

JEREMY

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INT BEDROOM NIGHT

JEREMY (9), A small Caucasian boy with blond hair, suddenly sits up in bed. He is breathing heavily. He stares straight ahead for a brief moment and then throws off his covers and leaps out of bed. He runs out of his bedroom and into the upstairs hall. He turns to his right and comes to a closed door. He immediately opens the door and as he runs to the large bed in the room...

JEREMY

Mom? Dad?

He jumps on the bed and realizes his parents are not there. He jumps off the bed, runs to the master bathroom, and turns on the light.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Mom, Dad, Where are you?

He runs out of the bathroom, through his parents bedroom and once again into the hall. He runs down the stairs and into the living room. No one is there. He continues to call for his parents as he searches every room. He stops in the kitchen to catch his breath and notices the doggie door is swinging back and forth.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Jacob?

The boy runs to the door, unlatches the locks, and runs outside.

EXT HOUSE NIGHT

It is a beautiful clear evening. Millions of stars shine as if celebrating a special occasion. The boy looks to his right and left and hears a digging sound.

CUT TO:

JACOB. He is a GORGEOUS GOLDEN RETRIEVER. Jacob is digging at the backyard gate that leads to the driveway as if he is trying to get out. The boy runs to him.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Jacob!

Jeremy bends down and hugs Jacob. Jacob is obviously happy to see Jeremy, but after a brief moment, Jacob starts barking again and continues scratching at the gate. The boy talks to the dog as if he expects him to answer.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

What is it, Jacob? Where are Mom
and Dad?

A scream is heard. Jeremy jumps up and runs to the back door.
He turns and calls for his dog.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Come on, Jacob. Come on boy.

Jacob runs to Jeremy and they both enter the house.

INT HOUSE NIGHT

Jeremy and the dog run through the kitchen and the living
room and come to the front door. The boy unlocks the front
door and runs into the beautifully manicured front yard.
Jacob follows. Once outside, the boy abruptly stops as if an
invisible hand is holding him back. His mouth is wide open.

EXT STREET NIGHT

MEN, WOMEN, and, CHILDREN are running through the streets,
yelling names, while others appear dazed, almost running in
slow motion. A pick-up truck has crashed into a nearby tree
in a neighbor's yard. Smoke is coming from its engine.
Another vehicle has rammed into the front of a house. A body
is slumped forward in the passenger's seat, causing the car
horn to blare continuously. MRS. JOHNSON(40'S), heavy-set
African-American and wearing a nightgown, approaches Jeremy.
Before Jeremy can do anything, she grabs him by the shoulders
and begins shaking him. She is obviously in a panic.

MRS. JOHNSON

Jeremy, have you seen Melissa? I
can't find her anywhere. It's
nearly two in the morning. Where
could she be? She's only 8 years
old for God's sake. Where is she?

Mrs. Johnson is shaking Jeremy violently, nearly oblivious
that she has someone in her grasps.

JEREMY

(struggling to get away)
I don't know, Mrs. Johnson. I don't
even know where my Mom or Dad are.

Mrs. Johnson doesn't hear a word the boy says. While he is
still talking, she lets him go and runs to a MAN across the
street, yelling...

MRS. JOHNSON
Mr. Rodriguez, have you seen my
Melissa?

The boy watches her go and stands for a brief moment surveying the chaos. He then slowly lowers himself to the ground sitting very close to his dog. He puts his arm around Jacob and begins to cry.

JEREMY
What's goin on, Jacob? What's
happening?

INT BEDROOM NIGHT

Jeremy suddenly sits up in his bed. He is breathing heavily. He stares straight ahead for a brief moment, then throws off his covers and leaps out of bed. He runs out of his bedroom and into the upstairs hallway. He turns to his right and immediately opens a door and runs into the room toward a large bed. He stands at the foot of the bed.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Mom? Dad?

Slowly a head appears from under the covers.

CLARK HENDERSON (30), Jeremy's Dad, a good-looking man with blond hair the color of Jeremy's, wipes sleep from his eyes.

