

# **FRISCO**

**by**

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**Second Draft**

**20th January 2013**

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1 INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

1

A long, empty, hospital corridor lined with abandoned gurneys.

WILLIS (O.S.)

So my wife and I separated. She says she's not seeing anyone, but I'm not so sure about that.

2 INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - SUNBEAM WARD - DAY

2

A faded sign - painted by children long ago - welcomes visitors to SUNBEAM WARD

WILLIS (O.S.)

And my kids hate me. You're going to tell me to be kinder to myself. That they don't hate me, not really, not deep down. But they do. And if it comes down to it, sometimes I don't like them so much either.

3 INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - PLAYROOM - DAY

3

A decapitated teddy bear in an empty playroom.

A flickering television connected to a broken games console.

WILLIS (O.S.)

My work no longer fulfills me. I can hardly even remember a time when it did. And if any of that stuff we tell people about recommended daily amounts is even slightly true, then I drink way too much caffeine. And also alcohol. And I haven't exercised since Christmas. Christmas 2008.

4 INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

4

A waiting room full of extremely bored looking PARENTS and CHILDREN.

WILLIS (O.S.)

But Clive - look, you call me Jeff, okay? Do you want to know what the real problem is, Clive?

Close on DR JEFF WILLIS, sitting in a chair in a consulting room.

He is in his late forties or early fifties.

His tie - emblazoned with images of the cartoon character Goofy - is loosened. He looks tired and a little dishevelled.

WILLIS

I just don't enjoy anything any more. I mean, I get up in the morning and I work, and I go home in the evening and it is just all the same. Every single day. Nothing ever changes, and nothing I do makes a difference. I'm in a rut. Stuck in a rut. It's like I'm the traffic on the Fremont bridge, you know? I just go back and forth, back and forth every day. And all that is going to happen is that I'm going to keep on going endlessly back and forth until one day far in the future the bridge collapses and we all plunge into that great terrible dark and bottomless abyss of death.

(Beat.)

Why are you looking at me like that?

We now pull back and see who is sitting across the table from Willis: a puzzled eight year old boy, CLIVE.

CLIVE

I think I'm here about my asthma.

WILLIS

See, this is another problem I have, Clive. I try to find a little empathy - not even sympathy, just empathy - and everybody that comes in here only ever wants to talk to me about their own problems. It's like I'm just not supposed to have any feelings at all. Which is ironic because, as I've been telling you, part of the problem is that I no longer actually have feelings.

Clive looks blank.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

It's like I'm just supposed to be the guy who prescribes inhalers for everyone else. But nobody ever thinks about me. Nobody ever says, Doctor Jeff, do you sometimes feel like you might need an inhaler yourself?

CLIVE

You can borrow mine if you want.

WILLIS

I don't need an actual inhaler, Clive. It's a metaphor. I need a metaphorical inhaler.

CLIVE

What's a metamorphical inhaler?

WILLIS

Metaphorical. I don't know. It's being in love with a beautiful woman and knowing that she loves you back. Or driving out to Cannon Beach on a sunny day when I was seventeen. Or a piece of music that makes you want to smash shit up. Or even just being so sad that you can't stop crying. It's just feeling something. Do you know what it is to feel something, Clive? To really and truly feel something?

CLIVE

One time I broke my arm.

WILLIS

Well, this is going nowhere. Take two puffs of this twice a day, and come back and see me in a month. Next time, try and bring some empathy with you, okay?

CLIVE

What is empathy?

WILLIS

Exactly. That is exactly what I am talking about.

6      **TITLES - 'FRISCO'**

6

7      **INT. GARAGE - DAY**

7

A garage in near darkness.

In the background are bicycles, a kayak, a freezer, the usual detritus of family life.

In the foreground, Willis snores on a camp bed.

A clock turns to **07:30** and an ALARM starts beeping.

Willis' hand emerges from beneath the covers and knocks the clock to the ground.

The alarm continues to sound.

8

**EXT. SUBURBAN DRIVEWAY - DAY**

8

A sunny day in a pleasant suburb. It is Portland, Oregon, but it could be anywhere.

A garage door opens and a bleary-eyed Willis emerges.

He is dressed in striped pyjamas.

Two cars are parked in Willis' driveway: a shiny new Lexus and a beaten-up ancient Volare.

Beside the Lexus, two girls, ALEXIS (15) and BLAKE (16), dressed in private school uniforms, are waiting.

WILLIS

Good morning, daughters.

ALEXIS

Jesus Christ, dad. Put some clothes on.

BLAKE

You look like a goddamn hobo.

SUSIE (late 40s), wearing a smart suit but late already, bustles out of the house towards the Lexus.

WILLIS

Good morning, wife.

SUSIE

We're separated, Jeff.

WILLIS

But not divorced. Hence, wife.

SUSIE

I need to talk to you today.

WILLIS

If you'd care to step into my office?

Willis motions to the garage.

SUSIE  
I'll see you at work.

Susie and the girls get in the car and drive off. Willis waves at them.

WILLIS  
Not if I see you first.

Across the street, BILL DRAKE - a man about the same age as Willis, dressed in Operating Room scrubs - and his SONS are getting into their car, a polished Jeep Cherokee.

BILL DRAKE  
Good morning, Jeff.

WILLIS  
Good morning, Bill.

9 **INT. WILLIS' CAR - FREMONT BRIDGE - DAY**

9

Willis sits in his beaten-up Volare in heavy traffic on the Fremont bridge. He is dressed for work in his Goofy tie.

He looks across at a billboard.

It displays a large advert for '**PORTLAND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL: WHERE FAMILY COMES FIRST**'.

These words are accompanied by a PICTURE of a perfect family, a husband and wife and their two daughters.

We recognise the female models as Susie, Alexis and Blake, but the man where Willis should be - slim, tanned, smiling, perfect teeth - is obviously an ACTOR.

Willis takes a sip from a metallic insulated coffee mug.

10 **INT. HOSPITAL - CANTEEN - DAY**

10

Willis refills his insulated coffee mug from a dispenser.

He is still sleepy and it overflows.

11 **INT. CHILDREN'S WARD - DAY**

11

Willis conducts his ward round. He is accompanied by a resident, LUCIA CHEN.

Chen, wheeling a trolley of case notes, is bright-eyed and keen. Willis is still half-asleep, bleary eyed and sipping from his insulated coffee mug.

They approach the bed of a nine year old black kid, CHARLIE.

Charlie is hooked up to an IV.

CHEN

Charles presented last night.  
Temperature 103.2, CBC showed a  
polymorphic leucocytosis,  
haematocrit-

WILLIS

Just give me the Cliff Notes, would  
you? It's too early in the morning  
for science.

CHEN

He was having a crisis.

WILLIS

A crisis? What's the big idea,  
Charlie? You got fired? You crashed  
the car? Your wife left you? How  
are you even old enough to know  
what a crisis is?

CHARLIE

It's my sickle cell.

WILLIS

Oh, that kind of crisis. I thought  
Dr Chen meant, you know, the other  
kind.

Willis points at the IV.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Is this working out for you?

CHARLIE

Yes.

WILLIS

Well, don't let anyone steal it.  
And next time I don't want to hear  
any more bleeding heart stories  
about the bank foreclosing on you  
or your dog getting run over, okay?

Charlie smiles, gets that this is a joke though Chen does  
not.

As they move on to the next patient, they become aware of  
SHOUTING coming from a side room.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Who is that?

CHEN

Amy Morrison. Fifteen year old with  
an astroglioma.

(MORE)

CHEN (CONT'D)  
She just transferred back from  
regional oncology.

WILLIS  
Did they cure her?

CHEN  
No.

WILLIS  
Why didn't she go to the Hospice?

CHEN  
They had issues with her there  
previously.

WILLIS  
So why can't she go home?

The door to the side room is flung open.

AMY (O.S.)  
I hate you! You're an asinine bitch  
and I wish that you were dead!

A well-dressed woman - ANNE MORRISON (late 40s) - emerges in  
tears and hurries down the ward.

CHEN  
Yeah. There were issues there too.

Several PATIENTS and PARENTS are now staring expectantly at  
Willis.

He sighs.

WILLIS  
Wait here.

12      **INT. AMY'S ROOM - CHILDREN'S WARD - DAY**

12

Willis enters the hospital room of AMY MORRISON, 15.

The door to the ensuite bathroom is open. Amy is vomiting  
into the toilet.

WILLIS  
Is this a bad time?

Amy flushes the toilet, wipes the vomit from her mouth. We  
see now that she has dyed black hair and copious mascara.

AMY  
Who are you?



WILLIS

I'm Doctor Jeff. One of the doctors.

AMY

I've never seen you before.

WILLIS

I fly under the radar. Kind of like a superhero in that regard.

AMY

Or a pedophile.

WILLIS

You have to admit being a children's doctor would be a pretty good cover.

AMY

What do you want, Jeff?

WILLIS

I heard the yelling.

AMY

And?

WILLIS

People were looking at me. I felt obliged to come in here and, you know, pretend to do something.

Amy visibly softens at this: at least Willis is honest.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Also your mom seemed upset.

AMY

My mom's dead.

WILLIS

So who was that woman?

AMY

That would be Anne.

WILLIS

Anne Frank? Anne of Cleves? Anne of Greengables?

AMY

She used to be my stepmother, but my dad's dead too now. So she's really just the woman that is going to inherit my trust fund.

WILLIS

You have a lot of death in your family.

AMY

Tell me about. I'm dying too.

WILLIS

We're all dying, Amy. Some of us are just doing it a little faster than others.

Willis notices a book on the bedside table and picks it up. It is a battered paperback copy of 'On the Road'

WILLIS (CONT'D)

You like Kerouac?

AMY

Have you heard of him?

WILLIS

When I read this book I made a vow I was going to drive across America. Just get in the car and go. See what happened along the way. Find the pearl.

AMY

And did you?

WILLIS

Well, no.

AMY

Why not?

WILLIS

I went to college. I was pre-med. I had to earn money. I got married. I had kids. Life got in the way.

AMY

How depressingly square. Could you leave now, Jeff?

13

**INT. CHILDREN'S WARD - DAY**

13

Willis rejoins Chen with the notes trolley.

Before they even get to the next patient, a NURSE approaches them.

NURSE

Margaret Brown is on the phone for you.

WILLIS  
Tell her I'm doing rounds.

The nurse goes back to the desk where the phone is.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
These administrators. They get an MBA and then they think they can just interrupt rounds. Rounds are sacred, they are holy, they are our communion. They are-

The nurse returns.

NURSE  
She wants you to go to her office.

WILLIS  
Did you tell her I'm doing rounds?

NURSE  
She said to tell you to come now.

Willis sighs and wearily trudges off.

14

**INT. HOSPITAL - MEETING ROOM - DAY**

14

Willis sits across from a Hospital Manager, MARGARET BROWN.

Willis takes a sip from his insulated coffee mug.

MARGARET  
You are the best pediatrician we have on staff, Jeff. If your colleagues can't diagnose a case, they ask you.

WILLIS  
If anybody ever tells them about a little thing I call 'Google' I'm screwed.

MARGARET  
Was that a joke?

WILLIS  
If you found it funny it was.

MARGARET  
I didn't.

WILLIS  
Then it wasn't a joke.

MARGARET

What I'm saying, Jeff, is the problem is not with your colleagues.

WILLIS

Then there is no problem. My patients love me.

MARGARET

Their parents don't.

WILLIS

Who cares what their parents think?

MARGARET

I care, because they complain. In the last six months we have had more complaints about you than the rest of the pediatric department put together.

WILLIS

It's a statistical anomaly. I'm sure it'll average out.

Margaret motions at a LARGE PILE OF CASE NOTES beside her.

MARGARET

This is from the last fortnight alone.

WILLIS

What's on the top there?

MARGARET

Claudia Jackson. Eight. You called her mother a moron.

WILLIS

The girl had a peanut allergy and they gave her peanut butter. It's pretty moronic. In more advanced cultures it's probably attempted murder.

MARGARET

You still can't call the woman a moron.

WILLIS

What would you like me to call her?

MARGARET

'Congresswoman' would have been fine.

Willis winces. Forgot about that.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Leonard Moss. Seven. Fractured his skull falling from a tree.

WILLIS

I used a metaphor. It's no big deal.

MARGARET

Which metaphor?

WILLIS

Something about an omelette. I forget exactly.

MARGARET

'If you're going to make an omelette you're going to have to break a few eggs'?

WILLIS

That might have been it, yeah.

MARGARET

Jeff, this is a children's hospital.

WILLIS

You're kidding me. I thought I was the world's greatest gerontologist.

MARGARET

We're considering reconfiguring the service.

WILLIS

What?

MARGARET

The board think that if we combine allergy with general pediatrics-

WILLIS

Come on, Margaret. I do too much general pediatrics as it is. It's all runny noses and diarrhoea and-

MARGARET

You're not hearing me Jeff. If we combined allergy with general then your job-

WILLIS

'Lead Pediatric Allergist with an interest in General Pediatrics.'

MARGARET

Right. Your job wouldn't exist anymore.

WILLIS

What? Who would do Allergy?

MARGARET

Your colleagues.

WILLIS

Margaret, you might not have heard, but in three days I'm presenting a paper in San Francisco at the United States Congress of Allergists.

Willis pauses to see what effect this has. None.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

My work on the hazelnut is - look, I don't want to boast here, but as far as the hazelnut goes, I'm one of this country's leading authorities.

Margaret looks unimpressed.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Top five, definitely.

MARGARET

This isn't about hazelnuts, Jeff. It's about complaints, and the fact that you are having way too many.

WILLIS

What are you saying?

MARGARET

I'm saying if we have any more complaints between now and the end of the month, Portland Children's will not be renewing your contract.

WILLIS

Did Susie put you up to this?

MARGARET

Susie is the only reason we've let you go on for so long.

WILLIS

Do me a favour, would you? Don't tell her that.

15      **INT. HOSPITAL CANTEEN - DAY**

15

A busy hospital canteen at lunchtime.

Willis sits eating his packed lunch alone.

Everybody else seems to have friends to eat with.

Willis is gazing at them when he sees Susie scanning the crowd.

Willis ducks his head and hides behind his hands so that she does not see him.

Susie leaves the canteen.

Willis stands up and follows her.

16      **INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY**

16

Willis sees Susie disappear around a corner.

He hurries after her.

17      **INT. HOSPITAL - VARIOUS CORRIDORS - DAY**

17

Willis follows Susie through several different hospital corridors.

18      **INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY**

18

Willis peers around the corner.

In the distance he sees Susie talking to a MALE COLLEAGUE.

Susie glances back down the corridor.

Willis ducks back behind the corner.

He peers around again and sees Susie walking back towards him.

Willis looks around him and sees a cupboard.

He hides in the cupboard.

Susie comes around the corner. She glances around, surmises what has happened, and tries to open the cupboard door.

It opens a tiny bit, but is then pulled shut from the inside.

SUSIE

Jeff.

No response.

SUSIE (CONT'D)  
I know you're in there, Jeff.

Still nothing.

SUSIE (CONT'D)  
Why were you following me, Jeff?

