

KID TURBONI BRINGS THE RAIN

A full-length dramedy by
Mark J. Costello

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

KID TURBONI, male, 12.

MILES TURBONI, Kid's dad, late 30s.

BILLY SANTOS, male, 11. Kid's best friend.

LYDIA SANTOS, Billy's mom, late 30s.

KELLY McCUSKEY, female, 12.

SMACK TURKENSON, the stuff of legend. Double with Miles.

SETTING

A housing project in Albuquerque's War Zone, nicknamed "the Zone" when referenced in dialogue. Located on California Street, the project is a squat collection of four two-story pastel apartment buildings: North, South, East, and West Blocks. A flat concrete courtyard rests between the buildings, dotted with benches, tables, and sun-scorched plants.

Scenes in the courtyard are understood to be in front of Kid's apartment, which is in East Block. Rain dance scenes take place on California Street, outside of the project.

It is early summer, with no air conditioning nor clouds in sight. 104 degrees at night; 115 at midday.

NOTES

Music for transitions would be most helpful. Short, punchy or sweet things. Sparklers may be illegal in your area—substitute as needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Kid Turboni Brings the Rain was a winner at the 2015 Write Now! conference and was featured in a rehearsed reading at Indiana Repertory Theatre, directed by Henry Godinez and dramaturged by Jenny Millinger.

(Lights up: the hottest day of the summer, and summer has just begun. Lighting onstage is uncomfortably bright as the late afternoon sun beats down, hot enough to melt the tar on California Street.)

(KID is young and scrappy looking, not underfed but not totally comfortable. He wears shiny basketball shorts, a tank top, Ray-Ban knockoffs, socks, and sandals. BILLY is as young as Kid but a bit thicker in the belly. He too wears Ray-Ban knockoffs, as well as neon green swim trunks, a tank top, a horned Viking helmet, and flip-flops.)

(They are discovered at lights-up sitting underneath umbrellas in the housing project courtyard. An unseen radio tunes in to a weather report: "...in Albuquerque, starting this Saturday and going through to Monday night. Temperatures today in the ABQ will reach 115, the hottest day so far this sum – " and cuts off.)

(A moment to appreciate the heat, then sedately, in need of water:)

KID: I'm outta sweat. *(Pause.)* I haven't blinked in ten minutes.

(Pause.)

BILLY: How are you wearing socks.

KID: How are you wearing a Viking helmet.

BILLY: I'm not.

(Pause.)

KID: I guess not. *(Pause.)* I might sleep here tonight.

BILLY: Outside?

KID: We're outside?

(Pause.)

BILLY: Am I wearin' swim trunks?

KID: I think so.

BILLY: I guess I was going to the pool.

KID: It's empty anyway. Drought.

(Pause.)

BILLY: I think I'm wearing a Viking hat.

KID: Nah.

(Pause.)

BILLY: I ever tell you about Smack Turkenson, guy who brought the rain?

KID: Smack Turkenson. He lived in North Block, right?

BILLY: South; now close your mouth and listen. *(Pause.)* I'm gonna try and stand up.

KID: I wouldn't.

BILLY: You couldn't—now watch and see.

(Billy tries to stand but ends up sitting back on his rump. He tries again. Same effect.)

So, Smack Turkenson, first American hero. Once upon a time, in the days of old, Smack Turkenson looked out on the dry, sun-scorched streets here in the Land of Enchantment and saw that the people of the Zone were thirsty, and unhappy, and it made Smack Turkenson thirsty and sad in his own right, for Smack is many things, including pathetic.

KID: Empathetic.

BILLY: Not now, ain't hungry. Smack Turkenson slides down the stairs in his torn denim jacket and beat-up All Stars, then moonwalks down the street to take Mother Nature by her ear. Says: "Listen, mama. We got to have words, because the way you treatin' my people, it won't fly. People need water to live,

because plants and oxygen, if you follow my drift. And coyotes, what are all getting stranded in empty swimming pools."

Mother Nature says to Smack Turkenson: "Smack, I hear you, and my heart's breaking, but just because it's dry in the ABQ doesn't mean it isn't crazy-wet somewhere else. Why should I take someone else's rain and give it to you?"

Mother Nature steals Smack's words away with her deep and ponderous question, but Smack is undeterred.

KID: Undeterred?

BILLY: That's standardized test-level verbiage, my friend. Read a book.

Smack says: "I am undeterred, for the people of the Zone are your people as well as mine, and why wouldn't a mother help her children?"

