

WHISPER WILLOW

Written by

Daniel Edwin Doble

FADE IN

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - DAY

A group of twelve, mostly family, sit comfortably on sofas and recliners, deep in their own conversations.

They've set up camp, encircling a lazy-boy recliner, right in the middle of the living room.

Laying in the recliner, is an old, tired, propped-up version of OLD MRS. FINLAY (84), sleeping. AKA: KATHERINE or "KITTY".

Her only son, DARREN FINLAY (58), sits by her side.

The group of 12 chatter about other things. Chatter. Chatter. Chatter.

The front door opens and there stands WILLOW (8), a small-framed blonde neighborhood kid, with an intense look in her eyes.

Willow's mother, JANET (36), Willow's big brother JAMES (16), and big sister ROBERTA (14), join the others and stake their claims just beyond the encampment, one on a nice foot stool and the others on a big sofa.

They add to the Chatter, Chatter, Chatter.

Willow directs the intensity in her eyes to Mrs. Finlay.

Suddenly, Mrs. Finlay opens her eyes and looks back at Willow.

Darren notices.

DARREN

Mother? You're awake? Yes!

The group is becoming a little frustrated that Old Mrs. Finlay is not responding to their barrage. Specially Darren.

DARREN (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

Mom, come on, at least look at me.

Darren finally figures out that his dying mother has a fixed gaze on 8-year-old Willow. Darren stops his protest and just watches them.

The others in the room soon follow suit and the volume in the room comes down from a solid seven to around a three, two, one. Silent.

In their mutual gaze, Old Mrs. Finlay and Willow appear to be communicating.

To those in the room, it looks a lot like magic. Perhaps, even supernatural. But, it's not. It's a simple comforting gaze from someone who's not on the clock.

Willow takes one step forward. Old Mrs. Finlay is in control of Willow's gaze and she's not letting go.

Mrs. Finlay trembles and looks frightened.

Willow gets within arms length of her feet. She moves like slow Tai-Chi. Willow sets the nude lace to the side.

Willow gently caresses Old Mrs. Finlay's feet and she let's out a slow rolling yelp, like a buck in distress.

MRS. FINLAY

Oarhoooooo..

DARREN

What's wrong? What's wrong.

Willow reaches out to Darren's forearm. Gently places her hand on his arm.

Suddenly, CLENCH! Willow engages with Darren's arm. An almost electric hum takes over.

Darren sees a FLASH! In his mind.

Darren stops his protest.

Darren cannot look away from Willow's eyes. He has tears running down his face.

WILLOW

(whisper)

Easy now. Gentle now. Quiet now.

Willow lets go of his arm.

Silence.

Willow's mother, Janet, takes her daughter's seat, with a good view of what her daughter is doing.

She doesn't even think about interfering. Willow has been Willow her entire life. She let go a long time before today.

Willow keeps her focus on the dying woman in the chair. They have a lock on their straight meaningful gazes.

Willow speaks directly to her. She's like a real Whisperer.
Gently now.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
(whisper)
I'm here, Kitty... Tell me.

INT. MRS. FINLAY'S HOME - NIGHT (INTROSPECTIVE MONOLOGUE)

MRS. FINLAY stands in the open doorway, a gentle wind blowing against her face. She gazes out into the dark night, lost in her thoughts.

INTERCUT BETWEEN FLASHBACK AND PRESENT

MRS. FINLAY
(voice trembling)
(INDISTINCT)

Willow looks at Darren.

WILLOW
(to Darren)
She wants to speak to you now.

Darren leans and looks at his mother's face, but Willow speaks for her.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Darren, my lovely boy.

Darren leans back and shifts his focus to Willow. His eyes go wide.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Did I show you enough love? I hope so.

Darren trembles from these words he's waited so long to hear.

MRS. FINLAY
(in a whisper)
(INDISTINCT)

WILLOW
Forgive me, my son. If I didn't make you feel loved. I am so sorry for that. You are loved, today, and you always have been.

A single tear falls, tracing a path down Mrs. Finlay's cheek, a silent testament to the emotions buried deep within her.

Willow nods.

She takes Mrs. Finlay's left hand, gently, and lovingly connects it with Darren's right hand.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 (whisper to Darren)
 Soft now. Slow now. Gentle now.

Willow takes the woman's right hand in her own left hand.

She settles.

Silence.

James and Roberta have rounded the edge of the crowd in order to have a better view.

Willow slowly shifts her focus back to the dying woman. They lock their gazes once again. Willow speaks to her for the last time.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 (whisper)
 Darren is here now, Kitty.

Mrs. Finlay softly squeezes her son's hand.

Silence.

Willow sits. She settles. And slowly puts her chin down and closes her eyes.

The once unhinged and boisterous group, has shifted their focus to three-feet of silence between Old Mrs. Finlay and Willow.

Willow slowly raises one hand to God and then begins to softly sing in a language no one knows. No one except Old Mrs. Finlay.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 Éist le mo chroí
 Go brónach a choích'
 Tá mé cailhte gan tú
 'S do bhean chéile

Willow reaches out and takes Darren's one free hand.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 An grá mór i do shaoil
 Treoraí sé mé
 Bígí liomsa i gcónaí
 Lá 's oích'

Old Mrs. Finlay breathes her last.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 Ag caoineadh ar an uaigneas mór
 Na deora, go brónach
 'Na gcodladh ins
 an uaigh ghlas chiúin
 Faoi shuaimhneas, go domhain

There's not an untouched heart in the room. Many breakdown in tears and find refuge on the sofa in the back room.

Most broken of all, Darren. He stares at Willow. Willow stares back, and gently takes his hand.

Willow leans in. Small. And tells him something he would never forget.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 She loves her little Bean.

Darren let's out a moan of sorrow like none other. Standing and walking off as he does.

On the inside, Willow is exhausted. The weight of the event, sits on her heart.

Willow turns to her mother, tears streaming down her face.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 Everyone has an expiration date,
 even me.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - DINING TABLE - NIGHT

Willow's dad ROB GARNER (47) arrives home with two buckets of KFC and two bags of sides. They begin to serve themselves, but not Willow. She's exhausted.

JANET
 Willow, take this plate. You need
 to eat.

ROB
 What's wrong with her?

JANET
 She had a time of it at the
 Finlay's.

ROB
Did that mean old lady finally
croak?

The whole family looks at Rob.

JANET
Yes, Rob... Yes she did. And your
daughter was very compassionate to
Mrs. Finlay in the last few minutes
of her life. And to Darren too.

ROB
That kinda thing is not for kids.
Maybe next time leave her at home.

JAMES
(to Willow)
Sissy, sorry if this sounds a
little direct, but what was that
back there?

JANET
James, she's tired. Your sister
helped a woman and a family in
need, comforting her.

ROBERTA
Oh, Man! That was so beautiful.

ROB
Yeah? Have you done that before?

WILLOW
No. There was no need. Today is the
first. And not the last.

JAMES
Where'd you learn to do that?

Willow doesn't have the strength for a direct answer.

WILLOW
I don't know. It's a lot like
breathing... Nobody really "taught"
me. You just do it.

Her brother and sister look at her with amazement.

Willow reaches both hands out to her dad.

ROB
What?

WILLOW
Please. Just entertain me.

He gives both hands back.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Dad, I will do this again, many,
many times before I die, and you
are welcome to attend.

ROB
Well, thank you sweetheart, but---

He tries to let go but Willow doesn't.

WILLOW
I understand.

Rob shakes. She locks eyes with him. He sees that she means business.

ROB
Ok. Ok. Can I have my hands back?

JANET
Willow? Can I ask you a question?

WILLOW
Please.

JANET
What song was that?

WILLOW
It was a favorite of Mrs. Finlay's
when she lived in Ireland.

JANET
(astounded)
But, sissy, how did you know that?

WILLOW
She told us. Last year. Christmas
or Thanksgiving.

ROB
It was thanksgiving. Darren thought
the old bat was going senile.

Janet is on the verge of tears.

JAMES
Mom, what's wrong?

JANET

Nothing. No. Just imagine you're a mom, knowing that her smallest child somehow listened to an old lady, more than a year ago, and not only did she remember the name of the song, she took the time to learn it before the woman died.

Janet shakes her head.

JAMES

And, in a foreign language of all things.

ROB

Yeah? Foreign language? How did you know what you were singing? Haha. Did you even know what the song was about?... Ha ha ha.

Willow nods.

It's obvious to Rob that Willow has picked up a different cadence in conversation, and he doesn't rush her.

WILLOW

I know what I was saying.

She drifts in thought. And then slowly she speaks it:

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Listen to my heart
How sad I am lost without you
And your wife
The great love of your life
He guides me
Always be with me
Day and night

There are only two dry eyes left at the table.

James and Roberta sign off.

JAMES

Sissy, the two of us, me and Roberta, we like what you did. Do it as much as you feel a need to.

Long pause.

Janet looks into Willows eyes.

WILLOW
Thanks, James.

Willow smiles.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Yes, that's my dream. To walk from
town to town, visiting people like
Mrs. Finlay. As many as I can.
That's my mission.

Rob looks suspicious and skeptical.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
And I will do it, hand in hand with
my mother.

Janet continues to stare into her daughter's eyes, lost in
thought.

JANET
Ok.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - EVENING

Janet pops her head in to check on Willow. Room is empty.

Janet looks out back. Outside, Willow sits, legs crossed.
Eyes closed. She sits in silence.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - WILLOW'S ROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

Willow lies in bed, tossing and turning, unable to sleep.

She suddenly feels a sharp pain in her chest and struggles to
catch her breath. She sits up, placing a hand over her heart.

WILLOW
What the...

INT. GARNER HOUSE - WILLOW'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Janet knocks on Willow's door. No answer.

She opens the door.

Willow is face down under the covers and they're pulled over
her head.

JANET
Honey? You ok?

No reply.

Mother cautiously pulls back the covers, revealing Willow with a big smile on her face.

JANET (CONT'D)
Glad to see you got in ok.

WILLOW
Ha ha ha ha.

JANET
Oh, Sissy.

WILLOW
Mom, I need to go to the hospital
this morning.

Janet knows by now, there is a good reason.

JANET
(teases)
Need an operation?

They both laugh.

WILLOW
Ah, no. I will visit a woman and
her family. Wanna come?

JANET
Ok.

Janet waits.

WILLOW
Mom, go. I need privacy.

Janet leaves and the door closes.

Willow gets up revealing the book she was laying on:
"Menders: Clinical Guide to Severe Heart Disease." Quickly,
she shoves the book deep under the covers.

Willow changes and steps out of her room.

Janet sees Willow wearing an all-white one-piece dress.

JANET
Sissy, where'd you get that? It's
beautiful.

Willow stares back at her mother, suspiciously.

WILLOW
 Mom, duh. You gave it to me.

JANET
 Oh, yeah. It's actually a cover up.

WILLOW
 Bingo. And that's what it's doing.

EXT. HOSPITAL - MAIN ENTRANCE - LATER

Janet walks with Willow through the big front doors. It's a phenomenon, but no one stops Willow.

Within minutes, Willow finds herself slowly approaching Room 208, the room for MAURA STABLER.

Willow keeps a distance.

Janet kept up and is right behind her.

Even at a distance, Maura can feel Willow's presence. She lifts her head and sees Willow's loving gaze.

JANET
 (skeptical)
 Sissy---

Willow holds her hand up to her mother.

Willow stares deeply into the riveting look in Maura Stabler's eyes.

INT. MAURA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (INTROSPECTIVE MONOLOGUE)

Maura sits by the window, a gentle rain tapping against the glass. She gazes out into the dark night, lost in her thoughts.

MAURA
 (softly, to herself)
 I always thought I had more time.
 More time to make things right, to
 mend the broken pieces. But time
 slips through our fingers like
 sand, doesn't it?

JANET
 (skeptical)
 Sissy---

Suddenly, the door to 208 SLAMS shut.

WILLOW

(to Janet)

You're going to ask me how I am going to introduce myself. And I won't have to. Maura will tell them that I am here.

The door opens again. Maura's daughter CARRIE looks at Willow and then steps out.

CARRIE

(to Willow)

Hi. Who are you? My mother thinks she knows you.

WILLOW

She doesn't know me.

