

WHAT'S EATING

GILBERT GRAPE?

by Peter Hedges

based on his novel

What's Eating Gilbert Grape

Revised Second draft

July 28, 1992

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - MORNING

GILBERT GRAPE, age 24, waits on the edge of a small Iowa town. ARNIE GRAPE, age 17, stands next to GILBERT, holding out his hands which are filled with rocks. GILBERT selects from among them. He holds the chosen rock, tosses it from hand to hand.

A truck whizzes past on the highway.

The brothers are near from a wooden sign which reads: "Welcome to Endora, Pop. 1,091."

He winds up and throws. The rock flies through the air. It hits the "Welcome to Endora" sign dead on.

ARNIE shoots his arms in the air and celebrates. GILBERT stands motionless.

GILBERT (V.O.)

Endora. Endora is where we are.
Describing it is like dancing to no
music.

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS OF ENDORA - MORNING

The empty town square; the Endora water tower; a run down beauty parlor and a barber shop; the sound of wind.

GILBERT (V.O.)

I'm Gilbert Grape. And this is where I
come from.

EXT. LAMSON GROCERY - MORNING

A small grocery store with a sign that reads: "Lamson Grocery -- Serving you since 1932."

GILBERT (V.O.)

Lamson Grocery is where I work.

EXT. FOOD LAND - MORNING

FOOD LAND is a large, new supermarket. Customers come and go. ARNIE steps on the door mat and the electronic door swings open.

GILBERT (V.O.)

And on the edge of town there is Food
Land, where everyone else shops.

As the electronic door closes, ARNIE presses his foot down again. GILBERT grabs his arm and pulls him along.

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS OF ENDORA - MORNING

The town swimming pool with no one swimming; an Insurance office; an ice cream shop called "Dairy Dream"; GILBERT walks fast, ARNIE trails after him, busily licking an ice cream cone.

GILBERT (V.O.)

My brother Arnie always has some trace of food on his face. Kool-aid, ketchup, whatever. He's a kind of bulletin board for the four major food groups.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - MORNING

A big, odd shaped, somewhat dilapidated, one-of-a-kind house. Shingles are missing, the paint peels, the porch sags.

GILBERT stands on the porch.

GILBERT (V.O.)

My dad designed this house. Built it with his own hands. It's where my parents had their honeymoon.

When GILBERT sits on the porch swing, it breaks.

ARNIE rounds the side of the house, carrying something cupped in his hands. He has a Kool-aid mustache above his top lip and a streak of dirt across his face.

GILBERT (V.O.)

Arnie's about to turn eighteen. And my family is planning a big party.

His short, thick fingers hold a grasshopper.

He sticks the grasshopper in the metal tab on the mailbox.

GILBERT (V.O.)

Doctors said we'd be lucky if he lived to be ten. Ten came and went. And now the doctors are saying, "Any time now, Arnie could go at any time."

ARNIE brings down the mailbox flag, chopping off the grasshopper's head.

GILBERT (V.O.)

Some days you want him to live. Some days you don't.

ARNIE giggles.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

GILBERT looks out from behind the screen door.

ARNIE sits on the porch, his face in his hands, the bodies of headless grasshoppers scattered about the porch.

GILBERT moves next to ARNIE and sits.

ARNIE

(In tears) I killed 'em. I killed 'em.

GILBERT starts to put his arm around his brother when ARNIE suddenly takes off running, disappearing up the street.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

On the stove a grease fire flares up in between pancakes cooking, eggs bubbling, bacon frying. AMY GRAPE, 30, calmly puts out the fire by throwing on some baking powder. She smiles.

GILBERT (V.O.)

My big sister Amy's more of a mother than a sister. It's only when she smiles you know something's wrong.

In the reflection of the kitchen toaster, ELLEN GRAPE, 16, can be seen checking her teeth. Smoke comes from the toaster.

GILBERT (V.O.)

When the dentist took off my sister Ellen's braces, I think they also took her brain.

The toast pops up. It is burnt. ELLEN keeps checking her teeth.

On the refrigerator is taped a picture of a man in a suit.

GILBERT (V.O.)

There's another one of us. A brother. But he got away.

A hand opens the refrigerator door: milk and orange juice are brought out. ELLEN's painted fingers toss the burnt toast onto a plate with other slices of equally burnt toast. Pancakes, eggs and bacon are heaped onto plates. The breakfast table is moved into place. The silverware drawer is pulled open, but the handle comes off.

GILBERT (V.O.)

And then there's Momma. Ever since our dad died suddenly seventeen years ago, she's had her hands full.

The food is carried through the kitchen.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

GILBERT (V.O.)

See with Momma there's no nice way to break it to you.

The plates of food are set down on the dining room table in front of MOMMA, who sits in a big blue chair. She is a huge woman, weighing at least 500 lbs.

AMY, ELLEN and GILBERT take their places.

MOMMA looks at the food. She looks at her children.

One chair remains empty.

MOMMA looks at the empty chair.

MOMMA

Where is he?

AMY

Gilbert?

GILBERT

Ask Ellen.

ELLEN

It wasn't my turn, thank you very much...

MOMMA

Sunshine? Where's my sunshine?

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - MORNING

ARNIE is nowhere on the property.

MOMMA (Off screen)

Sunshine? Sunshine!

The phone rings inside.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM - MORNING

The phone rings. AMY answers.

AMY

Amy Grape. Yes.

AMY looks at GILBERT. She is hearing familiar news.

AMY

Yes, Sheriff. We understand.

GILBERT quickly scoots out from his chair.

MOMMA

I want to see that boy turn eighteen!

EXT. ENDORA WATER TOWER - MORNING

A CROWD of all ages stares up. The SHERIFF stands, arms crossed, as the police lights from his car flash.

ARNIE dangles from the water tower railing.

GILBERT drives his pickup truck through the crowd and stops next to the police car. GILBERT gets of his truck and pushes through the people until he's standing before the SHERIFF.

GILBERT

I'll get him.

The CROWD gasps, GILBERT turns as a shoe falls to the ground.

ARNIE dangles high in the air, with one shoe missing.

GILBERT starts to scale the water tower.

The crowd below watches. Parked within the crowd is the McBURNEY FUNERAL HOME HEARSE. The driver's door of the hearse swings open, a young man dressed in black, BOBBY McBURNEY JR. steps out.

ARNIE seems to be in trouble, but as GILBERT gets closer, it becomes evident that he's actually having the time of his life.

ARNIE

I'm a phen. A phen-ha! A ffffffff...!

GILBERT pulls him to safety.

The CROWD below appears almost disappointed.

When GILBERT and ARNIE reach the bottom, the SHERIFF waits holding ARNIE's shoe.

GILBERT

Everything's OK now. We'll get him home. Won't happen again.

SHERIFF

Son, we hear this every time. And then after a couple days...

GILBERT

But this is the last time, isn't it, Arnie?

GILBERT and ARNIE walk to his truck. GILBERT holds open the passenger door as ARNIE climbs in.

ARNIE

I was uhm...I was...a phen...

GILBERT closes the door. GILBERT walks around the truck.

TUCKER VAN DYKE, Gilbert's oldest friend, dressed in his construction worker clothes, approaches.

GILBERT

Tucker, could use your help later.

TUCKER

You bet.

GILBERT climbs in his truck.

Looking to his left, GILBERT sees BOBBY McBURNEY leaning on the McBURNEY FUNERAL HOME hearse. BOBBY uses one of his pale hands to give a friendly wave. GILBERT starts his truck.

ARNIE

I was a phenah. A phenah-ha.

The truck kicks up gravel and GILBERT and ARNIE drive away.

EXT. ENDORA'S ONLY STOPLIGHT - MORNING

GILBERT comes to a stop. ARNIE has continued to struggle to find the word.

ARNIE

I'm a phen. A phen-ha. A fff.

GILBERT revs his truck. ARNIE looks out the back window of the truck.

From ARNIE's POV, a GIRL stands in a front yard. This GIRL is stunning, other-worldly -- definitely not from these parts. The GIRL'S MOTHER carries a suitcase up to the porch.

ARNIE (Off screen)
Phen-nom-ha-ha. Uhm.

The stop light is still red.

GILBERT revs his truck louder.

ARNIE presses his face to the back window.

ARNIE's POV. The GIRL hugs her MOTHER and he goes go to his car.

ARNIE (Off screen)
A ffffffff...!

GILBERT (Off screen)
The word is phenomenon.

The light clicks to green. GILBERT hits the gas and the truck tears out.

ARNIE (Off screen)
I know, Gilbert, I know.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Plates of dirty dishes are dropped into a sink full of suds. ELLEN washes and AMY dries. GILBERT puts the dishes away.

GILBERT hands AMY a plate which she checks. She hands it to ELLEN.

ELLEN
(Irritated) What now?

AMY
You missed a spot.

ELLEN
(Sighs) Well, I'm only human.

GILBERT sets a pan above the refrigerator. He hears GIGGLING coming from the dining room.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

MOMMA squeezes ARNIE. She holds him, plays with his hair, loves him.

MOMMA

(Softly) Don't disappear like that, OK?
Don't disappear.

She tickles him and ARNIE squeals. MOMMA looks toward the kitchen.

GILBERT stands in the door way watching.

MOMMA stops smiling.

MOMMA

Gilbert, we keeping you from something?

GILBERT returns to the kitchen.

EXT. LAMSON GROCERY - AFTERNOON

GILBERT's truck is parked in front of LAMSON GROCERY.

INT. LAMSON GROCERY - MORNING

The store is a cozy small town grocery -- composed of four short aisles, an old fashioned cash register and lots of charm.

GILBERT, wearing an apron, stamps prices on cereal boxes. His boss, MR. LAMSON, mid-sixties, a proud and simple man, is also busy working. MRS. LAMSON, his wife of a thousand years, gives change to a CUSTOMER, who carries bags with the Food Land logo. The CUSTOMER exits.

MRS. LAMSON

Dad, they got something special going on at Food Land?

MR. LAMSON

Let's ask Gilbert.

GILBERT

I'm not the one to ask. Never shopped there. Never will. Would rather die.

MR. LAMSON

You don't mean that.

GILBERT

I'm afraid I do, sir. I go to a store for food. Not for flash and neon...

MRS. LAMSON
(Interrupting) Well Food Land must be
up to something.

MRS. LAMSON smiles and they all go back to work.

MR. LAMSON
(Secretly) Gilbert?

GILBERT
Yes sir?

MR. LAMSON
It's those lobsters, isn't it?

GILBERT
I think so.

MR. LAMSON sighs in defeat.

GILBERT
Sir, it's just a fad. How long can
lobsters taped up in a tank be
interesting? Believe me. Lamson
Grocery will prevail.

MR. LAMSON
You think?

GILBERT nods with a smile.

MRS. LAMSON hums in the back ground.

MR. LAMSON
The way you say that makes me thinks I'm
talking to your father.

MR. LAMSON hands GILBERT the broom, and he begins to sweep.

The bell above the Lamson Grocery entrance jingles, signalling
the arrival of a customer.

GILBERT turns onto another aisle, moving the push broom across
the floor fast.

The push broom stops suddenly and the dirt and dust clouds over
a pair of women's shoes.

GILBERT looks up.

MRS. BETTY CARVER wears those shoes. She stands in front of him, dressed like a Sunday school teacher. She sneezes.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Bless me.

INT. LAMSON GROCERY - AFTERNOON

MRS. LAMSON rings up the purchases, MR. LAMSON sacks the groceries. MRS. BETTY CARVER stands waiting, GILBERT lurks by the bread rack.

A car horn honks from outside.

EXT. LAMSON GROCERY - AFTERNOON

MR. CARVER waits impatiently in the Carver's station wagon. He honks again.

INT. LAMSON GROCERY - AFTERNOON

MRS. BETTY CARVER glances outside. The honking makes her uneasy.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Maybe a delivery would be...

MR. LAMSON

I was about to suggest that myself.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

But only if it's possible...

MR. LAMSON

Well, Mrs. Carver, with a worker like Gilbert Grape, anything is possible.

The door to Lamson Grocery swings open hard, the bell jangling. MR. CARVER, a tall, once-athletic man, stands in the door way.

MR. CARVER

Honey, please.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

I'm coming.

INT. CARVER HOUSE - KITCHEN

The kitchen table is covered with sacks of groceries. In between the sacks, MRS. BETTY CARVER lies on the table, locked in an embrace with GILBERT. The table is shaking, the groceries moving. Food falls to the floor. GILBERT pulls away.

MRS. BETTY CARVER
(Catching her breath) What is it? Is something wrong?

GILBERT
(Lifts up a container of ice cream)
This is gonna melt.

MRS. BETTY CARVER
You're right.

She opens the ice cream container.

MRS. BETTY CARVER
You're absolutely right.

She digs her fingers into the ice cream and smiles.

MRS. BETTY CARVER
It's messy when it melts.

She playfully feeds GILBERT ice cream with her fingers.

EXT. CARVER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

GILBERT can be seen in the window, staring out. MRS. BETTY CARVER kisses his neck while her fingers remained in his mouth. Meanwhile TODD and DOUG CARVER, ages seven and nine, play in the yard.

EXT. LAMSON GROCERY - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

GILBERT exits Lamson Grocery carrying two sacks of groceries. MR. LAMSON follows with a big can of peaches.

MR. LAMSON
Gilbert?

GILBERT turns, startled.

MR. LAMSON
Surprised you?

GILBERT nods.

