

Nobody's Burden

Written by

Kevin Goodman

Copyright (c) 2025

Final Draft

Cell: 916-995-6360

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

The REVVING of a school bus engine recedes as it drives away after dropping off a group of middle school-aged children. DREW WILLIAMS (11), a paraplegic boy, who is wielding forearm crutches and dons a backpack, YELLS at his brother BEN WILLIAMS (13).

A group of kids, also wearing backpacks, surround Ben and JESSE (14) as they engage in a fistfight. The encircling kids egg the two on as they brawl. Jesse gets more shots in than Ben.

DREW

Stop! Ben, stop! Let's just go!

Ben hears this, but stays in the fight. Jesse lands a punch across his jawline causing Ben to fall backwards onto the ground.

JESSE

Stay down, punk-ass.

Jesse LAUGHS and walks away with the group of kids. Drew makes his way over to Ben, who's still plopped on the ground. Ben wipes away some blood from his lip.

EXT. WILLIAM'S RESIDENCE DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ben walks at half his normal speed to accommodate Drew up the driveway to their home.

BEN

I hate that idiot. What he said to you was the last straw.

DREW

I know. He's always been a jerk. We just need to ignore him.

Ben shakes his head and SCOFFS. His lip is still busted from the fight.

BEN

Alright, whatever. Just don't tell Mom and Dad about this, okay?

DREW

'Kay

INT. STEVE AND DEANNA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ben and Drew enter their parents' bedroom. Ben makes a beeline for their bathroom, while Drew traipses towards his dad's nightstand.

INT. BEDROOM BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben rummages through their medicine cabinet.

BEN

We have to hurry up before mom gets back from the store.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Drew peruses the contents on the nightstand, which include an alarm clock, empty cup, a platter for a wedding ring and watch, and a phone charger. He slowly opens the top drawer. He sees some pens, a magazine, and a holstered revolver.

INT. BEDROOM BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben grabs a tube of antibiotic cream and two bandages. He turns to leave.

BEN

'Kay, got it. Let's go.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben observes Drew peeking into the top drawer of their dad's nightstand.

BEN

Hey! We're not supposed to look in there!

Drew SLAMS the nightstand drawer shut.

DREW

Sorry.

Ben SIGHS.

BEN

Come on, let's go.

Ben leads them out of the bedroom. Drew shuffles behind with light SQUEAKING coming from his forearm crutches as they move. He looks one last time in the direction of the nightstand, before exiting the bedroom.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

STEVE WILLIAMS (39) and DEANNA WILLIAMS (38) sit at opposite heads of the dinner table, while Ben and Drew sit next to each other on a bench. Plates and utensils CLANK as each family member consumes their meal.

DEANNA

So, how was school, you two?

BEN

Good!

DREW

Good.

Deanna nods in reassurance.

DEANNA

(quietly)

Good.

STEVE

Drew, could you pass the green beans,
please?

Drew, who is the closest to Steve, stands up with one crutch and slides the bowl of green beans across the table to his dad. He returns to his spot on the bench.

STEVE (cont'd)

Thanks, buddy.

Deanna eyes Ben closely. Ben glimpses at her, realizing she's staring at the antibiotic cream sheen on his lip. He darts his eyes back to his plate.

DEANNA

What happened to your lip, honey?

BEN

Oh, nothing... I accidentally stabbed myself with a fork at lunch.

Deanna looks at him incredulously.

DEANNA

Oh, gosh! I'm sorry, honey.

She rubs Ben's shoulder.

DEANNA (cont'd)
Did you find the antibiotic gel out
of our bathroom cabinet?

Ben nods, eyes still glued to his plate.

STEVE
They're still giving you guys metal
forks to use? That's what we had.
They really need to change it to
plastic. Maybe I'll mention that at
the next PTA meeting.

Deanna SIGHS. All four continue to finish their dinner in silence. Ben and Drew slowly turn their heads to look at each other for two seconds. They each break eye contact. Neither of them chew their food. Ben looks at his plate, while Drew stares straight ahead into nothingness.

INT. BEN AND DREW'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's close to midnight. Ben is fast asleep until he hears SHOUTING. He wakes up to the hallway light shining on his face. Their bedroom door is wide open. He notices Drew standing behind the railing, on the second floor of their home.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Drew is still as he listens to his parents ARGUE in the kitchen below.

DEANNA
Steve! You knew we had his third
surgery coming up! Why did you-

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

STEVE
We had to! If I didn't make this
payment, they would have foreclosed
on us!

DEANNA
Why couldn't you have called them
first and try to work it out for
later?

STEVE

I DID! But it's already been six months since our last payment. You knew that!

Deanna SIGHS. Both begin to calm down.

INT. BEN AND DREW'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BEN

(whisper-shouts)

Drew! Get back in bed!

Drew ignores his command and remains at the railing.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

STEVE

Look, I can ask Al if I can extend my hours.

DEANNA

You're already working Seven 10s. And I can't work more than ten hours a week, so that I can be here with Drew after school.

Steve and Deanna's voices peter out, as their emotional conversation comes to a head.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Drew grabs a firm grasp on the handles of his forearm crutches, turns around, and stealthily heads for his bedroom.

INT. BEN AND DREW'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Drew silently closes the door behind him. He sits on his bed, leans the crutches up against his nightstand, GRUNTS as he lies down, and pulls the covers over his body. He stares up at the dark ceiling.

While still lying in his sleeping position, Ben slowly tilts his head up to glance at Drew. After a few seconds, he drops his head back down on his pillow, and shuts his eyes.

A beat.

Drew's eyes begin to water. A tear rolls down the side of his face as his eyelids lower.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END