

CAPTAIN INFINITY

Written by

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(10-15-16)

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CLOSE ON A DIMPLED, GAP-TOOTHED GRIN --

WIDEN TO REVEAL the owner of the grin, A FIVE-YEAR-OLD BOY. GUATEMALAN-AMERICAN. Tiny with wild, curly jet black hair. Decked out in a MAKESHIFT SUPERHERO OUTFIT. This is **BENJY RUIZ** and he's poised at the edge of a...

EXT. ROOF, RUIZ HOME - DAY

TOES curl. KNEES flex. Benjy looks to the heavens, raises his arms in a SUPERMAN POSE ready to leap into the abyss. A HERO.

MUSIC CRESCENDOES blending with the sounds of SIRENS--

OSCAR (O.S)
BENJY, BAJAR EL TECHO!!!

CRANE UP PAST BENJY and find a depressed Los Angeles suburb, gawking NEIGHBORS shaking their heads in their driveways, and-

OSCAR RUIZ(18) Benjy's older brother, on the YARD BELOW. Same jet black hair swooped to the right. Handsome with a boyish charm, but uptight-- crushed by too much responsibility.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Get off the roof Benjy!

BENJY
No Oscar. I wanna fly!

OSCAR
YOU CAN'T FLY!

A SQUAD CAR pulls up to the CURB.

Oscar approaches **LAPD OFFICER FIRESTONE** (50's, weathered) in the DRIVER'S SEAT--

OSCAR (CONT'D)
False alarm Officer Firestone.
Everything is A-Okay.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
What'd I tell you about keeping an eye on the little fella? This is the third time in a month.

OSCAR
We're fine. Really--

Suddenly, the GUTTER groans under Benjy's weight and he TEETERS off balance...

Oscar rushes to Benjy's aid, ready to catch him if he falls--
Benjy steadies himself. Oscar breathes a sigh of relief.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
What's it going to take to get you
off of the roof?

BENJY
Ummmm... I want a fish!

OSCAR
Done.

Benjy smiles. Heads through the window where he came, as
Oscar turns back to the CROWD to clean up Benjy's MESS--

BENJY (V.O.)
My brother Oscar is my Alfred and
I'm...
(a la Michael Caine)
Masta Wayne.

SLAM TO:

INT. BATHROOM, RUIZ HOME - DAY

BENJY (V.O.)
Alfred is there when Batman's tummy
hurt 'cause he ate too much glue...

Benjy is hunched over the toilet. Oscar rubs his back.

INT. BEDROOM, RUIZ HOME - DAY

BENJY (V.O.)
... or when he stick a Lego up his
nose...

Oscar kneels below a crying Benjy. He looks up into his NOSE.

OSCAR
I'm not even mad. Just, how?

INT. BEDROOM, RUIZ HOME - DAY

BENJY (V.O.)
... or to make Bob better when he
get sick...

TIGHT ON: BOB, A DEAD GOLDFISH in a bowl of murky water.

BENJY (O.S.)
What's wrong wit' Bob?

Benjy holds the FISHBOWL up to Oscar.

OSCAR
(lying)
Bob's just tired. He needs a nap.
Let him rest.

Benjy accepts this as the truth and gleefully darts away giving us a tour of the closet of a bedroom they share: TWIN BEDS and SHITTY IKEA FURNITURE--

BENJY (V.O.)
I actually don't like Batman that much. I like Marvel betta. Can I start ova' wit' the story?

BENJY'S WALL is littered with MARVEL SUPERHEROES -- POSTERS of THE FANTASTIC FOUR, WOLVERINE...

BENJY (V.O.)
Oscar is Mr. Fantastic and I'm the Thing...

OSCAR'S WALL is swathed in CLASSIC ROCK POSTERS -- THE CLASH, THE RAMONES, THE STONES.

Oscar strums an upbeat toon on an OLD GUITAR. He's good. The music carries us through a series of scenes...

BENJY (V.O.)
... or no, he Professor Xavier, and I'm Wolverine... WAIT NO! He the Wolverine when Wolverine became Captain Universe...
(beat, satisfied)
Yeahhhh. That's it!

... the most prominent of all Benjy's Superheroes-- a life-size cut-out of CAPTAIN UNIVERSE, a blue and white superhero with the slogan:

"The Hero That Could Be You!"

SLAM TO:

TIGHT ON: DEAD BOB in a TOILET BOWL...

A STREAM of yellow whiz treats Dead Bob like Target Practice. Oscar smiles as he pees, the simple things in life.

BENJY (V.O.)

Basically, Professer Xavier clean up after Wolverine makes a mess.

INT. KITCHEN, UPSCALE ITALIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

A HUSKY MANAGER and Oscar walk and talk as they weave in and out of the busy kitchen clean up crew.

MANAGER

Oscar, my restaurant isn't a day-care. If you can't get a baby-sitter I'm going to have to let you go.

OSCAR

But we can't afford a baby-sitter. Listen, I know Benjy's a bit of a handful, but he's been really well behaved this last week.

MANAGER

He lit a menu on fire last Tuesday.

OSCAR

Please. You know I need this job.

Manager exhales, okay.

SMASH! A loud crash from off screen. Manager and Oscar share a look before they open up the KITCHEN DOORS and find --

INT. DINING ROOM, UPSCALE ITALIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

UTTER DEVASTATION. Plates and glasses are shattered. A WAITER gingerly gets up and gathers his TRAY.

Benjy freezes on top of a TABLE, caught.

BENJY (V.O.)

We have to leave places sometimes because they don't like superheroes. Too many bad guys there, I guess.

EXT. STREET, UPSCALE ITALIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Oscar silently fumes as they exit the restaurant.

WIPE TO:

SHOTS OF OSCAR AT BENJY'S SOCCER PRACTICE, SWIMMING, AND KARATE--

INT. KARATE STUDIO - DAY

BENJY (V.O.)

Oscar takes me everywhere, because
he loves watchin' me play the
sports...

Oscar looks miserable sandwiched in the middle of A LONG LINE OF MOM'S who all swoon over the handsome **SENSEI CHAZ** (mid 20's) half Golden Retriever half bro, as he leads Benjy and the other little ninjas in intense jab moves.

SLAM TO:

INT. PET-STORE - DAY

BENJY (V.O.)

He so busy being my fan, he say he
don' have time for a girlfriend.

TIGHT ON: A SLEEVE OF TATTOOS handing a PLASTIC BAGGY with a NEW, LIVE GOLDFISH to Oscar.

The Tattoos are straight out of a Graphic Novel, and are all SUPER HEROINES (Invisible Woman, Black Widow, etc.) The owner of the tattoos, **LOLA FIRESTONE** (24) is the pet-store manager. We may see the resemblance to her father, Officer Firestone.

LOLA

Your brother is a goldfish serial
killer.

Oscar smiles awkwardly, intimidated by this force of nature.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Don't be a bitch, just nut up and
tell him the truth. Life is
fleeting. Fish die. He'll
understand.

OSCAR

... I'll do that. Thanks.

LOLA

Honesty is always the best policy.

She punches his shoulder. *It hurts.*

BENJY (V.O.)
Really I think he just too busy
working out...

INT. BASEMENT, RUIZ HOME - DAY

Oscar BENCH PRESSES in a makeshift gym. Benjy tiptoes down the stairs.

OSCAR
Get out Benjy. You know you're not allowed down here.

BENJY
Why?

Benjy investigates the FREE WEIGHTS, before--

KNOCKING A BARBELL ON THE FLOOR, SMASH!!!

BENJY (V.O.)
... or playing games I not allowed to play.

INT. BEDROOM, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

TIGHT ON: Oscar MASTURBATING under the SHEETS.

BENJY (O.S.)
What are you doing?

WIDEN to reveal Benjy at the foot of the bed. Oscar freaks, frantically tries to make it look like nothing is happening.

OSCAR
Er, nothing! I was just, uh, playing a game.

BENJY
Oh fun, can I play?

OSCAR
NO!

BENJY (V.O.)
Oscar say that super powers run in our family. He has telephene-esis...

EXT. STREET - DAY

Oscar and Benji are stopped at a STOPLIGHT on his BICYCLE. Benji's arms are wrapped around Oscar's chest.

OSCAR

I can make the light turn green
with my mind in five seconds:
Five, four, theeeeeeeeeeeeeee--

Oscar clocks the OPPOSING STOPLIGHT turn RED, so he--

OSCAR (CONT'D)
(rapid-fire)
--two-one.

-- just as the stoplight turns GREEN. Benji oo's and ah's.

SLAM TO:

INT. LIVING-LIVINROOM, RUIZ HOME - DAY

BENJY (V.O.)
He can even use his mind to shut
off the internets.

Benji sits at the FAMILY COMPUTER and the INTERNET isn't
working-- NETWORK CONNECTION ERROR...

OSCAR
I turned off the internet with my
mind because you've been playing
too many video games and not doing
enough homework.

BENJY
But there's no school. It's summa.

TIGHT ON: A TIME WARNER CABLE NOTICE - SUSPENDED SERVICE

Oscar is YELLED AT in a flurry of English and Spanish <<the
Spanish will be subtitled>> by their striking Guatemalan
mother, **SANDRA RUIZ** (30's). She's beautiful but not vein, and
lives for her children.

SANDRA
<<You were supposed to pay the Time
Warner bill. You can be so
irresponsible sometimes Oscar...>>

Oscar takes the abuse.

BENJY (V.O.)
 My Mami Sandra. Her super power is
 that she always right. Always. And
 she knows everything... Well except
 English. She working on English.

SLAM TO:

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Oscar, Benji, and Sandra sit in a PEW wearing their SUNDAY
 FINEST, except Benji, who wears a CAPE instead of a tie.

BENJY
 Is there a God?

SANDRA
 <<Of Course>>

BENJY
 Huh?

SANDRA
 Of course there is. Now sh!

BENJY
 But, but --

SANDRA
 Shhh!

Benji SNEEZES loudly. SNOT hangs from his nose. He flails
 around for a tissue--

Sandra offers up her SLEEVE. Benji blows his nose with gusto.

LATER:

Benji SNORES on Oscar's shoulder as the Priest, **FATHER JOHN**,
 gives his sermon--

FATHER JOHN
 Is suicide a sin? Yes. God gives
 life, "I have come that they may
 have life, and have it to the full"
 (John 10:10). Now is it
 unpardonable or unforgiveable? No.

Oscar searches his mom's eyes, but she remains intensely
 focused on the PODIUM.

EXT. - PARKING LOT, CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Oscar walks with Benjy up on his shoulders while Sandra walks by their side.

BENJY

How do you know there's a God?

SANDRA

<<You have to have faith in our Lord>>

BENJY

Huh?

SANDRA

You have to have faith in our Lord
hijo.

BENJY

Why?

SANDRA

Because faith keeps you moving
through the bad times.

BENJY

Why are there bad times if there a
God?

Oscar smiles. Smart kid. Shares a look with his mom.

SANDRA

Well...

OSCAR

(cutting in)

So that you'll appreciate the good
times.

BENJY (V.O.)

... My daddy work full time as a
Superhero. That's why I never see
him.

SLAM TO:

INT. KITCHEN, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

TIGHT ON: a CRUCIFIX in the middle of a DINING ROOM TABLE.

Moonlight juts through the window illuminating Sandra washing
DISHES.

OSCAR (PRE-LAP)
"I'm currently in Ghana protecting
underprivileged children from the
evil Dr. Doom."

INT. BEDROOM, RUIZ HOME - LATER

They have a MAKESHIFT FORT set-up in between their two beds.
A light is on INSIDE THE FORT--

Oscar reads from a LETTER..

OSCAR
"... I'm not sure when I'm coming
home but just know that I love you
more than anything, and listen to
Oscar, and especially your mother -
she's always right. XoXo Papa."

BENJY
Is papa really a superhero?

OSCAR
Oh yeah. Definitely.

BENJY
Do you think he'll teach me how to
become one on my birthday?

OSCAR
Maybe. But only if you know how old
you're turning?

BENJY
Four... No, Five?

OSCAR
Bingo.

BENJY
I love you Oscar.

OSCAR
Uh Huh.

Oscar kisses Benjy good night. The light goes out.

BENJY (V.O.)
Our story is like all da superhero
stories -- and it started on my
birthday... *The best day of my life!*

SLAM TO:

PRE-LAP
Cumpleaños Feliz!!!

INT. KITCHEN, RUIZ HOME - MORNING

Benji's FIVE BIRTHDAY CANDLES are in a STACK OF PANCAKES. He blows them out to much fanfare. Sandra kneels down to Benji dressed in her HOTEL MAID UNIFORM.

SANDRA

Hijo, I wish I could spend your special day with you, but Mami has to <<pay the bills>>.

BENJY

Aw Mami!

SANDRA

Guess what? Because it's your special day Oscar will take you to pick out any comic you want.

BENJY

ANY COMIC?! Are you serious!? THIS IS THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE!?

OSCAR

Really setting the bar low there Benji.

Sandra checks her wallet -- it's EMPTY.

SANDRA

<<Oscar do you have any cash? I forgot to stop by the bank.>>

OSCAR

<<Uh. Yeah. I've got some.>>

INT. BEDROOM, RUIZ HOME - SAME

Oscar rummages through his DRAWER, and finds a PIGGY BANK JAR. Scoops out a FEW BILLS. His eyes linger on--

A THICK ENVELOPE from **NYU'S CLIVE DAVIS INSTITUTE OF RECORDED MUSIC**, peaking out beneath a few ratty T-Shirts.

It's been collecting dust here for a few months. It's not clear if Oscar keeps this envelope here for safe keeping, or in an effort to forget. Oscar's face is unreadable.

SLAM TO:

EXT. COMIC BOOK STORE - DAY

Benji runs dangerous circles around the SHELVES.