MR. LAMSON
Well, son, a little surprise in life isn't a bad thing.

MR. LAMSON sets the can of peaches on the top of the sack, which already overflows with food.

GILBERT

Oh.

MR. LAMSON

Give my best to your mother. See you tomorrow.

GILBERT smiles and sets the groceries in back along with numerous other sacks of food. MR. LAMSON watches as GILBERT climbs in his truck and drives away.

EXT. ENDORA'S GAS STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

GILBERT's truck tires roll over the black cord of the local gas station, making a "Bing" sound.

A GAS STATION WORKER works under the raised hood of a nearby car.

GAS STATION WORKER

(Seeing the all the groceries in GILBERT's truck) Hey, Gilbert -- you hungry or what?

GILBERT ignores the GAS STATION WORKER, climbs out of his truck with a small gas can in his hand, which he begins to fill.

The WORKER lets the hood drop. Behind the WORKER, now revealed, stands MR. CARVER putting the final pumps of gas into his Pontiac. He turns toward GILBERT.

MR. CARVER

Gilbert.

GILBERT turns, seeing MR. CARVER.

MR. CARVER

Come see me some time. We need to talk.

GILBERT stares blankly at MR. CARVER. The gas overflows out of the gas can and drips onto GILBERT's shoes.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The gas can sits on the driveway. Behind it, ELLEN is stretched out on a lawn chair, dressed in a candy cane bikini, coated with coconut oil, sunbathing. The sound of a LAWN MOWER can be heard. GILBERT finishes mowing the last row of uncut grass. He reaches down to turn off the mower.

GILBERT turns in time to see ARNIE dive into a bush near the house.

AMY swings open the door.

AMY

Supper, everybody!

GILBERT

(Signalling Amy) Amy, have you seen Arnie? I don't know where he went!

AMY

(Playing along) Have I seen Arnie? Gilbert, I thought he was with you...

From inside the house, MOMMA can be heard yelling, "I want to see that boy turn eighteen!" AMY disappears into the house to calm MOMMA.

GILBERT

I wonder where he could be.

The bush giggles.

In the driveway, ELLEN lies on a lawn chair, sunbathing in her candy-cane bikini, flipping the pages of a teen magazine.

GILBERT

Ellen, you seen your brother?

AMY returns to the doorway.

GILBERT

Did you hear me, Ellen? We can't find Arnie! He's gone!

ELLEN

He's in the bush!

GILBERT glares at his sister, murdering her with his eyes. In the background, TUCKER pulls up in his truck.

AMY

No, he isn't. Gilbert checked the bush.

GILBERT

Yeah.

ELLEN

Gilbert is blind and a liar and quite, quite stupid!

ARNIE rises oblivious, his face caked with dirt and pine needles, and shouts a "boo."

GILBERT

(Falling to the ground, feigning surprise) You scared me, Arnie. Oh man, you scared me!

ARNIE laughs in his way and races inside. AMY and ELLEN follow him into the house. GILBERT sits in the yard as TUCKER approaches, tool box in hand.

TUCKER

So -- where's the trouble?

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

MOMMA, AMY, GILBERT, ARNIE and ELLEN eat dinner.

MOMMA chews in a concentrated way.

Between bites, AMY checks to see if anybody needs anything.

ELLEN holds her fork daintily. A spiral notebook sits opened next to her plate. She holds a colored marker in her available hand.

ARNIE is all fingers and sauce already drips from his chin.

GILBERT barely touches his food.

Outside TUCKER can be heard hammering, repairing the house.

ELLEN

(Consulting her notes) Decorations.
Theme colors. That'll be my department.
I've already got some great ideas.

GILBERT smiles. ARNIE sees GILBERT's smile and he laughs.
ELLEN glares at the boys.

MOMMA

Go on.

ELLEN

Amy will take care of the food, the
cake...

MOMMA

Good.

ELLEN

Momma will supervise everything.

MOMMA

Sounds good.

AMY

I think so.

MOMMA

It all sounds good.

ARNIE

What about me?

ELLEN

You're the guest of honor.

ARNIE looks confused. AMY serves ARNIE more food.

ARNIE

(To Gilbert) What about me?

GILBERT

You just show up, buddy. It's your party.

MOMMA

Yes, all you have to do is show up.

ARNIE

Oh.

They eat. ARNIE sucks a single Spaghetti noodle up slowly. MOMMA gestures and AMY puts more on her plate. They eat. The sounds of chewing and silverware clinking can be heard. With his fork, GILBERT, bored, moves the food around on his plate.

ELLEN

That just leaves Gilbert.

GILBERT

What?

ELLEN

You're the only one without something to do. (A beat) You have any ideas?

GILBERT

No but I'll do whatever.

ELLEN

(Sighs) You know, I'm just sixteen and I got pages of ideas.

GILBERT

We got plenty of time, right?

AMY

Not really, no.

ELLEN

Some of us are giving our all...

GILBERT

May I be excused?

ELLEN

No!

MOMMA

Why?

GILBERT

I'm not hungry anymore.

AMY

But you haven't eaten a thing...

ELLEN

Momma, he can't leave. Not in the middle....!

ARNIE covers his ears.

GILBERT

May I please be excused?

MOMMA

(She sighs) Gilbert honey, we do have a party to plan.

TUCKER presses his face to the window, taps on the glass and gives the thumbs up.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - LATER THAT EVENING

GILBERT braces the bottom of a ladder, which leans against the side of the house. TUCKER stands on the ladder, securing a shutter, hammering in the last nail.

TUCKER

And it will be an exact copy of the original built in Boone.

GILBERT

You're kidding.

TUCKER

Which is no big deal, Gilbert, because all Burger Barns are built identical.

A neighbor BOY has run up to GILBERT, who leans down. The BOY whispers in his ear.

TUCKER

They are the same exactly.

GILBERT lifts the BOY in the air and lets the BOY look through the window.

TUCKER (off screen)

Today I drove past the building site -- it's going up right next Food Land -- and I thought...

The BOY's POV. MOMMA asleep in her chair with AMY and ELLEN busy with the dishes in the background.

TUCKER (off screen)

Why not get me a job, wear one of those uniforms, flip some burgers, salt some fries ... Hey, you listening to me?

TUCKER finishes hammering and looks down toward GILBERT who holds the boy in the window.

TUCKER

Gilbert!

GILBERT lowers the BOY. The BOY runs off giggling. TUCKER descends the ladder.

TUCKER

That wasn't nice.

GILBERT

What? What'd I do?

TUCKER

You know what you did. (A beat) That's your mother in there. Your mother.

Through the window, inside the house, AMY waves at TUCKER. MOMMA turns in his direction and nods. TUCKER waves both hands as GILBERT falls back on the side of the house.

GILBERT

Let's get out of here.

EXT. DAIRY DREAM - EARLY EVENING

TUCKER and GILBERT sit at a picnic table outside of Endora's ice cream shop, the Dairy Dream. TUCKER drinks a large milk shake.

TUCKER

She isn't that big. Believe me.

GILBERT sits silent.

TUCKER

When I was at the state fair, I saw a guy that was a little bigger...

GILBERT

Yeah?

TUCKER

I'm just saying she's not the biggest I've ever seen. (A beat) That's all I'm saying.

An awkward silence. Then TUCKER slurps up the last of his milk shake. It makes that "No more milk shake" sound.

TUCKER

Did I tell you that Burger Barn uses real milk in their milk shakes?

GILBERT

Probably.

TUCKER

And that they pioneered the salad bar option.

As TUCKER talks, something in the distance catches GILBERT's eye. It is the GIRL -- stunning, other-worldly, definitely not from these parts -- pedalling on a boy's bike.

GILBERT

Impressive.

Since his back is to the GIRL, TUCKER does not see her. His lips continue to move but GILBERT hears only snippets as the GIRL has begun to move at another speed.

TUCKER

...that french fry taste...

Fragments, only parts of the GIRL are seen. Her lips, her legs, the shadow she casts, her hands as they squeeze the handlebars. Maybe a dog or two following in awe.

TUCKER

...future employee of the month...

The sounds of the bike are heightened, the shifting of gears, the tires rolling over gravel, the sound of wind.

The GIRL has gone past.

TUCKER

...the future...

TUCKER crushes his empty cup as GILBERT returns to earth. TUCKER throws the container toward the trash basket and misses.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - EVENING

TUCKER drops GILBERT off. ARNIE waits in the yard. He leaps on GILBERT's back and GILBERT carries him up the porch steps and into the house.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - EVENING

MOMMA, AMY and ELLEN watch TV.

GILBERT carries ARNIE up the stairs. He groans with each step.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - EVENING

GILBERT turns on the water in the bath tub with ARNIE still clinging to his back. He closes the bathroom door.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - EVENING

ARNIE GRAPE's face is underwater, he's blowing bubbles. When he surfaces, he makes a loud gasp noise. The bathtub is filled with his toys. GILBERT sits on the bathroom floor, supervising ARNIE. ARNIE stares. ARNIE presses his face close to GILBERT.

GILBERT stays lost in thought, though, until ARNIE hits his hand in the bath water, splashing GILBERT.

INT. ARNIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

ARNIE lies on the top bunk bed in his room. His legs extend to the ceiling and his feet are pretending to walk. GILBERT stands by the light switch. ARNIE is in his pajamas, his hair still wet.

ARNIE

Goodbye.

GILBERT

It's not goodbye, Arnie. It's good night.

ARNIE

Yeah.

GILBERT

Goodbye is for when you're going away.
And we're not going anywhere.

ARNIE

I know, jeez. (Moving his feet on the ceiling.) I'm not going. Anywhere.

GILBERT turns off the bedroom light. The light from the hall spills in.

GILBERT

See ya tomorrow.

ARNIE

Goodbye.

GILBERT

Arnie.

ARNIE laughs and laughs.

EXT. RAMP CAFE - MORNING

The MCBURNEY FUNERAL HOME hearse pulls in between GILBERT and TUCKER who stand leaning on their trucks. BOBBY climbs out of the hearse and they all head toward the Ramp Cafe.

TUCKER

Hey, Bobby.

BOBBY

Hey, guys.

GILBERT

(Gesturing toward the hearse) Bobby, do you have to...

BOBBY

Talk to my father. It's for business. Nobody's dying. Gotta remind people you exist.

GILBERT, TUCKER and BOBBY disappear into the Ramp Cafe.

INT. RAMP CAFE - MORNING

BOBBY and TUCKER eat their breakfasts with a vengeance. GILBERT has barely nibbled on two slices of white toast.

BOBBY

Seeing them -- you know -- one day walking the streets, waving to their friends -- and then, the next day, lying on the slab. It's harsh. But it's fun, too.

TUCKER

You ever uhm...you know...

BOBBY

What?

TUCKER

Fool around with the bodies?

GILBERT

Tucker, please.

TUCKER

I've always wanted to ask.

BOBBY

It's a fair question. Many people wonder.

GILBERT

(Flagging the waitress) Check.

BOBBY

(Softly) The worst thing we do is take the ugly ones, the grotesque ones -- and make jokes about 'em ... harmless jokes ... I mean, after all the people are dead.

GILBERT

Check, please.

BOBBY

We come up with some great ones, my dad and me.

TUCKER

I bet.

BOBBY

Boy, do we.

TUCKER

(Laughing) I bet you really do.

BOBBY

(Laughing) Oh god. But it doesn't hurt anybody.

The WAITRESS brings GILBERT the check. He stands and heads for the cash register.

TUCKER

See ya, Gilbert.

BOBBY

(With a wave to GILBERT) Nobody even knows we do it.

Through the Ramp Cafe window, GILBERT sees the GIRL. She is biking down Main Street. For GILBERT, she moves at a slower, more magical speed.

TUCKER (Off screen)

Now me and Gilbert know.

BOBBY (Off screen)

Yeah, but who are you guys?

GILBERT stands in the Ramp Cafe door as her reflection (or shadow) hits the glass.

Others in the cafe -- BOBBY and TUCKER included -- notice her as well. Their faces follow her movement. Entranced faces, curious faces -- the PEOPLE have noticed.

The GIRL bikes out of view.

The WAITRESS rings the register and the cash drawer slides open.

WAITRESS

Here's your change.

But GILBERT is gone.

EXT. EDGE OF ENDORA - AFTERNOON

GILBERT drives his truck, looking for the GIRL.

GILBERT's POV. A large semi-truck races toward GILBERT, its horn blaring. The truck whooshes past.

GILBERT drives on.

GILBERT's POV. On the side of the road in a ditch, ARNIE GRAPE lies on his back, his body twisted, his eyes closed.

GILBERT hits his brakes, skids to a stop. He calmly gets out of his truck and walks across the road toward ARNIE.

GILBERT

Oh no. Not Arnie. How awful. Guess this means no party.

ARNIE's face is streaked with dirt and food stains. He pretends to be dead.

GILBERT stands over him, maybe tickling him, maybe pounding the ground, maybe making the "I'm about to spit" sound.

ARNIE smiles.

Standing several feet away, the GIRL watches from her bike. She goes unnoticed.

GILBERT

I saw that.

ARNIE

No you didn't.

GILBERT kneels and reaches under ARNIE, struggling to lift him.

GILBERT

Wow, you're getting bigger. Pretty soon
I won't be able to carry you.

ARNIE

Nope.

GILBERT stands with ARNIE cradled in his arms. He carries him to
his truck.

ARNIE

You're just getting little.

GILBERT

You think?

ARNIE

You're getting littler and littler,
Gilbert. You're shrinking.

