

Geezer

(pilot episode - 'Matty')

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'GEEZER' is the story of a 67-year old man, Marti Jones, who is slowly sliding into the depths of Alzheimer's. His mind fights to relive the memories slowly being stripped from him. In turn are the ramblings of a weathered old man who once again lives through the visions of his past.

A well-traveled and cultured man, Marti contains endless stories from his youth to date. To many, just stories from the good ol' days...but to the lonely Anne Myers, a 47-year old widowed coffee shop owner, these sometimes far fetched stories provide the answers to why one continues to live on...even in the most despairing of moments.

Marti frequents Wings, the small town coffee shop, to share his stories with visitors and locals alike. His tales bring enlightenment, encouragement, and answers to those whom seek them. Sometimes, even to those unaware they were looking.

With every tale, he is taken back to the time of his story. He relives each situation as if he is physically there once again, at that specific time. Constantly switching back and forth between his youth-state to his aged-state, he gets the chance to see each situation again, but through youthful eyes as well as aged ones.

The lucky few who do get to spend time with Marti consider him an angel of sorts. His stories becoming subtle words of wisdom and guidance to those willing to listen and learn.

His stories have helped many faces from all walks of life. Sadly though, there is a price to pay for every trip down memory lane and every person he helps. The price is the loss of a small piece of himself, as every story can only be relived once and then it is gone forever...becoming nothing more than a lost memory.

He never pays mind though, as he does it all for the love of living...

An angel you ask? Sit for a short spell with Marti...then you decide.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Small town with a Midwest feel.

The streets are lined with cracked sidewalks and dozens of dated shops. Most of these shops are still the family owned and operated types.

A few pedestrians shuffle about, mostly elderly running their daily errands. Everyone is dressed in heavy coats as the winter chill has set in.

A quaint little coffee shop sits on nearby corner of an aged intersection.

A small sign dangling just above the entrance SQUEAKS back and forth in the cold winter breeze. The weathered metal sign consists of a small pair of angel wings and reads, "WINGS".

INT. WINGS COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

This cozy little spot rings home the days of old as the walls are lined with piece after piece of nostalgia.

'Son of a Preacher Man' by Etta James softly plays from a dated jukebox sitting just inside the entrance.

There are roughly half-a-dozen patrons in the entire place, scattered about. Each enjoying his/her coffee...one, in particular, more than the rest.

The local POSTMAN gets up from the corner booth and pauses next to the man who was sitting across from him. At this point we only see the back of the stranger's head.

The postman pats the figure on the back as he slowly passes.

POSTMAN

Thanks, Marti.

The Postman wipes a tear from under his eye and walks away.

He passes an approaching ANNE MYERS, a 46-year-old woman who appears slightly weathered before her time. She is the owner of this establishment.

ANNE

Larry, make sure you bundle up today. There's a nasty little chill setting in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He flashes her a friendly smile.

POSTMAN

Take care, we'll see ya' tomorrow.

An elderly man, MARTI JONES, age 67, now sits alone in the corner booth. With his back to the rest of the room, he stares blankly into his cup-of-joe.

He reaches for a nearby sugar dispenser and begins to stir in an endless stream of the sweet substance. After a short run, Anne reaches in, tilting up the dispenser to halt the flow.

Marti's gaze and expression remains the same.

ANNE

Hey there, sweetie...got a little bit of a sweet tooth today?

The man continues his blank stare into the cup.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Marti. Marti...come back to me, sweetie.

As if the lights come on, Marti turns to the woman with a soft smile.

MARTI

(slightly unsteady)
Hey...Hey, Anne.

ANNE

Hey, Marti.

MARTI

I slipped again, huh?

ANNE

Nah, you're okay. Just didn't want you to be bouncing off my walls from all that sugar.

Anne replaces the man's cup with a fresh one and drops in just a small dash of sugar.

MARTI

Thanks. I kind of got lost in a memory there.

ANNE

A good one I hope.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTI

Yeah...of my Isabelle. I miss her.

ANNE

I know you do, honey.

MARTI

(jokingly)

When you've spent time with a woman so sweet, all the sugar in the world just isn't enough.

Anne pats him on the shoulder and steps away.

Marti takes a sip from his cup and glances out the window.

Outside, a couple passes by, huddling together for warmth.

MARTI (CONT'D)

Now that's good...

Anne returns to the counter where MARIA SALAS, age 24, is filling the napkin dispensers. She is a cute Hispanic girl with the face of an angel.

Noting a slight concern on Anne's face, Maria softly brushes Anne's arm as she passes.

MARIA

Another spell?

ANNE

Just a small one, nothing to be too concerned about.

MARIA

They seem to be more and more frequent lately. It must be so hard for him.

ANNE

I think he's actually happier when he's 'there'.

MARIA

Where?

ANNE

The places he visits...from his stories...his memories. It's almost as if he slips back into his memories, reliving happier times.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARIA

Do you think they'll keep getting worse?

ANNE

Most likely. He's had the best care that money can buy. There's just nothing they can really do at this point.

MARIA

Is he ill?

ANNE

Yeah. Marti's been a regular here for about four years now. He started coming in right after my husband passed away. He reminds me a lot of how John was. Allows me a comfort zone to keep moving forward.

MARIA

Maybe...it was not an accident.

The comment rings deep to Anne, she pauses a second to ponder Maria's words.

ANNE

Like how?

MARIA

My family is very religious... especially my mother. She believes that everything happens for a reason. When something is lost, it is always replaced with something else.