Mother Nature is confused by the depth of Smack Turkenson's wisdom, but she won't be having any foolishness. She says: "I would very much like to give you rain, Smack Turkenson, but it must be earned, or stolen, and I don't think you're a thief."

Smack hears the truth and bows to it, but as he walks away down California Street toward Sunshine Market, he hears Mother Nature sighing the sighs of a broken heart for her heat-struck sons and daughters in the ABQ. Emboldened by her love, he opens his mouth wide and shouts: "RAAAAAAIN!" and down come the drops, one, two, three, a million. ABQ gets fulla water like a bathtub and what we don't need gets washed out down to Mexico (*read: MAY-he-co*), for our brothers south of the border.

His victory complete, he spreads the shreds of his sweet torn denim jacket and flies into the air, leaving behind streaks of red, white and blue, because, you know – America.

KID: Truth.

BILLY: I know it. Smack's not been seen since, but to this day, children confused and worried by the heat pray to Smack Turkenson, patron saint of escaping the Zone in style. And so ends the greatest of Smack Turkenson's miracles.

KID: You think he really brought the rain?

BILLY: No, I'm sweating my breakfast out through my skin under a Viking helmet to tell you lies and falsehoods. You my brother, Kid, and I tell you nothing but truth.

KID: I know it, Billy. *(Pause.)* If Smack Turkenson lived in the Zone today, I bet he'd have air conditioning.

BILLY: Pssh, I said Smack could work miracles, but that's a straight-up impossibility, son.

(MILES enters, dressed like Kid, and also carrying an umbrella.)

Mr. Turboni, as I live and breathe.

MILES: Mr. Santos, in living color.

KID: Dad.

MILES: Kiddo. Dinner time.

(Kid gets up and stands behind Miles in profile, dad and son. Billy stands.)

You're free to join us if you want, Billy.

BILLY: Nah, Ma's making Goya tonight.

MILES: What Goya? Black beans?

BILLY: I dunno, Mr. T. She opens a can, disappears, reappears, I'm eating something good.

(Pause.)

MILES: Truth. Tell her I asked after her, okay?

(Billy nods and starts to exit.)

Billy?

BILLY: Mr. T?

MILES: Is that Kid's Viking helmet from Halloween?

(Pause.)

KID: He can hold onto it. I know where he lives.

(Billy exits and the scene shifts to the interior of Kid and Miles' apartment. Second floor of the East Block apartment building, exactly across the courtyard from Billy and Lydia's apartment in West Block. When the shades are open and lights on in both apartments, they can see into each other's, from a distance.)

(The apartment is not unclean, just well-worn. Feels like it's missing something, something unnamable, like a presence that was once there has been removed but traces still remain.)

(The one oddity: a big block of ice that Kid sits on as he eats a peanut butter sandwich while Miles fans him with a magazine. Miles is also eating a sandwich.)

The story goes that Smack Turkenson brought the rain down by calling for it, and then flew away in a rush of red, white, and blue, because, you know – America.

MILES: Sounds true. What do you think?

KID: I think it's a good story.

MILES: So – what's it – Shmuck Turkeyson –

KID: Smack Turkenson, Dad.

MILES: Smack Turkenson didn't cause rain and fly away like Old Glory?

KID: I don't know.

MILES: Oh?

KID: I seen a lot of things in the Zone, Dad, but someone flying away – not so much.

MILES: Ain't no rope holding anyone down around here, Kid. Some folks leave. Switch.

(Kid stands, takes the magazine. Miles sits on the ice block, and Kid starts fanning while eating.)

KID: Some folks, yeah.

MILES: Our neighbor, before you were born, went to school on government assistance, got a degree. Began working office jobs and moved out toward the mall. Not the most exciting thing in the world, but you won't be tarring roofs for a living.

KID: I think what you do is cool, Dad.

MILES: Of course it's cool. I do it, and I'm cool, right?

KID: As cool as Smack Turkenson.

MILES: Smack Turkenson isn't real, I thought.

KID: I'm not so sure. Switch.

(They do.)

If anyone COULD bring the rain, it would be Smack. They wouldn't let him wear denim otherwise.

MILES: I love that you think denim is a privilege.

KID: He did something, something to grab Mother Nature's ear, and that's what I need to figure out.

MILES: You have that look in your eye.

KID: What?

MILES: The scheming look.

KID: What scheming look?

MILES: I haven't seen that look for a few years. It's a good look.

KID: Don't come between me and my scheming, Dad. This heat doesn't know what's gonna hit it.

MILES: Scheme away, Kid. You'd be doing me a favor. You know how hot those roofs get? Just don't bother the neighbors.