Silence.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

But I think she wants to. Shall we go in?

CARRIE

(surrenders)

Ok.

Carrie's brother JOHN is standing against the window, out of the way, crying.

JOHN

(to Carrie)

What the heck is this?

The room fills with John's resistance.

Willow walks gently first over to John. And like a cornered animal he physically begins to twitch and dart. Back and forth.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What?... What!

Until Willow touches his arm with her hand.

WILLOW

(whisper)

Softly. Slowly. Gently.

John is suddenly disarmed and his shoulders come down.

The look on Carrie's face is one of shock and awe. She hasn't seen that in all of her years with her brother.

Willow gently leads John to the dying woman's feet.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 (whisper to John)
 You're the only one to do this,
 John.

Close now. Willow pulls John in and connects his hands with Maura's cold feet. There's a sudden calm current. John nods.

Willow pauses and slowly turns her eyes into the awaiting eyes of MAURA STABLER.

Like a tractor beam, Willows gaze is pulled into her, by a well-deserving woman.

Willow is close to her.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 (whisper)
 I'm here. Tell me.

Willow nods. Slowly. Gently. She nods.

Willow slowly takes Carrie's hands and connects them with her mother MAURA's. Willow takes the other. JOHN is gently caressing her feet.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 (whisper)
 Soft now. Slow now. Gentle now.

Carrie settles. Willow settles.

Willow slowly puts her chin down, closes her eyes and raises one hand to God.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 We praise you, Eternal God,
 Sovereign of the Universe, who
 makes us holy with mitzvot and
 commands us to kindle the Sabbath
 lights.

John let's out an uncontrollable sorrow, through a constant and convulsive heaving, he sounds like an animal in pain. But no one stops him. No one touches him. And no one interferes with him. This is the way it must be.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 We praise You, Eternal God,
 Sovereign of the Universe, who
 creates the fruit of the vine.

Maura Stabler breathes her last.

The room comes to a peaceful silence and John has regained a peaceful heart.

Carrie turns to her mother, who's eyes are wide open, and slowly now, softly, gently closes them forever.

Willow gives Janet that look. Janet nods.

Willow steps out from behind the hospital bed.

From her post next to her mother, Carrie intercepts Willow and Janet with a request:

CARRIE
(to Janet)
Wait. Can we? Two minutes?

Janet nods.

Both Carrie and John surround Willow and drop low to get at eye level.

John slowly shakes his head.

JOHN
This moment, right here, right now,
is between the three of us. What I
am about to say, I will take to my
grave.

Willow reaches out her hand and places it on John's heart.

WILLOW
She loves her Boo Boo.

John, eyes-wide-open looks at Carrie and then cracks emotionally. John stands up in disbelief and backs away.

Willow turns to Carrie.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
And, Baby Girl, You'll never be
Number 2, ever.

Carrie cracks.

CARRIE
Oh, my God. How do you know that?

WILLOW
She loves you, Kitten.

Sounding like an exotic bird, Carrie let's out a cathartic scream and moaning, full of all the sorrow she had been holding in her chest.

Willow takes Janet's hand. They turn respectfully, and leave.

Behind them, a loving sight of two siblings embracing each other for the first time in years.

Janet heads toward to elevator in error.

JANET
Mom, it's this way.

Willow pulls Janet in with her solemn gaze and empathetic smile.

WILLOW
She's this way.

Willow stops shy of Room 215.

The head nurse on duty, BETH CROMWELL (45), sits on a high-stool, at the end of the nurse's station.

BETH
Are you family?

JANET
No.

Finally looks up.

BETH
Well, I'm sorry...

Willow turns her head to Beth. They lock eyes. Willow gently places her hand on Beth's arm.

BETH (CONT'D)
(surrenders)
Go ahead.

She puts her head back into her papers.

Willow turns to Janet and takes both her hands. Janet bends down and pays attention.

WILLOW
Mom. I know you enjoy watching your daughter do this. I know how that makes you proud.

Janet is nodding.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, but you won't be able to join me this time.

Janet stands back up, a bit taken aback.

JANET

Oh... Ok.

WILLOW

Thank you.

Janet stays standing.

Willow turns, slowly walks through the door, 215, and stands at the foot of the bed inside. Door closes.

Janet covers her mouth and holds firm.

BETH

Better have a seat, Mom.

Janet notices Beth motioning to the blue plastic chair against the wall.

JANET

Thank you.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM 215 - CONTINUOUS

Laying in the dimly-lit room is KAREN FORD (17), a bald high school senior with pale skin.

She and Willow are entranced in their mutual gaze.

In the far corner, sleeping in a orange plastic chair is Karen's mother, MARGARETTE FORD (47).

Willow slowly walks up to the side of Karen's bed and gently reaches for her left hand.

The INSTANT the two hands touch, a SHOCK of fear runs through Karen's veins and reveals itself in Karen's expression.

Karen quickly let's go of Willow and slowly shakes her head.

KAREN

I can't.

Willow is silent. She continues her gaze at Karen.

Karen begins to settle back into the pillow behind her. Her expression melts away.

WILLOW
(gently)
Karen, will the sun shine tomorrow?

Karen nods.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Will the waves lap on the shore?

Karen nods, not realizing that Willow has lovingly taken her hand and is caressing it..

WILLOW (CONT'D)
And in the next rainstorm, is there
a chance there will be lightning.

Karen nods, not realizing that she is caressing Willows hand as well.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
(gently softly)
Your passing on to whatever's next,
it's just like that. It happens
everyday, it happens everywhere, it
happens to everyone.

Karen slowly nods, absorbing the calm wisdom of this eight year-old sage standing in front of her.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
You're not an exception. You are a
lovely human being, no matter what
you leave behind.

Karen nods.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
There is nothing you need to do.
Just rest and relax. Let go.

Karen is calm.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Do not be afraid.

Karen nods.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Your passing will start soon.....
Do you want your mom near you?

Karen slowly shakes her head, "no".

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I'm here.

Karen begins to drift and then breathes her last.

Willow continues to gaze into her lifeless eyes.

Silent.

Willow turns and leaves. Karen's mother still asleep.

OUTSIDE IN THE HALL

Willow makes eye contact with the Head Nurse, BETH, and nods to her. Beth nods back.

Janet stands and collects a weary Willow. They take the elevator and leave.

EXT. GARNER HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Janet drives Willow home. She turns to enter her driveway and has to quickly SLAM ON THE BRAKES.

Standing in front of her is somber looking DARREN FINLAY. He slowly moves out of the way.

The car comes to a stop. In the backseat, Willow is sleeping.

Janet exits the car and approaches Darren.

JANET

(calm)

Hi Darren.

It takes him a minute.

DARREN

Ah, this may sound crazy, but is there any way I can talk to your daughter? Alone?

Janet feels the abundance of her daughter's natural compassion, the runoff absorbed simply through osmosis.

JANET

Of course you can. She would welcome that. At the moment...

Janet gestures to the back seat.

DARREN

Oh, no. No. No. That's fine. I'll come back another time.

JANET

Are you doing ok?

DARREN

Yes... And ... well... I have a few questions about ... well a few questions in general. Let's say.

JANET

Darren, the moment she wakes up---

WILLOW

I'm here.

Janet SCREAMS!

JANET

YIKES!

Next to the rear passenger door stands Willow.

JANET (CONT'D)

Sorry. Sorry... Darren, would you like to come in?

WILLOW

No. Thank you Mom. Darren and I are going to go for a walk.

Darren nods.

JANET

Oh. Ok. Don't be too late.

Willow takes Darren's hand and leisurely walks away, down the street. Janet stands in awe, but with cautious concern.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

Janet, one hand on the wall, removes her shoes. Husband Rob is sitting on the sofa.

ROB

You're finally back. Where have you been?

They look at each other.

JANET

Oh, I'm sorry. I was with Willow.
We went to the hospital... And no.
There's nothing wrong... She met
with a couple patients in the
terminal ward...

ROB

Why?

JANET

Rob, whether you want to admit it
or not, your youngest child has a
gift.

He keeps staring, waiting for more. Roberta comes in,
carrying a bowl of something and a spoon, and sits on the
sofa with her dad.

ROB

Yeah, I was worried.

JANET

Honey. Sorry.

ROBERTA

Where's Willow?

JANET

She's gone for a walk with Darren
Finlay.

Rob rolls his eyes.

ROB

(upset)
What?

Roberta and her dad have blank stares on their faces.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Willow and Darren slowly walk along a sidewalk, that opens up
onto a large green park with oversize Oak Trees. They pass a
bench.

DARREN

Let's sit down.

WILLOW

Ok.

Darren let's go of Willows hand and sits on the bench. When he looks up, Willow is past him, half way to the next Large Old Oak Tree.

Willow looks back to Darren and then offers up her hand.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Come with me.

Darren surrenders and catches up to Willow. They approach the base of the tree.

Willow smiles and gestures to the ground at the base of the old oak.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
You said "sit". Let's sit here. Is that ok?

They sit in silence for what seems like minutes.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
I'm here. Tell me.

Darren, calm, not on a cadence. Looks ahead into the distance.

DARREN
It's been more than forty-five years since I sat on the ground, that I've been this close to a tree.

Willow listens.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Something changed... inside me. Since yesterday.

Willow slowly reaches out and puts her hand on top of Darren's. The massive difference between the two is stark. They share a peaceful electrical current in their touch.

SFX: A single Constant Tone - Humming

DARREN (CONT'D)
(whispers to himself)
I used to be different. I had dreams and ambitions, but life has a way of changing us, doesn't it?

Darren's eyes cloud with sorrow as he recalls the weight of expectations from his youth, the burden of unmet goals.

Regrets and doubts simmer beneath the surface, a desire for change festering in his soul.

Willow listens. She gently caresses Darren's hand.

DARREN (CONT'D)
I'm afraid... I'm afraid of what's
in my heart, today...

Willow listens.

DARREN (CONT'D)
I'm afraid of letting go of this
wire cage that I've built up around
me and my family... that, any
minute, will come crashing down...

Willow listens. Darren becomes even more emotional.

DARREN (CONT'D)
I still feel ...
(doubt)
Oh, how foolish I must look,
sitting on the ground, in the park,
next to an eight year-old girl.

His tears well up in his eyes. And then he gives in.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Please.... Please... Willow...
speak to me.

WILLOW
(gently)
Take a deep breath and look
straight ahead.

Deep breath in... and out.

Willow is looking in the dirt.

She speaks the words.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
(Softly gently slowly)
"And you run.... and you run....
to catch up with the sun but it's
sinking, ..."

Darren can't help but look at Willow.

Willow is looking at the dirt.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 "racing around to come up behind
 you again."

Darren has tears in his eyes.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 "The sun is the same, in a relative
 way, but you're older, ..."

Darren finishes the verse, newly enlightened, by a song he's
 been listening to for more than 40 years.

DARREN
 "shorter of breath, and one day
 closer to death."

Darren nods in understanding. Trying to compose himself
 through his tears. Darren stands. And slowly walks off.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - ENTRY - DUSK

Janet and Rob sit on the sofa and watch as Willow comes in,
 bundled up in a ball of energy. She's jumping up and down and
 trying to get her shoes off at the same time. It's comical.

WILLOW
 I'm hungry. I'm hungry. I'm hungry.

JANET
 Ok. Ok. I'll fix you something.

She's still jumping.

ROB
 What? What now?

WILLOW
 I gotta pee. I gotta pee.
 I gotta pee.

Willow runs off.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - WILLOW'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Willow is finished getting dressed, again the white coverup
 dress. Janet appears in her doorway.

Willow smiles.

JANET
 Ready?

WILLOW

Ready.

START MONTAGE

- Willow arriving with Janet in a hospital.
- Willow sitting with an elderly man.
- Willow sitting with a female cancer patient.
- Janet looking on with pride and joy.
- Willow embracing the young child of a deceased mom.

END MONTAGE

INT. GARNER CAR - DUSK

Janet drives down the freeway. Willow is next to her exhausted and on the verge of sleeping. Finally, Willow's eyes close. Janet notices.

Janet exits the freeway and drives over to US1 and down the coast. She sees beach entrance parking and pulls in and parks.

She carries a sleeping Willow to the beach, beneath a palm tree. The sun is behind them on the other horizon, about to leave them for another evening.