ANNE

Maybe so, I never really thought of it that way. Anyhow, it wasn't too long after that, he started having these spells. He would slip into these dazed states for hours at a time, always to return with a refreshed sense about him. Eventually the doctors diagnosed him with an off-shoot of Alzheimer's. It seemingly appears to be triggered by the stories of his wonder years. Something about the memory recollections.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARIA

So why do people let him do it?

ANNE

When you get to know Marti you'll never even think of interrupting him. He...his stories, always have this sense about them. They always seem to sink in really deep. He's a well traveled and well versed man. His stories appear to help all those that he shares them with.

Maria stares at the man in the booth with wonder.

As if sensing it, Marti glances over his shoulder to return her gaze.

After a brief eye-lock, she shies away.

Looking back once more, she sees him signal for a refill.

Anne hands her a fresh pot of coffee.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Eerie, huh? I swear that man has eyes in the back of his head.

MARIA

Just a little.

ANNE

He's an amazing man. If it wasn't for him...I probably wouldn't be standing here right now.

Anne departs into the stock room as Maria heads to Marti's table.

Upon arrival, she begins to fill his cup.

MARTI

Did I frighten you, child?

MARIA

Huh?

MARTI

Sometimes people fear the things they don't understand...even when it's not necessary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MARIA

No...I...I hardly even know you.

MARTI

You sense it though, but that's okay.

MARIA

(unsure)

Uhm...okay...

MARTI

You and I should chat sometime...
get to know each other a little
better.

Maria is taken aback by the strange aura that this man purveys. It's as if he's known her forever...but how could he? Her nervousness shines through.

MARIA

I...I gotta get back to work...but
definitely...sometime...later...

Anne comes out from the back room to see the two in conversation.

MARTI

In time. Whenever you're ready.

MARIA

Uhm...okay.

Maria hurries back to the counter and passes Anne.

Anne looks to Marti, who smiles, then nods to her.

Anne nods back and smiles as if she's in on some kind of little secret.

Marti returns to his cup.

As Anne wipes down the counter tops, she is suddenly distracted by the jukebox's next tune.

'I Believe' by Frank Sinatra begins to play out from the box.

Anne smiles...definitely not her first time hearing this song.

She glances to Marti as he takes a sip from his mug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

ANNE
(under her breath)
That's twice already today.

She glances back toward the front door.

ANNE (CONT'D)
(like calling a show cue)
Door.

A small bell chimes out from the front door.

She turns to the outlined image of a young boy, silhouetted by the beaming glare of the morning sun from behind him.

As he approaches the counter, he becomes easily readable from his appearance. His name is MATT HIGGINS, age 14. In need of a shower and a hair cut, his rough appearance shows. He wears a torn old parka jacket and has a large backpack flung over his right shoulder.

His most distinctive mark, however, is a large black and blue bruise around his left eye.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Welcome to Wings. How about a
little hot cocoa to take that chill
off?

The boy hesitates, then bellies up to the counter.

MATT
Is it okay if I just sit here and
warm up for a second?

He begins to remove his gloves.

ANNE
Sure. How about that cocoa?

MATT
(hesitant)
Nah...I mean no thanks. I won't be
here that long.

ANNE
Suit yourself. I'm Anne...if you
change your mind.

Anne waits a beat for the boy to throw out his name, but it never comes.

She walks over and hands a cup and a small pot to Maria.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

MARIA
Lost soul?

ANNE
Probably...

Anne shrugs her head towards the kid and Maria takes the offering to him.

Upon arrival, she begins to pour him a cup of cocoa.

MATT
I don't...I can't...

MARIA
Shhh...don't sweat it. It's our
little secret.

MATT
(under his breath)
I don't have any money.

MARIA
It's okay. Just drink up so you
can get warm.

Matt doesn't waste another minute as he slams the cup so fast that it has to burn at least a little.

The boy smiles softly.

MATT
Thanks...

MARIA
What's your name?

Matt hesitates.

As she pours his second round, she also produces a blueberry muffin from under the counter.

He appears eager, but still very hesitant.

MARIA (CONT'D)
(slightly teasing him)
Yooooourr name?

MATT
It's Matt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

MARIA

The girls probably like to call you
Matty, huh?

MATT

Yeah, sure. What girls? It's just
Matt...just 'Matt'.

In the background, you can catch a slight glimpse of Marti,
nodding to the boys fixed reply.

MARIA

And how old are you 'Matt'?

MATT

Fourteen.

She gives him the muffin. He's in love...with the muffin.
Within seconds, he devours the muffin.

MARIA

Eaten in a while?

MATT

Not really.

MARIA

When's the last time you ate?

MATT

20 questions?

MARIA

It's kind of my job and I'll have
you know, I'm very good at it.

MATT

(sarcastically)
Obviously...

MARIA

That's a pretty nasty bruise you
got there. Did you get in a fight?

He slightly turns it away from her. Not an easy thing to
hide.

MATT

Something like that.

She pushes to make the conversation a little more rapid fire
with the questions and answers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

MARIA
So where are you from?

MATT
Culver City.

MARIA
You are quite a ways from home.

MATT
Yeah, but I can take care of
myself.

MARIA
I can see that. How's the cocoa?

MATT
Good. Can I have a little more?

MARIA
Sure.

MATT
And another muffin?

She looks back to Anne who's definitely keeping tabs on the situation.

MARIA
Sure. So, how about that bruise?

MATT
(hesitant)
I got punched.

She leans in for a closer inspection.

MARIA
A kid did that? It looks awful
bad.

MATT
Not exactly. I screwed up, so my
mom's boyfriend, Zack, smacked me
around a little.

MARIA
What? Come on. You couldn't have
done anything that bad.

MATT
Well, I sort of borrowed his truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

MARIA

That's it...