OSCAR
SLOW DOWN BENJY! YOU'RE GOING TO
HURT YOURSELF!?

LOLA (O.S.)
Oscar?

Lola, from the pet-store, notices Oscar as she's perusing.

OSCAR
Lola, Hey!

Oscar talks to Lola distracted -- keeping an eye on Benji.

LOLA
Find anything good?

OSCAR
Me? Oh no, just here for my lil'
bro Benji. I'm not into comics.

LOLA
So where's the Jeffrey Dahmer of
fish?

Oscar laughs a little too hard -- she makes him nervous.

OSCAR
Er, Benji's off picking out his
birthday present. My treat.

LOLA
Aw. That's so sweet of you.
(she gets closer)
Hey, do you want to come over and
smoke some weed when you guys are
done? YOU, not Benji, obviously.

OSCAR
... Er, I don't do weed.

LOLA
Well you don't "do" weed Oscar, you
smoke it. Actually, I make these
amazing pot brownies that will make
you lose your motor skills, like
really wipe you out--

BENJY
(interrupting)
I got it, I got it, I got it! I
found the one I want.

Benjy notices Lola and hides behind Oscar's knee, *shy*.

LOLA
Hi there Benjy!

OSCAR
He gets shy around girls.

Benjy elbows Oscar's knee.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Ow!

BENJY
You get shy around girls, dummy!

Lola laughs. Oscar glares at Benjy.

LOLA
Which comic did you choose Benjy?

OSCAR
Captain Universe is his favorite
Superhero. Right Buddy?

LOLA
Really?

Lola bends down so she's eye level with Benjy.

LOLA (CONT'D)
Why is Captain Universe your
favorite?

BENJY
Well, uh... I like that Captain
Universe can be anyone... a dog, a
neighbor... even me.

LOLA
That uni-power comes in handy. My
favorite was when mutant girl X-23
was the host for Captain Universe.
It was a fucking bloodbath--

Benjy gasps!

BENJY
You said the F-word!

LOLA

Oops. Sorry I'm like a sailor sometimes.

(correcting herself)
Freakin' bloodbath.

Lola starts taking her shirt off, trying to find a TATTOO on her back--

LOLA (CONT'D)

I've got X-23 as Captain Universe on my back somewhere... Do you see?

Benjy looks at Lola's back like a treasure map. He props up closer to get a better look.

BENJY

Spider-Girl, Invisible Woman, Black Widow, Storm, X-23 -- WOW! Oscar I wanna paint my body!

OSCAR

Not allowed.

Benjy doesn't respond. He's landed on a Superhero he doesn't recognize -- this never happens.

BENJY

(re: a Tattoo)
Who's that? I don't know that one.

LOLA

That's my mother.

BENJY

(mind blown)
Your Mami is a superhero!?

LOLA

She was... before she died.

Long beat. Benjy is confused.

BENJY

What's died? Like "Death" the Marvel character? He's a bad guy!

OSCAR

(changing the subject)
We really should get going. So nice to see you Lola.

BENJY

(to Lola)

Wanna come to the park wit' us for
my birthday?

OSCAR

She doesn't want to do that.

LOLA

Sure. Why not?

SLAM TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Oscar and Lola sit on a PARK BENCH, looking after a very active Benjy darting around the JUNGLE GYM. Lola pulls out a VAPE PEN. Takes a long drag. Blows SMOKE RINGS. Oscar freaks.

OSCAR

What are you doing!?

LOLA

Want a hit?

OSCAR

We're on a freaking playground.
That's illegal.

LOLA

I smoke with like half the cops on
the force. You need to relax.
You're way too high strung. This
may do you some good.

Benjy squeals on the MONKEY BARS, oblivious.

BENJY

Look at me Oscar!

OSCAR

(cheery)

Doing great buddy! Two thumbs up!

LOLA

Have you ever tried? You might like
it.

OSCAR

I've tried it... Once.

(beat, then)

Is it that obvious?

SFX PRE-LAP: OSCAR HAS A COUGHING FIT...

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS, PARK - DAY

Lola pats Oscar on the back as he wheezes.

LOLA

Stick with me kid, I figure we've got two months together to get you blowing perfect O's in the college girls faces next year. Where are you going this fall?

OSCAR

Um... I'm actually not going anywhere. Still saving up to afford tuition. Even with financial aid college is too expensive.

LOLA

Where did you want to go?

OSCAR

I got into The Clive Davis School at NYU.

LOLA

The music school? Wow. That's a great school. What do you play?

OSCAR

Guitar.

LOLA

And New York is a great city. Have you ever been?

OSCAR

No... I've never been anywhere really. Never even been on a plane.

LOLA

What kinda stuff do you play?

OSCAR

I play whatever-- jazz, blues, but I'm really into classic rock. Clapton. Stones. The Clash.

LOLA

Hells yeah.

She passes him back the Vape Pen. Oscar takes a deep hit, and giggles.

INTERCUT WITH:

THE JUNGLE GYM--

Benji rides the SPINNING WHEEL. The rusty metal squeaks as it spins dangerously fast. Benji's hair blows in the wind. He's having the time of his life, until--

His face goes pale and his eyes roll to the back of his head.

BACK TO THE WOODS--

Oscar and Lola have ventured farther away from the Jungle Gym.

OSCAR

(continuing)

I haven't even told my mom I got in.

LOLA

What? Why?

OSCAR

There's no point. Even if I had the money I wouldn't go. Benji and my mom need me here.

LOLA

Screw college. It's overrated. When I went, I stressed about grades and boys, was an active member of greek life--

OSCAR

Greek life? Really?

LOLA

I know, crazy right? The second I graduate my mom dies and I wind up right back here taking care of my dad so I feel you.

OSCAR

I'm sorry.

LOLA

That's okay. It was awhile ago now.

Awkward Beat.

OSCAR
(changing the subject)
So big bad Officer Firestone can't
take care of himself, eh?

LOLA
Please, he can barely tie his shoes
without me. And he's not who you
think he is. He named me after a
Kinks song--

OSCAR
"Lola." Weird song considering...

LOLA
(explaining)
Yeah, He really wanted me to be a
boy.

OSCAR
It's a great song. I can play it.

LOLA
I'd love to hear you play some
time.

They lock eyes for a beat too long. Oscar goes beet-red.

OSCAR
Hold up. Do you hear anything?

LOLA
Could you be more specific?

Oscar's face instantly changes, panicked.

OSCAR
BENJY?!

SILAM TO:

The Wheel is EMPTY. It slowly spins and creaks to a stop...

Several yards away, Benjy gingerly teeters around. His ears
RING and the LIGHTS become bright and intense, as he
COLLAPSES. We are high above in a--

BIRDS-EYE VIEW --

-- of Benjy who looks an awful lot like one of those GOLDFISH
in a TOILET BOWL in his GOLD T-SHIRT...

MATCH CUT TO:

BIRDS-EYE VIEW

-- of Benjy wearing a HOSPITAL GOWN, lying on a TABLE. Benjy enters the loud whirring and buzzing MRI MACHINE.

WIPE TO:

INT. OFFICE, HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

We're a fly on the ceiling, observing Oscar and Sandra sitting across from a DOCTOR who points to a dark spot on an MRI.

The sounds are MUFFLED as he delivers the worst news a family can receive.

We may hear snippets -- "An Astrocytoma," "Stage Three", "Aggressive Radiation Therapy."

Sandra falls into Oscar's arms.

LATER:

Sandra and Oscar are left alone in the Doctor's OFFICE. Oscar stares off, catatonic. Sandra approaches on egg shells.

SANDRA
<<Oscar. Oscar. Look at me. Look at
me>>

He can't.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
<<Everything is going to be okay. I
know it doesn't seem that way right
now, but God tests us in all sorts
of ways. We have to have faith that
everything will work out.>>

OSCAR
(snaps to)
What God would give a five-year-old
cancer!? Are you serious mom?

SANDRA
I know you're angry. I am too.

Oscar fights hot tears with CLENCHED FISTS.

Sandra walks over to a BOOKSHELF, and out of the blue--

TOPPLES THE BOOKSHELF OVER, SMASH!

Oscar pops up, shocked.

Sandra proceeds to TEAR THE ROOM APART, until she pauses out of breathe--

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I clean up people's mess all day
long... It's my turn to make a
mess.

(she smiles
conspiratorial)
Help me.

Oscar joins in-- throwing ITEMS around the room. They may enjoy themselves, before--

Tiring out and collapsing on the floor.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
<<You can't let anger consume you.
Love is the only way to fight this.
Love and Faith>>

OSCAR
Faith? Love and Faith? That's Bull
Shit.

SANDRA
Oscar Ruiz!

Sandra crosses herself.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
<<I need you to be strong. The
treatment is going to be very
expensive. I'm going to have to
pick up more shifts at the hotel to
cover the costs.>> I'll be around
even less.

Oscar looks up. Knows what this means and it crushes him.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I'm going to need you now more than
ever. Do you understand?

Long beat. All of Oscar's plans evaporate as he nods, yes--
ever the dutiful son.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I love you Oscar.

OSCAR

Uh huh.

SANDRA

Let's clean this mess.

They start cleaning together.

OSCAR

So what are we telling Benjy?

SANDRA

He's sick, and needs treatment to get better. The Doctors say we need to be honest with him about the changes that will be happening -
<<for all of us>>

THE DOOR OPENS, and THE DOCTOR enters--

He notes the WRECKAGE. Dramatic beat where Sandra and Oscar brace themselves for trouble--

DOCTOR

(compassionately)

I'll get somebody to clean this up.

SLAM TO:

EXT. HALLWAY, HOSPITAL - DAY

Oscar speaks with a NURSE at the end of a long hallway. She points to a room down the hall.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Oscar takes a moment before entering. Deep breath. Musters a smile. Opens the door, and is greeted with--

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BENJY (O.S.)

Oscar!

OSCAR

Hey buddy!

Benjy, in his HOSPITAL GOWN, sits in a bed smothered with COMIC BOOKS. He opens up his arms, needing a hug. They hug. Oscar sits at the edge of the bed.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
How ya doing?

BENJY
Terrible.

Oscar can't help but smile -- this kid is so honest.

OSCAR
I know, I know.

BENJY
Mami said I'm sick and I need
treatment to get better. I don't
wanna be sick. I wanna go home and
eat brownies.

OSCAR
We'll get you home soon. Don't
worry.

BENJY
What's wrong with me?

OSCAR
When the doctors put you in that
loud machine... they uh found
something.

BENJY
What?

OSCAR
They, uh, found a mutation in your
cells that makes them grow faster
than they should. I don't really
understand it.

BENJY
A MUTATION!?

OSCAR
Yeah, but--

BENJY
Like the Fantastic Four?

OSCAR
It's uh...

Oscar looks at the cover of the comics Benjy is holding: the characters glow with radiation.

Oscar's eyes light up, he has an idea.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Exactly like the Fantastic Four.
And so here's the thing. Because of
this mutation you have, this very
rare mutation, the doctors think...

Moment of truth...

OSCAR (CONT'D)

... You'd be a good fit to join
their special program.

BENJY

Really?

OSCAR

Yes. This whole thing, the
hospital, the doctors, the
(he uses air quotation
marks)
"sickness", it's all a cover up for
the program.

BENJY

But, what kind of program?

OSCAR

Well I don't know if you're quite
ready yet.

BENJY

I'm ready.

OSCAR

It's going to be hard. It's going
to make you want to quit.

BENJY

I won't quit.

OSCAR

You're going to have to be brave,
because only the bravest kids are
accepted into this program.

Benjy pops out of bed, excited. He flexes and roars like a lion.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I think you're ready to join the
program.

BENJY

Tell me what the program is
already!?

OSCAR

... It's a top secret program to
become a Superhero.

Benjy's eyes bulge. He dances around the room.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

But there are rules.

BENJY

What rules?

OSCAR

Er, you'll learn them as you go,
but number one, and it's the most
important rule of all, you can't
tell anyone about this program.

BENJY

Why?

OSCAR

Because the top secret superhero
society needs to know you can keep
a secret. The way superheroes stay
super is that they know how to keep
secrets. Can you do that?

BENJY

I won't tell. Promise.

OSCAR

Not the doctors. Not the other kids
in the program. Not even mom.

BENJY

Why can't I tell mom?

OSCAR

Because it's rule number one. If
you can keep a secret, you're one
step closer to being a superhero.

BENJY

I can!

Benjy thinks.

BENJY (CONT'D)

Will I have super powers?

Oscar paces around. He didn't think about this.

OSCAR

Yes... yes. Of course you will. The doctors are going to give you treatment that will give you super powers.

BENJY

Will I be able to fly?

OSCAR

NO. ABSOLUTELY NOT. That's the one super power you won't have.

BENJY

But, but I want to fly.

OSCAR

(flustered)

Look no more questions. For now, you have to rest.

The door opens. Sandra enters. Oscar mimes *zip the lips*, behind Sandra.

SANDRA

There's my beautiful hijo.
(Benjy and Sandra hug)
So I spoke with the doctors and they want to start your treatment Monday, so you can get better as soon as possible.

BENJY

Aw, can't we start right now!?

Sandra looks at Benjy, stunned.

SANDRA

You are my brave ángel.

SLAM TO:

BENJY (V.O.)

Oscar say that we have to pretend I was sick, otherwise everyone would want to join the program.

EXT. PORCH, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

TIGHT ON: Benjy in the WINDOW, looking out --

--at Lola and Oscar on the PORCH. Lola gives Oscar a bear hug. He sinks into her arms. They both cry...

BENJY (V.O.)
But I didn't wanna make anyone sad.

ON BENJY

Taking this in, confused.

Oscar turns around, notices Benjy watching from the window, and quickly feigns cheeriness. He gives Benjy a thumbs up, and wipes the tears from his eyes.