Janet sits against the palm tree, holding Willow in her lap and in her arms.

There is a beautiful orange and pink light that fills their faces. Janet's heart settles in her chest. It's a kind of good-sunken feeling.

Willow wakes up and looks around. She is emotionally so touched at her mother's effort.

WILLOW

I'm going to say something that, if you repeat, will only sound rehearsed and corny. So don't repeat it. Ok?

Janet nods.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Mom. There are only so many chances in life to give.

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

To give something meaningful to someone else. Like the gift of time together.

Willow clears her throat.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

The idea that you gave one of those precious and priceless gifts to me, today, really makes my soul sing. I love you, Mother.

Willow nestles into her mothers neckline.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Tomorrow, I'm going to ask you to join me on my mission.

JANET

Anytime. Beautiful. Anytime.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NEXT DAY

The parent's bedroom door comes open and Janet comes out. Top of the steps, she hears a loud KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK, on the front door.

JANET

Coming.

Janet opens the front door.

It's a steaming MARTHA FINLAY (43).

MARTHA

I've got a bone to pick with your little one.

Willow opens up her bedroom door and stands at the rail, looking down at the two women. Martha notices her.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Oh, good. Now listen to me, you little bitch.

JANET

HEY!

WILLOW

It's ok, mom.

Willow gently pulls her mother back behind her.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Martha. Martha!

Martha looks down.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Martha, look at me. You're not mad
at her. Look at me.

Willow listens.

MARTHA
What in the World did you tell my
husband?

WILLOW
(gently slowly)
I didn't tell him. I showed him.

Martha's face looks like it just smelled rotten fish.

MARTHA
He thinks I'm just gonna drop all
of this and ride off into the
sunset. I don't think so.

Willow steps in and gently puts her arms around Martha.
Martha stands there, arms up, afraid to embrace her. And
then, like she was fending off an over-enthusiastic puppy,
she starts to back up.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Ok. Ok. You can let go now. Thank
you.

Willow lets go. Keeps listening.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
It's just a Fuckin' Mid-Life
Crisis.

WILLOW
What if it's not?

Silence. They stare at each other for what seems to be 45
seconds.

Suddenly, Martha turns and bolts.

EXT. GARNER HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - THAT EVENING

Willow sits on the bench, staring into space, lost in
thought.

Janet walks up and sits beside her. They sit quietly.

WILLOW

Did you know that Justin Zackham was 19 years old when he came up with the idea of "The Bucket List"?

JANET

Huh.

Silence.

WILLOW

Mom, my mission starts tomorrow and I really want you to join me.

Janet thinks twice.

JANET

I'm in.

Smiles both ways.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

A flustered Rob sits on the sofa.

ROB

And what am I supposed to do?

JANET

Simple. While we're gone, you agree to take good care of yourself, period...

Rob huffs.

JANET (CONT'D)

And... that you will personally decide, not because I asked you, but on your own, to make yourself available for James and Roberta.

Staring contest again.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - ENTRY - LATER

Willow smiles. She approaches her mother.

WILLOW

I need an hour by myself, out back, and then I will finish packing.

Willow heads for the garden.

Janet is giddy.

JANET
Yay. Yay. Travel... Wha...
Wait. Where are we going?

WILLOW
(smiling)
Chicago.

Willow slides the glass door shut and sits legs crisscross in Janet's garden.

Janet throws her arms in the air.

JANET
Chicago! I've never been to
Chicago.

ROB
What's in Chicago?

Janet is still giddy.

JANET
(overjoyed)
I don't know. I don't know. And I
don't care. Yoohoo!

Rob turns back to his TV and the rest disperse each a different direction.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - LATER

Rob sits, TV directly in front of him, and just to the right, outside, in the distance, sits his precious youngest. Legs crossed and eyes closed.

COMMENTATOR
(on TV)
We're learning today, after two
more families came forward, that
her name is Willow Garner.

Rob's eyes are as big as saucers.

ROB
(to himself)
What the Fuck!

In comes Janet. There's an image of Willow on TV.

JANET

What was that? (screams)
OH! WILLOW!

COMMENTATOR

(on TV)

In all, we've spoken to four families who have lost loved ones and who were visited by the mysterious eight-year-old.

Rob looks fearful.

COMMENTATOR (CONT'D)

Each of the families are saying the exact same thing.

ROB

Don't say it.

COMMENTATOR

That this girl, is nothing short of miraculous.

Janet BURSTS into joyous tears. Rob shakes his head.

In comes James and Roberta.

ROBERTA

Hey, they're talking about Willow on TV.

Rob points to the TV.

JAMES

No. No. Turn it to 21.

Rob does.

On the screen is a FEMALE COMMENTATOR and CARRIE ADLER.

FEMALE COMMENTATOR

(on TV)

But, looking back on that, what was it, specifically, that made that moment so special that people are talking about this?

Carrie takes a moment. Slowly shakes her head.

CARRIE

(on TV)

I can't tell you... There aren't words to accurately describe her.

Willow comes in and Rob turns the TV off.

ROB
Hey, tomorrow's no good. I need the car. You can't take the car.

WILLOW
No.

Rob listens again.

The camera pans around the room, revealing all of the hiking, walking, climbing, and swimming they've done as a family.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
We're walking.

ROB
(mocking again)
Oh. You're going to walk. Ok. I see. Sure. No problem. You go right ahead... What'd you say? 65 Days? You won't make it even one day.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - ENTRY - LATER

Janet stands just inside the doorway, wearing cool hiking gear and KURU hiking sandals. Two REI Backpacks lean against the railing. Rob, James, and Roberta are scattered along the stairs and on the landing.

Janet looks around the corner, outside in the back.

Willow still sits, legs crisscross. Silent.

Janet looks at her watch. She's antsy and it's obvious. She's unintentionally comical in the way she's stretching her legs and arms.

JANET
What?

Janet paces. She has her cell phone out and is trying to find a convenient pocket to put it in, so that it will be handy. Again comical.

Willow comes in from outside.

JANET (CONT'D)
Yay!

Willow looks at her mother with wide-open eyes, takes her mother's cell phone from her hands, and gently sets it on the table underneath the mirror in the foyer.

JANET (CONT'D)

What? No phone?

WILLOW

(smiles and nods)

It's time to go.

ROB

Damn it! We've got company.

JANET

What is it?

JAMES

It's a news crew. No big deal, dad. They're just here, to do their job.

ROBERTA

Oh, my God! We're gonna be famous!

JANET

(to Willow)

It's ok, honey. I won't let them hurt you.

WILLOW

Mom, it's fine. We need their help.

ROB

Bye!

EXT. GARNER HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

A Channel 21 News Crew Van pulls into the driveway, to drop off the talent. KENNEDY FRANK (28), a stunning woman, steps out of the van, microphone in hand.

The van backs up and positions itself on the street.

A cameraman frames Kennedy. They're trying to figure out how they want to shoot it.

KENNEDY

Yeah, let's go back and get the reveal.

They step back and roll cameras.

The front door opens. Janet, wearing her backpack, emerges from the house, behind her is Willow, wearing her new norm, white coverup, and her backpack, which has a slogan hanging from it that reads, "There's no patent on Kindness."

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Willow? Can we get a few minutes.

WILLOW

(to Kennedy

I agree to tell you the truth, if you agree, Kennedy, not to spin it differently.

Kennedy blows straight through Willow's concern.

KENNEDY

Fine. How did you acquire the magic powers that you've demonstrated with these poor dying people and their distraught family members?

Willow grades her response, according to the instructions. F.

WILLOW

Sorry. You failed.

Willow pulls on Janet and they turn to walk away.

KENNEDY

(panics)

Wait. Wait. I thought we had an agreement.

WILLOW

(smiles)

I thought we did too.

Janet and Willow continue walking. They hold hands and continue down the street.

KENNEDY

(to herself)

Damn!

She tries for anything. Hail Mary.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Where are you off to?

WILLOW

(over her shoulder)

Chicago! You want to come?

Willow smiles and just walks away from Kennedy's desperate pleas for more time.

Kennedy has regret on her face.

Willow and Janet keep walking.

SUPER: DAY 1

START MONTAGE:

- Willow and Janet walk down a busy street.
- A passing car honks and waves to show their support.
- Willow and Janet smiling and laughing. Having fun.
- Janet has a rock in her shoe.
- Willow points in the direction they're heading.
- Janet makes Willow stop while she catches her breath.
- Willow encourages Janet to keep on going.

END MONTAGE

EXT. DEERFIELD BEACH - BEACH AREA - LATER

Janet and Willow, stagger, step by step, as they approach the beginning of the sandy area. Just at the end of the sidewalk, they take one step onto the sand. And then literally fall into a heap of exhaustion, on the first square foot of sand, panting like dogs.

They drink from their matching water bottles like they were on the verge of death by thirst. They shower their heads with a stream of water from the bottle.

JANET
(catching her breath)
WHAT... DID I SIGN UP FOR?

Willow starts laughing. Janet doesn't get it.

JANET (CONT'D)
What?... Why are you laughing? I'm
suffering here!

Janet quickly gets bit by the laughing bug and starts laughing too.

JANET (CONT'D)
 We... are... PATHETIC!

Mutual laughter.

The legs of two BEACH-GOERS walk by Janet.

WILLOW
 (through laughter)
 Do you want to know what's really
 funny?

JANET
 Funnier than this? HA!

They both crack up and cackle out loud.

WILLOW
 We've got another 12 days before we
 even get out of Florida! HA!

JANET
 HAHahaha!

They calm down from their laughter.

HOLD POV on their faces.

They stay there, their eyes close, faces planted to the sandy beach.

SAME POV.

Janet speaks next.

JANET (CONT'D)
 I'm hungry... You go... It's your
 turn...

WILLOW
 What? No... There's no *turns* on the
 first day... So, that means you...
 The mom.... Go.

JANET
 Oh... Ok... Gimme a second...

EXT. DEERFIELD BEACH - BEACH AREA - DUSK

Janet hasn't moved.

Willow approaches with two maxed-out foot-long hot dogs.

Like a starved Pitbull, Janet lunges for the hot dog.

WILLOW
Easy now.

Janet chomps at the dog.

JANET
Oh, my God. I was so hungry.

Willow has a quick personal chuckle.

JANET (CONT'D)
How far did we go today? Seems like
50 miles.

Willow shakes her head.

WILLOW
3.6 Miles.

JANET
(comically outraged)
WHAT!

Willow's chuckle begins to build.

JANET (CONT'D)
But, but, it's getting dark. We've
been at it for like seven hours!

Willow's chuckle still building.

WILLOW
No. No. We walked for an hour and
twenty-one minutes. You've been
sleeping mostly.

That goes over her head.

JANET
(chewing)
Wow. Sleeping makes me hungry.

After a beat, they both look at each other and laugh out
loud.

INT. PODCAST STUDIO - DAY

The host of the Podcast sits across from MARK MASTERS.

HOST
But shouldn't---

MASTERS

No! No. She shouldn't. What are you saying? She's Gandhi? Are you kidding? I need to take life lessons from an 8-year-old little girl? Please, I'm a 65 year-old man. You'd think I have my head on straight by now...

Masters pauses for impact.

MASTERS (CONT'D)

And these sessions that she's holding with the dying people. It's been stated many times that they provide absolutely no significant medical benefit what so ever... No certification. No license. No schooling. No benefit. I mean *this* is a malpractice suit waiting to happen.

HOST

Wait. Mark, let's be clear. When she's done, they're dead.

MASTERS

Exactly. Now you get it.

INT. NEWS STUDIO - DAY

Mark Masters speaks close to a microphone with a green placard: THE TRUTH.

MASTERS

No. That's not true. Actually, I think her *family* is exploiting her youth, yeah, for fame and attention. Probably in order to get likes on Tik-Tok...

Mark pauses for effect.

INT. HOME OF OPRAH WINFREY - DAY

Oprah and Stedman are watching a news channel. Oprah is slowly shaking her head.

EXT. DEERFIELD BEACH - NEXT MORNING

SUPER: DAY 2

Janet sleeps comfortably in her hammock. She's snoring.

Willow is already up, sitting on her towel, legs crisscross, back straight, head down. A breeze blows her hair around a bit.