KID: I'll talk to Billy. I think I have some ideas. Smack Turkenson will envy our mad skills.

MILES: Don't forget me when you fly away. Switch.

(Nothing.)

Kid? Switch!

KID: Dad?

MILES: What?

KID: ...I miss Mom.

(The apartment fades into a dark, confessional-like space. Kid lights a sparkler.)

Are you there, Smack Turkenson? It's me: Kid Turboni.

I feel weird doing this, because I'm not sure you're there. Billy's positive you're real and he's not a liar, but he isn't always right. Case in point: my Viking hat, which he has yet to return.

I'm over it, though.

I've been thinking a lot about you lately so I hope you don't mind my talkin' to you, because if you're busy, I'll come back later. My dad doesn't like it when I talk to him if he's on the can, and I assume this might be a little like that, if you're busy being awesome.

I wish school was still in, which I would never tell Billy because he'd call me a fool and make me hold his umbrella. At least at school, I have something to do all day. I like hanging out with Billy while Dad's at work, for sure, but sometimes, I just want someone to give me something to do. A little relief here and there, you know how I do.

I'll let you go now. I'm sorry to keep you like this. I'll talk to you later, okay?

And Smack? Do me a favor?

Say hi to Mom for me. I want her to know I'm thinking of her.

(The confessional fades out, and Kid exits.)

(Lights up on Billy and LYDIA in the courtyard. Lydia is dressed for work.)

LYDIA: Did you give it back?

BILLY: Yeah.

LYDIA: Good. What are you and Kid up to today?

BILLY: Ma, please!

LYDIA: Oh, excuse me, wanting to know where my grade schooler is hanging out while I bust my rump getting uptown to work, in order to feed that same so-called brilliant grade schooler, i.e. you.

BILLY: You love me.

LYDIA: I have to.

BILLY: Nuh-uh. Molly Sweeney at school, her parents don't love her. She came to school wearing her pajamas one day. I have to admit, I was mostly jealous.

LYDIA: Truth.

BILLY: Word.

(Kid enters, two folded umbrellas in tow.)

LYDIA: Kid! Come here.

(She fusses over him, hugging him and giving him a kiss.)

BILLY: She don't greet me like that, even after I came home from my uncle's house after not seeing her for two weeks.

LYDIA: I'll pack all that neediness up and send it to a therapist, circa ten years from now.

BILLY: Better start a savings account for it, too.

(She fusses over Billy, same as she did for Kid.)

LYDIA: I love you so much it hurts. Have a good day, and if you get into trouble, I better only hear about it if it's real good and exciting.

KID: Will do, Ms. S. Oh, and my dad asked about you.

LYDIA: Oh? What about me?

KID: He didn't say. That's pretty much all I got from him.

LYDIA: Well... I'll just keep an eye out for him, I suppose.

(She pinches Billy and Kid's cheeks one more time and exits.)

(The gentlemen open their umbrellas, and sit.)

BILLY: Why does your dad want to talk to my mom?

KID: I have chosen not to think about that.

BILLY: Sounds like a plan.

(Pause.)

KID: I spent all night thinking about Smack Turkenson.

BILLY: He is a man worthy of many thoughts.

KID: Truth.

BILLY: What were you thinking about?

KID: Bringing the rain.

BILLY: I would like to encourage that thought.

KID: Bringing the rain?

BILLY: I think it's a good idea.

KID: What?

BILLY: Bringing the rain, son! I hope your brain ain't already fried this early in the day.

KID: I think we can do it, but it won't be easy. For example, we don't have a glowing denim jacket.

BILLY: We are definitely at a disadvantage sartorially.

KID: And we have no idea where to find Mother Nature.

BILLY: Nope.

KID: And Dad says I'm not allowed to go any further down California Street than Sunshine Market because that's the farthest spot the East Block security cameras can see.

BILLY: No doubt.

KID: But I'm tired of sitting on blocks of ice to keep cool. My butt is fusing together into one continuous cheek.

BILLY: (*Indicating the umbrellas:*) And this daily vampire thing is getting old. My mattress has a permanent sweat stain in the shape of my body.

KID: My dad won't buy a second block of ice and our freezer isn't big enough to make one. Dad caught me trying to climb in again in the middle of the night.

BILLY: What'd he say?

KID: "If I can't, you can't, so get back to bed before all ice block privileges are revoked."

BILLY: Fair.

(Pause.)

KID: Your mom working late again tonight?

BILLY: She picked up a new shift at the hotel. She'll be working until 10 for a while.

