

I HATED HEAVEN

Screenplay by

KENNY KEMP

based on his novel

FADE IN:

EXT. DEL MAR - CEMETERY - DAY (RAIN)

A white glove is pulled onto a right hand that is missing the tip of the forefinger. The gloved hand grasps a brass handle. PULL BACK and FOLLOW as a group of men march across the grass, carrying a pewter-colored coffin, placing it on canvas straps spanning the grave. **PASTOR HEATH** places a purple coverlet on the casket. He pulls out a hanky and dries his bald head.

THE GLOVE is removed and the hand is placed on a woman's shoulder. PULL BACK TO REVEAL **TOM WARING**, early 30s, good tan, blonde hair. He pulls his wife **APRIL** closer. April is slender and 29 years old, a Natalie Wood type. She stands stiffly, her auburn hair gathered at the neck. She rests a hand on the shoulder of their boy **JOSH**, 5. April looks into the grave.

HER P.O.V. - PUSH IN on the emptiness. Water drips into the black hole. We HEAR the rising sounds of SQUIRMING INSECTS. The darkness bubbles with their glossy, segmented bodies as they envelop the casket, which is now, strangely, in the grave.

APRIL looks up, her eyes wide. The INSECT SOUND fades. She blinks away the terrible image.

HER P.O.V. - The grave is just that: a hole in the ground.

PASTOR HEATH pats the shoulder of **CHUCK BLANKENSHIP**, 65, who wears a tan Stetson and a Western-style suit. With gnarled fingers he smooths his droopy moustache. His eyes are distant.

HEATH

Our sister Carolyn will rise again
on resurrection morning, clothed in
glory, to dwell forever with the
Lord. Without God, man is doomed to
everlasting destruction. Our souls
exist by His grace, which comes to
all who call upon His holy name.

Heath sneaks a look at April, who meets his gaze firmly. She isn't buying any of this nonsense. Heath lowers his eyes.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Let us pray.

Heads bow as Heath prays. Tom looks up at the weeping sky.

TOM'S P.O.V. - PAN across the cemetery toward the freeway beyond the chain link fence. The SWOOSH of tires on wet pavement CROSSFADES to a CHORUS of VOICES.

And there, amidst the clouds, appears Chuck's deceased wife **CAROLYN**, in white, her upturned face radiant.

The clouds disappear and the richest, bluest sky surrounds her. Gossamer wings move at her back, her face a picture of joy. She raises her hands and is illuminated by white light, which envelopes her. She disappears into the whiteness.

TOM, overcome by the hopeful vision, blinks away a tear. He looks at April, who is looking up at him, her eyes also full of tears, but for a different reason. Tom pulls her closer.

The prayer ends, the mourners disperse. Chuck stands alone at the head of the grave. A WOMAN engages April in conversation. Josh crooks a finger at Tom.

JOSH

Dad? Is she really in that box?
And they're really going to bury it?

Tom nods, but can't suppress a smile.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Cool. Will God remember where she
Is when it's time to... ah..?

TOM

Sure. He'll remember.

JOSH

And then they'll dig her up?

APRIL

Tom! What in the world?

April appears, frowning at Tom, who reacts quickly.

TOM

April, we were just talking about
the resurrection. Josh is worried
about it.

APRIL

Josh, go tell Mr. Blankenship we'll
see him at his house.

Josh trots off toward Chuck. Tom raises his hands in defense.

TOM

He was confused.

APRIL

Then don't confuse him any more.

TOM

He hears both sides, like we agreed.
This is one of your... "formative
ritualistic moments," I think.

APRIL

Reading my Psychology today again?

TOM

You leave it in the john, what do you expect?

He gives her a disarming smile. In response, she punches his arm. Tom steers her toward Chuck. He takes Chuck's hand.

CHUCK

She's gone. Can't feel her.

TOM

You'll see her again.

CHUCK

Think so?

TOM

Know so.

Chuck nods doubtfully and turns to April, pulling her close.

CHUCK

I know this is hard for you.

April draws back, tears welling. Tom gives Chuck a hug.

TOM

See you at home.

CHUCK

God bless you folks.

Tom puts his arm around April and they walk away. Josh skips before them, splashing puddles of water. Tom looks back over his shoulder.

TOM'S P.O.V. - CHUCK watches the casket being lowered.

TOM turns to April, who looks at him, life's biggest question on her face. He nods and puts his arm around her shoulder.

ROLL OPENING CREDITS:

EXT. DEL MAR BEACH - DAY

We are inside the wave, like a surfing film. The sun is coming up over the cliffs, creating rainbows in the surf spray as the waves crash rhythmically. Tom and his two buddies are surfing.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) Tom catches a pumping right, screaming down the wave face.

B) **VINCE DECORSO**, 35, muscular, with long black hair and beard, cheers as Tom blasts past. Vince catches the next wave. It's clear he's an expert surfer, the best of the three.

C) GREG LEVITT, tall and skinny, 27, rounds out the trio. Greg makes gallant attempts, but with little success.

D) VINCE kicks out near Greg, and they both paddle out again.

E) SLO-MO - TOM leans into a wave, his hand just grazing the surface of the water, sending up a rooster tail, complete concentration and complete joy.

F) VINCE cuts Levitt off, who was struggling to catch the wave. Vince cuts sharply up a wave face and gets air kicking out.

G) TOM demonstrates proper take-off form to Levitt.

H) LEVITT finally gets a wave. Vince cheers, grinning at Tom, who raises his arms in victory. Levitt grins, stoked.

I) THE SURFERS carry their boards ashore. They pass a number of guys on the beach getting into their wetsuits.

TOM

Perfect day...

The surfers smile back.

VINCE

And now we're gonna wreck it by working.

This gets a laugh out of Tom and Levitt. They head for the cars.

CREDITS OUT.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The street is wet from last night's rain. The house is all stone and windows, three stories high, a Frank Lloyd Wright knock-off. Ocean view. Surrounded by mud, 2x10 planks form walkways. Beams jut out from the second floor, the beginnings of a balcony.

Tom opens the door on his pickup, and a mountain of cups, receipts, fast food wrappers, and junk falls out. He grabs his tool belt and shoves most of the junk back in before closing the door.

Vince and Greg join Tom and they walk across the planks toward the house. Tom points to the beams above.

TOM

Balcony today.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATER

Vince and Levitt move sheets of plywood out onto the second story beams. We HEAR the SOUND of a truck. Everyone looks.

Chuck gets out of an old F-150.

VINCE
Hey, Chuck! How's it hangin'?

ANGLE ON CHUCK - He shrugs. Tom steps INTO FRAME.

TOM
What are you doing here?

CHUCK
You rather I stayed home and moped?

TOM
Sure you're up to it?

CHUCK
Got out of bed and made my breakfast
all by myself.

TOM
Then why don't you finish forming up
the stairway here?

CHUCK
Vince does the cement work.

TOM
I know, but you can do it.

CHUCK
I know I can do it. Tell you what
else I know: you don't trust me on
the roof, seein' I'm bereaved and
all. You think I'll fall off.

TOM
I need you on this stairway, Chuck.

The two men stare at each other for a long moment. Finally:

CHUCK
I need my saw. You wanna help me up
this plank?

Tom reaches to help but Chuck pushes his hand brusquely away.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - STREET - LATER

A wheel with a BMW logo pulls INTO FRAME. The door opens. CRANE
UP to reveal **DAVE BALMER** in his thousand-dollar suit, frowning.
Tom trots toward him, extending his hand. Balmer ignores it.

BALMER
You haven't started the finish yet.

TOM
We haven't got final electrical.

BALMER
You're behind schedule.

Tom follows Balmer's gaze. Vince and Levitt watch from a bedroom window. Balmer leans in and whispers:

BALMER (CONT'D)
When you're not here not here, do they do any work?

TOM
Dave, suppliers don't show. Subs are late. It rains for a week. Wives change their minds. Ten thousand details--

BALMER
And you need to be on top of every one of them. Tom, how do you think I afford this car? By missing my deadlines?

TOM
We're doing our best.

BALMER
Well, do your best faster.

He gets in his car and roars off. Vince shakes a fist at it.

VINCE
Bite me, Shylock!

LEVITT
Well?

He looks at Tom and rubs his thumb and forefinger together. Tom walks to his truck, opening the door. Junk falls out. He searches inside. Chuck walks up.

CHUCK
Whatcha lookin' for?

TOM
Checkbook.

Chuck pulls the checkbook out of Tom's back pocket and hands it to him. Tom thumbs through it, shaking his head.

CHUCK
I can wait.

TOM
I don't want to get into the habit.

CHUCK

It ain't a habit if you don't do it regular. But I'd pay those guys.

Tom turns to see Vince and Levitt, still in the window.

TOM

I'll get you next time, pard.

CHUCK

Whenever. I trust ya.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO HIGH-RISE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The sun lit bay reflects off the mirrored skyscrapers.

INT. FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC - LOBBY

April bursts through the door, past the receptionist, **TRISH**. FOLLOW HER down the hall as she flies past several offices.

INT. CLINIC - APRIL'S OFFICE

April enters. In steps **MICHELLE ADAMS**, 35, black and shapely.

MICHELLE

Running behind?

APRIL

I'm as organized as anyone, right?
(on Michelle's nod)
Then why am I always behind? Tom never makes a list, yet he comes out on top every time!

MICHELLE

Then use his system.

April upends her briefcase on the desk.

APRIL

He doesn't have a system! When a problem surfaces, he doesn't sweat it. Says worrying is God's job.

MICHELLE

Sounds okay to me.

April stops and turns slowly to Michelle.

APRIL

I didn't know you believed in God.

Michelle shrugs and begins ordering April's desk.

MICHELLE

Would you rather people believed in celebrities, politicians, athletes? They gotta believe in something. Something bigger.

APRIL

Michelle, do you talk this way with your clients?

MICHELLE

Hell no! I use politically-correct terms like "releasing your angst," "self-actualization" and such, but it's the same thing.

She starts to leave. April touches her on the arm.

APRIL

Wait. I need to ask you something. I went to a funeral yesterday.

MICHELLE

That's something for a priest. Or your born-again husband.

APRIL

I can't discuss it with him. He'll just wonder, "Who is this crazy person I'm married to?"

MICHELLE

That's how I felt about my first three husbands!

APRIL

A friend of ours died and her passing is really troubling me. Everyone at the funeral was so hopeful, like they knew they'd see her again. But I just can't buy it. And then, on the other hand, I hear people like me say, "If we remember them, they're not really dead--"

MICHELLE

The Wrath of Kahn. Bones says it at Spock's funeral.

April flops down in her chair, disgusted.

APRIL

Great. I've got Dr. McCoy as my spiritual advisor.

MICHELLE

Your father's dead. How did he die?

April gets up again and turns toward the window.

APRIL

Not now.

MICHELLE

You wanted my help, let me help.

APRIL

My dad was a jeweler. Had a shop down on Broadway. One evening a man came in and pressed a gun to his ribs, demanding all the jewelry.

DAN CARROLL, mid-40s, pokes his head into the office.

DAN

April, your ten o'clock is here.

She doesn't turn from the window. Dan looks at Michelle.

MICHELLE

We're in the middle of something, Dan.

DAN

Do you want me to meet with them?

April shakes her head. Dan slowly closes the door.

MICHELLE

He's got a thing for you.

APRIL

Who?

MICHELLE

Old Dr. Dan there would write you love songs if he wasn't tone deaf.

APRIL

He hardly knows me.

MICHELLE

He sees you every day.

APRIL

Then he can see this.

She holds up her hand. A gold band glints on her ring finger.

MICHELLE

Doesn't stop him from liking you.

APRIL

Do you want to hear this or not?

(MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)

Anyway, a woman came in to get a ring, saw the gun, and started screaming. The robber shot my dad. That night my mom came home from the morgue with blood all over her dress. That was just the first of a long line of things that convinced me there was no reason to life. I know I'm not the first to ask this, but it's still a good question: If there is a God, how could he let something like this happen?

MICHELLE

You want the truth, or some psycho-babble B.S.?

APRIL

Aren't they the same thing?

MICHELLE

Honey, the truth is: no one knows. And people who say they do know are lying or delusional. People believe in God because they can't bear the thought of believing in nothing.

APRIL

I don't believe in nothing.

MICHELLE

But sometimes what we do believe in isn't enough. Weak minds turn to religion. Stronger minds believe in life, the good things: a good book, fine wine, great sex!

APRIL

Those are all good.

MICHELLE

You're one of the lucky ones! So what if Tom is superstitious? He's still better than the other ninety-nine percent of the guys out there.

EXT. WARING HOME - EVENING - ESTABLISHING

A modest Rambler with a gravel drive, palms, ratty lawn, and a redwood post and rail fence. Tom's pickup is in the drive.

INT. WARING HOME - LIVING ROOM/ENTRY/KITCHEN

Tom sits at the dining table, working on accounts. The SOUND of April's Maxima is heard.

Josh, who was coloring nearby, perks up. He races out the door. Tom heads for the front door, which opens, REVEALING April, a load of books in her arms. Josh is dragging plastic sacks of groceries along the parquet entry. April puts her free arm around Tom's neck and gives him a doozy of a kiss, long and heartfelt. Tom pulls back and looks at her.

TOM

Wow.

JOSH (O.S.)

Wow.

TILT DOWN as Tom steps back to REVEAL Josh, standing between them, his face upturned, watching them kiss. April reacts.

APRIL

Scoot!

Josh drags the groceries in the kitchen. Tom turns to April.

TOM

Sorry, Hon.

APRIL

Good thing one of us remembered it's your day to cook.

JOSH (O.S.)

Your day, Dad!

FOLLOW THEM to the kitchen. Josh goes through the bags.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Mommy, where's the food?

APRIL

Salad is food, young man.

TOM

And we love it. Right, Josh?

Josh nods sadly. Tom goes to the sink and starts organizing the overflowing mess. April nudges him aside, her ardor cooling.

APRIL

I'll do it.

TOM

No, I'll do it. Besides, Josh has something to show you.

They look at Josh, who is perplexed.

TOM (CONT'D)

Your bike, remember?

JOSH

Oh! Oh! Mommy, you gotta see this!

Josh grabs April's soapy hand and hauls her outside. **TERRIBLE TED**, their miniature terrier, yaps at Josh's heels.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Look what we did, Mommy!

April looks at the bike. Nothing has changed.

JOSH (CONT'D)

We took off the wheels!

The bike still has its wheels. April shakes her head.

JOSH (CONT'D)

The training wheels! We took 'em off!

SMASH CUT TO:

BEGIN TERROR VISION:

EXT. WARING HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Josh careens down the drive on his bike, as a huge, black semi roars out of a black cloud, horns BLARING, tires SQUEALING, brakes SCREAMING, as Josh heads for it on a collision course, the impact imminent--

END TERROR VISION.

BACK TO SCENE

TOM

It's gonna be great!

He puts his arm around April. Her eyes still hold the terrifying image. She looks at Josh, who straddles the bike, grinning.

APRIL

Do you really think he's ready?

TOM AND JOSH

Yes!

APRIL

But he's still so little!

TOM

I rode a two-wheeler when I was four. Evel Knievel here's five. I've been waiting for him to ask me to take them off. He's ready for a man's world!

He howls at the sky and beats his chest. Josh joins him.

APRIL

The drive is so steep! And the cars!
The teenager down the street tears
past here like a bat out of--

TOM

I'll teach him at the park. Nothing
to fall on except grass. And when he
learns, there will be strict rules
about riding in the street. Deal?

He sticks out his hand to Josh, who takes it eagerly.

JOSH

Deal! Yay!

He takes off, Ted scampering after him. April turns to Tom.

TOM

He's gonna grow up, no matter what
we do. He's gonna fall and scrape
his knees and all we can do is be
there with the Band-aids.

They watch Josh pushing his bike around the yard, Ted barking.

APRIL

He has no idea ho hard life will be.
Scraped knees are nothing...

