's for the best.

FREDDY

You're a selfish man, you know that? My whole life I wondered if I'd get to meet my birth father, and this is how you treat me?

JIMMY

How do I know you're telling the truth? Maybe you're some kind of con artist.

FREDDY

Or maybe I'm your son, and maybe you're my dad, and maybe you're too goddamn stubborn to realize that this is a good thing.

Freddy takes another step forward.

JIMMY

I'm warning you!

FREDDY

I'm not leaving without that rifle.

Freddy lunges for the rifle. A tug of war ensues. Then...

BANG!

Jimmy drops the rifle.

Matilda comes to Freddy's aid as he falls to the ground.

Jay tackles Jimmy and punches him in the face.

MATILDA

Stop!

Jay refrains himself, but only because Freddy needs help.

JIMMY

It was an accident. I swear!

Jay takes off his shirt and applies pressure to Freddy's wound on the lower left side of his torso.

JAY
Hang in there, Freddy.

Freddy's losing consciousness.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

They say your life flashes before your eyes when you die...

An infinite white room.

At the center is Freddy, in a recliner, watching an old tube TV on which flashbacks appear, as if they're TV programs.

Freddy changes the channel with the remote.

TV STATIC fills the frame, transitioning to:

INT. FREDDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - BACKYARD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Freddy (8) plays catch with his mom in the backyard.

MOTHER
Here goes a high one.

She tosses a tennis ball high into the air. Freddy locks on.

FREDDY
I got it.

The sun blinds him, causing him to miss the ball.

MOTHER
Nice try, sweetie.

FREDDY
The sun was in my face.

MOTHER
I know. I'll have a talk with it.

FREDDY
You're silly, mom.

She takes a seat at the patio table.

MOTHER
Come here, Freddy. I need to tell you something.

Freddy sits on her lap.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Remember the man that was here last week to fix the sink?

FREDDY

Uh huh.

MOTHER

He seemed nice, right?

FREDDY

He gave me a sticker.

MOTHER

That's right. We'll guess what? He wants to take me to dinner.

FREDDY

Can we get pizza?

MOTHER

No, sweetie. It's a date. Do you know what that is?

Freddy shakes his head.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

When a person likes another person, they go somewhere, usually dinner, and they get to know each other.

FREDDY

Is he going to be my dad?

She chuckles.

MOTHER

I don't know about that. I have to go on the date first.

(then)

Do you want a dad?

He shrugs his shoulders. Translation: yes.

STATIC CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Freddy (10) bullets through the middle of the street on his red bicycle, pedaling with full force.

On his tail are THREE OLDER BOYS.

BOY 1
You're gonna get it, nerd.

FREDDY
Leave me alone.

BOY 2
You're only making it worse.

Freddy cuts through a convenience store PARKING LOT where YOUNG JAY is enjoying an ice cream sandwich.

FREDDY
Help me, please.

JAY
Hey, leave him alone.

BOY 3
Shut up, stupid.

Jay tosses his ice cream sandwich and hops on his bicycle. He catches up to Boy 3 with ease.

JAY
You wanna say that again?

BOY 3
Get lost, dweeb.

Jay gets closer and with one swift kick sends Boy 3 flying. Boy 1 and Boy 2 don't notice and continue after Freddy. Freddy's getting tired.

The two boys pull up beside him.

BOY 1
Push him off.

FREDDY
No, don't. I'll stop.

Freddy slams on the brakes.

The two boys dismount and approach with balled fists.

JAY (O.S.)
Leave him alone.

BOY 2
This ain't your business.

JAY
It is now.

BOY 1
You wanna get a beating, too?

Boy 1 stomps toward Jay who doesn't give him a chance to get closer before hurling his bicycle into the boy's chest.

FREDDY
Holy crap.

JAY
(to Boy 2)
You want some of this?

BOY 2
No, no, I'm sorry.
(pointing to Boy 1)
He made me do it.

Boy 1 tries to hold back tears.

BOY 2 (CONT'D)
Are you crying?

BOY 1
Shut up.

Boy 1 limps over to his bicycle.

BOY 1 (CONT'D)
You're gonna pay for this.

Boy 1 and Boy 2 scurry away.

JAY
You okay?

FREDDY
Yeah. Thanks for helping.

JAY
No problem. What's your name?

FREDDY
Freddy. What's yours?