SLAM TO:

INT. BEDROOM, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

OFF SCREEN we hear Sandra on the phone with PATIENT BUSINESS SERVICES.

SANDRA (O.S.)
(distressed)
I want to apply for discounted
care... Si, I'll hold --
(beat)
Can I speak to someone who speaks
L'Espagnol?...

We now hear snippets of Sandra's conversation in SPANISH in the background as Oscar reads Benjy a letter in THEIR MAKESHIFT FORT--

OSCAR
"Congratulations Benjy! I am so proud of this major accomplishment and all of what you will soon achieve. You will make for a powerful Superhero. Just know, like Spiderman, with great power comes great responsibility. So always be a careful Superhero. Love, Papa."

BENJY
Do you think Papa will show up to my Superhero graduation?

OSCAR
Maybe. Now, let's get some rest.

LATER:

DARKNESS. Oscar and Benjy lie wide awake.

BENJY (O.S.)
Oscar? Oscar?

OSCAR
Yeah?

BENJY
Are you awake?

OSCAR
NO. Go to bed.

Long beat...

BENJY
Can you play me a song? I can't
fall asleep.

OSCAR
Okay.

Oscar scoops his guitar of the hook on the wall.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
What should I sing?

BENJY
Anything.

Oscar goes into an ACOUSTIC VERSION OF THE STONE'S **RUBY**
TUESDAY--

OSCAR
(like a lullaby)
Goodbye Ruby Tuesday / Who could
hang a name on you? / When you
change with every new day / Still
I'm gonna miss you...

Benjy falls asleep, snoring loudly...

FADE TO BLACK.

SFX PRE-LAP: FURIOUS KNOCKING...

EXT. BATHROOM, RUIZ HOME - MORNING

Benjy pounds the bathroom door--

BENJY
Oscar, I don't wanna be late on my
first day.

INT. BATHROOM, RUIZ HOME - SAME

Oscar dry heaves into the toilet. Washes his face. He's a mess from anxiety.

INT. RUIZ CRAPPY CAR - DAY

Sandra buckles Benjy into his CAR SEAT. Oscar enters still silently freaking out.

INT./EXT. RUIZ CRAPPY CAR - IN MOTION - DAY

We track their progress through TOWN, past middling storefront after middling storefront, past the PET-STORE--

Benjy notices the WATER TOWER in the distance-

BENJY

After I get my super powers I'm gunna fly off that WATER TOWER.

Oscar's eyes bulge. Sandra isn't really listening -- too much is on her mind.

SANDRA

Of course hijo. Whatever you say.

Oscar breathes a sigh of relief. Benjy hasn't blown their cover.

EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

ESTABLISHING. A post-modern building with a cheery PLAYGROUND and tranquil PARK in the front.

The RUIZ's CRAPPY CAR pulls into the PARKING STRUCTURE --

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Sandra takes a ticket from a MACHINE. Drives past car after car on LEVEL ONE -- No empty spots. She heads to --

SANDRA

Keep a look out for an open spot.

LEVEL TWO. Same thing. No empty spots. Oscar furrows his brow, looking for that hidden spot, a diamond in the ruff.

No dice. Car after car. Mercedes. Honda Civic. Minivan. Cadillac. Spot after spot. Level after level. All filled.

Level Four, Level Five, Level Six...

They end up on the ROOF before they find an open spot. They park. Sandra exits, closes the door. Leaving just Oscar and Benjy.

BENJY

Jeeze. There must be a lot of kids
in this Superhero Program, huh?

He's right. Too many.

INT. LOBBY, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Oscar, Sandra, and Benjy walk up to the WELCOMING DESK, where they are greeted by a GUEST SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE.

The Representative hands the group their OUTPATIENT VISITOR BADGES and sends them on their way to the ELEVATOR BANK.

INT. WAITING ROOM - LATER

THE HOSPITAL WALLS are an OCEANIC theme. Oscar, Benjy, and Sandra sit next to a picture of a GOLDFISH and a streak of SEAWEED. Benjy kicks his legs impatiently. A door opens--

NURSE (O.S.)
Benjamin Ruiz?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

DR. RABINOWITZ
Up Top Benjy!

DR. RABINOWITZ (oncologist, late 50's) the glasses and receding hairline do little to hide the fact that he is a big kid at heart. His arm is raised for a HIGH FIVE--

DR. RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
Come on Benjy! Let me have it.
Let's see your best high five!

Benjy is nervous. He goes for the high five--

DR. RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
Owww!!!

Dr. Rabinowitz feigns breaking his ARM. His dramatic squirming cuts the tension in the room. He's a pro.

DR. RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
Benjy don't laugh. You just broke
my arm! You've got to be the
strongest kid I've ever met.

BENJY
No way.

DR. RABINOWITZ
Yes way.

BENJY
Well I'm not sorry.

They all chuckle-- Benjy is the cutest.

DR. RABINOWITZ
Benjy, I'm going to be your primary
physician, so you're going to be
seeing a lot of me. How does that
sound?

KNOCK KNOCK-- a NURSE interrupts the conversation.

NURSE
Dr. Rabinowitz. You wanted me to
remind you--

DR. RABINOWITZ
Right, right. The paperwork. Mrs.
Ruiz--

SANDRA
Sandra. Call me Sandra.

DR. RABINOWITZ
Sandra. That's a beautiful name for
a very beautiful woman.

Sandra blushes. Oscar notices.

DR. RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
Sandra, there's a little bit more
paperwork the hospital needs you to
fill out when you apply for
discounted care.

SANDRA
More paperwork?

DR. RABINOWITZ
My sincerest apologies.
(to the Nurse)
(MORE)

DR. RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
Jessica, can you give Oscar and
Benjy the tour while I finish up
the paperwork with Sandra?

NURSE (JESSICA)
Of course.

Sandra kisses Benjy, and exits with Dr. Rabinowitz.

OSCAR
Jessica, before we start can I talk
to you outside for a second?

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Oscar stands with Jessica. He peaks in the WINDOW to make
sure Benjy can't see their exchange.

OSCAR
I think it wold be best if I give
Benjy the tour myself. He's really
nervous about the treatment, and
feels most comfortable with me.

JESSICA
Uh, yeah. Of course. You know him
best. Go explore together, and if
you have any questions don't
hesitate to reach out to any of the
staff here.

OSCAR
Thank you so much Jessica... and
this is a weird request, but can I
borrow your lab-coat?

Jessica looks at Oscar perplexed.

SLAM TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Oscar enters wearing Jessica's LAB-COAT. Benjy perks up.

OSCAR
So, it's time to come clean with
you Benjy... My name is actually,
Agent Oscar Ruiz and I'm the head
of the Top Secret Superhero
Program. Welcome to T.S.S.P.

Benjy's jaw drops to the floor. He buys it.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Before we start, all new superhero applicants need to sign this document here with the rules and regulations we expect new recruits to follow.

Oscar hands Benjy a piece of computer paper with HANDWRITTEN RULES. We notice, on the top of the page--

"TOP SECRET RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR INCOMING SUPERHEROES"

OSCAR (CONT'D)

(re: the document)

Sign here, and initial here. And so we begin...

Benjy can't sign fast enough.

SLAM TO:

INT. HALLWAY, HOSPITAL - DAY

Oscar improvises the tour -- explaining the rules of the program like a drill instructor.

OSCAR

You are already aware of rule number one, correct?

BENJY

Uh huh, don't tell no one.

OSCAR

Bingo. It is of the utmost importance that you keep this program a secret. Can I count on you?

Benjy nods, yes.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

This hospital is a superhero training facility--

They peak in a PHYSICAL THERAPY ROOM, where --

A YOUNG GIRL picks her nose and stares off into space.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

That girl just got her treatment and can now read minds.

A very SKINNY BOY stretches.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
He is now... elastic.

BENJY
Woh! Can I go talk to them?

OSCAR
NO. Benjy you are not to interact
with the other prospective
superheroes?

BENJY
Why not?

OSCAR
They're your main competition. You
don't want them to get in your
head, do you?

BENJY
No way.

OSCAR
Not everyone gets to be a
superhero. Only those who pass the
program.

Oscar leads him down the HALLWAY, and proceeds--

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Rule number two. Once you undergo
your treatment you are going to
start discovering your super
powers. You are only allowed to
test and practice your powers with
a certified specialist. Me.

BENJY
Cool.

OSCAR
This program is designed to scare
you Benjy. You're going to be
meeting lots of Doctors who are
going to be intimidating, but just
know that it's all a test. There's
nothing to be afraid of.

Benjy nods, feeling comforted.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Third Rule. Under no circumstances
are you allowed to fly.

BENJY

But, but--

OSCAR

Which leads me to rule number four.
You cannot question the rules of
the program. They are law. Are we
clear?

Benjy nods, yes.

SLAM TO:

EXT. CONFERENCE ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Oscar stumbles upon an empty CONFERENCE ROOM with STADIUM
SEATING in front of a giant WHITE ERASE BOARD.

OSCAR

This is, uh, where you will be
taking Superhero 101. You'll have
assignments each week and there
will be a final examination at the
end of the program.

SLAM TO:

EXT. CAFETERIA, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Looks like high school cafeteria but there are HOSPITAL STAFF
in SCRUBS.

OSCAR

You're going to have to eat up if
you want to be a healthy superhero.

SLAM TO:

EXT. GAME ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

A CHILDREN'S WONDERLAND: video games, board games, toys
stacked a mile high.

OSCAR

This is the game room where our prospective Superheroes unwind after their treatment- which brings me to rule number five -- you must always remember to have fun...

SLAM TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Benjy meets his CANCER TEAM. This includes the CLINICAL STAFF (Nurses, Therapist, Psychologist), as well as the PHYSICIAN STAFF (Pathologists, Radiologists, and a few Attendings).

They're all huddled around a CAKE, "**WELCOME BENJY**".

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - LATER

OSCAR (V.O.)

It is hard work being a superhero, so sometimes you've got to step back and enjoy yourself.

Benjy has a big smile on his face, as he starts his CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENT. He is hooked up to an I.V. and holding hands with SANDRA and OSCAR. He has taken the "fun" rule to heart and is thoroughly enjoying himself.

SLAM TO:

INT. BEDROOM, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

Sandra's bedroom door is opened a crack, and we may clock PRESCRIPTION PILL BOTTLES on her NIGHT-STAND, as Oscar tucks her in. Her MASCARA is smeared.

SANDRA

<<Can you please make Benjy dinner?
I'm too exhausted from today>>

OSCAR

Of course.

SANDRA

<<No sweets. They'll keep him up
all night.>>

OSCAR

I've got it. You need to rest Mami.

SFX: THE DOORBELL RINGS

SANDRA
Who could that be?

BENJY (O.S.)
I've got it!!!

INT. HALLWAY, RUIZ HOME - DAY

Oscar pads to the FRONT DOOR. He hears VOICES as he rounds the corner and finds Lola and Benji, who abruptly stop talking upon seeing Oscar.

BENJY
--I wasn't tellin' Lola all about the superhero program just now.

OSCAR
(smacks his own head)
Rule number 1 Benji, come on!

BENJY
Sorry. Her Mami is a superhero. I thought it would be okay.

EXT. PORCH, RUIZ HOME - DAY

Lola and Oscar talk in hushed whispers on the porch.

LOLA
You're lying to Benji!

OSCAR
What's wrong with making it "a game" for him?

LOLA
Wake up. Cancer isn't a game Oscar. It sucks. Chemo sucks.

OSCAR
I know that.

LOLA
No you don't. Not yet. It's going to get hard. When my mom got sick--

She stops, can't finish the thought.

LOLA (CONT'D)

I came tonight because I wanted to cheer Benji up after his first day of chemo.

OSCAR

This "lie" is cheering him up.

(beat, he tries a new tactic)

Listen, Lola I'm going to need your help. Please. You know everything about comics. You'll know what will make it feel real for Benji.

LOLA

I really do not know if I'm cool with this man.

Oscar notices something through the window.

OSCAR

Benji?

INT. LIVING-ROOM, RUIZ HOME - CONTINUOUS

Benji sits on the couch Indian-style holding a SPOON. He looks like he's about to pop a blood vessel.

OSCAR

Benji, are you okay?

Oscar approaches, while Lola hovers by the doorway unsure of her next move.

BENJY

I'm trying to blow this spoon up with my mind.

OSCAR

Well that sounds like a pretty advanced super power. Why don't you start smaller? Like mind reading. What am I thinking?

BENJY

Well, I think you're... hungry.

OSCAR

Yes! How did you know?

BENJY

... and you want to eat Mac and Cheese.

OSCAR

Wow. Spot on. Try Lola. Read her mind.

LOLA

No that's okay. I think I'm going to leave--

BENJY

Well, Lola, she's hungry too.

Beat. Lola gives Oscar a look like *I'm not okay with this.*

BENJY (CONT'D)

... and you want hotdogs.

Lola looks at Benjy. Takes a breath. Nods, yes.

BENJY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

But instead of Ketchup and Mustard on your hotdog, you want Whip Cream, Syrup, Mayonnaise, Vinegar, and Reese's Pieces.

LOLA

What?

Oscar gives Lola a NUDGE--

LOLA (CONT'D)

Oh, er yeah. You're absolutely right.

LATER--

TIGHT ON: THE HOTDOG CONCOCTION --

Lola grimaces, about to take the first bite. Benjy and Oscar eat their Mac and Cheese, happy.

BENJY

Lola, how is it?

LOLA

It looks, er, delicious.

BENJY

Eat it Lola.

OSCAR

Yeah Lola.

(pointed)

Eat it.

Lola takes a big bite, and forces a smile while chewing. She realizes the hotdog concoction is pretty good, and eats the whole thing.

