

FADE IN:

CLOSE UP ON AN OUTER SPACE FILLED WITH STARS.

The stars travel slowly by. Eventually, two distant and unfamiliar planets comes into view. What will soon be the familiar voice of BEN GORDON speaks:

BEN (V.O.)

Some paths are simply meant to cross.
But such a meeting cannot happen if
both are not coming from, and heading
to, their own destinations. And
regardless of how long two paths
merge, eventually each must continue
on its own way...

The voice over is interrupted by the sound of someone snoring.

It's SAM GORDON, an eight-year-old with what may possibly be the coolest bedroom in all of Texas: The ceiling and all four walls are a hand-painted intergalactic masterpiece.

The door opens slightly, shedding a sliver of light upon the sleeping boy, and floorboards creak as someone slips into the room. A shadow falls across Sam and a hand, completely splattered with DRIED PAINT, reaches in and wakes him from his slumber.

SAM

Dad?

Sam sits up and tries to focus on the penetrating blue eyes of BEN GORDON. The two make a very convincing argument that bedhead may actually be a genetic condition.

BEN

Lesson #1: Artists need inspiration.
Wanna catch the sunrise, kiddo?

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- ROAD

Sam and Ben drive down the road. On one side of the car, the sun rises; on the other, the moon sets. Ben leans into the dash to get a better look.

BEN

Look Sam, you can see the sun and
the moon.

SAM

Does that mean it's day or night?

BEN

I guess it's a little bit of both.

SAM

It can't be both. It has to be one
or the other.

BEN

So everything's black and white, is
it?

Sam looks at his father, confident he's right.

BEN (CONT'D)

You are your mother's kid, kiddo.
But I gotta warn you, if you want to
learn to be a painter this summer,
you're gonna need to see more than
black and white.

SAM

When *do* I start learning to paint?

Ben reaches behind the seat and brings back a sketch pad.

BEN

Right about now.

EXT. CLEAR LAKE -- EARLY MORNING

Sam sits in a fishing boat working in his sketch pad.

ANGLE ON BEN

Floating in the water nearby, Ben disappears beneath the
surface then pops up unexpectedly next to the boat and
splashes Sam. Sam jumps to protect his sketch.

Ben disappears again and pops up on the other side of the
boat, splashing Sam again.

Once more Ben disappears beneath the surface. This time Sam
drops the sketch pad and readies himself for Ben's return.

EXT. CLEAR LAKE -- JUST AROUND THE BEND

A speedboat full of college students hurl through the water.

ANGLE ON BACK OF BOAT

The name reads: PARTY BARGE

The boat is littered with empty beer cans. Last night's
party has clearly not ended.

EXT. CLEAR LAKE --BEN AND SAM

Ben pops up again, this time further from the boat. Once
Sam spots him, he disappears again.

The party barge rounds the bend.

Ben surfaces. Then back under.

BOAT DRIVER
(Turning to toast his
crew)
Wooohooo!

Sam spots the boat. But Ben's up and back under before he can warn him.

The party barge zooms closer...

Ben pops up...

The party barge closes in...

Ben waves his paint covered hand to his son as he disappears for the last time.

The party barge RIPS through the waters above him.

SAM
Daaaaad!

Sam's scream continues as...

EXT. WORLD WAR II BATTLEFIELD

Sam and his dad, both soldiers are blown to bits by a grenade.

INT. WESTERN SALOON, AMERICAN FRONTIER

Sam, a western saloon dancer dies in the arms of a Ben, a cowboy.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sam bolts upright in his bed, still screaming his head off. LUCY GORDON races in and scoops him up in the safety of a mother's hug.

LUCY
It's just a bad dream, sweetheart.

SAM
No, it was a good dream.

Lucy searches his face for understanding.

SAM (CONT'D)
...for a while I still had a dad.

LUCY
I know. I know, Sammie.
(MORE)

LUCY (CONT'D)
I'd give anything to bring him back
for you. For me, too.

SAM
Bring him back?

She doesn't understand the question.

SAM (CONT'D)
Back from where?

LUCY
From being...from being dead.

SAM
You mean people go somewhere after
they die?

LUCY
They don't go somewhere. They just
go.

SAM
I don't understand.