GILBERT pretends to wail and cry. The more GILBERT grieves, the
louder ARNIE laughs.

GILBERT sees the GIRL and stops.

The GIRL looks at GILBERT.

GILBERT lowers the "dead" ARNIE into the back of his truck.

GILBERT

Uhm. Hi. (A beat) I'm Gilbert.

GIRL

I know.

GILBERT

Gilbert Gra--

GIRL

I know who you are.

A beat. GILBERT looks startled.

GILBERT

You do?

ARNIE's sits up in the truck.

ARNIE

Gilbert's shrinking.

GIRL

Is he? Are you?

GILBERT stands there, awkward and uncomfortable. He climbs in his truck and drives away. ARNIE shouts from the back.

ARNIE

Shrinking, shrinking, shrinking!

The GIRL watches as the truck disappears down a gravel road, kicking up a cloud of dust.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DINNER

AMY, ELLEN and GILBERT clear the table after dinner. MOMMA laughs at ARNIE who makes faces.

As MOMMA laughs, she stomps a foot.

A vase tips over. Water pours to the floor.

GILBERT wipes up the floor.

GILBERT's POV. MOMMA stomping the floor. Creaking sounds come from weakening floor boards. The floor below MOMMA appears to dip, to curve.

MOMMA (off screen)

Where'd Gilbert go?

GILBERT

I'm here.

GILBERT stands. He looks pale. He looks at AMY and mouths the words, "The floor."

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - NIGHT

TUCKER pulls up in his truck. GILBERT has been waiting in the yard.

TUCKER turns off his engine.

GILBERT

Thanks for coming over so quickly.

TUCKER turns off his head lights.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - BASEMENT

The light in the basement snaps on. GILBERT holds the string. TUCKER stares up at the ceiling. AMY and ELLEN look on.

The basement ceiling has large cracks in it. Chunks of plaster have fallen and light from above shoots through the cracks.

TUCKER shakes his head. He makes noises like it's serious. He grunts a few times. TUCKER touches the ceiling with a broom handle.

AMY

(Smiling) Daddy wasn't much of a carpenter.

Silence as TUCKER extends a tape measure.

GILBERT

What do you think?

TUCKER

Short of ripping down the whole thing and starting over?

GILBERT

Yes.

TUCKER

You got me.

AMY

(Still smiling) Can it be fixed?

TUCKER

You can fix anything. It's just a question of..

AMY

Of what?

TUCKER

Of whether it's worth it.

The light bulb begins to jiggle, the ceiling creaks. They all look up.

AMY

Can you help us?

TUCKER

I'll do what I can.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Lit by the television's dim, flickering light, MOMMA sits in her big chair, finishing off a package of chocolate cupcakes.

GILBERT joins AMY watching from the shadows.

MOMMA crumples the food wrappers.

AMY

(Stepping in to the light) Momma?

MOMMA looks up.

AMY

We made up your bed.

MOMMA

What for?

AMY

In case you want a change of pace.

MOMMA

But I'm happy right here.

Silence. AMY smiles and goes to the kitchen.

MOMMA puts a cigarette to her lips. She struggles to light a match. She fails.

GILBERT moves toward her, takes her matches and lights one.

MOMMA

You're so helpful.

He lights her cigarette.

MOMMA

You're always so helpful.

He shakes out the match.

MOMMA

Goodnight.

GILBERT disappears up the dark stairs.

INT. LAMSON GROCERY - MORNING

MR. LAMSON drops some lettuce into ARNIE's jar full of grasshoppers and other insects.

MR. LAMSON

There you go, young man.

GILBERT (off screen)

What do you say?

ARNIE sits in the corner of the store, studies his jar and says "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

GILBERT stamps prices on products in the back of the store.

GILBERT

Boss, aren't pickle prices higher than this?

MR. LAMSON

Maybe at Food Land. We've always had a reasonable deal on pickles.

The bell rings and MR. LAMSON moves to the front of the store.

Hearing activity at the cash register, GILBERT stops working and moves quietly down an aisle.

MR. LAMSON (Off screen)

What you got there is a fifteen to twenty pound piece of fruit.

GILBERT peeks through the potato-chip rack. The hands of a girl receive change. The hands lift a large watermelon. GILBERT moves two bags of chips. The GIRL holds the watermelon.

MR. LAMSON

Gilbert? Gilbert!

GIRL

He's behind the chips.

GILBERT steps out from hiding.

MR. LAMSON

Delivery, Gilbert. Would you be so kind?

GILBERT

Huh? What?

MR. LAMSON

Delivery, son.

The GIRL turns and looks at him. GILBERT appears frozen.

MR. LAMSON

Help the young lady already.

GILBERT

Yes. Yes sir. Help.

GILBERT stares, stunned.

EXT. LAMSON GROCERY - AFTERNOON

GILBERT follows the GIRL outside, the watermelon cradled in his arms. ARNIE tags along.

GILBERT

We can put your bike in back.

ARNIE helps the GIRL lift her bike.

The three of them climb in the truck. ARNIE sits in the middle, the jar of grasshoppers in his lap. The GIRL holds the watermelon. They drive off.

INT. GILBERT'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Silence as GILBERT drives. ARNIE stares at the GIRL.

ARNIE

I could go at any time.

GILBERT

Arnie.

ARNIE

Any time.

GILBERT

Shhh. Where to?

The GIRL looks out the window, doesn't answer.

GILBERT

Excuse me. Where to?

GIRL

Just keep going.

ARNIE

(Softly) My mom wants me to become
eighteen. I'm having a big party.

GILBERT

Keep going straight?

The GIRL nods.

ARNIE

A biiiiiiiiig party. And you're not
invited.

GIRL

Oh.

The GIRL smiles.

GILBERT

Don't be rude.

ARNIE

I wasn't rude. I was being uhm ...

GIRL

Honest.

ARNIE

(To GILBERT) Ha.

The truck passes CARVER'S INSURANCE. MR. CARVER stands in front
of his office and calls out, "Gilbert, come see me!"

GILBERT

Just keep going?

GIRL

I'll tell you when to turn.

Silence.

ARNIE reaches with his fingers and touches the GIRL's cheeks and
lips.

GILBERT

You from around here?

GIRL

No. My grandma lives here.

GILBERT

Oh. Sorry.

GIRL

I like my grandma.

GILBERT

No sorry that you have to be here.
This place. Endora.

ARNIE tickles lightly under her chin.

GIRL

Turn here.

GILBERT turns.

GILBERT

You staying long?

GIRL

Depends on what you call long.

GILBERT

(Sighs) You know what I mean.

GIRL

My mother dropped me off. I'm here
until my dad picks me up. How long you
here for?

The McBURNEY FUNERAL HOME hearse heads down the street toward
GILBERT's truck.

GILBERT

Me?

GIRL

Yes.

GILBERT

The duration.

As the vehicles pass each other, BOBBY sees the GIRL and does an
immediate U-turn.

In GILBERT's mirror, the hearse can be seen in pursuit.

Silence.

GIRL

Do you know grasshoppers breathe through their sides?

ARNIE

No.

GIRL

Yes. And there ears are behind their legs.

ARNIE

No way!

GIRL

Their skeletons are on the outside. In order for them to grow, they have to crack open...

ARNIE

No!

GIRL

Completely step out of their old body ... turn there.

GILBERT

We've been down this street.

GIRL

Then turn there.

GILBERT

No.

GIRL

Then we're lost.

A beat.

GILBERT

Do you know how hard it is to get lost in Endora?

TUCKER's truck spins out from a side street and joins the procession.

Checking his mirror, GILBERT shakes his head.

He looks at the GIRL.

ARNIE's hand is on the GIRL's breast. The GIRL doesn't seem to mind.

GIRL

Wait -- we just passed it.

GILBERT whips into a driveway to turn around. BOBBY and TUCKER use other driveways to turn around.

GILBERT heads down the street.

ARNIE rests his head on the GIRL's shoulder.

GILBERT

Do you know the address?

GIRL

No.

GILBERT

Who's your grandma?

GIRL

There. There!

Standing in a yard, in her gardening best, is an OLD WOMAN, flagging down GILBERT's truck.

GILBERT pulls up in front of a small white house.

OLD WOMAN

Well if it isn't Gilbert Grape.

GILBERT

Uhm. Hi.

OLD WOMAN

Always good to see you. How you been?
How's your math?

GILBERT

Uhm. Good.

The OLD WOMAN smiles. The GIRL has climbed out the truck with the watermelon. ARNIE has followed her and helps with the bike.

OLD WOMAN

I see you've met my granddaughter.

GILBERT

Yeah. I mean, no, not formally.

The GIRL heads toward the house with the watermelon.

OLD WOMAN/GRANDMA

Hmmm. Becky? Set some extra places at the table. You'll join us, won't you?

GILBERT

Well...

GRANDMA

Please stay for some lunch.

ARNIE

Yes!

GILBERT

We really can't. I uh...work...I'm working.

GRANDMA

Oh. OK. Maybe some other time then.

GILBERT's POV. TUCKER in his truck and BOBBY McBURNEY in the hearse watch from a distance.

GILBERT

Arnie, let's go.

GRANDMA

You come around any time you want.

The GRANDMA waves from the porch. BECKY stands behind her as GILBERT and ARNIE drive away.

EXT. DAIRY DREAM - AFTERNOON

GILBERT and ARNIE, along with TUCKER and BOBBY sit outside the Dairy Dream.

TUCKER

Second grade. Great teacher. I mean, the best. I learned so much from her.

GILBERT

Like what?

TUCKER

Uhm. Intangibles. She taught the intangibles.

BOBBY

But about the girl? What else about the girl?

GILBERT

That's all I know.

BOBBY

I don't believe you.

TUCKER

If Gilbert say that's all he knows, then that's all he knows.

GILBERT

Oh, one other thing.

BOBBY

Yeah?

GILBERT

She likes morticians.

BOBBY looks up, almost hopeful.

BOBBY

You lie.

TUCKER

She wants you to give her an autopsy.

TUCKER and ARNIE laugh and GILBERT smiles.

BOBBY

You're sick.

TUCKER

You're sick.

BOBBY

You're twisted.

GILBERT

(To TUCKER) Let's go.

GILBERT wipes ARNIE's face.

GILBERT

See ya, Bobby.

TUCKER

We're on a mission. A secret mission.

BOBBY

Did I ask? I didn't ask!

The take-out window of the Dairy Dream slides open. ELLEN GRAPE and ANOTHER WORKER press their faces to the window.

ELLEN

Guys, for the record?

TUCKER/BOBBY/GILBERT

Yes.

ELLEN

There are other girls in Endora.

OTHER WORKER

Yeah, other girls who live here.

ELLEN slides the take-out window shut.

EXT. LUMBER YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

GILBERT and TUCKER haul lumber to their respective trucks. ARNIE pretends to help.

MRS. BETTY CARVER drives up in her station wagon. Her boys, TODD and DOUG, sit in back.

MRS. CARVER

Boys, show our friends what you learned in church camp.

TODD and DOUG

No. We don't wanna.

MRS. CARVER

Show them!

The car door swings open. TODD and DOUG step out. They begin to sing "This Little Gospel Light of Mine." They perform gestures to their lyrics.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

(In a whisper, under the singing)
I almost forgot. Tomorrow. Our anniversary. I almost forgot.

GILBERT

It's OK.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

I can drop the boys off. Ken has appointments. Wanna celebrate?

GILBERT

Uhm.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Picnic tomorrow? How does that sound? You know where. Two o'clock good...?

GILBERT

Uhm I don't know if...

MRS. BETTY CARVER

It's our anniversary.

GILBERT

But...

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Great. I'll see you then. (Applauding)
OK, boys! That was great!

TODD

But we're not done.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Good! It was good! You were so good!

With the BOYS in the back seat continuing their protests, MRS. BETTY CARVER prepares to drive away.

GILBERT

He keeps asking to see me.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Who does?

GILBERT

Your husband.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Oh, I know. (With a smile) Good luck.

GILBERT's about to speak when MRS. BETTY CARVER drives away.

Silence. TUCKER looks at GILBERT. GILBERT looks around. ARNIE coughs from the gravel dust that the CARVER car kicked up.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - NIGHT

GILBERT and TUCKER carry wood around the side of the house.

EXT. BASEMENT WINDOW - NIGHT

TUCKER slides boards through a basement window to GILBERT. After the last board, TUCKER squeezes through the window and drops to the basement floor. He accidentally knocks over his tool box, which crashes to the ground.

GILBERT

Shhh.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

A toilet flushes. MOMMA pushes open the bathroom door. She squeezes through and starts down the hall.

MOMMA

Arnie, out of my way.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

TUCKER and GILBERT assemble the boards under the basement ceiling.

The ceiling begins to creak, however; bits of plaster fall and the light jiggles. GILBERT looks up and TUCKER backs up to the wall.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

GILBERT shoots out the basement door.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

GILBERT rushes to the living room.

MOMMA is about to sit.

GILBERT

Momma. Here. Let me help.

MOMMA slowly moves into position. GILBERT tries to help her into her chair.

GILBERT

Easy now. Easy does it.

MOMMA tries to sit like a lady, but gravity takes over and she plops into her big blue chair. GILBERT cannot hide his look of terror.

INT. GRAPE BASEMENT - NIGHT

Boards are secured and bolted.

GILBERT and TUCKER stand before a partially constructed network of support boards and beams. They are through for the night.