JAY
Jay.
(then)
You owe me an ice cream sandwich.

STATIC CUT TO:

INT. FREDDY'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Freddy (10) dumps the contents of his backpack onto his bed, searching for something, until he finds it: A marker.

He sits on his bed and lifts his shirt, revealing a fist-sized bruise.

As soon as he touches the bruise, it begins to RAIN inside his room.

Freddy doesn't mind, as if it's happened before.

He takes the marker and traces the bruise -- almost a circle.

He then draws two eyes, a smile, and lines around the circle, transforming it into a happy sun.

The room brightens, defeating the rain cloud.

Freddy smiles.

STATIC CUT TO:

INT. FREDDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Freddy (9) walks in on his mother running her bruised forearm under cold water.

FREDDY

What happened?

MOTHER

It's fine. I burned myself cooking.

Freddy looks at the unused stove, then back at his mother who's holding back tears.

FREDDY

He used to be nice.

MOTHER

It's okay. It was my fault.

FREDDY

I don't like him.

MOTHER

You have to try.

Freddy hones in on his mother's wedding ring.

FREDDY
You shoulda said no.

STATIC CUT TO:

INT. CALL CENTER - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Is this an office or an episode of *Hoarders*?

ADAM LEWIS (50s) motions for Freddy to take a seat.

ADAM
(on phone)
No, you listen to me. I don't care
if your TV is making a funny noise.
I'm running a business over here,
so unless you're dead, don't call
me at work. Now if you'll excuse
me, mother, I've got a job to do.

Adam slams the phone down.

ADAM (CONT'D)
What is it, Gomez?

FREDDY
I was hoping--

ADAM
Hope is for chumps. Now cut the
crap and tell me what you want.

FREDDY
Vacation time.

ADAM
Ask me where I went on vacation
last year. And the twelve years
before that.

FREDDY
Where did you--

ADAM
Nowhere! Thirteen years since I
last took a vacation. And you know
why? Because winners never stop.
Now tell me something, Gomez. Are
you a winner?

FREDDY
I believe my work speaks for
itself, sir.

ADAM

It does. And right now it's saying
you're not committed to your job.

FREDDY

I've earned a vacation.

ADAM

You get what I give you, kid. The
food on your table, the clothes on
your back, the cheap gifts you buy
your mother for Christmas. That's
all thanks to me.

FREDDY

Don't bring my mother into this.

ADAM

Listen, Gomez, the only trip you're
going on is back to your cubicle.
Now get the hell out of my office.

Freddy stands, trembling from what he's about to say.

STATIC CUT TO:

EXT./INT. FREDDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY (FLASHBACK)

As Freddy (10) enters, he hears screaming coming from inside.

He hurries to his mother and STEPFATHER's bedroom and bangs
on the locked door.

FREDDY

Leave her alone!

STEPFATHER (O.S.)

Go to your room!

FREDDY

I'm calling the police!

STEPFATHER (O.S.)

Don't you dare threaten me.

Freddy runs to the kitchen and dials the corded phone.

DISPATCHER

9-1-1, what's your emergency?

FREDDY

Help me, please.

DISPATCHER
What is your emergency?

FREDDY
He's doing it again.

DISPATCHER
Are your parents home?

FREDDY
Hurry up!

DISPATCHER
Maybe it's your fault, Freddy.

FREDDY
How do you know my name?

DISPATCHER
It's all your fault.

FREDDY
No, it's not. Stop saying that.

DISPATCHER
You're supposed to protect her.

FREDDY
I'm trying.

DISPATCHER
It's no use. The Giant always wins.

FREDDY
Not if I kill him first.

DISPATCHER
You can't kill me.

FREDDY
What?

The dispatcher's voice now sounds like Freddy's stepfather.

DISPATCHER
YOU. CAN'T. KILL. ME.

Behind him he hears the bedroom door creak open.

Freddy drops the phone, his skin pale from absolute fear.

STATIC CUT TO:

INT. FREDDY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The entire room is in black and white.

Adult Freddy sits on the edge of his bed, breathing in and out, attempting to calm himself down.

A blood pressure monitor next to him reads 170 over 95.

As his B.P. drops, the color in the room begins to reappear.

STATIC CUT TO:

INT. FREDDY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Freddy enters, tosses his keys and phone on the coffee table.

Jay's watching TV.