KID: You want to eat dinner at my place tonight? Dad won't care.

BILLY: Mom left me some casserole to heat up. I'm going to try to climb into the fridge tonight while she's not home.

KID: You'll have to take the food out and it'll spoil in like five minutes.

BILLY: Don't care. Too hot.

KID: "If I can't, you can't, so get back to bed —"

BILLY & KID: "...before all ice block privileges are revoked."

BILLY: Fine.

KID: So, what do you think?

BILLY: I think it's decided, Kid.

KID: We're gonna bring the rain.

(Transition to nighttime on California Street. Kid deposits the umbrellas in a trash can for safe keeping and pulls out two sparklers from the same. Billy retrieves a bicycle from offstage.)

(KELLY McCUSKEY enters, unseen at first.)

BILLY: *(To the bicycle:)* Latoya, say hello to Kid.

KID: Oh, we're doing the bike thing again.

BILLY: She is my life, without her I am nothing, so treat her well —

KID: Or you'll mess with me while I sleep.

BOTH: This is not a threat. It is a promise.

KID: Yeah, yeah, just balance the bike for me as I light the sparklers.

(Kid climbs up and Billy balances the bike by the handlebars when Kelly speaks.)

KELLY: What're you two doing?

(Kid drops the unlit sparklers and Billy lets go of one handlebar, almost making Kid fall.)

BILLY: Kelly McCuskey, how pleasant to make your acquaintance this balmy summer evening. Now kindly head back to West Block while Kid and I set about saving the ABQ.

KELLY: Are the tassels on that bike pink?

BILLY: Like the finest of ice creams, strawberry, so if you wouldn't mind letting us save Albuquerque in peace, go on, get goin'!

KELLY: Hi, Kid!

(Kid awkwardly nods, or waves.)

KID: K...Kelly.

KELLY: What're you and Billy doing?

KID: He has a much better idea of it than I do, ask him.

BILLY: This was your idea, top to bottom! What is this foolishness I am made to live through?

KID: We're, uh. We're going to bring the rain.

...it sounds silly when I say it out loud.

KELLY: *(Enthralled:)* How're you gonna bring the rain?

BILLY: I will go sit where I am appreciated while I wait for our vital, necessary work to begin.

(He retrieves an umbrella from the can and sits on the curb, under it.)

KELLY: It's dark out, Billy.

BILLY: I cannot hear you, for I am thinking of grand and important things.

KELLY: He's still talking that way, huh?

KID: Ever since his mom made him read those SAT prep books last year.

BILLY: They were the only reading materials in my domicile.

KELLY: What're the sparklers for?

KID: To make Mother Nature pay attention to us.

KELLY: And the bicycle?

KID: To make speeding down California Street easier.

KELLY: No padding?

KID: Smack Turkenson has no need for padding.

KELLY: Smack Turkenson? The guy who brought the rain and flew away out of the Zone?

KID: The same.

KELLY: I heard he made it all the way to a housing project in Wisconsin!

KID: Truth.

KELLY: So how is this gonna happen?

KID: I intend to ride down the street holding sparklers in my hands while calling for rain.

KELLY: I think it'll work.

KID: Do you?

KELLY: For sure, if you're doing it.

(She smiles. Kid Turboni has never felt more awkward.)

KID: Well, we're running out of nighttime, so Billy, if you'd help me balance while I light the sparklers?

BILLY: Gladly.

(Billy approaches. He hands Kelly his umbrella, still opened.)

Hold this.

(He grabs the handlebars as Kid lights one sparkler, then the other.)

Ready?

KID: No.

BILLY: Alright then.

(He lets go of the handlebars and Kid starts pedaling, toward offstage.)

KELLY: Bring the rain, Kid!

KID: *(While riding offstage:)* RAAAAAAIN! RAAAAAAAIN!
RAAAAAAI—

(Offstage crash.)

KELLY: KID!

BILLY: LATOYA!

KELLY: He needs help!

BILLY: Help is for winners, winners who bring rain.

(Billy and Kelly rush offstage. Billy reenters with Latoya followed by Kelly with Kid, who is covered in trash. After checking Latoya for injury:)

It didn't work.

KID: You think?

BILLY: I think I know what we did wrong.

KELLY: It needs to be bigger.

BILLY: Right.

KID: Bigger?

KELLY: If you're going to grab Mother Nature by the ear, you need to be really big, and impressive—to her, I mean, not that you're...not already...

