

MEN IN THE PILLOW

By

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FADE IN:

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Typical young boys room - establish

BILLY HAYDEN, 8 years old, wears pajamas covered with planets and stars. His head pressed firmly against a pillow, which is pressed against a wall.

CICILY DONNER, also 8 and MAX HART, 9 - going on 10, stand nearby watching Billy. Cicily wears big, thick rimmed glasses and wears her dark curly hair in pigtails. Max is a good two inches taller than the other two.

MAX  
This is stupid.

CICILY & BILLY  
Shhhh.

Billy adjusts the pillow and tries again, pressing the pillow against the wall with his head.

MAX  
It's just a pillow -

CICILY & BILLY  
Shhhhhh!

Max folds his arms across his chest impatiently as he rolls his eyes.

CICILY  
(to Billy)  
May be you should lay down. You were always laying down before.

Cicily pushes her glasses further up her nose then smugly and over dramatically, for Max's sake, brings her notepad and pen into writing position.

BILLY  
(with head pressed to pillow)  
A bunch of men talking. I don't know...sounds like gibberish.

CICILY  
Give me something.

BILLY  
 (listening intensely)  
 Rose...

BILLY (CONTINUED)  
 ...in...

He adjusts the pillow slightly -

BILLY (CONTINUED)  
 ...felt? I think that's who they are  
 talking about.

Billy removes his head from the pillow -

CICILY  
 Okay. Who's Rose?

BILLY  
 Mean anything to you?

They both shake their heads, 'No'.

BILLY  
 And why is she in felt?

MAX  
 That's it? That's the big deal about  
 the voices in the pillows? It  
 doesn't even make sense.

BILLY  
 Sometimes it makes sense and  
 sometimes it doesn't. You can never  
 tell.

Max turns and heads for the closed bedroom door -

MAX  
 Well, I'm outta here. You coming  
 Cicily?

Cicily sets her pen and paper down on a desk and shrugs at  
 Billy.

CICILY  
 Okay, but I'll take the elevator.

Max stops short of the door and turns back to face them -  
 his interest peaked.

MAX  
 Elevator? What elevator?  
 (looks around the room)  
 Pffft, there's no elevator.

Billy dons a worn cabby hat and flops it on his head. He removes his flannel pajama top revealing a black vest covering an ordinary white t-shirt. He goes to his closet and opens the double doors wide -

Inside the closet he finds a long, dark jacket with a double row of golden buttons that run down the length, he puts the coat on and then parts the hanging clothes from the closet in half, leaving a large space in the middle.

Billy removes his hat and bows politely to Cicily. He holds the hat in the direction of the closet -

BILLY  
 After you Madame.

CICILY  
 Why thank you.

She walks into the open closet and stands in the gap between the parted clothes and turns to face the open doors.

Max peers around a door as Billy joins Cicily in the closet.

MAX  
 You gotta be kiddin' me.

BILLY  
 We going to the ground floor Miss  
 Cicily?

She shakes her head emphatically, 'Yes'.

BILLY  
 (to Max)  
 We are going down. Are you going  
 down or up, Sir?

Max just stares dumbfounded at the two in the closet.

Billy starts to close the doors - Max hops in at the last moment.

INT. CLOSET - SAME

Billy presses a make-believe floor pad of numbers on the inside wall of the closet. An imaginary, electronic DING sounds as he hits the ground floor button.

BILLY  
Going down!

Billy rocks back and forth with his hands behind his back in the semi dark closet. Cicily just stares at the doors patiently until another imaginary, electronic DING finally alerts them to their arrival on the ground floor.

BILLY  
Ground floor!

Max starts to push the doors open - but Billy halts him -

BILLY  
We never get out here.

He pushes a button on the make-believe floor pad with a DING.

They all patiently wait as the elevator makes its silent journey. Another few seconds and a DING marks their arrival at a floor.

BILLY  
Ah, here we are.

Billy politely opens the doors and they all arrive safely back in Billy's bedroom.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - SAME

They all pile out of the closet/elevator and Billy closes the doors, then removes his hat and coat.

MAX  
We never went anywhere!

CICILY  
Of course we did. We went two floors down to the ground floor, then we came back up.

MAX  
(disappointed)  
Whatever...C'mon Cicily let's go.

As they walk to Billy's bedroom door -

MAX  
(whispers to Cicily)  
You do know that's just a closet right?

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Billy watches Cicily and Max as they walk to the stairs. He rocks back and forth on his sock feet, heels to toe. His toes barely going over the line where the bedroom's polished wood floor meets the carpet in the hallway.

Max looks back at Billy rocking in the doorway before he and Cicily disappear down the stairs.

EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As the two kids descend the porch steps -

MAX

So Billy can never leave his room?

CICILY

Nope, not never.

Max looks back at the house and sees Billy sitting in his upstairs bedroom window frame, looking down at them.

MAX

Just like the boy in the plastic bubble?

CICILY

(matter-of-factly)

Yep. He's allergic to everything, even himself. Sometimes he breaks out in big, bumpy, pussie, open wounds just to prove it.

Max scrunches his face up in disgust, he looks sick as they walk on down the sidewalk.

INT. DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

Billy's dad, ROSS HAYDEN, 30s, and his younger brother PETER HAYDEN (UNCLE PETE), 25, are sitting at a dinning room table drinking bottled beer. The sound of someone CLINKING DISHES can be plainly heard nearby.

Ross calls out to his wife BETH through the kitchen doorway

ROSS

Hon? Hey hon...Did I ever tell you about the time Pete split his chin open on the park swing?

BETH (O.C.)  
(calling back)  
Only about fifteen times!

Peter laughs

Ross waves her off -

ROSS  
Don't mind her...I thought you were  
nearly dead. I raced home and got  
mom and dad. And then an ambulance  
came.

PETER  
(showing signs of hearing  
story one too many times)  
Yeah, yeah.

Silence as they stare into space, lost in some memory.

ROSS  
How long you in town for?

PETER  
Couple more weeks. I'm training in  
Vancouver.

ROSS  
You been to the track yet?

PETER  
Not yet. Was kind of hoping you  
could join me tomorrow.

ROSS  
Nah, I wish, but I got to work.

PETER  
Nasty habit.  
(swigs beer)  
How's my favorite nephew?

ROSS  
The same. He won't be able to join  
you either, I'm afraid.

INTERCUT:

INT. BILLY'S ROOM - SAME

Billy is sitting near the ventilation duct on the floor. His arms wrapped around his knees. He listens intently to the conversation between his father and uncle below.

ROSS

Let's see how the dogs are running  
shall we?

Ross wrestles with the local newspaper until he finds the right section and the two men settle in to discuss ways to pick the winning dogs at the race track.

DISSOLVE TO

DAYDREAM SEQUENCE - BILLY'S DAY AT THE RACES

EXT. DOG TRACK STADIUM - DAY

Billy and Uncle Pete are seated in the front row at the crowded racetrack.

Billy eats popcorn and sucks his extra large soda pop from a straw when an announcement comes over the loud speaker.

INTERCUT WITH GREYHOUNDS RACING -

ANNOUNCER

...And they're off! Number Seven  
gets off to a good start, as Number  
Five and Number Three go nose to  
nose.

DOGS ROUND THE BEND

ANNOUNCER (CONTINUED)

They round the first bend and now  
Number Five has made a bold move.  
Yes, it's Number Five in the lead.

DOG NUMBER FIVE PULLS AWAY FROM THE PACK

ANNOUNCER (CONTINUED)

And Number Five down the stretch.

DOG NUMBER FIVE RUNS ALONE OUT FRONT AND CROSSES THE FINISH  
LINE FIRST

ANNOUNCER (CONTINUED)

Yes, ladies and gentleman, Number  
Five wins the first race of the day.  
No need for a camera decision on  
that one!

Billy is jumping up and down in the stands, holding a  
winning ticket, for dog Number FIVE.

We hear the ROAR of the crowd as they CHEER and CLAP.

A quick glance around the crowd and we see that they are not  
clapping and cheering for the winning dog, but they are  
clapping and cheering for Billy -

- A Billy, who now wears several large gold medals around  
his neck and whose popcorn and soda pop has been replaced  
with a large trophy cup filled full of popcorn.

Uncle Pete lifts Billy up, trophy and all, and puts him on  
his shoulders -

UNCLE PETE

My favorite nephew is the winner!  
Billy Hayden, Champion of Champions!

Billy just beams a large smile as Uncle Pete turns him  
around and around for the crowd. Flashes from cameras start  
to flicker.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. BILLY'S ROOM - SAME

Billy is lost in his dream at the dog track.

UNCLE PETE (O.C.)

Billy? Hey, Champ.

Uncle Peter interrupts his dream.

Billy gets up and goes to his bedroom door. Uncle Pete  
stands in the hallway a fair distance from the door.

BILLY

Hey, Uncle Pete.

UNCLE PETE

I haven't showered and been around a  
lot of people today.

BILLY

That's okay. I know.

UNCLE PETE  
So how you been?

BILLY  
I haven't been sick in a good long  
time.

UNCLE PETE  
That's real good Billy.