TOM

But we'll be there, looking out for
him, just like...

APRIL

Just like what?

TOM

Nothing.

INT. WARING HOME - MASTER BATHROOM/BEDROOM - NIGHT

April brushes her teeth. She's wearing a company T-shirt. "Waring
Construction: Built To Last." Tom pokes his head into the room.

TOM

I need to ask you something, but
I'll wait until you're not rabid.

He leaves. She rinses and exits. FOLLOW HER into the bedroom.
She sits on the bed. Tom paces nervously.

APRIL

Just say it, Tom.

TOM

Okay... Sunday is Easter. I'd like you to come to services with us.

April turns and pulls the covers back. Tom crosses and sits on his side. She sits. He turns toward her, but only sees her back.

TOM (CONT'D)

You didn't mind going on Christmas. You said you liked the carols. There's gonna be a big crowd, so no one will notice you. And I'll protect you in case someone tries to convert you.

April turns out the lamp and lays down, her back to him.

TOM (CONT'D)

It would mean a lot to Josh.

Tom almost touches her, then pulls back.

APRIL

I'll think about it.

Tom spoons up behind her. He kisses her neck tenderly.

TOM

That's all I ask... I love you.

APRIL

(after a long moment)

Me too you.

INT. WARING HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Josh is eating his Trix. Ted watches Josh's moving spoon intently. April is at the sink. She's wearing a gray UCSD sweatshirt and cutoffs. Tom enters.

TOM

Today Joshua Michael Waring becomes a man! Are you ready to defy death? To test the limits of endurance? To eat a whole donut in one bite?

He grabs a donut and it disappears into his mouth.

APRIL

That's what being a man is, huh?

TOM

And you thought it was just belching! Today, I'm gonna teach the Josh-man here to ride a two-wheeler! And we're gonna need a nurse!

APRIL

But I've got some files to work on.

TOM

You've got enough nut cases here to keep you busy, Dr. Waring.

JOSH

Can we, Mom? Huh?

APRIL

Okay. Where are we going?

TOM

Where else?

EXT. SAN ELIJO BEACH - DAY

Tom stands by the truck, watching the waves. April joins him.

APRIL

You didn't bring your board. Nice off-shore, too.

TOM

Tempt me not. I came to teach Josh to ride a bike, not surf.

APRIL

Quite a sacrifice for you.

Tom turns and hauls Josh's bike out of the back of the truck.

TOM

Tell me about it! But nobody said we couldn't body surf. Me and the Josh-man are gonna hit the waves!

He pulls off his shirt. Josh pulls his off, too. They run to the water. It's cold, and Josh immediately backs out. Tom, waist deep, motions for the boy to come in. Josh reluctantly enters and Tom grabs him, spinning him around, flying free of the water. We HEAR Josh's delighted yells.

APRIL hauls their stuff to a picnic spot. She sits on the blanket, watching her guys. And smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAN ELIJO BEACH - PICNIC AREA - LATER

Josh is teasing Ted with a piece of bologna. April lies on her back, her forearm across her eyes. Tom scans the waves, then turns and leans back on one arm, watching April, smiling. April feels his eyes on her and looks up.

APRIL

What?

TOM

You are so beautiful.

APRIL

No, really, what is it?

TOM

Just that. You're beautiful.

APRIL

You think so? Then prove it.

JOSH

Yeah, Dad, prove it!

TOM

Josh, take Ted for a walk. See if he likes the water.

JOSH

By myself?

APRIL

Stay close. And don't drown him.

JOSH

He could drown?

April nods. Josh is astonished.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Wow.

He looks at Ted with wonder. Ted gives him a fearful look.

TOM

Keep a hold of his leash.

Josh and Ted bound off toward the water. Tom turns to April.

TOM (CONT'D)

Prove it, huh?

April nods. Tom leans over and gives her a long, deep kiss. Her eyes are wide open the whole time in surprise.

APRIL

Thomas Philip Waring! That was a bonafide PDA!

TOM

Well, you know what a fan I am of private displays of affection!

He sneaks his arm under her, pulling her close. They kiss again. April rolls him onto his back and straddles him.

APRIL

Oh yeah? Think you're ready for a serious public make-out?

Tom rolls her off easily and straddles her, pinning her arms at her side between his knees. He kisses her again.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Oh, Tom! You animal!

TOM

If you're gonna laugh at me...

He tickles her stomach. April struggles, and just as she is about to get mad, he releases her. She attacks, tickling him, but he's not ticklish. Finally, she gives up and pinches him, then nestles into the crook of his arm.

APRIL

You are so mean. I hate you.

TOM

Me too you.

He kisses the crown of her head.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAN ELIJO BEACH - PICNIC AREA - DAY - LATER

Tom kneels next to Josh's bike. He points at the sprocket, but WE CAN'T HEAR what he's saying. PULL BACK TO REVEAL April in the f.g., watching. Tom points to the brakes. Josh nods and casually puts his hand on his dad's shoulder.

APRIL is moved by the gesture. She reaches into her purse for her camera. It comes out with the car keys. She is about to put them back when she stops and looks down, focusing on the keys.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY - CLOSE UP

A LOCKSET is pulled out of a canvas bag with the UCSD Bookstore logo on it.

APRIL is younger, her hair longer and lighter. She has a better tan. She looks at around. She's in the door section, but there are no locksets in sight. She puts the lockset back in the bag.

OVER THE SHOULDER - SOMEONE walks this way, a door held shoulder high. All WE SEE are scuffed yellow work boots and khaki shorts.

APRIL
Excuse me. Can you help me?

VOICE
Me?

He stops and lowers the door. It's Tom. His long, blonde hair is pulled back in a pony tail. His nose is peeling and he hasn't shaved. He wears a tank top. He's dirty and ragged, but still looks good. April is embarrassed, both at her mistake and his healthy, robust good looks. Tom looks her over.

TOM
I don't work here.

APRIL
Oh, I'm sorry.

TOM
But I know where everything is.
What do you need?

APRIL
I need a lock.

TOM
What kind of lock?

APRIL
Door.

She pulls the lockset out. Tom stands his door up and takes the lockset. He looks at her. She looks away, embarrassed.

TOM
Hardware. Follow me.

He starts off down the aisle with the lockset.

APRIL
That's okay! Just tell me...

FOLLOW APRIL as she follows Tom. He looks back a couple of times, waving her on. He greets several people, who see April following him and smile at her. She smiles back uneasily and says to one guy who winks at her:

APRIL (CONT'D)
We just met...

Which makes her feel even more foolish. WE ARRIVE at hardware. Tom stands before the display, comparing April's lockset with another.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Thanks. I can take it from--

TOM

This looks okay. You lose your key?

April is speechless. Tom smiles genuinely at her.

APRIL

My roommate is moving out.

TOM

Oh. Okay. I know a locksmith in--

APRIL

Can you do it? I'll pay you. You obviously know about these things.

TOM

But you don't know me. I might be like the guy you wanna keep out.

APRIL

You wouldn't say that if you were like him.

TOM

So it is a guy.

APRIL

My roommate's boyfriend.

TOM

Your roommate's boyfriend.

April is embarrassed, but when she looks at Tom, he smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)

Tom Waring.

APRIL

April Conway.

TOM

You don't need new locksets. Just new tumblers and keys.

APRIL

So you'll do it?

TOM

Sure. But only because I think it's a rule that when you get a new life, you gotta get new locks. You wanna do it now?

April looks down, feeling his eyes on her. It feels good.

APRIL
Now would be perfect.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO SCENE

APRIL looks down at the keys in her hand.

HER P.O.V. - TOM steadies Josh on his bike, while Josh pedals furiously.

APRIL tosses the keys into her purse and raises her camera.

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS - It's not going well. Tom lets go and Josh wobbles and crashes. He wails in frustration. Tom picks him up and drags the offending bike behind them. Ted barks at the wheel.

APRIL lowers the camera, jumps up and runs to them. Tom hands the boy off to her. She rocks him gently.

TOM
I thought he was ready.

JOSH
I am!

APRIL
It's hard, honey.

JOSH
Too hard!

TOM
For your first time, you did good,
Josh-man. No lie.

JOSH
Did not!

TOM
Ted was so mad at that stupid bike,
he almost bit off the back tire!

Josh sneaks a peek at Ted, who looks up at him, tail wagging.

TOM (CONT'D)
Look! He knows you can do it!

JOSH
Good old Ted.

And just like that, he's done crying. Ted jumps into his lap, smothering him with dog kisses. Josh laughs.

APRIL
Good old Ted.

EXT. HIGHWAY 101 - DAY (GOLDEN HOUR)

Tom's truck cruises along the highway, Josh's bike in the back.

INT. TRUCK (TRAVELING) - SAME - PAN ACROSS THE CAB

Josh sits by the door with Ted on his lap. They're both asleep. April is next to Tom, who drives. Everyone is sunburned and worn out. A satisfied smile is on April's face. She looks down.

HER P.O.V. - TOM'S RIGHT HAND rests on her leg with its imperfect forefinger.

APRIL looks up. Tom watches the road, lost in thought.

APRIL
I was thinking.

TOM
Uh-oh.

APRIL
I'd like to go to Easter services
with you, if you still want me to.

Tom smiles and puts his arm around her.

TOM
That would be perfect.

INT. COMMUNITY CHURCH - DAY

The Warings sit near the front, by Chuck. Sunlight streams through stained glass.

HEATH
...and on the third day, the two
Marys came to the sepulcher. And the
angel said unto the women, "Fear
not! For I know that ye seek Jesus,
which was crucified. He is not here,
for he is risen."

April jumps when the WOMAN in front of her shouts:

WOMAN
Praise the Lord!

Josh's eyes are open wide, watching as others shout: "Glory be!" and "Yes, Lord!" April glances at Tom, whose eyes are closed.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. SUBURBAN TUCSON STREET - DAY

A **YOUNG TOM** walks slowly along, lost in thought. As he nears a corner,

A VOICE

Stop.

Tom stops and looks around, just in time to see...

A **LARGE TRUCK** rounding the corner. It would have flattened him if he had taken one more step. As it passes, the mud flap bracket hooks onto Tom's belt buckle, spinning him around, then releases him in one fluid motion. The truck rumbles away, leaving Tom gasping on diesel fumes. He looks around. There's no one there.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BIOLOGY CLASSROOM - DAY

Tom listens to **MR. HARLIN**, the Campus Life advisor, who holds up a green book.

MR. HARLIN

... he who hath ears, let him hear.
And what will he hear? The Lord's
voice! All we have to do is listen!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BIOLOGY CLASSROOM - LATER

Mr. Harlin hands Tom the green book. It's the New Testament.

MR. HARLIN

If your heart is open, Tom, your
questions will find answers.

ANGLE on the book. PULL BACK. We're **BACK IN CHURCH** and Tom holds the same little book in his lap, worn by the intervening years.

HEATH

... may we someday be worthy to be
found on Thy right hand, amidst the
concourses of Thine holy angels,
singing praises to Thy holy name, to
dwell with Thee in eternal joy forever
and ever! Amen!

The congregation resounds with amens. Heath sits. The choir stands and launches into a spirited version of "Amazing Grace."

April steals a peek at Tom, whose eyes glisten. She is touched that he is moved. She may not understand why, but she is glad he can be. She pats his knee. He nods, trying to maintain his composure.

INT. COMMUNITY CHURCH - FOYER - LATER

Pastor Heath is bidding farewell to the worshipers. April almost sneaks by when he snags her hand, holding it firmly in his. Tom is behind her.

HEATH

Thank you for coming, Sister Waring.

APRIL

April.

HEATH

I hope you felt the power of the truth today, April.

APRIL

I always respond to the truth, Gerald.

HEATH

Christ said, "The truth shall make you free."

APRIL

Funny. That's what Siddhartha said, too.

HEATH

Pardon? Sid...?

APRIL

You know: The spiritual leader of a billion Buddhists?

HEATH

Oh.

Tom grabs Heath's hand, pumping it... and saves Heath's life.

TOM

Great service! Well, we don't want to hold up the line, do we, Honey?

April smiles, the victor just this once.

APRIL

Absolutely not.

EXT. COMMUNITY CHURCH - PARKING LOT

Chuck is getting into his pickup. As Tom and April walk up, he turns to them.

CHUCK

Can't feel her, Tom. I been consulting my *Spirit Guide*--

TOM
That thing is full of witchcraft!

CHUCK
Everything good is of God.

TOM
But reading tea leaves and going to seances is not good, if you ask me.

CHUCK
Didn't ask you.

TOM
You've got to be patient.

CHUCK
I am patient, Tom. Look at what I'm puttin' up with right now!

TOM
You gotta have faith, Chuck.

CHUCK
Tom, you got way too good a tan to be talkin' to me about dark times.

And just like that, he walks away. Tom stares after him sadly.

EXT. DEL MAR - THE LOT - DAY

The Maxima pulls up to a hillside lot. Josh jumps out and heads down the hill, toward a fort dug into the hillside. Tom and April get out.

APRIL
Good thing his pants are already black.

TOM
What a view!

APRIL
You say that every time.

TOM
We'll build on it, Honey. Someday.

APRIL
As in "someday my prince will come"?

TOM
As in someday soon. I mean it.

APRIL
Maybe we shouldn't call it our "dream house."

TOM

But it will be. Vaulted ceilings,
Huge windows facing the--

APRIL

So it has to be perfect.

TOM

Right. You just wait.

APRIL

Oh, I am. Waiting. Patiently.

TOM

Okay, out with it. What did you think?

APRIL

You don't want to know.

TOM

You're right. Tell me anyway.

JOSH (O.S.)

Daddy! I see you!

Josh waves from his fort. They wave back. He disappears. Tom turns to April, who looks hesitant.

APRIL

All right. There's something that's
been bothering me for a long time:
The idea that he gets it both ways.

TOM

Who? God?

APRIL

All those conflicting opposites. He
doesn't have a body, but he sits on
a throne. He's everywhere, but he's
nowhere. He and Jesus are the same,
yet Jesus spoke to his father on the
cross. Doesn't make any sense.

TOM

Those are the mysteries.

APRIL

That's just code for "nonsense."

TOM

His ways are higher than our--

APRIL

Tom, if there really is a God, why
doesn't he just tell us what this is
about? Even with the answers, life
would still be plenty hard.

TOM

I don't know why he doesn't. But it's his test. It doesn't have to make sense to us.

APRIL

Well, I've got news for him. This is how I am. So if he made me, I'm his fault.

TOM

I knew someone was to blame.

APRIL

He's omnipotent, yet he allows evil. He's all loving, yet he burns the wicked in hell... he sounds like a confused, vindictive jerk.

(on Tom's look.)

Sorry.

TOM

I wish I could make you feel what I feel. The beauty and the wonder of it all. God's powerful love for all of us. The way it softens my heart and fills me with light. I wish you could just feel...

April looks up at him as he speaks. She touches his cheek, bringing his gaze to her own. They look at each other for a long moment.

APRIL

Honey, the fact that you believe is almost enough to make me believe.

TOM

Almost.

Just then, a dirt clod sails up and lands at their feet. They hear Josh laughing. Tom looks around in mock horror.

TOM (CONT'D)

What? Assassins?!

He runs after Josh, scoops him up, and puts him on his shoulders, hooting like a gorilla. Josh apes him, making monkey faces.

APRIL

Darwin was right, you know!

INT. WARING HOME - HALLWAY/JOSH'S ROOM - NIGHT

April carries a laundry basket down the hall. She stops outside Josh's room.

JOSH (O.S.)
 ... you think I'll ever learn to
 ride a two-wheeler, Dad?

TOM (O.S.)
 Sure. But like Mom said, you gotta
 be patient.

JOSH (O.S.)
 She's pretty patient with us, isn't
 she?

April smiles. She can't resist and sneaks a look.

HER P.O.V. - TOM AND JOSH kneel by the bed, their backs to her.

TOM
 Yeah. Pretty patient.