BILLY: Alright, I'm gonna go get more sparklers and some duct tape; we'll try this—

(He's cut off by Miles, who enters wearing just shorts and flip-flops, as if woken up.)

MILES: Kid, get upstairs right now before I make you carry the ice block up and down California Street while I sit on it. If I knew this is what you were scheming I would've made you come to work with me and tar roofs for the summer.

(Kid quickly exits.)

Hi, Kelly. Go home.

(She does.)

And Billy? I'm tellin' your mom about this. Too much nonsense for 10 PM. Now get inside before I rip those strawberry pink tassels off of that bike and make you eat 'em.

BILLY: Yes, Mr. T. Oh, my mom asked after you.

MILES: Really?

About what?

(Billy shrugs and exits. When Miles is alone, he stares up at the night sky, and then lights fade.)

(Confessional. Kid and a sparkler.)

KID: I'm pretty sure NASA lost a few dogs in space before putting Lance Armstrong on the moon.

Live strong, my brother. You'll always be a champion in my eyes.

The first attempt wasn't a success but who's to say you were able to bring the rain on your first walk down California Street. I bet you walked up and down from Sunshine Market a thousand times before you found the right way to bring the rain.

I want to earn the rain like you did—I don't want to steal it.

What's it matter, so long as it rains? Our people in the Zone steal things to get by sometimes. No judgment. I don't think that's me, though.

I think someday I'll leave this place, but I don't know what it'll do without me. Or me without it. Maybe I won't leave.

I don't know why your story is so important to me. I think about it all day. I keep picturing myself bringing the rain and then—well. I guess bringing the rain would be enough, for now. One thing at a time.

(As he speaks, SMACK TURKENSON appears in a spotlight, dressed like Evel Knievel with LED lights studded on his jacket and red, white, and blue fringe hanging down from his sleeves.)

I hope to someday put on the jacket of freedom and liberate the Zone from the heat Mother Nature is putting us through. It might be a test. You would know better than me.

(Smack puts his arms out like an airplane and ascends offstage, smiling.)

That would be sweet.

And I've been thinking... I think my mom would've put me back on the bike and told me to go again. She was like that, you know?

Thanks for listening, Smack. I ought to get to bed. Dad'll be up soon and I have a long day of planning attempt number two ahead of me with Billy.

And...maybe Kelly, too...

Not that I care.

(Transition to the courtyard, 5 AM. Miles enters dressed for work: jeans, boots, helmet. Lydia enters, wearing a bathrobe and slippers – utterly without sexiness, like she set an alarm and just woke up.)

LYDIA: Miles?

MILES: Lydia? What're you doing up?

LYDIA: Oh, you know. Just...going for a walk.

MILES: At 5 AM?

LYDIA: I...get leg cramps. But how're you? Where are you off to so bright and early?

(He looks at his work clothes.)

MILES: ...work?

LYDIA: Of course you are.

MILES: Replacing the roof on the IHOP over on Washington. People need their...pancakes, and such.

LYDIA: Definitely! Definitely. Yeah, pancakes. Blueberries and banana nut...stuff.

(Pause.)

I'll go inside now. Sorry, Miles.

(She turns to go.)

MILES: Wait! What's your favorite pizza topping?

LYDIA: What?

MILES: I mean, what's new at the hotel?

LYDIA: Sausage.

MILES: And your favorite pizza topping?

LYDIA: That *is* my favorite pizza topping.

MILES: Sausage isn't new at the hotel?

LYDIA: Miles.

(Pause.)

MILES: My buddy covered his foot in tar the other day on a bet and ended up losing a toe.

(He touches his forehead and looks away, appalled at his conversation topic choice.)

LYDIA: One of my coworkers steamed all the hair on her head off in the kitchen because she took the lid off a pot without knowing what was inside it!

MILES: Hilarious!

(Pause.)

LYDIA: Well, I'll...let you get going. Protect those pretty toes of yours, okay?

MILES: So long as you hang on to your hair.

(He slowly turns and walks offstage. Lydia stares after him for a moment, stricken. She smiles, then after a while, turns back and heads inside.)

(Transition to daytime.)

(Kid, Billy, and Kelly enter with umbrellas. Kelly is now wearing Ray-Ban knockoffs, too. They line up, and all at once, open their umbrellas and sit down.)

BILLY: I think we can all agree last night was a burp in the overall rain-bringing plan.

KID: I'm missing some skin over my right knee.

KELLY: Does it hurt?

KID: It did, before the nerve died.

KELLY: Truth.

BILLY: My mother informed me that it is supposed to hit 115 tomorrow, so tonight *must* go better.