Janet's eyes open slowly. So do Willow's.

Willow looks back at her mother and smiles.

WILLOW
Morning, sleepyhead.

JANET
Morning, beautiful... I should go
get us some breakfast.

Willow gestures to the white bag behind her, on the towel.

WILLOW
Ready when you are.

Janet, excitedly sits up in her hammock.

JANET
Oh my. That's great. What are we
having this morning?

Willow hands the bag to Janet.

WILLOW
Eggs Florentine and Crepes.

Janet quickly opens the bag.

JANET
What? Where?... Sissy, there's ...
you didn't eat yet?... You waited
for me? Ahh...

They eat.

EXT. FLORIDA BEACH - LATER THAT DAY

Janet and Willow, all geared-up, wearing their backpacks and barefoot, leisurely, walk along the wet sand heading North.

WILLOW
Ok. My turn. Did you ever dream
you'd be doing something like this?

Janet shakes her head, with introspection in her eyes.

JANET

No. The closest thing to adventure
I ever say coming was those
wonderful camping trips we would go
on.

WILLOW

(smiles)

Yeah. Bootcamp... I loved those
things.

JANET

(smiles)

Well, that's who you are.

A disturbance along the street has Willow's attention
diverted.

On the street, just up ahead, a crowd has formed. They are
shouting and carrying big signs. It appears to be a crowd of
local Del Ray beach protesters. It's hard to hear from this
far away.

JANET (CONT'D)

What's that?

WILLOW

I think they're protesting. Wanna
check it out?

JANET

Sure. Why not?

Willow and Janet put their hiking sandals on and slowly walk
over closer to the crowd. Janet reads one large sign.

"MATTHEW 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in
sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

Janet takes Willow's elbow.

JANET (CONT'D)

Wait.

Led by a bearded guy, with a megaphone, standing on a chair,
the crowd is repeating a chant: "SHE'S NO PROPHET!"

WILLOW

Closer.

JANET

No... They're talking about you.

Willow tries to encourage her mother's courage. She get's mother's attention and looks in her eyes.

WILLOW
Adventure awaits. (pointing) There.

Janet slowly nods.

Willow and Janet walk up to the group and stand just below the guy with the megaphone. After a couple more rounds of the chant, a large number of the group recognize Willow and stop chanting. Soon, it's quiet, except for megaphone.

He does a double-take and stares at Willow.

There's an awkward silence.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
I'm not a Prophet...
I'm a little girl.

Willow and Janet turn around and walk back to the water.

EXT. FLORIDA BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Willow and Janet continue their wet sand stroll, this time with their hiking sandals on.

JANET
They will make you out to be a villain, eventually.

WILLOW
Who? The fanatics?

Janet has a serious look in her eyes.

JANET
No... All the reporters and the camera crews and the 6:00 o'clock news man.

Willow is impressed with her mother's intuitive sense to protect her children.

WILLOW
How do we fix that?

JANET
Huh?... I don't know.

WILLOW

No, no, now, you made the comment.
How would you like it to be? If you
could have it any way you want.

Janet thinks.

JANET

That the News.. that the Media,
would just be a reflection of you.
Who you are, what you do, what you
believe...

Willow smiles and nods.

WILLOW

Well ok. ... I'll keep that in
mind.

They walk on.

EXT. JUPITER BEACH - LATER THAT NIGHT

Willow and Janet sit around a campfire in the moonlight.

Janet is in her hammock staring at the flames and Willow is
laying on her side, on her beach towel, writing in her
journal.

JANET

Honey, you are wise beyond your
years.

Janet looks up to maintain she has a captive audience.

WILLOW

(gently)
We're in this together..

The both smile and nod.

JANET

Are we making ok time?

WILLOW

Ah. Yeah. Sort of... We're a bit
behind.

JANET

How many days do we have before
we're there?

WILLOW

62... but we need to pick it up a bit. If we stay at this pace, we won't make it in time.

JANET

I'm afraid to ask... In time for what?

WILLOW

The interview.

Janet looks at Willow.

JANET

What interview?

WILLOW

That was my surprise for you.

Janet nods and on the inside, choose to support her daughter's plan.

JANET

Well, we better pick it up then.

EXT. JUPITER BEACH - NEXT MORNING

SUPER: DAY 3

Janet and Willow are waking up with the sun. Rubbing the sand out of their eyes.

As they sit in the shade, Janet appears to be looking at a figure of a man walking toward them.

JANET

Who's that?

Willow smiles.

WILLOW

He looks friendly.

Still from a moderate distance.

DAVID

Aha! The Famous Garner Sisters!

JANET

Excuse me?

David walks up. They are guarded.

DAVID
My name is Dr. David Delaney.

WILLOW
That's a lot of D's.

DAVID
Yes.. Mom, Can I talk to you alone?

JANET
Anything you have to say, you can
say to both of us.

David rifles through a canvas bag he's carrying. Janet backs up a bit.

David pulls out a screen shot of yesterday's news coverage. An image of Janet and Willow. He hands it to Janet.

DAVID
My specialty is Pediatric
Cardiology.

JANET
I know we're getting some
publicity. What am I looking at?

WILLOW
You're looking at an image of me. I
must be rubbing the bone in my
chest.

David removes his stethoscope from the canvas bag.

DAVID
Yes. You're right.

Willow puts out her hand and motions for Dr. Delaney to not approach.

WILLOW
What he doesn't realize is that I
have indigestion. Heartburn.

JANET
She's had it her whole life. I
mean, if you have a tums.
Dr. Delaney, thank you for your
interest in Willow, but she has
seen lots of doctors. She's fine.

DAVID
Ok. I can't force you. Good luck,
kid.

Dr. Delaney nods and walks off.

Janet has a feeling of a bit of suspicion.

JANET

Willow. Honey. Are you sure you
feel alright?

WILLOW

I'm fine.

START MONTAGE

- Janet and Willow playing on the beach.
- Janet looking on.
- Willow laying out all the ingredients for a meal.
- Janet collecting firewood.
- Janet working on the fire.
- Janet cooking.
- Both of them laughing and eating around a campfire.

END MONTAGE

EXT. JUPITER BEACH - NIGHT

After dinner, under a dark sky, they sit, at one with the crashing of the waves, just yards away.

JANET

Nope. I know. You would rather be
close to the ground, you feel
connected with the earth.

Willow shakes her head.

JANET (CONT'D)

Amazing... Sissy, honey, you should
write a book.

WILLOW

(gently)
Not much time for that.

EXT. FLORIDA BEACH - NEXT MORNING

Janet, as predicted, rises just before sunrise. No one is snoring this morning.

SUPER: DAY 4

Janet notices that Willow is missing.

Janet frantically looks around.

She stands on her tip-toes for better sight advantage.

In the distance, Janet sees a homeless man, sleeping on the bench of a picnic table, with his head in Willow's lap.

Willow is gently stroking the homeless man's hair.

Janet pursues briskly. She walks up slowly behind them.

Willow is singing.

WILLOW

"It's not what you've said or done to me. But the way I look at you, that keeps me hanging on. Day to day. Again and again."

Janet slowly gets around them at a distance, as not to startle Willow.

She approaches the pair with a serious look on her face.

The man has an old-growth beard, dirty clothing and a smell lingering over him.

With two fingers from one hand, under his own nose, and with two fingers from the other hand, Janet checks for the man's pulse.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

He passed away about an hour ago.

Janet shakes her head and takes a step away from them to gather her thoughts.

JANET

Oh, Willow... You need to be more careful. You are opening up yourself for a tragic encounter...

WILLOW

It's fine.

JANET

And what song were you singing when
I came up just now?

Willow thinks twice.

WILLOW

It was one of his.

Janet thinks about that for more than just a second.

She has a look on her face. She's disappointed. She slumps
her shoulders.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

(sad)

Just tell me.

JANET

Willow, I don't know if we've got
too much at risk in this mission.

Janet looks at the eight-year-old with the dead guy in her
lap.

JANET (CONT'D)

But.. (gestures) seeing you now.
Here. Like this. I realize that
this is bigger than just me and my
fears... You are who you are.

Willow listens.

WILLOW

It's not easy to say that, mom.

JANET

But, ... I still can't stand to see
us both out here all exposed like
this. There's too many creeps in
the world. Too many weirdos.

Willow smiles.

WILLOW

Now you sound like dad.

JANET

Yeah, well...

Janet sees a policeman. She waves him over.

JANET (CONT'D)
 (comically between them)
 Yes, sir. Ahuh. Uh, there is a dead
 guy here, laying on a park
 bench.... With his head in my
 daughter's lap.. Yes. For sure.
 Thank you.

WILLOW
 Mom, I'll wait with him. I know you
 want to go back.

JANET
 No. No. I'll wait, too.

Janet shakes her head.

EXT. FLORIDA ROAD A1A - DAYS LATER

Willow and Janet trek along A1A.

SUPER: DAY 8

EXT. FLORIDA NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Willow and Janet walk down a sidewalk in this older
 neighborhood. They are tired but determined. They're walking
 along US-1.

JANET
 What road is this?

WILLOW
 We're good. This is US-1. We're
 looking for Old Mango Rd.

They finally see the sign.

JANET
 Yay! Signs! We have a sign!

They turn left and walk for another four miles through a
 predominantly Black neighborhood. One block up, on the left,
 across the street, there is a small mom and pop cafe,
 "Ruby's".

Willow's stamina goes limp. They both look for traffic all
 around, the coast is clear.

WILLOW
 Mom. I'm starving.

JANET

Yes. Hungry. Let's go.

The bell inside the cafe disrupts the constant lull of the cicadas outside.

INT. RUBY'S CAFE - DAY

Inside the cafe, the conversations mix with a whirl and hum coming from the A/C unit in the wall. Janet stands directly in front of the unit and lets out an exaggerated reaction to the cool air.

JANET

Ahhh..

The conversations fall silent.

Willow stands at the booth along the back wall. In the booth sits a tiny NAOMI (6), a small Black girl with an ambitious smile and a large scar on her frontside.

RUBY (45) shuffles through the silence, up to greet her customers and then stops in her tracks, eyes fixed on Willow.

She speaks loudly, as if she's about to give Willow a whoopin'.

RUBY

(shaking her head)

Why did you come here?

Willow doesn't smile, just approaches Ruby.

WILLOW

(soft now)

Ruby.

Willow nods.

RUBY

No..... Leave.

WILLOW

Stop, Ruby.... It's time, now.

Say your goodbyes.

Ruby shakes her head and slowly walks to Naomi.

RUBY

No.

Ruby cries, laboring to say farewell to her Naomi.

Willow gently lifts the frail girl into her arms as they share a deep and poignant exchange.

WILLOW
(soft now)
There we go baby girl.

Willow sways like a big Willow in the wind.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
That's it. Nice and easy now.

Ruby recognizes the song Willow begins to sing, and the room stays quiet.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Wade in the water
Wade in the water
Wade in the water, children
God is gonna trouble these waters

Naomi breathes her last. Ruby is in tears.

Willow returns to humming. Naomi is still.

Ruby, swimming in her emotions, can hardly put two words together.

INT. RUBY'S CAFE - LATER

An EMT pulls a stretcher carrying Naomi out of the restaurant. There is a sheet over her.

Willow and Janet, each holding white to-go bags, say their goodbyes. They hug Ruby.

BENJAMIN PORTER (52) enters the cafe. Ruby gives him a nod and points to Willow and Janet.

RUBY
Women, that right there, is Benjamin. Now, outside he has a pickup truck and he's goin take you wherever you want, anywhere between here and the Georgia line.

JANET
(niceties)
Oh, we couldn't.

RUBY

Oh, yes you could, you should, you will, and you did. There's no place for you two out here after dark.

WILLOW

Thank you, Ruby.

Silence.

RUBY

You were called, to come here today. Not you're hungry or tired or need directions... No.

Ruby shakes her head.

RUBY (CONT'D)

No. None of that. You were called... Now, go on. Don't make me cry no more.

JANET

Goodbye, Ruby.

BENJAMIN opens the front door and ...

EXT. RUBY'S CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Willow and Janet step out of the doorway and can feel the thick emotions surrounding them. They look to the Pickup Truck, which is now surrounded by a large group of 50 or more. All standing in silence, staring at Willow.