WILLIS (O.C.)  
I wasn't.

SUSIE  
Then why are you hiding in a  
cupboard on the surgery floor?

WILLIS (O.C.)  
What? I'm not hiding.

SUSIE  
So what are you doing in there?

WILLIS (O.C.)  
I'm looking for a place for my new  
office.

SUSIE  
We need to talk, Jeff. We can  
either do it with me out here in  
the corridor and you in the  
cupboard or we can go and get a  
coffee.

Willis emerges from the cupboard.

WILLIS  
I'd be glad to have coffee with  
you, Susie.

SUSIE  
It's not like that.

WILLIS  
Like what?

SUSIE  
You make it sound like it's a date.

WILLIS  
A man can't go on a date with his  
wife now?

SUSIE  
Not when they're separated, Jeff.



The canteen is now emptier as Willis and Susie sit drinking coffee. Willis is drinking his from his insulated cup.

WILLIS

So is it Dalton from radiology?

SUSIE

What?

WILLIS

McQueen from Haematology.

SUSIE

How many times, Jeff? I'm not seeing anyone.

WILLIS

Tell me that it isn't Jones from Orthopaedics. He's an ape. They are all apes in orthopaedics. It's like an apiary up there.

SUSIE

An apiary is where bees are kept.

WILLIS

Well, that's ridiculous.

SUSIE

Jeff. You need to find somewhere else to live.

WILLIS

What? I'm working on it.

SUSIE

You've been saying that for months.

WILLIS

It's a busy time. I have this conference coming up and-

SUSIE

Can you tell me what exactly you have done to find somewhere else to live?

WILLIS

Yes. I've looked.

SUSIE

Where?

WILLIS

On the internet.

SUSIE  
Really? Which site?

WILLIS  
Let's see. Mainly it was  
www.Iamnottheonehavinganaffair.com.

SUSIE  
Jesus fucking Christ, Jeff! Enough!  
I am not having an affair!

They vehemence of Susie's reply makes things a little awkward.

WILLIS  
I'd better be getting back.

SUSIE  
I want a divorce.

WILLIS  
What? Why? Why would you say a  
thing like that?

SUSIE  
Because I'm not in love with you  
and our marriage is over.

WILLIS  
Is it Patel? It's Patel from  
anesthesiology, isn't it?

Susie starts to bang her head on the table.

20

**INT. CHILDREN'S WARD - DAY**

20

Willis is stood disinterestedly signing some prescription charts at the nurses' station.

He does not even bother reading them, just scribbles his signature on them as a NURSE places them in front of him.

DR TURNER - prim, formal, fifties - emerges from Amy's room and approaches Willis.

DR TURNER  
Can I borrow you for a moment,  
Jeff?

WILLIS  
For the price of a one-way ticket  
to Acapulco, you could have me.

21

**INT. AMY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

21

Willis follows Dr Turner into Amy's room.

Amy rolls her eyes when she sees Willis enter.

AMY

Great. Because that's definitely going to help.

DR TURNER

Dr Willis. Can you please explain to Amy why it is important she takes her Zinteca?

WILLIS

Look, Amy it's-  
(Shrugs.)  
Why don't you want to take it?

AMY

Because it tastes like vomit and I'm going to die anyway.

DR TURNER

Zinteca has been shown to improve survival in clinical trials.

WILLIS

By how long?

DR TURNER

The median is fourteen days, but-

WILLIS

Two weeks?

Dr Turner nods.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Well, there it is. You might get an extra fortnight if you take it. But if it tastes like vomit you might not enjoy that time anyway. So I guess it's up to you.

Dr Turner is staring at Willis with disbelief.

AMY

Thank you.

Willis nods at Dr Turner and leaves.

Willis enters the mortuary. An industrial fridge takes up one wall.

His colleague MELCHER is fixing some slides at a table.

Overweight and in his fifties, Melcher is a cheerful but owlsh man.

Willis pulls opens a drawer of the fridge.

It contains the CORPSE OF AN OLD WOMAN.

Willis frowns and closes the drawer.

He opens the next one. It contains a SIX PACK OF BEER.

Willis opens two bottles and passes one to Melcher.

They drink them in silence for a few moments. We understand that this is a regular ritual.

MELCHER

Oh hey, I've got those Make-A-Wish people coming this week.

WILLIS

Again? My wish is that they would stop coming.

MELCHER

Me too. But if they don't go for that could we take them round?

WILLIS

Yeah.

They sit in silence a bit longer.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

So Susie wants a divorce.

MELCHER

That's tough.

WILLIS

Yeah.

MELCHER

Moving on is going to be so hard.

WILLIS

What? No. I'm not going to move on, Ron. I'm going to win her back.

MELCHER

Oh. I just thought, because it has been a little while now and-

WILLIS

She's having an affair, Ron, that's all.

(MORE)

WILLIS (CONT'D)

I just need to find out who it is  
and, you know, kill him and then  
she'll realize what a perfect thing  
we've always had together.

MELCHER

Jeff, it's none of my business. But  
did you ever hear the phrase 'If  
you love something, set it free'?

WILLIS

I guess so, Ron. But you know a  
phrase I never heard?

MELCHER

What's that?

WILLIS

'If you love something, get  
divorced from it'.

Willis holds up his bottle and Melcher clinks his against it.

23

**INT. WILLIS' CAR ON FREMONT BRIDGE - DAY**

23

Willis in his car driving home over the bridge in slow moving  
traffic.

Just one of dozens more going back and forth all the time.

He stares at the poster for Portland Children's, focusing  
particularly on the face of the handsome actor pictured with  
his family.

24

**INT. WILLIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

24

Willis creeps into his kitchen through the back door.

He makes a sandwich, taking great care to do everything  
silently.

When he closes the fridge door, it reveals Alexis standing  
behind it.

She is wearing a cheerleader uniform and has some kind of a  
face pack on.

WILLIS

Aaarghh!  
(Realizes.)  
Oh, it's you.

ALEXIS

What are you doing, Dad?

WILLIS  
I'm making a sandwich.

ALEXIS  
You're not supposed to come in here  
after nine.

WILLIS  
I know that. But I'm hungry and  
your mother is out and I thought  
you and your sister wouldn't mind-

Blake enters, holding a phone as if about to dial.

BLAKE  
I'm calling Mom.

WILLIS  
Okay. Okay, I'm going.

Willis starts heading out the door, taking his sandwich with him.

ALEXIS  
Put down the sandwich, Dad.

WILLIS  
Alexis, I-

BLAKE  
It's ringing.

Willis puts down the sandwich. When he does so, Blake hangs up the phone.

WILLIS  
I want you to know that I forgive  
you both. You're my daughters and I  
will always love you, even if right  
now you're going through a kind of  
unpleasant phase.

Blake lifts up her phone again. Willis reluctantly goes.

25

**INT. WILLIS HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT**

25

Willis is woken by his phone ringing.

He fumbles around for it, knocking several things over.

WILLIS  
What?  
(Listens.)  
This is Dr Willis.  
(Listens.)  
I only do one call a month. It's  
really very unlikely to be me.  
(MORE)

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
 You should try someone else. Have  
 you tried Nancy? Nancy does a lot  
 of calls.

Willis puts the phone down and goes back to sleep.

After a few moments the phone starts to ring again.

26

**INT. WILLIS CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT**

26

Willis driving in his car. He is wearing his pyjamas and a dressing gown over them.

He is sipping from his insulated mug of coffee and talking into his phone clamped between his ear and his shoulder.

WILLIS  
 Set the pressure to twenty-five. A  
 size five tube. Size seven gloves.

Willis finishes the last of his coffee.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
 And I'm going to need some really  
 strong filter. Ethiopian if they  
 have it.

Willis turns off the phone and tosses it on the passenger seat.

27

**INT. DELIVERY ROOM - NIGHT**

27

Willis, now wearing surgical scrubs - beneath which his pyjamas are still visible - and a theatre cap and latex gloves waits beside a resuscitaire.

In the background a WOMAN is giving birth. She is attended by an OBSTETRICIAN and SEVERAL MIDWIVES. The FATHER loiters nervously nearby.

There is an abrupt flurry of activity around the woman.

Willis takes a swig of his insulated coffee mug.

A MIDWIFE places a NEWBORN BABY on the resuscitaire in front of Willis.

The baby, covered in blood and meconium, is blue and is not moving or breathing.

Willis rubs the baby with a towel in an entirely business-like manner.

When nothing happens he takes the oxygen mask and holds it firmly over the baby's face.

He uses his thumb to give a few firm inflation breaths.

We see the baby's chest wall rise.

A few seconds later the baby starts screaming and quickly turns pink.

Willis wraps the baby in a towel and passes it to the FATHER.

He takes off his gloves and drops them in the bin, then leaves the room.

Even the miracle of the birth of human life no longer has any impact whatsoever on Dr Jeff Willis.

28

**INT. WILLIS' OFFICE - NIGHT**

28

Still wearing his theatre scrubs - with his pyjamas visible underneath - Willis sits in his chair in his office and puts his feet up on the desk, intending to sleep.

Out of his window, he sees the red ember tip of a cigarette end on a nearby balcony.

Willis closes his eyes.

After a moment he opens them again.

The red ember is still there, brightening each time the unseen smoker inhales.

Willis sighs wearily and stands up.

29

**EXT. HOSPITAL BALCONY - NIGHT**

29

Willis opens the door onto the balcony.

WILLIS

We don't let parents smoke out here. It kind of sets a-

Willis stops when he sees who is smoking: Amy.

She blows smoke in his face.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

You know, we're starting to discover that those things might be bad for you.

AMY

Yeah, well, an astrogloma is worse.

Amy holds the pack out to Willis.



WILLIS  
No, thank you.

AMY  
Yeah. I used to be scared of shit  
too, before I went terminal.

WILLIS  
I'm not scared.

AMY  
Just square.

WILLIS  
Give me one of those.

Willis takes the cigarette and lights it up from Amy's.

He takes a long deep drag. And then coughs and splutters. Amy  
smirks.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
Did you finish the Kerouac?

AMY  
I've read it before. I've read all  
of them.

WILLIS  
Oh. Yeah. Me too.

AMY  
So what do you think of 'Visions of  
Cody'?

WILLIS  
Maybe I missed that one. But I  
always liked his poems.

AMY  
Really?

WILLIS  
'I saw the best minds of my  
generation destroyed by madness'

AMY  
That's Ginsberg.

WILLIS  
What?

AMY  
That's 'Howl' by Allen Ginsberg.

WILLIS  
Are you sure?

AMY  
Pretty sure, yeah.

They hear a noise behind them.

They look inside and see a NURSE approaching.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Fuck!

They quickly extinguish their cigarettes and flatten themselves against the wall so that the nurse cannot see them.

The nurse peers out from the glass but cannot see anything and leaves.

Willis waits until he is sure the nurse is out of earshot before speaking.

WILLIS  
Thanks for the cigarette. Please don't tell anyone about it.

AMY  
Who would I even tell?

WILLIS  
Seriously, if I get another complaint I get fired.

AMY  
Jesus, Jeff. I said I'm not going to tell anyone.

30

**INT. HOSPITAL CLINIC ROOM - DAY**

30

Willis sits in a consulting room with a pair of parents, MR and MRS LAKOVIC and their TODDLER. They look mildly alternative, a hemp yoga mat strapped to the buggy etc.

It is now the middle of the day, but Willis is still wearing his theatre scrubs with his pyjamas visible beneath them.

His insulated cup of coffee is on the table in front of him.

The parents are talking but Willis' eyes are closed.

MRS LAKOVIC  
We just don't believe in vaccination.

MR LAKOVIC  
Our friend Jenna recommended herbal vaccination. We printed some information from the internet.

They try to pass some sheets of paper to Willis.

MRS LAKOVIC  
Doctor, are you asleep?

Willis shakes himself awake.

WILLIS  
No.

MRS LAKOVIC  
So what did I just say?

WILLIS  
You were saying you don't believe  
in vaccination and you want a  
herbal version.

MRS LAKOVIC  
Yes.

WILLIS  
Can I ask what you do for a living?

MRS LAKOVIC  
I'm a chef and he's a mechanic but  
I don't see how-

WILLIS  
So imagine I came to your place of  
work and I told you that I didn't  
believe in broiling.

MRS LAKOVIC  
What? That wouldn't, I mean, that's  
not the same thing.

WILLIS  
And then I brought my car to your  
garage and told you I didn't want  
you to put any gas in and instead I  
wanted you to use milk, because  
somebody I knew had once read in a  
magazine that gas was bad for it  
and milk worked jut as well.

Mr and Mrs Lakovic look baffled.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
That would be insane, wouldn't it?  
And yet that is pretty much exactly  
what is happening here.

Willis fills his insulated coffee mug.

Margaret Brown approaches him.

MARGARET  
It's not a good start, Jeff.

WILLIS  
Wow. That was quick.

MARGARET  
What? What was quick?

WILLIS  
Nothing. What are you talking about?

MARGARET  
One of the pediatric patients has gone on hunger strike until you agree to become her doctor.

32

**INT. AMY'S ROOM - CHILDREN'S WARD - DAY**

32

Willis enters Amy's room.

They look at one another.

AMY  
It's not a real hunger strike. I stole chocolate from the little kids.

WILLIS  
Do you have any left?

Amy takes some chocolate out from under her bed and gives Willis a piece. He eats it and nods appreciatively.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
Jesus Christ, who is wasting this stuff on little kids?

Amy hands Willis another piece.

AMY  
So are you going to be my doctor?

WILLIS  
Let's see: are you in hospital because of an allergy, preferably a hazelnut allergy?

AMY  
No.

WILLIS

Then, no, I'm not going to be your doctor. Why would you even want me to be your doctor, anyway?

AMY

Because you're as messed-up as I am. And also I hate Dr Turner.

WILLIS

Dr Turner is a very good physician. She is a Stanford graduate and-

AMY

She's a mewling quim.

Willis chokes on his chocolate.

WILLIS

She takes a little bit of getting used to, that is all.

AMY

Yeah, I don't really have so much time for getting used to things. What with imminently dying of a brain tumour and all.

WILLIS

Look. I can't be your doctor. I'm going to San Francisco the day after tomorrow-

AMY

I'll wait. I mean, so long as I don't die.

WILLIS

I have way too many patients already.

AMY

It's okay. I understand.

WILLIS

Good.

AMY

But I think Anne might complain.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

Yeah. She saw us smoking together.

WILLIS

Did she?

AMY

No. But if I tell her to say she did then she will.

Willis is about to say something but realizes he is trapped.

AMY (CONT'D)

Case conference tomorrow at three, Jeff. Don't be late.

33      **INT. WILLIS' CAR - DRIVING ON FREMONT BRIDGE - DAY**      33

Willis stuck in traffic as he drives home from work over the bridge.

34      **INT. WILLIS CAR' - DRIVING ON FREMONT BRIDGE - DAY**      34

Willis stuck in traffic as he drives to work over the bridge.

The HANDSOME MAN in the photograph in the billboard seems to be laughing at him.

35      **INT. CHILDREN'S WARD - DAY**      35

Willis, Melcher and Chen walk down the ward with two women, JULIE and JANE.