JOSH
 I'm mean to her sometimes. She makes
 me do things I don't wanna... I wanna
 be better, but I just can't.

TOM
 I know. But when that happens to me,
 I ask God for help.

JOSH
 And he does?

TOM
 Well, sometimes it doesn't seem like
 it, but he knows more than me, so I
 try to do what he wants me to even
 if I don't understand why.

This sinks in. Josh turns to his Dad, real serious.

JOSH
 So he's like a dad... only smarter?
 That does it. April laughs and they both turn.

TOM
 Eavesdropping?

April enters and rubs noses with Josh.

APRIL
 Nighty night. Sweet dreams.

TOM
 We were about to say prayers.

Josh and Tom put on their most angelic faces. April sighs and
 kneels down, pinching Tom. He grimaces and nods at Josh.

JOSH

Heavenly Father, thanks for Mommy
and Daddy and Ted. Please help me
learn to ride a two-wheeler. And
help me mind Mommy better. Amen.

TOM

Amen.

Josh jumps up and into bed. April tucks him in.

APRIL

Love you, Tiger.

JOSH

Me too you!

He snuggles into the covers. Tom turns off the light and they
leave. April starts down the hall. Tom grabs her arm.

APRIL

I've got laundry to do.

He takes the basket and drops it on the floor. She stoops to
pick it up, but instead, he leads her down the hall, toward
their room.

TOM

It can wait...

INT. WARING HOME - MASTER BEDROOM

The light is off. The moon in the window casts a blue glow over
the scene. Tom starts undoing April's blouse button.

APRIL

I can do it.

Tom slowly removes her hands from the button.

TOM

So can I.

DISSOLVE TO:

Tom and April are in bed. The darkness surrounds them. They
move slowly, their kisses long and languid. It's not about sex,
and we feel like voyeurs, so we PULL BACK into the hallway and...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. WARING HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

April lies in the crook of Tom's arm, her eyes shut, her face bathed in moonlight. Very beautiful and very happy.

TOM
I was thinking.

APRIL
Uh-oh.

TOM
I heard something that might appeal
to your logic circuit.

APRIL
Mmm...

TOM
Did you know that the sun is four
hundred times larger than the moon?

Her eyes are still shut. She moves closer to him.

APRIL
Is that right?

TOM
It's also four hundred times farther
away.

APRIL
That's nice.

TOM
That makes them the same size in the
sky, so the moon can eclipse the
sun.

April follows Tom's gaze. The moon fills the window, a pale disk against a velvet background. She yawns.

APRIL
That's interesting.

TOM
Carl Sagan said we are probably the
only planet in the universe where a
total eclipse of the sun can occur.

April looks at the moon again. With interest, this time.

APRIL
And...?

TOM
Somebody put it there. For us.

Tom closes his eyes. April snuggles closer to him, her mystic who sees his God in everything, even in a dusty rock a quarter million miles out in space.

FADE OUT.

Fade In:

INT. WARING HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

April bustles about, preparing dinner. Tom, Josh and Chuck sit at the table, waiting. April brings a large dish over and takes her seat.

APRIL
Hope you like it. Curry chicken.

TOM
Grace?

They look at her. She has veto power but nods. Tom smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)
Would you, Chuck?

CHUCK
Be honored.

They hold hands and bow their heads. April is the only one who doesn't close her eyes. We HOLD on her reaction as Chuck prays:

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Lord, thank you for this family and how they've been looking after me. Please bless this food, and bless the dear heart that prepared it. She's awful good to us three good-for-nothing men and we love her for it. We know you do as well. Amen.

The prayer touches April and she gets in motion to hide it. Tom is also moved and he gives Chuck a tight, grateful smile.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WARING HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

April brings a piece of pie to Chuck. He looks up at her.

CHUCK
Lemme see your hand. Wanna show you something.

Chuck draws his finger across her palm from forefinger to heel.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
This here's your lifeline.

APRIL
Doctor, how long have I got?

Josh cranes his neck to see. Tom frowns.

CHUCK
Well, if your lifeline is unbroken,
it means you're gonna live a long
time. So this means you're gonna be
a grandma a mess of times!

April laughs and shows Tom her hand, enjoying the side show.

JOSH
Do me! Do me!

He holds out his hand and Chuck is about to take it, when:

TOM
I'd rather you didn't, Chuck.

JOSH
Why not?

TOM
It's nonsense, that's all.

APRIL
Then it won't hurt anything.

Chuck gives Josh's hand a cursory look and musses his hair.

CHUCK
Gonna live forever, Josh.

Josh cheers. Tom looks up at Chuck and points at Chuck's hand.

TOM
What about your lifeline?

Chuck folds his hands on his lap and looks away.

CHUCK
Mine's kinda broken up.

TOM
Josh, you forgot to feed Ted. Go.

The boy leaves the table. Tom turns to Chuck, grabbing the old man's hand and turning it palm up on the table.

TOM (CONT'D)

This is a working man's hand! It's covered with calluses and scars. You're old and so's your hand.

He lets go of Chuck's hand with disgust. Chuck is defiant.

CHUCK

I'm going to a psychic. She's gonna contact Carolyn for me.

Tom rolls his eyes and starts to get up, collecting plates.

APRIL

Well, I hope she is successful. Tom, sit down and eat your pie.

INT. WARING HOME - GARAGE - LATER

Sparks fly as a chisel is held against the grinder. The kitchen door opens and April appears.

APRIL

What's the harm in palm reading?

TOM

It's just wrong, that's all.

APRIL

Because the Bible doesn't mention it? You think everything is in that book?

Tom digs the chisel into the wheel. When he stops, the room is quiet except for the WHIR of the grinder wheel.

TOM

Everything important.

APRIL

I know something important that's not in it: What comes after death! And why not? Because no one has ever returned! All those who claim to have been there talk about white light and tunnels, but they don't stay, they come back!

Tom turns off the grinder. The room gets very quiet.

APRIL (CONT'D)

None of them actually made it to the other side. All they know is they see this light and somebody says they can't stay and boom!

(MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)

they're back! All they really know is that something happened when they were near death. Probably just a short circuit in their brain!

TOM

What's this got to do with palm reading?

APRIL

Tom! It's all just a theory! You can't prove it. You don't know palm reading is wrong any more than you know there is an afterlife!

TOM

It just feels wrong.

He looks at the ground. April shakes her head.

APRIL

I don't doubt your feelings. You've had some doozies, like the time you kept Josh home from pre-school and that day the kids all got exposed to chicken pox.

TOM

That's right--

APRIL

But, Sweetie, intuition is not evidence! Coincidence doesn't prove the existence of God!

TOM

I know.

APRIL

Chuck is searching. Who's to say he's looking in the wrong place? Maybe he'll find some answers.

She goes back inside. Tom drops a chisel. As he bends to pick it up, he grimaces and touches his side, which is tender.

TOM

Curry and religion do not mix.

He attacks the grinding wheel with the chisel.

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - ENTRY/UPSTAIRS - DAY

Chuck is working on the staircase. He wears white painter overalls and his Padres cap. He looks out the front door. Vince and Levitt are shoveling dirt against a retaining wall.

Chuck looks up. He walks upstairs and we FOLLOW HIM.

CHUCK

Tom?

He passes the landing and heads up to the next story. Walking into the master bedroom, he approaches an aluminum ladder poking through a skylight. He looks up. Just blue sky in the square.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Tommy? Son, you up there?

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - ROOFTOP - ANGLE ON THE ACCESS HOLE

Chuck's head slowly emerges. PAN the roof. No Tom, just stacks of shingles and an air compressor hose snaking over the crest.

CHUCK

Tom?

FOLLOW CHUCK as he gets up on the roof and walks toward the crest, following the hose. As he makes the top, PAN ACROSS three dormer windows. The first two are roofed, the last is half-done. HOLD on something yellow beyond the last dormer.

A work boot. Toe up. Not moving. Chuck rushes to the dormer. FOLLOW HIM and REVEAL Tom on his back, unconscious, his head only a foot from the drop-off. Chuck puts his ear next to Tom's mouth. He can't tell if he's breathing.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Vince! Greg! Come quick!

INT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - E.R. - DAY

April enters, sees Tom lying on a table. DR. DEVLIN, tall and imperious, stands aside. April strokes Tom's head. He's groggy, but conscious.

APRIL

Hi, Hon. You okay?

DEVLIN

He came in complaining of stomach pains.

TOM

I didn't complain; I was unconscious.

DEVLIN

We thought it might be pancreatitis, an inflammation of the pancreas, a gland which secretes enzymes into the stom--

APRIL

I know what it is and what it does.
Did you do an ultrasound?

DEVLIN

Yes. We found nothing, but that only
means it didn't show--

TOM

I'm pregnant.

DEVLIN

That's the Percoset talking.

TOM

But I'm okay now. Much better.

APRIL

How about a CT scan?

DEVLIN

We've scheduled one for Monday.

APRIL

What's wrong with right now?

DEVLIN

Well, he's stable, the pain can be
managed, and his fever is already
breaking. There's no emergency.

APRIL

Then what is he doing here?

She gestures at the busy E.R. Her patience is ebbing.

DEVLIN

It might be nothing more than a very
upset stomach.

He puts on his glasses as if that settles it. He exits, leaving
April looking at his back with slitted eyes. She turns to Tom.

APRIL

Jerk.

TOM

I'm sorry.

APRIL

Not you, Honey. The doctor.

TOM

Oh, yeah. He's a really nice guy.

He closes his eyes dreamily. April kisses his forehead.

APRIL

I know you are.

INT. WARING HOME - MASTER/HALLWAY/JOSH'S ROOM - NIGHT

ANGLE on Tom from the doorway, sleeping. April closes the door and tiptoes down the hall. She turns into Josh's room. He's in bed, staring at the ceiling.

JOSH

Mom, Daddy's gonna get better.

APRIL

Yes. Of course.

JOSH

I know, cause I prayed for him.

And with that, he rolls over and shuts his eyes.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Chuck looks up from the concrete forms he's working on to see Tom's Dodge truck pull up. FOLLOW as he approaches the truck.

TOM

Thought I'd stop by on the way to the hospital to see how you guys were doing.

CHUCK

Doin' fine. Hey, sorry about dinner the other night. Feel bad about it.

TOM

It's all right. April and I have this ongoing discussion about religion. It's okay. We're okay.

CHUCK

I know that. I just don't want you mad at me. I wanna set things straight, just in case...

TOM

In case of what?

CHUCK

Whatever. You know.

TOM

You and I will always be okay. And you're not going anywhere.

CHUCK

One more thing. Things might go a little easier between you two if you'd trust God to show himself to her when he's good and ready.

TOM

I'm scared he won't.

CHUCK

He will. Now go. Pass them tests!

INT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - IMAGING CENTER - DAY

Tom lies on a white slab moving through the hole in a big white donut: the CT scanner. A **TECH** sits bent over a white console, consulting the monitor and punching keys.

TOM'S P.O.V. - IN THE DARKNESS, he sees hundreds of tiny luminescent stars plastered to the ceiling.

TECH

Okay. One more. Hold your breath one last time. And...

TOM'S eyes follow what sounds like BALL BEARINGS rolling around inside the donut, then stop. Tom sneaks a look at the Tech, who looks at the screen, then punches some phone buttons.

TECH (CONT'D)

Dr. Gardener? Do you have a minute?

Moments later, **DR. GARDENER** enters. He consults the monitor with the Tech. Finally, he straightens and looks at Tom.

DR. GARDENER

Let's do just one more, shall we?

INT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR/CONSULTATION ROOM - DAY

ANGLE on a manilla envelope as it is carried down the hall toward the Reception Area, where WE SEE Tom sitting, thumbing blindly through a magazine.

DR. GARDENER

Mr. Waring? Would you come with me?

WE FOLLOW them into a room with light boxes on the walls. Gardener hangs several negatives and turns on the light boxes.

THE NEGATIVE contains a gray oval on a black background. Inside the oval are various shapes and shades of gray.

DR. GARDENER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 This is an axial view of your mid-
 section. Like a camera inside you
 looking down at your feet.

A pencil points out various objects.

DR. GARDENER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 This is your spinal cord. Your liver.
 And this is your pancreas. We think
 there's a problem here.

TOM squints at the tiny, gray, carrot-shaped object.

TOM
 What's wrong with it?

Gardener points to a gray blemish on the pancreas surface.

DR. GARDENER
 Don't know. I'll need a biopsy to be
 sure. I'm ordering an endoscopy.

TOM
 A what?

INT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - ANOTHER CORRIDOR - LATER

Tom lies on a gurney, a long, black snake-like probe sticking out of his mouth, the end of which bristles with knobs and buttons. His eyes are wide with horror as he is wheeled along by two NURSES, who chat nonchalantly, ignoring him. They push through swinging doors and WE HOLD ON THEM as they shut. In yellow script, above the familiar radiation symbol, are the words "NUCLEAR MEDICINE."

INT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - DRESSING AREA - LATER

Tom rubs his neck. The door opens and Dr. Gardener enters.

DR. GARDENER
 You're a contractor, right?

Tom nods as he slowly pulls on a sock.

DR. GARDENER (CONT'D)
 So you're used to taking charge,
 making decisions, giving hard news.

Gardener studies the file. His expression chills Tom's blood.

DR. GARDENER (CONT'D)
 You've got a tumor, Mr. Waring.

Tom drops his shoe. Gardener picks it up and hands it to him.

DR. GARDENER (CONT'D)

You may have cancer. We'll know soon.

TOM

How long?

DR. GARDENER

Three days.

INT. WARING HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom gets into bed. April enters and closes the door.

APRIL

Okay, he's in bed. Now can we talk?

TOM

They looked at my stomach. It's fine.

APRIL

I thought you were just getting a CT scan. What else did they do?

TOM

They stuck this big black tube down my throat and took pictures.

APRIL

Yuck. So what did they find?

TOM

Just the burrito I had for lunch. I told you. Nothing. Nada. Zip--

APRIL

Tom.

TOM

I might have an ulcer. Turns out you get 'em when your wife worries too much. Oh, and they took a tissue sample from my stomach.

APRIL

I thought they said your stomach was fine.

TOM

April, I was drugged. I really can't remember what they said.

April regards Tom skeptically. She sits on the bed. Finally:

APRIL

If you're lying to me, I swear I'll gouge your eyes out!

Tom kisses the crown of her head.

TOM
Love you too, babe.

INT. WARING HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tom lies on the couch watching TV. He's wearing a ratty bathrobe and looks bad. An untouched breakfast sits in front of him.

ON THE TV - A LAWYER appears in front of a graveside service in the b.g. He somberly addresses the camera:

LAWYER
It could happen to you. It will happen
to you. Are you ready?

Tom sits up, but the pain in his stomach lays him out again.

THE TV LAWYER continues:

LAWYER (CONT'D)
Our estate planning package includes
living will provisions for end-of-
life contingencies...

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) A pair of hands pull a black bag down from a closet shelf.
- B) A tripod is pulled out of the lower closet jumble.
- C) A cassette is fumbled into a video camera.
- D) The camera is mounted on the tripod.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

A VIDEO IMAGE resolves, revealing Terrible Ted, looking AT CAMERA, his tongue lolling. PULL BACK to REVEAL the image on the camera monitor. PULL BACK FURTHER. Ted is on the couch.

REVERSE ANGLE - TOM studies the monitor. He is wearing slacks and a polo shirt. He's pale and moves slowly. He pulls a bottle from his pocket and palms two pills, dry swallowing them, then sits down by Ted and points a small remote at the camera.

ANGLE ON CAMERA - THE BLINKING RED LIGHT burns solid red.

TOM looks into the lens, trying to see April.

TOM
Hi, Hon. I had some time today so I
decided to make you a tape...

INT. APRIL'S MAXIMA (TRAVELING) - LATE AFTERNOON

April holds a cell phone to her ear. A man's voice is heard.

