

THE RING MASTER

PROLOGUE

FADE IN.

EXT. CARMEN'S HOUSE. SUNRISE.

THE PURPLES AND ORANGES LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY AS NIGHT TURNS INTO DAY AND ILLUMINATE THE HOUSE IN THE FOREGROUND. THE COLORS FADE TO BLUE AS THE SKY CLEARS.

INT. CARMEN'S ROOM. MORNING.

CAMERA SHIFTS FROM THE OUTSIDE SCENE TO CARMEN'S DARK BEDROOM AS THE MUSIC FADES. THE CAMERA LANDS ON A CLOSE-UP OF CARMEN'S ALARM CLOCK. IT IS AN OLD-FASHIONED BLACK RECTANGULAR DIGITAL CLOCK WITH RED NUMBERS. THEY CURRENTLY READ 8:09. AFTER A FEW SECONDS IT CHANGES TO 8:10 AND STARTS BEEPING.

ABOVE-ANGLE SHOT WHERE WE SEE CARMEN'S DARK, DISORGANIZED ROOM AND CARMEN HIMSELF SITTING ON THE EDGE OF THE BED. HE GETS UP.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM. MORNING.

Carmen brushes his teeth. His lack of energy and body language suggests he is upset about more than just being awake. There is no music while the sounds of water running, towels moving and the like break the silence. We get some environmental storytelling from this shot.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Carmen walks down the stairs. Carmen's mom, Ina, is preparing food in the kitchen. She is tall and heavy with a beaded necklace and a fish image on her shirt. Her skin is oak and her energy is warm and loving.

The colors of the kitchen are more bright and colorful than the past scenes, adorned with various decorations and personality. Sticky-note reminders and calendars with X's and circles all over them color the walls.

SHOT OF HIS STEAMING PLATE OF EGGS.

INA

Morning!

Carmen grabs some orange juice out of the fridge. We aren't sure if he didn't hear her or if he is ignoring her.

INA (CONT'D)

(A bit louder)

Hey! I made you breakfast.

We can see in the background a reminder stickied to the fridge.

CARMEN

(Carmen glances over. Low-energy)

Thanks.

INA

Hey, today's demonstration day, right? Are you excited?

CARMEN

Beat.

Yeah. I got my headphones, just so you know. I texted you too.

Carmen briefly takes his ear-protective headgear out of his bag to show Ina.

INA

Thanks Cameron! I appreciate that. I was thinking maybe after school we could go get dinner and see the new Pixel movie?

CARMEN

Maybe.

INA

I think it would be good for us, give our minds a break for a bit. What do you say?

CARMEN

I dunno, I'll think about it.

Beat.

Ina tries to think of something to say.

Carmen drinks his OJ and eats his eggs all while standing, pacing, and preparing for the day.

INA
Cameron, you should really sit
down. Take a minute.

CARMEN
(trying to hold it
together)
I'd rather not. Thanks for
breakfast, mom. See you after
school.

He closes the door swiftly behind him as he leaves.

INA
See you.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKESIDE. MORNING.

Carmen walks over to the nearby lake from the establishing
shot.

The air is cool as you can see his breath. The lake is quiet,
calm, open, and still.

He takes a deep breath.

He sits at the shoreline and slowly pulls out his notepad and
ukulele. He pauses a few times, pensive. He cries a bit too.

He plays a bit but can't hear, so he turns up his hearing
aids.

He spends some time composing a quaint, pretty melody with
lyrics that give us a look into his heart. He sings a bit
too.

Content with his progress, he puts everything away and walks
to school.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOARDWALK. MORNING.

Carmen walks into town and gives us a glimpse into his
diverse community. It's not any one culture, but a mix of
many. We see various bits of the cultures as he walks along.

Some put up flags from their home country or family crest,
others bake secret family recipes.

The architecture varies widely, each building having some flavor of that family's culture.

There are small businesses, residential areas, and public places. It looks like the town maximizes its available resources, and it's not poor.

As the community wakes up, people are working together in harmony to bring in the new day.

CUT TO:

EXT. ONCE'S JEWELRY SHOP. MORNING.

Carmen sulks by. Through the window we see Once, the jeweler.

Mid-shot on him as Carmen walks by. Once notices Carmen and how sad he looks.

He's clearly thinking of something.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARMEN'S SCHOOL. MORNING.

Carmen arrives at a small building with a lot of open space and some training equipment outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLASSROOM. DAY.

A middle aged teacher is instructing a group of students, including Carmen, on chemical reactions. She speaks with a Hebrew accent. She is a professional with messy black hair and a playful energy that never compromises her professionalism. This is Ms. Thunderberker.

CRYSTAL

Ms. Thunderberker?

MS. THUNDERBERKER

Yes?

CRYSTAL

Why would we make something as dangerous as an explosive if it's so bad?

MS. THUNDERBERKER

Ah, excellent question, Crystal. The answer is it's not inherently bad; morally, it's neutral. Explosives can destroy, but they can also create.

CRYSTAL

How can an explosive create?

MS. THUNDERBERKER

Well, the power of explosives has created the ability to build cars and gas-powered machines. They've allowed us to build rockets and explore the stars beyond our atmosphere and learn more about our universe than ever before.

SYLVESTER

They can aid in self defense.

MS. THUNDERBERKER

Ah. You bring up an excellent point, Sylvester. They can aid in self-defense. But you have to be careful, because you can use it, but you can't control it.

SYLVESTER

What do you mean?

MS. THUNDERBERKER

If we're going to detonate an explosive, we can decide when, where, and why we detonate it. We can put up safety precautions to reduce the risk of someone getting hurt. But once that explosion starts, there is no way to control what it does. It can start a fire. It can throw people through walls or broken glass. And it can kill. All we can do is listen to it and learn from it and guide it. Do you understand, children?

They nod. Carmen is soaking up the wisdom. Good. Explosives can also be beautiful if we use them right. Just think of last year's fireworks show; how incredible the tapestry was in the night sky!

(MORE)

MS. THUNDERBERKER (CONT'D)
Those people knew how to use the
explosions to create something
beautiful. And they did.

CRYSTAL
Yeah, it was amazing. I've never
seen anything like it.

CARMEN
Yeah, it was...breathhtaking.

SYLVESTER
I don't think I'll ever forget
that.

STUDENT 2
Hey what do you know, the tin boy
does have a heart.

MS. THUNDERBERKER
Crystal, I hope that answers your
question?

CRYSTAL
It does, ma'am.

MS. THUNDERBERKER
Alright. Are you guys ready?

CLASS
Yeah!

MS. THUNDERBERKER
(puts on safety goggles)
Then it's time for the
demonstration.

The rest of the class puts on their safety goggles and long
clothes to protect from the explosion, just in case.

The TA's guide the students to their safety units and ensure
everything is secure.

The teacher works with the staff to safely demonstrate the
explosive, while the students whisper excitedly.

MS. THUNDERBERKER (CONT'D)
Alright everyone. Goggles on?

CLASS
Yes!

MS. THUNDERBERKER
Headphones?

CLASS

Check!

MS. THUNDERBERKER

Cameron, what level are your hearing aids at?

Carmen checks the "volume" on his hearing aids.

CARMEN

(alarmed)

Level 3.

He turns his hearing aids down quite a bit.

MS. THUNDERBERKER

Turn them down to level 1, unless you want to go completely deaf.

The class laughs a bit, and Carmen smiles genuinely.

CARMEN

Got it. Thank you, ma'am!

MS. THUNDERBERKER

Is everyone's protective clothing on?

CLASS

Yes!

A few people tighten their strings and zip up their zippers, but quickly give a thumbs-up.

The TA's walk around to make sure everything is properly fastened, securing the shields and safety equipment in place.

SYLVESTER

Is this really necessary? The bomb is a mile away.

The TA corrects Sylvester.

TA 1

Explosives are unpredictable. As your teachers and caretakers, your safety is paramount. We'll all be fine, but we want to protect you guys from any random unexpected occurrence.

SYLVESTER
(sarcastically)
Like getting stabbed in the eye
with a splinter?

TA 1
(sternly)
Yes.

SYLVESTER
Hm.

Sylvester continues with the safety instructions.

MS. THUNDERBERKER
Alright everyone, we're going to
get started.
(Into the walkie-talkie)
Site team, is everything secure on
site? What's your count?

TA 2
Yes ma'am! The site has been
secured and there are no signs of
interference.

MS. THUNDERBERKER
Alright. I'm going to begin the
countdown.

Faces of the students' anticipation appear on the screen.

Tension builds as we wait, and even Carmen lights up with
excitement.

MS. THUNDERBERKER (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)
5, 4, 3, 2, 1!

The explosive detonates in a beautifully animated explosion,
showing the sheer force and power within.

Things light on fire, nearby objects fall over or blow back,
and the wonder and light in everyone's eyes sparkles.

MS. THUNDERBERKER
Okay class, I need to coordinate
cleanup with my colleagues. Now's a
good time to go to the bathroom,
you won't miss much. I need about a
half an hour, so we will reconvene
at 10:01 to study the damages up
close.

Teacher walks away with the other TA's.

PHILLIP
What did she just say?!

CARMEN
(turning up his hearing
aids)
Don't look at me, Phil.

JACOB
She said we're going to study the
damages up close.

PHILIP
WHAT?!

DEVAN
Dude, she literally said that on
Friday.

CARMEN
That was incredible! How does she
even get that approved every year?