CLARK
Hey Bud, what's wrong?

A light goes on. CATHERINE HENDERSON(29), Jeremy's Mom, pretty with long brown hair in a ponytail, sits up, propping herself against her pillow. Jeremy jumps on the bed and goes to his Mom. She pulls him to her and holds him, stroking his hair.

CATHERINE
It's okay, honey. You're okay.

CLARK
We've got you, Buddy.

Jeremy doesn't look up nor respond. He remains cradled in his mother's arms.

EXT WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DAY

The school building is old and littered with graffiti. ROBERT (40's) a Hispanic man in paint-stained overalls and one of the school's janitors, cleans the walls as MR. LEWIS(50's), also a school janitor, paints over the scrubbed area. Several large oak trees take residence on the front lawn of the school which is divided by a wide sidewalk leading to the front entrance to the school. A small bird flies out of one of the trees and lands on top of a good-sized marquee emblazoned with the name of the school, "WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL." The marquee announces the next PTA meeting(the "A" is dangerously close to falling off). It also announces, "All Tuesday dismissals at 2:03." An "o" has been substituted for a "0" in 2:03. Again the bird takes flight; this time perching on a weather-beaten banner floating above the double doors of the school. The banner reads, "Truth is Knowledge." The bird soars toward the sky.

INT CLASSROOM AFTERNOON

It is a typical third grade classroom; very colorful with lots of student work posted throughout the room. The teacher, MR. TAYLOR(60's), young looking for his age and obviously enthusiastic, stands in front of about 30 THIRD GRADERS. He is holding a small inflatable globe in his hand.

MR. TAYLOR

Well, that's a little off the subject Kevin, but a good question. What do you think?

TREY MCFARLAND(9), with red hair and freckles, responds.

TREY

My dad says we came from monkeys and that the world was formed by some kind of explosion or something.

At the mention of the word, "monkeys," some of the other students begin to laugh.

MR. TAYLOR

You laugh, but he's not far from the truth... although there's a lot more to it than that.

TOMMY WARD(9), a large, tough-looking boy sitting in the third row shouts out...

TOMMY

I didn't come from no monkeys!

MR. TAYLOR

How do we share in this class,
Tommy?

Tommy rolls his eyes and slowly and half-heartedly raises his hand.

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Thank you. So where do you think we came from, Tommy?

TOMMY

I don't know, but not from monkeys. That's stupid.

MR. TAYLOR

I'm afraid science would disagree with you there, Tommy. Science has proven that Man evolved from apes millions of years ago. What did you think? Man just appeared out of nowhere one day? I don't think so.

Jeremy slowly raises his hand as if he is afraid he will be called on.

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Yes, Jeremy.

JEREMY

What about the Bible?

MR. TAYLOR

What about it?

JEREMY

(Looking around
hesitantly)

Well... it talks about how God made Adam and Eve and everything.

MR. TAYLOR

I take it you read the Bible, Jeremy?

JEREMY

I read it with my Dad... and we are talking about Genesis in church and Sunday School.

More than several of the children laugh.

TOMMY

You go to Sunday School?

CLIFF MONTGOMERY(10) a tall, skinny boy who sits in front of Tommy shouts out.

CLIFF
Sunday School's for babies.

MR. TAYLOR
That's enough.
(addressing Jeremy)
The Bible is certainly a fascinating book, Jeremy, but I'm not sure I would believe everything it says. Some great stories, though.

AMBER KAGAN(9), raises her hand.

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Yes, Amber.

AMBER
My Mom says the Bible isn't true. It's just a bunch of fairy tales like Aesop's Fables.

Jeremy looks at Amber as if she has insulted him personally.

JEREMY
No it's not.

MR. TAYLOR
I don't want to disagree with your beliefs, Jeremy, but you have to admit it is a little hard to believe God or a god created the universe in seven days, not to mention making man from dust and then a woman from the man's rib.

Several more giggles and a couple of "yucks" and "gross" come from different students in the classroom. SUSAN BISHOP(9), very pretty, sits in the desk next to Jeremy's. She looks at him as if to say, "i'm sorry. Jeremy just shrugs his shoulders.