Julie and Jane are wearing bright T-shirts announcing they are from the 'Moonbeams-Make-A-Wish Foundation'.

JANE

It must just be such a privilege to work with these children.

WILLIS

Some of them are actually kind of annoying.

Willis points to a CUTE TODDLER in a cot.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

That guy, he does this thing where he clicks his teeth. It drives you nuts.

JULIE

Children are our future, aren't they?

WILLIS

Generally, yes. Just, not so much these specific ones.

Julie studies a piece of paper in her hand.

JULIE  
We've got one more name on our  
list. Amy Morrison?

WILLIS  
Yeah, this isn't really her kind of  
thing.

JANE  
Is she terminally ill?

WILLIS  
Well, yes, but-

JULIE  
Then she should get to make a wish.

Willis reluctantly leads them over to Amy's bedroom.

36

**INT. AMY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

36

Willis, Julie, Jane, Chen and Melcher enter Amy's bedroom.

WILLIS  
Amy. You already know Dr Melcher  
and Lucia. This is Jane-

JULIE  
It's Julie.

WILLIS  
Then the other one is Jane. They  
come from, uh-

JANE  
Moonbeams-Make-A-Wish!

JULIE  
Hi there, Amy!

JANE  
We're so very sorry to hear you've  
been poorly!

AMY  
That's okay. I think I'm just about  
through the worst of it now.

Jane and Julie gasp and look with horror at Willis.

WILLIS  
Come on, she's kidding. She's toast  
and she knows it.

JULIE  
Do you know what we do at Moonbeams-  
Make-A-Wish, Amy?  
(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)  
We help terminally ill children  
realize their dreams.

JANE  
Earlier this year we arranged for a  
little girl without a functioning  
immune system to swim with  
dolphins.

WILLIS  
That doesn't sound very safe.

JULIE  
She passed away two days later. We  
were all so thrilled that we got to  
make her wish come true.

WILLIS  
Do you think her wish was to die of  
dolphin flu?

Willis has tried to whisper this to Melcher, but it comes out  
too loud and the others have heard.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
Sorry.

JANE  
The point is, is there anything you  
would like to do before, well,  
before you can't do it anymore?

AMY  
There is. But I don't think you can  
help.

JULIE  
You'd be surprised.

AMY  
Okay. I really want to have sex  
with a boy. Preferably a handsome  
boy who looks like Jack Kerouac.  
But time is short so I'd probably  
settle.

Jane and Julie look horrified.

WILLIS  
Amy is on medication. It makes her  
loopy.

AMY  
I'm only on Tylenol. It doesn't  
make me loopy.



37

INT. WILLIS' OFFICE - DAY

37

In his cramped little office, Willis sits at his computer working on a POWERPOINT PRESENTATION.

Chen knocks on the door.

WILLIS

Dr Chen. I need your advice on something.

CHEN

Of course.

WILLIS

You see this slide?

Willis pulls up an incredibly complicated diagram of a protein.

CHEN

The molecular structure of interleukin 5.

WILLIS

Right, right. Does it look better in blue or green?

Willis flicks a button to toggle between blue and green.

CHEN

They are both fine.

WILLIS

But if you had to pick one?

CHEN

Green.

WILLIS

You're not colorblind are you?

CHEN

No.

WILLIS

Okay. Listen, Nancy will be covering whilst I'm gone. If you have any problems with the patients, just call her.

LUCIA

I understand.

WILLIS

I mean, sometimes some parent will have some really specific question that it seems like only I could answer. What would you do then?

LUCIA

Call you?

WILLIS

Jesus, no. Call Nancy! Don't call me. I'm on vacation in California! Why would you call me?

LUCIA

I thought it was a conference.

WILLIS

It is, but, you know, conference, vacation - there is kind of a gray area there.

38

**INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CASE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

38

Willis sits outside a room, drinking coffee from his insulated cup.

Susie comes down the corridor.

SUSIE

I can't talk to you now, Jeff. I have a case conference and-

WILLIS

I have the same one.

SUSIE

Amy is Dr Turner's patient.

WILLIS

She asked me to be her doctor. Actually, she didn't just ask. She went on hunger strike.

Susie stares at Willis. This is the last thing she needed today.

39

**INT. CASE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

39

Willis, Susie, Amy, Anne all sat around a table.

ANNE

Amy, why don't you just come home?

AMY

Because I don't have a home.

ANNE

Do you have any idea how hurtful that is?

AMY

I'm a hobo, Anne. We don't choose the road. The road chooses us.

ANNE

You're a fifteen year old girl dying of a brain tumour. Where can you possibly go?

AMY

Maybe I'll just hop a freight down to San Luis Obispo and ride the boxcars for a while.

SUSIE

Amy, at the Department of Family Services we feel that the best thing for you would be-

AMY

Does nobody care what I think? Where I want to live? Is that not at all important to people?

SUSIE

Of course that's important. Where do you want to live?

AMY

I don't know. But not with Anne. No offence.

SUSIE

Look, Amy. Nobody wants to live at home when they are fifteen, but we can't all just do what we want all the time.

WILLIS

Why not?

SUSIE

Jeff-

WILLIS

Why can't we all just do what we want all the time?

SUSIE

Because we're adults.

WILLIS

Amy's not an adult. She's fifteen.

SUSIE  
Some of us are adults. Or at least  
we're supposed to be.

Amy catches the tension between the two of them.

Susie's pager goes. She looks at it, sighs and stands up.

SUSIE (CONT'D)  
She stays here for now.

WILLIS  
I went to med school with a guy  
lives down in San Luis Obispo. I  
could make a couple of calls?

Susie glares at Willis.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
Just a suggestion.

40

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY**

40

Willis walks down the corridor.

Amy catches up with him.

AMY  
What was that all about?

WILLIS  
We were trying to find you  
somewhere to live. We were  
unsuccessful.

AMY  
I meant with you and the child-  
catcher.

WILLIS  
Don't call her that.

AMY  
What? Why not?

WILLIS  
Because I'm married to her.

They come to the end of the corridor.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
I'll be back in a few days. Don't  
die whilst I'm out of state.

AMY  
Because you'll miss me?

WILLIS

It creates a lot of paperwork.

Willis turns and walks down the corridor.

AMY

I hope your plane doesn't crash,  
Jeff.

Willis replies without turning around.

WILLIS

I'm taking the train.

41

**EXT. WILLIS HOUSE - NIGHT**

41

Willis exits the garage and rings the doorbell of his house.

Blake answers it. She does not open the door very far.

BLAKE

What?

WILLIS

Well, I wondered if you and your  
sister wanted me to bring you  
anything from San Francisco?

BLAKE

Just the cash will be fine.

WILLIS

What? No, I mean - the idea is that  
I bring you a souvenir.

BLAKE

We'd prefer the cash.

WILLIS

Well, maybe your sister would like  
a souvenir? Perhaps if I could just  
come in and ask her-

BLAKE

(Shouts upstairs.)

Alexis? What do you want Dad to  
bring you from his trip?

ALEXIS (O.C.)

(Shouted from upstairs.)

Just the cash.

BLAKE

You can pay us later, Dad.

Blake closes the door.

42

**INT. SUSIE'S CAR - PULLING INTO AMTRAK LOT - DAY**

42

Susie and Willis pull into the parking lot at the Amtrak station in downtown Portland.

WILLIS

You know, this reminds me of that time, right after we first got married, when we drove down to Crater Lake and-

SUSIE

I'm giving you a lift to the station, Jeff. That is all that's happening here.

WILLIS

Right, I just meant-

SUSIE

And when you come back I want you to give me a divorce.

WILLIS

Right.

SUSIE

I still don't know why you couldn't have just flown down like any normal human being.

WILLIS

I'm a romantic. I like the romance of the railroad. It's, you know, romantic.

Willis goes to kiss Susie. But she pulls back from him.

SUSIE

Knock them dead with the peanuts.

WILLIS

It's hazelnuts. I do hazelnuts.

SUSIE

Really? I always thought it was peanuts.

43

**EXT. AMTRAK STATION - PLATFORM - DAY**

43

Willis stands on the platform waiting for the train.

He has a weekender bag with him, and he is drinking his insulated cup of coffee.

44

INT. QUIET CARRIAGE - AMTRAK TRAIN - DAY

44

Willis sits down on the train in an empty four-seater.

He puts his insulated cup on the table in front of him and looks out the window at the countryside.

He closes his eyes and lets the motion of the train rock him.

It feels good to be getting away from everything.

After a few moments Willis opens his eyes.

Amy is sitting directly opposite him.

WILLIS

Jesus!

AMY

Shhh, Jeff. This is the quiet carriage. You'll disturb the other passengers.

WILLIS

Why are you on this train?

AMY

Because I'm going to Frisco to get some kicks.

WILLIS

You're going where?

AMY

Duh. San Francisco. Everybody calls it Frisco.

WILLIS

Nobody calls it Frisco.

AMY

Jack Kerouac did. Neal Cassady did. You probably even called it that yourself back in the Summer of Love.

WILLIS

I wasn't there in the Summer of Love. Where's your stepmother?

AMY

Anne? How would I know where she is?

WILLIS

Isn't she travelling with you?

AMY

Of course not. Anne's not in to kicks.

WILLIS

So who are you going to San Francisco with?

AMY

That's funny, Jeff.

WILLIS

Why is that funny?

AMY

Because I'm going with you.

Willis stares at her in horror.

A CONDUCTOR is passing through the carriage.

WILLIS

Excuse me, Sir? We have a major problem here.

CONDUCTOR

What's the problem?

WILLIS

This girl. She's a stowaway.

AMY

Daddy! Don't kid on!

WILLIS

I'm not her dad and I'm not kidding. She's a stowaway. She doesn't even have a ticket.

Amy takes a TICKET out of her pocket and shows it to the Conductor.

The Conductor nods, give Willis a look, then continues on.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

How did you pay for that?

AMY

With Anne's credit card.

WILLIS

You stole you stepmother's credit card?

AMY

I borrowed it without her permission.



WILLIS  
Which is stealing.

AMY  
I'm not long for this world, Jeff.  
She's going to get paid back in  
spades soon enough anyway.

Willis takes out his mobile phone and starts to dial.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Quiet carriage, Jeff.

Willis gets up and walks towards the end of the carriage.

45

**INT. VESTIBULE BETWEEN COACHES - AMTRAK TRAIN - DAY**

45

The noisy vestibule between coaches.

Willis is yelling into his mobile phone, but between the poor  
signal and the noise of the train it is a losing battle.

WILLIS  
Hello? It's Jeff. Hello? Hello?

The door from the toilet unlocks, and Amy comes out.

She looks pale and her hair is a mess.

It is obvious she has been puking again.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
Hello? I can't hear-

Jeff looks at his phone, sighs and gives up.

46

**INT. DINING CAR - AMTRAK TRAIN - NIGHT**

46

It is now dark outside.

They sit in the dining car of the train as it travels on into  
the night.

Amy is reading her book, 'Visions of Cody' by Jack Kerouac.

Willis is staring at her, fuming.

AMY  
I have a Burroughs in my bag if  
you'd like.

WILLIS  
No, thank you.

AMY  
Are you mad with me?

WILLIS

Yes. I'm extremely mad with you.

AMY

Why?

WILLIS

Because you're a stowaway.

AMY

I bought a ticket.

WILLIS

Well, you weren't invited.

AMY

You don't own the train, Jeff. I bought a ticket.

WILLIS

I bought my ticket first!

AMY

That's mature.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

I said that's mature.

WILLIS

Were you being sarcastic?

AMY

I don't know, Jeff. What do you think?

WILLIS

See, the funny thing about sarcasm is that it is actually a sign of immaturity. You know who the only people who think sarcasm is mature are? Teenagers.

AMY

And when you say 'teenagers', you mean me?

WILLIS

No, I don't mean you, Amy. Why on earth would you think I meant you?

Amy smiles.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

What?

AMY

Pretty sure that was some sarcasm  
right there, Jeff.

Willis curses for getting himself caught up in a knot.

47

**EXT. PLATFORM - KLAMATH FALLS - NIGHT**

47

A desolate-looking platform in the middle of the night.

A sign on the platform announces this place is 'KLAMATH  
FALLS'.

Willis is on the payphone at the end of the platform.

Amy stood beside him looking bored and cold.

WILLIS

Yes, I know she is missing. She is  
here with me.

(Beat.)

Of course I didn't invite her! She  
stowed away!

(Beat.)

Well, unless you know anybody else  
wants to drive down to Klamath  
falls?

(Beat.)

What? No, I have a very important  
paper about hazelnuts to deliver.

Willis hangs up the phone and then holds the receiver out to  
Amy.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Call your stepmother.

AMY

What?

WILLIS

Call your stepmother and get her to  
come and pick you up.

Amy sighs and dials the number.

AMY

Hi, it's me.

(Beat.)

Klamath Falls.

(Beat.)

No, I understand. Goodbye.

Willis grabs the receiver from Amy.

WILLIS  
 Mrs Morrison? Don't hang up. It's  
 Dr Jeff from Portland Children's.  
 I'm on way to San Francisco and  
 Amy, well, maybe she didn't exactly  
 stowaway but-  
 (Listens.)  
 Oh. Oh, well I'm sorry that you  
 feel that way. Mrs Morrison? Mrs  
 Morrison?

Willis hangs the phone up.

48

**INT. DINING CAR - AMTRAK TRAIN - NIGHT**

48

The train is back on the move.

The dining car is emptier now. It is getting later.

WILLIS  
 Why doesn't your stepmother want to  
 collect you?

AMY  
 Please don't use the word 'mother'  
 in conjunction with that woman.

WILLIS  
 Seriously, why doesn't she want to  
 come? At the hospital it seemed  
 like-

AMY  
 Because she cares enough to drive  
 five miles but not a hundred, okay?

Amy turns and stares out the window.

She is trying not to cry.

WILLIS  
 What kind of berth do you have?

AMY  
 Yeah. They were all sold out.

WILLIS  
 Amy.

AMY  
 Well, maybe if somebody had given  
 me more notice-

WILLIS  
 You weren't invited! How could I  
 have given you more notice?

AMY

It's no big deal, Jeff. I'll just  
jungle down here. Maybe if I slip  
him a couple of greenbacks the  
brakeman will Jones me a blanket.

Willis sighs and slides a key across the table.

WILLIS

Take my berth.

AMY

How many beds are there?

WILLIS

Two.

AMY

Then we can share.

WILLIS

We can't share.

AMY

Why? What do you think is going to  
happen?

WILLIS

Well, for one thing you might get  
your stepmother to complain. If I  
get another complaint-

AMY

(Interrupts.)

Maybe I'll get her to complain if  
you don't share.

Willis is still looking hesitant.

AMY (CONT'D)

I absolutely promise you it is not  
going to be awkward. I'll go in  
first and go on the top bunk, you  
come in after ten minutes and go on  
the bottom one. I swear I won't  
peek. We don't even have to talk to  
one another.

Willis lies in the bottom bunk, Amy in the top.

The lights are off and Willis is contentedly drifting off to  
sleep.

AMY

Hey Jeff, do you want to hear a funny joke?