LUCY
Me neither, sweetheart.

Lucy pulls him close so he can't see her fighting back tears. She looks helplessly at the nightstand where Sam and his late father smile back at her through a picture frame. It takes some doing, but she regains composure and puts on her best game face.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Come on, why don't you jump into my
bed. You can sleep there again.

INT. LUCY'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sam sleeps in the big bed while Lucy is curled up in a nearby chair with her cell phone to her ear. The electronic voice of the cell phone leads her.

CELL:
You have one saved message.

Lucy hits a button. The voice of Ben begins to speak.

BEN (V.O.)
Hey, babe. Been calling but can't
seem to reach you. I'll keep trying,
but if you can find me, come find
me.

Again, she's on the brink of tears. Again, she refuses to let them come.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE -- DAY

SEYMORE PETTICOAT, PHD, a therapist who can't help but refer to himself as Seymore Petticoat, PHD, reads a patient file out loud.

PETTICOAT

Patient: Samuel Gordon...eight years old...eye witness to father's death...

In the doorway, Sam and Lucy stand unnoticed, listening to the details of their now tragic life being rattled off like yesterday's grocery list.

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)

reoccurring nightmares...denial of grief...mother, Lucy Gordon, Astrophysicist, NASA

This last piece of information peeks his interest and Seymore Petticoat, PHD peers up from his file folder to jot a few notes.

He's surprised to see the two in the doorway.

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, my receptionist didn't tell me...

LUCY

No, I'm sorry. There was nobody at the desk, we just walked back. I'm...

She points to the file still in his hand.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I'm Lucy Gordon. And this is Sam.

PETTICOAT

Come in, come in.

He shows them into the office.

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)

So, you work for NASA?

LUCY

Yes.

PETTICOAT

"The scientist alone is a true poet, for he gives us the moon and the stars."

They stare.

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)
Or so said Alan Ginsberg. Are you familiar with his work?

LUCY
Um, no. Not particularly.

He nods, sizing her up intently.

PETTICOAT
I see.

A few more moments of uncomfortable silence.

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)
Do you know Peter Grafton over at NASA. I do some work with the shuttle teams from time to time.

LUCY
I know Peter well. We actually met while I was at MIT.

PETTICOAT
Ah, MIT. I'm a Harvard grad myself.

Sam is instantly bored. He lays his head on Lucy's lap, closing his eyes.

LUCY
Actually, Peter introduced me to Ben.

PETTICOAT
Ben?

LUCY
My husband.

Petticoat looks at her a long, silent moment.

LUCY (CONT'D)
My late husband.

PETTICOAT
Yes, the reason for your visit...

Petticoat opens the file again.

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)
"Man is the only animal that contemplates death. And the only one that shows any sign of doubt in its finality."

Lucy is unsure how to respond.

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)
William Hawking.

A knock on the door saves Lucy from having to respond. Seymore Petticoat's receptionist enters with a clip board full of papers.

RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry to interrupt. I didn't realize your appointment had already arrived.

PETTICOAT
Yes, they snuck right past you when you weren't at your desk. Where, may I ask, were you?

RECEPTIONIST
I thought I had time to step out for a smoke.

PETTICOAT
Well I trust you'll be taking that time off your lunch hour.

RECEPTIONIST
Yes.

Petticoat waits for another response.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Yes, doctor.

PETTICOAT
Excellent. Now I take it you have Mrs. Gordon's paperwork there.

She hands it to him and leaves.

LUCY
Paperwork?

PETTICOAT
Yes, standard procedure, I assure you. Since Sam is a minor, I need your permission to treat him psychologically, and with medical assistance if necessary.

LUCY
Medical assistance?

PETTICOAT
You needn't look so frightened, Mrs.
(MORE)

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)

Gordon. A prescription may be just what Sam needs to get a good night's sleep.

Lucy takes the forms.

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)

Now, speaking of that, tell me about Sam's nightmares.

ANGLE ON SAM

As Lucy talks, Sam drifts into a dream...

EXT. HANOVER GERMANY, 1940'S -- DAY

World War II, war front. A British flag flies high as soldiers, nurses, all other manner of military personnel bustle throughout the camp.