JACOB
It couldn't have been that hard. It
is Ms. Thunderberker after all,
everyone knows her. Everyone trusts
her, and she's very thorough.

DEVAN
(rolling his eyes)
The license doesn't hurt either.

PHILIP
You think she'll do it again next
year?

CARMEN
Probably! This isn't the first time
she uh...blew our minds!

They don't laugh. There's an awkward silence.

DEVAN
Uh...yeah...good joke, Cameron.

The three of them go on a tangent while Carmen shifts to the background.

Carmen walks around outside for a bit, admiring the far off destruction and the nearby nature.

He takes it all in, relishing in the moment of reprieve.

SYLVESTER

You know, it's a shame we couldn't get any closer. I would've really liked to see something blow up close.

Carmen ignores Sylvester, recognizing what is doing.
What, too cool to talk to me? Did something happen this week?

PHILIP

Hey!

SYLVESTER

What? I'm just trying to have a conversation here.

DEVAN

Yeah, we know. Get lost.

Jacob slips away to get a teacher.

SYLVESTER

What, you need your friends to protect you? I thought you were deaf, not mute.

PHILIP

DUDE!

SYLVESTER

Oh please! He's old enough to speak for himself. If he wants me to go, he just has to ask nicely. It's not that hard.

Carmen glares at him.

CARMEN

Would you please leave me alone?

SYLVESTER

Of course! I only came by to get this anyway.

Sylvester holds up Carmen's backpack and runs away.

CARMEN

Hey!

Carmen books it for Sylvester.

PHILIP

Cameron!

He gains on Syl quickly. He starts playing tug-of-war with the backpack.

CARMEN

Sylvester, give it back!

SYLVESTER

You know, I thought you had to get parents' permission to come to demonstration day? Did your half-wit mom even remember?

Carmen throws Sylvester down and starts to attack him.

Eventually Sylvester grabs hold of Carmen's fists in a standstill.

SYLVESTER (CONT'D)

I bet your dad didn't care. Why else would he leave? And what kind of a mother doesn't remember her own family?

Carmen throws Sylvester back.

He punches Sylvester in the face.

Carmen starts beating up Sylvester.

Staff quickly come on the scene to physically restrain Carmen.

MS. THUNDERBERKER

Cameron!

Three adults come on and get Carmen off of Sylvester.

Cameron, calm down! Philip, go get the nurse!

Carmen kicks and screams while the adults pull him off of Sylvester. Once he is restrained, he slowly calms down.

TA

Hello? Mrs. Montenegro? We need you to come get your son. He just beat up another student.

Carmen pants as he realizes what he just did. His face says it all.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPLE'S OFFICE. AFTERNOON.

Carmen sits outside the principle's office while Ina talks to the principle. We can see Sylvester's silhouette behind the glass.

She comes out quietly.

INA
(sternly)
Alright. Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR. AFTERNOON.

Ina and Carmen get in the car together.

They buckle up and start driving. It's quiet.

INA
What made you fight him?

CARMEN
He...stole my backpack.

INA
I mean it, Cameron. You haven't gotten physical in over a year. Sylvester struck a nerve. What was it?

CARMEN
(Angry)
In three years.

INA
(sternly)
Cameron.

Carmen stonewalls her.

INA (CONT'D)
(softer)
Was it Dad? Or me?

His demeanor softens and he nods yes.
Cameron, I -

She goes to put her hand on his shoulder.

Carmen angrily brushes her hand away.

CARMEN

Don't touch me. Please. Not right now.

INA

(nods)

I can respect that. But you've got to talk about it some time.

CARMEN

I already have, everyone knows.

INA

With someone who can help?

CARMEN

I've seen all the shrinks in the area, and...I can't connect with any of them.

Beat. Ina sighs.

INA

Three months ago I picked you up from Dr. Windgrove. You stormed out before I came in, saying you never wanted to see him again. You were raving mad about how blind he was and how you were going to sue for misconduct.

CARMEN

You remember that?

INA

Yeah, I do. You spent the whole night researching the misconduct laws and how to enforce it. What ticked you off about him, again?

CARMEN

He tried to tell me I don't have anger issues.

INA

Right! This was that guy!

CARMEN

Do you remember how after that you told him off?

INA

No!

CARMEN

Yeah! We went to his office and you tore into the guy, saying if he can't recognize my anger issues he shouldn't have a license!

INA

I did what?!

CARMEN

Yeah!

INA

I guess great minds think alike, huh?

CARMEN

I guess they do. I didn't realize you remembered all that.

INA

It's hard, but I do have some ways.

CARMEN

Beat.

How can you remember all that but not remember Dad?

INA

I do remember him.

CARMEN

Not really. I mean, you can't put it into words very well. Why is that part gone if you can remember these details?

INA

They say you forget the recent stuff first. I don't remember what happened for most of that day, and the trauma scrambled up my other memories. I still have some brain damage -

CARMEN

Brain damage, I know. Your mind doesn't quite work the way it used to.

Beat.

You remember Max, though.

Beat.

INA

Yes, I do. Cameron, I'm not going to pretend to have all the answers here. I'm not going to pretend to understand how you feel. And I'm not going to pretend that you didn't just beat up one of your classmates -

CARMEN

(defensive)

He was -

INA

On demonstration day. Whatever he did obviously hurt you, but you have to find ways to keep your cool or get your anger out that isn't so dangerous. Cameron, there were explosives at school today. What if your outburst took itself out in another way? What if people got hurt? What if you got hurt?

Carmen is silent.

Look, I'm not going to ground you,

CARMEN

Really?!

INA

On two conditions. First, I want you to try to talk to Fr. Diego from St. Dymphna's regularly for spiritual direction. You need some way to get through your feelings.

CARMEN

(genuinely)

He does make me feel safe.

INA

You have talked to him before?

CARMEN

(upset)

We have talked to him before.

(happier)

It went well.

INA

I'm glad.

CARMEN

What's the second condition?

INA

You're going to start kung fu classes at the McCoy's.

CARMEN

(in disbelief)

What? I just got suspended for fighting, now you want to teach me how to fight better?

INA

Kung Fu is about more than just fighting. It's about self control and discipline, connecting your mind and body. The next time this happens, I want you to recognize the signs in your body and do something before it becomes an issue. You can learn to use it constructively. Plus, this might help get that frustrated energy out. And if one day you decide to pick a fight with someone you can't beat up, at least you can put up a good fight.

Carmen laughs.

In return, I'm not going to ground you. You can spend your suspension out of the house or at the lake if you want so long as you keep your phone on you at all times and answer the first time I call. If I have to call twice, forget it. Do we have a deal?

Carmen thinks for a moment.

CARMEN

Deal.

They shake on it.

Was the pun intended?

Ina gives Carmen a confused look.

You said, 'If I have to call twice, forget it.'

They both laugh.

So what are you going to do about all this? I mean, Sylvester can call the police.

INA

I'm not so worried about that. He knows what he did and why he did it, and I don't think he wants you locked up.

CARMEN

So you're just gonna let him do whatever he wants to me?

INA

I don't care about what Sylvester does. I care about you.

Beat.

CARMEN

(cold, to himself. tearing up)

But we could've gone sooner.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM. AFTERNOON.

Carmen and Ina walk into the house. Carmen puts his stuff on the couch, and Ina is on the phone with Father.

INA

Okay, thank you Father, I really appreciate this. So we good for next Thursday at 4? Wednesday at 6! Wednesday at 6. Perfect, it's in my calendar. Yes, I'm setting reminders now.

Carmen grabs a glass of orange juice and a couple pieces of fruit. He packs the fruit then goes to clean his hearing aids.

CARMEN

Mom, you know where my hearing aid cleaner is? They got some dirt in them at school.

INA

You didn't bring it with you?

CARMEN

No, it was demonstration day, remember? There were explosives, it could've blown up, and I don't need another disability.

INA

Oh my gosh, you're right! Um...

CARMEN

Found it!

Carmen takes out his hearing aids and cleans them.

Ina begins to talk to herself knowing Carmen can't hear.

INA

He really is quite something. You'd be so proud of him. I'm just worried. Am I doing the right thing? I just...want what's best for him. He has such a big heart. I just wish I could give him more.

Carmen puts his aids back in place.

CARMEN

Were you talking to me?

INA

No, just thinking out loud.

Carmen gathers his things and puts the cleaner in his backpack.

CARMEN

Ok. Can I go for a walk? It's nice, and I want to clear my head.

INA

Hang on.

Ina walks up to him.

INA (CONT'D)

Look me in the eyes and promise me you won't get into any more fights or trouble. That you'll pick up the first time I call.

Carmen looks her straight in the eyes.

CARMEN
(genuinely)
I promise. No fights, no trouble.
I'm okay.

INA
Be back by 6.

He hugs her.

CARMEN
Thanks Mom!

Carmen leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. ONCE'S JEWELRY SHOP. LATE AFTERNOON.

Carmen walks by the jewelry shop, sad. Once is outside his jewelry shop sweeping the front patio. He stops when he sees Carmen to wave.

ONCE
Hello, Cameron.

CARMEN
Hey.

Carmen keeps walking.

ONCE
Is everything alright? You've
seemed rather down lately.

CARMEN
I...I didn't tell you?

ONCE
Tell me what?

Beat.

Carmen tears up.

CARMEN
(crying)
My dad died.

Carmen begins to sob.

ONCE
Oh, Cameron!