BILLY  
You going to the dog track tomorrow?

UNCLE PETE  
I sure am.

Billy looks at the ground.

UNCLE PETE  
One day, Billy, I promise. You and  
me at the Dogs.

Billy looks up and halfheartedly smiles at his uncle.

BILLY  
One day.

Without thinking Uncle Pete reaches across the hallway and  
through the invisible security border, that being where the  
hallway carpet meets Billy's wooden floor.

SLOW MOTION CU: of Uncle Pete's hand as it reaches through  
the doorway and tussles Billy's hair -

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Cicily and Max walk up the few steps and cross the porch.  
Cicily rings the front door bell.

A woman in a long skirt and sensible heels answers the door.

The woman is Billy's Mother BETH, late 20s, with a gentle  
nature and kind eyes.

BETH  
I am afraid William is sick today.

CICILY  
Still?

INT. BILLY'S ROOM - DAY

Billy lays in bed. Wads of tissues cover the floor and nightstand near his bed. A half glass of water and a dozen prescription pill bottles cover the rest of the nightstand.

Red, festering pustules cover Billy's face and arms. His eyes are puffy and only half open. He stares at the ceiling.

MONTAGE OF SICK BILLY -

-Billy, looks sickly as he reads a Superman comic book.

-Billy lays in bed staring at the ceiling.

-Billy listens to the voices in his pillow then he writes down on Cicily's notepad -

CU of Notepad with the child written words:

"There are no diseases in outer space."

-Billy curled up in a ball sleeping on top of his bed covers.

-Billy's mom brings him hot chocolate with small marshmallows floating on the top.

-Billy's dad brings him an armful of used books.

-Billy's mom takes his temperature.

-Billy lays in bed staring at the ceiling.

-Billy sleeps soundly under the covers of his bed.

END MONTAGE

INT. BILLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Billy is doing a solar system jigsaw puzzle at his desk when he sneezes, causing the office chair he sits in to roll across the floor. He suddenly spins around and faces the camera - as Elton John's 'ROCKET MAN' begins to play.

BILLY'S ROCKET MAN DREAM SEQUENCE -

Suddenly Billy has a wireless microphone headset and an astronaut helmet on as we hear over the Elton John song -

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)  
We are good to go in  
five...four...three...two...one.

INSERT: Old footage of rocket as it fires up and takes off into the sky and then into space.

As Elton keeps SINGING -

MONTAGE OF BILLY IN OUTER SPACE

-Billy swims around in zero gravity inside his rocket ship.

-Billy on some unknown planets surface, totally fitted with astronautic suit and gear. He sticks a flag into the ground that reads:

BILLY WAS HERE

We hear over the music -

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)  
There is no such thing as disease in  
outer space.

Billy stands proudly next to his flag and waves at the camera. He undoes his helmet and throws it off. It floats away in anti-gravity.

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)  
There is no such thing as disease in  
outer space.

Billy removes his microphone headgear and it floats off.

Billy unzips his space suit and climbs out of it, the suit floats away.

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)  
There is no such thing as disease in  
outer space.

Billy now stands on the dry desolate planet in his flannel space pajama bottoms and a white t-shirt. He reaches down and unbuckles his gravity boots that stay stuck to the planets surface and Billy floats off into space in his sock feet.

-Billy does mid air somersaults over and over as the Elton John song ends

FADE OUT

END OUTER SPACE MONTAGE

FADE IN:

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Billy sleeps soundly in his bed, still slightly rashy.

EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Billy's mom answers the door

BETH  
 (looking down at the  
 Cicily and Max)  
 Hello Cicily, Max.

CICILY  
 Is Billy better yet?

BETH  
 Yes, he is all better.

CICILY  
 So he can play?

BETH  
 Have you both taken showers?

Cicily and Max nod, 'Yes' in unison.

BETH  
 And you haven't touched any plants  
 or other people?

CICILY  
 We are clean.

Beth opens the door and the two children both run up the  
 stair case -

INT. BILLY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Max and Cicily run into Billy's room.

They look around but there is no sign of Billy.

MAX  
 He's not here. Let's go.

CICILY  
 (sits on the bed)  
 He's in the elevator.

Max looks at the closed closet doors and a mischievous look comes over his face -

His hand slowly goes towards the closet door, then his other hand, as he takes the knobs and pulls the closet doors open.

CU of empty closet. The hanging clothes are parted evenly in half with a large gap between them. There is no sign of Billy.

Max moves the hanging clothes around and stands on his tip toes to have a look at the top shelf that holds puzzles and games.

Cicily shoves Max out of the way and quickly shuts the closet doors, throws her back against the closed doors to block Max.