Willis opens his eyes.

WILLIS

You're fifteen. You don't know any funny jokes.

AMY

So this guy gets home from work and his girlfriend tells him she is leaving him.

WILLIS

That's not funny, that's tragic.

AMY

It's not finished yet. The guy asks her why she is leaving him and she says, I am leaving you because you are a pedophile.

WILLIS

Amy-

AMY

He says, what? And she says, you heard me: I'm leaving you because you are a pedophile. And so this guy says, well, that is a very big word for a thirteen year old.

WILLIS

Go to sleep, Amy.

50      **INT. BERTH - AMTRAK TRAIN - DAY**

50

Willis wakes up and gets up quietly.

He tentatively glances up into the top bunk.

He is surprised to find that Amy is not there.

51      **INT. VIEWING LOUNGE - TRAIN - DAY**

51

Willis finds Amy alone in the deserted viewing lounge.

She is swaddled in blankets, watching the Californian desert scenery go by in the dawn.

AMY

Do you think this is what dying is like?

WILLIS

What?

AMY

Like just watching something beautiful slip past you. And it is a little sad but it is okay because you realize that you could never really have properly known it anyway.

WILLIS

Can you smell coffee? I think they are making coffee somewhere.

AMY

Jeff.

WILLIS

I don't. I mean. Look, the thing is. You do my job for long enough and you hear a lot of otherwise very smart and very scientific-minded people talk about better places and bright lights and sometimes even aliens. But, well, I think - and bear in mind this is just my personal opinion - it is really a whole lot of horseshit. I think that when you are dead you are dead. Sorry.

AMY

Yeah. That's what I think too. I was just trying to be poetic. But it is a pretty view.

They watch it for a while longer.

AMY (CONT'D)

I've been puking more.

WILLIS

I know.

AMY

It means I'm getting worse, doesn't it?

WILLIS

Yeah.

AMY

But you can't say how long I have?

WILLIS

Even if I could tell you, would you actually want to know?

AMY  
No, I guess not.

They watch some more of the scenery go by.

52

**INT. OAKLAND AMTRAK STATION - DAY**

52

Willis and Amy get off the train.

Willis stops an OLDER COUPLE who are heading for the train with their suitcases. Amy walks on ahead a little bit.

WILLIS  
Excuse me. Are you travelling to  
Portland?

MAN  
Seattle.

WILLIS  
Great. See, the thing is, I'm a  
pediatric doctor, and this young  
lady needs to get back to Portland  
Children's. I was hoping you could  
escort her on the train.

MAN  
Shouldn't you be escorting her?

WILLIS  
I would, but I have to deliver this  
paper about hazelnuts. It's kind of  
a big deal.

MAN  
Well, so long as we don't have to  
do anything medical, I think we  
could help.

Amy has come back to see what the hold up is.

WILLIS  
Amy, these people are going to be  
your companions on the trip back.

MAN  
You just stick with us, young lady.  
We'll get you to the hospital.

AMY  
What? What hospital?

MAN  
Your doctor has told us all about  
it.



AMY  
My doctor? Oh honey, why are you so  
funny? Our love is nothing to be  
ashamed about.

The old couple look horrified, turn and hurry away.

53

**EXT. OAKLAND AMTRAK STATION - DAY**

53

Willis and Amy emerge from the station and head towards the  
single waiting taxi.

WILLIS  
Jesus Christ! You could have had me  
arrested!

AMY  
Try to send me back again and I  
will.

A woman, VALERIE, approaches them. Valerie is in her early-  
thirties, probably pretty behind her large glasses, and  
struggling with a ridiculous amount of luggage that seems to  
include various poster tubes and display stands.

VALERIE  
Excuse me? I couldn't help but  
overhearing-

WILLIS  
Perfect. Take her. I don't even  
want any money for her.

VALERIE  
What?

WILLIS  
You're about to offer to buy her. I  
can feel it.

VALERIE  
I overheard you say you were going  
to the conference. I thought maybe  
I could share your cab. I mean, if  
your daughter doesn't mind.

WILLIS  
She's not my daughter and she  
doesn't get a vote. We'd be glad to  
have you along.

VALERIE  
Great.

Valerie struggles to get her copious luggage into the trunk.

Willis tries to help, but Valerie is so physically awkward it only makes things harder.

54

**INT. TAXI CAB - DAY**

54

Willis, Valerie and Amy in the cab, driving from the Oakland Station to San Francisco.

VALERIE

So what sessions are you looking forward to hearing?

WILLIS

I'm actually delivering the main lecture on hazelnuts.

VALERIE

Wow.

WILLIS

Yeah. It's a big honour but, you know, I'm just taking it in my stride.

AMY

What kind of doctor are you?

VALERIE

Oh, I'm not a doctor. I'm a rep. A rep is somebody who-

AMY

(Interrupts.)

You try and persuade doctors to prescribe drugs that don't work.

VALERIE

Who told you our secret?

AMY

I have an astroglioma.

VALERIE

Oh. Sorry.

AMY

Sorry I have a brain tumour or sorry for trying to poison me?

55

**INT. TAXI OUTSIDE HILTON UNION SQUARE - DAY**

55

The taxi pulls up outside the Hilton Union Square.

Willis takes his billfold out of his wallet.

VALERIE

Let me, Jeff. I can bill this back.

WILLIS

I won't say no to a free ride,  
Valerie.

AMY

It's not free. It just ultimately  
makes the drugs more expensive.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

It is paid for by the families of  
sick and dying children. Lots of  
them don't even have insurance.  
This particular cab ride was  
probably paid for by a foundry  
worker pulling double shifts to buy  
a medicine that he thinks is making  
his kid better but is actually just  
making his kid's hair fall out.

WILLIS

Amy, are you feeling okay?

AMY

Actually, I'm a little nauseous  
right now.

WILLIS

Well, that's funny, because I have  
a severe pain in the neck.

56

**INT. RECEPTION - HILTON UNION SQUARE - DAY**

56

Willis and Amy stand at the reception desk being attended by  
a UNIFORMED RECEPTIONIST.

Valerie is visible checking in a little further down the  
counter.

WILLIS

Dr Willis, I'm here for the  
conference.

The receptionist starts typing.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

I'm presenting the keynote paper on  
hazelnuts.

RECEPTIONIST

Then you'll be booked into one of  
our penthouses.

WILLIS

I'm not, I mean, formally a keynote  
- I'm kind of the keynote speaker  
within the hazelnut subsection. So  
I have a single room at the  
conference rate. They said it was  
eighty two dollars. With tax. And  
I'm also going to need another  
single room for my daughter.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry. The hotel is completely  
booked for the conference.

WILLIS

My daughter needs her own room.  
She's not actually very well, and-

RECEPTIONIST

I'm afraid that is not going to be  
possible. Unless-

The receptionist types something in.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Oh, you're in luck.

WILLIS

Great.

RECEPTIONIST

We have an Imperial Suite with two  
bedrooms available.

WILLIS

An Imperial Suite? How much is  
that?

RECEPTIONIST

It is nine hundred and twelve  
dollars a night. Before tax.

WILLIS

Yeah, the thing is. I mean, it's  
not the price, it's just-

AMY

We'll take it.

Amy holds out her stepmother's credit card.

Willis pushes it away and tries to give the receptionist his  
own card instead.

Amy forcefully gives the receptionist her card.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Live a little, Jeff. Anne doesn't  
even read the bills.

The receptionist looks at her with concern.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Private joke between me and my dad.  
Anne's my mom. His wife. She's just  
a crazy shopaholic, hey Dad?

57

**INT. HOTEL SUITE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

57

A BELLBOY shows Willis and Amy in to the suite and then  
departs.

There are large windows with extensive views of the city  
beneath.

AMY  
Which bedroom do you want?

WILLIS  
Nine hundred dollars a night. I  
think they are both going to be  
okay.

AMY  
Lighten up, Jeff! Nine hundred  
dollars is a small price to pay for  
a view like this.

WILLIS  
Eighty two dollars with tax would  
be a small price to pay. Nine  
hundred and twelve dollars before  
tax is a large price to pay.

AMY  
But look at this view. It's  
Frisco! It's the city lights, like  
Lawrence Ferlinghetti's bookstore!

WILLIS  
Well, I guess you'll be spending a  
lot of time in here so-

AMY  
What? What do you mean?

WILLIS  
See, I have a lot of sessions to go  
to and-

AMY

Jeff, do you really think I rode the rails all the way down to Frisco just to sit around in some crappy hotel room?

WILLIS

It's San Francisco and it's not a crappy hotel room, it's a nine hundred and twelve dollars before tax hotel room. And yes. I do think you came all the way here to sit in a hotel room.

AMY

Well, I didn't! I'm going out to explore. I'm going to go to the Mission, I'm going to ride a street car to the Castro, I'm going to walk up the steep hills and cross the Golden Gate Bridge and then I'm going to go down and look at the goddamn sea lions!

WILLIS

Amy, this isn't Portland. There are all kinds of dangers lurking out there.

AMY

Like what?

WILLIS

Well, for one thing they never caught the Zodiac killer.

AMY

Great. And what terrible thing could he do? Kill me?

Willis sighs.

WILLIS

Keep twenty dollars in your sock and get back here before dark.

AMY

Even ignoring the whole sock thing, that's ridiculous. Why do I have to be back before dark?

WILLIS

So that we can go for dinner.

AMY

Oh. Well, give me the twenty bucks and you have a deal.

Willis takes out a TWENTY DOLLAR BILL and gives it to her.  
Amy goes in to her bedroom and closes the door behind her.

58

**INT. CONFERENCE HALL - HOTEL - DAY**

58

Willis wanders through the conference hall.

DELEGATES are milling around the posters on display.

Several people dressed as GIANT PEANUTS are being chased around by another dressed as a GIANT EPIPEN.

Around the edge of the room are various drug company promotional stands.

They are all emblazoned with expensive and eye-catching materials, each promoting a blockbuster drug.

The stands are all staffed by IMMACULATE WOMEN, and many of the stalls are giving away expensive free gifts: BOTTLES OF SCOTCH, BRANDED MP3 PLAYERS, GOLF CLUBS etc

Willis walks past them all and makes for the auditorium.

59

**INT. AUDITORIUM - HOTEL - DAY**

59

Willis enters the packed auditorium.

Up on stage, a PROFESSOR is talking through fancy-looking graphs that are projected on a powerpoint display.

The last graph is titled '**Incidence of Peanut Allergy**' and it shows a red line spiralling upwards exponentially.

PROFESSOR

In conclusion, the peanut remains  
our most important and most deadly  
foe. We'd be nuts not to redouble  
our efforts against it.

The auditorium laughs and then erupts into applause and, a moment later, a standing ovation.

60

**INT. HOTEL RECEPTION ROOM - EVENING**

60

A welcome reception, a banner saying:

**'UNITED STATES 38th ANNUAL CONGRESS OF ALLERGISTS'**

Delegates stand chatting in small groups.

Willis takes a drink from a table.

A nearby delegate engages him in conversation.

DOCTOR  
Great session today, huh?

WILLIS  
Which one?

DOCTOR  
The peanut keynote. Fascinating.

WILLIS  
Well, if you liked that, I'm giving  
a session tomorrow on the hazelnut.

DOCTOR  
Does anybody still eat hazelnuts?

WILLIS  
Does anybody still eat hazelnuts?  
Are you kidding? It's one of the  
big three. And when you factor in  
Nutella - let me put it this way:  
what other nut can say it is the  
major ingredient in one of the  
nation's top-selling spreads?

DOCTOR  
The peanut.

WILLIS  
What?

DOCTOR  
I think peanut butter sells pretty  
steadily.

WILLIS  
Look, obviously peanuts are number  
one. That's a given. But you know  
what you can't make into a spread?  
Walnuts. Brazil nuts. And don't  
even get me started on pecans. I  
mean, sure, you can make a  
reasonable pie with a pecan, but  
that's about as far as that goes  
and-

Willis notices Valerie at a promotional stand in the  
distance.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
Would you excuse me?

Smaller and much more chaotic than the others, Valerie's  
stand carries the logo of a drug called 'Ventrán'.



Valerie is using a plastic model of the human respiratory system to demonstrate something to a group of delegates.

Most of the model is made of plastic, but two balloons act as inflatable lungs.

Valerie sprays an inhaler into the plastic model's mouth.

VALERIE

And so what Ventran does is to  
really open up the airways. All  
this old stale air that was trapped  
in here-

The balloons were supposed to deflate but have remained the same size.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Sorry, one moment.

Valerie sprays the inhaler again.

The two balloons loudly burst. The noise makes Valerie scream.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Oh. Sorry, well, look, I'm sure you  
all get the idea. I have some  
branded laser pens if anyone-

The delegates are already walking away.

Valerie sighs and starts packing up her broken model.

Willis approaches. Valerie does not initially look up.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm actually finished  
for the day-  
(Sees it is Willis.)  
Oh. Hi.

WILLIS

I've been wanting to apologize on  
behalf of Amy.

VALERIE

I liked it. She has character.

WILLIS

Yes, she does.

VALERIE

Anyway, she is right. This drug I'm  
here to sell, Ventran?

WILLIS

I read about this. It's that new inhaler that dilates your airways-

VALERIE

The new inhaler that we say dilates your airways.

WILLIS

Oh.

VALERIE

It's no better than placebo.

WILLIS

You're not doing a very good job of selling it.

VALERIE

Between you and me I think I might not actually be cut out for being a rep.

WILLIS

How long have you been a rep?

VALERIE

Six and a half years.

WILLIS

So why don't you change jobs?

VALERIE

Stuck in a rut, I guess.

WILLIS

I could drink to that.

VALERIE

Then maybe I could buy you a drink?

WILLIS

I told Amy we'd have dinner. Sorry.

VALERIE

Oh. Okay. Have fun.

WILLIS

Yeah. You too.

Valerie appears a little disappointed, but Willis does not seem to pick up on this.

Willis enters the suite.

WILLIS

Amy?

He glances into both the rooms.

Amy is not there.

Willis goes and looks out the window at the view of the lights of San Francisco.

He looks around and sees Amy's copy of 'Visions of Cody' on a table.

Willis leaves the room.

63

**EXT. CITY LIGHTS BOOKSTORE - NIGHT**

63

A cab pulls up outside the City Lights bookstore.

Willis gets out and hurries inside.

64

**INT. CITY LIGHTS BOOKSTORE - NIGHT**

64

Willis comes downstairs to where a reading is taking place in a packed basement.

Up on stage, a BEATNIK POET is reading from a chap-book.

POET

I want to sing in the railroad  
night,  
I want to feel the desert sun burn  
my bones,  
I want to board my slow boat to  
China,

Willis looks around and glimpses Amy.

He is about to make his way over to her when he sees how enraptured she is by the whole thing.

Willis turns to watch the poet too.

POET (CONT'D)

I want to sail lonesome as the wind  
in Frisco harbour,  
I want to sit at the feet of the  
Buddha,  
I want to touch heaven here on  
earth,  
And know that I was alive in each  
and every moment as I did so.

The poet closes his book and the crowd applauds.

Willis is surprised to find himself moved and joining in with the applause.