Once pulls Carmen in for a hug. Carmen accepts. The dialogue stops, and the only audio is the quiet, quaint music and Carmen's sobs.

Beat.

ONCE (CONT'D)
Cameron, I'm so sorry. How did you find out? What happened?

Carmen tries to compose himself.

ONCE (CONT'D)
Take your time.

CARMEN
(through sobs)
After he left, mom and I never knew where he was. We had tried to look but we couldn't find him.

ONCE
Breathe, Cameron. Breathe.

Beat.

CARMEN
(composing himself)
You know those people searcher websites?

ONCE
Mm-hm.

CARMEN
A new one came out a while ago and I wanted to try it out. I thought, it's a new one, maybe it's updated, maybe I'll find him this time. And I did! I found my dad! It had his address, his phone number, everything! Mom and I were planning to go see him last week so I could finally meet him.

ONCE
Is that why you were skipping on your way to school a while ago?

CARMEN
Yeah! We planned a trip to go see him, we had the plane tickets and hotel booked and everything.

(MORE)

CARMEN (CONT'D)
But a couple of days before, a huge
hurricane hit.

ONCE
(realizing)
Hurricane Diana.

CARMEN
You know about it?

ONCE
I'd heard rumors of the devastating
storm. I had no idea your father
was caught up in it.

CARMEN
Nobody could come into the area;
our plane and hotel were refunded.
A few days later, mom got a phone
call from a hospital. She was
apparently my dad's emergency
contact. He didn't make it.

Carmen sobs and hugs Once again.

ONCE
Oh, Cameron. I'm so sorry.

Carmen continues to cry.

Beat.

ONCE (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry, Cameron. Your dad was
a good man.

CARMEN
You knew him?

ONCE
I believe so, yes. Baxter, right?

CARMEN
Yeah, Baxter Montenegro.

ONCE
Yes. He helped me with a short
project a long time ago. I don't
remember the details, but I do
remember how much he cared about
his sons.

CARMEN
H-he did?

ONCE

He did. I wish I could say I remember what happened between that and his disappearance, but I don't. 10 years is a long time. 10? 15?

CARMEN

Thank you.

ONCE

For the information?

CARMEN

Yeah. I didn't know you knew him.

ONCE

Not for long, but I did.

Beat. Healing music faintly plays in the background.

ONCE (CONT'D)

Hey, I've actually been meaning to ask for your help lately.

CARMEN

Really?

ONCE

Yes. Customers come in and out of my shop all day, but it always feels too quiet; empty. I want to fill it up with some fitting sounds of music. Do you think you could help me?

CARMEN

What makes you think I can help?

ONCE

I've heard you play, Cameron.

Carmen stops in his tracks.

ONCE (CONT'D)

You play sometimes over by the lake at night when the frost would keep away the bugs. Sometimes when I go for my evening strolls, I can hear you writing. I was hoping to bring some of that into my shop. What do you say?

Carmen pauses and considers for a moment.

CARMEN

Can you show me around the store?

Once smiles. It's a genuine smile, but it gives off a slight hint that he's happy about more than just the music.

CUT TO:

INT. ONCE'S STORE. LATE AFTERNOON.

The store is decorated in a very particular style, reminiscent of something honorable and cultural, although it's different from what you'd see around the town. On display are several different kinds of jewelry ranging from necklaces to bracelets to earrings to gemstones of all different kinds of metals, shapes, and sizes.

CARMEN

(admiring)

Wow. These are beautiful.

ONCE

Yes, they are. I cut some of them myself.

CARMEN

You're a stone smith?

ONCE

Of course. What did you think, I just sell these?

CARMEN

I mean...kinda, yeah. It's not a popular trade anymore.

ONCE

Mh, I suppose.

CARMEN

Where'd you learn?

ONCE

My mother taught me. I was practicing for just a few years longer than I've been here.

CARMEN

Hm.

Beat.

Where are you from?

ONCE
Why do you ask?

CARMEN
I thought you said "longer than
I've been here".

ONCE
(smiles)
Keen ear. Not many people blink
when I say that.

CARMEN
Really?

ONCE
You'd be surprised. People can be
very oblivious when they want to.
My home is a long way away. A bit
of a woodsy area, though still
fairly populated. Don't get me
wrong, I don't dislike it here at
all, but it's nothing like my home.
The harmony of nature and
civilization integrated together as
one is truly breathtaking.

CARMEN
I know what you mean. I'd love to
visit it some day!

ONCE
(longingly)
I hope you will. But it's not an
easy place to get to. I'm not sure
if I'm ever going to get back
there.

Carmen puts a compassionate hand on Once's shoulder.

Once smiles.

ONCE (CONT'D)
After taking a look around, do you
have any creative inspirations?

CARMEN
Yeah, I think so. What kind of vibe
are you looking for, something
nostalgic, serious, regal?

ONCE
Could we somehow do nostalgic and
regal?

CARMEN

Yes, but it will cost extra.

They both laugh.

No, no, free of charge.

ONCE

Oh, nonsense! I'm not asking for free labor, even if it does give you experience. I'm not that cruel.

(Getting an idea)

Actually, I have something for you. I think you'll like it.

CARMEN

For me?

ONCE

Wait here.

Once goes around back, leaving Carmen curious.

Shuffles of things moving in the back can be heard.

Once comes out with a closed but unlocked box.

He opens it to reveal a single gold-colored bracelet with engraved patterns and symbols on it in a very different style than Once's shop. This is the Ring.

CARMEN

Woah.

ONCE

It's beautiful, no?

CARMEN

Is that solid gold?

ONCE

Despite it never corroding, no. It's not magnetic nor a good conductor. But nobody can determine what it's made of, and as such it's never sold. I'd like you to have it.

CARMEN

Oh no, I can't -

ONCE

You deserve compensation for your work. It's beautiful, but I can't sell it. Please, I insist.

Carmen slowly takes the Ring out of the box and feels it for a moment.

His face reflects in the Ring's shine with an expression of wonder and gratitude.

CARMEN

Thank you.

ONCE

Thank you, Cameron. Now it's getting late and I need to close up shop for the day.

CARMEN

Of course! I'll have a draft of the song for you by the end of next week.

ONCE

Sounds perfect. Take care!

CARMEN

You too. Thanks again, Mr. Pumpernickel!

ONCE

Oh please, call me Once.

Carmen takes a second to appreciate the name.

CARMEN

Mr. Once.

ONCE

No, just Once.

Carmen gets a devious idea.

CARMEN

Thanks, Just Once.

ONCE

Oh dear crust, you think you have a sense of humor.

Carmen laughs playfully in the background.

The music in the previous scene is sparse. It's mostly silence and sound effects.

CUT TO:

INT. CARMEN'S HOUSE. EVENING.

Carmen walks through the door in a much cheerier mood than before, humming a draft of his new song.

INA
Hey Cameron!

CARMEN
Hey mom.

INA
You seem to be doing better, you
bouncing back?

CARMEN
A little, yeah. You know the
jewelry store owner in the plaza,
Mr. Pumpernickel?

INA
I'm not sure.

CARMEN
Well, it's beside Geffrey's Bakery.
I'll draw it out for you if you
ever want to say hi.

Carmen grabs his notebook and sits down.

He sketches out a map for his mom.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
But he asked me to write a song for
his store.

INA
Really? That's quite an honor. I'm
happy for you! Are you excited?

CARMEN
I mean, I did walk in humming a
tune, so uh...yeah.

INA
I'm happy for you. Now what's he
paying you?

CARMEN
Well, I offered to do it for free,
(Ina glares)
...but he insisted. He gave me
something from his store. Look!

Carmen shows her the Ring.

INA

(genuine)

Wow, that's beautiful! These engravings are fascinating, what do they mean?

CARMEN

I'm not sure, actually.

INA

(suspicious)

This seems like it's worth a fortune. I don't understand. It would be worth well more than a commission.

CARMEN

He said it's never sold because nobody can tell what it's made of.

INA

(confused)

What do you mean? It's gold, isn't it?

CARMEN

That's what I thought, but he said it's not.

INA

Hm. Are you sure he meant to...give you this?

CARMEN

Yeah what do you...you think I stole it?

Ina fumbles her words.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

You think I stole it!

INA

Cameron, it's been a difficult week. You just had a major outburst. Did he give you a receipt?

CARMEN

No. He just gave it to me. You don't believe me?!

INA

Cameron, people don't just give away expensive jewelry!

CARMEN

Are you kidding me? I finally come home in a decent mood for the first time in two weeks, and you think it's because I got away with a crime?

INA

You just got suspended for beating up a student! Look I know this week has been...hard for us, I understand,

CARMEN

Oh please! Hard for us?! At least you had dad for however long you did! At least you had someone to confide in, be close to, share a life with! At least you remember him! All I've got is a mom who can barely remember to pick me up from school!

INA

Cameron, this isn't the time for this!

CARMEN

But apparently it's the time to start accusing me of petty theft?!

INA

This isn't petty! This bracelet's worth a year's wages, maybe more! You're already in enough trouble having gotten suspended, I don't want you drawing any more attention to yourself! And to think I chose not to ground you earlier.

Beat.

I'd like to re-write the following part of the argument; it's a little out of left field.

CARMEN

You think Dad killed Max, don't you?

INA

What?

CARMEN

That's why you never took me to see him. You thought he'd hurt the only son you have left. Too bad you had to go and ruin him yourself. But I think I know what really happened now. You drove him out.