MATT

(breaking a soft grin)
Pretty much...the problem came when
I parked it in the river. Total
accident, but a bad decision
anyway.

MARIA

Where was your mom during all this?

MATT

At work...she never even knew I
left. The cops took Zack though.
That part...was pretty cool.

MARIA

You should call her.

MATT

Probably not a good idea. She
'really' loves Zack...

MARIA

As much as you? She's probably
really freaked out right now. How
long have you been gone?

MATT

Couple of days.

MARIA

Seriously? Where have you been
staying?

MATT

Oh...Here and there.

MARIA

Matty, you need to call your mom
right now. You can't keep doing
this.

The rapid fire questioning is definitely over.

MATT

It's Matt.

She sets a quarter on the counter in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

The boy shifts his demeanor to uncomfortable and begins to gather his things.

MATT (CONT'D)

Thanks for the eats. I should get going now.

Maria heads out around the counter to catch up with him.

The boy turns to head for the door, but is instantly stopped in his tracks.

He now stands face-to-face with Marti, who smiles softly between sips of coffee from his cup.

The boy becomes slightly panicky, as he is now trapped between Marti and Maria.

Maria takes a quick glance back to the booth where she could have sworn he was a second ago, then returns her focus back to Marti.

MARTI

Hold on one second, son. Maria, could you do me a favor and freshen this up. Maybe another cocoa for the boy here. My treat.

MARIA

Sure thing, Marti.

The boy remains defensive. He glances around for his best escape route.

MATT

Isn't Marti a girls name?

Marti hands his cup to Maria, who is still trying to figure out how he got past her undetected and ever-so quickly.

She moves behind the counter with his cup.

MARTI

Not necessarily, 'Matty'...but I did get teased a lot growing up.

The boy tries to pass, but Marti grabs his arm. In his other hand, Marti holds up a one-hundred dollar bill.

MARTI (CONT'D)

A few more minutes...that's all I ask.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

The boy appears very interested...in the hundred bucks.

MARTI (CONT'D)
Have a cup with me.

MATT
Why?

MARTI
I'd like the company.

MATT
Do I get the hundred bucks?

MARTI
If you stay...you can decide when
I'm done.

MATT
Decide? What's to decide? I'll
stay if you give me the hundred
bucks.

MARTI
When my cup runs dry, you'll have
one decision to make. You can take
the hundred dollars and be on your
way...or...you can pick up that
quarter and call your mom, who I
know misses you very much.

MATT
That's it. One cup and then 'I'
get to decide if I still want the
money?

MARTI
Yep.

MATT
That's it? No catches? One
cup...a hundred bucks?

MARTI
Yep.

Marti reaches his hand out to shake on it.

MATT
You got a deal, mister.

He reaches for Marti's hand, then hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

MATT (CONT'D)

But, it's 'Matt'...not 'Matty'...

Marti nods with a smile.

MARTI

Deal.

The boy finishes the handshake. Marti responds by putting his arm around the boy and walking him up to the counter.

Behind the counter, Maria turns to catch Anne beaming her a smile.

ANNE

Oh, I think you're going to like this one.

Marti lays the large bill face up on the counter, right next to Maria's quarter. To the boy, Benjamin Franklin never looked so good.

Maria stands bewildered, as the boy and elderly man sit down at the counter.

She brings their drinks, then watches the two exchange smiles with their first sips.

Anne motions for Maria to join her at the other end of the counter.

Like a hawk, the boy continues to eye the bill.

Marti finishes his first sip and turns to the boy.

MARTI

It's good?

MATT

Yeah.

MARTI

'Matt'...it's 'Matt' right?

MATT

Yeah.

MARTI

You've probably heard this a million times before, but you really do remind me of myself when I was your age.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

The boy drinks and listens without comment.

MARTI (CONT'D)

Granted, It was a long time ago.
 Nearly fifty-five years ago. Matt,
 I've been many places in my life
 and have seen more things than
 most. But...there is one
 particular time in my life that I
 would most associate with a young
 man such as yourself.

Marti reaches for the sugar dispenser and pours a little into his dark coffee. A small sugar cloud settles on the surface of the steaming liquid.

He grabs a spoon and begins to stir the cloud into his drink.

Focusing on the swirling coffee, Marti begins his story.

MARTI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was just after my thirteenth
 birthday...everyone always told me
 that thirteen was an unlucky
 number...but that's merely
 superstition...

The swirling coffee dissolves into a swirling bowl of milk with a few Cheerios floating on top.

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE -----

INT. JONES' HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN

A small boy, the YOUNG MARTI, sits alone at the breakfast table in his 1950's attire. Just finishing up his cereal, he listens in as an old radio plays some scratchy tunes in the background.

Suddenly, his MOTHER bursts into the room and begins shoving items into his backpack.

MOTHER

C'mon...you're going to be late.
 You're always waiting until the
 last minute, then the teacher calls
 me threatening to suspend you. Get
 going.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

For an instant, time slows. PANNING AROUND the room, the young boy at the table transforms into the Aged Marti. He takes a few beats, as his aged self, to admire the beauty of the mother he once knew.

***In all of his stories, the Aged Marti always switches back and forth with the younger version of Marti. This allows him to relive key moments in his life, regardless of his illness.

Suddenly, a newspaper whacks the Aged Marti on the back of the head and knocks him back into the younger version of himself, still sitting at the same breakfast table.

The paper-wielding FATHER sits down at the table next to him and opens the paper.

Smiling to the Young Marti, the man fades away as if he was never there.

AGED MARTI (V.O.)

My mother and I lived alone, as my father had passed away about a year before. I could still feel his presence from time to time. I figure it was just his way of keeping tabs on me.