65

**EXT. CITY LIGHTS BOOKSTORE - NIGHT**

65

The crowd filtering out to the exits.

Willis has to push his way through to catch up with Amy. She is carrying a chapbook of poetry she has bought.

WILLIS

Amy?

AMY

Jeff! What are you doing here?

WILLIS

Oh, you know, I just wanted to pick up a little Ferlinghetti.

AMY

Really? You like Ferlinghetti?

WILLIS

No! You were supposed to be back at the hotel before dark!

AMY

You're not my dad.

WILLIS

I'm *in loco parentis*.

AMY

I take Spanish, Jeff. What you just said is ridiculous.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

You said that you are a crazy parent.

WILLIS

It's not Spanish, it's Latin. It means that for the purposes of this trip I am your parent. It might be Greek.

AMY

No offence, but if you were my parent I'd run away from home.

WILLIS

You have run away from home. And no offence, but if you were my daughter I'd probably -

AMY

You'd what, Jeff? What would you do?

WILLIS

I'd probably let you walk all over me like my actual daughters do.

66

**INT. CAB - NIGHT**

66

Amy and Willis get into a cab.

WILLIS

Union Hotel please.

AMY

What? I thought we were going for dinner.

WILLIS

We'll eat at the hotel.

AMY

Very adventurous, Jeff.

WILLIS

I have a big day tomorrow.

AMY

What about me?

WILLIS

You're fifteen. There is no what about you.

AMY

I'm dying of cancer, Jeff.

WILLIS

Well, you should have thought about that before you broke curfew.

AMY

Harsh, Jeff. Very harsh.

Amy slumps back in the seat of the taxi.

67

**INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

67

Amy and Willis dine in the hotel restaurant, a beer in front of him, a coke in front of her.

It is staid as any expense-account hotel restaurant anywhere.  
A corny 'jazz' quartet plays in one corner of the room.

WILLIS  
This isn't so bad, is it?

AMY  
It's terrible. But I have a question?

WILLIS  
You can't have a beer. You're not old enough.

Willis takes a long and satisfying pull of his own beer, proving a point.

AMY  
That wasn't my question.

WILLIS  
So what was it?

AMY  
My question is this, Jeff: what's wrong with you?

WILLIS  
Nothing is wrong with me. What's wrong with you?

AMY  
I have an astroglioma.

WILLIS  
Oh.

AMY  
Seriously, Jeff. When did you last have fun?

WILLIS  
What?

AMY  
When did you last have fun?

WILLIS  
Honestly?

AMY  
Yes, Jeff. Honestly.

Willis thinks about this for a long time.

WILLIS  
1998.

AMY

What happened in 1998?

WILLIS

I went camping with some buddies. Two of them were buddies. The third guy, he was kind of a friend of a friend.

AMY

And you've not been camping since?

WILLIS

I've been busy.

AMY

With what?

WILLIS

One thing and another.

AMY

You've been too busy to have fun since nineteen ninety-eight?

WILLIS

Yeah.

AMY

It's as if you've given up, Jeff.

WILLIS

I have given up.

AMY

Then it's no wonder your wife wants a divorce.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

Why would she want to stay married to somebody who had given up on everything?

WILLIS

I'd kind of hoped we could give up together.

AMY

That's ridiculous.

WILLIS

You're too young to understand this, but when you get a bit older life has this way of knocking the stuffing out of you and-

Amy has started to stare straight ahead at Willis.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

What?

Amy does not reply.

Willis now notices that one of Amy's fingers is twitching.

The twitch spreads to Amy's hand, and then her arm.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Right.

Willis lays Amy out on the floor, places a cushion under her head.

Amy starts having a tonic-clonic seizure, her arms and legs jerking rhythmically.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Can somebody call an ambulance,  
please?

68

**INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - SAN FRANCISCO HOSPITAL - NIGHT**

68

Amy lies on a trolley in a busy emergency room.

Willis is sitting beside her reading the chapbook of poetry she bought.

Amy drowsily stirs and sees Willis.

AMY

Jesus, Jeff. What are you doing  
here? Don't tell me you died too.

WILLIS

You didn't die. You had a seizure.

AMY

Did they scan me?

WILLIS

Yeah.

AMY

Has the astroglioma all gone away  
and we can live happily ever after?

Willis shakes his head.

AMY (CONT'D)

So what happens now?



WILLIS

They've given you medicine to  
reduce the risk of more seizures.  
It doesn't affect, I mean, overall  
the-

AMY

I know.

WILLIS

Do you want to go back to Portland?

AMY

No.

WILLIS

Do you want to go back to our nine  
hundred dollar hotel suite?

AMY

Nine hundred and twelve. Before  
tax. Yes.

Amy closes her eyes and drifts off back to sleep.

69

**INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT**

69

Willis carries a slumbering Amy in to the hotel suite.

70

**INT. BEDROOM - HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT**

70

Willis lays Amy on the bed and tucks the covers over her.

AMY

(Sleep-talking.)

I want there to be sea lions in the  
morning, Jeff.

WILLIS

Yeah.

Willis goes to leave the room.

AMY

And I don't want a crappy funeral.

Amy still has her eyes closed and is talking in a murmur.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

I don't want a whole lot of people  
who barely even know me talking  
bullshit and listening to  
sentimental music that doesn't even  
mean anything to anyone there.

(Beat.)

And I really want to see sea lions  
tomorrow.

WILLIS

Yeah. Goodnight Amy.

AMY

Goodnight Jeff.

71

**INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT**

71

Willis enters the hotel bar, sits down and signals the  
BARTENDER over.

WILLIS

Scotch, please. A big one.

Willis sips his drink. A moment of quiet and peace.

Then, a little way down the bar, he spots a familiar face:  
the HANDSOME MAN from the Portland Children's billboard.

The man is even more perfect-looking in the flesh. He is  
saying goodnight to TWO WOMEN who look like they are also  
models.

Willis laughs ruefully into his drink. Of all the bars in all  
the world.

After the women depart, Willis glances across at the guy  
again. He finds he cannot resist.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Hey. How's it going?

HANDSOME MAN

Good, thank you.

The Handsome Man turns his attention back to his drink.

WILLIS

Don't I know you from somewhere?

HANDSOME MAN

I don't think so.

Willis points at the guy, pretending he has just remembered.

WILLIS

Portland Children's.

HANDSOME MAN

I'm sorry?

WILLIS

You're on the billboard for  
Portland Children's Hospital.  
You're on it with my wife and  
daughters, actually.

HANDSOME MAN

Oh, Okay. Sounds about right.

WILLIS

Yeah. I wasn't considered - you  
know - photogenic or happy enough.  
So, to you.

(Raises drink.)

Mr Happy Handsome Guy. Happy Happy  
Handsome Guy. Happy Handsome Guy,  
right up there on the billboard  
with my family, where I have to  
pass it every day.

Willis downs his drink.

HANDSOME MAN

I'm not happy.

WILLIS

What?

HANDSOME MAN

People see my smiling on all those  
posters and they assume I must be  
happy.

Willis looks intrigued; this is indeed exactly what he has  
always assumed.

HANDSOME MAN (CONT'D)

You know all I've ever wanted to  
be? A proper actor.

Willis is surprised by this.

HANDSOME MAN (CONT'D)

Off-Broadway theatre, that's all I  
wanted to do. One play and I'd be  
content. Just one. And every time  
the phone rings it's another  
fucking catalogue or campaign. Come  
to San Francisco and sell cheese.  
Come to St Louis and sell cars.  
Come to Denver and sell orphans.

Willis is staring at the guy in disbelief.

HANDSOME MAN (CONT'D)  
 I'm empty inside. Completely and  
 utterly empty. Between you and me,  
 most days I don't even want to get  
 up anymore.

The Handsome Man necks his shot.

Willis stares at him in disbelief, astonished that this  
 seemingly perfect man is as unhappy as him.

WILLIS  
 Can I buy you another drink there?

HANDSOME MAN  
 Sure.

72

**INT. HOTEL - BREAKFAST ROOM - DAY**

72

Willis and Amy sit eating breakfast in the hotel.

Willis glances around to make sure nobody is watching then  
 fills his own insulated cup from the pot on the table.

WILLIS  
 How are you feeling today?

AMY  
 Fine.

WILLIS  
 I'm going to be at the conference  
 all day. I've got my talk at three  
 so-

AMY  
 I want to come.

WILLIS  
 What?

AMY  
 I want to come to your talk.

WILLIS  
 You're not a delegate. You don't  
 have a pass.

AMY  
 You can put me on the guest list.

WILLIS  
 What?

AMY  
 Like it was a band.

WILLIS

It's not a band. There isn't a guest list.

AMY

So then you could smuggle me in.

WILLIS

It's an important session. It's probably going to be full.

AMY

I'd really like to see it, Jeff.

WILLIS

Why?

AMY

Because I'm proud of you.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

You're about to talk at the United States Congress of Allergists. That's something, isn't it?

This has an impact on Willis that he was not anticipating.

WILLIS

If you meet me in the lobby at two thirty, we can try and get you in.

AMY

Great.

WILLIS

What are you going to do until then?

AMY

I'm going to explore Frisco.

Willis looks at Amy and from the defiant look on her face sees that it is not worth arguing with her on this point.

WILLIS

Okay. But call me if you start to feel funny. And don't talk to any men, alright? This isn't Portland. Any one of these guys could be the Zodiac killer.

AMY

He'd be like a hundred years old by now.

WILLIS  
Well, then they could be his son.  
Sometimes these things run in  
families.

73      **INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY**

73

Willis stands practicing his lines in front of the mirror in the suite.

WILLIS  
And in conclusion, we must never be  
vague about hazelnut allergy.

Willis frowns. It is not as punchy as the other guy's finale.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
And in conclusion, we must never be  
hazy about hazelnut allergy.

Willis smiles at the mirror. He has got it.

And then he winks at his reflection. And then frowns.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
It's the Congress of Allergists.  
Not 'Jeopardy'.  
(Beat.)  
And in conclusion, we must never be  
hazy about hazelnut allergy.

Willis gives the mirror his 'serious' look.

74      **INT. HOTEL SWIMMING POOL - DAY**

74

Willis goes to the empty hotel swimming pool.

He stands on the side, draws his hands up above him as if about to make a graceful dive.

And then bellyflops in.

He swims a length underwater.

He comes up, gasping for air and rubbing his eyes.

At the far end of the pool, he sees Valerie exit the steam room and walk along the poolside to the changing room.

Willis does not say anything, just watches her.

75      **INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY**

75

Willis getting dressed for his big moment.

He irons his shirt, puts on his best cuff-links and adjusts his tie.

He then picks up his phone and dials a number.

His face falls as the call goes through to answerphone.

WILLIS

Hi Susie. It's Jeff. I just - I'm doing my talk today and I kind of - well, I was just calling so you could wish me luck. I am sure you're thinking of me and you are probably just busy with something. I'll see you soon.

(Beat.)

Hey, maybe you're actually on your way down here and you're just going to surprise me? That'd be nice. But, I mean, I understand if you're not. I just-

(Beat.)

I don't know if I already said so, but this was Jeff, by the way.

Willis hangs up the phone.

76

**INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY**

76

Willis, dressed in his best suit, hurries in to the lobby.

It is bustling with delegates.

Amy is there, holding hands with a boy, DANNY.

DANNY is about sixteen. He is covered in tattoos and piercings and he has a goatee beard. He is carrying a longboard.

WILLIS

Who is this?

AMY

Danny. He wants to come to the talk too.

WILLIS

What?

DANNY

I've heard a lot about you, Jeff. The whole cashew nut thing sounds - well, I'm psyched.

WILLIS

Can I talk to you?

AMY

Yes.

WILLIS

Over there.

AMY

Excuse us a minute, Danny.

WILLIS

Who is that kid with the skateboard?

AMY

It's not a skateboard, it's a longboard. And I told you already, that's Danny.

WILLIS

Yes, but who is Danny?

AMY

Just a boy I met.

WILLIS

Where did you meet him?

AMY

On the street.

WILLIS

What do you mean you met him on the street?

AMY

We just kind of got talking.

WILLIS

Why isn't he in school? He should be in school.

AMY

He doesn't go to school here. He goes to school in Des Moines.

WILLIS

So what is he doing here?

AMY

Same thing we're all doing in Frisco, Jeff. Looking for the pearl.

A bell is rung, signifying that the session is about to start.



77

**INT. AUDITORIUM - HOTEL - DAY**

77

The same auditorium as yesterday, tight on the stage.

The screen says:

**THE HAZELNUT - A CINDERELLA STORY****DR JEFF WILLIS, LEAD PEDIATRIC ALLERGIST, PORTLAND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

Willis approaches the lectern and starts to speak.

WILLIS

When people think of allergy-

As Willis speaks he begins to look around the auditorium.

As he does so, something seems to catch in his throat.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

When people think of allergy-

We now see that - including Amy and Danny - there are only about SEVEN PEOPLE in the entire auditorium.

One of them - an OLD MAN in the front row who appears to have drifted in off the street - is already asleep.

Amy gives Willis an encouraging thumbs-up sign.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

When people think of allergy, they  
first of all think of the peanut.  
Very few people stop to consider  
the humble hazelnut, and yet-

A door noisily opens at the back of the room.

Willis looks up, hopefully, expectantly.

Valerie slips in and takes a seat.

78

**INT. AUDITORIUM - HOTEL - DAY**

78

Willis is coming to the end of his talk.

He has his jacket off now, and the slide we saw him test on Chen is displayed behind him.

WILLIS

...And in conclusion, we must never  
be hazy about hazelnut allergy.

Willis gives the auditorium his serious look, but it quickly fades to an expression of disappointment.

There is a pause.

Amy starts eagerly clapping.

A few others join in.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Thank you. Are there any questions?

The few delegates present look impassive and disinterested.

Willis' gloom visibly deepens.

Seeing this, Amy puts her hand up.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

The young lady in the middle there?

AMY

It's not a question so much as a comment. I just wanted to say I thought this was really an excellent talk.

WILLIS

Thank you.

Willis smiles and nods and turns and walks off stage.

79

**INT. HOTEL BAR - DAY**

79

Willis sits with Amy and Danny.

He has a large drink in front of him and he is staring straight into the distance.

WILLIS

Do you know how long I spent preparing for that moment? Dreaming about it, planning it all out?

DANNY

A couple of hours?

WILLIS

A couple of hours? That's what you think? That's how long you think that took me?

DANNY

A week?

WILLIS

Ten years. Danny. A decade. What a goddamn waste.

AMY

It wasn't a waste, Jeff.

WILLIS

Yeah. It was.

AMY

Jeff, she came.

WILLIS

What? Susie was here? Are you sure?  
I didn't see-

AMY

No. The child catcher wasn't here.  
Valerie came. She likes you.

WILLIS

How would you even know that?

AMY

Because I'm a woman.

WILLIS

You're a girl. And I am married.

AMY

You're separated. Your wife has  
asked you for a divorce.

WILLIS

What? Who told you that?

AMY

It's a hospital. Kids talk.

WILLIS

Look, Susie and I might be  
separated. But we are still joined  
by a very special bond. If anything  
important happened, she would be  
there for me.