SLAM TO:

EXT. PORCH, RUIZ HOME - LATER

Lola and Oscar stand by her beat up VW BEETLE.

LOLA
That mind reading shit was weak.

OSCAR
Agreed.

LOLA
We're going to give Benjy some kick
ass super powers.

OSCAR
You're in?

Lola nods, yes. Oscar WHISTLES, excited.

LOLA
Maybe we should give him Captain
Universe's powers: telekineses,
super strength, super speed, and
invisibility. Whaddya think?

OSCAR
Hells yeah! Thank you so much.
(beat, thinking)
So, uh, how are we going to
convince him he has all those
powers?

LOLA
Why are you asking me? I have
absolutely no idea. You got us into
this mess. Figure it out.

OSCAR
Oh. Right.

LOLA
You can do it. You're creative.

Lola gives Oscar a kiss on the cheek before heading out.

INT. KITCHEN, RUIZ HOME - LATE AT NIGHT

Oscar has COMIC BOOKS and his OLD LAPTOP splayed out all over the DINING ROOM TABLE like he's cramming for a midterm exam.

INSERT PAGES--

-- THE FLASH darts across the page with his *Super-speed*.

-- THE HULK throws a car clean over his head *Super-strength*.

-- INVISIBLE WOMAN evades an enemy with her *Invisibility*.

ON OSCAR

Overwhelmed, taking it all in.

He exes out of the WEB BROWSERS dealing with comics and goes to his FACEBOOK PAGE.

His PROFILE PICTURE is a shot of Benjy on his shoulders, all smiles.

Oscar types into the SEARCH BAR and pulls up a FACEBOOK GROUP PAGE -- **INCOMING NYU FRESHMAN "CLIVE DAVIS INSTITUTE OF RECORDED MUSIC"**

He scrolls longingly through the PROFILES of the students who would have been his classmates. Stews in what could have been. We may sense an anger bubbling under the surface of his stoic face.

SLAM TO:

EXT. FRONT-YARD, RUIZ HOME - MORNING

A CRAPPY 2004 TOYOTA sits in the driveway. Sandra tosses THE KEYS to Oscar. He looks at them like he's been handed the keys to a MERCEDES BENZ.

OSCAR
For me? Really?

Sandra nods, yes.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
But we can't afford this?

SANDRA
Your Tio gave it to us. It's the least he could do. Literally the least.

(MORE)

SANDRA (CONT'D)
<<You need a car if you're going to be taking Benjy for his treatments and looking out for him. So here it is.>>

OSCAR
Thank you Mami.

SANDRA
No, thank you Oscar. <<I know you didn't ask for any of this, and it's unfair. You probably want to be off doing, I dunno... But, I can't get through this without you. Thank you. I love you.>>

OSCAR
Uh huh.

SLAM TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Dr. Rabinowitz is mid check up with Benjy, using his STETHOSCOPE. Oscar sits in the chair next to them.

DR. RABINOWITZ
Deep Breathe...
(Benjy breathes in and out)
Good.

LATER:

Benjy, hooked up to an I.V., undergoes his second round of chemotherapy. He's just as excited as he was the first round.

Oscar speaks with Dr. Rabinowitz OUTSIDE THE ROOM--

OSCAR
When do you think we should be expecting the, uh, nastier side effects?

DR. RABINOWITZ
Well nausea, vomiting, hair loss, fatigue, and mouth sores are all common-- but everyone reacts differently. Benjy's responding very well to the treatment.

OSCAR
Okay. That's good.

DR. RABINOWITZ

Our team will do our best to manage
those effects.

OSCAR

I need to run some errands today.
Would it be possible for me to
leave Benjy alone here for a few
hours?

DR. RABINOWITZ

Of course.

SLAM TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Oscar stands in front of Benjy wearing a LAB-COAT again.
"SUPERHERO 101" is written on THE WHITE BOARD.

OSCAR

Before I run, it's time for your
first assignment. You have to come
up with your Superhero name, and
design your Superhero Suit.
Remember, that your name defines
you Benjy and will dictate what
kind of Superhero you become. Now
get to work!

SLAM TO:

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

Oscar and Lola peruse the aisles pushing a SHOPPING CART.
Lola picks out a few items: a ROD, STYROFOAM, BLACK SPRAY
PAINT CANNISTER.

INT. GAME ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Benjy sits at a table smothered in arts and crafts supplies.
He draws furiously, designing his SUPERHERO OUTFIT. He
crumples up his most recent attempt. Throws it in the TRASH.

INT. HALLOWEEN STORE - DAY

Oscar and Lola pick out different SUPERHERO COSTUMES (The
Flash, Wonder Woman, Iron Man) as they barrel down the
aisles, on a mission-- having a blast.

INT. GAME ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

A BOY with a BALD HEAD from chemo interrupts Benji.

BALD BOY

What are you doing?

BENJY

I'm not supposed to talk to you,
but I need to know what happened to
your hair?

BALD BOY

I lost it when I got the cancer?

BENJY

What's the cancer?

BALD BOY

It's why we're here. You have it
too.

BENJY

That's not true.

BALD BOY

Yes it is.

BENJY

Wanna know why we're really here?

Benji looks around cautiously. Then whispers into the Bald Boy's ear. The Bald Boy lights up, excited!

BALD BOY

I KNEW IT!

INT. GARAGE, RUIZ HOME - DAY

Oscar and Lola wear SCIENTIFIC GOGGLES as they SPRAY PAINT something OFF SCREEN.

EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Benji stands in front of the Children's Hospital like he's waiting for the SCHOOL BUS. OSCAR'S CAR pulls up--

INT. OSCAR'S CAR - IN MOTION - DAY

He drives with Lola in the passenger seat and Benji secure in his car-seat.

BENJY
What's *the cancer*?

Oscar and Lola share a concerned look.

BENJY (CONT'D)
Deadpool had the cancer, but what
is it? I'm confused.

OSCAR
(changing the subject)
Er... Speaking of Deadpool, have
you come up with your Superhero
name yet buddy?

BENJY
No. My head is all cloudy. I can't
think of anything.

OSCAR
What about Kangaroo Boy... or The
Little Lion Man?

LOLA
Ugh those are awful names.

OSCAR
I thought animal names were cool
for Superheroes. No? Like the
Phoenix. No one messes with the
Phoenix...
(to himself)
Yeah, I'll stop.

LOLA
What about Captain Universe? Why do
you like his name Benjy?

BENJY
I dunno.

LOLA
He's the Guardian of Eternity, The
Avenging Angel, The Hero That Could
Be You... What do you want to be
the Guardian of?

BENJY
I dunno. I guess, it will be easier
to come up with a name when I know
all my powers.

INT. OSCAR'S CAR - NIGHT

Oscar pulls up to Lola's HOUSE, where --

IN THE DRIVEWAY--

Officer Firestone plays PICKUP BASKETBALL with a few other OFF DUTY POLICE OFFICERS. This is the first time we've seen Officer Firestone out of his uniform, and he looks oddly normal and "Dad"-like. He notices Oscar's car come to a STOP--

LOLA

Thanks for the ride.

(whispers)

Break a leg tonight.

She gives him a flirtatious wink and EXITS. Officer Firestone approaches the car--

OFFICER FIRESTONE

(to Lola)

The Fitbit said I walked ten miles today sweetie. You impressed?

LOLA

Those are rookie numbers Dad. Bump 'em up and maybe I'll give you a gold star.

(waves to the Officers)

Night fellas'!

Officer Firestone waits for Lola to enter the HOUSE, before he pokes his head in Oscar's WINDOW--

OFFICER FIRESTONE

Hi Oscar. Hi little fella'.

OSCAR / BENJY

Hi Officer Firestone.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

So Oscar, are you dating my daughter now, or what?

Oscar laughs, nervously.

OSCAR

No.... No way...

OFFICER FIRESTONE

What? She's not good enough for you?

Oscar sputters.

OFFICER FIRESTONE (CONT'D)
I'm messing with you. Lola told me
about-- How are you feeling Benjy?

BENJY
Er...
(beat)
... Really sick... Definitely not
in a special top secret program.

Officer Firestone furrows his brow, confused.

Benjy FAKE COUGHS.

OSCAR
We should really get going.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
Of course. Stay outta trouble guys.

Oscar peels away.

BENJY
I followed rule number one! Are you
impressed.

OSCAR
Very nice work buddy. I think this
means you're ready.

BENJY
Ready for what?

SLAM TO:

INT. BASEMENT, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

TIGHT ON: THE BENCH PRESS, *looking the same as it did in the opening.* Benjy and Oscar sidle up to it.

BENJY
I thought I'm not allowed down
here?

OSCAR
That was before you started the
program. You're ready now. Here.
Come spot me.

BENJY
Spot you?

OSCAR

Yeah. Spot me. Watch my back. If the weight gets too heavy you have to help me lift it up.

BENJY

I don't know if I can do that.

OSCAR

Of course you can.

Oscar sits down on the BENCH PRESS.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Go around behind me so you have a good angle to lift. You want to put your hands here.

Oscar demonstrates proper grip.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

And you need to remember to breathe in and exhale.

BENJY

Like at the Doctors.

OSCAR

Exactly. So if I'm having trouble you have to grab the barbell, and guide it to the rack. Got it.

(Benjy nods)

Okay, here we go. One. Two. Three. Up!

Oscar lifts the weight. He does one repetition, breathes in, exhales. He starts to do the next repetition, and struggles--the weight must be over TWO HUNDRED POUNDS.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

(face turning blue)

One... more!

Oscar racks the weight.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Okay now it's your turn.

BENJY

What!?

Is Oscar insane!? This kid is only six!?

OSCAR
Give it a try.

BENJY
I can't lift that much. Look at me.

OSCAR
Strength is all mental. If you
believe you can lift the weight,
you can lift the weight.

BENJY
But--

OSCAR
Trust me. Okay?

Benjy nods. They switch places. Benjy sits down. He takes a few deep breaths to warm up.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Okay. One... Two... Three... Up.

Benjy lifts the weight. He does one rep. Beat. That wasn't too bad. He goes for another. Again, easy.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Holy crap! You're doing it.

Benjy does another, and another, and another. He has a huge grin on his face.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
You must have super strength!

They have a blast.

WE PUSH IN CLOSER ON WEIGHTS--

AND REVEAL they are **FAKE** -- made of STYROFOAM and painted BLACK. **THIS IS WHAT THEY WERE PAINTING--**

SLAM TO:

INT. BEDROOM, RUIZ HOME - THE NEXT DAY

THE VIEW OUT OSCAR AND BENJY'S WINDOW--

A serene morning is interrupted by an EIGHT-YEAR OLD GIRL who is crying because her CAT is stuck in the TREE.

Oscar wakes up, popping up into frame slowly, as he rubs the sleep from his eyes.

In the background, THROUGH THE WINDOW we see Benjy walk up to the girl, while--

OSCAR
Benjy? Where'd you go Buddy?

THROUGH THE WINDOW--

Benjy says something to calm the girl down we can't hear. He rolls up his sleeve. Marches toward the TREE determined.

OSCAR whips around and sees Benjy start climbing the tree like an Orangutang.

Benjy DANGLES DANGEROUSLY FROM A BRANCH--

OSCAR (CONT'D)
(panicked)
Benjy? What the --!?

Oscar darts out of the bedroom--

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Oscar arrives in a huff, just as Benjy reaches the TOP BRANCH and scoops up the CAT.

OSCAR
Benjy get down from there!!! You're
going to get hurt!!!

BENJY
In a sec'--

We are on Oscar's face, as he follows Benjy's progression down the tree. Oscar's eyes dart from left to right.

FINALLY, Benjy hops to the ground and LANDS with a THUD, rolling over and SCRAPING HIS KNEE, all the while keeping the Cat safely tucked in his arms.

Benjy pops up, and reunites the unharmed Cat with the Girl. She gives Benjy a big hug, overjoyed.

YOUNG GIRL
You're my hero!

BENJY
Oh no. I not a hero. Not yet.

The Girl gives Benjy a KISS on the cheek, and then sashays away.

Oscar grabs Benjy by the arm.

OSCAR
Benjy- what were you thinking?

BENJY
I have super climbing abilities.

OSCAR
What? No. Super climbing isn't a thing. You scared the crap out of me.

BENJY
Yes it is. Spiderman has it.

OSCAR
No it's not.

BENJY
Yes it is.

OSCAR
Super climbing isn't a super power.
I don't want you to do that again.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Do what again?

Sandra crosses the FRONT-YARD in her work uniform--

OSCAR
... Nothing.

Sandra notices the SCRAPES on Benjy's knees from the fall.

SANDRA
Hijo, what happened?

BENJY
I saved the day!

INT. BATHROOM, RUIZ HOME - DAY

Sandra puts NEOSPORIN on Benjy's SCRAPE. Dresses the wound with a few PINK BAND-AIDS, before she sends him on his way out of the bathroom, past Oscar in the DOORWAY. Sandra and Oscar are mindful not to let Benjy hear them.

SANDRA
What happened?

OSCAR

We were playing a game.

SANDRA

Oscar.

OSCAR

What? It's not a big deal. It was just a scratch.

SANDRA

Benji needs his rest. He's very sick.

OSCAR

I know that. I've actually been meaning to tell you about something. This game we've been playing--

SANDRA

<<Oscar you cannot be playing games. Benji needs two things right now, rest and prayer.>>

Oscar scoffs.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

<<Is something funny?>>

OSCAR

No.

SANDRA

<<I need you to be responsible with your little brother when I'm not around>>

OSCAR

<<Of course I am. Jesus Christ!>>

SANDRA

<<Do not raise your voice with me, or use the Lord's name in vain.>>

OSCAR

There you go again with that Lord shit. I hate to break it to you mom but the Lord and prayer are not going to get us through this.