GILBERT

It's OK. It's gonna be OK.

EXT. THE BANKS OF A RIVER/STREAM - AFTERNOON

In a secluded area under a large tree, MRS. BETTY CARVER has put out a full picnic spread. A red and white checkered cloth, numerous containers, and a picnic basket.

MRS. BETTY CARVER, in a white summer dress, hands GILBERT a plate loaded with food.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Happy anniversary.

GILBERT stares at his plate, looks at BETTY and forces a smile.

GILBERT

You didn't have to go to all this trouble.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Nonsense. It wasn't any trouble at all. But please be hungry.

GILBERT

I am.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Because everything here is for you.

GILBERT smiles. Then he leans over and kisses her on the cheek.

A beat.

MRS. BETTY CARVER unconsciously touches her lips. GILBERT takes a bite of chicken.

GILBERT

Oh my god. Wow.

MRS. BETTY CARVER smiles.

GILBERT

(Groaning with each bite) My god...
This is...good.

MRS. BETTY CARVER giggles as GILBERT continues moaning and complementing. She lies back and stares at the sky.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

That looks like a boat.

GILBERT

What?

MRS. BETTY CARVER

That. See, the mast and the sail. See it? Over there I see a train. Santa's beard.

GILBERT stops chewing.

GILBERT

You could've had any guy. (A beat.)
You know that, don't you? Any guy at all. Some farm boy type. A wrestler. My brother Larry.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Yes, I know.

GILBERT

Why did you choose me?

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Because I knew you'd never leave. And there's a candlestick. That's a hand.

GILBERT puts his plate down.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Gilbert. What is it? Are you full?

GILBERT

(Mumbled) Not really.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Then please keep eating.

GILBERT sits motionless.

EXT. EDGE OF ENDORA - AFTERNOON

GILBERT speeds toward town. The water tower is in the distance.

EXT. STREETS OF ENDORA - WATER TOWER

At the base of the water tower, ELLEN drags ARNIE by his ankles. ARNIE claws at clumps of grass. The battle has been going on for some time. ELLEN wears a t-shirt over her bikini. ARNIE is too strong for ELLEN. She drops his ankles, and reaching over, she gathers a handful of ARNIE's hair.

GILBERT's POV. ELLEN violently pulling ARNIE's hair.

GILBERT

Noooo!

GILBERT drives over the curb directly toward ELLEN, his truck horn blaring. GILBERT leaps out of his truck.

ELLEN

(Letting go of ARNIE) He was trying to climb it again. What am I supposed to do!

GILBERT

If you hit him...you so much as touch him...

ELLEN

And you'll do what? You'll do what!

GILBERT

I'll kick your ass.

ELLEN

Oh, aren't you the tough one?

GILBERT kneels down to ARNIE who has pressed his face to the ground.

GILBERT

Arnie? Hey buddy, you OK?

ARNIE looks up, his face and teeth are covered in dirt. His elbow is cut. GILBERT checks ARNIE over.

ELLEN walks on.

GILBERT
He's bleeding. You made him bleed!

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MORNING

ARNIE sits on the toilet lid. GILBERT applies a band-aid where ARNIE was cut.

GILBERT
If anybody ever hits or pinches you --
even lays a finger on you, what are you
gonna do? Arnie?

ARNIE shrugs.

GILBERT
You're gonna tell me. And I'll take
care of it. And why will I take care of
it?

ARNIE shrugs.

GILBERT
Because nobody hurts Arnie. Nobody.

ARNIE smiles.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

ELLEN sunbathes in the driveway in a candy cane bikini.
She stretches out on a lawn chair reading a magazine, her body
covered with oil.

GILBERT climbs in his truck.

ELLEN
Gilbert?

GILBERT sticks his head out his window.

ELLEN raises a fist and slowly stretches the middle finger up
like a candle.

GILBERT stares at what he sees. He starts his truck, shifts to
reverse, hesitates, stares again.

ELLEN's fist and finger stay in the air. She continues to read.

GILBERT revs his truck. He shifts to drive. His foot goes off
the brake.

ELLEN flips a page of her magazine. She remains unfazed.

The truck moves toward ELLEN.

ELLEN looks up.

GILBERT accelerates suddenly.

The lawn chair is crushed between the truck and the garage door.

ELLEN, having escaped just in time, stands to the side, her face matching the red stripes in her bikini.

GILBERT shifts to reverse and backs away.

ELLEN stands next to the mangled lawn chair. She might begin to try and bend it back into shape. Or she may just look at it. Or she may just stand there.

GILBERT drives off.

ARNIE stands in the house, looking out the living room window. He starts to bang his forehead on the living room -- his way of saying goodbye, maybe -- and after a few bangs, AMY pulls him away.

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - MORNING

GILBERT sits in his truck, motionless staring at Grandma's house. He goes to open his door, hesitates, and returns to waiting.

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

The sound of the door bell can be heard.

GILBERT waits, he reaches to ring the bell again when the front door opens and the GRANDMA appears.

GRANDMA

Gilbert! How nice to see you!

GILBERT

Uhm...you said I...

GRANDMA

Come in.

INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A large knife cuts into the watermelon.

GRANDMA (off screen)
Becky's been all over the world. Places
I didn't even know existed.

BECKY carves the watermelon. She sets large slices onto paper plates.

GILBERT sits across from GRANDMA, trying to pay full attention to her conversation, but now and then he glances towards Becky, who gives him occasional smile.

GRANDMA
Honey, that one is for Gilbert. It has
his name on it.

BECKY puts it in front of GILBERT.

GRANDMA
You should see my post cards. The
places Becky's been. And what did she
decide to do this summer? She came to
visit me in Endora, of all things! Can
you imagine?

GILBERT tries to remove a watermelon seed from his mouth in a gentlemanly fashion. He fails.

BECKY
Do you like it?

GILBERT
It's great.

GRANDMA
She's the sweetest. Aren't you going to
sit down, dear?

BECKY breezes past him and his eyes follow, his eyes lingering. She sets her plate on the table and she sits.

GRANDMA clears her throat.

BECKY
So Grandma -- was he a good student?

GRANDMA
What would you say -- were you a good
student?

GILBERT
Uhm. I don't know. It was just second
grade.

GRANDMA

You were curious. That's always good.
I remember you always raising your hand.

GILBERT

I used to confuse subtracting with
adding. I didn't like addition.

GILBERT laughs at his own attempted joke. The GRANDMA smiles.
BECKY stretches, her shirt rises up revealing her bare stomach.
GILBERT glances as he wipes his mouth with a napkin. The GRANDMA
notices.

GRANDMA

Becky's fifteen.

GILBERT

Oh really.

GRANDMA

You know what fifteen is?

GILBERT shakes his head.

GRANDMA

Three years more than twelve. Six years
older than nine.

GILBERT stops chewing. Silence. GRANDMA looks at him intensely
with a smile.

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

BECKY and GRANDMA stand in the front doorway. GILBERT backs down
the yard with thank yous and goodbyes.

BECKY peaks out behind GRANDMA who seems to block her in the
doorway.

GRANDMA

You come back anytime.

GILBERT fiddles with the knob to the gate, can't seem to be able
to open it, BECKY forces herself past GRANDMA and runs down to
help GILBERT. BECKY opens the gate, GRANDMA closes the door,
GILBERT hesitates in the gateway.

BECKY

My grandma likes you.

GILBERT

I'm glad.

BECKY
But she likes everybody.

A beat.

BECKY
She has this thing with age.

GILBERT
I noticed.

BECKY
I don't worry about age.

TUCKER in his truck, BOBBY McBURNEY in his hearse, drive past slowly, obvious with their staring.

GILBERT
You've got a fan club.

BECKY sighs.

GILBERT
What is it?

BECKY
Now, maybe. But one day I'll have blue hair, false teeth...

GILBERT flinches at her description.

BECKY
Well, if the thought of that bothers you, then you're just like those guys...into the surface thing, the beauty thing.

GILBERT
Me? Like them?

BECKY
If you're not, we might talk about hanging out.

GILBERT
(A beat) I'd like to hang out.

GILBERT tries a smile, BECKY returns it.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

GILBERT shaves, humming. ARNIE splashes in the tub.

GILBERT

Arnie, wind it up...

ARNIE

No.

GILBERT rinses his face in the sink water. He dries off.

GILBERT

You're gonna turn into a fish if you stay in any longer...

ARNIE

Soap.

GILBERT

You just had it.

ARNIE

Soap!

GILBERT kneels next to the tub, reaches his hand under the water and looks for soap.

GILBERT

You don't need me to do this. You got to learn to do for yourself. What if something happened to me?

ARNIE

No!

GILBERT

I'm just saying -- what if?

GILBERT gives up looking. A beat. ARNIE holds up the soap.

GILBERT

Real cute, Arnie. OK -- here's your towel, there are your pajamas.

ARNIE drops the soap.

ARNIE

Oops.

GILBERT

Too bad. You're on your own.

GILBERT leaves the bathroom.

EXT. AN ABANDONED RAIL ROAD BRIDGE AT SUNSET

A beautiful, vibrant sunset.

GILBERT and BECKY sit on an abandoned rail road bridge. They have been sitting for some time.

GILBERT

School closed the summer I graduated. The kids are bused to Motley. Mrs. Rex Mefford makes the butter cow we send to the state fair. The Byers twins had their accident, paralyzed and burned. That's the kind of excitement we get around here.

Silence.

GILBERT

But you, you've been everywhere.

BECKY

Name a place, I've lived there.

GILBERT

I figured.

BECKY

My parents are always moving. So I travel back and forth between them.

GILBERT

They split up?

BECKY

When I was a kid.

A beat.

GILBERT

What do you think of Endora? I mean, probably not much, huh?

BECKY

This place is as good as any.

GILBERT looks at her in disbelief.

BECKY

Trust me. It's as good as any.

EXT. STREETS OF ENDORA - NIGHT

GILBERT and BECKY walk down a street in the moonlight.

GILBERT

But nothing ever happens here. Nothing.
(Laughing) I'm not kidding. Somedays
you think something will happen, but it
never does. It just never ...

A car drives down a street. The headlights illuminate GILBERT and BECKY.

MR. CARVER

(From the car) Come see me, Gilbert.
I insist.

INT. CARVER STATION WAGON - NIGHT

MR. CARVER drives and MRS. BETTY CARVER looks back over her shoulder.

MR. CARVER

Who's the girl?

EXT. STREETS OF ENDORA - NIGHT

The CARVER car drives off.

BECKY and GILBERT stop at the GRANDMA's house.

GILBERT

It never does. (A beat as BECKY
unlatches the gate.) I had a nice time.

BECKY

I know.

GILBERT laughs.

BECKY

I'd like to see you again.

BECKY goes up the porch steps and into the house.

EXT. STREETS OF ENDORA - NIGHT

GILBERT runs down a street. He hops a fence, hurdles a bird bath, or something of the sort. His run home is celebratory.

INT. GILBERT'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The morning sun shines through GILBERT's bedroom window.

GILBERT sleeps face down in his bed, still wearing his clothes from the night before. He opens an eye. He stretches.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

GILBERT shuffles down the hall toward the bathroom.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MORNING

GILBERT enters the bathroom, he looks in the mirror. He sits on the toilet.

Water sloshing can be heard. In the bathtub, behind the wavy glass of the sliding door, a FIGURE can be seen.

GILBERT stands and slides open the door. ARNIE sits in the water. He has stayed in the tub the entire night. His hands and feet have shriveled from the water. ARNIE looks to be in shock.

GILBERT

Arnie?

ARNIE starts to shake.

GILBERT lifts him out of the water and wraps him in a towel.

GILBERT

You're OK now.

ARNIE shivers in the towel.

INT. GRAPE KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM - MORNING

In the dining room, MOMMA waits for breakfast. ARNIE sits in his place, staring at his wrinkly fingers. AMY brings in the food. ELLEN waits. GILBERT stirs the orange juice, trying to be helpful.

MOMMA

Would somebody please explain?

ELLEN

Well, Gilbert's in charge of bathing.

MOMMA looks at GILBERT.

ARNIE

I coulda drowned. I coulda drowned!

MOMMA

(Hugs ARNIE close) But you didn't. You could have but you didn't. (A beat) Somebody? Anybody? Is it too much to ask to see this boy turn eighteen?

GILBERT

No.

AMY

Momma, the food's getting cold.

MOMMA

(Stomping her foot) Let it!

GILBERT

Momma, don't!

MOMMA

What?

GILBERT

(Glancing toward the floor) Nothing.

MOMMA

(A beat) You know, having you kids was the best thing I've ever done. Please don't make me regret it.

INT. LAMSON'S GROCERY - MORNING

MRS. LAMSON waits at the cash register, singing "The Iowa Corn Song".

MR. LAMSON talks on the phone.

GILBERT works in back, and when MRS. LAMSON finishes her song, he breaks into applause.

MRS. LAMSON

Thank you. Thank you.

Having hung up the phone, MR. LAMSON approaches GILBERT.

LAMSON

You know, Gilbert -- if only there was another Mrs. Lamson. If there were two of her, you could have one.

GILBERT

(Sincerely) That would be nice.

MR. LAMSON
(Handing him a slip of paper) Got a
delivery for you, son.

GILBERT
Yeah?

MR. LAMSON
And it sounds urgent.

EXT. CARVER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

GILBERT drives onto the Carver driveway. He emerges from the truck with a bag of groceries.