APRIL
 Chuck, where's Tom? I've tried the
 house. He hasn't answered.

At this moment, they round the corner on their street. And there's Tom's Dodge in the drive. April heaves a sigh of relief.

APRIL (CONT'D)
 He's home now, Chuck. Thanks. Bye.

EXT. WARING HOME - SAME

April pulls in the drive. She jumps out and hurries to the door.

INT. WARING HOME - ENTRY - SAME

April bursts in the door and scans the living room. Josh follows her, looking around.

JOSH
 Ted? Here, boy!

April picks up on it. Ted usually greets them at the door.

APRIL
 Ted? Ted?

FOLLOW APRIL as she runs down the hall toward the master bedroom. There, through the open doorway, lies Ted, unmoving, looking at her but facing the bed. DOLLY TO REVEAL Tom in a fetal position on the bed, flannel gray. He's unconscious.

APRIL (CONT'D)
 TOM!

JOSH (O.S.)
 Mom?

APRIL
 Stay out! Don't come in!

She shakes Tom, but he doesn't respond. She grabs the phone.

JOSH
 Is Daddy all right?

April squeezes Tom's hand. Hold on her as we hear:

PHONE VOICE
 Emergency operator.

INT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR/ROOM - NIGHT

April stands with Dr. Gardener before a closed door.

DR. GARDENER
You didn't know? About the tumor?

April shakes her head miserably. Gardener is stunned.

DR. GARDENER (CONT'D)
But even your husband didn't know it
was malignant. We just found out
ourselves.

APRIL
Can you operate?

DR. GARDENER
Pancreatic cancer is known as one of
the "four horsemen." It moves very
fast. In many cases, the diagnosis
isn't made until...

He looks away. April steels herself. She points at the file.

APRIL
What that doesn't say there is how
strong Tom is. He doesn't know how
to quit. He'll beat this.

DR. GARDENER
Mrs. Waring, we must be realistic--

She turns and ENTERS the room. Tom lies in bed, an I.V. drip in
his arm, surrounded by equipment. A NURSE studies a chart. The
darkness outside makes the window a mirror. Rain trickles down
the pane. April touches Tom's hand.

APRIL
I came to gouge your eyes out, liar.
(on his smile)
Oh, Tom, why didn't you tell me?

TOM
Tell you what? Nothing to tell.

APRIL
What are we going to do?

TOM
What everyone does... deal with it.

Suddenly, the tears come to her eyes. Tom brushes them away.

TOM (CONT'D)
You shouldn't be here, Hon.

APRIL
Where else would I be?

TOM
With Josh. I want you to go.

APRIL
I'm not going anywhere.

TOM
But I am.

APRIL
Oh, Tom! No!

With great effort, he leans forward and kisses her cheek.

TOM
I'm being called home.

APRIL
But you are home! You belong here,
with your family, not with that cruel
God of yours! What kind of evil,
sadistic... thing... would take you
away from us?

TOM
Please, April. Don't.

She shakes her head so vigorously that tears fly.

APRIL
If there is a God, he's cruel. Look
at the world he created: full of
hatred and bloodshed... starving
children... husbands taken...

TOM
Life is a test. Suffering is part of
it. It's how we learn to love.

APRIL
I hate your God.

TOM
I don't. He gave me you.

April cries, Tom strokes her hair. Finally:

TOM (CONT'D)
April, I know you can believe.

APRIL
I can't.

TOM

I think most people believe in God,
they're just afraid He doesn't believe
in them.

With the effort of that speech, he settles back. The door opens and Dr. Gardener enters. He motions to the Nurse, and they confer quietly in a corner. April hugs Tom, then pulls back and holds his face in her hands. They look at each other silently. Then:

APRIL

I love you.

TOM

Me too you.

APRIL

Then promise me something.

TOM

Anything... you know, within reason.

APRIL

Tom, I know as an unbeliever I'm not going to your heaven. But I can't bear to be separated from you, so... when you get on the other side--if there is one--promise me... promise me you'll come back and tell me...

She pulls back and looks in his eyes, which are full of surprise.

APRIL (CONT'D)

I mean it. Promise me.

TOM

I promise.

She hugs him. Tom whispers, his tongue thick with sedation:

TOM (CONT'D)

He believes in you, April. So do I.

April holds on for dear life, but Tom's eyes close and his breathing slows. Something eases and his hand on her back goes limp. Suddenly, the EKG shrieks a continuous, piercing tone. Dr. Gardener reaches and switches it off.

April sobs over Tom's body. Outside, RAIN strikes the window.

FADE OUT.

OVER BLACK:

A BURST OF LIGHT. TOM stands next to his body. April bends over him, crying. The EKG alarm blares. Tom looks down. He's wearing the hospital gown. It feels substantial.

He reaches for the bed and his hand moves right through it. He jumps aside as Dr. Gardener passes through him and switches off the EKG. Tom is standing right in the middle of his own body. His hand passes through April's hair. Dr. Gardener and the Nurse leave the room.

A WHISPERING. Faint, but growing. Up in the corner where two walls meet the ceiling, a pinpoint of light grows, filling the room. Tom is pulled toward it. He passes through April. The light throws out multi-colored streamers. He is pulled up by the sternum. His feet leave the floor, and he raises his hands toward the light. He looks back over his shoulder.

HIS P.O.V. - APRIL sobs over his body.

AS HE RISES, Tom separates, moving past each molecule in the ceiling, insulation and steel beams, like water through a sieve.

EXT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - ROOFTOP/EFX - NIGHT (RAIN)

Tom passes through the roof and up through the clouds. The hospital falls away below. The dark horizon glints as the moon shines on a sea of silver clouds.

Soon the earth is a small, blue marble on a glittering black background. The moon rushes by and disappears. The sun bursts past like a magician's flare, then dies in the distance.

He flies past solar systems, some planets twinkling with the light of civilization, others quiet and empty, just beginning the cycle.

He passes through suns and planets, as if they were just misted rain. As he passes very close to one star, he trails his hand out like he did while surfing, sending up a solar flare rooster tail, sparkles trailing from his fingertips.

He passes a thousand spinning galaxies. And there, moving toward him, is a great brightness, the center of the known universe. The whiteness fills his eyes, yet he doesn't blink, because he, too, is made of light. His body shines like a sun.

Tom suddenly finds himself standing on a marble surface. He looks down. He's on a step. There is another above it. TILT to REVEAL a broad, glistening stairway, disappearing into a point of light. Tom looks back. The stairway arcs away below, disappearing into blackness.

Tom begins climbing. As he does, the faces of friends and family appear out of the blackness and then recede. He reaches out to April's face, and as he almost touches her, she disappears.

The end of the stairway is in sight. At the top step, Tom finds himself on a circular marble platform inset with gold geometric patterns. White gossamer curtains encircle the platform.

WE HEAR VOICES. The curtains part and a group of people appear, wearing white robes. They surround Tom, reaching for him like a long-lost son. Tom moves away, embarrassed, clutching the open back of his gown.

A **THIN MAN** with slicked-back hair wearing a white suit steps forward. He speaks with an English accent.

JONATHAN

I am Jonathan. Your spirit guide.

He consults a binder.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Ninetieth percentile! Very good!

Everyone applauds. Tom feels like he should bow.

TOM

So this is Heaven?

Everyone laughs and nudges each other.

JONATHAN

This is Paradise, the last stop before the Final Judgment. Until then, good people come here, while others go... elsewhere.

TOM

So I'm dead, but I'm not in Heaven.

JONATHAN

Not yet.

A MAN'S VOICE

That elbow ever set?

Tom turns to see a young **MAN** with sandy hair, frowning at him. His arms are crossed over a barrel chest.

TOM

Elbow?

MAN

The one you busted on my porch! I see you made it up these stairs without breaking anything.

TOM

Grandpa Waring?

GRANDPA WARING

So, how's my Jessie?

TOM

Who? Oh! Grandma! Oh, she's pretty good, I guess, for eighty-five.

GRANDPA WARING

Eighty five? I've only been here a few cycles...

A BEEPER goes off. Everyone reaches reflexively to their sides. Grandpa Waring frowns at his white pager.

GRANDPA WARING (CONT'D)

Gotta run. Nice to see you. I mean, sorry to see you so soon and all, but we'll talk later.

And with that he takes off at a run, through the curtains and down a marble pathway. The curtains fall back behind him.

ROTUND MAN

It's nice to have family here.

Tom looks down at a **ROTUND MAN** who smiles up at him. He throws his arms around Tom and hugs him tightly.

ROTUND MAN (CONT'D)

Welcome to Paradise, Tom!

The crowd once again applauds and claps him on the back. Jonathan grasps his arm and escorts him away.

JONATHAN

We must be going. The next arrival is due momentarily.

Tom looks back over his shoulder. The Rotund Man waves.

INT. PARADISE - GATEWAY COMPLEX CORRIDOR - SAME

Tom and Jonathan pass a doorway labeled OFFICIAL GREETERS.

TOM'S P.O.V. - THROUGH A GAP in the curtains, WE SEE an old woman summit the stairs. She is met by the greeters.

ROTUND MAN

Welcome!

JONATHAN pulls Tom along. The walls and floor are translucent, lit from within. There is no ceiling, just inky blackness above.

Other passageways join theirs, and soon the corridor is crowded with people. Tom points to a child in pajamas, clutching a teddy bear, holding a woman's hand.

TOM

Who's that?

JONATHAN

New Arrival. Like you.

INT. PARADISE - GATEWAY COMPLEX ADMISSIONS

Tom and Jonathan enter. Everywhere are groupings of white furniture. The DIN of conversation fills the room. Far away is a raised dais, where a **MATRON** sits behind a white desk, a New Arrival and her escort standing before her. In a moment, a large gold square behind the Matron glows brilliantly. A gold checkmark appears inside the square, and the New Arrival is led away.

VOICE

Thomas Waring. Step forward.

JONATHAN

We stayed too long at the Gate.

He hauls Tom toward the dais, where Tom sees the biggest book ever. Jonathan stands at attention, eyes riveted forward.

TOM

Is this it? The Final Judgm--?

JONATHAN

Shh!

The Matron gives Tom a cursory once over.

MATRON

Mr. Waring? Take this.

She hands him a pen. Tom stares at it.

TOM

Hey! I got my finger back!

He holds his perfect forefinger up. He tastes it to be sure.

MATRON

Very nice. Now listen carefully: Do you agree to abide by the rules and regulations of Paradise?

TOM

Sure.

MATRON

Then please signify.

She turns the big book to him and Tom signs absently. A tone rings and the square lights up with the gold checkmark. Jonathan escorts Tom away. Something occurs to Tom. He looks down.

TOM

Hey! I wonder if I'm circum--

JONATHAN

Let's go!

INT. PARADISE - APPAREL CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Tom emerges in a white tunic with half sleeves. Jonathan studies his watch. Tom shakes his head, lifts one foot and points.

TOM
Birkenstocks! Ha!

JONATHAN
Very nice. Shall we go? We're late.

TOM
It's good to get out of that gown.
Glad I didn't die in the shower!

His joke falls flat. Jonathan frowns and starts off.

TOM (CONT'D)
Where are we going?

JONATHAN
Orientation.

He turns a corner and continues on. Tom follows at a trot, sandals slapping the marble. A woman passes him and he double-takes.

HIS P.O.V. - THE WOMAN walks away, her back to Tom. But she looks familiar, with auburn hair and a familiar step.

TOM turns back and breaks into a run.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Where are you going?!

TOM
Home!

EXT. DEL MAR - CEMETERY - DAY (RAIN)

April stands beside a grave. Pastor Heath is speaking. Josh holds her hand. Chuck is nearby. WE HEAR the squawk of seagulls, the rain falling, and the sound of tires on wet pavement. April looks into the hole, the casket suspended over the darkness. THE SOUND of INSECTS rises, overpowering the other noises.

HER P.O.V. - PUSH IN ON THE BLACKNESS until it fills the screen.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. WARING HOME - JOSH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Josh sits on the edge of his bed, still dressed. April enters.

APRIL

You okay?

He shrugs. His face betrays no emotion. She sees his emptiness and something loosens inside. She starts crying. Two seconds later, they are both sobbing in each other's arms.

JOSH

Why did God take Daddy away?

APRIL

I don't know, honey.

JOSH

Well, I'm gonna ask Him.

Josh kneels and looks up at April, who goes to the doorway.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Mommy, will you pray with me?

She shakes her head. And in a choked voice,

APRIL

I'm sorry, I can't.

She leaves. Josh turns out the light and crawls into bed. April sobs in the next room. Josh's eyes are tear-filled as he looks up at the ceiling.

INT. PARADISE - GATEWAY COMPLEX - CORRIDOR - DAY

Tom runs down the hall, dodging New Arrivals. He whips around a corner and screeches to a halt before Jonathan, who stands, arms crossed.

JONATHAN

What is the meaning of this?

TOM

I gotta go back.

Jonathan takes him firmly by the elbow.

JONATHAN

Perhaps, but right now, you have an appointment.

TOM

With who?

JONATHAN

Someone very important.

EXT. PARADISE - GATEWAY COMPLEX - PLAZA - DAY

Tom and Jonathan emerge into daylight and Tom gets his first view of Paradise: The Garden of Eden amidst the New Jerusalem. People stroll along. The sky is a perfect blue. Tom taps the pavement beneath his feet.

TOM

I thought the streets of Heaven were paved with gold.

JONATHAN

So I have heard as well. But as I told you, we are not in Heaven. We are in Paradise, and we are late!

They crest a hill. Beyond a lake is an ornate pyramid. A broad staircase leads to huge golden doors. Scores of people are ascending the stairs.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

The Great Hall. We must hurry.

EXT. PARADISE - GREAT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Tom stands before a statue of an angel, his wings lifted high.

TOM

Who's that?

JONATHAN

Gabriel.

TOM

The Archangel?

JONATHAN

There's only one.

INT. PARADISE - GREAT HALL

Tom and Jonathan enter through one of a dozen golden doors. Red plush seats are filling. Tiered balconies circle the immense hall. An enormous spherical chandelier hangs overhead. The doors close and the lights fade, but the people glow, some brighter than others, some so brightly they are hard to look at. Tom looks down. His own hand glows faintly.

The whispering grows as people make the discovery. Soon there is a secondary sound, VOICES rising in a melody. A golden glow settles over the crowd. Tom looks up.

THE CHANDELIER comes alive, tiny lights winking on one by one, until it burns like a sun. VOICES ring out. Tom notices a woman nearby singing. He looks at another, who also sings.

Next to him, Jonathan sings, chin raised, eyes closed. And at last, he notices he's singing as well. Shock on his face as he remembers a melody from another life, a song of joy and possibility. His lips form unlearned words, remembering...

Then the song fades, ten thousand voices quieting one by one, until the room is quiet and the last chandelier light winks out. Yet the room remains bright as day. Tom looks around. The people are glowing, everyone bright as the sun.

Tom looks at his own hands, which are so bright he must be blinding himself, yet he can still see every feature.

Suddenly, the stage EXPLODES in a fireball. The corona pushes Tom back in his seat, bounces off the wall behind him, and recoils, drawing light with it, coalescing around a **MAN** with flowing white hair. Light pours from eyes like two almond suns. Tom whispers:

TOM

Is that...?

JONATHAN

Oh, no, He's much too busy!

GABRIEL

I am the Archangel Gabriel. I have come to tell you a story about yourself: a story that each of you has written over eons of time. I also will answer the three great questions: who you are, what the purpose of your life is, and what lies ahead !

Thunderous applause. Gabriel descends the steps.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Life is an endless path--we call it the Continuum. You left one life when you were born on Earth and now you are entering a new life. Each life has its test. On Earth, the test was a physical body. Most of your challenges were caused by the body's passions and weaknesses. But great rewards also come from the body: the touch of a loved one, the power of self-control, and the joy in bringing life into the world. You have mastered your body, or you would not be here today. You have traveled the Continuum for eons, seeking light and knowledge.