SANDRA

You need to have faith Oscar.

OSCAR

Well I don't have faith. But I will be there for Benjy like I have been for the past five years, since his birth.

SANDRA

I don't have time to argue. I'm late for work.

SLAM TO:

EXT. PET STORE - DAY

Oscar and Lola walk and talk mid-conversation--

OSCAR

I haven't even told my mom, and you want me to tell Sensei Chaz? Are you insane?

LOLA

Just hear me out?

OSCAR

Fine.

LOLA

We are limited here. I mean we are a low budget operation, so we have to be creative. We can't have Benjy race a high speed train, or stop a bullet. So what can we do?

Oscar shrugs, *what?* They arrive at the WINDOW OF THE KARATE STUDIO, where--

INT. KARATE STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

SENSEI CHAZ is doing intense lunges.

LOLA (O.S.)

We have Chaz, who is the spitting image of Barry Allen?

OSCAR (O.S.)

Who?

LOLA (O.S.)

The Flash. Jesus you really are hopeless.

BACK ON THE STREET--

LOLA (CONT'D)
Chaz is perfect. His cheek bones
look like they were chiseled by
Michelangelo.

OSCAR
He's not *that* chiseled--

LOLA
Trust me. We need him.

OSCAR
I really don't think we should let
anyone else in on this.

LOLA
Superheroes don't do it all on
their own. The Avengers. Guardians
of the Galaxy. X-Men... You need to
stop shutting yourself off if you
want this to work.

OSCAR
I don't shut myself off.

LOLA
When's the last time you hung out
with anyone who's name wasn't
Benjy?

OSCAR
Right now.

LOLA
--Or Lola?

Oscar considers this. He looks back in the WINDOW--

As Chaz smashes his face into a BLOCK OF WOOD, we--

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

TIGHT ON: THE FLASH...

... or really SENSEI CHAZ dressed up in a FLASH COSTUME. His
suit is too small for him so his ankles are showing, and the
seams are busting, but to Benjy-- he is real.

Benjy and Oscar stand on THE TRACK watching The Flash warm up.

OSCAR
The Flash is the fastest person in the world. If you beat him we'll know you have super speed.

Chaz darts over to a TRASH CAN on the sidelines, dry heaving.

BENJY
What's wrong with the Flash?

Oscar darts off to CHAZ's SIDE --

OSCAR
What the hell Chaz?

CHAZ
Sorry, had a pretty rough night last night. I don't want to get into it--

OSCAR
Please don't.

CHAZ
(continuing)
But I was balls deep in--

A FOG HORN BLAST interrupting Chaz' story...

LOLA (O.S.)
I come bearing gifts!

They turn to find Lola strutting up to the group with a FOGHORN in one hand and a SIX PACK OF BUD LIGHT in the other.

OSCAR
There you are Lola. What's that?

CHAZ
Hair of the dog.

Chaz expertly SHOTGUNS a beer. Takes it down in one long gulp. Burps. Benjy arrives on the scene.

BENJY
What is that you drinking Flash?

CHAZ
Beer.

BENJY

What's beer?

OSCAR

It's his, uh, secret drink that helps him run faster. You better bring your A game Benjy.

BENJY

Can I have some?

OSCAR

NO.

LATER: ON THE TRACK --

Benjy and THE FLASH line-up to RACE.

OSCAR

The winner of this race, is officially the fastest person on Earth.

CHAZ

You're going down little Dude!

Lola holds the Foghorn.

LOLA

On your mark... Get Set... Go!

And they're off...

Chaz does his best impression of Usain Bolt, and is having a blast, until he realizes Benjy is actually starting to outrun him --

CHAZ

Hey! Hey! Slow down!

LOLA

Run Benjy Run!!!

Benjy won't quit. He gallops past the FINISH LINE.

SLAM TO:

OSCAR (PRE-LAP)

Let's toast!

INT. DINING ROOM, UPSCALE ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Oscar, Lola, and Benjy raise their GLASSES.

OSCAR
To the fastest kid in the world!

LOLA
Here here.

BENJY
And I didn't even need to drink the
beer.

Oscar and Lola smile. Then out of the blue--

OSCAR
BENJY? WHERE'D BENJY GO!?

BENJY
I'm right here.

LOLA
I dunno. I can't see him either.

OSCAR
Where are you Benjy? You
disappeared.

BENJY
Helloooo. I'm right hereeee.

Benjy wipes his hand in front of Oscar's face. No reaction.

So Benjy hops up on the TABLE to get Oscar's attention. The CUTLERY rattles. Again, no reaction.

Across the room, the Manager from the opening appears to catch wind of what's going on. He approaches their table and doesn't look happy. Is he going to ruin their fun?

Benjy freezes in place, just as the Manager arrives at the table.

MANAGER
How is everything?

OSCAR
Uh, great.

MANAGER
And where is Benjy tonight? I miss
that little guy.

OSCAR

He just disappeared on us.

MANAGER

Well, if he reappears tell him he's always welcome in my restaurant. Superheroes eat on the house.

OSCAR

Well he hasn't passed the program yet, but thank you. I'll let him know.

Manager was in on it all along--

Benjy can't contain his excitement. He has the time of his life, hopping from table to table, as everyone in the restaurant plays along. The mood is cheery and light, until--

SLAM TO:

TIGHT ON: A CLUMP OF BLACK HAIR IN A SHOWER DRAIN...

BENJY

(screaming)

OSCAR! OSCAR!

INT. BATHROOM, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

Benjy is crying. Huddled naked in the corner of the bathroom. Oscar arrives, out of breath.

OSCAR

What's wrong!? What's going on?!

BENJY

I... my hair.

Benjy's hands are full of clumps of his once luscious, jet black hair.

OSCAR

It's okay buddy. That's supposed to happen. You're going to be okay.

Oscar wraps Benjy in a TOWEL.

LATER --

Oscar and Benjy stand at the sink and look into the mirror as Oscar buzzes all of Benjy's hair off. It's as somber as a funeral.

TIGHT ON BENJY: FULLY BALD. He's ready to explode.

BENJY
I look like a Super Villain.

OSCAR
No you don't.

BENJY
They're going to kick me out of the
program. I know it.

OSCAR
You look like Professor Xavier--
he's a good guy.

Benjy can't hold it anymore -- he erupts in tears and wails.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Shhhh... Shhh.. Benjy it's all part
of the program.

BENJY
How?

Oscar has his work cut out for him to explain this one.

OSCAR
Well, uh, they need you to know
what it feels like to be a villain
if you want to beat them.

BENJY
Huh?

OSCAR
You need to take a walk in a
Villains shoes if you want to
outsmart them. It's part of
Superhero 101.

Benjy calms down. He sniffles now.

BENJY
I guess that makes sense...

OSCAR
And you know what else?

BENJY
What?

OSCAR
I have to do it too.

Oscar hands Benjy the BUZZER.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
It's my turn. Shave my head.

Benjy has a mischievous smile. He shaves Oscar's head.

(NOTE: Benjy will be BALD for the rest of the script)

SLAM TO:

INT. LIVING-ROOM, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

Benjy is fast asleep drooling on Oscar as they sit on the couch watching GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY.

The DOORBELL RINGS, Benjy stirs but doesn't wake up.

INT. FOYER, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

Oscar opens the door to find Lola. She takes in his new HAIRCUT.

LOLA
Damnnnn. You look bad-ass.

OSCAR
Thanks. What are you doing here?

LOLA
We came to cheer you up!

OSCAR
We?

CHAZ (O.S.)
Hey Bro!

CHAZ locks his car and crosses the FRONT LAWN--

OSCAR
(under his breath)
Why'd you invite him?

Chaz arrives in the doorway brandishing his CASE OF BEERS--

CHAZ
Let's get wasted!

OSCAR
Er, my mom doesn't really let me have parties when she's out.

CHAZ

Parties? It's just the three of us.

(looking into the living-room)

Is that Wii!? Oh man, I'm going to smash bro.

Chaz darts past Oscar straight for the NINTENTO WII CONSOLE.

OSCAR

Be quiet. Benji's fast asleep--

BENJY (O.S.)

No I'm not!

CHAZ

There's my lil' dude!

BENJY

Sensei Chaz!

Chaz and Benji bow. They do intricate punch moves in unison.

LOLA

I brought you a present Benji.

Lola pulls out an old COMIC BOOK -- Captain Marvel "**THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN MARVEL**".

Benji approaches it like it's a sacred scroll. Gives Lola a big hug. Oscar gets a better look at the Comic.

OSCAR

The Death of Captain Marvel!?

(under his breath to Lola)

Are you serious?

LOLA

What?

OSCAR

Can I talk to you in private for a sec'?

Chaz and Benji start to play Wii in the background.

LOLA

Sure. Ooo can we go on the roof?

OSCAR

Absolutely not.

SLAM TO:

EXT. ROOF, RUIZ HOME - MAGIC HOUR

Lola strides onto the ROOF basking in the picture perfect SUNSET. Oscar hovers in the window.

OSCAR
Come back here Lola.

LOLA
Don't be such a wimp. Check out the view!

Against his better judgement, Oscar tiptoes over to Lola.

LOLA (CONT'D)
So what did you want to talk about?

OSCAR
I appreciate you coming over to cheer us up. I really do.

LOLA
But?

OSCAR
You can't give a kid with cancer a book with Death in the title.

LOLA
Why? Death is a Marvel character.

OSCAR
It's not a character Lola. Death is a horrible thing.

LOLA
Why is it horrible?

OSCAR
I mean, do I really have to explain?

LOLA
Believe me, I know all about death, but I don't think it's some "horrible" thing, and I don't think you need to tiptoe around it with Benji. He's a sharp kid.

OSCAR
Death is the end. Period. Benji's too young to know about horrible things like that.

LOLA

Cancer is horrible. Suffering is horrible. Death is the beginning.

OSCAR

You may like to be delusional. But I don't have that luxury.

Oscar and Lola sit on the edge of the roof. Thinking.

LOLA

When my mom got sick she was battling aggressive bone cancer, and she was fighting like a champ. I was so lost, and confused. My dad tried to console me because he's a fixer, always putting things back together and helping people -- but nothing worked.

OSCAR

I'm sorry.

LOLA

I was lost until I found my first comic book. *That* comic book. The beauty of comics are that they take all of this, everything, and make sense of it. It makes everything-- okay. And now I'm a fixer too, and I look after my dad instead of the other way around, but I'm not afraid to live my life to the fullest.

Out of nowhere, Lola pops up and does a HANDSTAND on the roof. She is framed up against THE WATER TOWER in the background.

OSCAR

Jesus, are you trying to kill yourself!?

LOLA

(still upside down)
When's the last time you did something crazy Oscar?

OSCAR

What?

Lola rights herself.

LOLA

You spend all this time worrying about your brother, but when's the last time you said fuck it and took time for yourself?

OSCAR

Are you saying I should just say F-U to my brother who has *cancer*?

LOLA

You're so busy acting like Benjy could drop dead at any moment, that you're the one who's dead.

OSCAR

You think I like having to be Benjy's father, looking after him, worrying every second of every day? You think I like that pressure?

LOLA

No.

OSCAR

Sometimes I can't breathe. It feels like someone's sitting on me. And I want to go somewhere and be alone, and scream. But there's nowhere to go. I'm trapped.

LOLA

(points to the Water Tower)

Go anywhere. Go there!

OSCAR

The Water Tower?

LOLA

Yeah, to be alone.

OSCAR

I'm afraid of heights. That's like the last place I'd want to go Lola.

LOLA

You spend all this time with Benjy, who's fearless, and yet you're afraid of everything Oscar. I wish he'd rub off on you a little.

OSCAR

Well he hasn't. I'm a bitch.

Oscar sits down, defeated. Lola joins him.

LOLA
You're not a bitch.

OSCAR
... You're a bad liar.

LOLA
I'll try and learn from the master.

OSCAR
I'll host a seminar.

They chuckle.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Wanna go check on Chaz and Benjy?

LOLA
Sure.

OSCAR
Are you and Chaz... Y'know?

LOLA
What? Screwing?

OSCAR
Dating?

LOLA
No. He's just a friend. I mean
we've had sex. But like we're just
friends... He has a huge cock.

Lola leaves Oscar with that to chew on before we.

SLAM TO:

EXT. FRONT-YARD, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

Oscar and Lola stand outside Chaz' car. Oscar doesn't notice
the CAR WINDOW is open.

OSCAR
So Lola, I think it's time for
Benjy's first real-world test.
Maybe we could go to dinner soon
and come up with something?

CHAZ
(from inside the car)
Sweet! Let's do this bro.

OSCAR
I was thinking it was more of a me
and Lola kind of thing Chaz.

CHAZ
Well you're going to need a
villain. Every hero needs a
villain.

OSCAR
And that's you?

CHAZ
I'm an actor man, or trying to be.
And the true thespians make their
bones playing villains. I'd want to
be like Alan Rickman in Die Hard,
or Anthony Hopkins in Hannibal.

LOLA
Benjy *does* need a villain.

OSCAR
Okay, fine. You're in.

LOLA
What'd you have in mind Oscar?

OSCAR
I dunno. Maybe after church
tomorrow we can, wait...
(snaps his finger)
I've got it.

LOLA
What?

OSCAR
We're going to fake a robbery at
the Pet Store.

SLAM TO:

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Oscar and Benjy, wearing his cape as a tie per usual, snooze
in a back pew as Father John gives his sermon. Sandra nudges
them awake, annoyed.

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

The congregation files out. Sandra hangs back, chatting with Father John. They approach Oscar with Benjy on his shoulders.

SANDRA

Oscar-Benjy, I'm going to head to work, but I thought it might be nice for you to spend a little time with Father John.