The boy hops up and kisses his mother on the cheek.

She spins him around and forces a jacket onto his arms.

YOUNG MARTI

Bye, mom. Love ya'.

He glances to the empty chair where the ghostly image of his father sat for a short time...then smiles.

MOTHER

I love you, honey. Bundle up and stay warm.

She grabs him by the coat and helps with the zipper.

Young Marti grabs his pack and bolts out the door. Leaving only the screen door to close, the main door remains open allowing a chill to fill the room.

The mother quickly crosses her arms tight, trying to shake off the crisp air.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Martin...the door! Martin! Lord, will that boy ever learn?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She glances out the door toward the Young Marti as he makes his way down the sidewalk.

AGED MARTI (V.O.)
Little did she know that this would
be the very day that I would learn
one of the biggest lessons of my
life...

The mother walks over and closes the door. Returning to the stove, she begins to prepare herself a little breakfast.

EXT. RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Several children huddle around a stop sign awaiting the school bus.

As Young Marti approaches, he seemingly becomes hesitant.

The neighborhood bully, FRANK HADLEY, age 15, steps out from the group. He's a stalky boy who towers over the Young Marti by a good six inches.

A second later, Frank is joined by his sniveling counterpart, JOHNNY DAVIS, age 12.

FRANK
Well, well. If it isn't the little
cry baby from down the street.
What are you doing here cry-baby?

JOHNNY
Hey, cry-baby.

YOUNG MARTI
(uneasy)
Waiting for the bus just like
everyone else.

JOHNNY
Oh really? Like we didn't already
know that one.

Frank smacks his little counterpart for the obviously dumb statement.

YOUNG MARTI
Then why did you ask?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

You got an awful smart mouth for
such a tiny little punk.

Frank steps toe-to-toe with the nervous boy. He grabs Young Marti's jacket with both hands and pulls him in close.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Not so smart now, are ya'?

Young Marti hesitates a second to process a response. The response is Young Marti spitting into Frank's face.

Frank releases his grip to wipe his face.

Young Marti takes advantage and bolts down the street.

Before he can get twenty yards, the two bullies overtake him and shove him down into a nearby snow bank.

Within seconds, they are surrounded by the other children from the bus stop.

The two bullies are too much for Young Marti as he begins to take a nasty beating.

Everyone else stands clear and watches with anticipation.

Young Marti scrambles to his feet, but is greeted with a punch in the eye from Frank. It knocks the boy backwards, into some bushes.

A HORN sounds out as the school bus now sits back at the stop, awaiting the children.

Everyone scrambles back to the bus...except Young Marti who is still lost in the bushes.

Finally climbing out of the bushes, he catches the tail end of the bus pulling away. Frank and Johnny make faces at him from inside the back window.

Young Marti quickly steps to the curb, then bolts down the snow covered street in pursuit of a school bus which has already forgotten him.

The faster he runs, the further the bus becomes.

Blinded by the cold wind and the icy cloud of his breath, the boy stops in the middle of an intersection. His pack drops into the slushy mess of the half-melted snow atop the road's surface.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOUNG MARTI
Oh, man. Not again...

He takes a second to favor the swelling knot now forming around his eye. Frank has gotten him good this time.

He glances around for an alternative form of transportation, but finds nothing.

Bundling up a little tighter as the cold winter air bites at him, he grabs his pack from the slush and heads off across a small, hilly field of trees.

Over the tree tops, the school can be seen way across the valley, perched on the side of an outlying hill.

The Young Marti disappears into the nearby woods.

INT. WOODS

Young Marti now tromps through knee high snow, unsure of his bearings.

He stops and sits upon a fallen tree log.

Wiping frozen snot from his cheeks with his sleeve, a few tears begin to appear. He bows his head down to avoid the wind.

YOUNG MARTI
(under his breath)
I'm sorry mommy. I try so hard,
but I can never seem to get things
right...

A train whistle sounds in the nearby vicinity.

An Aged Marti lifts his head from the position that the Young Marti was just in. He glances through the trees to see movement in the distance.

He stands and begins to fight his way around the trees toward his goal.

Running through the forest, he passes behind a large tree. He enters as the Aged Marti and emerges once again as the Young Marti.

Young Marti now continues on, running wildly through the forest toward the opening just ahead.

EXT. TRAIN YARD

The boy emerges from the tree line at the far end of the yard.

A few train cars move back and forth among the rows of stationary ones.

Young Marti begins to make his way across the yard, weaving in and out of the train cars.

Two security officers, SECURITY #1 and SECURITY #2, in a nearby booth spot the boy.

SECURITY #1
Hey! You, kid! Stop!

The little boy stops to catch a glimpse of his pursuers.

He bolts.

Dodging in and out of the various rail cars, he begins to run out of options.

His pursuers constantly gaining ground...time's up.

In a last minute decision, he climbs through the small opening of a cattle car.

His feet disappear inside and the door closes as the first guard turns the corner.

Unaware, the security guards move on without a clue.

INT. CATTLE CAR

Young Marti watches through the slats as the guards disappear in the distance.

Suddenly, from behind, he hears a deep bellowing SNORT.

Without turning yet, the boy freezes and his eyes open wide.

Now turning slowly, he takes a deep breath.

A loud, "MOOOO!", rings out, knocking the boy back against the slats and sliding down onto his rear.

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CONTINUED:

He now sits face-to-face with a very-large and very-curious cow.

The boy begins to rise, causing the cow to lunge forward a bit.

The boy quickly sits back down to bring ease to the cow.

YOUNG MARTI

It's okay, girl. I won't be here long. I just need a few minutes to hide.