Tom starts when he sees Gabriel standing next to him.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

And what is Heaven? What is the purpose of all this? To grow and learn, until you too know the secret of life itself. In short...

(he looks directly at Tom)

... you will become like the gods themselves.

Tom's jaw drops. A murmur rises among the crowd. Jonathan stifles a yawn. Gabriel takes the hand of a WOMAN. She stands.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

In the darkness you glimpsed the light of your own spirit. You see the brightness of mine. Someday, you will witness the glory of God, when he takes you in his arms and welcomes you home!

A chill runs up Tom's spine. Gabriel is on the stage again.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

You are not home yet, but you are moving closer. Use your time here wisely, and trust God. He has great plans for you. He believes in you as you have believed in him. Welcome to Paradise!

The light coalesces around Gabriel and he disappears, leaving the room in darkness. Jonathan stands.

JONATHAN

Show off.

TOM

Excuse me?

JONATHAN

I said, "Let's shove off!"

EXT. PARADISE - GREAT HALL - DAY

Tom and Jonathan are descending the steps. Jonathan hands Tom a binder and cell-phone.

TOM

What's this?

JONATHAN

Your Record and ViewLink.

Tom opens the Record, which looks like a PDA. He sighs.

TOM

Do I really need this stuff?

JONATHAN

You will soon feel naked without it.

INT. CHUCK'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chuck sits at the dining table, the huge Spirit Guide open before him. A candle lights the room. The book is open to a chapter titled "Communicating With the Dead." He takes a sip of wine and stubs out his cigar. Then he leans forward, placing his hands flat on the table, and focuses on the candle flame.

CHUCK

Carolyn. Carolyn. Please hear me.
Speak to the living. Please, dear.

He closes his eyes, listening. Nothing. His brow furrows.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Carolyn. I need to talk to you.

After a long moment, he opens his eyes and leans back. He absently looks at the candle, his mind wandering.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Tom was right. It is nonsense.

HIS P.O.V. - THE CANDLE - RACK OUT OF FOCUS. DISSOLVE TO...

THE VISION:

INT. DEL MAR - CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Chuck stands by the stairs. Tom is writing on a clipboard.

CHUCK

It's nonsense. Isn't it, Tom? Tom,
did you hear me? Tom?

Tom looks up from the clipboard.

EXT. PARADISE - STREET - DAY

Jonathan and Tom are walking along. Suddenly, Tom stops.

TOM

Someone just called my name.

Jonathan glares at Tom, hands on his hips.

JONATHAN

We are on a tight schedule.

He walks off briskly. Tom recovers and follows.

TOM

Why are you mad at me?

JONATHAN

Dogs get mad. I get annoyed, perturbed, irritated--

TOM

You must hate your job.

JONATHAN

Nonsense. I have an important job.

TOM

But you don't seem to enjoy it.

JONATHAN

A job is not meant to be enjoyed. It has a purpose. My job is to acclimate you to Paradise. It's not about having fun.

Tom extends his arms wide, exulting in the surroundings.

TOM

Why not? I mean, look, Jonathan! There is life after death! We were right! We're in Heaven! We made it!

JONATHAN

We haven't "made it." We're still on probation; we could falter...

TOM

How? What's left to doubt? I'm not to clear about this Continuum stuff, but the fact is, I'm here! And I feel like cheering!

Tom stops. There, right before him, eating a popsicle, is Josh.

TOM (CONT'D)

Josh! What are you doing here?

But it's not Josh. The **BOY** looks up, licking his popsicle.

JONATHAN

Your son is still on Earth.

TOM

How do you know?

Jonathan is reading his Record. Tom reaches for it, but Jonathan closes it and puts it away.

TOM (CONT'D)

I've got to go back to Earth.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

I promised my wife I'd return and tell her if there was... you know... a heaven...

JONATHAN

Out of the question.

TOM

Why?

JONATHAN

Thomas, as even you have no doubt discovered, you are dead. The dead do not return to Earth. Forget it.

TOM

But I can't!

JONATHAN

Oh, but you will.

EXT. PARADISE - HOTEL - DAY

Jonathan and Tom stop in front of high-rise, fifty stories tall.

JONATHAN

Your new home.

INT. PARADISE - HOTEL ROOM

Tom walks into a room just like any other hotel room: bed, dresser, table. Glass doors through which a breeze is billowing curtains.

EXT. PARADISE - HOTEL - TOM'S ROOM/BALCONY

Tom steps out onto the balcony. Paradise has the feel of a pie tin hanging out in space, the City occupying the central area, surrounded by parkland and forests, which dwindle to brown, empty desert beyond. The skyline is dominated by a huge building, ornate and official-looking.

JONATHAN

The Council Building. The seat of government, if you will.

TOM

You pay taxes, too?

JONATHAN

God delegates. People serve. You will too, starting tomorrow.

(MORE)

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

But until then, relax. Have a nice meal. Go swimming. Enjoy yourself. You start your new life tomorrow. It's back to school... and work.

Jonathan exits. Tom stares out over Paradise, disappointed.

INT. WARING HOME - GARAGE/LIVINGROOM - DAY

April closes the washer lid and heads indoors with a load of clean laundry. She plops down on the couch and starts folding clothes. Her eyes wander along the mantle.

HER P.O.V. - PAN ACROSS the mantle. Various knick-knacks and the camcorder.

APRIL goes and picks it up. There's a tape inside.

CUT TO:

THE TV - There's Ted on the couch, looking INTO CAMERA.

APRIL leans forward, interested, and a little scared.

THE TV - Ted disappears, then Tom appears in a dark polo shirt and khakis. He's sitting by Ted, stroking the dog's head.

TOM

Hi, Hon. I had some time today so I decided to make you a tape...

APRIL'S heart is in her throat. It's Tom. Alive.

THE TV - TOM looks pale and weak, but he's smiling.

TOM (CONT'D)

... Some lawyer on TV tells me I need a will. But since we don't have anything anyway... But there is something I want to say to you. I love you. But if you hadn't asked me to fix the locks, I wouldn't have had the courage to even ask your name. You've made me the happiest man in the world. I've never had words to tell you how much I love you. But when I held Josh in my arms for the first time, and saw you looking at me... I think you saw in my eyes what I couldn't say.

APRIL is sitting amid the unfolded clothes, tears streaming.

ON THE TV - TOM is having his own battle with emotion.

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I didn't do better for us,
April. And I'm sorry for being me.
I can be a jerk sometimes.

APRIL is shaking her head.

BUT ON THE TV - Tom is nodding.

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm gonna miss you guys so much! My
family! Tell Josh how much I wanted
to teach him to ride a bike. And
tell him how much I love him. I guess
I don't really need a will because
you already have the only thing that
matters... my heart...

He points to his head, his heart, and the camera, mouthing "I...
love... you."

APRIL tries to see the TV through her tears.

APRIL

Me too you.

THE TV - TOM smiles and raises the remote. The screen GOES BLACK.

APRIL cries into a dish towel.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. PARADISE - COUNCIL BUILDING - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The tallest building in Paradise, located at the hub.

INT. PARADISE - COUNCIL BUILDING - JONATHAN'S OFFICE

Tom strides through the waiting area, a man on a mission.

RECEPTIONIST

Sir! You can't just walk--

FOLLOW HIM as he enters to find Jonathan at his desk.

JONATHAN

Don't you have a class right now?

TOM

I have to go back.

JONATHAN

Heavens. That again.

TOM

I promised!

Jonathan steeples his fingers. He nods for Tom to sit.

JONATHAN

Do you think you're the only one who wants to go back to Earth?

TOM

I don't--

JONATHAN

Well, you are not. Many people wish to return. They all have unfinished business: children to raise, lovers to comfort. Even revenge to exact.

TOM

So? This place is neck-deep in bureaucrats! I'm sure you got a policy that covers it.

JONATHAN

Oh, there's a policy all right.

He removes a sheaf of paper from a drawer and tosses it to Tom.

INSERT - THE FORM: "REQUEST FOR FORMAL POLICY CHANGE."

TOM hefts it, amazed. He flips through it. Hundreds of pages of questions and blanks. He looks up at Jonathan in despair.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

If you want to change a policy that has stood for six thousand years, you'd better be prepared for some work. We shall see how important your promise is. What price are you willing to pay?

INT. CLINIC - LUNCH ROOM - DAY

April sits at a table with Michelle, eating lunch.

MICHELLE

You doing anything for the Fourth?

APRIL

No. Maybe fireworks. Nothing else.

Dan Carroll walks in, nods politely and takes an empty table. He acts casual, but he's aware of April. Michelle leans in...

MICHELLE

Has he, you know...?

APRIL

No! Michelle!

Then the Receptionist Trish bops in and plops down opposite Dan. He looks up, surprised. She beams at him.

TRISH

Anyone sitting here?

He shakes his head. April and Michelle turn away, smiling. Trish starts yammering at Dan. April leans in to Michelle.

APRIL

I need to ask you something. It's been on my mind for months.

MICHELLE

Okay, but remember I only play a doctor on TV.

APRIL

Before he died, I made Tom promise that he'd come back from the dead and tell me if there is a heaven or not.

MICHELLE

From the dead.

April nods, feeling suddenly foolish. Michelle smiles.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

So, has he?

APRIL

Of course not!

MICHELLE

Did you think he would?

Michelle can't help it--she starts laughing. April looks over at Dan and Trish staring at her. They heard it all.

TRISH

Ooh! I read about a lady who was kidnapped by aliens--

DAN

Trish. I need to talk to you. Outside.

He takes her arm and pulls her out of the room, avoiding eye contact with April. Michelle leans in, mimicking Trish:

MICHELLE

Ooh! What happened then?

April musters as much dignity as she can, stands, and exits.

EXT. PARADISE - BOULEVARD - DAY

Tom trudges along, the Form under his arm, head down, shoulders hunched. A HAND grabs him, whirling him around. Tom is face to face with a black man with blue eyes and white, flowing hair.

AMISTHAR

I knew it was you! I'd recognize that walk anywhere! What are you doing here?

TOM

I ask myself that question all the time. Who are you?

AMISTHAR

(points to his eyes)
These do not stir any memories?

TOM

Sorry.

AMISTHAR

Ah! The Veil has not yet lifted. It will soon, and when it does, you will remember that my name is Amisthar, and you will also remember the jokes I always played on you.

TOM

We know each other?

AMISTHAR

In our pre-Earth life, we were best friends. You were a great musician, and I was your poor student--

TOM

Whoa. Me, a musician?

AMISTHAR

One of the best.

TOM

All I play is the stereo.

Amisthar grabs Tom and envelops him in a great bear hug.

AMISTHAR

My friend! I have missed you! Where are you going?

TOM

I have a class called "LifeBooks," but I think I missed it. I'm lost.

AMISTHAR

Ha! You have never been lost!

He points at the magnificent building directly in front of them, with a dozen huge columns below a giant frieze: the biggest Greek temple in the universe.

INT. PARADISE - GREAT LIBRARY - DAY

Tom and Amisthar walk between tables under a Sistine Chapel-like ceiling. Ringing the hall are balconies, full of shelves. People sit reading or wander the stacks.

AMISTHAR

It's all here. All history, all science, all everything. There's even a book about you. Come on!

Amisthar leads the way, bounding up the wide marble stairway at the end of the hall. Tom runs to keep up with him.

INT. PARADISE - GREAT LIBRARY STACKS

Amisthar removes a book from the shelf and hands it to Tom.

INSERT - THE COVER reads: THOMAS PHILIP WARING, son of Vivian and Donald Waring, 1968-2004.

TOM looks the book over, confused. He flips through the pages.

AMISTHAR

Your life story!

TOM

Man, you guys work fast.

He opens the book, flipping pages, scanning text. Suddenly, he closes it and looks at Amisthar, his face reddening.

TOM (CONT'D)

Who wrote this? How do they know all this stuff?

AMISTHAR

Your guardian angel. Why?

TOM

Because there's some really personal stuff in here!

AMISTHAR

Of course! But those are just the facts. Your job is to edit, to add your views on what you did.

TOM

You mean make excuses. Why?

AMISTHAR

Because it's one of the books you'll be judged out of, Tom.

TOM

You know, it just occurred to me that I never told you my name.

AMISTHAR

My apologies. You haven't yet learned how to listen in on another's mind?

TOM

Oh, no. Don't tell me you guys can...

AMISTHAR

We don't use it that way, Tom. It's for communicating ideas and feelings for which there are no words... like the way you're feeling now, and what you're thinking about those papers you carry under your arm.

TOM

I have to go back.

AMISTHAR

I understand.

TOM

Can you help me?

AMISTHAR

No. But you're going about it the right way. Just do what you're doing. It will all work out.

TOM

You know, this place is nothing like I imagined it would be.

AMISTHAR

And how was that?

TOM

I thought they'd give me a harp and I'd sit on a cloud and take it easy... kind of like Club Med.

AMISTHAR

Club Med?

INT. PARADISE - HOTEL - TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tom enters the room, throws the Form on the table, and goes to the balcony. The City spreads out below. A breeze lifts the curtains. Tom leans on the railing and sighs.

INT. WARING HOME - HALLWAY/JOSH'S ROOM - NIGHT

FOLLOW TOM down the hall. Josh is in bed, crying, curled up.

TOM
What is it, Josh?

JOSH
Daddy! Where are you?

Tom kneels down. Josh rolls over to face him.

TOM
Daddy's here. What is it?

April enters and goes around the other side of the bed.

APRIL
Honey, what's wrong?

TOM
I don't know what's bother--

JOSH
I want my Daddy!

TOM
I'm right here, Josh.

April takes the boy in her arms, rocking him gently.

APRIL
Shh. It's all right. Shh. I know.

TOM
Know what?

JOSH
He won't answer!

APRIL
I know, honey. I'm sorry.

TOM
I'm right here!

Tom reaches out and strokes her cheek but she doesn't react.

APRIL
Oh, Tom, why aren't you here?

INT. PARADISE - HOTEL - TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tom's eyes pop open. He stares at the ceiling.

TOM
Because I'm dead.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. PARADISE - HOTEL - HALLWAY/TOM'S ROOM - MORNING

A hand raps on the door. Raps again. The door opens. Tom, bleary-eyed, frowns and turns away. Jonathan enters. The room looks like it was bombed. Bedding everywhere, paper covering the floor, and Tom in the middle of it, at the desk.

JONATHAN
You missed your classes. Again.

TOM
I'll make 'em up.

JONATHAN
This is not high school, Thomas.

TOM
Then quit treating me like a teenager.

He signs the last blank with a flourish and gathers up the papers, giving the disordered mass to Jonathan.

TOM (CONT'D)
Here. The Policy Change Form-thing.

JONATHAN
You should be concentrating on the present, not the past!

Tom extends his hand to Jonathan, who looks at it with disdain.

TOM
I'll try. I will. Thanks.

JONATHAN
I'll do what I can, on one condition:
Go to class! Now!

TOM
Thanks! You're a real friend!

Outside, Jonathan stomps down the hall with the papers.

JONATHAN
Friend indeed!

INT. CLINIC - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

April shows various pictures to a 3 year-old **CHILD**. In the b.g., through a square window in the door, WE SEE Dan Carroll. April signals to **RENEE**, a co-worker.

APRIL

That's enough for today.

Renee takes the Child out. Dan enters.

DAN

April, can we talk?

APRIL

Sure, Dan. What about?

DAN

I need to apologize.

APRIL

For what?

DAN

I've been avoiding you. Sorry.

APRIL

No, I've been avoiding you. Because I'm a complete idiot.

DAN

I wouldn't say that to your face.

April looks up, sees Dan smiling, and lets herself relax.

APRIL

As always, your diagnosis is dead on.

DAN

But I also think you're the most sane person in the room.

He gestures around. They're alone.

APRIL

Even though you know what I asked my husband to do?

DAN

Especially then. I thought your request was interesting, kind of like a scientific experiment.

APRIL

Thanks for not judging me.