INA

Of course not!

CARMEN

You drove him out. He didn't want his kids being exposed to you, so he took Max with him and ran away. I bet you don't even have amnesia! That's just your cover-up, isn't it?!

INA

Cameron, do you hear yourself? You're making up stories out of thin air! None of that happened!

CARMEN

Well what else am I supposed to go off of? It's not like you've told me anything! And how would you know none of that happened? I thought you hit your head and couldn't remember anything from that day? You can't honestly say it's not true!

INA

Actually, I can!

CARMEN

Whys that?!

INA

He told me in his letter!

Beat.

CARMEN

(hurt)

He sent you a letter?

INA

Two weeks ago. He wanted to-

CARMEN
You kept this from me?

Ina realized she's made a mistake.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
And this is why you're accusing me of stealing, isn't it? You were so worried about keeping your own secrets that you ignored every flaw in your logic. Why wasn't I hiding the bracelet, Mom? Why did I tell you about it as soon as I come home when I could have just lied to you? And you know what the worst part is? You know I've never broken a promise. I've heard you say that when I'm cleaning my hearing aids and you think I can't hear you. But I guess all bets are off when I'm angry, aren't they?

Beat. Ina is stunned.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
Go to Once. Call the police, have them take me away, I don't care. Maybe then you'll forget about me, too.

Carmen turns to run out the door.

INA
Cameron, wait!

Carmen doesn't stop and books it out the door. Music swells.

Ina doesn't follow. Instead, she looks to the map Carmen drew for her.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKESIDE. AFTERNOON.

Carmen goes up to the shoreline of the lake, looks at the Ring he's holding and throws it as far as he can.

He screams, but no one hears him.

It's not a populated area around the lake.

The Ring falls to the ground. The camera sits on it for a moment too long, unmoving.

He collapses to the ground distraught and exhausted and sobbing.

He goes into fetal position.

CARMEN

(to himself, and to God)

I'm a horrible son, aren't I? Why else would Dad leave? He probably left because of me, right? One kid was enough so when I came around he just bailed. ARGH! Why did he leave?! And why did he never come back? He never sent me a letter!

Carmen sobs a bit.

Cut to the grass near the Ring. While we can't see the Ring itself, we can see some grass disappearing.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

Mom didn't deserve that. I...I know she's doing her best. It's just...when she forgets to pick you up from school, when she forgets your doctor's appointment, when she forgets your birthday, it's hard to believe that she's really trying! I know her brain is damaged but it doesn't change how I feel! Hmph. At least she remembers my name. Pretty consistently, actually. I'll take that.

Beat.

Ugh, what am I doing? I had a great streak, and I just had to go and ruin it! Now nobody's going to want to be around me. Syl's right. Nobody wants to be around me. Maybe Mom doesn't care, maybe Dad never cared, maybe I'll live my whole life alone.

Carmen stands up, angry.

(to God)

Why am I alone?

Long pause while we view a few quiet shots of nature.

The wind blows the leaves and flowers.

The bugs pollinate the nearby fauna.

The fish swim in the lake.

This is to artistically say that Carmen is not alone.

Carmen looks up and notices a disturbance in the ground a stone's throw away.

Curious, he walks over to investigate.

We take our time with this dramatic reveal.

The music dramatically (but quietly) swells to reveal a gaping hole in the ground.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

Woah.

Carmen curiously inspects the hole.

He looks down.

He sticks his hand in.

He throws a pen down the hole.

He listens for the pen, but he does not hear it hit the bottom and eventually loses sight of it.

He discovers that in the hole, the ground beneath him isn't there in the hole. It seems as though this hole extends forever in all directions.

He inspects the edges of the hole to see a golden-white object that seems to be spinning around the brim of the hole. It's tangible, but not entirely solid. It glows.

He is amazed, enthralled by this impossibility.

He puts his hand in the hole and tries to grab some of the purple vapor moving through the hole like clouds. It slips through his hands like smoke.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

This is incredible. What is this?
Why is it here?

Beat.

I gotta draw this.

He gets out his pen and notebook to sketch what he sees.

He doesn't notice, but the portal slowly grows in diameter.

Time moves as he gets lost in the task of drawing.

As he's drawing the outside of the hole, he notices a familiar pattern in the glow.

After a while, he makes a connection.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. Is this...the bracelet?!

Carmen gets up and looks around for the Ring.

This must be where it landed! I gotta go tell Once!

He excitedly makes his way back to town.

He trips on a tree root and nearly falls in the hole.

He grabs onto the ground outside while he hangs on the edge, desperately trying to pull himself up.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

Help! Somebody help me!

Carmen slowly loses his grip as the ground he's clinging on to gets uprooted in his grip.

The ground gives.

Carmen falls through the hole.

The portal closes and the Ring is gone, leaving no trace that anything was ever there to begin with.

CUT TO:

INT.(?) THE BETWIXT. UNKNOWN.

Carmen falls through the portal.

A cloudy purple haze paints the background and we can see many foreign objects and figures in the background that foreshadow future events.

Carmen screams, mortified with questions on what's happening and what will happen next.

Suddenly a bright hole opens far underneath him. If you look closely, you can see the pen falling long after him.

At first it's too bright to make anything out, but as his eyes adjust he can start to see a sky, some clouds, and a few rocks. It's hard to tell what orientation he's looking at.

Carmen braces himself as he falls up through the hole.

That pen has got to come back later! Something they 'find on the boy'.

CUT TO:

EXT. DITCH. LATE AFTERNOON.

We see a green-yellow clearing of dry grass in the hot sun, clearly dry and dying.

The Ring opens a portal at this spot. The ground around it shifts, digging in a few feet as it opens the portal.

With the portal opened, the Ring spits Carmen out.

As soon as he's through, the Ring snaps onto his left wrist and the portal closes. Carmen falls to the ground with a THUD.

CARMEN

Ow!!

Carmen rubs his rear end and looks around his surroundings. It's bright and hot; Carmen's least favorite weather. It doesn't take long for him to realize he has no idea where he is.

Starting to realize what happened, Carmen looks beneath him for the whole he came out of. There's nothing but solid ground beneath him.

Carmen starts to go through another confused panic when he realizes that the bracelet that he threw across the way, the one Once gave him, was now attached to his left wrist.

It doesn't come off, no matter how hard he tries.

When he hits it with a rock, he writhes in pain, even though he wasn't otherwise struck.

He inspects the Ring to see if it has any clues on how to get him back home, but finds nothing.

A voice calls from above with a thick Irish accent.

PENNY

Hello?

Cam looks up to see a girl sticking her head above the hole. Short with curly auburn hair, this girl had jewelry and accessories hanging off her face and neck. This is PENNY.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

Beat as Carmen gathers his thoughts.

CARMEN
(panicked)
No! I'm not! Where am I? What's going on? What is this thing? How did I get -

PENNY
Hey, hey, it's okay, it's okay! I'm coming down.

Penny carefully climbs down the ditch. She is very pretty, and if you're paying attention you can tell Carmen notices. She gets down to Carmen's level.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Are you hurt anywhere?

Beat as Carmen thinks.

CARMEN
No, I don't think so.

Penny physically inspects his body and notices an open wound where he cut himself on the rock. It's not deep or serious, but it bleeds and could get infected.

PENNY
Your arm is bruised.

Carmen glances down and notices the wound for the first time. He goes to touch it, but it stings. Penny grabs some makeshift bandages from something she has on her (NOT tearing her clothes though) and wraps it up. She is very careful to not ruin her clothes, but tending to Carmen is more important to her.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Do you have any Idlewood on you?

CARMEN
Any...what?

PENNY
(believing he misheard
her)
Idlewood. We're on the West Side,
right? It's usually more common
around those waters.

CARMEN
Why would we need...

Carmen trails off, trying to pronounce the word.
Eye-dull-wood?

PENNY
(confused)
You mean Idlewood?

Carmen nods.

PENNY (CONT'D)
It's good for cuts and bruises.
Didn't you ever know that?

CARMEN
N-no. I've never heard of
aidlewood.

PENNY
Really? Never?

Carmen stays silent and gives her a slight "no" shake.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Huh. Well, it is a bit of a scarce
resource. I've got a stock back
home, I can get you fixed up.

She reaches out a hand to help Carmen up.

Low-angle shot of Penny reaching out her hand to the camera
with the sun behind her.

Carmen admires for a moment, smiles, takes her hand and
stands up.

They climb out of the hole together.

PENNY (CONT'D)
So what can I call you, stranger?

CARMEN
E-excuse me?

PENNY
You're name? You got one, stranger?

CARMEN
Oh! Um...

Carmen blanks for a moment while considering. Shot of Penny giving him a weird look.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
(realizing she's staring)
Uh, Cameron. You can call me
Cameron.

Penny holds out her hand for Carmen to shake.

PENNY
Nice to meet you Cameron. You can
call me Penny.

They shake hands.

CARMEN
Nice to meet you, Penny.

PENNY
Now what're you doing out in the
middle of nowhere?

CARMEN
I, uh...I don't know.

PENNY
You don't know? What, did you whack
your head on something?

CARMEN
(defensively)
No! I mean, wait, well, did I? That
would make the most sense.

Penny stares at him with squinted eyes, intrigued.

PENNY
Hm. You're strange.

CARMEN
(offended)
Oh?

PENNY
(genuine)
What's wrong? Never heard a
compliment before?