A new arrival of soldiers pile out of the back of a truck. Among them are SAM AND BEN. Each look to be about 18 years old and wear brand new British military uniforms.

The two walk with a platoon of other men into a long, empty tent lined on both side with bunk beds. The soldier version of Ben drop their packs at the same bunk as the soldier version of Sam.

ANGLE ON MILITARY PACK

It reads: Private Elliott Howes.

BEN/HOWES

Looks like we're bunkies, mate.

Holding out his hand.

BEN/HOWES (CONT'D)

Elliott Howes. Essex.

The other soldier shakes, a bit to shy to meet his eyes right away.

SAM/FRASIER

James Frasier. Bournemouth.

BEN/HOWES

Good to know you, James Frasier Bournemouth. First trip to the front?

SAM/FRASIER

First trip anywhere. Never left home before I was called up.

A strange muffled noise turns both of their attention to Frasier's pack on the ground.

BEN/HOWES

What have you there, mate, a body?

Frasier doesn't move. Howes opens the pack and pulls out a puppy. He hands it to his new, incredibly busted, friend.

BEN/HOWES (CONT'D)

Well, well, I say. Who's this?

SAM/FRASIER

Found him at the train station, shaking like a leaf behind a row of rubbish bins. Couldn't rightly leave him there...I knew just how he felt.

Frasier holds the puppy close. At the other end of the tent, a door opens then slams shut.

SOLDIER. (O.S.)

Officer on deck!

All soldiers snap to attention in a line in front of the bunks. Frasier freezes.

Howes quickly grabs the puppy and hides it back in the pack. The two fall in with the rest of the platoon as the commanding officer, SERGEANT EDMUND ISAACS I, inspects his newest troops.

ANGLE ON SERGEANT

You might not notice at first glance, but behind the bad teeth and excess weight, Edmund Isaacs looks to be the reincarnation of SEYMORE PETTICOAT.

ISAACS

Welcome to combat, soldiers. In the brave words of Jean Giraudoux, "Who would prefer peace to the glory of hunger and thirst, of wading through the mud, and dying in the service of one's country?"

The puppy whines. Sgnt. Isaacs turns quickly and cocks his head in the direction of the sound.

A tense moment of silence follows. Then the whining starts up again.

Sgnt. Isaacs clips down the line, zeroing in.

ANGLE ON FRASIER.

He's ready to crap his britches.

Howes yanks Fraasier over in front of his pack and jumps into the hot seat.

Moments later, it is Howes who's staring into the cold, condescending eyes of his new commanding officer.

PETTICOAT/SGNT.

What is that sound, soldier?

Plane engines begin to hum in the distance.

BEN/HOWES

Sounds like planes overhead, sir.

Warning sirens scream out through the base.

PETTICOAT/SGNT.

This conversation is far from over, lad.

A bomb explodes very nearby.

PETTICOAT/SGNT. (CONT'D)

(to entire troop)

Fall out and follow me.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE -- DAY

Sam bolts upright from Lucy's lap in a panic. Lucy's arms are around him in a heartbeat.

LUCY

Shhhhh, It's okay, sweetheart. I'm here. You're safe. It was just a dream, Sammie. And what does mom say about dreams?

SAM

They're only true while they last.

Petticoat knows quote when he hears one.

PETTICOAT

Actually, I believe Lord Byron said that first.

He and Lucy lock eyes, each trying to recognize something oddly familiar about the other.

INT. LUCY'S CAR -- LATER

Lucy and Sam drive down the road.

LUCY

You okay, kiddo?

Sam shrugs.

LUCY (CONT'D)
How did you like Mr. Petticoat?

Sam shrugs again.

LUCY (CONT'D)
I'll give you that. But I have a feeling about him. Maybe he's worth another try, whattaya say?

SAM
Do we have to?

LUCY
We have to see someone, Sammie.

SAM
Mom...

LUCY
Those dreams aren't letting up, Sam. Maybe he can help solve the problem.

SAM
Is talking to him going to bring dad back?

LUCY
Sammie...

SAM
Then he can't solve the problem.

LUCY
Honey...

SAM
Can we talk about something else.

Lucy chooses not to push the issue.

LUCY
Mrs. Friarmuthe called today.

SAM
Who?