The cow stares blankly at him. He reaches out and brushes the top of her nose.

She responds by bowing her head.

YOUNG MARTI (CONT'D)

I'm Marti. What's your name?

She leaves him, turning toward the far end of the car.

She comes to rest just outside of a dark corner where a few other cattle lie.

Curious, the boy rises up and follows.

Nearing the shadow, he is startled by the moaning and groaning of another cow.

Lying in the center of the group is a mother giving birth to a calf.

He stands momentarily in awe.

Suddenly, he darts quickly into the shadows as a few men approach outside. This is UNSEEN MAN #1 and UNSEEN MAN #2.

One of the men BANGS heavily on the outside of the car.

UNSEEN MAN #1

Shut up in there!

UNSEEN MAN #2

C'mon! Get these cars rolling! We don't have all damn day!

Suddenly, a LOUD WHISTLE CRIES OUT from the train.

As soon as the men outside clear away, the Young Marti bolts to the door and starts trying to open it.

EXT. TRAIN YARD

The WHISTLE blows again as several men walk about the track, checking for any debris that might be blocking the iron giant's path.

The wheels engage, lunging the train forward.

INT. CATTLE CAR

The movement sends Young Marti barreling into the side of a nearby cow.

Without so much as a flinch from the collision, the cow nudges Young Marti with her nose.

He begins to panic as the train rolls out. He runs back and forth trying everything in his power to free himself.

After a short period, through the slats in the car, he watches the train depot disappear into the distance.

YOUNG MARTI
(under his breath)
This...is not...good.

He turns and heads over toward the group of huddled cattle.

YOUNG MARTI (CONT'D)
Looks like we're travel mates for a
bit...

He kneels down next to the birthing cow and begins to rub her head.

EXT. ALTERNATE TRAIN YARD - AFTERNOON

The engine once towing the Young Marti now leaves this new train yard without its haul. The cars have been left for future unloading.

Young Marti's car now sits idle, mixed in with several others.

INT. CATTLE CAR

Young Marti lies next to the cows, sleeping so soundly that he doesn't notice the approaching stranger, HOBO.

The cattle step back as the shadowed man reaches in and shakes the boy.

Young Marti practically jumps from his skin to gain distance from the man. He pins himself into a corner.

Before him stands a 6'7" travelling hobo. In his 60's, the man is very weathered and not very clean. The years and the road have not been kind.

HOBO

It's okay, son...I thought you could use a hand.

YOUNG MARTI

No..it's okay. I can manage.

HOBO

I'm off to Tulsa, just catching a ride. I popped the door and to my surprise, there you were. You're awful young to be a traveling man.

YOUNG MARTI

I got stuck...long story. Do you live here? Are you a bum?

The hobo moves to a corner and begins to unload his travel pack. Upon the removal of some snacks, he spies Young Marti eyeing his bag of goodies.

He tosses the boy a candy bar that he had been saving for a special occasion.

Young Marti digs right in.

The food filling his belly soon lessens his tension with the situation.

HOBO

Yes, I do live here sometimes...and no, I'm not a bum. More of a 'free-spirit' travelling from place to place.

YOUNG MARTI

Why Tulsa?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOBO

Work. This here car is headed to the meat plant in Oklahoma. Figure I can get a little work down that way.

YOUNG MARTI

Meat plant? These cows are on their way to a meat plant? To be butchered?

HOBO

That's usually what they do at a meat plant.

YOUNG MARTI

That seems wrong...

HOBO

Do you eat steak? Or hamburgers?

The hobo opens a can of beans and begins shoveling them into his mouth with his fingers.

YOUNG MARTI

Sure.

HOBO

And where do you think they come from?

YOUNG MARTI

But that's different...

HOBO

How so?

YOUNG MARTI

You never actually see that part...

HOBO

You can go through life being blind to any situation...doesn't mean that it's still not out there.

The boy squats down to ponder the words.

HOBO (CONT'D)

That's a pretty mean shiner you got there. Fell down, huh?

YOUNG MARTI

Something like that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOBO

I tripped on a step just like that when I was your age. It's not your fault, sometimes bad things happen to good people...when they should be happening to the bad people. But don't fret any, son...karma always gets the last laugh.

YOUNG MARTI

Karma? What's 'that'?

HOBO

'That' is a 'She'. And 'She' is the sister of good ol' Lady Luck. Karma works just like luck...only you have a little more say so in the outcome. If you do bad things... well then, bad things will happen to you.

YOUNG MARTI

And good Karma?

HOBO

Same principle.

YOUNG MARTI

Karma, huh? I kinda like that.

The hobo hands the can to Young Marti.

His fingers dig into the can and shovel the contents into his mouth, only now it is the Aged Marti.

HOBO

Look, son...the road is no place for you. It's rough out here.

AGED MARTI

Yeah...

HOBO

There's a pay phone across the yard.

He tosses the aged Marti a dime.

HOBO (CONT'D)

Call your mom, kid. She misses you something awful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

AGED MARTI

How do you know so much about...
stuff?

HOBO

About 'stuff', huh? The world has
taught me a lot about 'stuff'.
You'll learn too, just remember to
always keep your eyes open. Don't
go through life sleeping.

The hobo fixes a pillow and lays back into the shadows.

HOBO (CONT'D)

Call your mom kid...

Aged Marti jumps up and heads to the door.

He cracks the door and jumps down onto the ground

AGED MARTI

Thanks...

HOBO

Don't mention it...now go, cause I
won't be telling you twice.

Aged Marti smiles briefly, before being caught off-guard by a
big wet kiss from a cow who has slammed its face through the
door.

Aged Marti smiles to himself as his mental gears begin to
spin. He looks around frantically.