CARMEN
(understanding, but
confused)
Oh! Thanks.

A distant, authoritative shout pierces the air.

Penny glances up. Carmen doesn't notice.

A small band of locals in uniforms investigate the area.

GUARD 1
I think it came from over here.

PENNY
(realizing)
Get down.

CARMEN
(loud)
What? Whoa!

Penny pulls Carmen behind a nearby tree.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
What are you-

PENNY
(interrupting, serious,
NOT playful)
Shhhh!

CARMEN
Wha-

PENNY
Shush!

Carmen, wary that something is wrong, looks around carefully. He spots the group as they inspect the hole curiously.

GUARD 1
This must be it.

GUARD 2
What do you think made it?

GUARD 1
I don't know.

GUARD 3
I've never seen a hole like this.

GUARD 1

Let's take samples. Khorally, you got the bags?

GUARD 2

Check, sir.

The guards huddle around the hole, distracted.

PENNY

(hushed)

Um, let's go. They're distracted, let's go now.

CARMEN

(confused)

Wait, what are they doing?

PENNY

I don't know, Cameron.

CARMEN

Why are you trying to hide from them?

PENNY

(hesitant, but admitting)

Because they want me and my mom locked up.

CARMEN

(taken back, but not accusing)

What? Why?

PENNY

(genuine)

William's orders. Let's just say my family has a complicated history with the mayor.

Carmen takes this all in. He's still not sure what's going on, and he's not sure if she's telling the truth.

But he makes a decision when he sees the look in her eye.

CARMEN

Alright. Let's go, lead the way.

Penny leads Carmen slowly away from the guards.

Carmen's hearing aid suddenly makes a sharp noise, causing him to scream in pain.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
(in pain)
Aahhgh!

The guards immediately look over.

Penny's skin goes pale and she hides her face.

Carmen takes out his hearing aids and tinkers with them, not knowing why they were so loud suddenly. In the pain, he forgets about the guards.

Penny looks wide-eyed at the foreign device in Carmen's hand.

GUARD 1
Hey! You two, come here!

Carmen doesn't hear them at all. As his hearing aids quiet, he returns them to his ears.

Irritated, the guards approach.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)
Did you see anything about this
hole or the creature that made it?

Carmen freezes, unsure what to do. He eyes Penny for guidance, but she doesn't answer.

CARMEN
Um...yes? I think so.

GUARD 1
(irritated)
What does that mean, you think so?

GUARD 2
(to guard)
Calm down, Fitz. The heat is
getting to you.
(to Carmen)
We don't mean to startle you. But
if you know something about this,
please tell us.

CARMEN
(thinking, noticing an
opportunity)
I mean...I...what's the deal with
that hole? Why do you want to know?

Guard 1 is fitz-ibly more irritated.

Penny admires Carmen's gall.

GUARD 2

We are the guard-ians of this place. If something is wrong we must report back on it. Now please, tell us what's wrong. We don't want to have to take you into custody.

Carmen carefully considers again, this time more confident.

CARMEN

I woke up in that hole. I don't know how I got there, and I don't really understand what's going on.

GUARD 3

Who's your friend?

Guard 3 goes to touch Penny. Carmen extends a hand in front of her.

CARMEN

She's not feeling well. She was taking me back to her place to bandage me up.

He shows them his arm wound.

GUARD 3

(suspicious, to Carmen)
Where do you live?

CARMEN

(naturally)
Down the road, about a 10 minute walk that way, near the monument...

Carmen trails off, realizing he is nowhere near home.

The guards look at each other. Penny reaches into her pocket, and the guards gear up too.

The guards take action.

PENNY

(to Carmen)
Run!

She tried to blast the guards with something, but she's caught in her tracks.

Carmen tries to run, but trips and is apprehended quickly.

In the struggle to get away, the guards see Penny's face.

GUARD 3
It's Laurella's daughter.

GUARD 2
(flabbergasted)
You criminals are under arrest!

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL. EARLY EVENING.

The area is dimly lit by a few torches. Carmen is in a cell by himself.

A guard brings Penny into an adjacent cell.

In the dim light, it's hard to see details.

CARMEN
What the heck is this?

PENNY
(sarcastically)
A lock-up cell.

CARMEN
Why didn't you start by saying you're a wanted criminal?

PENNY
Oh, fantastic way to start off a conversation! Hi, I'm Penny, on the run from the guards! Besides, I shouldn't have to.

CARMEN
What do you mean, you shouldn't have to?

PENNY
I don't owe you anything.

CARMEN
I trusted you!

PENNY
Oh yeah, big talk coming from a stranger out in a ditch in the middle of nowhere in the middle of summer! I came out of hiding, put my neck out on the line for you and this is what I get. I told you to run!

CARMEN
(Angrily)
I,

Carmen pauses, considering.

(softer)
Didn't realize you were in hiding.
Thank you.

Beat.

PENNY
What?

CARMEN
You're right. You took a risk coming out to help me, and you don't even know who I am. And I got you in prison. You don't owe me anything. I owe a lot to you, and here I am yelling at you. I'm sorry.

Penny's demeanor changes to one of vulnerability. She was expecting a fight, not an apology.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
If you don't mind me asking, what do the guards even want you for?

Beat.

PENNY
(considering)
Precaution, I think. They say my mom's dangerous and they don't want me following in her footsteps.

CARMEN
Why do they think your mom is dangerous?

Beat.

PENNY
I'm not sure, to be honest. My mom lost her memories from before she had me, and any time I ask someone around here they call the guards before I can get my question out.

CARMEN
Can they prove she did anything wrong?

PENNY

No.

CARMEN

Then shouldn't she be able to go free? I thought she was innocent until proven guilty.

PENNY

Heh. That'd be nice. You're not from around here, are you?

Beat.

CARMEN

I guess not.

PENNY

You guess?

CARMEN

I...don't know where I am.

Beat.

PENNY

What do you mean?

CARMEN

I don't know. Where are we, exactly? It didn't look like the lake.

PENNY

(Sarcastically)
Well, we are in a jail cell-

CARMEN

(Sarcastically)
Okay! I know that!

Penny laughs sadistically.

PENNY

We're in Arbol.

CARMEN

Ere-bull?

PENNY

Close enough.

CARMEN

So where's Ere-bull?

PENNY

It's a town in the southeast province of Dostani.

CARMEN

Dostani?

PENNY

Yeah. The Kingdom of Dostani.

Cam's blood runs a little cold.

CARMEN

Kingdom?

PENNY

Yeah. How lost are you?

Carmen gives her a worried look.

How did you get here? In that ditch I found you in?

CARMEN

I...

Carmen starts to cry.

PENNY

Cameron?

CARMEN

(sobbing)

Sorry, it's been a long week and a long day and I don't know what's going on. This morning I woke up and went to school and was mad at my mom and the jewelry store guy gave me this stupid bracelet and I threw it cause I was mad and then a freaking hole appeared in the ground and I fell in and landed in the ditch. And now this stupid thing is stuck to my hand and I don't know what to do about it! And you found me, and the guards found us, and now...I'm here. But I don't know where "here" is or why I'm here or how I can get back home. I just wanna go home!

Carmen continues to cry for a bit.

Penny gives him space to let it out.

PENNY

It's okay. I'm actually not from around here either.

CARMEN

I'm sure.

PENNY

No, really! Well, we're from Dostani, but we don't really have a home. My mom and I are nomads. We travel around looking for a bed, a meal, a kind soul. Something.

Beat.

What's your home like, Cameron?

CARMEN

Sniff. It's nice. It's quiet. Well, no, it's not quiet, I just...there's this lake near my house that I go to, to get away from all the noise. It's so peaceful there. When the sky is clear and the wind isn't blowing, the lake looks like glass. It's so beautiful.

PENNY

It sounds it. What do you do over there?

CARMEN

Write music, mostly. Homework. Unwind. I don't know why nobody else goes over there, but I'm glad they don't. It's so...calm.

Beat.

How am I ever going to get back there?

PENNY

I think I might be able to help, actually.

CARMEN

R-really?

PENNY

Yeah. My mo -

She catches herself and looks around to make sure no one can hear.

(Quieter)

I know of a massive library with books from all over, from fables to research to history. Maybe we can find something in one of those old books to help you get back home!

CARMEN

Yeah!

Cam sulks a little bit.

But first we have to get out of here. Do you know how long they'll keep us in here for?

PENNY

Not sure. But with both of our "situations", I doubt it's anytime soon.

Carmen slumps back to sadness.

He fiddles with the iron bars a bit, but nothing happens. This goes on for a few seconds.

Penny notices some dust kicking up but doesn't think anything of it.

Carmen gets some rust on his hands from the metal bars.

CARMEN

Uck.

PENNY

What?

CARMEN

This rust is terrible. I'm getting it all over.

PENNY

(excitedly)

Did you say rust?

CARMEN

(confused)

Yeah?

PENNY

Could you scrape some off and toss it over here?

Carmen gives her a confused glare.

PENNY (CONT'D)
I know how to get us out of here.
Will you trust me?

Carmen doesn't respond, then nods.

He starts scraping off as much rust from the iron bars as he can.

CARMEN
How much do you need?

PENNY
Not much, just enough to smear.

CARMEN
Okay, got it. Ready?

PENNY
Ready.

Carmen tosses it over to Penny's cell.

Penny catches some of it, but some of it falls to the ground.