LUCY
Miss Betty, our next door neighbor...hello?

SAM
Oh yeah. I haven't been walking through her stupid flowers, I swear.

LUCY
She wasn't calling to complain.

SAM

That's a first.

LUCY

She's going to visit her daughter for a week. Wants to know if you'd like to earn a little extra summer money feeding her cat and getting her mail.

SAM

I don't care.

LUCY

That's alright, honey. I'll tell her your not up for it. Maybe, considering everything, it's too much right now.

SAM

How much?

LUCY

Huh?

SAM

How much will she pay me?

LUCY

A hundred bucks for the week.

SAM

A hundred bucks? I'm totally up for it.

LUCY

You sure, honey?

SAM

Mom....

Lucy's cell phone rings from inside her purse on the floor.

LUCY

Grab that for me, will you?

Sam hands Lucy the cell phone.

ANGLE ON LCD SCREEN.

It's NASA calling.

Lucy tosses the phone back into her bag. Sam doesn't recognize the neighborhood.

SAM

Where are we going?

LUCY
We've got to pick up your grandmother.
She's coming for dinner.

SAM
Where is she?

EXT. CITY PARK -- DAY

A group of young thirty somethings practice tai chi. Other than their bare feet, all are dressed in business attire. In the middle of them, MILLIE, twice the age of anyone around her, moves fluidly from pose to pose.

Lucy and Sam pull up.

INT. CAR

Both watch as if, by some silent signal, the group stops moving. All stand silent and still. Millie begins to sing a song in some other language. The song ends and all bow in unison.

Eyes open. Hugging commences. Millie spots Sam and Lucy and heads for the car.

SAM
She's not going to make us chant
before dinner again is she?

The door opens and Millie jumps in back, then leans into the front seat.

MILLIE
(kissing Sam)
Blessings!
(kissing Lucy)
Blessings!

She settles into the back seat.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
Ready for a little more chanting,
Sammie?

SAM
No no no no no no no no no no no no
nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo.

Lucy smiles at her mom from the rear view mirror. Millie winks.

INT. GORDON KITCHEN -- LATER

Dinner preparations. Lucy chops vegetables. Millie lights incense and smudges the room with it.

MILLIE

How did it go with the therapy today?

LUCY

Not great. He doesn't want to go anymore. And who can blame him? We shouldn't expect a young boy to be able to wrap his head around the whole concept of death.

MILLIE

It isn't about death, it's about grief. And the focus isn't his head, honey, it's his heart. You can't let it back up on him. Or you, for that matter.

LUCY

Don't start with that whole you-got-to-get-in-there-and-wallow-in-it-before-you-can-let-it-go speech again, mother. I'm losing my appetite.

Millie knows better than to push.

MILLIE

Have you decided when you're going back to work?

LUCY

They called again today. Looks like I'm going back next week.

MILLIE

What are you going to do?

LUCY

I have no idea what to do.

Bottled up emotions start to erupt.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I have no idea what to do...

Lucy drops the knife on the counter and looks to Millie.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I can tell you the molecular structuring of a meteor shower four planets away, but I can't tell you the first thing about how we're supposed to live without Ben.

SAM'S BEDROOM

Sam lays on his bed holding a picture of he and his dad. He continues to overhear the conversation in the kitchen.

MILLIE (O.S.)
Breathe, honey. You're doing fine.

LUCY (O.S.)
No mom, I'm not. How can I be? I'm
the brains of this family, but Ben
was the heart. He'd know just how
to help Sam, he'd know exactly what
to do to get him through this. I
can't even find a way to get him
through the summer.

Sam's face starts to crumble. His eyes well up.

LUCY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
This is stupid. I am not going to
cry. I will not cry.

Something hardens in Sam. He, too, pushes back his tears,
then puts down the picture and heads out of his room.

KITCHEN

Lucy moves on to marinating chicken. Millie puts her hands
over the vegetables to cleanse the food's aura but keeps her
eyes on Lucy.

MILLIE
It doesn't hurt to cry, honey.

LUCY
Well it hurts even less not to,
mother. All the tears in the world
aren't going to change the fact that
Ben's dead.

MILLIE
No, but they might help you feel
alive again.