INT. CARVER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

MRS. BETTY CARVER prepares a batch of cookies to bake. Her fingers are covered with cookie dough, the counter has opened boxes of ingredients. Her hair is pulled back, however, and her face is freshly made-up.

MRS. BETTY CARVER
Boys, outside!

The BOYS stomp out of the house as GILBERT enters.

MRS. BETTY CARVER
Over by the phone...

GILBERT
Yeah?

MRS. BETTY CARVER
There's a slip of paper -- could you
dial the number on it? I would, honey,
but I'm all covered with batter.

GILBERT dials.

MRS. BETTY CARVER
How you been?

GILBERT
Good.

MRS. BETTY CARVER
I've been thinking about you. Have you
been thinking...

GILBERT
It's ringing.

MRS. BETTY CARVER works to get the batter off her fingers. She puts a finger or two in GILBERT's mouth.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

How is it?

GILBERT

It's ringing. Hurry.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

I am, Gilbert. I am.

The phone is answered.

MAN'S VOICE (on phone)

Hello, Ken Carver here.

GILBERT extends the phone toward MRS. CARVER. He looks in shock. MRS. CARVER smiles, giggles, and signals for GILBERT to speak.

MR. CARVER (on phone)

Hello. Anybody there?

GILBERT

(Hesitates) Uhm. Mr. Carver?

MR. CARVER (on phone)

Hello. Who am I speaking with?

GILBERT

Gilbert, sir. Gilbert Grape.

MR. CARVER (on phone)

Oh. (A beat.) Well, well. I'd given up on you, Gilbert. You can understand why, can't you?

GILBERT

(Faintly) Yes.

MR. CARVER (o.s.)

I'd like to pencil you in. As soon as possible.

As GILBERT talks on the phone, MRS. CARVER lifts GILBERT's shirt and kisses his stomach, then moves lower, undoes his pants.

GILBERT

Excuse me?

INT. CARVER'S INSURANCE - AFTERNOON

A small town insurance office. MR. CARVER sits at his desk, his appointment calendar open and for the most part empty.

MR. CARVER

For an appointment. We need to talk.
And soon. I think you'll agree it's
important. Do you agree?

GILBERT's moan can be heard over the phone.

MR. CARVER

Is that a yes, Gilbert?

INT. CARVER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

GILBERT moans again.

GILBERT

Yes.

MR. CARVER (o.s.)

When, Gilbert? When can you come by?

GILBERT

Uhm whenever.

MR. CARVER (o.s.)

Two o'clock today?

GILBERT (on phone)

Fine.

GILBERT's free hand lands in the cookie batter. GILBERT is sweating, out of breath.

GILBERT (On phone)

Ow!

MRS. CARVER stops, checks GILBERT and looks up. She smiles, her lipstick has begun to smear.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

(Whispered) I'll be gentler.

MR. CARVER (o.s.)

I'll see you at two o'clock.

GILBERT hangs up the phone. MRS. BETTY CARVER giggles and keeps going.

GILBERT

What the hell are you doing?

MRS. BETTY CARVER

(Laughing) An adventure. We're having an adventure.

GILBERT

This is crazy.

He stands and starts to dress. She stops laughing.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

I was just trying to excite you.

GILBERT

I gotta go.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Have you met someone?

GILBERT doesn't answer.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Be honest. It's that new girl, isn't it?

Silence. MRS. BETTY CARVER slumps over on the floor. GILBERT leans over, wipes the hair out of her face, and kisses her on the cheek.

GILBERT

Your husband is expecting me.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

If you walk out that door, we're finished.

GILBERT

Bye, Betty.

Silence as GILBERT hugs her.

The food buzzer sounds, jolting the two of them. When GILBERT turns it off, MRS. BETTY CARVER bursts into tears.

GILBERT

Please stop.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

I will.

GILBERT walks toward the door.

MRS. BETTY CARVER watches GILBERT go.

EXT. CARVER'S INSURANCE - AFTERNOON

GILBERT's truck is parked in front.

MR. CARVER (Off screen)
What's this, Gilbert? What is this?

INT. CARVER'S INSURANCE - AFTERNOON

A big hand with a wedding band.

GILBERT (Off screen)
Your hand, sir.

MR. CARVER sits at his desk, his hand extended. GILBERT sits across from him.

MR. CARVER
(Smiling) There's nothing I admire more than the human hand.

MR. CARVER's hands stretch in all directions. MR. CARVER chuckles at the sight of all this activity.

MR. CARVER
When Betty and I were living in Boone, before the boys were born -- there was a kid, a prodigy -- eight or nine years old and he was Chinese or Japanese or whatever it is that you are when you can play the piano really well.

A picture of the CARVER family sits on his desk. MR. CARVER smiles, his boys smile, MRS. BETTY CARVER stares blankly.

MR. CARVER
And they insured the little sucker's hands for half a million dollars!

GILBERT
Wow.

MR. CARVER
Gilbert, let me cut right to it. The boy's hand had a value. I want to talk about value. Your value.

GILBERT

Sir?

MR. CARVER

I've reviewed your file. You got the minimum automobile insurance allowed by law. The minimum. You got no health insurance, no house or property, no life...

GILBERT

Sir?

MR. CARVER

Don't you think you have value? You've not planned well. What about an accident, something sudden, something unforeseeable. It happens, Gilbert. (A beat.) It happens all the time.

MR. CARVER brings a hand to his chest, pressing it to him for a moment, his eyes closed. He breathes deep.

GILBERT

Sir?

MR. CARVER

It's nothing. A little gas. Gilbert, you might feel invincible, but it's a funny world. Things happen. Random things.

The PHONE rings. This must be a rare occurrence because MR. CARVER stops and stares at the phone. It rings again. A beat.

MR. CARVER

(On the phone) Ken Carver. I'm in a meeting, better be...(To GILBERT)
Excuse me for a moment.

MR. CARVER swivels around, he faces away from GILBERT.

MR. CARVER

(On phone) Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Calm down Betty. Calm down! No. Yes, I'm in a conference with Gilbert Grape. With Gilbert, yes. (Covering the phone.) My wife wants to know how you are.

GILBERT

I'm uhm fine.

MR. CARVER

He's never been better. Uh-huh. Honey, don't start again.

GILBERT picks at a scab on his hand. MR. CARVER's balding head is turning red.

MR. CARVER

Uh huh.

Sweat forms on GILBERT's forehead. He removes his keys from his pocket and holds them secretly in his hand.

MR. CARVER

Calm down, Betty, or I'm coming home. OK -- that does it.

MR. CARVER hangs up the phone, swivels around in his chair. GILBERT sits frozen, a forced smile on his face.

MR. CARVER

Gilbert, some troubles at home. I'm sure you understand.

GILBERT

Yes.

MR. CARVER

Damn. Betty has the car. Gilbert, give me a ride.

GILBERT

(Speechless) Uh...

INT. GILBERT'S TRUCK - THE STREETS OF ENDORA - AFTERNOON

MR. CARVER shouts, as the windows are rolled down.

MR. CARVER

My wife spends the afternoon trying to make a better cookie. But like I was saying before -- accidents happen. Some things get baked too long.

GILBERT

Uhm.

MR. CARVER

And she's crying like the world has ended. All for a bunch of burnt cookies. Tell me, what is the big deal in that?

GILBERT

Perhaps she's disappointed.

MR. CARVER

Well sometimes I want to put her head in the oven and turn on the gas.

A beat. MR. CARVER suddenly slaps his hand to his head.

MR. CARVER

I can't believe I just said that.

EXT. THE CARVER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

GILBERT's truck pulls into the driveway of the Carver house.

The kitchen windows are opened and smoke pours out.

INT. GILBERT'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

MR. CARVER

Oh Christ.

MR. CARVER climbs out of the truck.

He heads toward his house yelling, and gesticulating. MRS. BETTY CARVER sits on the porch with her head in her hands. MR. CARVER disappears into the smoke. MRS. BETTY CARVER looks up at GILBERT.

GILBERT shifts to reverse, backs up and drives away.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - NIGHT

AMY, at the stove, makes popcorn. She pours it from the pressure cooker into a large bowl.

MOMMA, GILBERT and ARNIE sit with the lights out watching an old movie on TV. The scene is a sentimental farewell scene. On the screen, a handsome man says goodbye to a beautiful woman.

AMY sets the large bowl of popcorn in front of MOMMA. AMY serves the others with small bowls.

ARNIE reaches with his dirty hands into the corn.

GILBERT

I feel like a bath.

ARNIE

No.

GILBERT

(To ARNIE) Do you feel like a bath?

ARNIE

No!

MOMMA

Shhhhhh.

MOMMA watches intently, her face drenched with tears.

ELLEN barges in the door.

ELLEN

You know Mr. Carver?

They watch TV intently, ignoring ELLEN.

ELLEN

Do you know Mr. Carver!

ELLEN moves in front of the TV.

ELLEN

Well, he's dead.

The others stare, stunned.

From the television, sobbing can be heard.

INT. RAMP CAFE - MORNING

GILBERT, TUCKER and BOBBY eat breakfast.

BOBBY

Dad doesn't like me to drive it at a time like this. Seems a bit tasteless. Give it three days tops and I'll be back at the wheel. Of course if somebody else kicks off ...

TUCKER

You think it was murder?

BOBBY

No.

TUCKER

I'm asking Gilbert.

GILBERT

Got me.

TUCKER

You'd know more than any of us.

GILBERT

It's possible.

BOBBY

Who picked up the body? Who drove the body?

TUCKER

But she's getting all that insurance money. She's set for life.

BOBBY

It was a heart attack. I'm telling you his heart just stopped.

TUCKER

Well, I think it was murder!

BOBBY

Stick to burgers!

GILBERT

Guys, guys -- please. Here's the question. How do you kill a guy who was already dead?

BOBBY and TUCKER stop. Silence. GILBERT has made a good point.

TUCKER

Beverly -- toast all around. Butter, jelly -- the works.

BEVERLY

Coming right up.

TUCKER

Thanks, doll.

Outside of the Ramp Cafe, BECKY bikes past with ARNIE sharing the seat.

TUCKER

Look who's got a girlfriend.

BOBBY

That little sneak.

TUCKER

So, Grape, what are you gonna do about that?

GILBERT walks up to the cash register. BOBBY and TUCKER giggle.

GILBERT

Check please.

EXT. AN ABANDONED SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Endora's old schoolhouse is red brick, two stories or so, with many of its windows boarded.

BECKY pushes ARNIE on the swing in the old playground.

BECKY

See, he wants to mate.

GILBERT shuts the door to his truck.

BECKY

But if he's not careful, she'll turn around and bite off his head.

ARNIE

No.

GILBERT walks toward them.

BECKY

The rest of him keeps on mating -- and when that part of him is finished, she eats what's left.

ARNIE

No!

BECKY

Interesting, huh?

ARNIE

Yes!

BECKY

I think so. So that's how praying mantises mate. (To GILBERT) I'm teaching Arnie.

GILBERT

(Standing before them) Oh. Good.

ARNIE looks at GILBERT from the swing and leaps to the ground.

BECKY

Show me her room.

EXT. ABANDONED SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

GILBERT, BECKY and ARNIE walk along the side of the school.
BECKY tries to look in windows.

GILBERT

This was fourth grade. A so-so year.
Third grade is across the way. Now this
here was your grandma's room.

BECKY pulls off the boards which cover a window. She struggles
to get it open.

GILBERT

You can't go in there.

BECKY pulls herself up through the window and disappears into the
school. ARNIE goes after her.

GILBERT has no choice but to follow.

INT. ABANDONED SCHOOL - CLASS ROOM - AFTERNOON

GILBERT and BECKY stand in an old classroom. The walls are
peeling, the chalkboard dusty, light fixtures have been removed,
sunlight streams through the window. ARNIE watches from the
side.

GILBERT

OK. I sat here. Over there was her
desk. She had a big globe -- textured
kind -- that sat on a table. We'd
always touch it. Spin it. A guy
would...

When GILBERT turns his back on them, ARNIE runs out of the room
and BECKY follows in pursuit.

GILBERT

... use his finger to stop it and see
what country he landed ... (noticing
BECKY and ARNIE are gone) Hey, wait!

INT. ABANDONED SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

An empty, dark hallway.

GILBERT appears in the hallway. ARNIE and BECKY are nowhere to be seen. GILBERT walks down the hall, checking rooms for signs of them. The school is dead silent. GILBERT walks on.

INT. OLD HIGH SCHOOL GYM - AFTERNOON

Sun shines through the windows that have been broken. The gymnasium at one time was also the auditorium, the stage and the cafeteria. The basketball hoops have been removed, the championship banners and fold-up tables are gone, too.

GILBERT discovers BECKY and ARNIE dancing to no music in the gym. They move about the room with abandon.

GILBERT

What are you doing?

BECKY

Reminding the living.

GILBERT

Of what?

BECKY

That we're alive.

ARNIE laughs hysterically.

GILBERT

You shouldn't be in here.

BECKY

Gilbert. Come on. Do something.
Anything! Do something!

GILBERT stands watching.

ARNIE

Do something!

GILBERT turns and walks away. BECKY and ARNIE can be heard hooting and hollering.

EXT. ABANDONED SCHOOL - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

GILBERT sits on the swing, where he has wound the chains above him. He stares blankly as he lets himself spin out.

As he spins, BECKY and ARNIE are nowhere to be seen.

EXT. ENDORA'S CEMETERY - THE NEXT DAY

A crowd of people stand around a green funeral tent and a casket covered with flowers. MRS. BETTY CARVER, her boys at side, stands in the center, a black veil draped over her face.