FREDDY

I think I made a huge mistake.

JAY

Oh boy.

FREDDY

I quit my job.

JAY

Why the hell would you do that?

FREDDY

My boss told me I couldn't get time off and I guess I got caught up in the moment.

JAY

Man, that's not good. You can't go quitting a job in this economy.

FREDDY

It wasn't much of a job.

JAY

I know it wasn't your dream job but it paid the bills.

FREDDY

I'll figure something out. Who knows, maybe this a good thing.

STATIC CUT TO:

INT. FREDDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Freddy (10) enters through the open front door.

FREDDY
Mom, you left the door open.

Freddy hears moans coming from the basement.

He opens the door and finds his mother at the bottom of the stairs, crying out for help.

Freddy darts downstairs.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Mom, what happened?!

She's losing consciousness.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Wake up! Don't leave me!

Freddy clings to her body.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS of Freddy reacting to the flashbacks, ending with him dozing off in his chair.

MATILDA (PRE-LAP)
Don't fall asleep Freddy.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Back to the accidental shooting.

MATILDA
Come on, keep your eyes open.
Everything's going to be okay.

JIMMY
You have believe me, it was an
accident.

JAY
Shut up! Just shut up.

MATILDA
We have to get him to a hospital.

Jay tosses his car keys to Jimmy.

JAY
Go get my car. Now!

Jimmy hurries away.

JAY (CONT'D)
He's losing a lot of blood.

MATILDA
Do you think he did it on purpose?

JAY
I don't know, but grab that rifle.

Matilda goes for the rifle.

MATILDA
What now?

JAY
Throw it in the lake.

MATILDA
Isn't that tampering with evidence?

JAY
The cops in this town are not on
our side. You said it yourselves.

Matilda heaves the rifle into the lake.

JAY (CONT'D)
What's taking him so long?

Jimmy returns with Jay's car.

Jimmy and Jay lift Freddy into the backseat.

Matilda slides into the driver's seat.

Jay takes Freddy's keys from his pocket, hands them to Jimmy.

JAY (CONT'D)
Take his car. We'll follow you.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - TRAVELING

Both cars speed down the highway.

65 miles per hour... 75... 85... a POLICE SIREN.

Matilda checks her rear-view mirror. It's Officer Chuck.

MATILDA

No, no, not now!

Jimmy keeps driving, perhaps thinking the cops are after him.

Matilda slams the steering wheel and pulls over.

Before Chuck gets out of his car, Matilda pops open her door and approaches him.

Chuck bolts from his seat.

CHUCK

Stay back!

He gets a closer look at her.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

You again? Didn't I tell you to be on your way?

MATILDA

I can't believe I'm going to say this but we need your help.

CHUCK

Why the hell would I ever help you?

JAY (O.S.)

Hurry up!

MATILDA

Because as much as you hate me, you're still an officer, and I know deep down inside that means something to you.

CHUCK

Save your speech. I'll help you if it means you'll finally get the hell out of my town.

They hurry over to Freddy.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ! What happened?

JAY

It was an accident.

MATILDA

We need to get him to a hospital.

CHUCK

God damn it. Why'd you have to bring your problems into my town?

MATILDA

Listen to me. I know you're up to no good, but I don't care. All I want is to get to a hospital and forget that you and this town ever existed. Okay?

CHUCK

Fine. Follow me.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - TRAVELING

Sirens and lights. Chuck leads the way for Matilda.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

SUPER: Two weeks later

Jay and Matilda at Freddy's bedside

His body swarmed by a jungle of cables hooked up to machines.

The DOCTOR enters, carrying a medical chart.

JAY

Any good news, doctor?

DOCTOR

Unfortunately the test results show no sign of improvement, but on a somewhat positive note, his condition hasn't regressed.

MATILDA

There's nothing else you can do?

DOCTOR

At this point, the only thing we can do is wait.

JAY

That's it? You're giving up on him?

DOCTOR

We've done all we can on our side. The rest is up to him. If anything changes, I'll let you know.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Jay's alone at Freddy's bedside.

JAY

I don't know if you can hear me,
man, but you gotta wake up. I'm not
gonna say goodbye.

EXT. GRASS FIELD - NIGHT (**FREDDY'S DREAM**)

Jay appears across from Freddy in the middle of a field.

But in reality, Jay's still at the hospital. This is a dream.