CARMEN
Sorry! Do you need more?

PENNY
No, no, this is enough. Keep watch?

CARMEN
(uncertain)
For...guards?

PENNY
(confused and sarcastic)
Yes.

CARMEN
O-okay.

Penny takes out her wand, which is disguised in a hidden place on her body, easily mistaken for jewelry or to be missed altogether.

It glows and morphs into a sturdy wooden wand with a clear gemstone that encircles the center.

Carmen doesn't see the magical transformation, but he suddenly sees the wand.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
They let you keep that?

PENNY

They can never find it on me.

CARMEN

You've been here before?!

PENNY

Yes, that's why they put me in a cell with immaculate iron bars. Now keep watch and stand back. This might get dusty.

Penny smears the rust on the gemstone of the wand.

She takes a deep breath.

The gemstone begins to glow.

She paints the iron bars with the wand and they begin to rust, aging years in mere seconds.

The iron bars, from top to bottom, crumble to the ground.

Once Carmen realizes what he's seeing he begins to panic.

CARMEN

Ah, AH, AH, AH!

PENNY

Shh! You're gonna get us caught.

CARMEN

Wha-what did you do?

Penny picks up some of the rust that fell on the ground.

PENNY

Little alchemy spell. Had enough rust to take care of these bars, just need a little more for yours-

Penny notices Carmen cowering in the corner like he has just seen a ghost.

What's wrong?

Beat. Carmen calms his breath.

CARMEN

You have a magic wand?

Beat.

PENNY
 (gently)
 Yes.

Beat.

CARMEN
 This is real, isn't it?

Penny is taken back by this.

PENNY
 You really are telling the truth,
 aren't you?

Beat.

Let's get you out of here.

Penny starts to do the spell to Carmen's door.

She puts her wand away, this time as a ring on her finger.

Carmen beholds the sight for a second.

Alright, I know a way out, but we
 have to be quiet. I don't know if
 I'll be able to get us out of here
 again. Can you be quiet, Cameron?

Beat.

CARMEN
 (considering)
 Yeah, I can.

INT. PRISON HALLWAYS. AFTERNOON.

They sneak through the halls and slip past a few guards.

They also grab their confiscated stuff.

After a bit of success, Carmen's phone blares.

PHONE
 (loud, monotone, and
 annoying)
 Reminder: charge your hearing aids.
 Reminder: charge your hearing aids.
 Reminder: charge your hearing aids.

The guards immediately notice and get closer to investigate.

PENNY
 What is that?!

CARMEN
It's a reminder to charge my
hearing aids!

Carmen is trying to shut off his phone while saying this.

Penny looks utterly confused.

PENNY
What is that?

CARMEN
My phone!

PENNY
Here I thought you were scared of
magic?!

CARMEN
Look out!

Carmen saves Penny from getting attacked by a guard.

Carmen frantically looks for a way past the guards, but there isn't one.

He decides to take another turn.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
This way!

PENNY
Cameron, that is not an exit!

CARMEN
We're not making it past those
guards. We have to find another way
out!

Side note: the way Penny was planning to take them got blocked off by the walking guards. They were waiting for them to leave when Carmen's phone went off, causing a distraction.

Carmen takes Penny through some hallways and turns. He doesn't know where he is going, but he is very good at deducing where he is, picking up on context clues, and figuring things out in his head. As they run, more guard commotion can be heard.

In the previous escape scene, Carmen and Penny get into more combat and fist-fights. They aren't able to overpower the guards, just outsmart them and get a little lucky. There is a fight scene right after the phone blares, and

another one while they're running. Realizing what he's up against prompts Carmen to ask Penny about the wand.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
What can you do with that wand?

Sounds of more guards come from all over.

PENNY
All sorts of things.

CARMEN
(not rude)
Specifics, Penny!

PENNY
Anything, just about. It depends on
the fuel.

CARMEN
Fuel?

PENNY
Yes, fuel. That's why I needed the
rust; I can perform any spell based
on its fuel.

Carmen stops. Music stops.

CARMEN
Seriously?

PENNY
Yes, now what are you thinking?

Carmen looks around.

CARMEN
I'm working on it!

Carmen grabs a nearby torch.
Fire spell!

PENNY
I can't absorb fire!

CARMEN
What do you mean, 'you can't absorb
fire'?

PENNY
I mean, I can't absorb fire,
Cameron!

CARMEN

How can a magic wand absorb rust
but not fire?

PENNY

Have you ever tried to smear fire
on something, Cameron? Doesn't
exactly go well!

CARMEN

Smear fire - what about the coals?!

PENNY

I -

Penny has a blank stare on her face. She'd never thought of
that before.

The flaming ones? I've never tried
that before.

CARMEN

Can you try it while I think of a
plan b?

PENNY

(nods)

Hm.

Carmen studies the area and plans their escape.

Penny absorbs the hot coals.

She attempts a fire spell successfully and plays around with
it for about 5 literal seconds.

PENNY (CONT'D)

The coals worked!

CARMEN

Get as much as you can! I don't
know how much we're going to need.

PENNY

Right.

Carmen continues studying the area for a moment.

CARMEN

This way!

They run to the end of the hallway and see a heavy wooden
door with a giant iron lock on it.

Carmen almost runs into the foyer, but Penny grabs him and hides him around the corner. There aren't many guards at the entrance, but it would take too long to get the door open before they get caught.

The sound of guards thundering up the hall increases.

PENNY

What are you doing?

CARMEN

Escaping!

PENNY

Oh, brilliant idea, Cameron. Just leave through the front door, nobody will notice.

CARMEN

If it wasn't locked, we could make it. Do you have any rust left?

PENNY

I'm not sure I have enough to take down that door.

CARMEN

Can you try?

PENNY

If I wanted to go back to jail, sure!

Carmen studies the area for a moment.

He rummages around in his backpack.

He grabs his rubbing alcohol and contemplates.

CARMEN

I've got an idea. Block off the hallways with as thick of a fire as you can. Save enough to light up that door.

PENNY

So you're new AND you're insane. If the guards don't get to us, the fire will! And even more guards are outside!

CARMEN

Then this will work. Trust me?

Beat.

Penny looks utterly confused, but seeing his face she decides to trust him.

Penny nods.

After you block the guards, get behind me. Then send the rest of your fire power to light up the door.

PENNY

Okay.

CARMEN

Let's go!

The two of them book it for the entrance.

When people come around to stop them Penny blockades them in with fire.

Carmen rushes over to tie a sealed bottle of rubbing alcohol to the iron gates.

Carmen takes a panted breath.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

I hope this works. You ready?

Beat.

Penny gets under cover with Cam.

PENNY

Ready.

CARMEN

Light it up! Close your eyes and block your ears!

Penny casts the spell and lights up the door.

Guards on the other side are trying to open the door, preparing for a fight.

Guards inside are getting around the fire.

Carmen and Penny hide their faces in cover.

The bottle lights and explodes. Debris and smoke spatters everywhere.

Carmen and Penny have a few scrapes and burns, but they are otherwise fine.

When the smoke starts to clear Penny opens her eyes and gazes awestruck at the destruction.

Penny realizes that the door is wide open and with the smoke and commotion, this is the perfect opportunity.

PENNY
(loud but hushed)
Come on! We can make it to the library.

Carmen follows close behind her.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON CELL COURTYARD. LATE AFTERNOON.

They make it through the commotion unnoticed.

Most people are wondering what in Dostani is going on.

Penny quickly leads Carmen through the town to the forest.

Carmen starts to go into the forest, but Penny stops him.

Before they escape to Penny's house, Carmen stops running to help someone hurt in the explosion. He saves her life. They can't make each other out, and the woman never finds out who helped her. Penny thinks he's crazy, but in the commotion and haze Cam and Penny escape.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEARING. LATE AFTERNOON.

PENNY
Woah!

CARMEN
What?

PENNY
You can't go in there without a map. You'll get lost.

CARMEN
I can find my way around the woods pretty we-

PENNY
It's the Enchanted Woods, Cameron.

Beat.

CARMEN
Oh.

The gemstone on Penny's wand glows.

PENNY
This way.

The two enter the forest, hand-in-hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENCHANTED WOODS. LATE AFTERNOON.

After an eerie minute of twists and turns that don't seem to lead anywhere, Penny stops.

She lets go of Carmen's hand and starts to look around for something.

CARMEN
This is a...nice home you've got here?

PENNY
(sarcastically)
Oh why, thank you! Some of the trees are brand new and the furniture has such a natural look, don't you think?

CARMEN
Uhm...

PENNY
Now, stand here for a moment please?

Carmen listens.

Now, it may get dark for a minute, but you'll be fine. I've performed this spell two times and only one came out missing their eyes.

CARMEN
What?!

She casts the spell before Carmen has a chance to object.

Carmen finds himself in a dark hallway.

Penny soon arrives after him.

PENNY

Hello!

CARMEN

Penny! I can't see. Do I still have my eyes?

PENNY

Oh dear. We're in broad daylight, you can't see anything?

CARMEN

No! I - I can feel my eyes though! Did the spell blind me? Did the darkness wear off yet? I can't -

Penny is laughing her butt off as Carmen says these things.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

Why are you laughing?!

Penny casts a light spell. They can both see.

PENNY

It's just a short ranged teleportation spell. It's completely harmless.

CARMEN

Penny! That's not funny!

PENNY

You're right! It's hilarious!

CARMEN

You scared me half to death!