She glances toward GILBERT.

GILBERT looks down. Dressed in a suit of sorts, GILBERT watches from an appropriate distance. He stands with AMY and ELLEN. Groans can be heard. GILBERT turns in the direction of the groans.

ARNIE kneels over a nearby grave. He struggles to pull weeds from around a tombstone. He grunts as he pulls.

GILBERT picks up a small rock and tosses it toward ARNIE.

ARNIE glances around to see who threw it. The grave he has been weeding reads: Albert Grape, 1947 - 1974.

GILBERT waves for ARNIE to join them.

ARNIE returns to his brother and sisters, his hands all covered with dirt.

MRS. BETTY CARVER wipes a tear from her face.

GILBERT, AMY, ELLEN and ARNIE watch the funeral. ARNIE imitates MRS. BETTY CARVER's wiping of tears, but leaves a streak of dirt across his face in the process.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - THE FOLLOWING DAY

The family eats. The children are still dressed in their funeral clothes. ARNIE's face is still dirty.

AMY

Not the crowd we had at Daddy's but a lot of people just the same. There wasn't any music, so the service was short.

ELLEN

They opened the casket for everybody to see. Really eery.

MOMMA

Did the McBurney's...

AMY

Yes.

MOMMA

How was his hair? Did they get his hair right?

AMY shrugs.

GILBERT

He was pretty bald, Momma.

MOMMA chews.

MOMMA

Good people, the McBurney's. But no good with the hair. With your father, they just didn't get the part right. I was too polite to say anything. If I had said something...said that's not Albert's hair...if I had said...

MOMMA tears up.

AMY

Oh, Momma.

MOMMA

The least you can do is get the hair right. That's the least you can do.

INT. - LAMSON GROCERY - MORNING

GILBERT works alone in Lamson Grocery.

The customer bell rings. GILBERT walks down an aisle.

Little hands, four of them, grab at candy bars and packs of gum.

GILBERT

(Rounding the corner). Hi Todd, Hi Doug.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Boys, say hello to Gilbert Grape.

MRS. BETTY CARVER and the BOYS are dressed for car travel.

Silence. GILBERT doesn't know what to say.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

I told them they could have whatever they wanted.

The BOYS look as if they've been crying for days. They wait with their arms full of candy and chocolate bars and bubble gum cards.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

And for me - I'd like a pack of those.

GILBERT looks at her, surprised.

He hands her the cigarettes.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Is that everything, boys?

The BOYS nod.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Ring it up. We need to hit the road.

GILBERT rings up the candy.

MRS. BETTY CARVER sends the boys out to the CARVER station wagon which is packed full with belongings. Suitcases are strapped above.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

I've seen people do this before they open the pack. Is this what people do?

MRS. BETTY CARVER taps the pack of cigarettes out on the back of her hand.

GILBERT

I guess.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Ken would never let me smoke.

MRS. BETTY CARVER puts the cigarette to her lips. GILBERT takes matches and lights it.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Well, I'm taking the boys to St. Louis.
(She puffs awkwardly on the cigarette)
Finally getting out of here. Will you miss me?

GILBERT

Yes.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

You're lying.

GILBERT

No, I'm not.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

You don't seem all that upset.

MRS. BETTY CARVER is puffing on her cigarette and coughing.

GILBERT

I do my grieving, you know, in private.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

(A beat) I know.

GILBERT finishes ringing up the prices. The total registers at \$9.36.

MRS. BETTY CARVER opens her black purse and pulls out two twenties.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Keep the change.

GILBERT

I can't...

MRS. BETTY CARVER

You must. For me.

DOUG comes back in the store. He's got chocolate on his lips.

DOUG

Mommy.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Mommy's coming honey.

DOUG turns and leaves the store.

MRS. BETTY CARVER looks for an ash tray. She drops her half smoked cigarette in the empty soda can which GILBERT provides.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

The boys. They need their father. It's wrong for them not to have their father.
(A beat) I was thinking if they turn out anything like you...

GILBERT

Yes?

MRS. BETTY CARVER

I was thinking how that would be nice.
For my boys to be like you.

Smoke starts to billow out of the soda can.

MRS. BETTY CARVER

Goodbye.

MRS. BETTY CARVER leaves the store.

INT. LAMSON GROCERY - MORNING

GILBERT watches as the CARVER family station wagon drives away.

GILBERT goes back to work. The sound of sirens can be heard in the distance.

GILBERT returns to the window as several police cars and a fire truck speed past, sirens wailing. The Lamson grocery phone rings.

EXT. ENDORA WATER TOWER - AFTERNOON

Three POLICE CARS with their lights flashing, sirens wailing are parked at the base of the water tower. A FIRE TRUCK has its ladder extended. An AMBULANCE also waits. A CROWD of all ages watches as two firemen guide ARNIE down the fire ladder.

GILBERT runs up to the crowd.

AMY and ELLEN stand among the people, looking agitated and worried.

ARNIE slowly descends the fire ladder steps. The SHERIFF waits impatiently, and when ARNIE's feet touch down, the SHERIFF takes him by the neck and drags him toward the POLICE CAR.

The CROWD bursts into a loud applause and cheering.

GILBERT pushes through the crowd. BECKY watches.

GILBERT

Hey!

SHERIFF

We're taking him in.

GILBERT

Oh come on.

SHERIFF

We warned you, we warned your sister,
that the next time...

The SHERIFF starts to shove ARNIE in the back seat of the police car.

ARNIE

(To the Sheriff) Be sure to flash the
lights and play the siren the whole way.

ARNIE smacks his head getting in the car. A mother standing among the crowd goes "Ow." Several of the children giggle.

The SHERIFF'S CAR drives off. ARNIE presses his face to the back window, happy, as if he's in a parade -- happy until the POLICE LIGHTS are turned off.

GILBERT, AMY and ELLEN stand motionless.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

GILBERT slams down the telephone. AMY, ELLEN, and MOMMA have been listening.

AMY

They're probably just teaching him a
lesson...

ELLEN

That's right.

GILBERT

Assholes.

AMY

Probably just proving a point...

MOMMA

Get my coat.

MOMMA prepares to stand.

AMY

Momma, we'll take care of this...

GILBERT

No need for you...

MOMMA

Get. My. Coat.

GILBERT, AMY and ELLEN all stop talking. Silence as it sinks in.

INT. and EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

AMY rummages through winter coats in the closet.

ELLEN digs quickly in a box, sorting through numerous pairs of snow boots.

GILBERT pulls out some old blankets.

AMY shoves back the front seat of her old rusty car, and clears out handfuls of trash.

ELLEN's hands lift out a pair of men's winter snow boots.

GILBERT unfolds a large winter blanket.

The snow boots sit, ready to be worn, on the living room floor.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

GILBERT and AMY wait by the car. ELLEN holds open the door. Slowly, a giant figure steps into the doorway. It is MOMMA. The sun hits her face, she squints. She blinks. She breathes in, her first breath outside in years. With the blanket draped around her back and her feet stuffed in GILBERT's winter boots, she fills the doorway.

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

The car heads down the highway, tilting to the right, the exhaust pipe dragging on the asphalt, sending sparks.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

GILBERT looks to AMY, the noise from the exhaust pipe can be heard. He turns on the radio to drown out the noise. His hand flips the radio dial, settling on a music station.

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

The tail pipe catches and is torn from the car. The car now makes an unbearably loud sound -- like a man screaming.

EXT. THE STREETS OF MOTLEY - AFTERNOON

Motley, IA is a town of over 5,000, with a town square, two movie theaters. It is the county seat with a small courthouse in the center of the square. It is a quiet peaceful morning.

The GRAPE car can be heard approaching.

GILBERT pulls in across from the Sheriff's Office/County Jail. The car is turned off.

GILBERT
It'll take us just a minute, Momma.

AMY
Yeah, wait right...

MOMMA swings open her door.

Two snow boots step onto the pavement.

The first to notice her are a woman and her dog who barks at MOMMA. But when MOMMA gets to her feet, the dog runs behind its owner. Two boys on bikes come to a stop and watch, mouths open.

GILBERT sees what is about to happen and he sprints toward the SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

GILBERT enters in a somewhat agitated state. The SHERIFF and a few DEPUTIES, a DISPATCHER, two SECRETARIES are at work. ARNIE is nowhere to be found.

GILBERT
You gotta let him out ...

SECRETARY
You need to wait your turn.

GILBERT
Please let him out ...

DEPUTY
We have a procedure, young man. And it will take time.

EXT. THE TOWN SQUARE IN MOTLEY - AFTERNOON

BONNIE GRAPE moves across the street, determined, with a daughter on each side.

Traffic has come to a complete stop. People peer out of windows. A crowd grows by the minute.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

DEPUTY
Police procedure dictates the posting of bail or a bond ...

GILBERT

(Pulling cash out of his pocket) How much?

DEPUTY

That's determined by...

SHERIFF

Why don't you have a seat?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE OF MOTLEY - AFTERNOON

MOMMA's feet in the snow boots take slow steps.

The CROWD has grown. Kids have climbed trees. The CROWD is silent, staring in awe, disbelief.

MOMMA stops, breathing heavily, her clothes all sweaty. She teeters as if she might fall over.

GILBERT (off screen)

I don't think you understand...doctors say that he...

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

GILBERT continues his plea to the uninterested POLICE WORKERS.

DEPUTY

You seem to be the one having trouble understanding. The Sheriff asked you to have a seat.

GILBERT

Please let him...

DEPUTY

Look -- no one's going to do a thing until you sit...

The door opens ringing the bell above it. AMY holds the door. SHERIFF FARREL looks up from his desk. The RADIO DISPATCHER stops in mid-sentence. Two SECRETARIES stare with their mouths open. A young officer turns to the Sheriff with a look of "What do I do?"

BONNIE GRAPE stands in the doorway, her face drenched in sweat. The station is silent except for a voice over the police radio saying: "Does anybody read me? Hello? Anybody read me?"

BONNIE

I've come for my son.

An uncomfortable silence. It's a standoff.

SHERIFF FARREL

You'll need to fill out papers...

BONNIE

No.

SHERIFF FARREL

Police procedure requires...

BONNIE

I want my boy, Jerry.

SHERIFF FARREL

But Bonnie ...

BONNIE

My boy. Give me my boy.

A beat. No one moves.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - HALLWAY LEADING TO THE JAIL

ARNIE rounds the corner, escorted by a deputy.

ARNIE's POV. MOMMA standing. AMY, GILBERT and ELLEN waiting too.

ARNIE looks puzzled at first, then he drops his head.

EXT. LEAVING MOTLEY - LATE AFTERNOON

An enormous CROWD watches as the now noisy car leaves MOTLEY.

INT. AMY'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

GILBERT drives. ARNIE sits sandwiched in the middle. AMY smiles in back, ELLEN retouches her makeup. MOMMA sits in her seat, an arm pulling ARNIE close to her tight. ARNIE struggles for air as MOMMA squeezes him.

ARNIE

They didn't flash the lights.

EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE OF ENDORA

AMY's car drives toward Endora. The water tower is in the distance.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

MOMMA, AMY, GILBERT, ELLEN and ARNIE sit at dinner.

Everyone, even GILBERT, eats -- except for MOMMA, who sits motionless, staring at her plate.

GILBERT looks at AMY. He looks at the others while ARNIE blabbers on about his jail experience.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - EVENING

A pack of young kids sneaks toward the house. One kid gets down on all fours so others can stand on him and peer inside.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - EVENING

The faces of several young people fill the dining room windows.

GILBERT sees the faces. AMY sees the faces. MOMMA closes her eyes.

The kids look on in awe and shock.

GILBERT throws a baked potato at the window, shattering the glass. The kids drop out of sight.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - EVENING

The kids flee from the GRAPE house, running off in all directions.

EXT. STREETS OF ENDORA - NIGHT

GILBERT and BECKY sit on the grass, under a street light. BECKY's bike lies on its side behind them.

GILBERT

We pulled in the driveway ... and I'm thinking ... "Now we're safe" ... but no...

GILBERT giggles.

GILBERT

... she gets stuck ... she's wedged in and guess what? ... Amy starts pulling!

GILBERT's laughs. BECKY watches him.

GILBERT

And I start pushing ... but she's stuck!
So I start pounding on her back ...
punching but she's ... stuck! Stuck!

GILBERT laughs. BECKY watches him.

GILBERT

Can you imagine?

BECKY reaches for his hand, takes it.

BECKY

Yeah, I can imagine.

GILBERT chokes on his laughter, starts to cough.

BECKY

She did something. She did something
remarkable. You know that, don't you?

He wipes away a tear of laughter.

GILBERT

What's wrong with me?

BECKY takes his hand and puts it in her lap. GILBERT's laughter
starts to sound more like crying.

BECKY

It's OK. It's OK.

GILBERT pulls his hand away, stands up, clears his throat.

GILBERT

This is stupid. Really stupid.

He walks away. BECKY watches him go.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - MORNING

Dark clouds move across the sky.

GILBERT and TUCKER finish installing the window glass.
ARNIE watches.

TUCKER

Tomorrow is gonna be something. The
Mayor will be there...lots of people...

ARNIE

A big opening.

A car honks. GILBERT and TUCKER turn.

At the bottom of the street, a pickup truck races toward the GRAPE house. The horn sounds, a group of young men wave from the truck bed.

AMY watches from the porch.