OSCAR

Er, now is not a good time. We were planning on going to the Pet-Store. It's really important.

FATHER JOHN

How about I drive you there after? I need to pick up some Iams anyway.

SANDRA

Perfect. Thank you Father John.
<<Have a nice time boys. I'll see you later.>>

SLAM TO:

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH, CATHOLIC CHURCH - LATER

Father John and Benjy have their heads bent down in prayer, eyes closed. Oscar glances at his watch. Taps his foot impatiently.

Oscar pulls out his FLIP PHONE and shoots Lola a TEXT:
Running 30 minutes late. Let's call off the Robbery.

Lola Responds: **I can't reach Chaz. He's gone Rogue.**

Oscar mouths *shit* to himself, as --

FATHER JOHN

(wrapping up their prayer)

... Amen. So Benjy, how are you doing buddy?

BENJY

Good... I guess.

FATHER JOHN

Do you want to talk about what's going on in your life.

BENJY

Not really.

FATHER JOHN

That's alright. We don't have to talk about anything right now. But if you're feeling uneasy about anything, I just want you to know that I'm here for you.

Benjy looks down, embarrassed.

BENJY

Well, actually I feel... a little scared.

Oscar reacts, never considering that Benjy might feel this way.

FATHER JOHN

Benjy, you know there's nothing to be afraid of, right?

Benjy is talking about the Superhero program, while Father John is talking about Cancer. The sentiment works both ways.

BENJY

I know. It's just... sometimes I worry that I'm not going to pass the program, and become a superhero.

FATHER JOHN

Well, I think you have to realize that you're already a Superhero Benjy. No matter what happens.

Oscar can't believe that the Father's speech reinforced his charade. He wipes the sweat from his brow.

FATHER JOHN (CONT'D)

Now Oscar, you haven't given a confession since your father --

OSCAR

(cutting Father John off)

I don't need to talk. And I haven't confessed because I don't believe in God, or any of this. I just come to Church to keep mom off my back.

(to Benjy)

That's between us.

FATHER JOHN

Well, that's why your mom wanted me to talk to you.

OSCAR

So she roped you into this?
Classic. Well we're really in a hurry Father John.

FATHER JOHN

Alright. Just know, I'm here for you if you need.

OSCAR

Sure.

SLAM TO:

INT. EXT. FATHER JOHN'S CAR - IN MOTION -DAY

Father John drives Oscar and Benjy to the Pet store. He BLASTS a censored version of KENDRICK LAMAR'S **KING KUNTA** on the CAR RADIO, and RAPS along with the song.

FATHER JOHN

(rapping)

When you got the yams (What's the yams?)/ The yam is the power that be / You can smell it when I'm walking down the street (Oh yes we can oh yes we can) / I can dig rapping but a rapper with a ghost writer? / What the F happened?

(stopping)

What? You think a man of the cloth can't be a Kendrick fan? Kendrick speaks the truth, and the truth is what we try to help our people find.

Oscar and Benjy are speechless.

SLAM TO:

INT. PET STORE - DAY

Oscar, Benjy, and Father John enter the Pet Store.

Lola grabs Oscar and takes him aside. They talk in hushed whispers, as Benjy and Father John search the pet-food AISLES.

LOLA
What the hell Oscar?

OSCAR
I know, I know. I'm sorry. Did you
reach Chaz?

LOLA
No. His phone must be dead.

OSCAR
Hopefully he forgot about the whole
thing.

LOLA
It's actually a relief. My dad is
eating lunch next door.

EXT. PET STORE - DAY

CAMERA PUSHES in on a MYSTERIOUS MAN FROM BEHIND wearing what looks like BURGLAR GEAR holding a MASK by his waist--

This is Chaz psyching himself up for the Pet Store Robbery. He pulls the MASK over his head.

INT. DINER - DAY

Officer Firestone looks longingly at a MAN eating an UNHEALTHY LUNCH, as he picks at his unappetizing, dressing free, SALAD.

He takes a forkful of LETTUCE, and is about to take a bite, when his EYES BULGE.

THROUGH THE WINDOW, he clocks CHAZ IN HIS BURGLAR MASK, as he enters--

INT. PET STORE - CONTINUOUS

CHAZ
(a la Pulp Fiction)
*Everybody be cool this is a
robbery!*

FATHER JOHN
Jesus Christ!

Father John, Oscar, Lola, and Benji throw up their hands. Chaz has his hand in his pocket as if he has a GUN.

CHAZ

Give me the money in the safe. Now.

LOLA

What safe? This is a pet-store.

CHAZ

The register-whatever. Give me the
money or I'll blow your brains out.

LOLA

(faux panic)

Of course! Please don't hurt us.

Lola rushes to the register to prepare bills for Chaz.

CHAZ

(noticing the Father John)

Why is there a priest here?

EXT. PET STORE - DAY

Officer Firestone approaches cautiously. He flicks open his
GUN HOLSTER thinking this might actually be a robbery.

INT. PET STORE - DAY

Benjy steps up to Chaz, defiant.

BENJY

Get outta here you big bully!

CHAZ

And who's going to make me?

BENJY

Well, I don't have a name yet...
but me.

CHAZ

HA! You don't scare me.

BENJY

Don't make me hurt you mister
bully. I'm warning you.

CHAZ

Come and get me.

Benjy strides at Chaz, just as THE DOOR OPENS --

Officer Firestone un-holsters his GUN and points it at the GROUP.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
FREEZE!

LOLA
DAD NO!

Officer Firestone surveys the room--

Benji is on top of CHAZ THE BURGLAR, smothering him with punches, while--

Father John prays to himself on the floor, and --

Oscar and Lola approach Officer Firestone, trying to manage the situation.

LOLA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
We're just playing a game.

OSCAR
(whispering)
Rehearsing for a play.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
WHAT IN THE GOD-DAMNED HELL IS
GOING ON HERE?

SLAM TO:

INT. PET STORE - LATER

Officer Firestone and Father John stand with Lola and Oscar. THROUGH THE WINDOW we see Chaz and Benji on the sidewalk waiting impatiently for the others.

FATHER JOHN
I'm very disappointed in both of
you.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
Do you know how dangerous it is to
tell a boy with cancer he's got
magic powers? Especially that
little Tasmanian Devil.

OSCAR
We're Guatemalan. That's offensive.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
Shut up.

OSCAR
Okay.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

You're better than this Lola. I
warned you about hanging around bad
apples like *him*.

OSCAR

ME? The bad apple?

OFFICER FIRESTONE

Shut up.

OSCAR

Sure.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

Now I can empathize with your
situation Oscar. Lord knows I can.
But it's time to end this charade
before someone gets hurt.

FATHER JOHN

I agree with Officer Firestone. You
need to be honest with Benji.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

You're just lucky you escaped
without a bullet in that thick
skull of yours Oscar.

(to Lola)

Let's go Lola.

They exit. Oscar turns to Father John.

OSCAR

I think I'm ready for that
confession Father John, as long as
there's some sort of Confessor-
Confessee confidentiality?

Father John rolls his eyes at Oscar.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll come clean.

SLAM TO:

INT. PLAYGROUND, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Oscar and Lola are mid confession to Dr. Rabinowitz--

OSCAR

I came up with this stupid lie, really STUPID, like brain dead stupid, BUT I didn't want him to have to know what he's up against because it's bleak, and horrible, and unfair, and I know my baby brother and he's not ready. He's just not. So I said "you're going to be joining a top secret program to become a superhero" not thinking about how I could possibly keep up a lie of that magnitude--

DR. RABINOWITZ

--I'm in.

OSCAR

Good. Let's just go in there, and tell him the truth. Because that's what's right.

DR. RABINOWITZ

Oscar, I'm in. Let's do it.

OSCAR

Wait, what?

DR. RABINOWITZ

Let's help Benjy become a Superhero.

OSCAR

But it can't be a good idea. Can it?

DR. RABINOWITZ

We're here to help Benjy get better. And I've learned over the years that one of the most effective healing tools is hope. What could give Benjy more to look forward to than becoming a Superhero? Though, we can do a better job of controlling the situations. Clearly.

OSCAR

Right. And on that subject, I think it'll be best if I explain all of this to my mom. She's pretty emotionally distraught right now, so I'll need to be delicate with her.

DR. RABINOWITZ
Sure. Whatever you think is best.

OSCAR
Thanks.

DR. RABINOWITZ
Well now it's time for me to put
those awkward years of being a fan
boy to good use. Let's get to it!

SLAM TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Dr. Rabinowitz at front of the ROOM.

DR. RABINOWITZ
Benji. The time has come for your
first mission.

The LIGHTS GO OUT--

Dr. Rabinowitz uses a PROJECTOR to outline the mission--

1st SLIDE-- **A PICTURE OF THE MARVEL CHARACTER "DEATH"**

DR. RABINOWITZ (V.O.)
Death has enlisted his crony Dr.
Doom to do his bidding...

2nd SLIDE-- **"DR. DOOM" (DR. RABINOWITZ DRESSED IN COSTUME)**

DR. RABINOWITZ (V.O.)
... and what is he after? The fifth
Infinity Gem.

3rd SLIDE-- **AN INFINITY GEM (A RING POP)**

DR. RABINOWITZ (V.O.)
Our reconnaissance has lead us to
believe the Gem is located here...
on this Jungle Gym.

4th SLIDE-- **CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL JUNGLE GYM**

The LIGHTS in the conference room flick on--

DR. RABINOWITZ
We need you to find the ring before
Dr. Doom does. The fate of the
world and the universe hangs in the
balance.

(MORE)

DR. RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
If Death gets a hold of the ring
first, it's the end of everything--

LOLA
(chiming in)
--The end of infinity.

Benji gasps.

BENJY
That's it! That's my name-- **Captain Infinity**. Guardi-nan of Infinity.

Beat they all take this in.

DR. RABINOWITZ
I love it Benji, and I took a look
at some of your initial suit
designs.

Dr. Rabinowitz brandishes the HAND-DRAWN SUPERHERO SUIT. It's a crude mix between Batman and Superman in blue and gold. Oscar brings out the REAL THING-- the SUPERHERO SUIT based on the designs and it's BAD ASS.

DR. RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
What do you say? Are you ready to
save the world?

EXT. PARK, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Benji, in his new superhero suit, scours the park for the Infinity gem with Oscar and Lola, when DR. DOOM approaches brandishing the RING POP (INFINITY GEM).

DR. RABINOWITZ/DR. DOOM
Were you looking for this *Captain Infinity*?

BENJY
Hand it over Dr. Doom.

DR. RABINOWITZ/DR. DOOM.
Make me.

The scene plays out the way Benji's imagination sees it...

-- STRAIGHT OUT OF A MARVEL MOVIE --

The shots are stylized. The colors saturated.

Benji and Dr. Doom engage in a FIST FIGHT that would make Tarantino proud. They utilize ITEMS FROM THE PLAYGROUND--

Benjy climbs the MONKEY BARS. FLIPS THROUGH THE AIR and FLIES at DR. DOOM ending in a HIGH KICK. WAM.

Dr. Doom recovers and grabs the CHAINS from the SWING SET. He rips them off and swings them at Benjy who DUCKS just in time.

The two have an EPIC BATTLE, fighting on the SLIDE, THE SPINNING WHEEL, THE UNEVEN BARS, and ultimately Benjy defeats Dr. Doom winning the INFINITY GEM...

BACK TO REALITY--

Benjy holds the ring pop HIGH IN THE AIR, victorious.

Dr. Rabinowitz makes dramatic noises with his mouth before PLAYING DEAD.

Oscar and Lola celebrate, cheering Benjy on. The mood is triumphant, until --

Benjy gets queasy...

BENJY
I don' feel... so... good.

Then he VOMITS...

SLAM TO:

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Benjy is hooked up to an I.V., groaning in intense pain, with Sandra at his side.

SANDRA
You're okay hijo! Mami's here.

Oscar stands horrified in the corner. Dr. Rabinowitz enters.

DR. RABINOWITZ
His white blood cell count is very low, and he's not holding any of his food down. We're going to need to do a blood transfusion.

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Benjy does a SCAN. His face is contorted due to the pain.

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Benji is under for a BLOOD TRANSFUSION.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dr. Rabinowitz speaks to Oscar--

DR. RABINOWITZ

We're going to have to take a break
on the Superhero hi-jinks until
Benji is feeling better.

OSCAR

(lying)

Got it. I actually, uh, just spoke
with my mom and she thought the
same thing.

DR. RABINOWITZ

Good. Have you given any thought
into Benji's Make-A-Wish?

OSCAR

Wait, he's not terminal is he?

DR. RABINOWITZ

No, no, no -- he just needs rest.
The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants
wishes for all children with life
threatening illnesses.

OSCAR

Oh...

SLAM TO:

EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Sandra wheels Benji out in a WHEELCHAIR, wearing a HOSPITAL
MASK over his mouth.

INT. BATHROOM, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

Benji hurls, bent over the toilet while Sandra pats his back.
Oscar watches from the doorway.

SLAM TO:

INT. ROOF, RUIZ HOME - NIGHT

Oscar sits on the edge of the roof, pensive. He spots that WATER TOWER again. Thinks. Then takes out his PHONE.

TEXT MESSAGE TO LOLA: **Been a tough week. Are you free tonight?**

SLAM TO:

INT. FOYER, RUIZ HOME

Lola enters, holding a TRAY OF BROWNIES.

LOLA

Thought these might cheer you up.

OSCAR

Aw that's sweet of you, but I'm not hungry. Cleaning up puke all day kind of ruins your appetite.

LOLA

Trust me, you're going to want to eat these brownies.

Lola and Oscar make their way to the COUCH.

OSCAR

Benjy and my mom are both asleep so we have to be quiet.

LOLA

Well in that case--

Lola cuts herself a BROWNIE piece and starts eating.