LUCY
I need to focus on Sam right now,
mother. A breakdown is a luxury I
cannot afford.

MILLIE
I still don't understand why you
won't just let me take care of Sam
this summer.

LUCY
You've done so much already, mom.
Besides, the only thing he's asked
for through this whole thing is to
learn to paint.

MILLIE

Have you found a place yet?

LUCY

All the art camps I've found are
already full or already half over.

MILLIE

What about private instruction?

LUCY

Too pricey.

Millie pulls something from her beaded chakra sack and hands
it to Lucy.

MILLIE

Maybe not. I found this on the
bulletin board at my Unity Meeting.
Thought it might be perfect.

ANGLE ON AN INDEX CARD

In large, hand made block letters, the words: IMAGINE NATION.

Lucy reads the rest aloud...

LUCY

Imagine Nation. Individual art
instruction for true individuals.
4444 Gabee Way. There isn't even a
phone number.

MILLIE

So what?

LUCY

Mother, it could be a cult for all
we know.

MILLIE

Not having a phone puts you in a
cult? That makes half my friends
moonies.

LUCY

Half your friends are moonies, mother.
There's no web site either. It just
doesn't look legitimate.

MILLIE

So be it, create your own reality.
I was just trying to help.

LUCY

I know, and thanks, Mom.

Lucy hands the card back. Millie goes to tuck it into her bra and realizes she isn't wearing one. She sticks it in her pocket instead.

INT. BASEMENT / BEN'S ART STUDIO

An antique PLAYER PIANO splattered with paint takes up a large portion of the small studio. And sitting on top of the it, an army of little plastic cowboy figurines are lined up and ready for battle.

Paintings of all imaginable topics fill every space of the room. The only picture in the room that wasn't painted by Ben is a snapshot of Lucy and Sam on the day he was born, and that's taped to giant easel smack dab in the middle of the room.

Also on the easel sits the beginnings of Ben's final painting: oversized raindrops falling from a vast, open sky. What they're falling onto, he never had the chance to paint.

On the floor in front of the easel, Sam sits, sketch pad in hand. He works to recreate the half painted scene on the easel in front of him.

LUCY (O.S.)
Sam, dinner's ready.

He hears nothing.

LUCY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Come on Sammie, let's go.

Still, no movement.

The door at the top of the stairs opens and Lucy makes her way half way down to where Sam can see her.

LUCY (CONT'D)
If you don't hurry, Gram's gonna start chanting.

He hears that...

DINING ROOM

Dinner is halfway over. Lucy pours herself another glass of wine.

LUCY
(to Sam)
I'm gonna have to go back to work next week. Have you given any more thought to what you want to do?

SAM
I want my dad to teach me to paint.

Lucy chokes on the sip of wine.

MILLIE

Samuel...

SAM

What? She asked what I wanted to do,
not what I had to do.

Millie pulls the rejected index card back out of her pocket and tosses it across the table to Lucy.

INT. LUCY'S CAR -- NEXT DAY

Lucy drives slowly through the winding dusty dirt roads of a gigantic trailer park. Millie rides shotgun, and Sam works on his sketch in the back seat.

LUCY

What's the address again?

MILLIE

444

They round the corner and the car rolls to a stop. A stunned silence fills the car...

EXT. 444 GABEE RD

Rising from the dirt road is a double wide, every inch of which is painted with angels, animals, fairies, fireworks, pineapples, porcupines, you name it.

It's a bona-fide, four-color, 3-D brainfart.

Scattered around the trailer stand rickety make-shift tables, constructed with all sorts of ODDS AND ENDS. Over each table hangs a sheet held up by broom sticks to provide shade to the hundreds of hand-painted table candles that are in the process of drying.

INT. LUCY'S CAR

LUCY

Holy shit.

Sam's more surprised by the language than the scenery.

MILLIE

Oh my goddess.

Lucy snaps back to attention and throws the car in reverse. But not quick enough.

ANGLE ON THE TRAILER ROOF.

LUCA LANTERN pops over the roof's edge. It's buried in stubble and topped with wild white hair that would do Einstein proud. He scratches his butt with one hand and waves to the car with the other.

INT. LUCY'S CAR

Lucy backs the car up.