GILBERT and TUCKER stop their work.

The truck passes and the YOUNG PEOPLE in back heave bags of food scraps.

YOUNG PEOPLE

(As if calling pigs) Sooo-eeee! Sooo-eeee!

The bags hit the ground and explode, sending potato peels and other leftovers over the lawn.

AMY sinks down to the porch steps. She hides her face in her hands.

GILBERT consoles her, awkwardly.

AMY

(To GILBERT) Do something. Why don't you do something?

GILBERT looks up the street as the truck disappears. ARNIE goes about gathering up the food scraps, as if they were Easter eggs.

EXT. ENDORA STOP LIGHT - MORNING

GILBERT pulls up to the stop light. When the light clicks to green, he shifts to drive but his engine stalls.

He tries to start his engine but it won't turn over.

GILBERT leaves the driver's seat and lifts the hood of his truck.

A flash of lightening, the sound of thunder.

In the distance, BECKY pedals her bike toward GILBERT.

GILBERT pulls and adjusts his engine.

BECKY gets closer.

GILBERT drops the hood, sees BECKY and moves to his truck. He tries to start the engine, but it won't turn over.

BECKY

Hi. How are you?

GILBERT

It's gonna rain.

BECKY

I know. Isn't it great?

The engine won't turn over.

GILBERT

It's not a good idea to ride your bike in the rain.

BECKY

Okay. Whatever you say.

The engine starts. The light turns green. GILBERT shifts, about to drive away.

BECKY

Gilbert, I don't have a lot of time left here.

GILBERT

Lucky you.

BECKY

My Dad said two weeks. But he's unpredictable. So.

GILBERT

So what?

BECKY

I've been thinking about your mother. What she did. I'd like to meet her.

GILBERT

You have anything else to say?

BECKY

Oooo. Are you mad at everybody today or is it just me?

The light turns yellow. GILBERT starts to drive off.

BECKY

Gilbert, stop!

He hits the brakes, stopping his truck in the middle of the intersection. BECKY coasts up to his side.

A drop of rain hits his windshield. Another drop.

GILBERT
(Turning to her) What?

GILBERT stares at her, his eyes cold.

BECKY
There's something you need to know.

GILBERT
What!

BECKY moves her face through the open window, her lips find GILBERT's lips. Kiss. Long and simple and sweet, their kiss.

The rain falls faster.

An elderly couple maneuver around GILBERT's pick-up truck and the kiss.

GILBERT's truck sits in the middle of the intersection. As a soft rain comes down, the stop light changes colors, and they continue their kiss.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - MORNING

ARNIE stands in the window as the rain runs down the window. He presses his face to the glass, distorting it, squishing it.

MOMMA sits in the background.

MOMMA
Come love your Momma.

But ARNIE stays pressed to the window, staring out.

MOMMA (off screen)
What is it, sunshine? What do you see?

ARNIE's POV. GILBERT stands in the yard, drenched. The rain falls hard. BECKY moves into view and stands by GILBERT's side. She, too, is soaked.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - MORNING

GILBERT enters the house, his clothes and hair dripping wet. He holds the door for BECKY. She comes inside and waits in the hallway as GILBERT goes to MOMMA.

MOMMA looks up. AMY enters from the kitchen, holding a dish she's drying with a towel.

GILBERT stands before them, wet and smiling.

GILBERT

There's somebody who wants to meet you.

MOMMA

No.

GILBERT pulls BECKY into the room who enters reluctantly. MOMMA covers her face with her hands or newspaper.

MOMMA

No! No! No! No! No!

GILBERT

She won't laugh at you, Momma.

MOMMA keeps her face covered. Silence.

GILBERT

This is Amy.

AMY

Hello.

BECKY

Hi.

After a long silence, MOMMA slowly lowers the paper or her hands. When MOMMA sees BECKY, she almost gasps. A beat.

MOMMA

Somebody get our guest a towel.

BECKY

(Realizing she's wet) Oh, sorry.

GILBERT, MOMMA and AMY -- all at once -- "No, don't be silly - it's fine! Water resistant..."

BECKY dries her face with the towel AMY tossed her. BECKY smiles.

MOMMA

I haven't always been like this.

Silence. A beat as the women look at each other.

EXT. STREETS OF ENDORA - EARLY EVENING

The rain has stopped, patches of blue have broken through the sky. BECKY circles around on her bike in the street. GILBERT stands on the curb.

GILBERT

She's not into that surface thing, that beauty thing...

BECKY

Gilbert.

GILBERT

You did a great job, by the way.

BECKY

Great job what?

GILBERT

Covering up. You didn't look repulsed at all.

BECKY

But I wasn't repulsed.

GILBERT

She's grotesque -- don't deny it.

BECKY

I don't see her that way.

GILBERT

Give it time.

BECKY climbs on her bike.

BECKY

Perhaps I'll like you better tomorrow.

GILBERT

Where you going? You can't ...

BECKY rides away. GILBERT hesitates, then chases after her. BECKY pedals faster and faster, GILBERT tries to catch up, BECKY laughs. GILBERT stumbles and falls. He rolls over and comes to a stop, lying on his back. BECKY turns and bikes up to him. GILBERT doesn't move, lies lifeless.

BECKY

Are you all right?

BECKY jumps off her bike and kneels next to him.

GILBERT

I'm dead.

BECKY

Well, I know that.

GILBERT

Call Bobby and have him pick me up. Was it suicide? Or murder. Maybe I never lived.

BECKY leans over and puts her ear to his chest, listens.

BECKY

Not dead. Not yet. There's still hope.

GILBERT

You think?

BECKY nods, kisses him on the forehead. She climbs on her bike.

BECKY

See you tomorrow.

BECKY pedals off. GILBERT sits up and watches her go.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

AMY pours cake mix into cake pans.

AMY

This morning I bake. Later I frost.
Hey, anybody want to lick the bowl?

INT. GILBERT'S BEDROOM - MORNING

GILBERT sleeps in his bed.

ARNIE, the human alarm clock, stands over GILBERT.

ARNIE

Burger Barn! Burger Barn! Burger Barn!

GILBERT pulls the covers over his head.

EXT. BURGER BARN - GRAND OPENING - MORNING

The Motley High School Jazz Band plays "We've only just begun."
A large crowd stands around the Burger Barn. The Mayor waits to cut a ribbon with a pair of scissors.

A disheveled GILBERT and a food stained, dirt smudged ARNIE stand among the people. ARNIE moves to the music.

BURGER BARN WORKERS move about among the people, giving free samples of miniature hamburgers and small packets of french fries.

TUCKER appears with a Burger Barn hat which he proudly places on ARNIE's head. ARNIE squeals.

TUCKER

What do you think?

GILBERT

(Lying) Wow.

TUCKER

I'd say. Did you taste a shake?

GILBERT

Not yet.

TUCKER

Real milk!

The band finishes "We've Only Just Begun." The crowd applauds.

BECKY pushes through the crowd.

BECKY's POV. A crowd of people. The band preparing to play again. GILBERT standing in the crowd.

BECKY

Gilbert!

GILBERT

Hi.

BECKY

Here.

BECKY hands GILBERT her address on a piece of paper.

GILBERT

What's this?

BECKY

In case you feel like writing...

GILBERT looks puzzled.

BECKY points to a MAN standing by a car, studying a map.

BECKY

My dad showed up this morning. I'm going home.

The band starts to play again.

GILBERT

What?

BECKY

He's taking me home. And I'm going now!

BECKY hugs GILBERT. But GILBERT does not hug back.

People eat and watch and enjoy the music.

TUCKER adjusts the apron of a fellow employee.

BECKY's FATHER looks up, searching the crowd for BECKY.

The music is interrupted.

MAYOR

It's time, ladies and gentlemen. So without any further ado...

As the mayor continues in the background, BECKY steps back and looks at GILBERT.

BECKY

Come on, Gilbert, say something.

The ribbon is cut and people cheer.

BECKY starts to shake him. She shakes him hard.

BECKY

Say something!

GILBERT says nothing. BECKY backs away. ARNIE practically tackles her. She says whispers goodbye to him and they hug. Then she pushes her way through the crowd.

GILBERT stands motionless as the Burger Barn celebration continues around him.

EXT. OLD RAILROAD BRIDGE - AFTERNOON

GILBERT stands on the railroad bridge. ARNIE sits in GILBERT's truck, which is parked to the side. ARNIE still wears his Burger Barn hat.

GILBERT stands there ARNIE repeatedly honks the horn.

INT. GRAPE KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

AMY finishes frosting ARNIE's cake.

MOMMA (off screen)

I want that boy clean on his birthday.
I don't think that's too much to ask.

ARNIE runs laps through the Grape living room, past MOMMA in the dining room, the kitchen where GILBERT sits watching AMY, and down the hall. ARNIE makes airplane noises as he runs.

MOMMA (off screen)

It feels so good, doesn't it kids?
Getting clean can feel so good. So nice.

Blue candles are put on the cake.

GILBERT stands and walks down the hall toward the front door. ARNIE pushes past him.

MOMMA (off screen)

Being clean. Starting fresh. No feeling like it. Arnie...

GILBERT

Slow down...

GILBERT stares out the screen door.

ARNIE buzzes past MOMMA.

GILBERT runs his fingers down the screen door.

GILBERT

Slow down...

AMY (off screen)

No! Noooooo!

GILBERT moves down the hallway.

In the kitchen, he finds AMY on her knees, the cake splat on the floor, the frosting squashed out on all sides.

AMY

I can't make another. I can't.

EXT. FOOD LAND SUPERMARKET - EVENING

GILBERT's tennis shoes hit the floor mat, the electric doors open, and GILBERT enters FOOD LAND.

INT. FOOD LAND - BAKERY SECTION - EVENING

GILBERT approaches a BAKERY WORKER.

GILBERT

My sister called in an order.

BAKERY WORKER

Yes, it's all set.

The BAKERY WORKER sets the cake box on the counter. GILBERT hands her money, he doesn't wait for change.

BAKERY WORKER

Thank you for shopping Food Land.

INT. FOOD LAND - EVENING

GILBERT walks reluctantly through the store avoiding all eyes. Hordes of people shop. The store is shiny, and new, and workers are everywhere.

He bumps into the lobster tank, steps back and stares at it in dismay. Turning, he continues on his way.

His feet step on the doormat and the electronic door swings open.

EXT. FOOD LAND SUPERMARKET - EVENING

Standing before him in the parking lot is MR. LAMSON, holding a Burger Barn bag. MRS. LAMSON watches from their car.

GILBERT stops.

Silence as MR. LAMSON and GILBERT look at each other.

GILBERT

Boss, it's not what you think...

MR. LAMSON holds up his hand, signalling GILBERT to stop speaking. He pauses, his eyes mist.

MR. LAMSON

Did you see their cereal selection?
All the juices...the bargains...the
lobsters...

GILBERT

Yeah but...

MR. LAMSON

No need to explain, son. We've been whupped.

MR. LAMSON smiles, gets in his car and drives away.

GILBERT watches. "Food Land" in red neon letters glows behind him.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - EVENING

AMY dusts, ELLEN hangs streamers from the ceiling, MOMMA folds napkins.

The TV is on, but the volume is down.

GILBERT enters the house holding the cake box above his head. ARNIE trails after him.

GILBERT

No, Arnie. It's a surprise. No!

ARNIE

But...

GILBERT

Do you know what surprise means?

GILBERT walks down the hall to the kitchen. He puts the cake box in the refrigerator.

ARNIE stands close to GILBERT, straining to see inside.

GILBERT

Jesus, Arnie. You're really starting to smell.

ARNIE

You smell.

GILBERT

No, you smell. Stand back.

ELLEN

(Standing in the door way of the kitchen, holding streamers) Boys, I could use some help.

GILBERT

(Leaving the kitchen) Come on, buddy.

ARNIE trails after GILBERT.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - LATER THAT NIGHT

GILBERT's POV. The living room, almost decorated. MOMMA folding napkins. AMY plugging in the vacuum. ELLEN surveying the room. ARNIE standing in the door way, his hands and face covered with frosting.

GILBERT

Arnie?

ARNIE runs out the front door.

GILBERT leaps off the chair and takes off after him.

AMY turns on the vacuum.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - NIGHT

The screen door closes on GILBERT.

GILBERT

Arnie!

He turns on the porch light. He steps onto the porch. Giggling can be heard coming from the bush.

GILBERT reaches in and pulls ARNIE out.

ARNIE

Ow. Ow!

GILBERT

You know what that cake cost, Arnie?
You know the cost?!

ARNIE struggles to get away, GILBERT holds him.

ARNIE

Owwwww.

GILBERT carries ARNIE over his shoulder.

GILBERT

It's time for that bath.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

MOMMA, AMY and ELLEN do not notice as GILBERT carries ARNIE in the house and sets him on the steps. The vacuuming drowns out ARNIE's cries for help.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT

GILBERT drags him by his arms up the stairs. ARNIE kicks his legs, scuffing the walls.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sliding open the shower door, GILBERT forces ARNIE into the tub.

GILBERT

Take off your clothes. Take 'em off!

ARNIE

I don't wanna.

GILBERT

Strip.

ARNIE

But I don't wanna.

GILBERT

Strip!

ARNIE

Gilbert...

ARNIE lifts up his filthy T-shirt, which gets stuck for a moment around his head. ARNIE pulls down his pants but stops when he realizes his shoes are still on. GILBERT reaches down to undo the shoelaces when ARNIE lets fly with a wad of spit. It hits GILBERT's neck. He gets one shoe off when ARNIE spits again. GILBERT knocks ARNIE to the back wall of the shower.