KID: Agreed.

BILLY: With Mr. T floating around, we only have a brief window in which to bring the rain. And if we are to go bigger and better than we did yesterday —

KID: — which we are —

BILLY: — then we must operate like a well-oiled machine, you know what I'm sayin'?

KELLY: Half the time, yes.

KID: What did you have in mind?

BILLY: You know that shopping cart those teenagers left a few blocks down on California?

KID: Yeah?

BILLY: We'll need that.

KELLY: Those get hot sittin' in the sun all day — make sure to grab oven mitts first. What else?

BILLY: We'll need the Christmas lights with the battery pack from the storage shed.

KID: Anything else?

BILLY: I'll cover the rest.

KID: What time tonight?

BILLY: Nine forty-five. Shout across the courtyard to me that you're ready and I'll meet you in front of East Block.

KELLY: What if the manager catches us?

BILLY: That's your job, Kelly. Keep Mr. Mathers occupied and then meet up with us on California Street at 10 PM.

KELLY: Word.

KID: Am I going to lose anymore skin?

BILLY: No. Possibly the same amount as last time. Nothing more.

KID: If I die, I would like to leave you my Viking helmet, Billy.

BILLY: My brother is good to me. I am blessed.

KID: Treat it well. If my dad comes out, how do we get away?

BILLY: One miracle at a time, Kid.

KELLY: What about your mom, Billy?

BILLY: Working the late shift at the hotel. She won't be home until midnight, at the earliest.

KELLY: You want to come over for dinner?

KID: His mom left a casserole.

BILLY: She's good at casseroles.

(Pause.)

Prepare yourself for magic and wonder, Kid. Tonight, it happens.

(Billy exits.)

KELLY: Do you think we'll be able to pull it off tonight?

KID: No. Well, I don't know. Maybe. I want to make sure I do it right, if we're going to do it at all.

KELLY: What do you mean?

KID: Nothing.

KELLY: Hey, Kid?

KID: Yeah?

KELLY: ...You ever sit by the garden in the courtyard and think?

KID: ...No.

KELLY: You ever sit anywhere and just think?

(For a brief second, the scene darkens to the confessional spotlight and the sound of a sparkler is heard. Kid stares out toward the audience. As soon as the moment rises, it falls, and Kid's back in the courtyard with Kelly. The whole sequence should only take a few seconds.)

KID: No...

KELLY: Sometimes I sit there and think about school, the times when everyone thinks I should be understanding something that doesn't make sense.

KID: ...Like what?

KELLY: Like... You know how they go around the room and make everyone take a turn reading a paragraph or two out loud?

KID: Yeah?

KELLY: I just have trouble with that, sometimes.

KID: What kind of trouble?

KELLY: Letters not being where I think they should be. Like a puzzle that was put together wrong.

KID: You should tell Ms. Finster. I bet she'd help you.

KELLY: I don't want to tell anyone.

Except you, I guess.

I'm sorry, that was weird.

(She stands up and goes to leave.)

KID: I keep having dreams about my mom.

(She stops, sits back down.)

KELLY: What kind of dreams?

KID: One dream over and over.

We're crossing Washington Street on our way to Taqueria Veracruz for dinner.

She was real excited about it. I can smell her perfume, in the dream.

I feel the street under my shoe, and I see the car. The yellow headlights.

I feel her push me hard, and then my face hitting the street, breaking my nose.

Then I see Mom on the ground, and the broken bumper with the glass from the headlights everywhere.

A police officer picks me up and I see the red and blue lights reflect off every window on the way to the hospital.

KELLY: Kid.

KID: The dreams have been coming on real strong lately, stronger even than the night after her funeral, and I thought it'd never be worse than that.

KELLY: Maybe it's the heat?

KID: Yeah, the heat.

KELLY: Truth.

(Pause.)

(Kelly reaches over and holds Kid's hand.)

(They sit like that until lights and scenery transition back to the Turboni apartment. Lights are on in the Santos apartment across the way.)

(Kid and Kelly walk offstage with their umbrellas.)

(Miles enters, looking beat. It is late in the evening. He sits on a new block of ice and fans himself for a while.)

MILES: Kid? Kid, you here?

KID: *(Off:)* Yeah! Give me a second!

(A toilet flushes and Kid enters.)

Papa Turboni, as I live and breathe.

MILES: Kid Turboni, in living color.

KID: What's for dinner?

MILES: It's your turn to cook, so what're you thinking?

KID: I know how to make peanut butter sandwiches and peanut butter and fluff sandwiches. So, fluff or no?