LUCY
Pretend you don't see him.

Millie waves.

LUCY (CONT'D)
I am going to brain you, mother.

But Millie, clearly already brained by a force beyond reason, stares at the man on the roof.

EXT. TRAILER ROOF

He now stands at the ledge, looking perched for flight.

LUCA LANTERN
Heidy ho!

He LEAPS with a hoop and a holler and lands flat on his kiester, detonating the ground around him in an explosion of dust.

INT. LUCY'S CAR

Lucy throws the car into park and gets out, Sam and Millie hot on her heels.

EXT. 444 GABEE RD

Luca Lantern walks through the swirl of dust and straight to the trio.

LUCA LANTERN
Well, how do. You folks look lost.

LUCY
We are. Completely. We must have taken a wrong turn.

Luca looks at the index card in Lucy's hand. It shows, clear as day, his writing and his address.

LUCA LANTERN
That ain't the kind of lost I was talking about.

Busted, Lucy tucks the card away.

MILLIE

Funny, I feel found.

LUCA LANTERN

Well, we've howdied, but we ain't shook yet. My momma named me Luca. Luca Lantern. Basically the name means light-light, which don't make her too bright. But no matter cuz folks that know me call me Uncle Bulb.

LUCY

Uncle what?

Uncle Bulb extends his hand to shake. It's covered in DRIED PAINT.

ANGLE ON SAM.

Sam locks eyes on the paint covered arm. It immediately takes him back.

LUCY (CONT'D)

It's very nice to meet you. But I don't think this is quite what we were looking for..

SAM

I want to stay.

LUCY

Sweetie, we can talk about this later, okay?

SAM

No mom. I want to stay. This is where I want to be for the summer.

LUCY

Sam, honey, we don't have to decide this right now...

Lucy's cell rings.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Excuse me...

She rifles through her bag to find it. Millie takes advantage of the interruption.

MILLIE

I'm Millie.

Lucy pulls her phone from her purse. Some papers fall out as she does.

Lucy looks at the phone. It's NASA calling again. She actually does need to make some decisions now.

Millie picks up the papers. They're Dr. Petticoat's treatment consent forms. Millie hands them to Lucy.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

You know dear, art can be great therapy, as well.

LUCY

Mother...

MILLIE

Or, at the very least, a great bargaining tool for therapy.

Lucy gets Millie's point.

UNCLE BULB

What say we all plant ourselves over there in the shade and get acquainted. I'll get us some lemonade. It's hotter'n a goat's butt in a pepper patch out here today.

EXT. PICNIC TABLE -- LATER

Lemonade glasses empty.

LUCY

Okay. We'll try this for a week.

Sam's excited.

LUCY (CONT'D)

But under two conditions. One: Sam, you agree to continue seeing Dr. Petticoat.

Sam's not so excited anymore.

LUCY (CONT'D)

And two: My mother will bring Sam and stay with him while he's here.

Now Millie's excited.

UNCLE BULB

You gotcher self a deal.

(to Sam)

And it looks like I got me a student.

He studies Sam a moment.

UNCLE BULB (CONT'D)
Or maybe you're the teacher. Never
can tell right off the bat.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Lucy tucks Sam in.

LUCY
Are you sure you don't want to sleep
in my room?

SAM
Mom, what if I don't have anymore
nightmares?

LUCY
What do you mean, honey?

SAM
If I stopped having nightmares, would
I still have to go to therapy?

LUCY
Sammie, I thought we had a deal.

SAM
We do. But just say I didn't have
nightmares...

LUCY
Then no, honey, you wouldn't need
therapy.

Lucy turns out the bed side light and watches as he drifts
to sleep. She kisses her sleeping child and leaves.

As soon as the door closes, Sam opens his eyes. He sits up
and flips the light back on and pulls a couple CANS OF COKE
out from under his bed.

SAM
Can't have a nightmare if I don't
sleep.

He pops the first soda and starts to guzzle.

INT. GORDON KITCHEN -- MORNING

Lucy is dressed for work and sipping coffee when Sam enters
the room. His eyes are rimmed with DARK CIRCLES.

LUCY
Honey, are you feeling okay?

SAM
I'm fine, mom.

LUCY
Did you sleep alright?