Their silent faces radiate with hope.

Janet pulls Willow back. Willow removes herself from her mother's protective arms and hands her the backpack. Janet takes it and heads for the bed of the truck.

Willow, full of compassion, steps into the thick arrangement of young and old, boys and girls, men and women.

As she passes through them, Willow captures every face. She slowly reaches out and gently strokes their face.

Some reply with tears, some smile, some look mad, but in the end ALL of them were changed, and not because of some Magical Power.

No. Simpler than that, someone just cares.

Janet has loaded the two packs into the back of the pickup. They climb into the front seat.

Benjamin shifts the gear into neutral (N). And without being asked, the group silently moves the truck, back, and then out into the street, and then forward, a ways down the road.

Eventually, the truck drives off on its own.

EXT. GEORGIA HIGHWAY - NEXT DAY

Willow and Janet walk on the shoulder of the road. This section of the 121 is two lanes headed North and three lanes headed south. Not a narrow country road.

SUPER: DAY 27

Janet keeps her eyes open for a motel. She and Willow, together, agreed to treat themselves to some indoor plumbing. And if they still had time, a make-shift DIY Spa Day.

JANET

What about tonight?

WILLOW

(comically robotic)

Music. I need some music. My tank is low. I need to hear it.

As Janet and Willow round the corner onto Broad Street, they get a two-for-one deal. Motel and Music.

Janet peels off and heads for a Mom and Pop motel.

Willow quickly explores the street music venue for a flyer with dates and times.

INT. MOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The front desk is a tad shabby and an even bigger tad messy. There's a TV hanging from the ceiling, pointing at an angle to the floor.

Behind the counter is THERESA DAHL (58), the receptionist. She's watching a News Report on, of all things, a little girl named Willow Garner. There's a video feed of Willow standing next to her mother, who is now standing next to THERESA.

Janet approaches.

Theresa turns to her.

THERESA

How m---

Theresa looks back at the TV.

And then back to Janet.

THERESA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. We are plum full up
tonight.

Theresa slides a placard in front: "This Station Closed."

Janet is more than just a little surprised.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - LATER

Badly needed, they find themselves in a room with Air Conditioning. Willow dims the lights. Willow and Janet lay flat on their backs, heads over the edge of the bed, in the middle.

Willow slowly rubs the pain in her chest. Easy now.

JANET

Sissy, are you able to share with
me, what was wrong with Naomi?

WILLOW

(sad)
She was in pain.

JANET

Poor thing.

Here it comes.

WILLOW

Mom... I need you to make me a
promise.

JANET

I'm afraid to ask.

WILLOW

Promise me that you will go back
and visit Ruby, next year.

Janet gets caught up in her own grief. No words.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Mom.

JANET
 (covering her eyes)
 Willow, you can't ask me things
 like that. Not yet.

WILLOW
 Sorry... How about this? Just nod.

That hit too close to home.

JANET
 Oh, DAMN IT!

Willow is taken aback by Mother's outburst.

JANET (CONT'D)
 Can't you see? Can't you see that
 every step you take in this
 pilgrimage of yours, just pulls me
 closer and closer to the edge...

WILLOW
 I'm sorry.

JANET
 Willow, I am torn between going
 home or letting you soar into the
 unknown...

Janet stands up and pounds her fist on her heart.

JANET (CONT'D)
 And it is killing me!

Janet turns and heads for the shower. No hot water needed.

SLAM!

Willow winces and recoils.

She falls on the bed.

Her breathing starts to become heavy and fast.

Her eyesight is spinning.

There is a sharp pain in her chest.

She reaches up to ease it.

She hears her mother's words again.

JANET (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 It's killing me

Willow's eye's close.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Janet emerges from the shower. She's cooled down. She sees Willow laying on the bed, Willow's back to her.

JANET

Hey, Sissy, I apologize for that.

No response.

JANET (CONT'D)

But I don't quite have the patience of a Saint yet. Your question hurt me.

Willow nods, still facing away.

WILLOW

I get it. I'm sorry.

Willow cries out of fear.

JANET

Sissy, you ok?

WILLOW

Just tired.

Janet smiles and nods.

JANET

Ok. You rest. I'm gonna call home.

INT. GARNER HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Rob, sits on the sofa, watching TV, cordless phone in his hand. Waiting.

RING!

ROB

Hello! Hello? Honey? Janet?

He smiles.

ROB (CONT'D)

Oh, my God. It feels like I haven't seen you in a year!

Rob gets a little emotional.

ROB (CONT'D)
 (to upstairs)
 Hey! Kids!

They both come FLYING down the stairs. Rob flips the call to speaker.

JANET
 (in phone)
 Hello?

JAMES AND ROBERTA
 Mom!

ROBERTA (CONT'D)
 Oh my gosh, I can't believe it's you. You're still alive. That's good.

JAMES
 How's it going, mom?

JANET
 Going very well, extremely well. You should see your little sister. She makes me proud every day.

JAMES
 Where are you guys, right now?

JANET
 We're in Augusta, Georgia. Staying in our first hotel room of the trip, so far.

All three of them.

ALL THREE
 WHAT?

JANET
 Yeah, I know. 27 days without a shower. Hahahaha..

JAMES
 Gross!

ROB
 (comic romantic)
 Don't you worry there, honey, I still wouldn't mind.

ROBERTA
 Ewww!

ROB
Is Sissy there with you?

JANET
Yeah, she's just getting out of the bathroom. Here she is.

WILLOW
Yes. Who is it?

ALL THREE
(choked up)
Hi, Sissy.

WILLOW
Hi you guys. I miss you soooo much!
Wait, I'm gonna put this on speaker.

ROB
We've been keeping up with your progress on the TV and Social Media.

Janet and Willow are both shocked to hear that.

JANET AND WILLOW
WHAT?

ROB
Yeah, you're a really big deal.
And, the media have... Well, let's just say it's a mixed bag.

JAMES
Yeah, there was a video and a posting on YouTube of both of you when you guys shut down that protest in Jupiter Beach.

JANET AND WILLOW
WHAT?

JAMES
Yeah, they are spinning it like it was the biggest "dis" of the century, coming from a super young girl.

ROBERTA

And, just today there was an Instagram posting of Willow and a cute little tiny Black girl, like rocking back and forth in, like in a Denny's booth or something.

ROB

Yeah, and that one has triggered some, well, backlash in the news.

JANET

Backlash?

ROB

Yeah, let's you and I talk about that later.

JANET

No. No. Rob... We're all mature enough to handle these things... I was so proud of Willow in that exact moment. I'd love to hear what *anyone* has to say negative about that.

ROB

It's hard to even think about, let alone saying it out loud. Ugh... Some idiots are just mouthing off, suggesting that the little girl wasn't really that sick, and that Willow actually harmed her.

JANET

WHAT!

ROB

And then to make things worse, the NAACP spoke out against showing an image of an really fair-skinned ultra-Caucasian girl with blonde hair singing a Negro-Spiritual, originally sung throughout the Underground Railroad, during slavery.

JANET

Nonsense. That's absurd! I'll have you know that that little girl---

WILLOW

Mom!... No.

Janet falls in line.

JANET
Never mind. Anyway...

ROBERTA
No, but at the same time, that video is also getting a bunch of positive reactions. They're not all bad.

ROB
So, what are you two doing tonight?

JANET
We are going out on the town! Woo-hoo!

WILLOW
Yeah and I have to get ready. Love you guys! Bye.

ALL THREE
Love you WILLOW!

Janet takes it off speaker.

ROB
Love you honey.

JANET
I love you too, Rob. Very much.

ROB
Ah. Stop. You're making me blush. Hehehe.

JANET
Hey, I won't be able to call much for probably two weeks. We're crossing over into the Blue Ridge Mountains in the next few days.

No response. It's hard for him to believe it.

JANET (CONT'D)
Honey?

ROB
Boy, it's not every day that you hear that... (cough) I was so wrong.

JANET

Honey.

ROB

Janet, I'm so stinking proud of both of the two of you.

JANET

Ah, Rob, I love you.

ROB

You too. Bye.

Janet hangs up.

WILLOW

(smiling)

You could totally tell he was on the verge of crying.

JANET

Don't make fun of my boyfriend.

WILLOW

Mom! Gross! Did you have to?

Not pondering.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Wow. It's amazing how much he's changed.

Janet lost in thought. Pondering.

JANET

His heart.

WILLOW

Huh?

JANET

His heart is changing.

WILLOW

Yeah?

JANET

Because of you, Sissy.

START MONTAGE

- Willow and Janet walking arm in arm.
- Both of them listening to a musician.

- Getting filmed by a camera crew.
- Talking to fans.

END MONTAGE

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Janet and Willow come inside and land on the beds.

WILLOW
 Ok, mom. So we have:
 Blue Ridge Mountains
 Nashville, TN
 Indianapolis, IN
 Chicago, IL

Janet shakes her head.

JANET
 And how are we tracking?

WILLOW
 Still running behind. But, I have
 an idea that, I think, will help us
 make up some time.

JANET
 Well, if it involves hopping a
 freight train, I am ALL-IN!

WILLOW
 (disappointed)
 Hello? Spoiler Alert!

JANET
 Are you serious?

Willow laughs. They both laugh.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

The room is comfortable, Willow and Janet sleep deeply. Janet is sawing logs again.

Through the motel room's front window, there is a commotion. Someone falls against the motel room door and it makes a loud noise, which wakes Janet.

Janet gets out of bed and approaches the window. She gently looks through the edge of the curtain and FLASH! Someone takes a picture.

Janet looks through the peep hole and discovers not one, not two, but FOUR different news crews camping out.

JANET
(under her breath)
Fudgesicle.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Janet is already dressed and packed, ready to go. Willow is still sleeping. It's 05:30 AM.

Willow sees her nervous mom sitting up in a chair.

Willow works on the goop in the corners of her eye.

Janet is jumpy and Willow can see that.

WILLOW
(still sleepy)
Good morning.

JANET
(biting her nails)
Morning.

WILLOW
You want to tell me about it?

Willow gets out of bed. Janet REACTS!

JANET
DON'T .. Don't go outside.

WILLOW
No? Haha I'm going to pee.

Nail biting.

FLUSH!

Willow comes out.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Why?

JANET
NO!

Willow smiles. What? Do we have company?

Janet slowly nods her head and makes this frightened puppy sound at the same time.

WILLOW
 (nods while talking)
 Ok. Janet, I'm going to look out
 the peep hole.

Willow looks through the peep hole, she sees utter chaos.
 Eleven News Crews. Four of them standing in front of their
 door.

Willow laughs.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 Hahahaha... Perfect.

Willow gets dressed.

JANET
 What is so perfect about it?

WILLOW
 It's time. Get up.

JANET
 What time?

WILLOW
 Press Conference Time. Come on.

JANET
 Wait! What?

Willow walks to the front door.

WILLOW
 Are you coming? It was you who
 inspired the idea.

JANET
 No. Yes. Of course I'm coming.

WILLOW
 Look at me... I'll do the talking.

JANET
 You do the talking.

WILLOW
 And...

Willow looks down and references Janet's finger nails.

JANET

Oh. Yeah. Ok... Why do I suddenly feel like you're the mother and I'm the eight-year-old?

WILLOW

(smiles)

Ready?

Door Opens.

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

All the reporters are crowding around Willow.

Willow! Willow! Willow!

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Good morning. Thank you for coming.

The crews are relieved, she just might know how to talk.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I would like to make a short statement and then we will..

Kick in the knee.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I will take some questions... Please listen closely.

Willow clears her throat.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

For the past 28 days, my mother and I have been meeting with good people from all over. Men, women, boys, and girls. We sat with them, we listened to them, cried with them, laughed... There was even one instance where I held a man's head in my lap, as he died.

Willow presses her thumb into her chest.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

We have encountered people in pain, people who were hungry, people who were angry, people who were joyful, and everywhere in between. And I will say that every one of these unique and varied events had two things in common..

Willow presses her thumb into her chest again.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

There was a Need.. And there was Love... People have needs. And... people have hope. In the end, they just want to be loved.

DAVID

(to himself)

Oh. This little girl is really sick. I have to tell her.