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Okay, Okay. We need to get back to our own world. Who can show where Iceland is on the globe.

SEVERAL STUDENTS raise their hands, including SUSAN BISHOP(9), very pretty, who sits near Tommy. Mr. Taylor tosses the beach ball-like globe to Susan who misses catching it.

Tommy, as well as several other boys, scramble to pick up the globe. Tommy grabs it first and smiling, hands it to Susan. Susan smiles back and holding the globe with one hand, points to Iceland with her index finger.

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Excellent, Susan.

Mr. Taylor motions for Susan to toss the globe back to him, which she does. As the globe passes over Jeremy, Jeremy lowers his head and in deep thought, stares down at the science book on his desk.

EXT FRONT OF WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DAY

A bell rings. The school's two large front doors fly open and hundreds of first through sixth grade CHILDREN run out of the building to waiting PARENTS, FRIENDS, and school buses.

Jeremy slings his backpack over his shoulders and begins walking down the sidewalk. As he goes to the student bike racks, three boys, including Tommy Ward and Cliff Montgomery, appear from around the corner of the building. Jeremy abruptly stops.

TOMMY

Going home to read your Bible,
Jeremy?

CLIFF

I bet he's going home to get ready
for Sunday School.

The three boys laugh as IVAN CASTLEBERRY(11) who is in the 4th grade and showing early signs of acne chimes in.

IVAN

Sunday School is for sissies.

Jeremy tries to ignore them and walks past them. Tommy moves directly in front of Jeremy.

TOMMY

I hate sissies.

JEREMY

Come on, Tommy. I need to get home.

TOMMY

(mockingly)
Come on, Tommy, I need to get home.

Jeremy tries to go around Tommy, but Tommy steps in front of him. Every time Jeremy moves, Tommy counters him. Finally, Jeremy has had enough. He throws his backpack down on the ground and looks directly into Tommy's eyes.

JEREMY

Okay, Fine! You win, Tommy. Hit me.
Beat me up. Let's get this over
with.

Tommy, Cliff, and Ivan just stare at Tommy.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Well, what're ya waiting for?

There is silence as the three boys just look at each other and then back at Jeremy. After a brief moment, Jeremy picks up his backpack and walks around Tommy.

TOMMY

You're weird, Jeremy. You know
that? You're really weird.

Jeremy just keeps walking to the bike racks without looking back. He lets out an obviously long held-in breath.

EXT TWO STORY HOUSE DAY

Jeremy enters the front door of the house. He enters the living room and proceeds to the stairway. He climbs the stairs.

Catherine Henderson appears from the dining room, adjacent to the stairs. It is apparent that she has been cleaning as she holds a feather duster and wears rubber cleaning gloves. She sees Jeremy ascend the stairs.

CATHERINE

Hi Honey. How was school?

Jeremy stops midway up the stairs and turns to face his mother.

TOMMY

Okay.

CATHERINE

Want a snack before dinner? I made
your favorite chocolate chip
cookies this morning. I even left
some real gooey ones for you.

TOMMY
Maybe later.

Jeremy starts to turn around and continues walking up the stairs.

CATHERINE
Hey, are you okay?

JEREMY
Yeah. Just gonna do some homework.

CATHERINE
Homework over chocolate chip cookies? Who are you and what have you done with my son.

Jeremy manages a half-baked smile. He continues walking up the stairs.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
(Sternly)
Wait a minute, Mister.

Jeremy stops and closes his eyes knowing what is coming.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
What is that in your back pocket?

Jeremy turns around and Catherine stands with her arms crossed. She then holds one hand out.

JEREMY
Mom...

CATHERINE
Mom nothing. What did we tell you about taking your slingshot to school?

JEREMY
I know, but...

CATHERINE
You must have hid it well. We didn't call a call from Mrs. Baca.

JEREMY
I don't use it, Mom. I just like having it with me.

Catherine continues to stretch out her hand in the universal sign for "hand it over, buster." Jeremy knows the battle is lost.