SAM
Not a single bad dream.

Lucy feels his head for fever.

LUCY
Sweetie, if you don't feel well, I
can stay home with you. It's okay,
we'll just call work.

SAM
No mom, I'm fine. What's for
breakfast?

LUCY
Are you hungry?

SAM
Mostly I'm thirsty. Can I have a
coke?

LUCY
No you cannot have a coke for
breakfast. But you can go feed Miss
Betty's cat before you go.

Millie knocks on the kitchen door as she lets herself in.

MILLIE
Good morning.

LUCY
Hi mom. How 'bout a cup of coffee?

MILLIE
Sure.

Lucy pours her a cup. Sam uses the diversion to sneak a coke
out of the fridge on his way out the door.

EXT. 444 GABEE RD -- LATER

Millie and Sam pull up to the trailer on Millie's scooter.
It has a picnic basket tied on back. Uncle Bulb puts down
his paint brush and leaves his current candle masterpiece.

UNCLE BULB
Top o' the mornin' to ya!

Sam takes another long look at his paint covered arms and
smiles.

UNCLE BULB (CONT'D)
You ready to get crackin'?

SAM

Yes sir.

EXT. 444 GABEE RD -- PAINTING TABLE

Sam sits at one of the tarp covered tables. He's surrounded with mason jars filled with paint. Uncle Bulb plops a big, white candle down in front of him.

UNCLE BULB

Well, let's just start with this and show me where you're at.

SAM

Start what?

UNCLE BULB

Start paintin'.

SAM

But what am I supposed to paint?

UNCLE BULB

Paint whatever you feel.

Uncle Bulb leaves to join Millie under a tree.

INT. NASA OFFICES -- DAY

ANGLE ON NAME PLATE: PETER GRAFTON DEPARTMENT OF ORIGINS

Lucy sits across the desk from her boss, PETER GRAFTON (think of a grand father from a Norman Rockwell painting.)

PETER

Honestly, LuLu, how you holding up?

LUCY

You know I hate it when you call me that.

PETER

Don't avoid the question.

LUCY

I'm not avoiding it, Peter. I don't know how to answer it. I have no idea how I'm holding up. The past month has felt like life on another planet.

PETER

How about Sam?

LUCY

He didn't have any nightmares last night, so maybe that's a good sign.

PETER

Tell me what I can do to help.

LUCY

Just keep me busy, Peter. The faster time passes, the faster it can heal all wounds, right?

Peter pulls out a file from the many on his desk.

PETER

I'm glad you could make it back for this project. We could really use your brain on this one.

He hands her the file. She takes a look.

LUCY

The Space Infrared Telescope Facility study? You don't think that's a little out of my league?

PETER

The initial study has uncovered some really unusual data. I think your steel trap of logic would be perfect for helping us decipher it.

LUCY

What's the deal?

PETER

We've uncovered a new family of stars.

LUCY

And?

PETER

And every single one of them is a white dwarf.

LUCY

All of them?

PETER

All of them.

There's a knock at the door. Lucy turns to find Seymore Petticoat, PHD, standing in the doorway.

EXT. 444 GABEE RD PAINTING TABLE-- LATER

Uncle Bulb leaves Millie under the tree and returns to Sam, who's still staring at the candle. He hasn't painted a stroke.

SAM

I can't do it.

UNCLE BULB

Can't do what?

SAM

I can't paint anything.

UNCLE BULB

Why the hell not?

SAM

I guess I don't feel anything.

UNCLE BULB

Everybody feels somethin' boy. They might not like what they feel, but they feel it alright.

SAM

Maybe I don't want to feel anything.

UNCLE BULB

You can't be afraid to feel, boy. That's the real language of life. Feeling's what this whole hootenanny's all about.

SAM

Who said I was afraid?

ANGLE ON THE DUSTY GROUND

A GIGANTIC COCKROACH crawls near Uncle Bulb's foot.

Uncle Bulb grabs the bug in a lightning fast move. He holds it right up to Sam's face. Sam flinches back.

UNCLE BULB

See this?

Sam does not want to have anything to do with that big ass bug.

UNCLE BULB (CONT'D)

'Comeon now and take a gander. This here's the best example of smart livin your ever gonna git.