WILLOW

I understand that some people do not approve of my methods. How I provide comfort and love to others. And that's just fine. They are entitled to their own thoughts. I will continue to love them just the same.

Everyone is listening to her every word.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

So here are the ground rules for covering me or my mother, Janet, or ANYTHING we are doing... Ready? Be a mirror. Anyone in the media and any private person, please hear this.

Willow pauses.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I will not allow for my words to be twisted. Just be a reflection of what is said and what is done. That's it.

She points.

REPORTER

Is it true that you are dying?

Willow pauses.

MURMUR, FLASH, MURMUR, FLASH.

WILLOW

Yes. I believe I will die this year...

The look of shock on Janet's face is unmistakable.

MURMUR, MURMUR.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
September 1st.

MURMUR

REPORTER #4
Willow, there are many, many
people, all over the world
following your story. Do you have a
message for them?

Willow is emotionally struck by the question and it shows.
She really thinks about her answer, staring back at the
reporter.

WILLOW
What's your name?... Yes. What's
your name?

REPORTER #4
Daniel Zimmer.

WILLOW
Daniel. It's not a message, per se,
not exactly. It's more of a
personal challenge...

MURMUR, FLASH.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
I challenge EVERYONE connected to
this news segment. Everyone seeing
it, talking about it, reading about
it, or hearing about it.. Everyone.

They're waiting.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Reach out to someone in need,
(emphasis with finger down motion)
Today! ... Thank you everyone.

Janet and Willow turn and fold back into the room.

Inside, Janet just stares at her daughter, chest full of
pride. Janet cries. They hug and then sit next to each other
on the bed.

JANET
Oh, Willow. What's this? You're
dying?

WILLOW

I'm sorry, mom.... Yes. I have a heart condition.

JANET

Then we stop today and go home to get it treated.

WILLOW

No. There's nothing anyone can do.

JANET

Willow, I'm your mother. You can't expect me to just continue on like this after hearing that my little one is going to die.

Willow thinks twice.

WILLOW

It's bigger than just me.

JANET

No. No. I'm sorry. This ends---

WILLOW

Mom.

Janet looks into her daughter's eyes.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I'll show you.

Willow slowly reaches over and gently touches her mom's forearm.

CLENCH! Electric humming...

Janet's head rolls back. She looks at the ceiling.

Willow let's go an Janet comes back down.

Janet nods.

JANET

Ok.

EXT. BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS - DAY

SUPER: DAY 30

The silent footage from the news crew used in Montage.

START MONTAGE

- Willow and Janet reaching the Blue Ridge Mountains
- Willow, Janet, and one silent News Crew.
- Walking on the trail.
- Willow pointing at nature and talking.
- Everyone reacting fearfully to a wild animal.
- Willow off on her own, crisscross, silent.
- Willow watching on as Janet is hospitable to the crew.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BLUERIDGE MOUNTAINS - LATER THAT DAY

Janet stands alone at the edge of a cliff, overlooking a vast expanse of wilderness. The wind whispers through the trees and Janet bares her soul to the universe.

EXT. BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS - DAY

SUPER: DAY 35

Willow and Janet, followed by the crew, walk down a road in the mountains.

In the distance, heading away from the group, is an OLD MAN pulling a cart filled with kindling.

The group sees him.

In reaction to such a big number of people, the Old Man stops and secures his cart. He looks back, not at the group, but directly into Willow's eyes.

Willow looks directly into his eyes, as well.

With her hand, Willow signals Janet.

JANET
(to group)
Let's take a break.

The group immediately gets comfortable on the ground.

Willow walks off toward the Old Man. She approaches gently, slowly.

From a distance, Janet watches how her daughter engages with the Old Man and eventually they sit on the ground.

Janet continues to watch as Willow appears to be singing.

Suddenly, the Old Man falls into Willow. Concerned, Janet, Peter, and Mike walk to Willow.

Janet signals for Peter and Mike to empty the cart and then lift the Old Man into it.

Peter and Mike gently do so.

EXT. BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS - LATER

The cart is pushed by Peter and Mike. Willow and Janet are out front leading the way, the rest of the Group trailing behind.

As they round the corner, they see a mountain cabin with a STRONG MAN standing in the yard in front. He sees what's coming.

He rushes to his dad in the cart.

WILLOW

I'm sorry.

The Strong Man takes it like a man. He lifts his dead father out of the cart and into his arms. He walks him to the front door.

As the group walks away from the cart, back down the road, Barry speaks to Andrew.

BARRY

Hello Emmy Awards!

EXT. BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

The campfire lights the faces around camp. Some sad. Some sleeping. Some just lost in thought.

EXT. NASHVILLE STREETS - DAY

SUPER: DAY 45

Janet, Willow, and the news group walk the streets in the middle of the vibrant music scene.

JANET (V.O.)

Every 10th person or so, recognizes her. Some wave. Some smile. And she smiles to some and waves to others.

Approaching family.

JANET (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And some ask for an autograph.

SUZY

Hi, Willow. I love what you're doing. I'm Suzy. Can I have your autograph?

WILLOW

Suzy, you are so lovely. Let's take a picture instead. Is that ok?

Suzy's mother with a camera. CLICK!

Willow turns away and continues.

JANET (V.O.)

Nine times out of ten that works just fine. People fall in. They assimilate when needed.

Cameramen, Andrew and Barry are filming. Barry just got a great shot of Suzy and Willow doing a selfie. Barry is a tad over-excited.

JANET (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And then there are some that just simply don't know how.

Willow turns back in on the group and they all fold in around her and stop.

Willow stands in front of Barry. Barry stops filming and looks to Willow.

WILLOW

Barry, please hand your camera to Andrew.

BARRY

(defensive)
Why? What's up?

WILLOW

Please.

Barry does so. And then his camera is passed on to another person.

Janet receives an e-tablet from the back of the group and shows Barry the video on the screen.

The video is from Barry's POV in the Mountains. In the distance is Willow sitting with the Old Man.

In the video, the Old Man is heard as he cries out in overwhelming despair, and then Willow begins to sing, and then the Old Man dies.

Silence.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
(to Barry)
Strike One. You're out. Goodbye.

The group begins to break away from Barry.

BARRY
Oh, come on. It was just singing,
the audio isn't even that good.

Willow turns and walks away. Janet and the group follows, minus Barry.

EXT. LUKE'S 32 BRIDGE - NIGHT

The group is running on empty and on its last leg.

They approach the Restaurant / Bar owned by Luke Bryant.

Outside there is some commotion because Luke Bryant, himself, is making a personal appearance, sitting at a table, signing autographs.

The group continues to walk on. But, as they're passing, an over-excited Luke Bryant jumps up from the signing table after seeing Willow and approaches the group.

LUKE
Wait. Wait. Wait...

He catches up to Willow.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Oh, my God. It's you.

Crickets. Awkward.

LUKE (CONT'D)

I am sorry. I don't mean to disturb you, but I just got so "fanboy" just now. I absolutely love what you're doing, Willow.

WILLOW

Thank you, Mr. Bryant.

LUKE

Luke. Luke. Please call me Luke.

Willow looks deep into Luke Bryant's eyes.

WILLOW

(smiles)

Luke. Can I tell you something?

Oh, my God, he acts as if his moment had arrived.

LUKE

Yes. Yes. Please.

WILLOW

Luke... We are hungry.

Luke was waiting for the metaphor.

LUKE

Oh. Oh! (smiles) Well, why don't you let me take care of that... Please, follow me.

Everyone in the group smiles with joy.

Luke walks them into his restaurant.

INT. LUKE'S 32 BRIDGE - LATER

A large wooden ranch-house table is in the center of the room, near the stage. It's covered by a red and white plaid tablecloth.

Willow stops eating her Mac-N-Cheese every three minutes or so to take a selfie with someone who recognizes her. Eventually Willow gets enough food and stops eating.

A WOMAN and her teenage daughter, AMBER, approach Willow.

WOMAN

Hi.

WILLOW
 (smiles)
 Hi.

WOMAN
 We don't want to bother you.

WILLOW
 You're not bothering me.

The group at the table is paying attention.

The Woman begins to cry. Willow gently takes her hands.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 Tell me.

WOMAN
 It's my daughter.

Willow looks to her daughter.

WILLOW
 (smiling)
 Hi.

AMBER
 Hi, Willow... Do you see that man,
 sitting at the bar?

At the bar there is a man, ADAM (59), denim shirt, denim jeans and a troubled and regretful look on his face.

Willow nods to Amber.

WILLOW
 Yeah, I saw him there earlier.

AMBER
 (on the verge of tears)
 Willow, can you sing a song for
 him?

Willow nods and begins to cry. She's emotionally frozen.

Ugly cry face coming. Chin quivering. Lips trembling. Snot. Tears. Both of them, Amber and Willow.

Willow gently takes Amber's hand and leads Amber over to the bar. They stand just behind Adam's barstool, holding hands.

BACK AT THE TABLE

Luke Bryant approaches Janet, who has tears of her own.

JANET
 (to Luke)
 She wants to sing a song for that
 man.

Luke nods. He's on it!

BACK AT THE BAR

Adam doesn't realize that Amber and Willow are standing
 there.

EVERYONE in the bar is now paying attention, focused on a
 two-foot space between the girls and Adam.

Adam does recognize one thing, the SILENCE...

He looks around for the origin and realizes that the patrons
 are all looking in his direction. Adam finally sees the two
 girls, but doesn't recognize either one.

Willow prompts Amber with an elbow to proceed.

AMBER
 Hi. What's your name?

MAN
 Me?... I'm Adam.

AMBER
 (choked up)
 I asked my friend to sing you a
 song. Is that ok?

Adam is emotional, dumbfounded, but emotional. He nods.

Willow gently reaches out and puts her tiny hand on Adam's
 arm and looks into his eyes.

ON STAGE

Luke Bryant, guitar in hand, is settling down on a wooden
 stool, a microphone comes up to his face. There's another
 microphone waiting next to him.

LUKE
 Ladies and gentlemen, if I can get
 your attention, please. We have...
 an unbelievable treat tonight.

Luke makes eye contact with Willow and waves her up.

LUKE (CONT'D)
 I would...

He has to collect himself. Clears his throat.

On her way up, Willow speaks to Andrew.

WILLOW
(smiles)
It's ok if you want to record me.

Andrew is over-the-moon. Suddenly the Mic gets turned on.

LUKE
Please welcome to the stage, the
absolute sweetest angel you will
ever meet. This is Willow.

Willow steps on the stage and in unison, the entire crowd
GASPS! Followed by CHEERS and CLAPPING.

Willow talks into Luke's ear. Luke nods and hands Willow the
second microphone. The clapping calms down and a SILENCE
comes over the restaurant.

Everyone at Janet's table AND EVERYONE AT EVERY OTHER TABLE
IN THE ENTIRE PLACE are standing, looking, and listening.

WILLOW
A few moments ago, Amber, right
there, noticed a man sitting at the
bar, right there. That's Adam. And
Amber came up with an idea. She
asked me to sing a song for Adam.

Willow gets choked up.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
So, that's what this is.

The room doesn't say a word. Although we do lose a couple of
soldiers, early on, to tears and their emotions.

Willow looks at Adam's eyes. Quiet now. Sincere now.

Silence. One Nod to Luke.

Willow closes her eyes and raises one hand to God.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Holding back the years
Thinking of the fear
I've had so long
When somebody hears
Listen to the fear that's gone

Adam cries.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 Strangled by the wishes of pater
 Hoping for the arms of mater
 Get to me the sooner or later

Janet watches with pride as Willow's compassion for others, shines in the spotlight. Adam is in tears. Janet is in tears. Amber is in tears.

EXT. LUKE'S 32 BRIDGE - NIGHT

Janet and Willow and Group all emerge from the restaurant. Luke Bryant makes eye contact with Willow. One hand. Wave. Willow smiles. They walk on.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - LATER

Willow and Janet walk into the lobby. They're laughing. They both notice a familiar face.

Sitting in the lobby is Dr. David Delaney and his Doctor bag. He stands up and approaches them.

DAVID
 Yes. Hi, it's me again, Dr. David Delaney from Jupiter Beach.

WILLOW
 Triple-D! How are you, sir?

David slowly shakes his head and smiles.

DAVID
 Willow, once again, you are certainly bigger than life itself.