He slowly, and with several sighs and shrugs, places the slingshot in his Mother's hand. He begins walking back up the stairs.

CATHERINE

Sure you don't want a cookie?

Jeremy doesn't even turn around. He simply Shakes his head "no" and continues climbing the stairs.

INT BEDROOM AFTERNOON

It is a typical 9 year old's bedroom. Several walls are covered with a large posters, including an "Avengers Infinity War" Movie Poster, and a map of the world as well as posters of bands. Assorted Marvel and DC comic books are strewn to the side of his bed. A small computer sits on a table in the corner of the room. A jacket had been thrown over the back of the computer chair.

Jeremy enters his bedroom, tosses his backpack on the floor, throws his coat on the bed, and plops down on the bed himself. He thinks for a brief moment, then grabs his backpack and takes out his iPod. He puts his headphones on and begins mouthing the words to a familiar song.

A clock in the form of a robot sits on the small nightstand by Jeremy's bed. It reads 5:00.

A knock at Jeremy's door is heard. Jeremy doesn't move. Another knock. Jeremy is still oblivious to the knocking.

Clark Henderson, pokes his head in to Jeremy's room. He knocks even harder on the partially opened door to no avail. Shaking his head and smiling, he completely enters the room. Just as he is about to approach Jeremy's bed, Jeremy opens his eyes and jumps up, obviously startled. He removes his headphones.

CLARK

Sorry, son... didn't mean to scare you. I knocked a couple of times, but you didn't hear me.

Clark picks up the headphones.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Gee, I wonder why. I can hear the music loud and clear and I don't even have these things on. I can't believe that's very good for your ears, Jer.

Jeremy sits in silence. Clark sits on the edge of the bed and waits a moment before speaking again.

CLARK (CONT'D)

So how ya doing? Your Mom said you turned down her famous chocolate chip cookies because you had to do your homework. Wanna talk about it?

JEREMY

About what?

CLARK

Come on, Jer. We're talking homework over just-out-the-oven gooey chocolate chip cookies. Something is definitely up.

Jeremy looks at his Dad then down at his pillow.

JEREMY

When you were in school, Dad, did the other kids ever make fun of you.

CLARK

Are you kidding? Just about every day.

JEREMY

Really? Why? I thought you were a big football hero.

CLARK

That was in high school. When I was your age, I was the skinniest kid in school. I bet I heard every skinny joke there was to tell. A day didn't go by that Sammy Jones or one of his cronies didn't knock my books out of my hands or trip me with my lunch tray in the cafeteria.

JEREMY

Wha'd you do?

CLARK

At first I went home, locked myself in my room, and cried a lot. But after awhile I got tired of it and stood up to them.

JEREMY

What happened?

CLARK

I got the snot beat out of me. But things we're never the same after that. I think Sammy and his gang started to respect me a little. At least it got me started into weight lifting.

There is a moment of silence.

CLARK (CONT'D)

So what is all this about? Some bully pushing you around at school?

JEREMY

Not really. I mean sort of, but that's not really the problem.

CLARK

What is?

JEREMY

The Bible.

Late afternoon shadows fall on the floor of Jeremy's bedroom. The room is illuminated by a lamp over Jeremy's bed. Jeremy and his Dad are propped up against the head of the bed with pillows. Clark holds a Bible in his hand.

CLARK

It's hard to stand up for what you believe in when everybody else is making fun of you. But sometimes, Jer, people are just ignorant... they don't understand.

JEREMY

Still feels bad.

Clark places his arm around his son.

CLARK

I know.

JEREMY

You really believe what the Bible says about God creating Adam and everything?

CLARK

With all my heart. I tell you
what... you just relax and I'll
tell ya a little story.

Jeremy rolls his eyes.

JEREMY

Dad, I know about Adam and Eve.

CLARK

I know, but sometimes it's
different when you hear it being
read by someone else. I won't read
much.

Clark opens the Bible and begins to read. As he does...

FOCUS ON:

Open window in Jeremy's room. Moonlight fills the room.

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

"In the beginning God created the
heavens and the earth."