EXT. ALTERNATE TRAIN YARD - TEN MINUTES LATER

Two security guards are running for cover as a small herd of
cattle blast through the yard and into the tree line.

In the middle of the herd is the Aged Marti running with
them, free as the wind. His smile stretches ear-to-ear.

Nearing the tree line, Young Marti departs from the herd and
runs to a nearby building.

EXT. BUILDING

Young Marti rounds the far corner and hops up to an old, worn
pay-phone. He pops in the dime and dials.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INT. CATTLE CAR - HOURS LATER

The hobo peeks from the car to see the Young Marti getting into his mother's car and driving away.

HOBO
 (under his breath)
 We'll be seeing you, Marti. Take
 care for now...and be strong...

Although the hobo was never told the boys name, he does somehow know 'Marti'.

He pulls the door closed, shutting himself inside.

The train lunges forward and the cattle car moves on.

INT. MOTHER'S CAR - DUSK

The mother reaches up to wipe away the light haze building up on the windshield.

The boy sits quietly. Not really sure of his mother's tone.

MOTHER
 Are you, okay?

YOUNG MARTI
 Yeah...

MOTHER
 Good.

After a slight pause, the Young Marti cracks.

YOUNG MARTI
 I sorry mom. It was an accident.
 I meant to go to...

MOTHER
 Stop.

The boy silences instantly.

YOUNG MARTI
 But Frank...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER
(soothing tone)
It's okay...I know what happened.

EXT. MOTHER'S CAR

The vehicle pulls off onto a shoulder and stops. The brake lights blanket the night in a red glow.

INT. MOTHER'S CAR

She unbuckles her belt and turns to the boy.

Taking his face softly in both hands, she pulls him closer. Her eyes begin to tear up.

MOTHER
Marti...honey, you nearly scared me
to death. When I couldn't find
you, I didn't know what to do.

The boy grows teary-eyed too.

YOUNG MARTI
I'm sorry...

MOTHER
I'm just really glad you're okay.
I couldn't bear losing you too.

Although upset, the boy definitely likes what he hears.

YOUNG MARTI
Okay...

The mother squeezes him tight and kisses him on his cheek.

EXT. MOTHER'S CAR

The brake lights fade and the car moves back to the road.

The glow of the red tail-lights disappears into the darkness.

EXT. JONES' HOUSE - NIGHT

The mother's car pulls into the driveway and the lights fall dark.

INT. MOTHER'S CAR

The young boy unbuckles his belt and hesitates upon touching the door handle as his exit is interrupted by his mother.

MOTHER

Marti, look at me.

Turning, the Aged Marti now turns to his mother, his cheeks red as roses and drenched in the tears of a child.

She wipes away the tears with her soft hands.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Don't be sad, dear. In the morning, this will all seem like a bad dream.

AGED MARTI

I...I know...

MOTHER

You, okay?

AGED MARTI

Yeah...

MOTHER

Sure?

He nods with a smile.

EXT. JONES' HOUSE - NIGHT

The two cross the yard and then his mother opens the door.

For a brief moment, the light from inside blankets the yard.

She pushes the boy inside, then turns, almost as if she feels something behind her.

Suddenly, the mother falls back, collapsing into the pathway of light.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The door closes and everything falls dark again.

FADE TO BLACK:

AGED MARTI (V.O.)

I believe that part of her knew
before she sent me in...that it was
her time. No real explanation ever
came about as to why...this was
just the way it had to be.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Young Marti enters the hospital lobby with POLICE OFFICER #1 leading him along. The boy's head hangs low as he already knows the situation.

POLICE OFFICER #2 and POLICE OFFICER #3 stand at the check-in desk.

Police Officer #1 spies the bruise on Young Marti's cheek and leans in for a better look. Young Marti turns quickly to avoid attention.

He takes the Young Marti over to a chair and sits him down.

Leaving the boy, he moves over to join the other two officers.

After a short period, the Young Marti stands and wipes the tears from his eyes.

Spying a water dispenser in the far corner, he heads to the machine.

The officers note his movement, but let it pass when the boy stops to pour himself a cup of water.

The trio, now back to their conversation, fails to notice the young Marti slipping by them into a nearby hall.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Young Marti cautiously makes his way down the hallway, then stops at about the half-way mark.

He glances to a chart on the door marked for "C. Jones". He doesn't need to read the name though...somehow he just feels it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Young Marti opens the door, then steps into the dimly lit room.

The door closes behind him, leaving a barren hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

The Aged Marti now stands just inside the door, his eyes drowning from the tears. The bruise still lingers, even on his aged face. Wounds that were never forgotten.

AGED MARTI

Mommy...

He dares not move closer...a scared little boy in an aged man's body. The site of her lying there is almost more than he can take.

He cringes slightly with breath that she struggles to take.

The mother stirs a bit, then her eyes open to fix on a Young Marti standing by the door.

She forces a smile through her pain for her loving little boy.

MOTHER

(soft and weak)

My baby...come closer.

Back to the Aged Marti, he hesitates and shakes his head softly.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

It's okay, baby...

The Aged Marti shuffles to her with great hesitation and then kneels at her side.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

That's my boy. My beautiful little boy.

She rubs his bruise softly with her weak hand.

AGED MARTI

I'm so...I don't want it to be like this.

The man can barely control his emotions as he already knows the outcome, having lived this all before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER

Shhh...it's okay. It's not your fault. It's just my time...I'm needed elsewhere now. Just promise me one thing...

AGED MARTI

Mommy?

The mother struggles, with every painful breath, to bring comfort to her son.

MOTHER

Never forget me nor the love I have for you. Promise?