JAY

Whatever it takes, I'm here for
you. Lead the way, Freddy.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Matilda at Freddy's bedside.

MATILDA

I think you should know that I've
never had any luck with
relationships. All the men in my
life end up hurting me.

(beat)

I was hoping things would be
different with you.

She grabs Freddy's hand.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Squeeze my hand if you can hear me.
Show me you're still fighting.

EXT. GRASS FIELD - NIGHT (FREDDY'S DREAM)

Matilda catches up to Jay and Freddy.

But just like Jay, she's actually at the hospital.

MATILDA

Whatever you do, don't give up.
We're getting you out of here.

FREDDY

I have to find my mom first.

JAY
Where is she?

FREDDY
The Giant took her.

MATILDA
Then let's go save her.

FREDDY
It won't be easy.

Freddy points to a mountain.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
She's all the way up there. And to
get there, we have to go through
the forest and across the river.

JAY
That doesn't sound too hard.

FREDDY
This place is haunted and filled
with bloodthirsty creatures.

JAY
Okay that sounds hard.

FREDDY
We'll need weapons.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Medieval meets fairy tale with a dash of Lord of the Rings.

JAY
Woh, where are we?

FREDDY
Welcome to **Phantasy**.

MATILDA
Do you dream of this place often?

FREDDY
Once in a while. Come on, the
shop's over here.

INT. SHOP - NIGHT

Freddy, Jay and Matilda enter a cozy shop.

MARTHA, a woman wrinkled by time, greets them with a smile.

MARTHA

Freddy, my dear. How lovely to see you again. What can I do for you?

FREDDY

We need weapons.

MARTHA

May I ask what for?

FREDDY

The Giant kidnapped my mother.

MARTHA

And what do you intend to do?

FREDDY

What I should have done years ago.

MARTHA

I knew this day would come.

Martha scurries into the shop's storage area and returns with a beautiful black and silver sword.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

This is yours. Use it wisely.

FREDDY

It's perfect.

MARTHA

And for your friends...

Martha grabs a bow with arrows and hands them to Matilda.

She then grabs a battle axe for Jay.

JAY

Sweet.

MATILDA

I don't know how to use this.

Martha grabs Matilda's hands, whispers an inaudible spell.

MARTHA

You do now.

Matilda secures the quiver on her back.

Martha hugs Freddy, whispers in his ear:

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Kill the Giant.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The same forest from page one. A full moon lights the way.

They creep along, step by step, eyes peeled.

Freddy and Matilda step over a large tree branch.

Jay tries to do the same but his foot slips, causing him to fall and hit his knee.

JAY
Ah!

FREDDY
Keep your voice down.

JAY
Dude, I hit my knee.

MATILDA
Are you okay?

Before he can answer, a nearby tree rustles.

JAY
What was that?

Freddy brings his finger to his lips, "Be quiet."

They stand still, eyes darting around, expecting an ambush.

Another tree rustles, and another.

FREDDY
RUN!

The group scatters in different directions.

Freddy hides behind a group of large trees.

Matilda finds a pile of leaves just large enough to hide in.

Jay limps away as fast as he can.

JAY (O.S.)
Get away from me! Help!

Freddy and Matilda hear Jay's plea for help and without hesitating emerge from their hiding spots.

Freddy and Matilda cross paths.

FREDDY

This way!

They spot Jay on the ground as a DEMONIO is about to grab him. Half human, half creature, its body engulfed in flames.

Freddy waves his arms, trying to get the Demonio's attention.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Hey! Over here!

His plan works.

The Demonio runs toward Freddy and Matilda.

Matilda draws an arrow, aims and fires.

The arrow cuts through the air, hits its target in the head.

The Demonio explodes into a million ashy pieces.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Woh.

JAY

Nice shot!

Freddy and Matilda help Jay to his feet.

FREDDY

Can you walk?

JAY

It hurts a bit, but I'll be fine.

MATILDA

Let's make sure we stick together.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy arrives.

Jay stands, while Matilda ignores him.

JAY

What do you want?

JIMMY

I just want to know how he's doing.
I'll leave if you want me to.

JAY
It's not looking good.

Jimmy looks around the room.

JIMMY
Is it just you and Matilda?

JAY
Who else would be here?

JIMMY
His mom isn't coming?

JAY
His mom?

JIMMY
You didn't tell her yet?