OSCAR

Those Brownie's smell weird, are they--?

LOLA

"Special". Yeah.

Oscar get's it now-- she brought POT BROWNIES. He scoops a piece of BROWNIE for himself. Nibbles it.

LOLA (CONT'D)

So Chaz is throwing a little get together tonight at his place. He invited us.

OSCAR

You should go.

LOLA

No YOU should go. You need to take a night off Dr. Ruiz.

OSCAR

Benjy's been feeling pretty crappy lately. It's not a good idea. You go. Thanks for stopping by. You really did cheer me up. But go have fun with Chaz. I don't want to hold anyone else back.

LOLA

I'm not going without you. When's the last time you went to a party with kids your own age...

(beat)

We're going.

Lola drags Oscar up on his feet.

OSCAR

Fine, fine. Let me just put this tray away and save it for later.

Oscar places the TRAY OF BROWNIES above the REFRIGERATOR in a place seemingly too high for Benjy.

SLAM TO:

EXT. CHAZ' HOUSE - NIGHT

The thump of a HOUSE PARTY vibrates CHAZ' HOUSE. Lola and Oscar walk up to the FRONT DOOR--

OSCAR

Cops are going to bust this party in a second. It feels like an earthquake.

LOLA

Hi I'm Lola, the girl with a get out of jail free card. Nice to meet you.

OSCAR

Right.

They push the FRONT DOOR open, and step inside to find--

INT. CHAZ' HOUSE - NIGHT

A KEGGAR in full swing replete with beer pong, flip cup, and a dance floor in the LIVING ROOM--

Oscar is an alien discovering this magical world for the first time. Lola senses his trepidation and touches his HAND.

CHAZ (O.S.)
Oscar!

Chaz slaps his arm around both Chaz and Lola.

CHAZ (CONT'D)
I'm so glad you made it man.

OSCAR
Of course. Thanks for having me.

CHAZ
Want to go do a keg-stand.

OSCAR
Oh no sorry, I'm not drinking. I drove.

LOLA
(to Chaz)
He wouldn't let me call an uber.

CHAZ
Oscar, mi casa is your casa. You are sleeping over and leaving your car here. That's an order.

OSCAR
Uh, sure. I guess that's alright.

CHAZ
Hells to the yeah! Let's get wasted!

OSCAR
What's a keg stand?

SLAM TO:

Chaz and Lola hold Oscar upside down as he does his first KEG-STAND. He spits out frothy beer as they let him down.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
That wasn't so bad.

SLAM TO:

INT. HALLWAY, RUIZ HOME - SAME

BENJY ambles down the HALLWAY. Yawns. Sniffs the air. Wakes up. Follows his nose right up to the--

INT. KITCHEN, RUIZ HOME - SAME

--REFRIGERATOR. Spots the Tray of Brownies peaking out over the edge. He reaches. No dice, he's too short. He hops up. No dice. So he grabs a chair. Props himself up. Ah ha.

He grabs the Tray of Brownies. Digs in with both hands.

SLAM TO:

INT. LIVING-ROOM, CHAZ' HOUSE - SAME

Lola and Chaz teach Oscar various beer games: Flip Cup. Quarters. Beer Pong. He grows more comfortable the more booze he consumes.

SLAM TO:

INT. KITCHEN, RUIZ HOME - CONTINUOUS

Benjy is halfway through the TRAY. And now he's hungry. He rips open the refrigerator door. Snatches anything edible: COLD CUTS, YOGURT, ICE CREAM.

SLAM TO:

INT. LIVING-ROOM, CHAZ HOUSE - SAME

Chaz pulls Oscar and Lola aside. He's thoroughly sloshed, and opening up to them--

CHAZ
I love you guys.

LOLA
We love you too Chaz.

CHAZ
No, I'm serious. Y'know most people
think I'm a loser Karate teacher.
But you guys -- you believe in me.
Thank you. Group hug.

Chaz pulls them in close for a HUG, though Oscar protests.

CHAZ (CONT'D)
And Oscar. The same goes for you.
We believe in you man. You are so
freakin' talented.

OSCAR
No.

LOLA
Seriously Oscar. You are.

OSCAR
... Thanks, but you guys have never
even seen me play.

Chaz and Lola look at each other. Chaz encourages Lola to say something.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Why are you guys being so weird?

LOLA
Did you bring your guitar?

OSCAR
It's in my trunk. Why?

Lola and Chaz grin mischievously.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
No. Not tonight. I can't. Not in
front of all these people. I don't
even know anyone here.

SLAM TO:

LATER:

The DJ MUSIC cuts out as Chaz makes an announcement.

CHAZ
Everyone quiet down, quiet down.

The rowdy PARTY GO-ERS settle down.

CHAZ (CONT'D)
The man of the hour, my main man,
my brother from another mother,
Oscar Ruiz, is going to play
something special for us.

Oscar stands in front of the crowd with his GUITAR, scared
shitless.

He starts to strum LOLA by The Kinks

Then dives into it with a confident and raw rendition --

OSCAR

I met her in a club down in North
Soho
Where you drink champagne and it
tastes just like cherry cola
See-O-L-A cola.
She walked up to me and she asked
me to dance.
I asked her name and in a dark
brown voice she said, "Lola"
L-O-L-A Lola, lo lo lo lo Lola
Well, I'm not the world's most
physical guy,
But when she squeezed me tight she
nearly broke my spine
Oh my Lola, lo lo lo lo Lola...

Oscar oozes charisma. He was born to be on STAGE.

The AUDIENCE whistles and cheers.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Well, I'm not dumb but I can't
understand
Why she walk like a woman and talk
like a man
Well, we drank champagne and danced
all night,
Under electric candlelight,
She picked me up and sat me on her
knee,
And said, "Little boy won't you
come home with me?"

Lola and Oscar lock eyes. The tension between them is
electric...

SLAM TO:

INT. OSCAR'S CAR - NIGHT

THE CHORUS to the song LOLA kicks into high gear over the CAR
RADIO, as Oscar and Lola attack each other's faces, making
out intensely.

OVER THE RADIO

Well, I'm not the world's most
passionate guy,
But when I looked in her eyes,
(MORE)

OVER THE RADIO (CONT'D)
Well I almost fell for my Lola,
Lo lo lo lo Lola, lo lo lo lo Lola
Lola lo lo lo lo Lola lo lo lo lo
Lola

They peel off their CLOTHES as they try to maneuver comfortably in the BACKSEAT. This is part ballet, part animalistic dance.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, RUIZ HOME - SAME

Benji, high from the pot brownies, is dancing around the kitchen in sync with the MUSIC. He's like a mini Tom Cruise in *Risky Business*, but with a face covered in CRUMBS.

CUT TO:

INT. OSCAR'S CAR - SAME

Oscar and Lola's bodies entwine as they fight to get as close as possible to one another. They THRUST and MOAN in pleasure.

BLUE and RED lights dance in the reflection of the windows as if this long overdue interaction brought on FIREWORKS.

Lola's FACE contorts, close to an orgasm, while--

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, RUIZ HOME - SAME

Benji keels over, and VOMITS uncontrollably onto the floor, sick from the POT BROWNIES, as--

CUT TO:

INT. OSCAR'S CAR - SAME

Oscar and Lola realize too late, that these dancing lights are not fireworks at all -- they are POLICE LIGHTS.

A KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK rattles the CAR WINDOW from none other than Officer Firestone.

It takes him a moment to register who he just found in the BACKSEAT, while busting up the party...

We don't linger on his wordless reaction, because we --

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, RUIZ HOME - SAME

THE LIGHTS are on in the whole house as Sandra is awake cleaning up the mess.

She clocks the TRAY OF POT BROWNIES as she mops the floor. Sniffs. Knows what they are.

INT. BEDROOM, RUIZ HOME - DAY

Sandra tucks Benjy into bed. He's looking a little better than before.

SANDRA

I'm going to kill Oscar.

BENJY

Don't get Oscar in trouble. I don't want to be kicked out of the program.

SANDRA

What program?

BENJY

You don't know?

SANDRA

What program?

BENJY

The "sickness" is a fake. I thought you would'a known by now. I'm in a program to become a superhero. I'm gunna make papa so proud.

SANDRA

Benjy, I'm so sorry to tell you this but there is no program. You have cancer. You are very sick, and you need rest.

BENJY

But it's real. I have super strength, and speed, and invisibility. Just ask Oscar.

Sandra doesn't know how to handle this, and she's interrupted as A PHONE RINGS...

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Establishing.

INT. HOLDING CELL, POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Oscar pleads with Officer Firestone who is filling out paperwork at his DESK--

OSCAR

Please. If I have an arrest on my record, I'll never get into college. Please.

Officer Firestone ignores him, revelling in Oscar's agony. Oscar punches the BRICK WALL. Ow. He immediately regrets it.

INT. LOBBY, POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Sandra checks in at the FRONT DESK holding Benjy who looks a little better than before.

CLERK

What's with the kid?

SANDRA

You try getting a baby sitter at 2am. I'm here for Oscar Ruiz.

Clerk directs her to have a SEAT.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLDING CELL, POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Officer Firestone gets a MESSAGE on his inter-office AIM. He turns and acknowledges Oscar for the first time.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

Your mom is here to pick you up.
(beat)
Good luck.

INT. HALLWAY, POLICE STATION - DAY

Sandra sits Benjy down.

SANDRA

I'm going back there to pick up
Oscar. Stay put. Okay?

BENJY

But I need to talk to Oscar.

INT. HOLDING CELL, POLICE STATION - DAY

Officer Firestone opens up the DOOR to the holding cell for Sandra with a CLINK.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

I'll give you two a minute.

Officer exits leaving Sandra and Oscar alone.

Oscar can't make eye contact. They stand there, breathing deeply for a moment -- an epic standoff. He finally looks up, and starts to cry. It's tough disappointing someone you love.

SANDRA

<<I can't believe you right now...
Benjy ate those brownies and got
very sick. I've been taking care of
him all night.>>

Oscar's stomach churns with guilt.

OSCAR

I'm so sorry, Mami...

SANDRA

<<And I can't even begin to tell
you how mad I am at you for lying
to him. Shame on you Oscar.>>

OSCAR

I didn't--

BENJY (O.S.)

Oscar!

Benjy hustles into the room.

OSCAR

Benjy.

BENJY

Tell Mami about the program. It's
real right? I'm a superhero, right?

OSCAR

I--

BENJY

You didn't lie. I told mom lying is
for villains. You're not a villain.
Are you?

Oscar's no response, is a guilty verdict.

This betrayal takes a moment to sink in for Benjy, but when
it does, he freaks out -- starts crying, and--

SANDRA

Don't cry Benjy!

Benjy charges at Oscar, punching him in the stomach.

BENJY

You a liar. I hate you.

OSCAR

No-I...

Benjy finishes and dashes out--

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

BENJY

I'm running away.

SANDRA

No you're not hijo.

-- and he's out the DOOR.

Oscar is left with Sandra.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I can't believe you would lie to a
him.

OSCAR

You're a hypocrite.

SANDRA

A what?

OSCAR

You talk about lying-- you haven't
mentioned dad once in three years.

SANDRA
Oscar!

OSCAR
He killed himself mom. And you won't even acknowledge that it happened. Meanwhile, I've been playing "Dad" for Benjy's whole life and I'm tired of it. I want to just be a normal kid. Go to parties. Drink beer. Go to college. Have a girlfriend. But I can't do anything. Sometimes I just wish Benjy would die already --

Sandra breaks down crying. Oscar can't believe he just revealed a deep and painful truth.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I didn't.. mean that. I didn't mean that... I'm so sorry Mami.

He tries to touch her, but she recoils.

Oscar wants to console her, but he remembers Benjy is out there. He darts out after Benjy--

EXT. POLICE STATION - SAME

Benjy cries as he runs as fast as he can in the middle of the street. His little legs kick up dust. He's a block away from the Station, when --

Oscar exits, and chases after him.

OSCAR
(yelling)
Come back Benjy!

Benjy doesn't have the energy to respond. He's confused. Devastated. Lost.

His legs lose steam. He coughs. Wobbles. Collapses in the MIDDLE OF THE STREET.

Oscar sprints -- arrives at Benjy's side. He wraps Benjy in a HUG, but Benjy fights it-- flailing his arms in protest. Crying.

Benjy gives up. Falls into the hug. Exhausted of all emotions.

He goes catatonic as Oscar holds him in his arms.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Benjy? Benjy? BENJY?

SFX PRE-LAP: The BEEP BEEP BEEP of a heart monitor...

SLAM TO:

EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Establishing. A THUNDERSTORM bombards the walls of the hospital, but we hear nothing but the Beep Beep Beep...

INT. ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Benjy is in bed and not doing well. Not only does he look frail but his magical spark is gone. His eyes are empty.

A NURSE tries to feed him soup, but he won't open his mouth.

SANDRA
Want some ice cream hijo?

No.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Want to play video games.

No.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
You're still not talking to me.

Yes.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I love you so much. I'm sorry.

SLAM TO:

INT. HALLWAY, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Dr. Rabinowitz is mid-conversation with Sandra and Oscar.

DR. RABINOWITZ
We've completed 14 rounds out of 18
and the good news is we've shrunken
the tumor to a manageable size. Now
it's risky, but I recommend
surgery.

SANDRA
Is it dangerous?

DR. RABINOWITZ
It is, but I highly recommend it.
(beat)
Take some time to think it over.

Oscar marches off -- pissed off at the world.

SANDRA
Thank you Doctor.

DR. RABINOWITZ
You know it's my fault. The whole
superhero program. I thought it was
a good idea.

Sandra thinks about this.

SLAM TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Oscar stands SOAKED in front of his father's GRAVE-SITE -- devoid of emotion. Rain falls. He doesn't notice.