GILBERT turns on the water. It sprays down on ARNIE.

ARNIE

No! No!

Dirt starts to streak down ARNIE's face. The water below turns a dark brown. ARNIE slides the glass door into GILBERT, almost knocking him over. ARNIE starts to climb out the tub. GILBERT catches him, pushes him back and slaps ARNIE hard. Blood comes from his nose and GILBERT continues slapping. His right hand, his left, his right, his left. ARNIE falls to the base of the tub, the water showers down. ARNIE tries to block GILBERT's slaps but fails. ARNIE's head gets smacked back and forth, his struggle stops.

GILBERT shuts the water off.

ARNIE lies motionless in his wet underwear, his pants still at his knees, his muddy fingers clinging to his dirty head. He continues to bleed. He lies there, more in shock than anything.

GILBERT runs out of the bathroom.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

ELLEN stops hanging streamers. AMY slows her vacuuming, MOMMA stops her preparations. The vacuum is turned off, the bag slowly deflating. The three women stare.

GILBERT, half wet, stands before them, upset and unable to speak.

GILBERT

Uhm...uh...Arnie.

AMY, followed by ELLEN, heads for the stairs.

MOMMA

What is it? What happened?

GILBERT stands there, stunned at his actions, unable to move.

ELLEN (off screen)

Momma!

MOMMA

What did you do?

GILBERT turns and runs out of the house.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

GILBERT speeds in his truck down a highway. His windows are rolled down, his hair blows about, he stares ahead.

EXT. SKYLINE OF CHICAGO - SUNRISE

The sun has begun to rise on the city of Chicago.

EXT. INTERSTATE OUTSIDE OF CHICAGO - EARLY MORNING

GILBERT drives his truck toward the city of Chicago.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - MORNING

GILBERT stands in a phone booth. The "L" train runs over head. People cross in front of and behind his truck.

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - MORNING

A mass of people walk down a Chicago street. The faces of the people reflect a diversity of race and age. In the crowd, BECKY can be seen. She moves closer. She comes to a stop.

BECKY's POV. GILBERT sitting in the driver's seat of his truck. His hands grip the steering wheel, and he sits, slumped, staring down.

EXT. GILBERT'S TRUCK - MORNING

BECKY's hand taps on the glass. GILBERT turns and sees BECKY. He brightens up, as much as he can.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - MORNING

GILBERT and BECKY walk through downtown. They talk as they walk, traffic and city noises drown out most of their conversation.

GILBERT

I pounded him. I couldn't stop. You don't hurt Arnie. Nobody hurts Arnie.

BECKY puts her hand on GILBERT's back, as if to console. They walk on.

EXT. SHORE OF LAKE MICHIGAN - MORNING

BECKY and GILBERT sit on rocks which overlook Lake Michigan.

Long silence as BECKY studies GILBERT who stares ahead.

GILBERT

At least I surprised you. I did, didn't I?

BECKY is silent.

GILBERT

I surprised you, admit it. Come on -- look at me. Look where I am. Look. Give me credit for doing something.

BECKY

What did you do?

GILBERT

I got out of there. I got out alive. I left Endora.

BECKY

You didn't leave.

GILBERT

I didn't?

BECKY

No. You ran away.

GILBERT looks at BECKY. He starts to giggle.

GILBERT

(Laughing) And now I'm lost. I'm just so lost.

The laughing subsides. GILBERT starts to breathe heavily. BECKY wraps her arms around him. He begins to cry.

BECKY

It's OK. It's OK.

GILBERT

No, it isn't.

BECKY

It is. It's OK. You're doing something. You are.

GILBERT cries uncontrollably as BECKY rocks him.

EXT. SHORE OF LAKE MICHIGAN - LATER THAT MORNING

GILBERT's head rests in BECKY's lap.

BECKY

You've surprised me. You really have.

GILBERT smiles sincerely. A beat. He stops smiling.

GILBERT

It's his birthday.

GILBERT sits up.

GILBERT

It's Arnie's birthday.

A beat. GILBERT has panicked.

BECKY

What are you gonna give him?

EXT. GRAPE BACKYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

ARNIE eats cake with his fingers. Two Band-aids have been applied to his now clean face.

The party around him is in progress. Boxes of presents have been opened, wrapping paper everywhere.

AMY gathers up cake plates and paper cups.

Three RETARDED CHILDREN hop around playing a party game.

ELLEN snaps pictures.

MR. and MRS. LAMSON share a cup of punch. TUCKER and BOBBY and other townspeople stand around.

ARNIE suddenly freezes and stares out into the yard.

GILBERT stands in the middle of the yard, a giant blow-up punching bag held to his side.

AMY stops her clean-up activities and looks up at GILBERT.

GILBERT and AMY look at each other.

GILBERT

(To AMY) Where is he?

AMY looks to where ARNIE has been sitting, but ARNIE is gone.

GILBERT

Is he OK?

AMY

You have to ask him.

ARNIE crawls across the grass.

AMY sees ARNIE dive into the bush.

GILBERT

Arnie? Arnie?

The bush giggles.

GILBERT looks toward the bush, then to AMY.

AMY smiles slightly.

GILBERT

Anybody seen Arnie? Where's my buddy?
Oh no. Arnie!

GILBERT moves toward the bush, positioning himself so ARNIE can scare him.

ELLEN lowers her camera. OTHER GUESTS look toward where GILBERT stands.

GILBERT

(Overcome with emotion) Does anybody
know...my brother...where...

ARNIE rises slowly out of the bush. He taps GILBERT on the shoulder.

GILBERT turns.

ARNIE

Boo.

GILBERT falls to the ground.

GILBERT

You scared me. Oh. Man. You...I...

ARNIE tackles GILBERT and they roll around in the grass.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

MOMMA's POV. MOMMA's large hand has pulled back the side of a shade. Out in the yard, ARNIE pins GILBERT to the ground.

EXT. GRAPE YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

ARNIE, laughing, pulls back and slaps GILBERT across the face.

He rolls off and jumps around victorious.

GILBERT holds his face.

ELLEN snaps a picture.

AMY squats down.

AMY

(Smiling) Welcome home.

GILBERT

(In some pain) The kid forgives too
easily.

AMY

I wish everybody was that way.

GILBERT looks at AMY.

AMY

You better talk to Momma.

ELLEN

Yes, you better.

GILBERT looks toward the house.

The shade/curtain closes. MOMMA has moved back from the window.

GILBERT slowly stands.

Behind him, ARNIE hugs the punching bag as if it were a girlfriend.

GILBERT moves through the party.

The LAMSON's wave. TUCKER gives a piggy back ride to one of the GUESTS. BOBBY watches from the edge of the yard.

GILBERT heads toward the house.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

GILBERT enters the house, moves through the kitchen.

GILBERT

Momma?

GILBERT moves to the dining room. He opens the shades, light pours in on MOMMA's big blue chair which sits empty.

INT. HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

GILBERT checks the bathroom. MOMMA is not there. The sound of heavy breathing and the creaking of wood.

INT. STAIRS - LATE AFTERNOON

MOMMA's hand grabs the stair rail, almost ripping it from the wall.

MOMMA's dry, brittle feet take slow steps.

MOMMA breathes heavily. She is already half way up the steps.

GILBERT appears at the foot of the stairs.

GILBERT

Momma.

MOMMA ignores GILBERT and keeps climbing.

When she reaches the top of the stairs, she turns left and enters her room. She closes her door. Outside the cheering can be heard.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

ARNIE pounds on the punching bag and the PARTY GUESTS cheer him on.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - OUTSIDE MOMMA'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

GILBERT knocks on the door.

GILBERT

Momma?

GILBERT opens the door.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - MOMMA'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

MOMMA sits on the edge of her bed, breathing heavily, sweating. Her back is to GILBERT.

MOMMA

That was hateful. What you did.

Silence.

MOMMA

A helpless boy.

Silence.

MOMMA

And then disappearing like that.

GILBERT

Yes..

MOMMA

I hate that. You know how I hate that.

GILBERT

I know.

MOMMA drops her head.

MOMMA

(Composing herself) You walked out and I thought -- no. I can't take another.

GILBERT

Momma.

MOMMA

Your father missed the party.
Your brother ...

GILBERT

Yes.

MOMMA

Disappeared. They all just disappear. But you came back? My Gilbert came back. Why? Why would you do a stupid thing like that? Why would you be any different?

GILBERT

Because I wasn't done.

MOMMA

Oh. (A beat) And when you finish...

GILBERT

I don't know.

MOMMA

...will you run off again?

GILBERT

I don't know.

MOMMA

I have to know. Because I can't be left anymore. With no explanation.

GILBERT

I'm here, Momma. I'm here now.

MOMMA

Yes. You are. You came back for the party.

Silence.

MOMMA

(Fighting tears) Thank you. Thank you for doing that.

A beat.

MOMMA

I know what a burden I am. I can't imagine how it's been for you kids. I didn't set out to be like this.

GILBERT

Momma.

MOMMA

I never intended to be a joke.

GILBERT

You're no joke.

MOMMA

I never wanted to be...

GILBERT

You're no joke.

GILBERT hugs MOMMA. Her large arms wrap around him, almost covering him.

MOMMA

Promise me you won't disappear.

GILBERT

I promise.

Silence as they release from their hug.

GILBERT

Rest, Momma. OK?

MOMMA

I want to see the birthday boy.

GILBERT

You deserve to rest.

MOMMA

I know. Get me sunshine first.

GILBERT

And then you'll rest.

MOMMA

Of course. Get me my boy.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

GILBERT emerges from the house. The last party guests are leaving. AMY and ELLEN pick up. ARNIE tries to use the punching bag as a trampoline, jumps on it and falls.

GILBERT walks up to him and whispers something in his ear.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

ARNIE runs up the stairs and into MOMMA's bedroom.

Behind MOMMA's stomach and feet, ARNIE disappears below the bed.

ARNIE pops up and looks at MOMMA. He stares blankly.

ARNIE

Hey. Momma.

ARNIE shakes MOMMA. No reaction. He waits.

ARNIE

Hey!

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

The house and yard seen at a distance.

Out of the house comes a little figure (ARNIE). He runs around, screaming hysterically.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - MOMMA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

MOMMA lies on the bed. Gathered around her are GILBERT, AMY, ELLEN and ARNIE. Soft crying.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - NIGHT

Police lights flash in the yard, illuminating the house. SHERIFF FARREL and a DOCTOR emerge from the house and move to their vehicles.

ARNIE follows after them.

ARNIE

Play the lights, the siren. OK?

GILBERT pulls ARNIE back.

Over the police radio a POLICE OFFICER can be heard. "We got a beached whale in Endora. Do you copy?"

SHERIFF reaches over and turns down the radio.

SHERIFF

(To AMY and GILBERT) Sorry about that.

AMY wipes away tears. GILBERT shuts the police car door.
The SHERIFF drives away.

AMY and GILBERT walk to the house where ELLEN and ARNIE wait on
the porch.

AMY

They're gonna need some extra men.

ELLEN

But...

AMY

There's nothing we can do till morning.

They enter the house. The porch light is turned off.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - NIGHT

A sleepy ARNIE sits holding one of MOMMA's feet. Nearby, AMY
sobs. No sound.

A teary-eyed ELLEN emerges from the bathroom and throws her arms
around a stoic GILBERT. No sound.

AMY touches MOMMA and whispers something. No sound.

GILBERT watches from the doorway.

ELLEN

There's gonna be a crowd. I just know
there's gonna be a crowd.

AMY combs MOMMA's hair.

AMY

(To GILBERT) She's beautiful.

GILBERT leaves the room.

INT. GRAPE BASEMENT - NIGHT

GILBERT tears down the support beams in a fury.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - MOMMA'S ROOM NIGHT

AMY and ELLEN sit with MOMMA.

GILBERT enters, out of breath.

GILBERT
She's no joke. She's no joke.

AMY and ELLEN stare at GILBERT, who tries to catch his breath.

GILBERT
Momma. Deserves. Better.

INT. GRAPE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

ARNIE sits in MOMMA's chair, staring blankly ahead.
GILBERT, ELLEN and AMY come down the steps and look at ARNIE.

GILBERT
Arnie? We're gonna need your help.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - DAWN

The bluish light of dawn.

The yard is littered with the insides of the Grape house.
Chairs, sofas, unassembled beds.

Out of the house comes AMY and ELLEN carrying a table, which they put on the ground.

In the living room window, GILBERT talks to ARNIE, who finally nods. GILBERT draws him close and hugs him.

EXT. GRAPE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

GILBERT and ARNIE appear on the porch. GILBERT nods almost invisibly to AMY and ELLEN.

SLOW MOTION OF:

A match catching fire.

GILBERT holding the match. He stands at the open living room window with a gas can in hand. He puts the can down and turns to look at AMY and ELLEN, who hold onto ARNIE among the furniture in the yard.

GILBERT throws the match through the window.

The fire catches.

The Grapes watch.

The flames start to grow.

ARNIE stares in fascination.

The whole house burning.

Dissolves: ELLEN, GILBERT and AMY watching, flames reflecting in their faces.

ARNIE, his face bright from the nearby fire, laughing.

GILBERT watching.

The GRAPE family stands among their belongings.

Neighbors begin to come out of their houses. A police car with lights flashing can be seen far off. In the distance, the GRAPE house burns.