JAY
Oh, that's right, you don't know.

JIMMY
Know what?

JAY
About what her ex-husband did.

JIMMY
What did he do? Where's Elizabeth?
(off Jay's look)
Oh, God, no. Don't tell me...

EXT. FOREST - LATER

The group's trek through the forest continues.

Out of nowhere, a large, winged creature swoops past them.

JAY
Great, now what? Evil bats?

The body of a pit bull, large bat-like wings, and the eyes of a tarantula all covered in green slime is how you'd describe a SLASHER if you ever saw one.

Out of nowhere, the group is surrounded by FIVE of them.

FREDDY
Stick together!

They assemble into a defensive triangle, backs to each other.

SLASHER 1 dives straight at Jay.

He swings his battle axe and sends Slasher 1 crashing against a tree.

Before it can get up, Matilda shoots an arrow into its head.

Slasher 1 explodes, splattering slime everywhere.

SLASHER 2 darts head first toward Freddy, teeth ready to devour any and all body parts.

MATILDA

Behind you!

Freddy turns just in time and swings his sword in a circular motion, cutting off one of its wings.

It lands with a thud, recovers and runs toward Freddy.

JAY

Allow me.

Jay flings his battle axe at Slasher 2.

It slices the creature like a knife through butter.

Some of the death slime hits Jay's face.

JAY (CONT'D)

Oh God, it's in my mouth!

Jay dry heaves and spits.

JAY (CONT'D)

It smells!

FREDDY

Forget about it. There's three more of these things.

SLASHER 3 and SLASHER 4 hover above them.

JAY

I only see two.

Freddy searches for the fifth Slasher and spots it on the ground, running at full speed toward Matilda.

SLASHER 5 leaps forward, jaw wide open.

FREDDY

Duck!

Matilda dives to the ground.

Freddy, holding his sword like a jousting lance, dashes toward Slasher 5.

Before Slasher 5 has time to land, Freddy stabs it through its open mouth. Dead.

JAY

Heads up!

Slashers 3 and 4 go after Matilda while she's down.

She rolls out of the way, readies an arrow and fires.

She misses.

The team regroups, now face to face with two creatures.

Slasher 3 lands and paces while Slasher 4 remains airborne.

Jay whistles at Slasher 3, as if it were a puppy.

JAY (CONT'D)

Come here, boy. Daddy's got a little treat for you.

Jay grips his battle axe.

Slasher 3 snarls and rushes toward Jay.

JAY (CONT'D)

That's it. Come to papa.

Slasher 3 lunges at Jay.

He swings his battle axe like a baseball bat, smashing the creature high into the air with the flat side of the blade.

As it soars backward, struggling to correct itself, two arrows pin it to a tree.

JAY (CONT'D)

Matilda with the assist.

Slasher 4 SQUEALS, sending the team to the ground as they cover their ears in agony.

Slasher 4 lands atop Matilda.

She holds on for dear life, pushing the creature away with her bow.

MATILDA

Help!

Freddy considers using his sword but decides against it because Slasher 4 is too close to Matilda.

Instead, he tackles it so hard I'm pretty sure it's on ESPN right now.

JAY

Damn!

Jay helps Matilda up as Freddy confronts Slasher 4.

FREDDY

You picked the wrong day.

Slasher 4 speeds toward Freddy.

Matilda readies an arrow.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

He's mine.

Both warriors approach each other at full speed.

As Freddy nears Slasher 4, he slides beneath it, causing the creature to stop mid-flight.

Slasher 4 turns to face Freddy but before it can react, Freddy's sword chops the creature straight down the middle.

Freddy covers himself, expecting a slime explosion.

But this time the creature's body simply falls to the ground.

JAY

Man, that's one ugly creature.

Freddy and Matilda walk back to Slasher 3, which is still pinned to the tree with Matilda's arrows.

Jay stays behind.

JAY (CONT'D)

Dude, look at these teeth. There must be at least a hundred.

Jay leans in for a closer look.

BOOM! Slime everywhere.

JAY (CONT'D)

Oh, come on!

Freddy and Matilda laugh. A nice respite from all the chaos.
Jay approaches them, covered in slime.

MATILDA
What do we do with this one?

FREDDY
Set it free.

JAY
So it can eat us?

FREDDY
It won't.
(to Slasher 3)
You're not going to harm us, right?