SANDRA (O.S.)
I thought I might find you here.

Sandra walks up to Oscar with an UMBRELLA. She offers it. He declines. Long beat.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Your father was the most charming
man I'd ever known. <<He was
magnetic.>>

Oscar looks up.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
<<But he was unstable. Tormented.>>
He couldn't just be happy- stay
put. So I let him go... the first
time. He needed to travel the world-
- and he had so much to offer it.

Oscar really listens now -- this is the first time his mother has opened up about his father.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
<<I didn't want to let him back
into our lives, but I loved him so
deeply. I took him back and he gave
us a miracle.>>

OSCAR
<<A miracle?>>

SANDRA
Benji. Benji is our miracle.

Oscar nods in agreement.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
This world was too much for him. So
he left again.

OSCAR
You mean killed himself.

Beat.

SANDRA
<<Yes. I was so mad. So furious. So
heartbroken. I pushed it out of my
mind. I never accepted it. I'm
sorry hijo.>>

Oscar doesn't respond, but he gets it.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I get why you lied to Benji.
Sometimes a white lie isn't so bad.
You're not a liar.

OSCAR
I am.

SANDRA
No.

OSCAR
I'm more like Papa than you know.

SANDRA
Don't be scared hijo. Have faith.

OSCAR
How? How can you believe in God?
Benji might die tomorrow.

SANDRA

I have faith that if the Lord decides to take Benji, he will go to a better place.

OSCAR

That's a fairy tale. A comic book. There's nothing after this. Nothing.

SANDRA

<<You see I thought about it, and I was thinking about what you did.>> Telling Benji this whole Superhero story to make him believe. Maybe that's all I do too. But it's that belief that makes it real. Belief in God. Belief in stories. There may be nothing after this life Oscar, but nothing is everything. Nothing is Infinity.

This doesn't make Oscar feel any better. He's still lost.

SLAM TO:

INT. HALLWAY, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Sandra, Lola and Oscar speak to Officer Firestone.

SANDRA

Thank you for coming. Nothing is cheering him up, and he needs to be in good spirits before the surgery.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

Happy to help. Honestly Oscar, if I was going to walk in on my daughter and any young punk, I'm glad it was you.

Officer Firestone holds out his hand for Oscar. They shake.

OSCAR

Thanks. I'm going to wait out here. Benji still won't talk to me.

Oscar and Lola exit, while Sandra opens the door for the Officer Firestone--

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

SANDRA

Benji? I have a guest for you.

No response. Officer Firestone enters and pulls up a CHAIR next to Benji's HOSPITAL BED. Takes off his HAT.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

Hi Benji.

Benji studies Officer Firestone.

OFFICER FIRESTONE (CONT'D)

I hear you're all bummed out. Is that right? You want to be a Superhero, huh? Well, what if I told you that you don't have to be a Superhero to be a Super Hero.

BENJY

I'd say you're stupid.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

Police Officers- we risk our lives every day to protect the people of this town. We don't have super powers, just a will to do some good. It takes grit. It takes toughness. And it's not easy. I have to tell you, I see potential in you.

BENJY

Me?

OFFICER FIRESTONE

Yes sir. That's why I'm here -- to deputize you.

BENJY

(weakly, but excited)

Really?

Officer Firestone brandishes a BADGE and a WALKIE TALKIE.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

You can have these but only after you recite the Police Officer's Oath. Repeat after me -- I Benjamin Ruiz do swear...

BENJY

Is this real? I'm tired of lies.

Officer Firestone nods.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
(repeating)
I Benjamin Ruiz do swear...

BENJY
I Benjamin... Ruiz do swear...

OFFICER FIRESTONE
I will well and truly serve

BENJY
I will... uh--

OFFICER FIRESTONE
Well and truly serve our sovereign
country and state.

BENJY
... Well and truly suv our sov'n
country and state.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
Good...
(then intense and
inspiring)
AS A POLICE OFFICER WITHOUT FAVOR
OR AFFECTION - MALICE OR ILL-
WILL...

BENJY
AS A OFFICER WITHOUT FAVOR OR A
FICTION - MALLS OR ILL-WILL?

OFFICER FIRESTONE
SO HELP ME GOD.

BENJY
SO HELP ME GOD.

Officer Firestone puts the BADGE and WALKIE TALKIE in front
of Benjy.

He twists a knob and the Walkie Talkie SQUAWKS TO LIFE--

OFFICER FIRESTONE
Congratulations. You're deputized.
Ready to be a real hero?

Benjy nods, excited.

DISPATCH
(crackly)
Calling all cars we've got an S-02
in progress over...

OFFICER FIRESTONE
And that's me. After your surgery
we'll go on a ride along. How does
that sound?

BENJY
Good.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
Stay outta trouble, and get some
rest.

SLAM TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Oscar and Lola sit on the swings. Oscar broods.

LOLA
What are you thinking about?

OSCAR
Nothing... Everything.

LOLA
I know.

She swings higher and higher.

LOLA (CONT'D)
Come, let's see who can jump
farther.

OSCAR
No.

LOLA
Don't be a bitch.

They swing higher and higher, before LEAPING--

THEY LAND. Oscar out-jumped Lola.

LOLA (CONT'D)
I let you win to cheer you up.

OSCAR

Nothing is going to make me forget
that this could be the last night I
have with my brother and he's not
speaking to me.

LOLA

Well, that doesn't mean you can't
speak to him.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - MAGIC HOUR

Sandra is fast asleep in the chair by Benjy's bedside. Benjy is fast asleep as well, looking angelic but frail.

Oscar pulls a chair up next to the bed. He holds A LETTER, like those written from his dad earlier.

OSCAR

Hi Buddy... If you can hear me I
just wanted to read you a letter --
from ME this time. "Dear Benjy...
I'm sorry... for everything. I love
you so much. I never meant to hurt
you by lying to you, I just wanted
to protect you, but the truth is
you don't need me to protect you. I
need you. I need you badly. And I
know I lied about papa, but I
didn't lie about something else...
you ARE a superhero. That was REAL.
You are my hero. You are all
strength and I'm weak. I need you
buddy. I need you."

Oscar wipes a few tears from his eyes. Gives Benjy a kiss on the head.

He looks OUT THE WINDOW-

We see the WATER TOWER peaking out over the trees.

Oscar is mesmerized. He exits the ROOM--

SLAM TO:

EXT. WATER TOWER - DUSK

Oscar stands at the base of the WATER TOWER. Cranes his neck. He takes a SWIG from a BOTTLE OF JACK DANIELS. Then climbs, rung after rung while he hums the song, LOLA, to himself.

He throws open the HATCH that leads to a BALCONY. Stands looking out over Los Angeles. The SUNSET is breathtaking.

Oscar is tormented. Wild eyed.

He holds onto the rail, and steps up OVER THE EDGE.

He takes another long gulp. Raises the BOTTLE UP IN THE AIR--

OSCAR
Cheers God!

He peaks over the edge-- woh! He's too drunk to realize how dangerous this is.

THE BOTTLE drops, and SMASHES!

SFX PRE-LAP: SIRENS RING OUT...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - SAME

THE WALKIE TALKIE chirps to life on the HOSPITAL TABLE--

DISPATCH
We've got a potential 10-56A on the Water Tower. Repeat 10-56A.
Hispanic Male in his 20's. Looks like he's going to jump. Calling all available cars.

Benjy WAKES. This is a call to action.

He looks over at his mom, still asleep in her chair. He shoots out of bed. Sandra stirs, and then falls back asleep as Benjy exits.

SLAM TO:

EXT. WATER TOWER - NIGHT

Oscar sees a LINE OF POLICE CARS in the distance.

SLAM TO:

INT. HALLWAY, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Benjy tiptoes down the hallway. The RECEPTIONIST is awake, guarding his only exit.

BENJY (V.O.)
I know they said I didn't have
powers... but then I realize--
there's always that point in the
story where the superhero is
tested, and don't think they have
what it takes... I knew it was a
test. My test. And I have to pass.

BENJY
(to himself)
Invisibility on.

This time Benjy actually goes **INVISIBLE**.

The Receptionist is surprised when the electronic door opens,
as if by magic--

INT. STREET, DAY

Benjy RE-APPEARS. He eyes the Water Tower over the trees.

BENJY
(to himself)
Super speed on.

Benjy engages his **SUPER SPEED** -- the background becomes a
blur as he kicks up dust and arrives--

EXT. WATER TOWER - DAY

-- at the base of the Water Tower. He hides behind a BUSH as
he sees TWO SQUAD CARS. One is Officer Firestone's, who looks
deeply concerned.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
(to another Officer)
I know Oscar-- he's not going to do
it, he's just being an idiot. Let's
give him some space. Okay. Don't
startle him. I'm going to get my
daughter here...

Officer Firestone is distracted calling Lola.

Benjy looks up at his brother -- leaning precariously over
the edge. Benjy ambles over to the Water Tower.

BENJY
(to himself)
Super climbing on.

He **SUPER-CLIMBS** the rungs of the ladder that lead up the water-tower.

One of the other OFFICERS notices--

OFFICER
We've got another one.

OFFICER FIRESTONE
Shit.

EXT. BALCONY, WATER TOWER - DAY

Oscar hears a knock at the HATCH, gets confused.

EXT. WATER TOWER - DAY

Underneath the BALCONY.

BENJY
(to himself)
Superstrength on.

Benjy RIPS the hatch off like it's made of PAPER MACHE.

EXT. BALCONY, WATER TOWER - DAY

Oscar's eyes go wide as Benjy steps out on the balcony.

OSCAR
Benjy!?

BENJY
Oscar I'm sorry I was mean to you.
I know it was just a test.

OSCAR
But-- but-- how'd you get here?

BENJY
I'm a Superhero dummy.

Oscar can't control the tears that fall.

BENJY (CONT'D)
Why are you so sad?

OSCAR
Because you're sick.

BENJY

I'm going to be okay Oscar. I got
the infinity ring. Death isn't
going to beat me...

(beat, dramatic)

I'm Captain Infinity. Come fly with
me.

OSCAR

... You can't fly. Rule number 3.

BENJY

I can do anything if I want to. You
told me that.

OSCAR

You can't fly.

BENJY

Yes I can. Come...

Benjy takes Oscar's hand.

BENJY (CONT'D)

You have to have faith.

They both stand out on the EDGE...

EXT. WATER TOWER - DAY

Down below Officer Firestone is freaking out.

OFFICER FIRESTONE

Woh woh woh! Don't you dare do it!
I'm warning you both, I will kill
you if you do something stupid like
jumping!!!

LOLA'S VW BEATLE PULLS UP--

She gets out rushes to her father's SIDE.

EXT. BALCONY, WATER TOWER - DAY

BENJY

(to Oscar)

Ready?

Oscar isn't sure.

BENJY (CONT'D)

1, 2... 3

They both take a LEAP OF FAITH...

And FLOAT ON AIR...

Oscar opens his eyes-- he can't believe it.

They are **FLOATING ON AIR**--

They test out their powers swimming around like it's water.

Then, Oscar and Benji ROCKET INTO THE SKY--

JETTING PAST CLOUDS--

UP INTO THE UPPER STRATOSPHERE--

THEY FLY ALONGSIDE A COMMERCIAL AIRLINER--

A YOUNG PASSENGER in the WINDOW points to them, and looks out in awe.

They STAND ON TOP OF THE PLANE IN MOTION--

OSCAR
(yelling over the NOISE)
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME ON A PLANE!

They laugh and have more fun flying around--

-- and then Benji takes Oscar's HAND and guides him THROUGH THE CLOUDS--

They float gently to the ground...

Officer Firestone and the Deputy can't believe it. Their jaws drop.

Neither can Oscar. He looks at Benji.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
<<You are a miracle>>

Oscar sees Lola. He rushes to her--

They embrace and kiss SILHOUETTED by the MOONLIGHT...

SLAM TO:

INT. MAKE A WISH - OFFICES - SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

BENJY
And that's exactly how it happened.
Right Mami?

WE PULL BACK from a prominent SCAR on Benji's head that is several months old, and notice that Benji looks healthier than we saw him last. The surgery was a success.

Benji finishes telling his story to a room full of MAKE-A-WISH EXECUTIVES, and there's not a dry eye in the house, including Sandra. Sandra nods and wipes a tear from her eye.

SANDRA
That's right hijo.

We notice POSTERS on the WALLS of wishes that have been granted. Smiling MAKE-WISH-KIDS meeting ATHLETES, throwing PARTIES...

BENJY
So that's why I don't need anything for my make-a-wish. It already came true cause of my brother Oscar. I became a Superhero. So I wanna give him what he's always wanted... I want him to get to go to music school, and travel the world. Can you do that?

Beat.

VOICE OFF-SCREEN
We can make that happen.

SLAM TO:

EXT. FRONT-YARD, RUIZ HOME - DAY

Their CAR is filled to the brim with COLLEGE MOVING BOXES. Sandra slams the TRUNK SHUT. We may notice an **NYU** sticker on the BACK WINDOW.

SANDRA
<<We need to hit the rode, or we're going to be late! This is a seven day rode trip. Let's not make it fifteen.>>

OSCAR
Give me a second, Mami.

SANDRA
I love you hijo, but hurry up.

This time Oscar stops and kisses his mom on the FOREHEAD.

OSCAR
Love you too.

SLAM TO:

CLOSE ON A DIMPLED, GAP-TOOTHED GRIN --

WIDEN TO REVEAL Benjy is decked out in his Captain Infinity suit, and--

WIDEN EVEN FURTHER TO REVEAL Oscar stands on the edge of the roof too, decked out in his own Superhero suit.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
We're just going to go for a quick spin.

They both bend their knees, and LAUNCH INTO THE AIR, as we--

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END