DAN

Oh, I judged you all right. And you were not found wanting.

He steps closer. April feels something give way. She lowers her head and a tear falls. Dan puts his arms around her. She sobs, her head buried in his neck.

APRIL

Your shirt. My makeup.

DAN

Doesn't matter.

He strokes her hair. After a moment, April pulls away, embarrassed. Dan pulls out his hanky and hands it to her. April looks up at him and ventures a tiny smile.

INT. PARADISE - LECTURE HALL - DAY

Tom sits in the class, his Record open, straining to keep up with the **LECTURER**, a small Hispanic boy, who is scribbling furiously on a chalk board. Tom looks around.

EVERYONE takes notes, except a woman who sits placidly nearby. She is GLOWING. PAN to find another STUDENT, who is nodding. He too is full of light. PULL BACK TO REVEAL that fully half the class is EXUDING LIGHT.

TOM looks at his hand. No lightbulb inside him.

LECTURER

... that's why spirit can travel faster than light. Questions?

Tom almost raises his hand but notices that everyone else is just nodding. They get it. He focuses on his Record.

EXT. PARADISE - BOULEVARD - DAY

Tom sits dejectedly at a sidewalk cafe. He jumps when his ViewLink RINGS. A life-size HOLOGRAM of Jonathan appears.

JONATHAN

Thomas, how are you?

TOM

Dead, just like you said.

JONATHAN

Your next class doesn't start for half an hour. You'll have time to meet me at the Council Building.

TOM

You have news? Of my request?

JONATHAN

Meet me at the fountain. Ta.

His image dissipates like smoke. Tom jumps up, elated.

EXT. PARADISE - COUNCIL BUILDING PLAZA - MINUTES LATER

Tom jogs to the fountain. Jonathan is there, a manilla envelope under his arm. He is not smiling. Tom grabs the envelope.

JONATHAN

I'm afraid it's not good news.

THE FORM - ACROSS THE FIRST PAGE, in bold red letters: DENIED.

TOM sits on the low fountain wall. The Form falls to the ground, and the wind scatters it. Throughout the following, Jonathan tries to recover the blowing pages.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Thomas, no one returns to Earth except for extraordinary reasons. I'm afraid yours were rather... pedestrian.

TOM

You mean "ordinary."

JONATHAN

That's what "pedestrian" means.

He looks up and is surprised to see Tom looming over him.

TOM

I just wanna know one thing.

Jonathan backs up, suddenly uninterested in policing the plaza.

TOM (CONT'D)

Did you recommend it?

Jonathan straightens and raises his chin.

JONATHAN

I did not.

Tom clenches his fists at his side. He bores angry holes into Jonathan, who takes another step back.

TOM

Thanks a lot, pal.

He storms off pushing through the crowd in the plaza.

JONATHAN

You can always appeal!

Jonathan is left standing there, surrounded by passing people, many of whom give him icy stares, assuming he's the litter bug. He points at Tom's retreating figure.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

It's his fault!

EXT. APRIL'S HOME - AFTERNOON - ESTABLISHING

Her new home is located on in an old, nondescript subdivision.

INT. APRIL'S HOME - KITCHEN - SAME

Boxes are everywhere, indications of a recent move. April has a new hair style. She is digging through a box while Josh watches.

APRIL

I'll find it. We've still got three days, Josh-man.

JOSH

Don't call me that.

He kicks a cardboard box. April glares at him. He glares back and kicks it again. She scowls and digs deeper in the box.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I wanna be Spiderman!

April glowers at him. He exits, kicking boxes as he goes.

APRIL

That's just about enough--

The DOORBELL rings. April looks through the peephole.

HER P.O.V. - DAN CARROLL stands on the porch with a pizza.

APRIL is aghast. She straightens herself in the mirror and fluffs her hair. She puts on a smile and opens the door.

DAN

Pizza Man!

Josh cheers, Ted barks, and April shakes her head, embarrassed.

APRIL

Dan. We're in a bit of a mess here.

Dan walks in. April clears a spot on the counter for the pizza.

DAN

You offended everyone at work by not asking for help moving, you know.

APRIL

I'm sorry. It happened so fast.
This house was available and...

DAN

Well, we all hate you for it. To get even, I've been sent to help you unpack. I'm supposed to put things where you'll never find them.

APRIL

Ha. I can do that all by myself.

Dan turns to Josh and kneels down, extending his hand.

DAN

So you're Josh. Pleased to meet you.
I'm Mr. Carroll. Funny, isn't it? A man with a girl's name?

Josh shrugs, relaxing. Dan gets serious.

DAN (CONT'D)

Josh, would you do me a favor?

Josh is doubtful. Dan produces a half gallon of ice cream.

DAN (CONT'D)

Would you put this in the freezer?

JOSH

Yessir!

He grabs the ice cream and marches it to the fridge. Dan begins clearing the table. April watches, doubtful, but smiling.

INT. PARADISE COUNCIL BUILDING ELEVATOR - DAY

ANGLE on counter as it ticks upward: 175, 176, 177...

TOM stands rigidly. On a placard is a quote: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding." Proverbs 3:5. He shakes his head. The counter hits 200 and stops.

INT. PARADISE COUNCIL BUILDING - RECEPTION AREA

Tom steps into the reception, drawn to the immense windows, which look out on Paradise. We are so high that the horizon curves below us. In the distance, a gash cuts diagonally across the view and something glistens.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

I thought I'd find you here.

TOM whirls. There's Jonathan, arms full of the jumbled Form.

TOM

I'm done talking to you.

JONATHAN

Thomas, the Council has already made it's decision. You must obey!

TOM

I'm sick of obeying. It's getting me nowhere!

JONATHAN

Obedience is the first law of Heaven!

TOM

But, as you keep telling me, this is not Heaven.

Tom folds his arms across his chest and glares out the window. Jonathan sets the Form down on a table and comes closer.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry, but there are reasons--

TOM

Are you married, Jonathan?

JONATHAN

Yes.

TOM

And she's here, with you, right?

JONATHAN

Yes. She is.

Tom turns, all anger gone from his face, leaving only despair.

TOM

A teacher here said that everyone on Earth gets one, good, solid chance to believe, to follow the truth.

JONATHAN

That's true but--

TOM

I think God put me in April's life To show her that He exists! I prayed for her, invited her to services, and tried to be a good example... and nothing worked. Then, when I was dying, she asked me to return to tell her if there really was something more... and I agreed. So don't you see?

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

If I don't return, she'll know there is no God, because she knows I'd never lie to her! I'm her chance!
If I don't come through, we won't be together! That's true, isn't it?

Jonathan hangs his head and turns away.

TOM (CONT'D)

You bastards.

He slams his fist against the window, cracking it. Jonathan steps back, shocked. Tom rests his head against the glass.

JONATHAN

You have to trust in God--

TOM

Right! The same God who destroyed both of our lives? Son of a---

BOOMING VOICE

Silence!

Tom and Jonathan whirl to see **CHAIRMAN ANATOLI**, a Russian giant.

JONATHAN

Chairman Anatoli!

ANATOLI

Who is blaspheming the Lord?

JONATHAN

Well, he--

ANATOLI

I was addressing him.

TOM

You guys turned down my request to return to Earth!

ANATOLI

I'm sure there was a good reason.

Anatoli walks away. Tom musters all his courage and follows.

TOM

No. There wasn't.

Anatoli stops and turns, his black beard bristling with anger. He looks past Tom and scowls at Jonathan, who hangs his head in shame. Tom notices the silent exchange.

TOM (CONT'D)

This isn't about him! It's about me.
And I want some answers!

Anatoli surveys Tom evenly, then turns and walks away.

ANATOLI

Then you shall have them.

Tom looks at Jonathan, who urges Tom forward, whispering:

JONATHAN

You asked for it.

INT. PARADISE - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The darkened room is dominated by an oval table, each place lit by a circular light. Here and there a hand rests on the table, but the faces are in shadow. Anatoli takes his place at the head. Tom and Jonathan stand at the other end. Anatoli leans forward, his face illuminated.

ANATOLI

You have your audience.

Ten chairs slowly swivel toward Tom, their occupants in darkness. A white book sits on the table in front of each chair. Tom gulps.

TOM

My name is Tom Waring--

VOICE #1

We know who you are.

TOM

Oh. Okay. Well, I'm here to--

VOICE #2

We also know why you're here.

ANATOLI

It's all here.

He taps the white book in front of him as proof.

TOM

Oh. Then you know why I have--

VOICE #3

Mr. Waring?

A face appears in the light, heavily scarred, with a beak-like nose and wire-rimmed glasses. Very old and very pale.

HAWK-NOSE

Do you know the mind of God?

Tom shakes his head.

HAWK-NOSE (CONT'D)

Then how is it that you know more
than we do on this matter?

Tom looks around for help. Jonathan is focused on his shoes.
Anatoli leans forward, glaring at Tom. Tom screws up his courage.

TOM

Are you sure this is God's will?

Each of the Councilmen slowly leans into the light and the
expression on every face is identical: incredulity.

ANATOLI

We know who you are, Thomas Philip
Waring, but do you know who we are?

He moves to the chair next to his and grasps the top with both
hands. An Asian man with deep vertical wrinkles in his cheeks
looks serenely at Tom.

ANATOLI (CONT'D)

This is Yung Wei, who lived three
thousand years ago in China. There
was a great drought. His village was
starving. He prayed with such faith
that God sent rain, saving the people.

He moves to the next chair, turning it.

ANATOLI (CONT'D)

This is Alberto de Moranis, who lived
in fourth century Spain. He died
rather than renounce God.

TOM

I didn't mean--

ANATOLI

Silence! You have questioned us, now
we will question you! Do you believe
that we do not know what it means to
keep a promise?

Anatoli strides toward Tom. It is all Tom can do to stay put as
Anatoli looms over him. Anatoli whispers:

ANATOLI (CONT'D)

I lived on the Siberian steppes a
thousand years ago. My family was
murdered and I was thrust into prison
and blinded so I could not identify
the man who butchered them. For forty
years I rotted in a dungeon, where
my hatred grew. But there was another
prisoner there who knew God.

(MORE)

ANATOLI (CONT'D)

He taught me about faith and God's command to forgive. I learned to forgive my tormentors, even as they killed my body. It was obedience to God's truth that saved my soul.

He trudges back to his seat and sits. Tom shakes like a leaf.

TOM

But I promised.

Anatoli consults his book.

ANATOLI

When you made your promise, did your wife promise in turn to believe?

TOM

Not in so many words.

ANATOLI

Then you made a one-sided promise. Only you are bound. Your wife is not.

TOM

She will believe if I return and--

YUNG WEI

There is another problem. If a party to any contract, by action or inaction, repudiates the premise of the contract, it is rescinded and the non-breaching party is released from performance.

Tom turns to Jonathan, confused. Jonathan steps forward.

JONATHAN

It means that if your wife no longer wishes you to return, then you are released from your promise to do so.

TOM

I don't understand.

ANATOLI

Memory is a very subjective thing.

Anatoli closes his book. All others are closed. He nods and the placelights begin to dim. Soon the room is in complete darkness.

ANATOLI (CONT'D)

You are about to be given a great gift, Thomas. See to it that you are not ungrateful.

A WHITE ORB appears over the table. Colored shapes appear, circling the orb in SLOW MOTION. It grows in size and the shapes begin settling into rows. A black strip appears between them. Soon, a residential street takes shape, lined with modest houses. Autumn leaves are falling. FOCUS on one house and CRANE DOWN. Josh bursts out of the door and picks up his bike.

TOM stares, slack-jawed.

April appears on the porch, wearing gray Levis, her hair cut short. Radiant. A MAN appears behind her, touching her lightly as he passes. She smiles and pats him on the back.

TOM feels his heart crumbling to dust.

The Man trots behind as Josh pedals the bike furiously. He lets go and Josh wobbles down the sidewalk. The SOUND is as if from a great distance, but we can hear Josh's delighted squeals as he turns back, still in control. The Man reaches out to steady the bike as it passes him. April claps her hands.

CRANE UP as April comes down the steps. The colors begin to fade, turning to gray shapes, until the whirlwind on the desk is sucked into the white orb. It winks out. The lights slowly come up. Tom stands, his head bowed.

TOM

I shouldn't have questioned your judgment.

Jonathan has to move as Tom turns and reaches for the door.

EXT. APRIL'S HOME - FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Dan turns to April, who is watching Josh ride his bike.

DAN

Wow, he picked that up fast!

APRIL

Honey, stay on the sidewalk!

(to Dan)

He's been wanting to learn all summer, but I haven't had time to help him.

DAN

With everything that's happened.

She feels him looking and hugs herself against the chill.

DAN (CONT'D)

How about dinner?

APRIL

We just had dinner. Thanks.

DAN

No, dinner out. Something that doesn't come in a cardboard box.

APRIL

I don't think it's a good idea, Dan.

DAN

Look, we'll bring chaperones. You bring Josh and I'll bring Katie and Susan. It will be totally safe.

April retreats to the porch. Dan looks up at her.

DAN (CONT'D)

But the offer still stands, okay?

April nods reluctantly.

EXT. PARADISE - BOULEVARD - DAY

Tom walks blindly, head down, lost in thought. Crowds of happy people surge around him.

EXT. PARADISE - OUTSKIRTS - DAY

The park-like City has given way to mounds of bunch grass and exposed rock and dirt. Tom crests a barren hill and stops.

THE CHASM he saw from the Council Building slashes the view, its red walls disappearing in darkness. The trail meanders down the hill toward it, winding between stands of trees.

FOLLOW Tom as he breaks through the trees and there it is, a hundred yards away: THE BRIDGE, a brilliant low-slung arch of a million colorful fiber optic strands, almost too bright to look at. It slopes low into the Chasm before climbing up to the far side, where a dark, forbidding forest hugs the Chasm walls.

A VOICE

Boo!

TOM jumps. Standing next to him is a **SHORT BALD MAN** with a hook nose and piercing black eyes. He grins.

MAN

What are you up to?

TOM

Nothing.

MAN

You must be up to something or you wouldn't be so jittery. Boo!

Tom jumps again, but this time it makes him mad.

TOM

Knock it off!

MAN

You a suicide bomber, come to destroy the Bridge? That it?

TOM

No! I was just wondering what it is. And who you are.

MAN

I'm Stan. And that's the Bridge. It spans the chasm between Paradise and Hell--where people with a sense of humor live... which is why you're over here.

He looks up at Tom with an amused expression. Baiting him.

TOM

Don't they want to keep them away from us?

STAN

Maybe they want to keep us away from them.

TOM

So why a bridge, then?

Stan starts climbing up a nearby tree. He's quite agile.

STAN

People who get their act together can cross over. And of course everybody knows Earth is that way.

TOM

I thought Earth was back that way.

He points to the City, its spires pointing to the sky.

STAN (O.S.)

Coming from, yes. Going to, no.

Suddenly, Stan is at Tom's side, causing him to jump.

TOM

Quit it, dammit! Sorry. I shouldn't cuss. I'm having a really bad time. I hate it here. Too many rules.

STAN

You can't fight city hall.

TOM

Tell me about it. I just got back from there. I wanted to go back to Earth because I promised my wife I'd return and tell her if there was a God.

Tom immediately regrets the confession. He looks at Stan sheepishly. Stan is staring at him. Suddenly, Stan starts laughing, high-pitched, whooping laughs, slapping his knee. This goes on so long that Tom almost punches him. Finally, Stan regains his composure enough to manage:

STAN

So... is... there?

TOM

Is there what?

STAN

Is... there... a... God?

TOM

Don't know. Haven't met Him yet.

Stan laughs again. Tom's face is burning with embarrassment.

STAN

Well, let me know when you do. I got a couple of questions for the old boy!

Stan howls with laughter. Tom turns away angrily. Stan wipes the tears from his eyes, trying to contain himself.

STAN (CONT'D)

You gotta admit, it's pretty funny. So, what did they say? The Council?