Slasher 3 somehow understands and shakes its head "no."

JAY
Woh.

FREDDY
If you attack us, you know what's
going to happen.

Slasher 3 nods "yes."

Freddy pulls the arrows out.

Slasher 3 lands with a thud.

Then, before their very eyes, it transforms into a WOMAN.

JAY
Okay, sure. That makes sense. You
handle this one, Freddy.

Jay sits on a nearby rock.

MATILDA
How did you know?

FREDDY
Inside every monster there's
goodness trying to get out.

WOMAN
How may I repay your mercy?

FREDDY
Help us get to Nightmare Peak.

WOMAN

But the Giant lives there.

FREDDY

We know.

WOMAN

Very well. If that's what you want.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

The river's the only thing in their way before reaching Nightmare Peak atop the towering mountain in the distance.

The woman transforms once more, this time into a GRIFFIN.

JAY

Nope. Not even gonna say anything.

GRIFFIN

Hop on and hold on tight.

The team jumps aboard.

They soar through the moonlit sky above the mile-wide river.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

The Griffin drops them off atop an eerie, black mountain.

JAY

Now what?

FREDDY

She should be here.

They look around for any sign of Freddy's mother.

Matilda points to a large GLASS CUBE.

Imagine the New York City Apple Store, but this cube's only seven feet tall or so.

MATILDA

What's that over there?

JAY

I think there's someone inside.

Freddy sprints for the cube.

Matilda and Jay trail behind.

As Freddy nears the cube, he recognizes his sleeping mother.

FREDDY

Mom!

Freddy's fists hammer the cube, but his mom doesn't budge.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Mom, wake up!

Freddy strikes the cube with his sword. Not even a scratch.

JAY

Let me try.

Jay swings his battle axe. Nothing.

MATILDA

Why won't she wake up?

All three bang on the cube. But, alas, she doesn't wake up.

JAY

Maybe there's a door or something.

They inspect all four sides. Solid all around.

FREDDY

Gimme a boost.

Jay helps Freddy climb onto the top of the cube.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

There's no way in.

Freddy drops to his knees, defeated.

Matilda and Jay continue searching for a way inside.

Freddy's mom is deep in slumber, like Sleeping Beauty.

The person that matters most to him needs help and there's nothing he can do to help her.

He pummels the cube with his fists.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!

A single tear rolls down his cheek--

FREDDY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, mom.

--and continues downward, dropping from his face to the top of the glass cube where it pauses for a second before melting a hole in the glass and landing on Freddy's mom's forehead.

Her eyes burst open.

The first thing she sees is Freddy.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
She's awake!

Freddy lifts his sword, aims it at the hole left by his tear.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Mom, stand back.

She hurries to a safe corner.

Matilda and Jay step aside.

MOTHER
Be careful, sweetie.

With a single hit, the cube shatters into glass dust that disappears as Freddy lands with both feet on the ground.

His mother hugs him the way only a mother can.

FREDDY
I thought I lost you.

MOTHER
You'll never lose me, Freddy.

FREDDY
Let's go home.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - LATER

The team, now joined by Freddy's mother, begins their journey down the mountain.

MOTHER
Aren't you going to introduce me?

FREDDY
Oh, right, sorry. Mom, this is Matilda. And you already know Jay.

MOTHER
Pen pal Matilda?

MATILDA

That's me.

MOTHER

Are you his girlfriend now?

FREDDY

Ma!

MOTHER

What? It's just a question.

Matilda smiles.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You don't have to say anything. But that smile gives you away.

Jay spots the Griffin off in the distance.

JAY

Hey look, she came back.

The Griffin lands in a hurry.

GRIFFIN

He's coming! Get on!

They climb aboard.

The Griffin rockets down the mountain.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

As they fly over the river, THE GIANT EMERGES FROM THE WATER.

He's huge! As tall as the Statue of Liberty and as weathered as the Roman Coliseum.

The Giant tries to catch the Griffin but he's too slow.

Instead, he SMASHES the river with his hands, causing a GIANT WAVE to materialize.

The Griffin's flight path is thrown off and is forced to make an emergency landing.

The team dismounts and runs for cover.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The team scatters into the forest.

Before the Griffin has time to take off, the Giant grabs it and hurls it across the river.

The Giant gives chase, knocking over trees with each step.

It spots Jay on his right and before he can find shelter, the Giant snatches him and SWALLOWS HIM WHOLE.