Penny starts to compose herself.

PENNY

(teasing on 'new')
You're right, I'm sorry. You are new.

CARMEN

It's okay. I'll get you back.

Penny looks playfully offended.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
So you don't really live outside in
those woods?

PENNY
No.

She begins to open the door.

PENNY (CONT'D)
I live here.

CARMEN
Woah.

PENNY
I know, right?

CARMEN
You live here?

PENNY
Yes! When my mom was free we lived
together, but it's been just me for
a while.

CARMEN
What are all these?

PENNY
Family heirlooms and magical
artifacts.

CARMEN
What do they do?

PENNY
All sorts of things.

CARMEN
(sarcastically)
I need specifics, Penny.

PENNY
(playing along)
Oh, what for? You tryin' to make a
skylight?

They laugh.

That was incredible, though! What
on Dostani did you do to that door?

CARMEN

I had a bottle of cleaning alcohol in my backpack. I usually use it to clean my hearing aids, but this was more important.

PENNY

(struggling to pronounce)
Cleaning alcohol, hearing aids, and that incessant noise box! Where exactly did you say you were from?

CARMEN

Erth.

NOT Earth.

PENNY

I have so many questions.

CARMEN

So do I. But first, got any of that...um...

Penny looks perplexed.
Eye-dull-wood?

PENNY

Idlewood, that's right! Yes, come here with me. Let's get cleaned up.

The two laugh and talk into the night as we pan to the clear moonlit sky.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLOWN-UP DOOR. NIGHT.

A few high-ranking officials are discussing something in the torchlight while some clean up the debris.

Enter Captain William, the leader of the province. He is a tall, quiet, menacing gentleman in formal captain's clothing. The people around him go to attention when they see him. He rushes to the Guard Head and speaks with a weak Irish accent that's clearly trying to mask his British accent.

WILLIAM

Is anyone injured?

GUARD HEAD

Not seriously, no. A few broken bones, deep cuts and burns, but everyone is otherwise safe and accounted for.

WILLIAM

Did any prisoners escape?

Beat.

They're afraid to answer.

William looks at them compassionately.

GUARD HEAD

Laurella's daughter, sir.

WILLIAM

(sighs)

Anyone else?

Beat.

GUARD HEAD

H-her accomplice.

WILLIAM

Accomplice? Who on Dostani would work with her?

GUARD HEAD

A boy named Cameron, sir.

WILLIAM

(confused)

Cameron? Last name?

GUARD HEAD

Unknown.

WILLIAM

Can you describe him for me?

GUARD HEAD

Um...young boy, blonde hair, bark skin tone,

WILLIAM

Oak or pine?

GUARD HEAD

Oak.

WILLIAM

Interesting.

He pauses for a moment.

Beat.

They don't know what he's thinking.

Does anyone know where he was from?
How he got through the city walls?
Or the Enchanted Woods?

GUARD HEAD

We don't know, sir. We've run full reports on him, but it doesn't match up with anything we have records of.

WILLIAM

What do you mean by "anything we have records of"?

Beat.

The guard head doesn't know what to say.
Did you run a potion test on him?

GUARD HEAD

Yes, sir.

WILLIAM

And what were the results?

GUARD HEAD

Inconclusive.

WILLIAM

And you ran it twice?

GUARD HEAD

Thrice, sir. We can show you the reports.

William's face is amazed, but not angry or stressed. He is lost in thought, putting puzzle pieces together.

GUARD HEAD (CONT'D)

One of our guards overheard his conversation with Laurella's daughter. We can't vet his story yet, but he said he came here through some kind of magical hole in his bracelet.

Beat.

William gets a look of realization in his eye.

WILLIAM
(clearly referring to something)
A bracelet? What did it look like?

GUARD HEAD
Um...gold? Guards tried to confiscate it but it wouldn't come off.

WILLIAM
(somewhat confused)
Hmm. Do we know where the prisoners went?

GUARD HEAD
Into the Enchanted Woods, sir.

WILLIAM
Hmr. Of course.

William walks over to the ruins of the prison door entrance and studies it.

Find out what kind of magic was used to accomplish this. Do not leave out any possibilities. We are dealing with a new kind of magic that we have never seen before from a foreigner we know nothing about. Our people could be in danger. Be on guard, but do not cause a panic. Do you understand?

GUARD HEAD
Yes, sir.

WILLIAM
Head to the capital tomorrow to run a full potion examination on any trace we have of the boy. I want to rule out any natural causes. At daybreak have the guards clean up what's left and begin organizing repairs. I want a full report on your findings no later than three before Festivia. If this boy truly is a threat, we need to neutralize it. For now, tend to the wounded.

(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Make sure you ask for help if you
need it. Getting this job done
right is the top priority now.

GUARD HEAD
Understood, sir.

WILLIAM
Now, get the sentry from her post.
Have her meet me in Laurella's cell
immediately.

For the feature, there will be a break here where we go to Penny and Carmen talking to each other after healing. Penny is showing Carmen all her cool magic stuff, and Carmen is showing Penny all his cool Erth stuff. They reminisce about their pasts and families; this is where they get into each of their pasts and what's really going on in their lives.

Actually, I think that'll be more the next episode.

This is an intense scene where we see the wreckage of everything that's happened, what Cam did to help, and how this world handles emergencies. Capt. Will is a tall, dark, intimidating figure with a commanding presence. I want to make that clear.

CUT TO:

INT. PENNY'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

Penny tends to Carmen's wounds.

Penny finishes mixing some ingredients in a bowl. Carmen sits in a nearby chair, tightening the bandage around his ankle.

Penny walks over to give Carmen the mixture.

CARMEN
(pronouncing it correctly)
Is that Idlewood?

PENNY
It's a mixture. It's mostly
Idlewood, but it's got some ground
roots and fruit seeds to help close
the wound and ease the sting.

Penny takes her wand as it morphs into a gentle brush, the gemstone in the center.

Carmen stares in amazement. She smears some of the mixture on the gemstone.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Now hold still.

The wand glows gently, the color a strong spring green. She gently brushes the wand over his cuts, but when it touches his skin he winces.

CARMEN
(in mild pain, not screaming)
Ah!

PENNY
Sorry. It does sting.

Carmen eases, prepared this time.

He shoots Penny a look of affirmation to continue.

Penny tries again with her wand, slower and more careful.

Carmen eases as he gets used to the pain.

Penny finishes to brush his arm.

PENNY (CONT'D)
(smiling)
Any others?

Carmen and Penny looks around his body for more injuries.

CARMEN
I've got a burn here, a scrape here, and I'm bruised over here. Does that thing work for bruises?

PENNY
Of course.

Penny continues tending to Carmen's wounds.

Beat.

CARMEN
(curiously)
So, what is Idlewood exactly? Is it a plant, part of an animal, something else?

PENNY

It's a birch that grows best where it's wet, warm, and shady. Partial shade is important. There's not a lot of places in the province it can grow well, but certain parts of these woods have a harvest.

CARMEN

So it's rare?

PENNY

Yes. It's a bit of a scarce resource. That's why it helps to mix it with other things.

CARMEN

Well wait, I don't want to use it all on you.

PENNY

I'll have none of that. You're hurt. Besides, when I use it as fuel for a spell, it's much more efficient.

CARMEN

(learning)
Oh. Cool!

Beat. Penny continues to cover his wounds.

Carmen watches in amazement.

He notices some injuries over her; on her neck, on her arms, her knee.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

You've got some wounds too. Want me to try to use the wand?

PENNY

You can't use the wand. It's blood magic. Only me and my mom can use it now. And I can take care of myself.

Penny turns to clear up some of her own wounds.

Penny grabs a bit more mixture for the spell.

Carmen notices a bad tear in the back of her shirt.

CARMEN
Hey, turn around for a second?

PENNY
Hm?

CARMEN
Turn around? I think your shirt is torn. Are you hurt?

PENNY
Oh no, this is one of my favorites.

She looks over at the hole.
Tch, ugh. But no, I don't feel anything.

Penny turns around. There is a noticeable wound on her left shoulder.

CARMEN
You've definitely got a wound back here. Do you mind if I see it? I want to see how bad it is.

PENNY
(playfully, but calmly)
Well what else are you gonna do, spit on it?

Carmen shoots her a look, grossed out. He laughs. So does Penny.

CARMEN
Gross.

He gently goes to touch her wound. After a second, she writhes in pain.

PENNY
(in pain)
Aahhgh!

Carmen immediately takes his hand off her shoulder.

After a second Penny takes her main shirt off enough to see the shoulder wound. It's much larger than they thought, spanning from the edge of her left shoulder blade, across her shoulder, ending near her arm and collar bone.

Penny looks to see some of the damage herself. What she can see isn't pretty.

CARMEN

Penny, that looks pretty bad. Do you have another brush or something?

PENNY

Yeah but they're not good for wounds; they hurt so much more. How big is it?

CARMEN

Goes across your whole left shoulder.

Carmen thinks for a brief moment.

Want me to guide the wand?

PENNY

Cameron, I already told you it's blood magic. It won't work for you.

CARMEN

I know. But I can guide the wand. You can't see the wound, but can you reach back here? You hold the wand and perform the spell. I'll guide your hands.

Penny considers for a moment. She shrinks a bit into herself.

PENNY

I've never had anyone guide my wand before.

CARMEN

Penny, you're hurt. I can help you. Will you let me?

Beat.