CUT TO:

Darkness. Complete blackness. [ANIMATED]

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

"Now the earth was formless and
empty, darkness was over the
surface of the deep, and the Spirit
of God was hovering over the
waters."

There is a slight movement in the darkness as if something is
causing a mild wave. [ANIMATED]

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

"Then God said, 'let there be light
and there was light.'"

A burst of blinding light appears in the center of the
darkness. It quickly expands and overcomes the darkness,
enveloping it completely. [ANIMATED]

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM NIGHT

CLARK

"God saw that the light was good,
and he separated the light from the
darkness. God called the light
'day,' and the darkness he called
'night.' And there was evening, and
there was morning—the first day."

Jeremy looks up at his father.

JEREMY

Just like that, God made the
universe?

CLARK

That's what it says.

JEREMY

It's kinda hard to believe.

CLARK

That's what faith is all about.

JEREMY

I guess.

CLARK

Wanna go on?

JEREMY

Okay.

CLARK

Well, after God made the light and
darkness, he then caused the waters
to separate.

CUT TO:

HUGE BODY OF WATER. [ANIMATED]

The water is crystal blue and completely still under a
beautiful blue sky.

CLARK(O.S.)

"And God said, 'Let the water under
the sky be gathered to one place,
and let dry ground appear.' And it
was so.

(MORE)

CLARK(O.S.) (CONT'D)
 God called the dry ground "land,"
 and the gathered waters he called
 "seas." And God saw that it was
 good.

Suddenly a small peak emerges from the still water. The peak
 becomes larger and larger until is it a great mountain.
 (ANIMATED)

More mountains and land masses appear as the waters recede.
 The land, now filled with mountains and hills, is brown and
 desolate. (ANIMATED)

CUT TO:

INT BEDROOM NIGHT

JEREMY

It sounds so easy... like it's too
 simple or something. It seems like
 creating the world and the universe
 should be more complicated like Mr.
 Taylor says.

CLARK

But it isn't. I believe it happened
 just like it says. God commanded it
 and it happened.

JEREMY

I know. I guess I believe it too.

CLARK

I hope so, Son. Can't believe in
 anything more important than what's
 in this book.

A voice is heard coming from downstairs.

CATHERINE (O.S.)

Clark... Jeremy... dinner.

CLARK

(yelling)
 Be right there.
 (to Jeremy)
 We better get a move on.
 Oh, yeah. Keep this is your
 backpack.

Clark pulls out Jeremy's slingshot from his back pocket and
 hands it to the surprised and smiling Jeremy.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Don't tell your Mother.

JEREMY
Thanks, Dad.

Jeremy does as his father instructed him and places his slingshot in his backpack.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Race ya.

CLARK
Fine, but I get the bannister.

JEREMY
No way. You got it last time.

CLARK
No I didn't. You did.

From downstairs again...

CATHERINE (O.S.)
And no racing or sliding down the bannister. I mean it!

Clark and Jeremy roll their eyes and then simultaneously look at each other. They both begin to laugh and dash out of Jeremy's room, pushing each other out the door.

EXT WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LUNCH AREA NOON

Many THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE CHILDREN are sitting at large metal tables eating their lunch. Some students empty their tray in a large rubber trash can and then place the tray in a large bin beside the door of the school cafeteria and run to the large playground. Other students remain at the tables talking and trading food. Jeremy sits alone at a table. MARGARET TIKAHCHE(9), a gregarious, pretty, but overweight Native-American girl, approaches Jeremy's table and sits down.

MARGARET
Hey, Jeremy.

JEREMY
Hey, Margaret.

There is a brief silence as Margaret takes out the sandwich from her Wonder Woman lunch box. She removes a bag of chips, a carton of chocolate milk, and two ding dongs. She arranges the food in a neat order before unwrapping one of the ding dongs and taking a bite.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Uh... aren't you suppose to eat those for dessert?

MARGARET

I can't wait. I love ding dongs. Besides in France, people eat their dessert before the main meal. Did you know that? Want one?