CICILY

What are you doing! It's very dangerous to open the doors when someone is in there. They could get stuck between floors!

MAX

Oh come on Cicily, he's not here.

Cicily goes back to Billy's bed and crosses her arms.

MAX

What are you doing? Let's go!

CICILY

Waiting for Billy.

Max goes and stands near the bedroom door, leans his back against the wall and picks at his fingernails.

They wait a few moments, when Billy explodes out of the closet.

CICILY

Billy!

BILLY

Hey Cic. Hey Max.

Max looks at Billy amazed, then suspiciously at the closet.

CICILY

What took you so long?

BILLY

The things on the fritz again. I got stuck between floors.

Cicily squints her eyes and glowers at Max.

Max rolls his eyes in an 'As if' way.

CICILY  
How are you feeling?

Billy goes to his office chair, sits and whirls around.

BILLY  
Good. You know...

Max goes and joins Cicily on Billy's bed.

BILLY (CONTINUED)  
...but I've had tons of time to think.

CICILY  
Think about what?

BILLY  
You know life and stuff.

Billy continues to rock from side to side in his office chair as he picks at an action figure sticker stuck on the chair arm.

BILLY (CONTINUED)  
(looks at Max)  
I mean how do you really know your alive?

MAX  
(snickers)  
'Cuz your not dead.

BILLY  
(leans forward and looks directly into Max's eyes)  
But how do you know? How do you know your not dead.

MAX  
(slightly uncomfortable under Billy's gaze)  
Because you wouldn't be here if you were dead.

CICILY

Yeah, you'd be in heaven. That's where Critter's, my cat went when she died.

BILLY

(still not taking his eyes off Max)

But how do you know? May be your dead and you don't know your dead, like that guy in that movie and because you don't know, you just keep doing all the things you always do. You don't go to heaven 'cuz you don't know your dead.

MAX

So what are you saying, we could be dead and not know it? I'm talking to you ain't I? You can see and hear me.

BILLY

That's true. And you can see and hear me. So I guess we are not dead.

CICILY

And you can see and hear me so I'm not dead.

Billy doesn't twitch or even move in Cicily's direction.

Max starts to say something, but something about the way Billy's eyes are deadlocked with his, makes him stop. A smile comes over Max's face as he gets the joke.

MAX

(to Billy)

So, what do you want to do today?

Billy gets up and moves to a heaping pile of blankets and sheets.

BILLY

I was thinking about building a tee-pee.

CICILY

Guys. Hello. You can see me right?

Max goes and joins Billy, looking at the blankets.

MAX

Cool. You got something to hold it up?

CICILY  
Guys! I'm here. I'm alive. Can't you see me?

BILLY  
My dad gave me this steel tube. Do you think it will be enough?

Cicily starts to cry -

CICILY  
(screams through her tears)  
I'm not dead! I'm not dead!

Billy looks at Max and frowns, then turns to Cicily -

BILLY  
No, Cicily, your not dead. We can see and hear you.

Cicily won't stop crying, in fact she is crying worse now.

CICILY  
I'm not dead.

MAX  
No, your not dead.

Billy's mothers legs, in a summer dress, appear in Billy's doorway.

BETH  
What is going on up here? Cicily, what's upset you?

CICILY  
(crying)  
I want to go home.

BETH  
(to boys)  
What did you do to upset her?

BILLY  
(looks at the ground)  
She thinks she's dead.

BETH

What! Max, please take Cicily home  
this instant. Cicily, honey, you are  
not dead. You are a beautiful little  
girl, full of life.

Cicily still crying allows Max to lead her out of the room  
and down the hall.

INT. HALLWAY

Through her tears and steamed up glasses she turns back to  
Beth, who watches them from the doorway.

CICILY  
Thank you, Mrs. Hayden. I am glad to  
be alive again.

INT. BILLY'S ROOM - SAME

CU of Billy sitting on floor. He appears even smaller than  
normal and looks ashamed as his mother stands over him, arms  
folded and taps her foot disapprovingly.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

It's early morning, BIRDS CHIRP outside Billy's bedroom  
window.

Billy groggily wakes up, opens one eye.

INSERT: A man sits in Billy's office chair near his bed.

BILLY'S POV: Through one eye, the man is out of focus.

BILLY  
Are you another Doctor?

MAN  
Nope.

Billy slowly opens his other eye.

BILLY'S POV: As he opens his other eye, the man comes into  
sharper focus. The man is in his late 30s and wears a hat.

BILLY  
Who are you?

MAN  
Who do you want me to be?

BILLY

Are you one of the men from my  
pillow?

MAN

I could be. Those are voices from  
the past.