PENNY

Alright.

Penny's wand glows.

Carmen gets on the ground next to her.

Penny offers Carmen her hand.

Carmen takes it and guides it over the wound.

He starts at the farthest part.

CARMEN
You okay here?

PENNY
Yeah.

CARMEN
Good, that's as far as the wound goes. Now hold still. I've been told this might sting a little.

Penny smiles and chuckles.

Carmen guides her hand across the entire wound. Penny winces in pain, more than Carmen did, but doesn't let up.

Penny relaxes as she gets used to the pain.

The scene is quiet and intimate. Carmen guides her wand gently and tenderly over the entire wound. He pays clear attention to make sure he doesn't miss anything, making consistent, intentional movements.

Penny starts to feel better, and her face shows it.

Carmen slowly moves his way towards Penny's side to reach her arm. Penny can see the wound now but she doesn't stop Carmen.

Instead, Penny stares at him, realizing how nice it is to have someone who cares so much. People don't usually take care of her.

Carmen finishes brushing her shoulder, arm, and collar bone.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
There. That's all of it.

Carmen looks at Penny, looking at him, and suddenly realizes how close he is to her.

Carmen quickly and respectfully (not awkwardly) backs away.

He looks away, respectfully, and hands Penny her shirt.

Penny takes the shirt and puts it on.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
Here you go.

PENNY
(admiring, but not over-
the-top)
Thank you.

Beat. Penny's main shirt is on.

CARMEN
So, how does it feel?

PENNY
(genuinely)
Still stings a bit. But I couldn't
have done a better job if I did it
myself.

Carmen smiles.

Carmen explores his arm wound with the mixture on it. He
touches it, but it doesn't smear away. It does sting, though.

CARMEN
(from the sting)
Ah! So how long will this take to
heal?

PENNY
If we rest well, it'll just be a
flesh-wound by sun-up.

CARMEN
(theatrically)
'Tis but a flesh wound.

PENNY
(confused)
What?

CARMEN
(realizing)
Eh - never mind.

Small beat.

Carmen looks her in the eye. Genuinely, not romantically.

CARMEN (CONT'D)
(genuinely, not
romantically)
Thank you, Penny. From the moment I
got here you've been nothing but
helpful. You helped me feel safe
when I got here, you're helping me
heal, you helped me break out of
jail.

She laughs.

This situation is crazy and I don't know where I am or how I'm gonna get home.

She shoots Carmen an empathetic look.
But I'm really glad you're the one who helped me out of that hole back there.

Penny blushes and fidgets a bit, but it's not overt. You won't notice it unless you're paying attention.

PENNY

I...I don't know what to say. I'm not usually the one helping others out, they're usually the ones helping me. You wouldn't believe the situations I've had to get out of.

CARMEN

Oh I can imagine. Life on the run is a bit uh...new, don't you think?

Beat.

PENNY

(in playful disbelief)
You did not just say that.

CARMEN

(feigning confidence)
Whaat? I mean I -

PENNY

(not cringing)
Do you even know what that means?

CARMEN

(suddenly anxious)
I don-I mean-uh-I guess-I can-

PENNY

(laughing)
YOU'RE SO RIGHT! Oh, that's got to be the funniest thing I've heard all day!

CARMEN

(realizing, laughing too)
Yeah?

PENNY

You learn quick, don't you?

CARMEN

I do.

The two laugh together into the night.

Pan out to the night sky as we transition.

This will somehow transition to what we see them coming into in the last scene, where they are prepping for bed.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL. NIGHT.

A woman who resembles Penny is seen inside. This is Laurella, Penny's mother. She is thin and unkempt from her time in prison, but has an internal fire and determination that they can't extinguish.

Captain William and the sentry guard walk up to her.

Beat.

WILLIAM

Laurella Doe. I have a proposition for you.

LAURELLA

What do you want now? I already told you, I don't know how to get-

WILLIAM

(interrupting)

That's not what I'm here for. You remember how to get to your hideout in the Enchanted Woods, do you not?

Laurella gives a stern, hateful glare.

LAURELLA

If you think I'm just gonna hand my daughter over to you-

WILLIAM

(interrupting)

I don't need your daughter. Not anymore.

Laurella's face reads confused, intrigued. This has never happened before.

I'm actually willing to grant you and your daughter immunity and forgive all charges. I just need your help with a few things, if you'll hear me out.

Laurella considers and softens. She is listening.

LAURELLA
What do you want?

WILLIAM
Your daughter escaped again today.

LAURELLA
(proud mama)
Well, what've I told you? You can't keep her down.

WILLIAM
She wasn't alone.

Beat. Laurella pays closer attention to what he is saying. She had a young boy with her, about her age, when she was arrested. She would not have escaped without him.

LAURELLA
Okay. What's your point?

The click of the lock echoes as the cell door opens.

Laurella looks at William strangely.

WILLIAM
Come with me.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. REMAINS OF THE FRONT DOOR. NIGHT.

Menacing music plays as we see the full extent of the damage done. The door is blown to bits, the windows are cracked, frames and hinges nearby are hanging by a thread. Any wall fixtures are damaged, fallen, or crooked.

Some guards are picking up pieces from the front door, salvaging what's left. Some guards are healing others, and some other people walk around with bruises, casts, and bandages.

Some guards are gathering as much evidence as they can to identify what went wrong.

Laurella looks around, admiring the chaos.

LAURELLA
What...is this?

WILLIAM
(a bit sarcastically)
The remains of the front door.

LAURELLA
How...how did this happen?

WILLIAM
(beat)
That boy did this, somehow. I told you, she would not have escaped today if it wasn't for him. That boy's magic...somehow brought this to our doorstep.

LAURELLA
(to herself)
What does that mean?

A guard urgently comes up to William.

GUARD
Captain, sir. We're in need of a larger supply of Idlewood. Permission to open the reserves?

WILLIAM
(compassionately)
Permission granted. Don't be wasteful, but don't be cheap. Spare nothing to heal everyone involved. Tell the commander he has orders from me to ask the neighboring towns for help and more supplies, if needed.

GUARD
Yes, sir.

WILLIAM
(smiling compassionately)
Dismissed.

LAURELLA
(in wonder)
This is incredible...how is this possible? I've never seen magic like this before.

WILLIAM
(skeptically)
Some say it was a blast spell or a
pressure potion.

LAURELLA
Oh sure, but the resources needed
to achieve something this scale - I
didn't even know that door could
come down. Isn't there a protection
spell-

WILLIAM
(concerned)
Protection spell, yes. Nothing
should have made this come down.

LAURELLA
(not really listening)
Besides, Penny can't do anything
like that. You know if she
could've, she would've.

WILLIAM
We're aware. It is
certainly...foreign. Ethereal, in a
way.

LAURELLA
(studying the magic,
noticing traces of
Penny's wand)
Incredible.

William walks up to Laurella.

She stands and faces him, non-confrontationally. For a
moment, it's almost as if they're equals. William is only a
touch taller than she is.

WILLIAM
I want the boy. He has posed a
significant threat to our people,
and he is with your daughter. So I
need your help to find him and
bring him to me. In return, you and
your daughter will have your
freedom. You can come and go from
this province and the rest of the
kingdom as you wish, never to fear
the guards again.

Laurella goes wide-eyed.

William extends his hand.

Do we have a-

LAURELLA

(sternly interrupting)

I want it in writing. 5 times.
Signed and stamped with the
official seal from the capital.

Beat.

Laurella shakes William's hand.

But you have yourself a deal.

Add more detail and context to this scene. Really relish in the mystery both from the audience's perspective and from the characters'.

We've done so already, but we can always add more.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURELLA'S CASTLE/CARMEN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Penny opens the door for Carmen, who is holding an armful of world-relevant toiletries and bedding.

Maybe make them come in singing or talking about something? Maybe writing a song together? Something to add some personality.

PENNY

You can stay here for now. My room is a few corners that way, and the exterior door is behind you in the corner.

CARMEN

What do I need that for?

PENNY

(confused, but genuine)

Do people not have to use the loo where you're from?

CARMEN

Got it! No, we do. Thank you.

PENNY

Of course. I know this is a very odd situation for the both of us, but we will make the best of it.

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

In the morning we will crack open that library and answer any questions you may have.

CARMEN

Wow. That's amazing! I...

Beat.

thank you, Penny. You've just...I've just...been so scared today. You're really, um...I...thank you.

PENNY

You're welcome, Cameron. You too.

She smiles awkwardly as she says this.

Carmen blushes.

CARMEN

Thanks.

Beat.

They stare at each other for a moment.

Carmen breaks eye contact, a bit awkwardly.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

I...um...I'll go to bed now. Sorry.

PENNY

Oh, no, no worries, fine by me. Goodnight.

CARMEN

Night.

Penny leaves.

Carmen settles in, taking in all the wonderful things that have happened today.

He takes a deep breath, places his hearing aids in their case, blows out the candle, and lies down.

He closes his eyes.

Beat.

He makes the sign of the cross with his fingers, folds his hands and starts to pray.

I don't know if you can hear me,
but...please, bring me back home. I
need to see my mom again. The last
time I saw her...I yelled at her. I
screamed at her. I'm sorry. Please,
I want to make things right. Help
me...do whatever I need to do to
get back to her. Our father, who
art in Heaven, hallow be thy
name...

THE CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON THE RING. THE AUDIO SLOWLY FADES OUT.

CUT TO BLACK.