

MISSING LINK

FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES SKYLINE - EVENING

Skyscrapers puncture a red sun as it descends below the horizon, unleashing a crimson glow over the city.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - SAME

DANNY stands outside a coffee store, fidgets with his coat zipper, scans the ground with a face of concern -- eyes are moving targets. He's about nine, with pale, soft features.

AN ARM

reaches around and pats Danny's shoulder. He stops fidgeting, makes a half-hearted attempt to kick a rock on the ground -- misses completely.

The arm around Danny belongs to PETER (30s), blond hair and blue eyes. He gives Danny a reassuring nudge.

THERESA (30s), with a peaches-and-cream complexion, stands facing Peter and Danny -- hazel eyes full of sadness -- SIGHS.

THERESA

I was expecting different news.

She pulls a scarf from her pocket, prepares to leave.

THERESA

You're just not ready to take
that off, are you?

Peter glances down at his wedding band, remains silent.

THERESA

Is it cold feet ... or is this
the cold shoulder?

Peter stretches his neck out of a tightly-buttoned collar, clears his throat, looks straight into Theresa's pleading eyes.

PETER

I need a friend more than a
wife right now.

Theresa starts to cry, dries her eyes with the scarf. She stands still for a moment -- alone and awkward -- like a familiar stranger.

THERESA
Who's going to take care of
you and Danny?

Peter looks over at Danny, shakes him gently.

Danny looks up with a helpless expression -- lips pinched tightly together in a dispirited frown.

PETER
We'll manage.

Theresa wraps the scarf tightly over her head, as if to package her emotions, acquiesces with a slight nod.

THERESA
I'll still keep an eye on you
... in case you need me ... or
change your mind.

She tries to smile before the tears come again, puts on dark sunglasses, rubs Danny's hair -- her last goodbye.

She quickly walks away.

Peter and Danny watch motionless until Theresa disappears into her car.

Peter turns to Danny, holds out a fist.

Danny responds -- taps his fist twice against Peter's fist.

DANNY
Knock. Knock.

PETER
Are you okay, Sport?

Danny watches as Theresa drives away, shrugs.

DANNY
My friend Toby at school told
me when he got a new mom, she
snored all the time and kept
waking him up at night.

Peter clasps his hand on Danny's neck, gives a gentle shake.

PETER
That's the difference between
a girlfriend and a wife.

Peter notices a man staring at him and Danny through binoculars from a parked car.

Peter quickly zips up Danny's coat, puts his cap on, turns to look at the man again -- he's gone.

INT. BEDROOM IN LOS ANGELES HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny kneels alongside a bed -- hands clasped, eyes shut tightly -- prays to himself. He squeezes out a tear as Peter enters the room.

PETER

What's wrong, Sport?

DANNY

I'm not getting up until God answers me.

PETER

Maybe if you lay down in bed quietly, you'll have a better chance of hearing Him.

Danny looks above the headboard -- facial features the spitting image of Peter, but with dark-brown hair and dark-brown eyes -- scopes out a map of the world.

ON THE MAP

countries highlighted in different colors stretch across the wall, except for China, which is covered by a large soccer ball sticker.

DANNY

Why is there a soccer ball sticker there?

PETER

I thought you like soccer.

Danny shrugs, crawls into bed.

Peter tucks Danny in for the night, working his way past a bookcase with statuettes of Mickey Mouse, the Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty, and the Golden Gate Bridge.

DANNY

Will you promise to take me to another country before I die?

Peter stops at the footboard, kisses Danny's forehead.

PETER

You are not going to die.
We'll have plenty of time to see the world.

He places four stuffed animals around Danny -- comfort toys -- all shades and sizes of the American Bald Eagle.

DANNY
I don't like Bald Eagles.
They're not very friendly ...
or soft and cuddly.

Peter tucks a small, fluffy pillow with a needlepoint of the American flag next to Danny's head -- no response.

DANNY
Do you know what tomorrow is?

Peter looks up for a moment, returns a blank stare, shrugs.

Danny touches Peter's wedding band, eyes questioning -- anticipating.

DANNY
It's Mother's Day.

Peter nods to himself, makes a mental note.

DANNY
How come you never talked about
my mom?

Peter looks into space -- thoughts now far away -- then jumps up to close the blinds to a window.

AT THE WINDOW

Peter notices a man on the street below in a car -- the same man who was watching from outside the coffee shop.

The man gazes through a pair of binoculars straight into Danny's room.

DANNY
Was she pretty?

Peter quickly closes the blinds and turns down the lights.

PETER
Very. Now let's get some rest.

Danny glances over at a calendar on the wall, solemn.

DANNY
Dad, what if I don't wake up
in the hospital on Monday?

Peter returns to the bedside, gives Danny a sympathetic rub on the back.

PETER
Everything's going to be okay,
Sport. I'll be right there
with you.

DANNY
I'm scared, Dad.

PETER
(softly)
I know, but you need to be
brave. Tomorrow, I have a big
surprise for you.

Peter sits on the bed, HUMS a melody that is distinctly Asian. Within seconds, Danny's eyes close. He surrenders to sleep. Peter jumps up and peeks through the blinds. The BINOCULAR MAN (Asian in his 40s) is still there.

Peter rushes out of the room.

EXT. DARK STREET - CONTINUOUS

Peter emerges in a darkness that ensnares the street in a suffocating grip.

Binocular Man quickly drives away before Peter reaches the car.

Peter chases the car down the street until he disappears into the night.

EXT. FRONT DOOR OF HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Moments later, FOOTSTEPS are heard as Peter re-emerges outside the house, panting. He lingers long enough to catch his breath, then bolts back upstairs.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peter triple-bolts the front door.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Peter peeks behind the curtains -- no one's outside. Suddenly, a wave of realization hits him.

PETER
Theresa!

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peter un-boxes a new toy globe, blackens out China with a marker pen.

An ornate jewelry chest catches Peter's eye across the hall.

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peter removes a small, ornate brush with Chinese characters from the jewelry chest. He holds the brush up to his nose, inhales slowly with closed eyes -- he's in another dimension.

Peter shakes his head -- snaps out of it -- tosses the brush back into the chest.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Danny -- face of worry -- sits alone in front of a large chocolate cake cut in the shape of the American Bald Eagle.

Peter records the moment with a video camera.

PETER

The Bald Eagle is my favorite
animal. It can fly to anywhere
... even to different countries.

Danny listens politely, doesn't react.

PETER

Now that's freedom.

Danny sticks his finger into the eagle's eye, licks the frosting -- still no response.

PETER

It's not often you get to eat
cake in the morning. Right,
Sport?

Danny nods in quiet acknowledgment.

PETER

You won't be able to eat
anything tonight ... so eat up
now.

Danny pushes the cake away, stares into the camera, pensive.

DANNY

I'm not hungry.

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For the complete script (for production or representation consideration only)
please contact Jennifer Brooks at: info@filmmakers.com