He hesitates, barely understanding. Just like when he was a child.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Promise me.

AGED MARTI

I promise...

Tears begin to flow from the corners of his eyes.

AGED MARTI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was so hard for me that day. To understand a higher calling. Fate had other plans...but how is a thirteen-year-old boy to understand that?

The Aged Marti leans over his mother, hugging her as she starts to cry to herself.

His tears release along with hers.

He hugs her tight until her last breath fades away.

The Aged Marti stands, kisses his mother on her forehead, and heads for the door.

Opening the door, the room is flooded with light from the hallway. He flips the light switch off so only the hall's light reveals the image of his fallen mother.

AGED MARTI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(choked-up)

Eventually, I would understand more than anyone. But that's a story for another time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The Aged Marti exits and the door closes. The image of his mother is consumed by the darkness of the door's closing.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Young Marti now walks down the hallway and out into the lobby, where he is greeted by the three officers who know where he has been.

Police Officer #1 puts his arm around Young Marti and walks him to the door.

AGED MARTI (V.O.)

Even though he didn't have the heart to tell me, I already knew. There isn't much place in the world for a free roaming thirteen-year-old. They sent me to a state orphanage the very next day.

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATE NIGHT

From a hilltop, a shadowed figure watches the boy and the police officer leave in the cruiser.

This watchful eye is revealed as the hobo from the train yard.

HOBO

God-speed Marti, I know it will not be easy, but there's so many wonderful things yet for you to see...

The man smiles to himself and then turns his back.

Walking away, the darkness actually moves towards his position, engulfing him in a way almost unnatural. Within seconds, he disappears into the shadows.

EXT. NEW TRAIN STATION - DAY

The station buzzes with activity as travellers bounce from car to car struggling to catch the various departing trains.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGED MARTI (V.O.)

The orphanage lasted about two days, then I took off on my own. There were so many kids back then, I'm not even sure they knew I left.

The Young Marti steps up onto the platform with his overstuffed backpack.

Quickly, he begins to scan the boarding signs.

His gaze fixes on one sign in particular, just up ahead, 'San Francisco'.

With his backpack in tow, he bolts down the track and stops just short of his destination.

A CONDUCTOR blocks the entrance, validating all boarding passengers tickets as they enter.

After a slight pause, Young Marti hops into a large passing group of travellers and heads for the door.

The group causes just enough distraction for Marti to slip inside unnoticed...almost.

Not even ten feet down the aisle, he is grabbed by the shoulder from behind.

CONDUCTOR

Hold on there, son. Where do you think you're going?

Young Marti scrambles for an answer, but only a small bit of gibberish finds its way out.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)

I need to see your ticket.

YOUNG MARTI

It's...my father has it in the next car back. I just went out to grab my bag I left on the platform.

CONDUCTOR

Oh, really? Well then, let's go see your father...shall we?

Knowing he's gone too far, Young Marti turns toward the back and quickly heads down the aisle. The conductor is close behind, countering ever step.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

When the Young Marti nears the end of the current car, he darts forward through the door, SLAMMING it behind him.

Before he can make the end of the next car, he is snatched by the collar. The conductor must have been a track star in a former life.

YOUNG MARTI

Oww...you're hurting me. Let go!

CONDUCTOR

Wait until the authorities get a hold of you. They don't take to kindly to stowaways around here.

YOUNG MARTI

My dad's going to be real angry if you don't leave me be.

CONDUCTOR

Give it up you little brat. I know a homeless waif when I see one. Street trash at best...

Suddenly from behind the Conductor, a DEEP VOICE booms out.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)

I suggest you take your hands off my boy...cause I won't be telling you twice.

The conductor's eyes grow wide.

Awestruck, he turns to be nearly face-to-chest with the towering 6'7" giant. It is the Hobo from the old train yard, only now he is clean cut and in more of a business type attire.

Young Marti gets a totally bewildered look on his face.

The conductor turns to the boy. Young Marti's expression instantly pops to a grin.

HOBO

Let...go...

The conductor release his catch and turns back toward the large man.

CONDUCTOR

My...apologies, sir. But...it is procedure that I see your tickets before we can depart the station.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The hobo produces a crisp new pair of train tickets from his inside jacket pocket. Then follows up with a wink to the young Marti.

The conductor looks them over, then returns the tickets.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
Sir, please continue...

Takes another look at the towering man.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
Please continue on down this aisle.
Your seats will be the last two on
the right. Sorry for any
inconvenience.

The conductor quickly slips past the hobo and removes himself from the car.

HOBO
Miss me?

YOUNG MARTI
Now that you mention it. But
how...uhm, never mind.

Young Marti turns and heads back to his seat with his guardian angel right behind.

The two take their seats, Young Marti nearest the window.

He delivers one last smile to the hobo, then glances out at the platform.

YOUNG MARTI (CONT'D)
Thanks...for everything...

EXT. NEW TRAIN STATION

The train begins to glide forward as a LOUD WHISTLE rings out.

As the nearby car passes, the Aged Marti can now be seen glancing out the window from where the Young Marti once sat. Behind him the hobo glances over his shoulder, smiling.

The image of the train station fades to the Young Marti standing on a deserted California beach. The wind softly blows at his back.

EXT. CALIFORNIA BEACH

AGED MARTI (V.O.)

A lot of things became clear to me that day. I finally found the perfect resting place for my mother...where she can be at peace.

The boy produces a small urn from his backpack and removes the top.

Ever so slowly, he releases the ashes into the outgoing tide.

YOUNG MARTI

At that point, I knew I could do anything and go anywhere. A final gift from my mother, I realized there was still so much life left for me to live...