AMY

So where was she today? Or wasn't  
this an important day for you?

On Willis, Amy's words visibly having an impact on him.

Amy spots Valerie passing through the bar.

AMY (CONT'D)

Valerie! Hi!

Amy gets up and hugs Valerie.

AMY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry if I was weird yesterday.  
I'm on Tylenol. It makes me go  
completely loopy. This is my  
boyfriend, Danny.

WILLIS

He's not her boyfriend. She met him  
on the street today.

AMY

It's called spontaneity, Jeff. You  
haven't heard of it, but some  
people find it helps them to stay  
alive.

WILLIS

My middle name is spontaneity.

AMY

So take us all to dinner in  
Chinatown to celebrate the occasion  
of you talking at the Congress of  
Allergists.

WILLIS

What? Now? No. I can't. We don't  
have a reservation and-

Amy is looking at Willis with her eyebrows raised.

She draws the sign for 'square' with her fingers.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Fine, fine. Somebody just call us a  
cab.

80

**INT. CHINATOWN RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

80

A cheap and cheerful restaurant in Chinatown.

Willis, Amy, Valerie and Danny all sit around a table at the  
end of a meal.

Everybody is cracking up with laughter.

WILLIS

And then this girl at the desk  
says, you are in luck, it is nine  
hundred dollars! Before tax!

VALERIE

It doesn't sound so lucky, Jeff!

WILLIS

Well, I sleep in the garage at  
home, so this is definitely better!

Everyone stops laughing at this.

AMY

What?

WILLIS

Oh, since my wife and I separated,  
I sleep out in our garage. It's  
fine.

The others look at him. Really?

WILLIS (CONT'D)

I mean, it'd be better if I could  
go in the house after nine o'clock.  
But, you can't have everything,  
right? Besides, modern camp beds  
are actually surprisingly  
comfortable.

VALERIE

I bet your nine hundred dollar bed  
is even more comfortable, Jeff.

Valerie fixes Willis with a sultry gaze as she reaches for  
her wine glass.

And knocks it all over the table.

WILLIS

Here. Let me-

Willis dabs at her with a napkin.

VALERIE

I need to go the ladies room.

Valerie gets up and hurries away.

AMY

You should totally bone her  
tonight.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

Tell him, Danny.

DANNY

I've been observing Valerie's body  
language carefully. She wants to  
bone you.

AMY

Danny is an expert in body  
language.

WILLIS

Well, I'm married. I made a vow.  
That doesn't mean much at your age,  
but when you have spent as long  
being faithful as my wife and I  
have-

AMY

She makes you sleep in the garage!

WILLIS

Our love is more complicated than  
you could ever understand.

AMY

Danny, could you excuse us for a  
minute?

DANNY

Yeah, I knew you were going to say  
that. From your body language.

Danny gets up and heads to the restroom too.

WILLIS

What is this?

AMY

Look, the thing is Jeff, there is  
no easy way to say this.

WILLIS

Amy, if this is the part where you  
tell me you are secretly in love  
with me, trust me, today has been  
more than bad enough already. Why  
don't you just write a poem about  
me. And then, you know, burn it?

AMY

You know that guy at the hospital,  
Dr Melcher?

WILLIS

Of course I do. He's my friend.

AMY

Oh. Is he a good friend?

WILLIS

He's my only friend.

AMY

Right.

WILLIS

What? What about him?

AMY

He's kind of sleeping with your wife, Jeff.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

Yeah. I saw them going at it in the pathology lab. Sorry.

WILLIS

What? How?

AMY

Well, first of all they were kind of standing up, which was weird, but then he sort of-

WILLIS

I meant how did you see them?

AMY

Oh. I had to go there to get some blood drawn.

Willis stares into the distance.

WILLIS

Melcher. I never thought of Melcher. Dalton, McQueen, Patel - I thought of all the others. One time I even asked her if it was Margaret Brown.

Willis looks at Amy, suddenly suspicious.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Why are you telling me this now?

AMY

Because you are wasting the best moments of your life, Jeff.

WILLIS

No I'm not. I wasted the best moments of my life long ago.

AMY

You didn't. Do you know how I know that?

WILLIS

How do you know that?

AMY

Because the past is the past and in the future we'll all be dead, so all anybody has is the right now.

WILLIS

You're not reading that from a fortune cookie, are you?

Valerie returns from the bathroom and sits down.

VALERIE

What did I miss?

Amy and Willis both fall silent and stare at each other.

81

**EXT. CHINATOWN RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

81

Willis talking on his phone outside the restaurant.

WILLIS

I'm not surprised you are not picking up, Ron. If I were you, I would not be picking up either. But I'm not angry. I'm just sad. All those times I came to you and told you about the problems Susie and I were having. And you listened and pretended you were concerned. And you were concerned, weren't you? Because you're such a good friend, Ron! Because you always had my back! I mean, you always had my back so you could stick your knife in! You are dead to me, Ron! Absolutely dead! And I swear to god when I see you I'm going to-

Willis turns and sees Valerie, Danny and Amy all staring at him.

He presses the button to hang up the phone.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Hey. You guys ready to go home?

AMY

No.

WILLIS

What?

VALERIE

The night is still pretty young, Jeff.



WILLIS

It's after eleven. The night is elderly. If it's not elderly then it's certainly middle aged.

AMY

Jeff, we are leaving tomorrow. Have you even seen any of the sights of Frisco?

WILLIS

I've been to Chinatown. So yeah, I think I've done pretty well with the sights.

AMY

What about the Golden Gate Bridge? What about the steep hills? What about the sea lions? Those are the things Frisco is famous for, and you've not seen any of them!

WILLIS

I'll see them next time I'm here. It's too late now.

VALERIE

It's not really too late, is it?

AMY

Live a little, Jeff! We'll all be dead soon enough.

WILLIS

Alright, alright, fine. Let's see the Bridge. Find us a taxi.

Amy whistles for a taxi.

82

**INT. TAXI DRIVING OVER GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - NIGHT**

82

Willis sits in the front, Amy, Danny and Valerie squeezed in the back.

They are driving over the golden gate bridge.

VALERIE

Isn't it beautiful?

WILLIS

You know, we have bridges in Portland that are nice too.

AMY

We don't have bridges like this, Jeff.

WILLIS  
Yeah, maybe not. This one is pretty special.

They gaze out the windows, everyone enjoying the beauty of the structure, the lights, the water.

Willis turns to the driver.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
Are we going to have drive all the way back over this thing, or is there another way around?

Amy hits Willis from the back seat.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
What? I just thought, you know, maybe there was a tunnel or something.

83

**INT. TAXI - STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT**

83

The taxi driving through streets of San Francisco.

DANNY  
So what now?

WILLIS  
Now we go back to the hotel. It's late.

Willis smiles at Valerie and rolls his eyes: kids these days.

AMY  
Hey! Stop the car! Stop the car!

The taxi driver pulls over to the side of the road.

WILLIS  
What?

AMY  
That place there! That's the Sixth Gallery!

Willis looks sceptically at the place, an entrance to a grungy-looking basement with a faded canopy that does indeed say 'Sixth Gallery'.

AMY (CONT'D)  
It's where Allen Ginsberg first performed 'Howl'! Kerouac was too shy to read that night, so he just shouted out encouragement. Neal Cassady passed around the hat so they could buy more whiskey sours.

WILLIS

Great. And now we've seen it we can go home.

AMY

No! We have to go in there!

Willis sighs and turns to Valerie.

WILLIS

Can you explain this to her, place?

VALERIE

Amy, this is where those writers you love used to hand out, right?

AMY

It's where it all began! It's where the Beat Generation was born!

VALERIE

Then what are waiting for?

Valerie gets out of the car.

Amy follows her.

Danny shrugs apologetically at Willis and gets out.

Willis turns to the DRIVER and counts out the far.

WILLIS

You shouldn't have stopped. Next time, listen to the guy who is paying the fare, okay? I'm sure there is some kind of regulation about that.

84

**INT. SIXTH GALLERY - NIGHT**

84

Inside, the Sixth Gallery is a dark and busy basement jazz club.

The band on stage are a HIPSTER JAZZ GROUP. They are playing loud, free-form jazz. The band - and indeed the place - are the polar opposite of the hotel restaurant from the previous night.

Amy, Danny, Valerie are taking in the scene as Willis descends the stairs and joins them.

AMY

This is awesome.

WILLIS

It's very loud.

DANNY  
Don't you like it?

AMY  
Jeff was a flower child. He likes  
songs about unicorns sung by men  
who sound like women.

WILLIS  
What? No, I wasn't. And no, I  
don't.  
(Sighs.)  
What do you all want to drink?

AMY  
What do you think we want? Whiskey  
sours.

WILLIS  
Okay. What do you want that doesn't  
have any alcohol in it?

AMY  
Really, Jeff?

WILLIS  
Really, Amy.

Amy sighs.

AMY  
Fine. Just get us jaegerbombs then.

WILLIS  
What's a jaegerbomb?

AMY  
Root beer and coke. You know, what  
little kids drink?

Willis turns to Valerie.

WILLIS  
Whiskey sour?

VALERIE  
Sounds great.

85

**INT. SIXTH GALLERY - A LITTLE LATER - NIGHT**

85

The four of them sit at a table, watching the band who are  
really rocking out.

Eight empty glasses on the table show that they have been  
here a little while and have had a couple of rounds.

A WAITRESS is passing nearby.

AMY

Can we have one more round?

Willis looks at Valerie. She shrugs at him: why the hell not?

WILLIS

Miss! Two jaegerbombs and two  
whiskey sours please.

WAITRESS

Coming up.

Valerie now stands up and pulls Willis towards the dance floor.

WILLIS

Oh no. That's not. I mean. I don't  
really. I have a ligament thing and-

Valerie puts a finger to her lips and leads Willis to the area in front of the stage where a few people are dancing.

Valerie starts to dance. Her style is highly idiosyncratic, but she is so completely unselfconscious that it looks good.

Willis himself now starts to move. He begins very stiff but, inspired by Valerie's example, starts to loosen up.

Now the TENOR SAX PLAYER takes a solo and Valerie closes her eyes and starts to really go for it.

She is so lost in the music, so at one with the moment, that Willis stops dancing and simply stares at her.

He takes a step backwards to give her more space, and finds himself backing into the BOUNCER.

BOUNCER

You folks have to leave now.

WILLIS

What? We just got here. Look how  
much she's enjoying herself.

BOUNCER

You've been giving alcohol to  
minors.

WILLIS

They've only been drinking  
jaegerbombs. They're just root beer  
and coke.

BOUNCER

They're jaegermeister and red bull.

On Willis as he realizes.

Willis looks across to where Amy and Danny are standing - with their coats already on and looking a little sheepish - at the edge of the dancefloor.

Willis looks sternly at Amy. She looks solemnly back at him.

Amy goes first, breaking into a smile.

Willis starts to smile too but quickly looks away in an attempt to prevent Amy seeing this.

86

**EXT. NOB HILL - SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT**

86

Nob Hill. Amy and Danny lead the way, then Valerie, then Willis straggling behind.

WILLIS

You know, this can't actually be the right way to our hotel. You do all realize that?

AMY

What makes you say that, Jeff?

WILLIS

What makes me say that is our hotel isn't up a huge hill. That's kind of the clue.

Amy and Danny have reached the top of the hill.

They turn back and stare at the view behind them.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Valerie. You seem like someone who would understand basic geography-

Valerie has now reached the top and has also turned back to look at the view.

VALERIE

Uh, Jeff-

WILLIS

Yeah.

VALERIE

Shhhhh.

Willis who has now joined them at the top, turns back and looks down the hill too, so the four of them are now stood in a line.

Spread out beneath them are the night-time lights of the city, and beyond those the bay and then the sea. It is breathtakingly beautiful.

They stare at it in wonder for a some moments.

AMY

You know what you should do? You guys should have a shot on Danny's longboard.

WILLIS

What? No. You should. You're younger and-

AMY

I already did.

WILLIS

What? When?

AMY

We came up here this morning.

WILLIS

Look how steep it is, Amy! You could have been killed!

AMY

That's pretty much the fun of it.

WILLIS

Well, did you even have a helmet?

AMY

Uh, let me see. No.

WILLIS

You went all the way down there without a helmet?

VALERIE

I'm game if you are, Jeff.

WILLIS

Go down there on a skateboard? At my age? Are you insane?

DANNY

It's a longboard, Jeff. If you sit down it is actually technically impossible to hurt yourself. Even for a guy in his sixties.

WILLIS

What? I'm not in my sixties! Is that what you think?

DANNY

Well, most people that were at the Summer of Love-

WILLIS

Look, I was not at the Summer of  
Love! I was three years old in  
1967!

Valerie takes the longboard from Danny and sits down on the  
back of it.

VALERIE

We're only here tonight, Jeff.  
It'll be fun.

Willis shakes his head and grudgingly sits down at the front  
of the longboard.

WILLIS

Why do I have to go at the front?

VALERIE

In case we crash into anything.

WILLIS

Okay, look, if we just don't go too  
fast, then-

Valerie uses her legs to push them off very firmly.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

What did you do that for?

VALERIE

I was getting us going!

They start picking up speed and both start to scream, Valerie  
with joy, Willis with something a little closer to terror.

VALERIE

Yeaahhhhhh!

WILLIS

Aaarrgghhh!

They hurtle down the pavements, people jumping out of the  
way.

The wind is in their hair as they go, faster all the time.

Amy and Danny are behind them.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Go left!

WILLIS

I can't! There's no steering wheel!

VALERIE

Lean then!

WILLIS

I'm already leaning! You lean!



They crash into a lamppost. It looks bad.

Valerie gets up, a little dazed.

Willis remains lying on his back.

AMY

Jeff!

Willis has not moved since the crash.

AMY (CONT'D)

Jeff? Oh my god, Jeff? Are you  
okay?

As Amy arrives she finds Willis still lying on his back but  
laughing and staring up at the stars.

WILLIS

I want another shot.

AMY

I don't think Danny will let you.

WILLIS

Well, how much do those things  
cost?

AMY

A hundred bucks.

WILLIS

I'll take two.

Willis stands up, still laughing.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

That was great. That was really  
something.

Amy stares at Willis.

AMY

Did you just have fun, Jeff?

WILLIS

What? No. No. No, that wasn't fun.  
I mean-

AMY

You had fun, admit it!

WILLIS

I'm not admitting anything. Find us  
a taxi, would you?

Amy looks at Willis with disappointment.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
 We've been in Frisco two whole days  
 and I've not seen a single goddamn  
 sea lion yet.

Amy looks delighted.

87

**EXT. ENTRANCE TO PIER 39 - NIGHT**

87

A taxi pulls away leaving Willis, Valerie, Amy and Danny at the locked entrance to Pier 39.

WILLIS  
 Well, that's too bad.

DANNY  
 Wait here.

Danny scales a nearby fence with a speed that suggests he has done this on more than one occasion before.

WILLIS  
 What's he doing?

AMY  
 Relax. Danny knows what he is doing.

WILLIS  
 That is kind of what is concerning me.