MILES: Fluff.

KID: Milk or water?

MILES: It's peanut butter!

KID: Water, then.

MILES: Wise guy.

KID: *(Moving toward the counter to make the sandwiches:)* How was work?

MILES: Another day in paradise. How was California Street?

KID: Productive.

MILES: What?

KID: I'm not so sure about the drought anymore, Dad.

MILES: I assure you: it is still very real.

KID: No, I mean, the rain-bringing.

MILES: Because you crashed Latoya into some garbage cans?

KID: Because I kind of absolutely one hundred percent have to get it right now or things are going to keep getting worse.

MILES: What things are we talking about?

KID: Nothing. Just...heat stuff, I guess.

MILES: If you ever want to talk—about anything, from the heat to, you know, I'll give you unlimited ice block time and peanut butter with extra fluff. Just please don't destroy any more property.

(Kid brings the sandwiches and milk over. They begin to eat. After a moment, Kid notices the time. Startled:)

KID: It's 9:50!

(He approaches the window.)

BILLY!

(A small puppet of Billy appears in the far window, to give the illusion of distance.)

MILES: What're you doing?

BILLY: WHAAAAT?

KID: Hold on, Dad—

WHAT DO YOU THINK? IT'S 9:50!

MILES: Where do you think you're going this late?

KID: Billy and Kelly are playing late night basketball in the courtyard.

BILLY: MEET ME IN THE SHED, TO GET THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS!

KID: He means basketballs.

MILES: Kid—

KID: SEE YOU DOWN THERE!

(A knock on the door. Kid crosses and opens it to find Lydia carrying a casserole dish and a box fan.)

LYDIA: Oh, Kid. I thought you'd be asleep.

I brought a casserole— and a box fan!

(Kid pauses, confused and embarrassed. He gently pushes past her and exits. Looking down the hallway, toward him:)

It's Mexican lasagna!

Are you hungry, Miles?

MILES: Yes... I am.

(Transition down to California Street, where Kelly waits impatiently.)

(Billy enters holding some sparklers, which he hands to Kelly.)

KELLY: Everything set up?

BILLY: Nearly. I need you to light these when I tell you to and chase after Kid as we run down California toward Sunshine Market.

KELLY: Got it.

BILLY: This time will have to work. We're all part of it, and it will be like Smack Turkenson back from Wisconsin. If this doesn't bring the rain, I officially quit as the group brain and will give myself over to lesser pursuits.

KELLY: Such as?

BILLY: Playing cards outside the housing authority office. I'll shake those old men down. They'll never see my mad Crazy 8 skills comin' down the road.

KELLY: Are you ready, Kid?

KID: *(Off:)* No!

BILLY: *(Exiting toward Kid:)* He's ready, let's do this.

(Fully offstage:) KELLY! LIGHT THE SPARKLERS!

(She does.)

(Off:) CHRISTMAS LIGHTS, ENGAGE!

(The tinny sound of Jingle Bells begins lightly, from one of those torturous musical strings of Christmas lights.)

(Off:) KID TURBONI, GO, GO, GO, GO!

(There is an all-too-brief moment of pregnant silence before we hear the sound of a shopping cart rattling along the cracked Zone pavement.)

(Kid enters, kneeling in the shopping cart, facing forward with his arms out while wrapped in musical Christmas lights. Billy pushes him, also wrapped in Christmas lights and wearing huge oven mitts to protect his hands from the metal shopping cart that baked in the New Mexican sun all day. Kelly follows close behind, her hands out like airplane wings and full of lit, sizzling sparklers.)

(As they cross and approach the opposite stage exit:)

ALL: RAAAAAAINNN! RAAAAINNN! RAAAAIIINNN!
RAAAIIINNN –

(A second after they've all exited:)

BILLY: *(Off:)* KID! LOOK OUT! JUMP!

(The distinct sound of a shopping cart carrying a glowing 12-year-old hitting a parked car, followed by a car alarm going off.)

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(Billy reenters, running toward the opposite offstage, heading toward the housing complex. He is free of the lights but still has the mitts on. As he crosses the stage:)

AND STILL NO RAIN! BONE FREAKING DRY!

(Before he fully exits, he is caught by Lydia, who drags him back onstage. Miles enters with her.)

YOU'RE HOME EARLY!

MILES: Miles Turboni, Junior – get over here. RIGHT. NOW.

(Kid enters, trailing Christmas lights from offstage that are still turned on. Miles turns the battery pack off.)