TOM

Turned me down. Flat.

STAN

What a surprise. So, what are you going to do now? Planning your escape?

TOM

What?

STAN

You're gonna bust out, right?

TOM

Of course not.

STAN

That's good. 'Cause if you got caught, they'd probably disincorporate you.

TOM
What's that? Disin...

STAN
Disincorporate. Poof. You're gone.
Annihilation. Good night, Irene.
Th-th-that's all, folks!

TOM
I thought we lived forever.

STAN
Not if you don't follow the rules.
But you're a Boy Scout, so no problem.

TOM
I am not a Boy Scout. I'm just...
conventional.

This sets Stan off again, laughing.

STAN
What's so all-fired important about
going back, anyway?

TOM
My wife. Isn't that enough?

STAN
Depends on the wife. What's she look
like?

TOM
No jokes, okay?

Stan crosses his heart, suppressing a smile. Tom is serious.

TOM (CONT'D)
Her name's April. She has a nice
figure and delicate hands. Great
legs. Full lips, and her eyes...

He sneaks a look at Stan, whose eyes are shut, listening.

STAN
Go ahead. I won't say anything.

TOM
I can't remember their color!

STAN
It doesn't matter.

TOM
It does to me! They're brown? Blue?

STAN
I like blue eyes.

Tom paces in a circle, confused. Then he stops, comprehending.

TOM

They've stolen my memories! Today I can't remember her eyes, tomorrow I'll forget the color of her hair, and in a week, I'll have forgotten her name!

He glares at Stan, who shrugs.

STAN

Them's the rules. Like it or lump it.

TOM

Oh yeah? We'll just see about that.

His eyes burn with anger and he strides down the pathway.

STAN

Where are you going?

TOM

Nobody's taking my memories away without a fight.

As Stan watches him march down the trail, an impish smile appears on his face. He rubs his bony hands together gleefully.

STAN

This is gonna be good!

EXT. PARADISE - THE CHASM - DAY

Tom marches along, but stops when he sees a guard shack.

ON THE BRIDGE, a thin cable is suspended about four feet above the narrow walkway. There are no guard rails. A **GUARD** in a white uniform and matching helmet stands at parade rest facing the Bridge. Suddenly, he turns.

TOM jumps behind a tree, out of sight.

THE GUARD returns to his vigil.

STAN (O.S.)

You got a plan?

Tom about jumps out of his skin--again. He scowls at Stan.

TOM

Do that again and I'll pound you.

Stan raises his hands in mock fear. Tom looks back at the Bridge.

STAN

How you gonna get across?

TOM

I have no idea.

But as they watch, a FOG rises from the Chasm, engulfing the Bridge. VOICES come from within the fog. Emerging from the fog is a BLONDE MAN in a gray cloak, moving hand over hand along the cable. He gains solid ground and turns. Behind, a WOMAN emerges. He pulls her the last few feet. They embrace momentarily, then they approach the Guard.

STAN

Now's as good a time as any.

He slaps Tom's back and trots off, keeping out of sight behind the stubby trees. Tom follows. They stop behind a bush that is only a meter from the edge of the Chasm. Tom crawls to the edge.

TOM'S P.O.V. - THE CHASM, its flinty walls a bloody black, disappears in darkness.

NEXT TO HIM, Stan drops a loogie into the Chasm. Tom shoves him.

TOM

Quit it!

They turn back to the Bridge, just a few meters away. More people emerge from the fog. Ten people now surround the Guard.

STAN

Souls crossing over from Hell.

Tom looks down at his hands. They're sweating and shaking. Then suddenly Stan lopes past, swings up on the Bridge and disappears into the fog. Tom looks at the group surrounding the Guard. No one saw Stan.

TOM

Now or never.

Tom runs toward the Bridge. It's wet and takes a couple of tries before he successfully gets up on it. He grabs the cable. It's wet, too, and no thicker than a kite string. He turns back.

THE GROUP hasn't seen him. The fog soon erases their image.

Tom looks down. The pathway is only a couple of feet wide. He slides his hand along the cable. The Bridge pulses colorfully under his feet, like something alive, sloping down at a terrifying angle. The air is black with fog; the Bridge gives off little light.

A WHISPER

Let go.

Tom looks around. He tries to move. He can't.

A WHISPER (CONT'D)

Let go.

Tom shakes his head. He's on his knees, the cable under his armpit, terrified. The Bridge ripples under him.

A VOICE NOW

Let go!

Tom shakes his head blindly. Then,

APRIL (O.S.)

Tom.

Tom looks up. There is April, appearing out of the fog just beyond reach. She is smiling, beckoning him.

TOM

April!

APRIL

Come to me.

THE VOICE

LET GO! LET GO!

He focuses on April. One hand moves along the cable. Then the other. He takes one step, then another. Yet April is just out of reach. She smiles.

TOM

April! April!

He moves slowly as the Bridge undulates. The VOICE continues shrieking at him to let go. Tom reaches for April.

Suddenly a hand grabs his and pulls him out of the fog. Tom finds himself sprawled on the ground in front of Stan, who glowers down at him.

STAN

What took you? You go sightseeing?

Tom fights for breath, terrified and sick at heart.

TOM

April. Oh, April.

STAN

Come on. Get up. We gotta hurry.

With surprising strength, he pulls Tom to his feet. They look back at the Bridge. The fog is breaking up, shreds floating away. Stan pulls him toward the trees. Tom looks back. The Bridge sways across the Chasm, brilliant with light.

The people on the far side are making their way up the path, toward Paradise City. Tom turns and heads into the forest.

EXT. PARADISE - THE BRIDGE - DAY

THE GUARD double-takes at something on the far side of the Chasm.

HIS P.O.V. - SOMETHING MOVES, disappearing into the blackness.

THE GUARD turns back to his clipboard. With a red pen, he makes a check in a box by the last name.

INT. PARADISE - HOTEL - TOM'S ROOM - EVENING

Jonathan enters and sees Tom's ViewLink and his Record on the table. He goes to the balcony and looks out over the city, the evening lights winking on. He leans against the railing.

EXT. DEL MAR - THE LOT - NIGHT

April leans against the Maxima fender. The sea is placid and green, the ground brown with winter. Clouds crowd the horizon, making a colorful sunset. She sighs, turns and reaches into the car, withdrawing a sign on a stake and a hammer. She pounds the sign into the dirt. When she moves out of the way, we see it is a FOR SALE sign.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHT

Stan strides along, but Tom is nervous. Tree branches form a dark canopy over the narrow path. Tom notices Stan has stopped behind a tree trunk. He motions Tom forward, pointing.

A spur turns from the path and crosses a meadow, at the far end of which are two stone pillars a hundred feet tall. Between them hang two immense black iron gates. Twisted steel over the entrance forms the words: GATES OF HELL. Sentries walk the stone walls that disappear into the forest on each side.

STAN
Take a good look.

TOM
Why?

STAN
'Cause that's where we're probably gonna wind up. Come on!

He lopes off, skirting the meadow, heading for the gates! Tom stares. Stan stops and waves him forward. Tom shakes his head. Stan tucks his hands under his armpits and pantomimes a chicken. Tom angrily moves forward.

They meet behind a tree a mere twenty meters from the gates. The pillars are massive, stretching up into the dark sky. The Sentries are distant figures.

TOM
What are you doing?

STAN
Don't you wanna see what Hell looks like?

TOM
Are you kidding? Hell no.

STAN
Check this out.

He bolts for the wall and flattens himself against it, motioning Tom forward. Tom reluctantly joins him. They inch along until they are next to a giant iron hinge. Stan peeks through the crack and waves for Tom to take a look.

HIS P.O.V. - THE PATH winds toward a city on a hill. It's incredibly beautiful and huge, far more impressive than Paradise.

TOM turns to Stan, dumbfounded.

TOM
That's Hell?

STAN
You expected fire and brimstone?

Stan trots back toward the trees. Tom looks up, doesn't see any Sentries, and follows. They meet in the forest and make their way back to the path. They turn and take one last look at Hell.

TOM
I don't get it. Hell looks nicer than Paradise. I thought it was where the wicked suffer.

STAN
Oh, there's suffering all right. They can't progress in there. And you know the worst part?

Tom crouches, sure the Sentries will hear. He grabs Stan's arm, but Stan jerks away and points a bony finger at Tom.

STAN (CONT'D)
Those gates are locked from the inside! They could leave at any time, but they don't because their whole lives are about rules--either slavishly obeying them, or mindlessly rebelling against them! Morons!

TOM

You've been in there, haven't you?

Stan whirls on him, seething, his hands fists, spittle flying.

STAN

What business is that of yours?

TOM

All right. Sorry. Calm down.

STAN

I will not calm down! And if you think you can make me calm down, you just try it!

He moves to Tom, who recoils, more out of revulsion than fear.

STAN (CONT'D)

And another thing. I'm not here because of your virtuous quest. Your integrity means nothing to me. That place is full of people with integrity. They had integrity when they murdered for king and country. They had integrity when they lied to the people for a "greater good." They had integrity when they oppressed the weak in the name of progress. So I don't wanna hear about integrity. I'm going to Earth--I have business there. If you wanna tag along, fine. But I'm in charge, so don't give me any of your crap.

He stomps away, in full view of the Sentries. They don't seem to see him.

EXT. HELL - FOREST PATH - TOM TROTS

along, trying to catch up with Stan. Ahead, as Stan rounds a corner, he jerks his thumb over his shoulder, pointing to a sign he's passing.

As Tom passes, WE SEE it is in the shape of an arrow and says "EARTH." Someone has scrawled "Abandon hope all who enter here" across the sign.

EXT. HELL - FOREST PATH/PLAIN

The forest thins out and ends. Stan and Tom face an endless, flat plain. The path disappears into nothing.

TOM

What now?

STAN

The Portals. You walk out there,
think about where you want to go,
and boom! you're there. Go ahead.

TOM

You first.

STAN

Some hero. Afraid of everything.
The Bridge, the Forest, Hell. I'll
bet you sleep with a night light.

Tom glares at him and strides forward.

TOM

You can go to back to Hell; I'm going
to Earth.

STAN

What's the difference?

Stan laughs. Tom walks forward, closing his eyes. A SOUND, like
leaves crackling or distant lightning. He opens his eyes.

EVERYTHING IS BLACK. The Plain is gone. Stan is gone. He's in a
complete void. Then sparks start flying, arcing in a circle
before him. Soon they form a gleaming, circular porthole, inside
of which is Tom's house in Solana Beach.

TOM

Home.

He steps into the Portal.

EXT/INT. WARING HOME - STREET - DAY

Tom steps from the Portal into the street in front of his house.
He turns just as a minivan roars right through him. His
molecules reform as the van passes. The van turns the corner
and disappears. Tom feels himself. Still intact.

He walks to the house. The place looks forlorn. The paint is
peeling on the front door. He reaches to touch it and falls
right through, landing with a THUMP on the entry parquet.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) The LIVING ROOM is dominated by a big screen TV, fronted by
a ratty couch. Pizza boxes on the floor. The place is filthy.
- B) Tom enters JOSH'S ROOM. Josh's bed is replaced by a red tube
bunk bed. Posters of sullen rock bands hang on the walls.
- C) In the MASTER, the brass bed is replaced by a waterbed.
- D) Tom passes through the KITCHEN, heading for the garage.

INT. WARING HOME - GARAGE/KITCHEN - DAY

Tom passes through the door. The garage is filled with moving boxes and bulging garbage bags. Tom HEARS something.

TOM

Ted? That you, boy?

Tom moves slowly toward the sound. There, behind a pile of cardboard boxes, is a German Shepherd. Tom backs away and the dog's eyes follow. Then the Shepherd lunges and Tom dives toward the door, falling through it and into the kitchen. A THUMP as the dog hits the door and a then growl of pain is heard.

Tom gets up and sees a calendar. He approaches it.

TOM (CONT'D)

Still May.

Then something catches his eye.

INSERT - CALENDAR - PAN from the word "May" to the year: 2005.

TOM stumbles backward.

TOM (CONT'D)

Oh no! A whole year? Okay, get a grip. They moved. But where?

EXT. WARING HOME - PORCH - DAY

Tom emerges through the front door. Then it hits him.

TOM

Her work! Portal!

Suddenly, the fiery white Portal appears before him.

INT. PARADISE - CLASSROOM - DAY

Jonathan points his ViewLink and a hologram of Tom appears, along with Jonathan, standing in his hotel room. The young Instructor from Tom's class shakes his head.

INT. CLINIC - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

The Portal pops and fizzes. Tom steps through and it disappears. No one notices him. He passes Trish at her post. FOLLOW TOM as he passes doorways with name plates. He stops at April's office. The door is shut.

INT. CLINIC - APRIL'S OFFICE

Tom's head pops through the door. He looks around.

HIS P.O.V. - THE OFFICE IS EMPTY.

TOM pulls his head out of April's office. Across the hall, someone is talking on the phone. Tom turns toward the sound.

INT. CLINIC - MICHELLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom enters the open doorway. Michelle CHATS on the phone, her nails idly tapping the desk. Tom moves into her eye line.

TOM

Hi, Michelle. Remember me?

Michelle keeps CHATTING. Tom moves to within a foot of her.

TOM (CONT'D)

Michelle, where's April?

As if in response, Michelle twirls her chair to look out the window. Tom reaches for the chair, but his hands pass through it. He moves through the desk and through Michelle, and now stands between her and the window.

TOM (CONT'D)

Where's April, Michelle?

Nothing. Then, Michelle says goodbye, turns, punches the FLASH and hits a memory key. A phone in another room RINGS.

MICHELLE

Trish? Where's April today?

Tom almost leaps for joy. He pumps his fists into the air. He moves close to Michelle, trying to listen in and, as he does, his hand accidentally passes through the phone cord. It gives him a shock. He recoils, rubbing his hand.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

How come I don't get a personal day?

I've got a life, too, you know!

She hits the FLASH button and dials a number. The phone RINGS. Tom gingerly touches the phone cord, grimaces at the pain, but holds on. WE HEAR as the machine answers:

APRIL'S VOICE

I'm sorry, but we're unable to come
to the phone right now...

Tom cheers, but we know by the way Michelle has her finger positioned over the FLASH button that she's about to hang up.

TOM

No! Don't hang up!

APRIL'S VOICE

If you'd like to leave your name and number after the tone...

Michelle rolls her eyes impatiently. Her finger moves closer to the FLASH button. Tom looks around wildly. What can he do?

APRIL'S VOICE (CONT'D)

... we'll call you back as soon...

Suddenly, it dawns on Tom.

TOM

The Portal!

Instantly, the circle of white fire appears.

APRIL'S VOICE

... as we get the mess--

TOM

Follow the line!

The phone BEEPS, and Tom is sucked into the Portal.

INSIDE THE PORTAL (SFX): Tom is pulled along, hanging onto the phone line like a kite string. It pulses red and orange and disappears into the darkness before him. Behind him the tail runs for ten feet and ends in a burst of sparks, like a fuse.

Tom sees the last of the red/orange pulsations moving ahead, replaced by blue pulses. He starts moving hand over hand along the line. The tail extends out behind him, burning furiously. It's growing shorter.

TOM (CONT'D)

Faster!

Instantly, Tom is flying along like a kid at the end of crack-the-whip. The NOISE of a thousand conversations fills the air, pulsing through him, making his hands glow red/orange. He grimaces in pain but holds on.

Then, in the distance, a white dot grows. Another Portal. Behind him, an identical Portal is gaining. He's about to be squished between the two. Inside the Portal before him he can make out an interior of some sort. The phone line goes right through it. Tom closes his eyes and prepares for impact.

INT. APRIL'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Tom tumbles out of the Portal. He looks up just as the fuse end pops through his hands and burns down to the phone. BEEP.

INSERT - ANSWERING MACHINE - A red numeral "1" appears.