A moment later the gate is opened from the inside.

DANNY  
 What are you guys waiting out here for?

88

**EXT. PIER 39 - NIGHT**

88

Willis, Valerie, Danny and Amy sit on the boardwalk near the SEA LIONS.

They stare at the sea lions. Up this close they are amazing creatures: filthy and belching and yet somehow grotesquely beautiful.

WILLIS  
 You know, despite the name, sea lions are actually closer to the seal family than the lion family. It's kind of a secret we scientists keep to ourselves.

VALERIE  
 Why?

WILLIS  
Mainly for these guys.

VALERIE  
What?

WILLIS  
Think about it, Valerie. If this was just a bunch of seals out here lazing around all day and stinking the place out and getting in the way of shipping then, well, people wouldn't be nearly so tolerant of them. Throw in the lion part, though, you can do what you like. We actually run a similar programme with the mountain lion.

Valerie pushes Jeff affectionately.

VALERIE  
Did anybody ever tell you how ridiculous you are?

WILLIS  
Well, yeah, quite a lot. But I think I prefer the way you say it.

They are interrupted by a flashlight shining in their faces and the crackle of a bullhorn.

COP  
SFPD! Keep your hands where we can see them!

89

**INT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT**

89

A police precinct busy with WEARY COPS and LATE NIGHT MISCREANTS.

Inisde an office, a UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICER is interviewing Willis And Valerie. A window gives on to corridor, where Amy and Danny are sitting.

OFFICER  
Okay. So we've got breaking and entering and misdemeanor possession of marijuana.

WILLIS  
Marijuana? What? Who had marijuana?

OFFICER  
The boy with the skateboard.

WILLIS  
It's a longboard.

The Officer looks at Willis.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

We're not with that kid. He's from Iowa.

OFFICER

You're not in loco parentis?

WILLIS

Of that guy? No. We've never seen him before in our lives.

OFFICER

That's a pity. See, I could have let him off with a warning, but if he's an unaccompanied minor-

VALERIE

He's my nephew.

Through the window, Willis sees that Amy and Danny have started kissing. He starts banging on the window.

WILLIS

Hey!

OFFICER

Sir?

WILLIS

Could you get them to knock that off please? You can Taser them if you like.

OFFICER

What relation is the girl to you, Sir?

WILLIS

She's my patient.

OFFICER

What?

WILLIS

I'm a children's doctor. Amy is my patient.

OFFICER

And, uh, what's wrong with her?

WILLIS

She's dying of brain cancer.

OFFICER

I'm sorry, you broke into the pier with a kid with cancer?

WILLIS

She wanted to see the sea lions.

Willis sees this is not cutting any ice.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

We're working on behalf of a  
charity called Moonbeams-Make-A-  
Wish to make the dreams of  
terminally ill children come true.

Out in the corridor, Amy and Danny are all over each other.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Hey! Knock it off, would you!

OFFICER

A registered charity was involved  
with this?

WILLIS

Officer. I'm a children's doctor.  
Do you really think I'm the kind of  
man that would break into a pier  
with a girl dying of brain cancer  
and a long-boarding pothead from  
Iowa just for kicks?

The Officer sighs and wearily commences to write up his  
notes.

90

**EXT. HILTON HOTEL - NIGHT**

90

Willis, Danny, Amy and Valerie get out of a cab outside the  
hotel.

WILLIS

Are you going to be okay to get  
home?

DANNY

What? I'm coming up, amn't I?

WILLIS

No.

DANNY

So it goes. I'm pretty much a hobo  
anyway. It's all good.

WILLIS

Where are you actually going to  
sleep, though?

DANNY

My cousin has a condo in Russian  
Hill. Goodnight.

Danny and Amy kiss.

WILLIS  
Come on, come on, please don't do  
that.

91      **INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - NIGHT**

91

Willis, Amy and Valerie ascending in the lift.

Awkward silence.

The lift pings as it reaches a floor.

WILLIS  
So I guess this is your-

VALERIE  
(Interrupts.)  
Room 422.  
(Beat.)  
Oh. Yeah. This is my floor.  
Goodnight.

WILLIS  
Goodnight.

Valerie gets out of the lift, somehow managing to stumble as she does so.

Other GUESTS get in and the lift continues to ascend.

Amy elbows Willis in the ribs.

Willis elbows Amy in the ribs.

92      **INT. HOTEL SUITE - WILLIS' ROOM - NIGHT**

92

Willis lies awake in his room.

He looks at the clock.

When it changes from 0329 to 0330 he throws back the covers and gets up.

We see he still has all his clothes on.

Willis tiptoes out of the room.

93      **INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT**

93

Willis tiptoes out of the suite, gently closing the door behind him.

94

**INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ROOM 422 - NIGHT**

94

Willis knocks on the door of Room 422.

Valerie, now wearing a hotel robe and no longer wearing her glasses, opens the door.

Willis stares at her.

She stares back.

We think they are locked in a passionate gaze.

VALERIE

Who's there, please? I don't have  
my glasses.

WILLIS

It's Doctor Jeff. Doctor Willis.  
Jeff Willis. Jeff. It's Jeff.

Valerie leaps forward and starts furiously kissing Willis.

After a few moments of this she drags him into the room and  
closes the door behind them.

95

**INT. VALERIE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY**

95

A single, cramped hotel room of the eighty-two dollar  
variety.

Daylight streaming in from the windows.

Valerie is sleeping on the bed.

Willis is creeping around the room, picking his clothes up  
and quietly putting them back on.

96

**INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY**

96

Willis, still carrying his shoes, creeps back into his suite.

He closes the door quietly and then tiptoes across the room.

AMY (O.C.)

Busted, Jeff. Totally busted.

Willis spins around to see Amy sat on the couch.

WILLIS

Morning. I popped down to the gym.  
Did a few circuits.

AMY

In the clothes you had on last  
night.

Willis stops, seems to hear something.

Danny appears in the doorway of one of the bedrooms, a towel wrapped around his waist.

WILLIS

Danny? Why are you here?

AMY

It's nine hundred and twelve dollars a night, Jeff. If you're not going to sleep here, we have to get Anne her money's worth somehow.

WILLIS

Wait. Did you two-

AMY

Every terminally ill child deserves to have a wish come true, Jeff.

Willis puts up his hand and shakes his head. He does not want to hear any more, does not want to think about it.

97

**INT. HOTEL BREAKFAST ROOM - DAY**

97

Willis, Amy and Danny all sit at a table in the hotel dining room having breakfast.

Danny notices that Amy is not eating.

DANNY

Why aren't you eating anything?

WILLIS

She'd only puke it up later.

A moment of silence.

Willis glances at Amy. Doesn't Danny know?

AMY

Yeah. I didn't tell you this yet, but I have cancer.

DANNY

I just thought you were bulimic. Can they treat it?

AMY

No.

DANNY

Bummer.

AMY

Yeah.



98

**EXT. UNION HOTEL - DAY**

98

Willis packs the bags into the boot of a taxi.

He looks back at the hotel and sees Amy smooching with Danny.

WILLIS

Amy. Come on, Amy. We're going to  
be late.

Amy does not stop kissing Danny but detaches a hand from his  
embrace just long enough to give Willis the finger.

Valerie emerges from the hotel with all her copious luggage.

VALERIE

Hi.

Willis is visibly uncomfortable.

WILLIS

I'm sorry for I didn't wake you  
this morning, I-

VALERIE

It's okay, Jeff. I wasn't actually  
planning on marrying you.

WILLIS

No, I didn't, I mean-

VALERIE

You can put yourself down as a  
vacation romance.

WILLIS

Oh.

VALERIE

Also I'm pretty sure you're married  
already.

WILLIS

Well, there is that.

VALERIE

But it was nice to meet you, Jeff.

WILLIS

It was nice to meet you too.

Valerie kisses Willis on the cheek then walks away.

Willis watches her go, struggling with her luggage, and  
imagines how another life could be.

In the background, Amy is still vigorously kissing Danny.

WILLIS (CONT'D)  
 Amy! You'll catch Mono. Or Herpes.  
 Possibly CMV. Maybe even Hepatitis  
 C.

99

**INT. AIRPLANE - DAY**

99

The flight from SFO to PDX is quiet.

Willis and Amy sit near the back. His trusty insulated cup of coffee is sitting on the tray in front of him.

They are both wearing AIRLINE EYE MASKS and Willis is using an inflatable travel pillow.

WILLIS  
 Have you thought about where you're  
 going to live when we go back?

AMY  
 I was hoping I could come and live  
 with you.

WILLIS  
 I live in the garage, Amy. And I  
 have these daughters. They're kind  
 of mean and-

AMY  
 I'm kidding. I'll go back to the  
 hospital. And then if I'm still  
 alive in a fortnight me and Danny  
 are going to elope to Alaska.

WILLIS  
 Why Alaska?

AMY  
 Because why not Alaska?

WILLIS  
 He's a nice kid, Danny. From Iowa,  
 but, you know, otherwise okay.

AMY  
 Do you know who else was nice?  
 Valerie.

WILLIS  
 That situation wasn't what you  
 thought it was.

AMY  
 A random hook-up?

WILLIS

Yes. No. It wasn't a random hook-up. We'd known each other for a while and-

AMY

You met her at the cabstand two days ago.

WILLIS

People experience time as a percentage. It goes faster when you are older. But that's not what is important.

AMY

What is important?

WILLIS

It was just. I had to get it out of my system. What you told me about Susie and Melcher. I think I just needed to, I don't know, even up the scores. And now I did that, well, Susie and I can have a real go at sorting things out. Of course, I'll still need to kill my so-called friend Melcher, but that is a small price to pay.

Amy does not say anything for a moment.

AMY

Um, Jeff, about that stuff?

WILLIS

About what?

AMY

That stuff. It kind of wasn't really true.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

Yeah. I kind of made it up. Sorry.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

I didn't see them doing anything.

Willis takes his eye mask off.

WILLIS

What? Wait, my wife wasn't sleeping  
with Melcher?

Amy - still wearing her eye mask - shakes her head.

Willis is completely horrified as he thinks through the  
implications: Susie, the phone call he made to Melcher.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

But why, why would you make  
something like that up?

AMY

Because you needed to live a  
little, Jeff.

Willis takes Amy's eye mask off.

WILLIS

What?

AMY

You needed to get laid. I did it  
for you. I wanted to set you free.  
I wanted to help you feel something  
again.

WILLIS

It didn't work.

AMY

What?

WILLIS

I didn't feel anything.

AMY

Yes, you did.

WILLIS

No, I didn't. And why did you have  
to pick my only friend?

AMY

That was an unfortunate  
coincidence. He was just the most  
ridiculous person I could think of.  
I didn't know he was your only  
friend.

WILLIS

Just don't talk to me. Don't say  
anything else ever again.

Willis pulls his eye mask down.

Amy sighs and then pulls her eye mask down too.

100

**EXT. TAXI DRIVING THROUGH PORTLAND STREETS - NIGHT**

100

Willis and Amy in the back of a taxi driving through Portland.

Amy glances across at Willis.

AMY

Jeff? Are you more or less mad with me than you were on the train?

WILLIS

More. Way more. A vast amount more.

AMY

Right. I mean, it's just good to know. To have some sort of scale.

WILLIS

It's not even on the same scale. It's exponentially different.

AMY

I don't know what exponentially means.

WILLIS

It means a massive amount. A goddamn massive amount, Amy.

Amy is visibly upset by this. When she next speaks, we understand she is fighting back tears.

AMY

I was doing it for you, Jeff. I thought you'd be grateful.

WILLIS

Okay, next time, do me a favour? Don't do anything for me!

AMY

Oh, I won't. You don't have to worry about that.

101

**EXT. GARAGE - WILLIS HOUSE - NIGHT**

101

Willis pays the taxi off in front of his house.

He opens the garage door.

The garage looks miserable, Willis' pathetic camp-bed crammed in front of the freezer, the fishing rods etc.

Willis sighs and puts his overnight bag down.

102

**EXT. BACK DOOR - WILLIS HOUSE - NIGHT**

102

Willis knocks on the back door.

Susie opens it.

SUSIE

It's after nine, Jeff.

WILLIS

I just got back from San Francisco.

SUSIE

Welcome back. It's still after nine.

WILLIS

Can I come in? I need to talk to you.

SUSIE

You'll have to be quiet. The girls will go nuts if they catch you in here.

103

**INT. KITCHEN - WILLIS HOUSE - NIGHT**

103

Willis and Susie sit across the table from each other.

SUSIE

What can I do for you, Jeff?

WILLIS

I have a confession to make. It's something very serious.

SUSIE

You haven't killed anybody, have you?

WILLIS

No. It's worse than that.

SUSIE

Jesus Christ, Jeff. What did you do?

WILLIS

When I was in San Francisco I slept with someone. It was an accident. I mean, it wasn't strictly speaking an accident but-

SUSIE

Who was this person?

WILLIS  
Her name was Valerie. It didn't  
mean anything. It was fun, but it  
didn't mean anything. I didn't  
actually even feel-

Susie sits back, shrugs and smiles at Willis.

SUSIE  
Good for you, Jeff.

WILLIS  
What?

SUSIE  
I said 'good for you'.

WILLIS  
Aren't you angry?

SUSIE  
No.

WILLIS  
Jealous?

SUSIE  
No.

WILLIS  
Upset?

SUSIE  
No.

WILLIS  
Even a little bit any of the above?

SUSIE  
I'm pleased, Jeff. You did  
something. You got out there and  
did something. I've been telling  
you for months that our marriage is  
over. Now, if you could just please  
run away with someone, that would  
be even better.

WILLIS  
That's really how you feel?

SUSIE  
That's really how I feel.

Willis digests this. It hurts, but is somehow liberating too.

WILLIS  
 (Hopefully.)  
 You're not by any chance sleeping  
 with Melcher, are you?

SUSIE  
 I'm not sleeping with Melcher,  
 Jeff. You'd better get back to the  
 garage now.

Willis is heading out the door.

SUSIE (CONT'D)  
 Jeff?

WILLIS  
 Yeah?

SUSIE  
 You can take the girls to the game  
 this week. I think it'd do you all  
 good to spend some time with each  
 other. They miss you.

WILLIS  
 They get mad when I come in the  
 house. If they miss me, they could  
 just let me come in and-

SUSIE  
 They miss the old you. We all do.

104

**INT. CHILDREN'S WARD - DAY**

104

Willis and Chen stand at the end of the bed of a SEVEN YEAR  
 OLD GIRL.

Willis is wearing his Goofy tie and drinking coffee from his  
 insulated cup.

Willis' gaze is wandering off to the door to Amy's room.

CHEN  
 Melissa presented with  
 gastroenteritis. She has had forty-  
 eight hours of diarrhoea and-

WILLIS  
 (Interrupts.)  
 Why didn't we see Amy Morrison this  
 morning?

CHEN  
 She requested Dr Turner take over  
 her care again.



WILLIS  
Oh. How is she?

CHEN  
She had another seizure last night.

WILLIS  
Maybe we should pop in and say  
hello.

CHEN  
Amy and her stepmother have said  
they'll put in a complaint if you  
approach her.