WILLOW
 I'll take that as a compliment.

JANET
 What can we do for you, Doctor?

DAVID
 Yes. We need to talk.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Mother, Willow, and Dr. Delaney come in.

JANET

Willow, I've asked Dr. Delaney to listen to your heart.

WILLOW

(smiling)

Ok. I guess I can take a break from saving humanity.

DAVID

Wow. That's a big responsibility for such a---

Suddenly, CLENCH! Willow engages with David's hand. An almost electric hum takes over.

David sees a FLASH! In his mind.

Dr. David stops on the left side of Willows chest and withdraws his stethoscope. It's over.

He cannot look away from Willow's eyes. He has tears running down his face.

Willow lets go of his hand.

WILLOW

You're ok, now.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

Janet rustles in the background.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Mrs. Garner, sorry to have disturbed you. We're good. Thanks. Enjoy the rest of your mission.

David turns. One glance at Willow.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I am honored to have met you. Both of you.

He leaves.

EXT. ROADWAY - NEXT DAY

Willow, Janet, and the Group continue North on Tennessee 431 near Duke's Cemetery. The cemetery has three families visiting headstones and laying flowers.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWS STUDIO - DAY

The News Anchor is interviewing harsh critic MARK MASTERS.

MASTERS

And then this morning, I see a video of this eight-year-old, in a bar, singing and dancing with a room full of adults, on a school night. I mean who are these parents? And. And. She's supposed to be dying? I mean. Come on. That's just flagrant child abuse. Wouldn't you say?

INT. HOME OF OPRAH WINFREY - CONTINUOUS

Oprah looks introspective.

OPRAH

This poor girl. She's getting it from every angle...

Stedman shakes his head.

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS - DAY

SUPER: DAY 53

Janet and Andrew are pacing. She's not back yet. It's been an hour. They look at one another. Janet nods.

They peel off and head out to find Willow. They enter the encampment and disappear.

JANET

Homeless encampment? It's been an hour. Andrew, lets go find her.

10 Minutes later, they reappear, Andrew carrying a limp-body Willow. They get back to the group.

Andrew is breathing hard. Janet is relieved. Willow comes to.

AND SHE IS PISSED OFF!

WILLOW
What the HECK!... I don't
understand. What was that?

Allison decides to complicate things even more.

ALLISON
Willow!... Willow, you should have
NEVER gone in there.

Allison looks at Janet.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Certainly not alone.

JANET
(gently, slowly)
Yes. Yes. It's ok now. Everything
is just fine.

WILLOW
(reacts)
NO, Mother! It's not!

JANET
Willow---

WILLOW
I've NEVER been so rejected.. like
that! EVER!

JANET
Willow---

WILLOW
NO! I want to go now! And not back
on some stupid trail, sleeping
under some stupid stars... I want
to go to a hotel... an expensive
hotel.

Janet is secretly relieved.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
That's it. We're done for the day.
Goodbye.

Willow seems to have just thrown a tantrum and walked off.

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS - CONTINUOUS

Willow continues to walk away, obviously emotionally affected in her spirit with the rejections.

Willows breathing come up. The pain her chest starts to flare up. She reaches to comfort herself. She stops walking and puts her hands on her knees.

BACK WITH THE GROUP

The group, followed by Janet, walks off too, more somberly.

JANET
(to Andrew)
I'm sorry about today.

Janet sees Willow resting with her hands on her knees.

ANDREW
Well, at least we know she's human.

Andrew smiles and walks off.

Janet jogs up to meet her daughter.

JANET
Willow, honey? Are you ok?

Willow has recovered.

WILLOW
Yeah. Fine. Thanks.

Willow walks off.

Janet reflects on the "she's human" response, not realizing until now, the height at which the public's view of Willow had stood... Maybe this was a good thing. To happen. Today.

Janet imagines, in light of what Willow has seen in her short life, perhaps today was a small dose of medicine.....
Medicine of a different kind.

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS STREETS - LATER

Reporter Allison is on her cell with her Office. She paces.

ALLISON
No... No... The challenge is...
Ugh. No, Benny.
(MORE)

ALLISON (CONT'D)

No, doesn't reflect bad on me, its the reflection of this "trainwreck" on our organization. If we don't look good, we pull out. That has always been our motto. We cannot just choose to ignore it now.

Allison makes head and hand gestures that suggest she's losing this battle.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

This story has run it's course... We have squeezed every little ounce of value out of this tiny girl.... Her stock price is high, right now. I say, Sell! Before it crashes. And, it's gonna crash soon.

She hangs up.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Willow is completely out, sleeping, face down.

Janet stands on the other side of the room, out of earshot. She has the receiver from the hotel room phone up to her ear. She's talking just loud enough for Rob to hear her.

JANET

Yeah, I don't know. Maybe she didn't have enough to eat. Didn't sleep well. I don't know. She's just not herself.

INTERCUT BETWEEN Janet AND ROB

ROB

And, how is my wife doing?

JANET

Oh. Okay. I know she's just a child, but Rob, but this experience is she's teaching me more about life and loss.

ROB

I don't know. Maybe it's time to come home?

JANET

No. No. That's not it. She's come all this way and we only have like nine days left.

ROB

Ha! You sound like her.

JANET

No. I think we both just need a good night's sleep and we'll see what things look like in the morning.

ROB

Let me know what you decide. I support you either way.

JANET

Thank you, Rob. I will.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Janet is laying in bed, reading an article about how her daughter is poisoning today's youth. When a knock comes.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Janet opens the door and sees Andrew.

ANDREW

(sheepish)

Hi, good morning. I hope I didn't-

JANET

No. No. Come on in.

He doesn't.

ANDREW

No. I'll Just be a sec... Ah, I just wanted to let you know that my editor has pulled us off and we are headed somewhere else this morning.

JANET

(suspicious)

Oh. Ok... Is it something we did?

ANDREW

No. No. Of course not. No, that's just the news business. Anyway, have a great rest of your trip and say goodbye to Willow for us. Ok? Mm. Bye.

And poof! He's gone.

Door closes.

Willow is still out. The clock says 10:03 AM.

Janet starts to worry and get's up to come around the bed and check on---

But aborts the plan when a big YAWN comes from her daughter.

Let's test the waters this morning.

JANET
(chipper)
Good morning, sweetheart.

No response.

JANET (CONT'D)
(sing-song)
Oh, Sissy...

WILLOW
(defeated)
Stop.

Oops.

JANET
Honey, what's wrong?

WILLOW
I think it might be over. I think
the whole thing just might be over.

JANET
Willow.

WILLOW
What? I thought that this journey
was born of divine origin. I truly
believed that I was given a special
gift.

JANET
And you do. And you are. You have.

WILLOW
And that I was supposed to share
that gift with the world.

JANET
And you will, honey.

WILLOW
 (had enough)
 OH MOTHER, JUST SHUT UP!

Our angel has left the building.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 Mother! Please! Which part do you
 NOT understand? ...

Janet resets.

She stands up, gently moves around her daughter's bed, calmly approaches her and kneels down, slowly.

She looks into her daughters eyes, which are looking out the window.

JANET
 (whisper)
 Hi. It's Willow. Right?

WILLOW
 Mom.

JANET
 Willow, can I touch your hands?

WILLOW
 (grumpy)
 No.

JANET
 Willow, please, look into your
 heart. Tell me one thing I should
 know. Anything.

Willow starts to cry. Janet can barely understand her words.

WILLOW
 (through crying)
 And now, after all this, you're not
 even going to be able to see your
 surprise.

Janet doesn't understand a word.

JANET
 (comical)
 Ahhh. What?

Willow half-composes herself and makes a clearer attempt.

WILLOW

Now, after all of this, you're not even going to see your surprise.

JANET

Oh, honey. That's ok. I'm---

WILLOW

It's Oprah Winfrey

Janet is legitimately shocked.

JANET

What---

WILLOW

Yes. Your favorite. The one you have been waiting to meet your entire adult life... Why do you think we're going to Chicago?

JANET

Oh, Willow.

WILLOW

Because I need to be on her Oprah Winfrey show, watched by millions. So they can understand the mission.

Janet is not quite sure if she can hold it back. How to tell her? How to break the news to her?

JANET

Oh, honey... I'm sorry. But sweetheart, um, they stopped making the Oprah Winfrey Show years and years ago.

Willow looks unaffected by her comment.

JANET (CONT'D)

These days, Oprah lives in Los Angeles... But you know what? It's really the thought that counts.

Willow is lost in her head. Calm. Quiet. And lost.

Then, a sudden productive burst of energy

WILLOW

I have to call her.

JANET
 (not sure)
 Huh?

Willow starts to scooch out of the bed.

WILLOW
 I have to call her. AND...
 I gotta pee. I gotta pee.
 I gotta pee.

Willow hops into the bathroom.

JANET
 Sorry?

WILLOW
 (yells from the bathroom)
 Mom, what's an outside line?

JANET
 Ah, It's a thing. With the
 landline.

WILLOW
 Can you buy one for me, please?
 Real quick please.

JANET
 Hm, I don't think---

Willow's teeth are clenched as she says this next line.

WILLOW
 (super frustrated)
 MOM! Please! I was told by someone
 WHO ACTUALLY WORKS IN THIS VERY
 HOTEL, that in order for me to make
 a phone call, I would need to first
 get something called an "outside
 line"...

Janet can barely hold back the wave of laughter building up
 inside her.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
 I DON'T CARE WHAT IT COSTS. CAN YOU
 PLEASE BUY ME AN OUTSIDE LINE?

Inside, Janet is laughing and a little frightened.

JANET
 Ok. Tada! Here you go. Your outside
 line.

WILLOW

Wow. That was fast. Cool. Thanks.

Willow carries a little piece of paper with her to the phone.

Janet steps back in order to see this sand castle crumble.

INT. HOME OF OPRAH WINFREY - DAY

The phone rings. Stedman answers.

STEDMAN

Hello.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE HOTEL ROOM PHONE AND OPRAH HOUSE PHONE

WILLOW

Hi... It's Willow Garner.

Janet rolls her eyes and delivers a fake smile.

STEDMAN

Oh, my God. Willow.... This is great. Wait. Don't hang up. Wait just a second. Let me get Oprah. Hold on.

Janet speaks to Willow.

JANET

(sassy)

Ahuh. So. Is that Oprah on the phone?

WILLOW

(teenager)

No...

Janet backs up.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

That was Stedman... He's getting Oprah.

JANET

Hmm.

OPRAH

(amazed)

Hi, Willow.

WILLOW

Hi Oprah. How are you?

Janet is rolling her eyes.

OPRAH
Willow. First things first. I do NOT agree with the trashing you're getting in the media.

WILLOW
Thank you, Oprah...

Janet nods her head sarcastically at Willow.

Willow furrows her brow and shakes her head at Janet.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Yeah, I wanted to talk to you about that.

OPRAH
(smiles)
Ok. Girl. Start talking.

With a cocked head, Janet slowly moves from suspicion to curiosity. She takes a step closer.

WILLOW
Oprah, I have a message that the world needs to hear.

OPRAH
Willow, I agree 100%.

Janet pops her head up, like a gazelle suddenly spots an oncoming threat on the African Savannah.

Wait. That sounded suspiciously like...

WILLOW
Ok. Good. I'm gonna let you chew on that for a second.

And sure enough, that's all the time Oprah needed.

OPRAH
Willow, where exactly will you be in ten days? Specifically, on Wednesday, July 30th, at 10:00 AM?

Janet has big saucers for eyes. Her mouth drops wide open. She points to the receiver and jumps up and down. She starts pounding with her hands and still jumps up and down.

WILLOW

My mother and I, will be at the
Memorial Fountain in Grant Park.

There is a tense and unsure pause.

OPRAH

Ok. Leave it to me. See you then.

WILLOW

Thank you, Oprah.

Willow hangs up. Janet is beside herself.

JANET

Are you crazy!

WILLOW

I must be!

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - DAY

SUPER: DAY 64

SUPER: 1,677 MILES

SUPER: 613 HOURS

Willow and Janet, with a dozen or so well-wishers in tow,
round the corner and find themselves at the intersection of
East Roosevelt Road and South Columbus Drive in Chicago, IL.

Silence.

THOUSANDS have come to welcome Willow and Janet.