LYDIA: William Santos, you get up to the apartment NOW, no wandering. I'll be up in a few minutes, by which time I'll have come up with no less than TEN ways to make your life miserable. GO.

(Billy runs offstage. Lydia turns to Miles.)

Quick, let's get this out of here before that car's owner comes out!

(She runs offstage toward the car and brings the cart back on, detaching the Christmas lights, and wheeling it back toward the complex.)

MILES: I'll be right there, Lydia.

And you. Miles. I don't know what your problem is these past few days, but it stops NOW. No more ridiculous dressing up. No more noise at 10 PM, when people are trying to SLEEP. No more nonsense about Smack Turkerson or whoever it is you kids made up. It stops, NOW. Do you understand?

(Kid doesn't say anything. He stares at the ground.)

Take off those Christmas lights. You better be in the apartment by the time I get back up there, or I'll keep you inside until school starts back up. Do you understand?

(No answer. Miles goes to exit.)

Kelly, go home!

(Miles exits.)

(A pause.)

KELLY: Kid?

(Silence.)

Kid Turboni?

(He looks at her.)

I still believe you'll bring the rain.

(She leans in and kisses him. Lights transition to the confessional. Kid turns into the confessional dim spotlight and lights a sparkler.)

(He goes through a chain of expressions, all with brow furrowed in a confused sort of way: Confused. Angry. Confused. Sad. Confused. Delighted. Confused. Ecstatic. Confused. Scared. Confused. Confused. Confused.)

(Lights transition back to the apartment, later that same night. There are now two ice blocks, Miles on one, Kid on the other.)

KID: *(Indicating the ice block he is sitting on:)* Ms. Santos gets her own ice block after visiting once?

MILES: Talk.

KID: I honestly did not think we'd ram a shopping cart into a parked car. Mistakes were made, and for that, I apologize.

(Pause.)

MILES: Talk more.

KID: Billy, Kelly, and me were trying to bring the rain—see, whenever I say it out loud like that, it sounds ridiculous.

MILES: So, wait. Crashing Latoya, burning sparklers, flinging yourself out of shopping carts, waking up all of California Street and ramming parked cars—this is what you do to bring the rain?

KID: No.

MILES: Then what were you doing? Besides vandalism.

KID: I'm just trying to do the right thing.

MILES: I don't doubt that.

KID: It won't rain until I earn it and if what I've done so far hasn't earned it, Mother Nature must think I'm trying to steal it and if she wouldn't let Smack steal it, I doubt she'll let us.

MILES: Look at me.

(Kid does.)

Promise me that you will not do anything else that will cause any damage. Not only is it wrong to break other people's things, but you are going to get hurt if this keeps up.

KID: Okay, dad.

(Pause.)

I'll tell Billy in the morning that we need to stop trying.

MILES: Well. Wait. I never said that.

KID: What?

MILES: I said no more property damage, I didn't say stop trying.

KID: What do you mean?

MILES: Doing those things that generally made you a holy terror was—what did you say?—stealing Mother Nature's attention rather than earning it?

KID: Yes. It's complicated, I know.

MILES: Then figure out how to do it proper, and I'll help you.

KID: Really?

MILES: You have that scheming look in your eye again, Kid, and I can't tell you how happy that makes me. This energy you have, your desire to do good.

KID: What?

MILES: Bringing the rain. We're in a drought, kiddo. And correct me if I'm wrong, but Smack did what he did to help his people. It's really cool that you want to do the same.

KID: Thanks, Dad.

(Pause.)

Something else is bothering me.

MILES: I figured. The burnt-out sparklers I keep finding in the toilet indicate something deeper and weirder is going on.

KID: I've been having the dream again.

MILES: Ah.

KID: More and more.

MILES: Why do you think that is?

KID: Heat, I guess.

MILES: Maybe. Anything else it could be?

KID: I've been thinking about her more and more and picturing...where she'd be, and what she'd say, and sometimes it's strong enough that I'm pretty sure I can hear or

smell her, like she's right around the corner but I'm not fast enough to catch her.

MILES: You know, I wake up every morning and still expect her to be next to me when I reach my arm over to turn off the alarm.

KID: Yeah.

MILES: That'll never go away, Kid. Would you want it to?

KID: The dream beats me up when I have it, but I feel like a terrible person because I like the dream—I get to see and hear and feel her when she—pushes me.

MILES: There's nothing wrong with that, Kid. It is okay for you to feel however you feel, to grieve however you grieve, and I promise—it is absolutely okay for you to move on from that grief when you're ready.

(A moment of silence.)

KID: Dad?

MILES: Yeah?

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