WILLIS  
Right.

CHEN  
Anyway, this girl with  
gastroenteritis-

Willis stares at the door to Amy's room.

105

**INT. MARGARET BROWN'S OFFICE - DAY**

105

Willis sits in Margaret Brown's office.

MARGARET  
Do you know why I have asked you  
down here, Jeff?

WILLIS  
Am I being presented with an award  
of some kind?

MARGARET  
We have an issue, Jeff.

WILLIS  
What is that?

MARGARET  
We have some parents who are on the  
verge of making a formal complaint  
against you.

WILLIS  
Well, that's obviously a case of  
mistaken identity. I've not even  
been here. I've been in San  
Francisco.

MARGARET  
It dates from before your trip.

WILLIS

Oh. Who is it?

MARGARET

Mr and Mrs Lakovic. They brought their child to be vaccinated by you last week.

WILLIS

And did I vaccinate it?

MARGARET

Her. Yes.

WILLIS

So what are they complaining about?

MARGARET

Your interaction with them and your general attitude. But I've managed to square it with them that if you apologize to them then they won't proceed to a formal complaint.

WILLIS

Is that everything?

MARGARET

Yes.

106

**INT. MORTUARY - DAY**

106

Willis enters the mortuary.

WILLIS

Hey, Ron.

Melcher gets up and hurries around the other side of the dissection table in order to put some distance between him and Willis.

MELCHER

I didn't do it, Jeff. I don't know what you think I did or why, but I didn't do it.

WILLIS

I know, Ron.

MELCHER

You're not just pretending so that I'll come over there and then you can attack me?

WILLIS  
I'm not just pretending so that  
you'll come over here and then I  
can attack you. Can we drink a  
beer?

Melcher eyes Willis suspiciously and then nods to the  
mortuary drawer.

Willis opens it, takes out two beers and passes one to  
Melcher.

107

**INT. WILLIS CAR - DRIVING ON FREMONT BRIDGE - NIGHT**

107

Willis driving his car, stuck in traffic on the Fremont  
bridge.

Alexis and Blake are both sitting in the back, wearing their  
cheerleader uniforms.

BLAKE  
Why is your car so gross?

ALEXIS  
Yeah. And Mom says you're having an  
affair.

WILLIS  
What? That's not true. You two know  
you and your mother are the only  
women in my life.

BLAKE  
Eugh.

ALEXIS  
Douchebag.

BLAKE  
You know who Mom should start  
seeing? Bill Drake.

ALEXIS  
Totally. His car is awesome.

BLAKE  
Yeah. Why don't you have a car like  
Bill Drake's?

WILLIS  
I'm a paediatrician. Bill Drake is  
an eye surgeon. Our jobs reward us  
in different ways.

ALEXIS  
Yeah. Bill Drake's job rewards him  
with actual money.

Willis looks out the window towards where the Portland Children's advertisement was.

He does a double take when he sees it has been replaced with a POSTER that says '**VISIT SAN FRANCISCO!**'.

The photographs on it include NOB HILL, the GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE and the PIER 39 SEA LIONS.

BLAKE

Hey Dad, You never brought us back our money from San Francisco.

ALEXIS

Yeah. You should probably give us extra. For interest.

BLAKE

And a surcharge for having an affair.

Willis pulls the car over to the side of the road.

ALEXIS

What are you doing, Dad?

WILLIS

You guys are getting out.

BLAKE

What? What are you talking about?

WILLIS

There is an emergency at the hospital. I have to go there now.

ALEXIS

Really?

WILLIS

Really.

ALEXIS

It just seems a little odd that nobody called you or paged you.

WILLIS

They called earlier. I just forgot until now.

BLAKE

Mom is going to freak.

WILLIS

You both have phones and I know that because I pay the bills. You can call a cab.

INT. CHILDREN'S WARD - NIGHT

Willis enters the ward.

WILLIS  
Lucia? What's going on?

WILLIS  
How many?

WILLIS  
Don't call her.

WILLIS  
What do you think she is going to  
be able to do?

Willis shakes his head and enters the room.

109

109

She is in bed, looks pale, sweaty and drowsy.

Willis studies her chart.

AMY  
Well, that really sucks.

WILLIS  
Do you want me to call Anne?

Amy shakes her head.

AMY

Why are you even here, anyway? I'm pretty sure I fired you.

WILLIS

I actually came by to say thank you.

AMY

For what?

WILLIS

Well, you know, paying for the hotel suite. Some other stuff too.

AMY

Are you thanking me for telling you your wife was sleeping with Melcher?

WILLIS

Mainly for paying for the hotel suite. But the other thing too. A little bit.

AMY

We'll always have Frisco, Jeff.

WILLIS

Is there anything I can do? Are you sure you don't need me to call anyone? Do you maybe need some water or your feet massaged or-

AMY

You could read to me, Jeff.

Willis looks puzzled, but then sees the paperback copy of 'On the Road' on the bedside table and understands.

He picks it up and begins to read.

WILLIS

(Reads.)

I first met Dean Moriarty not long after my wife and I split up. I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about, except that it had something to do with the miserably weary split-up and my feeling that everything was dead. With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life you could call my life on the road...

Amy has closed her eyes and rested back on the pillow.

110      **INT. CORRIDOR - DAWN**      110

Willis emerges from Amy's hospital room and closes the door behind him.

Something about the weary way he moves tells us Amy has passed away.

It is morning now, CHARLIE wheeling his IV stand to the bathrooms, the DAY STAFF arriving in, the first CLEANERS getting to work.

111      **INT. WILLIS CAR - DRIVING ON FREMONT BRIDGE - DAY**      111

Willis drives home across the Fremont Bridge.

Going this way there is no traffic.

112      **EXT. WILLIS HOUSE - DAY**      112

Willis gets out of the car.

He walks up the stairs to his front door.

113      **INT. WILLIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY**      113

Willis enters the hallway.

As soon as he closes the door Susie, Blake and Alexis converge on him from various rooms.

Alexis, just of the shower, has a towel wrapped around her head. Blake is cleaning her teeth with an electric toothbrush. Susie has her skirt and blouse on, but they are not yet fully buttoned up.

SUSIE

Jesus Christ, Jeff. The girls are saying you left them on the freeway last night?

BLAKE

It's before eight-fifteen, Dad!

ALEXIS

You shouldn't be in here before eight-fifteen!

Willis walks straight past them all, through to the kitchen.

Willis takes a BEER out of the fridge opens it and pours it into a glass.

He then does the same with ANOTHER BEER and walks upstairs holding his two full glasses of beer.

His family have followed him, though they have now fallen silent.

114      **INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY**

114

Willis walks into the guest room carrying his two beers.

He closes the door behind him, shutting the door on his wife and children.

115      **INT. CHURCH - DAY**

115

A small church, a WHITE COFFIN at the front overlaid with a simple wreath and a BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO OF AMY.

The photograph is a recent one, but Amy looks surprisingly young; in life the force of her personality made her seem older than she really was.

A MINISTER stands at a lectern, addressing a SMALL CONGREGATION: Willis, Susie, Anne, Melcher, a couple of Nurses, a few others.

MINISTER

Our music today was all selected by Amy herself. I'm not sure it is what any of us would have chosen, but it is what Amy wanted and that is what is important. This first song is at least a short one.

A moment later, the music starts.

It is some kind of awful THRASH METAL DIRGE.

The congregation are mostly bemused.

Anne is horrified and seems about to cry.

Willis is smiling. He gets that Amy was just trying to piss people off.

The music finishes.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

Normally I would say a few words of eulogy at this point, but when I visited her in hospital Amy said that organized religion was all a lot of, well, the only person she wanted to speak today was her pediatrician, Doctor Jeff Willis. Dr Willis?



This is clearly news to Willis, who glances behind him then taps his chest in a 'Who, me?' kind of gesture.

The minister nods.

Willis reluctantly comes up to the lectern.

WILLIS

Well, this is, unexpected. I mean, really unexpected. A eulogy. Jesus. I don't actually know what to say. Amy and I only knew each other towards the end of her life so the first fifteen years of it - well, who knows what happened there? Obviously at some point her Mom died, and then her Dad married Anne and then he died, but Amy didn't get along with Anne so-

Willis sees Anne looking at him.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Maybe she wanted me to talk medically? Well, this tumour Amy had, it was really an aggressive one. There was not much you could do about it. I mean, a few years ago there was some experimental work from France on a mouse model that looked quite promising, but since then-

Willis looks out at the blank faces of the crowd.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

What am I doing? Amy didn't want me to talk medically. She wanted me to talk about who she was.

Willis takes a deep breath and looks out at the congregation.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Well, Amy Morrison was fifteen years old. She liked Jack Kerouac and she took absolutely no shit from anybody. She would have made more of even one more week of life than any of us in this room have done in years and even though I only knew her for a short time she was my friend and I am going to miss the absolute hell out of her.

Willis nods at the Minister then gets down from the lectern.

Willis takes his place back in the pew. He has not cried.

MINISTER

Amy had requested that we play one more song.

The music comes on.

Gently strummed melodic chords. They sound vaguely familiar, but initially nobody can quite place the song.

On Willis as the words start.

The song is 'San Francisco' by Scott McKenzie.

SCOTT MCKENZIE (LYRICS)

If you're going to San Francisco  
Be sure to wear some flowers in  
your hair,  
If you're going to San Francisco  
You're going to meet some gentle  
people there.

On Willis.

He does not want to.

He looks around.

He is going to make sure that he does not.

But then he starts to tear up.

SCOTT MCKENZIE (LYRICS) (CONT'D)

For those who come to San Francisco  
Summertime will be a love-in there  
In the streets of San Francisco  
Gentle people with flowers in their  
hair.

And then Willis is openly weeping, the first time in years.

Willis is crying so hard that several other members of the congregation turn to look at him.

116

**INT. WILLIS' CAR ON FREMONT BRIDGE - DAY**

116

Willis - dressed for work in his Goofy tie - drives over the Fremont Bridge in busy traffic.

Workmen are changing the 'VISIT SAN FRANCISCO' poster to one for 'VENTRAN'.

It depicts a cute child taking an inhaler.

The caption says 'HELP THEM BREATHE MORE EASILY'.

Willis is sipping from his insulated cup.

It seems like it is just another day.

117

**INT. MARGARET BROWN'S OFFICE - DAY**

117

Willis sits opposite MR and MRS LAKOVIC whilst Margaret Brown looks on.

MARGARET

Firstly, thank you for coming in today.

WILLIS

That's okay. I was here anyway.

MARGARET

I meant Mr and Mrs Lakovic.

WILLIS

Oh.

MARGARET

Now, Dr Willis has something he'd like to say to you about your recent interaction.

WILLIS

I'm-

(Beat.)

I mean-

(Beat.)

I-

Willis tries but cannot physically say the words.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

She wants me to say I'm sorry. But I can't. That's because I'm not sorry.

MARGARET

Jeff.

WILLIS

I'm not. I don't do this job because it's fun or because I like getting up in the middle of the night or because I like driving a car that cost a tenth of what Bill Drake's did. I do it because I want to look after your kids and because I'm good at looking after your kids.

(MORE)

WILLIS (CONT'D)

And if you think your friend Jenna who once read something in a magazine knows as much about this as me who has only spent my whole life doing this, well, that's fine, but don't ask for my opinion then, and don't be upset when it's not the same as Jenna's.

MRS LAKOVIC

You said a doctor not believing in vaccination was like a chef not believing in broiling.

WILLIS

I'm going to use that one again.

MRS LAKOVIC

Mrs Brown, you said that if we came here he was going to apologize.

MARGARET

Jeff, if these people complain there won't be anything I can do about your position.

WILLIS

I know.

MARGARET

But if we fire you what will you do? We're the only children's hospital in the city and-

WILLIS

I've been thinking I might drive across the United States.

MARGARET

What? Why?

WILLIS

I'm going to look for the pearl.

MARGARET

But who will cover allergy?

WILLIS

Maybe Jenna can.

A clock ticking in an empty waiting room.

WILLIS (O.C.)

You want to know something funny?  
We tell kids that adults know  
everything. We tell them 'Wait till  
you are older' and 'You're too  
young to understand this' and 'You  
can't ride the rollercoaster until  
you are four feet eight' and 'Just  
wait until your taste buds mature  
and then you'll realize just how  
much you've been missing out on by  
refusing to eat mushrooms all this  
time'.

119

**INT. PLASTER ROOM - DAY**

119

A row of CHILDREN sit with various arms and legs in plaster casts.

WILLIS (O.C.)

But, you know, when you think about  
that, it's crazy. Our taste buds  
don't mature. They just wither. All  
five year old girls think they are  
going to grow up to be princesses  
and all five year old boys think  
they are going to grow up to be  
astronauts. Even most teenagers  
still all think they are going to  
be popstars or models or at least  
dentists and football players.

120

**INT. NEONATAL NURSERY - DAY**

120

Mobiles dangle above rows of cribs of PERFECT NEWBORN BABIES.

WILLIS (O.C.)

But ask an average adult what the  
future holds, and they will say,  
well, if they work hard and don't  
piss anyone off and don't get laid  
off and their ulcer doesn't make  
them need to take any more sick  
days, well, they might possibly be  
able to see about asking for a  
raise the year after next if the  
economy doesn't tank any further.

121

**INT. PEDIATRIC CLINIC ROOM - DAY**

121

Willis sits in his chair in the clinic room.

He has his insulated coffee cup in front of him and he is  
wearing his Goofy tie.

WILLIS

So what I am saying to you is this. Right now, you have a twinkle in your eye. You don't know it is there, because to you it is just your eye, and it's there every time you look in the mirror. And besides, all your friends have the same twinkle too. But, Clive, when I see you in this clinic in a year's time, I want it to still be there.

Pull back to see that Willis is addressing a bemused-looking Clive, the asthmatic kid from the start.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

And even better, when I bring my grandchildren in to see you in thirty years time, I want it to still be there. That is when I really want it to still be there. Of course, knowing my luck I'll probably be dead by then, but I'll still be watching you, okay?

CLIVE

Why won't I see you for a year?

WILLIS

Because I'm going away.

CLIVE

Where?

WILLIS

I don't know, Clive. That's kind of the fun of it.

CLIVE

Oh, well. Don't forgot to have a good time.

Willis is taken aback by this. Out of the mouths of babes.

WILLIS

Yeah, I won't. You don't forgot to have a good time either.

CLIVE

I won't.

Willis comes out of his front door carrying his insulated coffee cup.

He makes for the garage door and opens it.

We start to think maybe nothing has changed after all.

But the garage is different inside, for it now contains an RV.

Willis gets in and starts the engine.

As he pulls out, Susie and his daughters come to the door and wave him off.

They are not coming with him on his trip, but being on such waving terms is at least a start.

123

**INT. WILLIS' RV ON BRIDGE - DAY**

123

Willis in his RV on the Fremont bridge.

WORKMEN are changing the Ventran advert for one that features a picture of a PEARL.

We cannot yet see what the product is, just that the advertisement involves a gleaming pearl.

Willis pulls into the lane for the interstate, puts his foot to the floor, and drives off into the distance.

**FADE OUT**

**THE END**