JEREMY

No thanks. I'm kinda full.

More silence.

MARGARET

What church do you go to?

JEREMY

How'd you know I go to church?

MARGARET

Kanisha told me what happened in your class yesterday... about what you said about the Bible and Sunday School. I'm baptist. I go to Calvary Baptist Church. It's about a mile from here.

JEREMY

I know. We pass it when we go to the mall.

MARGARET

So where do you go?

JEREMY

Me and my Mom and Dad go to little church called First Christian Bible Church.

MARGARET

Is it Baptist?

JEREMY

I don't think it's anything. Everybody just believes in the Bible.

Before Margaret can respond, Tommy, Cliff, and Ivan pass Jeremy and Margaret. As they pass, they look at Margaret and push their noses up with their index fingers.

TOMMY/CLIFF/IVAN
Oink, Oink, Oink, Oink!

As the boys break out in laughter, Margaret puts down her ding dong and stares at her food.

JEREMY
What jerks.

Margaret lifts up her head.

MARGARET
Sometimes I wish I could just disappear.

JEREMY
I know what you mean.

Margaret places the rest of her uneaten food back in her lunch box. Suddenly her face lights up.

MARGARET
Hey, did you know I can recite Genesis 1:11-25 by heart?

JEREMY
Really?

MARGARET
Yeah. We had a contest in Sunday School to see who could memorize the most verses and I won. I even got a gold medal - well it really wasn't gold, but it looked like it.

JEREMY
Wow! That's a lot to memorize. Why those verses?

MARGARET
Because it tells about how God created the plants and animals and I really love animals, even platypuses and warthogs.

JEREMY
What's your favorite.

MARGARET
Definitely zebras. They are so beautiful. What's yours?

JEREMY
I don't know. I guess a leopard.

MARGARET

Cool. We both like animals with patterns.

Another second of silence.

JEREMY

My Dad and I were reading Genesis last night. It's kind of hard to believe all the stuff it says.

MARGARET

Why?

JEREMY

I don't know.

MARGARET

My Grandfather says that all the truth you need is in the Bible.

JEREMY

So does my Dad.

MARGARET

Hey, You wanna hear me say my verses?

JEREMY

Uh...sure.

Margaret stands up and clears her voice as if she is about to give a great speech. In her best speaking voice...

MARGARET

Okay...um...Genesis 1:11. "Then God said, 'Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.' And it was so."

JEREMY

Uh Margaret, you're not trying to win any awards here. It's just me.

Margaret looks a little embarrassed and sits down.

MARGARET

Oh, sorry.

JEREMY

Go on.

MARGARET

Verse 12...The land produced
vegetation: plants bearing seed
according to their kinds and trees
bearing fruit with seed in it
according to their kinds. And God
saw that it was good. Verse 13...
And there was evening, and there
was morning—the third day.

As Margaret is reciting the Bible verses...

CUT TO:

EXT DAY DESOLATE LAND[ANIMATED]

A brown and desolate earth. The mountains, as well as the
valley's, are bare.

A small stem breaks through the surface of the ground. As the
stem grows, leaves appear.

Trees and plants of every kind begin to grow and fruits and
vegetables begin to appear on plants. Plants not normally
seen in the same region grow side by side. Flowers of every
kind and conceivable color bloom immediately. All the plants,
including the smallest to the tallest redwood trees are
majestic in their appearance. The landscape is lush and what
was once a barren land is now a magnificent forest/garden.

A bell rings(O.C.)

INT CAFETERIA AFTERNOON

Jeremy and Margaret are still sitting at the table. As Jeremy
picks up his tray and begins walking to the trash can,
Margaret closes her lunch box and gets up from the table.

JEREMY

Maybe you can finish tomorrow...at
lunch.

Margaret smiles from ear to ear.

EXT BACKYARD - DAY

Jeremy is in his backyard. He is practicing using his
slingshot. He is really good as he knocks several cans over
that he has placed on a picnic table several yards away.
Clark opens the backdoor and walks toward Jeremy. Jeremy
shoots one last time, knocking the can off the table.