Sam opens his eyes and looks at the big bug, but keeps his distance.

Uncle Bulb starts petting and playing with the cockroach like it's some kind of cute, fuzzy bunny rabbit. And oddly, the cockroach doesn't try to get away.

UNCLE BULB (CONT'D)

This little feller, and all the others just like him, they're all blind. Can't see squat. And they ain't got no brains neither. Couldn't think a thought if their beans depended on it. But you know what? His kind's outlasted just about every species on the planet. Outlived the dinosaurs. Hell, probably gonna outlive us all. You know why?

SAM

Why?

UNCLE BULB

Cuzza these.

He pets the bug's antennae.

SAM

His feelers?

UNCLE BULB

That's right. His feelers. He feels his way through life. He don't try to be reasonable or sensible. He just feels. If what's in front of him feels right, he follows it. If it feels wrong, he don't. He don't waste spit thinking 'bout what's down the road ahead of him or what's happened behind him, he only deals with what's right there on his radar.

He lets the bug loose and turns back to Sam.

UNCLE BULB (CONT'D)

You know where your feelers are?

Sam has no response. Uncle Bulb holds his index fingers up to his head like antennae, and starts making his way toward Sam.

UNCLE BULB (CONT'D)

You tellin' me you ain't ever used your feelers?

He tickles Sam with his fingers/feelers. Sam wiggles off his chair and falls to the ground.

SAM

Stop!

He doesn't.

UNCLE BULB
Say uncle.

SAM
Uncle!

UNCLE BULB
Uncle what?

SAM
Uncle Bulb!!

He stops tickling Sam and helps him to his feet.

UNCLE BULB
Now sit yer butt back down and answer
the question.

SAM
What question?

UNCLE BULB
Do you know where your feelers are?

SAM
I don't have feelers. I'm not a
bug.

UNCLE BULB
You ever swim with a whale?

SAM
No.

UNCLE BULB
Trust me, to some, you're a bug.

Sam stares, confident he's right.

UNCLE BULB (CONT'D)
Alright, alright. You ain't no bug.
But you do got yer own kind a feelers.

Sam rubs his head.

UNCLE BULB (CONT'D)
That's the thinker. The feelers are
down here.

He taps Sam's heart.

UNCLE BULB (CONT'D)
Once you realize you got to feel
your way through life, you start
usin' your real eyes. The ones in
your heart.

SAM
My heart can't see.

UNCLE BULB
Course it can't. But gimme time, we
just got started.

INT. NASA, PETER GRAFTON'S OFFICE

Petticoat is now seated in Grafton's office as well.

LUCY
Dr. Petticoat. Wow.

PETER
Seymore is here to help get the crew
in tip top mental shape for the next
mission.

LUCY
I was actually going to call you
today to book another appointment
for Sam.

The phone rings.

PETER
Excuse me.

He answers.

PETER (CONT'D)
Hello?... Yep, be right there.

He hangs up.

PETER (CONT'D)
Got a meteor shower to put out.

He leaves, an awkward silence floating in his wake.

PETTICOAT
What about you?

LUCY
Me?

PETTICOAT
Do you not need to wrap your head
around your grief?

LUCY
Grief? Please. I have a boy to
raise and a job to keep. The only
thing I have to wrap my head around
is this space study.

She reaches into her brief case and pulls out the consent forms for Sam. She hands them over.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I've filled out the paperwork for Sam. I'll call your office and make an appointment for later in the week.

PETTICOAT

"Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break."

She waits.

PETTICOAT (CONT'D)

Shakespeare.

LUCY

Of course.

INT. GORDON HOUSE -- EVENING

Lucy sips tea in her office at home, reviewing files. Her office is as organized as Ben's studio is not. A door slams from another room.

LUCY

Sam?

Sam comes into the room, Millie trails behind, humming. Lucy examines the bags under Sam's eyes.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Hey kiddo. You feeling any better?

SAM

I'm good mom.

LUCY

How did it go today? What did you paint?

SAM

Nothing.

Lucy raises an eyebrow to Millie. Sam recovers quickly.

SAM (CONT'D)

But it was great, mom. I'm gonna paint like a cockroach tomorrow.

LUCY

What?