The beach image begins to fade back to the diner very slowly.

AGED MARTI (V.O.)

(referring back to Matt)

Young man, if you ever find yourself lost again, feel free to come back and visit us. Most answers will be right here waiting... whenever you're ready.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE -----

INT. WINGS COFFEE SHOP - EVENING

We return to Matt and Marti still sitting at the counter.

The boy, tearful but smiling, turns to the old man who is now incoherent. Marti just stares into his near empty cup as the liquid swirls around from his stirring.

MATT

Marti? Marti, are you okay?

The kid starts to panic. He hops up from his stool as his eyes wildly search the room for Anne.

Anne approaches quickly with Maria in tow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MATT (CONT'D)

What's wrong with him? What?

ANNE

Calm down...it's okay. He's ill.
It's just a little spell he suffers
from sometimes. He'll be okay in a
bit.

MATT

Are you sure?

ANNE

Yeah.

Marti comes back and turns to the boy. It's as if he doesn't
even recognize the young lad.

MARTI

What a nice young fellow we have
here. I'm Marti, and this is Anne
and Maria. Well, say 'hi'
everyone.

ANNE AND MARIA

(to Matt)

Hi...

The boy is slightly confused.

MARTI

Hey Maria, how about another cup of
joe?

MARIA

(saddened by his state)

Sorry Marti, looks like your ride
is here. Don't worry though, I'll
save you some for tomorrow.

The door chime rings out and in walks an elderly lady, the
WIDOW JOHNSON. She's 62-years-old and Marti's best
friend/caretaker.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Hi, Ms. Johnson.

WIDOW JOHNSON

Hello, Maria and Anne.

She approaches Marti.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WIDOW JOHNSON (CONT'D)
How's my favorite sexy man doing?

She runs her hand through the back of Marti's hair.

MARTI
I'm good...just waiting for you,
good looking.

She turns to the boy.

WIDOW JOHNSON
(gesturing towards Matt)
And who do we have here? Marti,
did you make some new friends
today?

MARTI
Not yet, he just got here. Haven't
really had a chance.

She reaches to shake hands with the boy.

WIDOW JOHNSON
Hello there, I'm Ms. Johnson. I
take care of this here crazy-old-
coot.

MARTI
(smiling big)
She loves me you know...

MATT
Hi, I'm 'Matty'.

Maria shines Matty a quick smile.

WIDOW JOHNSON
Matty, what a delightful name.

MARTI
I really like that name. 'Matty'
really suits you.

The boy catches a small wink from Marti. He realizes that
somewhere inside, Marti still recognizes him.

Marti reaches up and shakes the boys hand.

The boy still stands slightly confused.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WIDOW JOHNSON
(to the boy)
He's been telling stories again,
hasn't he?

MATT
Yes, ma'am.

WIDOW JOHNSON
He's so good with those.

MATT
Yes, ma'am.

MARIA
Coffee, Ms. Johnson?

ANNE
Cup on the house?

WIDOW JOHNSON
Not today, kids. I've got to get
Marti here home before he causes
any more trouble.

MARTI
Who me? But I just got here.

WIDOW JOHNSON
Thanks anyway, but maybe another
time. We must be going. Say bye
Marti.

She helps him up from his stool.

MARTI
Okay. Bye, everyone. I'll see you
all tomorrow.

ANNE
I'll be looking forward to it.

MARIA
Me too...

The boy stops the elder and their eyes lock.

MARTI
You okay, boy?

MATT
Couldn't be better...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The boy picks up the hundred dollar bill from the counter and tucks it into Marti's shirt pocket.

MARTI

What's that for? Is it mine?

Matt pats the pocket to secure the bill.

MATT

Yeah...I didn't want you to forget
to take it with you..

Maria looks to Anne for conformation of what she just saw.

The man pats the boy on the back as Matty scoops up the quarter for himself.

MATT (CONT'D)

(to Anne and Maria)

Thanks...for everything.

The boy gathers his stuff and heads out the front door.

Ms. Johnson and Marti turn and slowly make their way to the door.

Maria stands awestruck at the day's events.

ANNE

It takes a piece from him ever
time...like a personal sacrifice.

MARIA

What just happened?

ANNE

In time...in time...

Anne turns and heads to the back.

Maria stands quietly as the Widow Johnson helps Marti out the door.

The door swings closed leaving Maria to stand all alone in the silence of the deserted shop.

The overhead lights shut down for closing, leaving Maria to the soft glow of the jukebox.

EXT. WINGS COFFEE SHOP - EVENING

Outside, the elderly couple pass Matt who is now on a nearby pay-phone.

MATT'S MOTHER (O.S.)

It's going to be just the two of us
from now on. I promise. Just...
please...I miss you...

MATT

Me too.

MATT'S MOTHER

Matty...

The mere sound of 'Matty' now brings a smile to the boy's face. He catches a small tear that glides down his cheek.

MATT

Yes, mom...

MATT'S MOTHER

I love you.

MATT

(teary eyed)

I love you too, mom.

He waves to a passing taxi.

The brake lights flash, then the taxi backs up to the curb next to him.

MATT (CONT'D)

Mom...

MATT'S MOTHER

Yes...

MATT

I'm coming home...

He hangs up the phone and steps into the taxi.

In the background, the Widow Johnson can be seen assisting Marti as the two walk off into the distance.

Nearing the end of the sidewalk, the darkness moves in on the elderly couple's position, engulfing them in a way almost unnatural. Within seconds, they disappear into the shadows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Marti's theme from the diner, 'I Believe' by Frank Sinatra, fades in as the night fades away.

FADE TO BLACK:

CREDITS ROLL.

END.