FREDDY

NO!

Freddy runs straight for the Giant, sword ready to strike.

He stabs the Giant's foot.

A laughable attempt. In fact, the Giant doesn't even notice.

However, he does notice the arrows that whiz past his eyes.

Mother hides near Matilda.

MOTHER

What are you doing? He's going to get you.

MATILDA

I know. This is where you run. Go!

Mother disappears among the trees.

Matilda fires another arrow at the Giant.

Freddy tries to warn Matilda from afar.

FREDDY

Run, Matilda!

Matilda fires the rest of her arrows at the Giant.

She knows they can't hurt him, but keeps firing, hoping she can distract him long enough for Freddy and Mother to escape.

The Giant grabs Matilda and tosses her hundreds of feet in the air over the river.

Her body plummets, SLAMS the water and vanishes beneath.

Frozen from shock and agony for a few seconds, Freddy snaps out of it and runs for his life.

GIANT (O.S.)

YOU. CAN'T. KILL. ME!

Freddy catches up to his mother.

MOTHER

We can't run forever.

FREDDY

How do I stop him?

MOTHER

Use your imagination. Dream!

FREDDY

Isn't this a dream?

MOTHER

Yes! And you're in control, Freddy.
He can't hurt you in your dreams.

They stop running.

FREDDY

It's time to end this nightmare.

Freddy closes his eyes and concentrates.

In an instant, he grows to half the size of the Giant, similar to the size difference between 10-year-old Freddy and a grown man.

Freddy swings his sword but misses and stumbles forward.

The Giant punches Freddy's back, bringing him to his knees.

Freddy stays down, waiting for the Giant to approach.

SLASH! Freddy cuts off the Giant's right arm.

The Giant cries out in pain, giving Freddy just enough time to SLICE through the Giant's left leg, causing him to fall.

Freddy hovers over him and STOMPS the Giant's remaining arm.

Freddy's sword glows red. He aims it over the Giant's heart.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

You can't hurt us anymore.

The blade becomes engulfed in fire and with one swift motion, Freddy STABS the Giant.

Its body goes up in flames.

The Giant [**FREDDY'S STEPFATHER**] has been defeated.

Freddy shrinks back down to human size.

Tired and bruised, he struggles to stay upright.
 Freddy's mother holds him in her arms.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
 I miss your voice.

She smiles and puts her hand over Freddy's heart.

MOTHER
 It's time to wake up.

DOCTOR (PRE-LAP)
 Clear!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The Doctor jolts Freddy with a defibrillator.

HE WAKES UP!

The doctor works his magic. All of it's a blur to Freddy.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY - DAY

Vibrant in color, serving to contrast the depressing reality behind each door.

SUPER: Six Months Later

Freddy, Matilda and Arthur head to a room at the end of a hallway where Jimmy paces, waiting.

FREDDY
 Are you ready?

JIMMY
 What if she doesn't recognize me?

FREDDY
 You're not gonna find out standing out here. Remember, she hasn't spoken in years, so don't freak out or anything.

JIMMY
 Are you coming in?

FREDDY
 We'll give you two some time.

JIMMY

Thank you, Freddy. For everything.

Jimmy enters the room, leaving the door ajar.

He tries not to cry as he sees Elizabeth hooked up to machines, permanent reminders of her ex-husband's assault.

He grabs her hand.

His backlog of tears floods his face.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

It's clear her mental capacity is not one hundred percent but the more she looks at him, the more focused her stare becomes, as if she's remembering something.

Then...

ELIZABETH

Miguel.

Reminder: Jimmy Santos' birth name is Miguel Santiago.

JIMMY

Yes! Yes, it's me!

A huge smile stretches across Jimmy's face.

In the hallway, Matilda turns to Freddy.

MATILDA

She spoke!

Freddy smiles and nods.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

You should go in there.

FREDDY

Not yet. Let him enjoy the moment.

Freddy grabs Arthur's hand.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

I believe I owe you some ice cream.

ARTHUR

With sprinkles?

FREDDY

With sprinkles.

Matilda smiles, grabs Arthur's other hand.

As they head down the hallway, Freddy stops, reaches over and kisses Matilda.

Arthur, in the middle, looks up at them.

ARTHUR

Cooties!

They laugh and continue on their way, hand in hand...

THE END.