Billy sits up and studies the man -

BILLY

You look a little like my father.  
(then adds)  
And a little like my Uncle Pete.

The man smiles.

BILLY

Grandpa?

GRANDPA/MAN

You're a sharp boy, Billy.

BILLY

But your...

GRANDPA

...dead? Yeah, I know.

BILLY

But your so...

GRANDPA

This is how I remember myself. Much  
better than that cranky old man,  
don't you think?

BILLY

You were never cranky.

GRANDPA

And a kind boy, too.

(thinks a moment)

Which is why it's hard to believe  
you were so mean to that little  
girl.

BILLY

Cicily? I'll make it up to her.

GRANDPA

Good boy, Billy. See that you do.  
 You know you weren't so far off the  
 mark. Some dead people don't know  
 there dead and some people, like  
 myself, stick around - try and help  
 out their loved ones. In fact, when  
 someone we love is in trouble,  
 that's where you'll find us.

BILLY

Is someone you love in trouble?

Grandpa scratches his chin -

GRANDPA

I can't say for sure, but he might  
 be. Did you know I had the same  
 illness you have, when I was a  
 little boy?

BILLY

You did?

GRANDPA

Yes, I did. When I got old and  
 cranky, I forgot about it. And of  
 course, by then there was nobody  
 left who remembered. Of course, they  
 didn't have a big fancy name for it,  
 like they have now. They just said I  
 had 'thin blood'.

BILLY

What's that mean?

Grandpa shrugs -

BILLY

But you got better?

GRANDPA

Yes, I did. I grew out of it. As  
 soon as puberty hit and the hormones  
 kicked in. Bam, I was as good as  
 new. The same thing, most likely,  
 will happen to you.

BILLY

(excited)

When will I get hit?

Grandpa laughs -

GRANDPA

Well, you don't actually get hit by anything. It's a natural part of growing up.

BILLY

(disappointed he won't get hit by anything)

Oh.

GRANDPA

But it will happen soon enough, Billy. In the mean time though you have a wonderful opportunity.

BILLY

I do?

GRANDPA

Absolutely! I know being stuck in here all the time can seem a bit...restricting. You can't go out and play and learn with the other kids, but you have an advantage over the other kids.

BILLY

I do?

GRANDPA

Yes, you do. Those kids, they grow up so fast, always in a hurry to be an adult. Let me tell you, it's not so great. I'd give anything to go back and be a kid again. When all things were innocent and new.

BILLY

Nothing so great about being a kid. 'Specially when you can't even go outside and play ball with your dad.

GRANDPA

Yeah, that would be fun. But Billy, you are so fortunate. So very lucky.

BILLY

I don't feel very lucky.

Grandpa slaps his hands together hard, getting Billy's full attention -

GRANDPA

What if I were to tell you there was a way for you to leave this room and go anywhere you want?

BILLY

I can't leave. I have allergies.

GRANDPA

Yes, I know - that's your body. But your mind isn't sick. Your mind and imagination are clear and fresh and better than most, because you - you use it. The mind is the greatest muscle in your body. And I can show your mind how to leave your body and this room. But you have to practice and learn control and above all else, you can never tell anyone.

BILLY

How?

GRANDPA

Look behind you.

Billy looks behind him and sees himself sleeping peacefully on his pillow -

BILLY

(frightened)

Ahhhh! Am I dead?

GRANDPA

No, Billy, you are not dead. Your consciousness, that part of yourself that dreams and makes you unique - your mind. That's who's talking to me. Your body, is that part laying there asleep. It is this part of you we will work on until you have complete control of it.

Billy's consciousness gets up and jumps up and down on the bed, although the bed doesn't move or even disturb the sleeping Billy.

GRANDPA

With this conscious mind, this part of you, you are as light as air. As light as steam and like thoughts, you can go through walls and...and...

Grandpa prepares to sneeze -

GRANDPA  
Ah, ah, ah...choooooo!

When Grandpa sneezes his snot is bright neon green and it instantly stains the wall next to Billy's bed.

GRANDPA  
Excuse me!

Billy laughs and looks at the goo left on the wall.

Grandpa removes a handkerchief from his pocket and wipes the goo off his hand and then gets up and wipes it off the wall.

GRANDPA  
Did you see that? How fast was that do you think?

BILLY  
Your sneeze?

GRANDPA  
Yes, because that's how fast you can travel with your mind.

He snaps his fingers.

GRANDPA (CONTINUED)  
Like that. Almost instantly. You can travel at the speed of sneeze.

BILLY  
(repeats the words)  
The speed of sneeze.

GRANDPA  
That's right! Now let's get to practicing.