The main road has been shut down and barricaded off.

Janet and Willow come around the bend walk up South Columbus
Drive, smiling and waving, the people waving and smiling.

They arrive at the Clarence F. Buckingham Memorial Fountain.

There is a podium and microphone. Standing at the microphone
is Oprah Winfrey, flanked by her longtime partner, Stedman.
Willow and Janet are shocked to see them.

OPRAH

And I should know, because I have
been following her heroic journey
since DAY 1.

Applause.

OPRAH (CONT'D)

Willow's unwavering spirit and her family's unwavering support, serve as a beacon of light amidst darkness.

Applause.

Janet stands beside her, proud of the remarkable young girl she has become, and the bond they share is stronger than ever.

Willow sees, in the front row, her Dad, James, and Roberta. And without asking permission, she breaks free and runs straight at them.

WILLOW

Dad!

ROB

I'm so proud of you, Sissy!

The crowd melts and claps.

Willow ushers her Dad, her brother, and her sister back to Janet. Rob is crying.

And then, Willow is ushered to the microphone. She hugs Oprah and Stedman.

Comically, the podium is too tall and she can't see or be seen, until they bring a riser for her to stand on.

Willow reflects on the journey that has transformed her.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NEXT DAY

SUPER: DAY 65

Willow is in the makeup chair, Janet standing right beside her.

JANET

I love my surprise.

Willow smiles.

She stops a passing PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.

WILLOW

Hi. Can you give this note to Oprah for me?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Sure.

INT. SOUND STAGE - LATER

No audience.

Oprah Winfrey sits on a rich navy sofa, going over her notes on Willow. There's some blocking issues. Lighting. Sound.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT approaches and hands Oprah a slip of paper.

Oprah reads it: "Thank you. Willow"

The crew gives a thumbs up.

PRODUCER

And in 4.. 3.. ..

OPRAH

My special guest during this evening's program has become nothing less than a worldwide phenomenon.

She clears her throat.

OPRAH (CONT'D)

At this very moment, in most EVERY MAJOR CITY IN THE WORLD, massive numbers of people, are holding public vigils for this tiny EIGHT-YEAR-OLD GIRL...

Willow sits on the sofa next to Oprah.

OPRAH (CONT'D)

So, what's her trick? She doesn't have one. What's the angle? What's the gimmick?... There isn't one.

She pauses.

OPRAH (CONT'D)

Her notoriety comes from being just one thing... Caring. Everyone, this is Willow.

Willow smiles.

WILLOW

Hi.

OPRAH
Hi, Willow. Sweet girl.

Willow smiles.

OPRAH (CONT'D)
Willow, how did this happen? ...
How did the entire world come to
know about you?

Silence.

WILLOW
Orpah, ... can we talk?

Oprah hasn't heard that name, her original name on her Birth Record, in a long time. She's a tad thrown off.

OPRAH
Oh, my God.... That's my birth
name: Orpah

Oprah recovers.

OPRAH (CONT'D)
Yes. Yes. We can talk.

WILLOW
I mean, really talk.

Willow locks eyes with Oprah.

In the background, her PRODUCER RICK is rolling his hands, like come on, come on. Willow starts with him.

She stands and approaches PRODUCER RICK.

Oprah flags the handheld guy to shoot it.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Hi, Rick?

Rick nods.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Oprah and I are going to chat over
there on the sofa. Yeah, over there
and we're requesting a smaller,
more close-up shot. Can you do
that?

Rick nods frantically.

Willow walks back to the sofa.

OPRAH
Willow, honey. Why don't you sit
next to me? Here.

Willow accommodates her.

OPRAH (CONT'D)
So, Willow, tell me.

Silence.

And then Willow shares that familiar gaze with Oprah.

WILLOW
Can I touch your hands?

OPRAH
Ah, sure.

Willow slowly reaches out in a gesture, asking for Oprah's
hands to join hers.

A moment goes by and then Oprah joins hands with Willow.

They settle. They're comfortable, both. Willow never loses
her gaze into Oprah's eyes.

WILLOW
(sincerely)
One of the things I love about you,
is your obvious and overt love for
other people.

Oprah is entranced in Willow's gaze. And her emotions are
bubbling up quickly. Her eyes are glossy.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
First and foremost, I want to
affirm you for listening to and
following your heart, every day,
since Friday, January 29th, 1954.

Oprah is tearing up now.

OPRAH
Thank you.

WILLOW
(profound)
And let me be clear, here.
(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I'm not talking about your organizations, your foundation or your angel network, or the half a billion dollars they've made available to those in need.

Oprah takes a deep breath.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I'm talking about the way you listen. I'm talking about the way you inspire others, how you empower others, how you love others.

Oprah can only nod now. Her words are not coming.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

That's what I love about you. You are a beautiful human being.

OPRAH

(through tears)
Thank you.

Willow still engaged, still connected

WILLOW

No. Thank you.

Their hands separate. Oprah collects herself.

OPRAH

Phew! ... Willow, I wouldn't be doing my job, if I didn't ask a few questions.

Oprah looks at her notes and so does Willow.

WILLOW

(shakes her head)
No...

Oprah looks panicked.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

One thing first. I want to talk about your dad.

OPRAH

Yes, that did come up, lately. I think you mean Noah Robinson.

WILLOW

No, I mean Vernon Winfrey. The man who stepped in and stepped up and assumed the role of your father when he didn't have to.

Oprah nods.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Oprah, he loved you... So much.

Oprah tears and nods.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

You had a father, now I am paraphrasing, you had a father who took responsibility for you, even though you could have been some other man's daughter. He never really knew, because to him, it didn't really matter.

Silence.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

And it wasn't just the burden and responsibility that he put on his own shoulders, but the care, and love, and the direction, and the support for you, these are the things that made the difference in forming who you are today.

Oprah nods and wipes tears.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Do you see my meaning? It's not about what you did for yourself, the true meaning of love is what you do for others with NOTHING IN RETURN.

Impact.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

It's what Vernon Winfrey did for you, and asked for nothing in exchange. I think that's love. I think that is compassion.

Oprah can only nod.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I think it's normal to be sad about separation from a loved one...
I think it's human to be emotional when you're watching your mom die, your dad die, or a sibling, or a close friend, or a spouse, anyone.

Oprah asks for another tissue.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

And at the same time, I think it is the love inside of us, that tugs on our hearts at those very moments, wanting to come out. Wanting to be shared with the dying and their family members. That love inside of us wants to connect with them and just listen.

Oprah nods. She finds herself in a dry (no tears) moment and reaches out to Willow.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Oprah, I walked with my mother, 1,677 miles from Deerfield Beach, Florida all the way to Chicago to be here with you today. Along the way, I sat with more than 100 people. Men, women, boys, girls... They just wanted someone to listen to them. To be there for them. To look them in the eyes and say you are loved.

She takes a deep breath. Gently now, easy now.

Willow tries to ignore the pain in her chest.

OPRAH

Willow, one question, if I can get it out. That right there, what you were just describing. It seems so natural with you. Where did that come from?

The world sits on the edge of their seats.

Willow is silent, still engaged with Oprah's gaze.

Willow leans into her, like she's going to share a secret.

The handheld guy has to readjust. The shot is very tight.

WILLOW
I did the math.

Some in the crew laugh.

OPRAH
Math?

WILLOW
Eight (8) billion people on this earth and 1% of us, die every year. One percent. That's 80 million people. Die every year.

OPRAH
(admiring)
Oh, my God.

Willow uses her hands to represent the living on one and the dead on the other.

WILLOW
So think about it, Oprah. If 1% of the living, took the time, once a year, to visit with the 1% who are dying, to be quiet, compassionate, empathetic, and to listen... that would do it.

OPRAH
Willow Garner, I am so sad to say that we are almost out of time.

Willow sees her note in Oprah's hand.

OPRAH (CONT'D)
Can I tell you my wish, before you go?

WILLOW
(smiles)
Yes. Please.

OPRAH
My wish, Willow Garner, is that you are wrong.

Impact.

OPRAH (CONT'D)
(gently, carefully)
That you are wrong about your impending death. And instead you live for a hundred years.

Some crew clap.

OPRAH (CONT'D)

And that you write dozens and
dozens and dozens of books filled
with your vision and your insights.

Crew claps.

WILLOW

(nods)
Thank you.

Oprah shakes her head.

OPRAH

That saddens me. It was an honor to
meet you and talk with you. And in
light of your timeline, I won't
hold you up, here any longer. Thank
you for coming all this way.

WILLOW

Thank you for being here.

OPRAH

To our guests at home, say goodbye
to Willow...

PRODUCER

And we're clear.

Oprah sits lost in thought.

Willow stands and smiles. Oprah stands and smiles.
They hug goodbye.

WILLOW

(to Oprah)
Goodbye... and Thank You.

Oprah can only nod.

Oprah turns to Janet in the front row. She blows Janet a kiss
and then has to walk away. Willow joins Janet in the front
row. A handheld camera captures their leaving.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Willow sits with her whole family at "Vin Jardin", the most
expensive menu in all of Chicago. Janet is content staring at
Willow and having a glass of wine. Rob looks at Willow.

ROB

Willow, I cannot imagine losing you. You are my little princess. You are my Sissy. And you take up such a big part of my heart, your Janet has become claustrophobic, sharing it.

Willows tears flow.

ROB (CONT'D)

Yes. I'll admit it. I love you, deeply. And I am very, very proud of you.

Willow smiles. Silence.

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - NIGHT

Willow, Rob, Janet, Roberta, and James walk with a STUDIO WRANGLER through the city of Chicago, laughing and loving.

INT. LUXURY HOTEL ENTRANCE - LATE NIGHT

A doorman, REGINALD BEAUMONT (72), Black man, wrinkled, frail and hunched, opens the door for the Garner family. Last through the door, Willow takes a special interest in him. Reginald Beaumont is too old to be working.

Willow gently touches his arm. He perks up and notices.

Willow looks into his eyes. He responds and looks into hers.

At the elevator, Janet looks back to Willow, still at the entrance. Concern? Maybe. Time to let go? Yes.

JANET

(from a distance)

Willow, don't be too late.

Willow eases Reginald Beaumont into an oversized rich leather chair in the waiting area. They sit.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - WILLOW'S BED - LATE NIGHT

Willow is in bed. Janet peeks her head in. Rob snaps a towel outside the door. Frisky!

JANET

(smiles)

Rob. Stop. Stop it. Haha.

She's obviously eager to get to bed with her husband.

JANET (CONT'D)
 (to Willow)
 Sleep well, Sissy. Get some rest.
 We have an early flight in the
 morning.

WILLOW
 Mom?

JANET
 Yeah.

WILLOW
 (tired)
 Can you stay with me?

Janet looks out at her husband off camera. Janet thinks twice.

JANET
 Yeah. Sure thing.

Janet crawls into the huge bed and leans against the headboard. Willow crawls over and puts her head in Janet's lap.

Unknowingly, Janet begins to gently stroke Willows hair.

WILLOW
 Mom, I'm scared.

JANET
 (softly)
 It's ok. I'm here.

Willow looks scared.

JANET (CONT'D)
 Soft now. Gentle now. Slowly now.

Janet hums Willow's favorite childhood song and rocks slowly back and forth.

JANET (CONT'D)
 (gently)
 I'm here. You're ok. I love you.

Janet continues to hum. Willow, eyes closed. She has a peaceful orb around her.

Peace.

INT. NEWS STUDIO - NEXT MORNING

The ON AIR light is already red. The PRODUCER is nodding.

A solemn NEWSCASTER is momentarily lost in thought. He holds a piece of paper.

NEWSCASTER

We have been given a statement to read... from the family.

News caster clears his throat.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

With solemn...

He shakes it off.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

"With solemn hearts, we deliver the absolutely devastating news that eight-year-old, Willow Garner... has passed away."

Silence.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

At 11:59 PM last night, she suffered a massive coronary event. The initial assessments suggest a rare genetic disorder, leading to an enlargement of her Right Ventricle, ultimately claiming her precious life.

Silence.

FADE TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK:

SUPER:

"Even love has a shelf life.
Don't wait for someday,
to give love to someone who needs it, today."

Willow Garner
2017 - 2025

FADE OUT:

THE END