INT. APRIL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

Tom stumbles into the room. He lights up when he sees their couch, their coffee table, and their potted palm. He looks around. Then, WATER shuts off and all is quiet.

INT. APRIL'S HOME - HALLWAY

Tom passes Josh's room. There's his bed, with Ted asleep on it. At the end of the hall is a door, light leaking under it.

INT. APRIL'S HOME - BATHROOM/HALLWAY

Tom steps into the bathroom, which is full of steam. April stands before the mirror in a bathrobe, rubbing moisturizer on her face. Tom heaves a sigh of relief and reaches for her.

TOM

April. April, honey. It's me.

His hand passes through her. She shows no sign of feeling or hearing him. She starts combing her wet hair.

TOM (CONT'D)

April. I came back.

April looks right at Tom but doesn't see him. She opens the door and passes through Tom, who shudders with joy as their spirits are momentarily one. He stumbles after her as she walks down the hall.

INT. APRIL'S HOME - KITCHEN

April goes to the fridge, Tom behind her. She grabs a pint of ice cream, finds a spoon, and heads back to the living room.

TOM

April! April! Can't you hear me?

FOLLOW HER as she sits on the couch and picks up the remote. Oprah. April rhythmically takes bites of ice cream, her eyes distant and unfocused. Tom kneels before her, directly in her line of sight. His hand grazes her cheek. No response.

TOM (CONT'D)

Do you still remember me?

(long beat)

I thought I was coming back to tell you about Heaven, but now I know I really came back to tell you how much I miss you.

April absently keys the remote. Tom looks into her dead eyes.

TOM (CONT'D)

I love you, sweetheart.

He puts his hand on her cheek, feeling nothing. He stands, wipes a tear away, and heads for the door.

EXT. APRIL'S HOME - PORCH

Tom looks around. It's the neighborhood he saw in the vision. Josh's bike lays on the lawn. He slowly descends the steps and--

STAN

Gang way!

A bike roars right through him. The rider makes a U-turn, roars his laughter, and heads back toward him. Tom scowls.

TOM

Look out!

Stan hits the curb at full speed. The cruiser's rear wheel pops up, catapulting him head over heels. Tom watches the trajectory as Stan flies into a hedge. Stan jumps up, hands held high.

STAN

I'm okay! Not a scratch! Ha!

The bike lays there, wheels ticking. Tom shakes his head.

TOM

That a real bike?

STAN

Real as a skinned knee!

Tom pinches Stan, who yelps and jumps away, rubbing his arm.

TOM

You're a spirit, like me. How come you can ride a bike?

Tom extends a foot to stop one of the wheels. It continues spinning. Stan puts his bare foot on the wheel. It stops.

TOM (CONT'D)

How do you do that?

STAN

Not telling.

TOM

Why not?

Stan shrugs. Tom shakes his head, getting angry.

TOM (CONT'D)

What is wrong with you?

Stan makes a "Who, me?" gesture and grins. Tom turns away in disgust. Stan brightens.

STAN

You deliver your message? What did she say?

(he kneels, hands clasped
piously under his chin)

I believe! Yes, I believe!

TOM

I don't think she heard me.

STAN

Oh. Then she's probably not a Listener.

TOM

What's a Listener?

JONATHAN

You should know, you were one. A Listener is someone who is tuned into promptings. They get premonitions, you know: feelings.

TOM

Oh. April doesn't get those things.

Tom turns away, hands on hips. At his feet, the other bike wheel slowly ticks around. Tom points at Stan, who stands.

TOM (CONT'D)

You could make her hear!

STAN

You're the hero, pal, not me. You figure it out, friend.

He picks up the bike. Tom mouths the word "friend."

TOM

Only a Listener can hear, right?

Stan is riding the bike in circles. He shrugs. Tom whoops.

TOM (CONT'D)

Give me the Portal!

INT. APRIL'S HOME - SAME

April puts down the ice cream and clicks off the TV, still staring at it.

ON THE TV - There's Tom, coming in from the waves, his board under his arm, his wet hair slicked back. He walks out of the TV. Now he's in the room with her. He kneels down, caressing her cheek.

TOM

I love you.

APRIL closes her eyes, tears streaming down her cheeks.

APRIL

Me too you.

The Vision vanishes and she's alone again, sobbing.

INT. CHUCK'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Portal disappears, leaving Tom and Stan behind when it winks out. The room is filled with every kind of religious icon, book, or relic. An Ouija Board sits on the coffee table. Stan takes it all in, shaking his head.

STAN

Guy's a real crackpot, isn't he?

TOM

He's just got an open mind.

Stan picks up the Spirit Guide and thumbs pages.

STAN

I'll say. It's so open, I think his brains fell out!

TOM

How do you do that?

STAN

It's easy. You simply ask the molecules in the book to help you. Since their highest objective is to serve, they'll usually comply
(puts the book down)
Here... you try.

Tom leans over the book and concentrates. Stan smiles.

TOM

Please. Will you let me move you?

STAN

You don't have to say it out loud. Just ask it in your mind. Go ahead.

Tom tries again. Nothing. He looks at Stan. Stan nods at the book. Tom jumps back. The book floats in the air in front of him. The cover opens and the pages turn.

STAN (CONT'D)

You didn't even touch it. Now who's showing off?

Tom extends his hands and the book settles onto his palms.

TOM

Hey! I can feel it!

STAN

Like I said, it exists to serve.

CHUCK (O.S.)

Oh my Lord!

They whirl to see Chuck, his mouth agape, eyes bulging.

CHUCK'S P.O.V. - THE SPIRIT GUIDE hovers in the air.

CHUCK takes a step back. Tom tucks the book under his arm and starts toward Chuck, his hand extended in greeting.

TOM

Chuck! Chuck, it's me... Tom!

Chuck sees the book floating toward him. He's terrified.

STAN

Put the book down before you give him a coronary! Look at him!

Tom stops. Chuck indeed looks bad. Pale, translucent skin. His hands shake feebly. Tom puts the book down and goes to Chuck, whose eyes don't leave the Guide, now lying on his easy chair.

TOM

Chuck! Chuck! It's me, Tom!
(to Stan)
Why can't he hear me?

STAN

'Cause you're doing it wrong. Ahem.
(draws close to Chuck)
We're from the library... these books are overdue... we've come to take them baaack!

TOM

Cut it out!

Stan chortles with glee and turns away, shaking his head.

STAN

I said Listeners get impressions. They don't hear actual words. He'd have to be as dead as we are...

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)
 (he studies Chuck)
 On the other hand, if you wait a
 couple of minutes, he'll be able to
 hear you loud and clear.

Chuck has moved to the couch. He withdraws a string of rosary
 beads from his robe and fingers them, mumbling. Tom draws close.

STAN (CONT'D)
 He's dying, you know.

TOM
 Nonsense. Chuck, it's me. Tom.

Stan goes into the kitchen. Chuck suddenly raises his head.

CHUCK
 Mom?

TOM
 No, it's me, Tom!

CHUCK
 See Mom.

TOM
 No! Tom! TOM!

STAN (O.S.)
 Keep it down in there!

CHUCK
 See Mom tomorrow.

Tom throws his hands up in disgust and goes into the kitchen.

INT. CHUCK'S HOME - KITCHEN

Tom enters. Stan's head is hidden behind the freezer door.

TOM
 It's hopeless.

Stan slams the door and holds up a foil-wrapped disk.

STAN
 Ding Dongs! I love these things!

He pulls the wrapper off and shoves it whole into his mouth. He
 holds another out to Tom, who shakes his head.

TOM
 He can't hear me.

Stan wads the wrapper up and arcs it toward a waste basket. It misses by a mile. He shrugs and opens another Ding Dong.

STAN

Let me understand. You want old one-foot-in-the-grave in there to deliver your message to your wife?

He stuffs the Ding Dong in his mouth, wads the foil, and throws it at the basket. Misses again. He scowls and picks up the foil.

TOM

He's a Listener. I know it.

STAN

Dream on.

Stan pitches another foil ball. It misses. He scowls. Suddenly, Tom brightens and slaps Stan on the shoulder.

TOM

You're a genius, man!

Tom exits in a hurry. Stan lines up another shot. Arcs toward the basket. Finally, this one goes in. He smiles.

STAN

Tell me something I don't know.

INT. PARADISE - GREAT LIBRARY - DAY

Jonathan speaks to a Librarian, who points to an upper level.

INT. PARADISE - GREAT LIBRARY - STACKS

Jonathan scans Tom's LifeBook. After a moment, he closes it and replaces it on the shelf. He turns, muttering to himself.

JONATHAN

A true believer. This is worse than I thought.

INT. CHUCK'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Stan saunters into the room. Tom is sitting next to Chuck.

TOM

I know how to reach him! While he's asleep, I'll go into his dreams!

STAN

What good will that do?

TOM

Even though his conscious mind is old and confused, his subconscious mind ought to be clear. It's his spirit, so it's ageless, right?

STAN

Where did you get such a goofy idea?

TOM

It won't work?

STAN

Didn't say that. I just wondered how you knew that.

Tom smiles, feeling his oats. He stands and paces around.

TOM

I just wish we didn't have to wait for him to go to bed.

A foil ball bounces off Tom's head.

STAN

Hey, Einstein! Use your noggin'!
Time and space are variable!

He snaps his fingers. The Portal appears and Chuck instantly disappears. Tom looks around. Stan points at the Portal.

STAN (CONT'D)

It's four hours later. He's in bed.

Tom enters the Portal, followed by Stan. It winks out.

INT. CHUCK'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chuck is asleep. Tom and Stan stand by the bed. The Portal disappears. Stan goes to the closet and begins pulling out ties. Tom sits down on the bed and places his hand on Chuck's forehead.

TOM

I can't feel anything.

STAN

Remember what I said: just ask.

Tom closes his eyes. When he opens them, his arm is halfway inside Chuck's skull. Tom tries to pull it back, but can't.

TOM

I can't get it out! Help!

STAN

You asked for it. Enjoy the ride.

Tom is being sucked into Chuck's head. He's squeezed and elongated into a mere string, which disappears inside Chuck.

IN THE DARKNESS, Tom falls, flailing, head over heels, down, down, spinning. Then he hits the ground. He lies there for a moment, then opens an eye. DISTANT, RHYTHMIC DRONING is broken by the SOUND of steel on steel. Tom gets up on an elbow.

THERE, SPIRALING UPWARDS, is a tremendous wooden stairway. A young **MAN** is kneeling on a step, swinging a hammer.

TOM gets to his feet groggily.

TOM

Hello?

MAN

Hello yourself.

The Man doesn't turn, just continues driving nails.

TOM

What are you building?

MAN

Pretty obvious, ain't it?
(turns and smiles)
Why, howdy, Tom.

TOM

Chuck? Is that you?

Chuck is young, with black hair and no moustache.

CHUCK

Where's my hammer?

TOM

It's in your belt.

Chuck's hand goes to his belt like a gunfighter. He withdraws the hammer and turns back to the stairway. He sets and drives another nail, then stands, goes to a table saw that wasn't there a second ago, and cuts a piece of wood. He turns back and starts looking around again. The hammer is not in his belt.

CHUCK

You see that thing? Where is it?

TOM

There.

The hammer is on the stair. Chuck picks it up again.

CHUCK

Can't make no headway if my tools
keep growin' legs and walkin' off.

TOM

Chuck, I think this is one of those frustration dreams. You know, where nothing works? The car won't start, you can't sink the nine ball?

CHUCK

It don't feel like a dream, except for you: you're dead, you know.

TOM

That's why I'm here.

CHUCK

'Cause you owe me money, right?

TOM

Not exactly. I have a favor to ask.

CHUCK

Where is that thing?

The hammer is gone again. Tom points. Now it's on a pile of lumber. Chuck puts it in his tool belt, keeping a hand on it.

TOM

Chuck, I promised April I'd come back from the dead and tell her if there really was a Heaven. I'm back keep my promise. But she can't hear me. I need your help.

CHUCK

Hey! How's my Carolyn? Is she there, in heaven?

TOM

I don't know. I haven't seen her.

CHUCK

Have you looked?

Tom shakes his head. Chuck looks at him with hard eyes.

TOM

It's a big place.

CHUCK

Well, did you even try? You tellin' me couldn't spare a minute to look her up?

TOM

I guess I've just been thinking about myself.

Chuck looks at Tom for a long time, sizing him up.

CHUCK

Well, from what I seen looking in mirror, ain't none of us perfect. So I'll do your favor for you. No charge. But we gotta do it soon. I'm fixing to head out. Find Carolyn myself.

TOM

Nonsense. You're fine.

CHUCK

Tom, look at me. This is an old man's dream, being young again. I'm dying.

Tom starts to protest, but Chuck gives him a look.

TOM

Thanks, Chuck. You're the best.

CHUCK

On your way.

Tom walks into the darkness. He looks back. Chuck is looking for something.

INT. CHUCK'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

Chuck opens his eyes, winces, and pulls a pillow over his face. He gropes for a bottle of pills on the nightstand. Finds it and chews a couple, then puts the pillow back over his head.

Suddenly, a FLASH, and the Portal appears, leaving Tom and Stan behind when it winks out.

TOM

Still not up! I'm not coming back a third time. I'm gonna wake him.

STAN

I'm hungry.

Stan leaves and Tom sits down on the bed. Just as he does, Chuck slowly moves the pillow away. He keeps his eyes closed and slowly gets up, one hand on his head, the other out in front of him, feeling for the bathroom. The door closes.

INT. CHUCK'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tom enters to find Stan standing in front of the crucifix over the mantle, a look of disgust on his face. He turns. Chuck enters the room in slow motion. He looks terrible. His eyes are slits and bloodshot to boot. He moves as if the very idea of sound is too loud. He shuffles to the kitchen. Tom follows.

INT. CHUCK'S HOME - KITCHEN

Chuck sits at the table. He pulls the phone over and dials a number. Tom steels himself and grabs the phone line. He winces, but brightens when he notices that Chuck is dialing his phone number.

OPERATOR'S VOICE

The number you are dialing, 555-2582,
is no longer in service. No further
information--

Chuck replaces the receiver. He puts his head in his hands.

TOM

It's not gonna be that easy.

Chuck pulls the phone book out and starts searching the "W"s.

TOM (CONT'D)

She might have a new last name.

STAN (O.S.)

Are you trying to kill him?

Tom turns to see Stan in the doorway, flipping through a Watchtower magazine.

TOM

How can I tell him where she lives
when I don't even know?

STAN

Of course you do. You were there!

TOM

But I don't remember! The street,
the house number. I don't even know
which town she lives in!

(beat)

Hey! You were there! Tell me!

Stan exits and Tom follows. Stan plops down in Chuck's recliner and grabs the remote. The TV goes on. Tom grabs the remote, shutting it off. He looms over Stan, who smiles up at him.

TOM (CONT'D)

Tell me. Now.

STAN

I won't. Ever.

TOM

Why the hell not?

STAN

Because you didn't say, "please."

TOM

You are the biggest ass--

At that moment, Chuck comes in, eyes searching. The TV is off, but Tom still holds the remote. It hovers in the air and catches Chuck's eye. He freezes.

STAN

Now look what you did: you went and raised the dead.

Tom drops the remote and Chuck jumps, then approaches it and nudges it with his foot. He finally picks it up and sits down in his recliner, turning the remote over in his hands.

TOM

Stan! Help me! How can I tell Chuck something even I don't know?

STAN

This is the last time I bail you out. Your spirit-mind doesn't forget anything. Everything you saw at her house, every blade of grass, is still in there. All you gotta do is access the memory, then lend it to your buddy here.

Tom goes to Chuck and places his hand on Chuck's brow. He closes his eyes.

TOM'S MEMORY:

EXT. APRIL'S HOME - PORCH - DAY

Tom stands on her porch. PULL BACK TO REVEAL another Tom (the present Tom) standing across the street, watching. The previous scene with Stan and the bicycle progresses as before, while Tom looks around.

HIS P.O.V. - THE HOUSE NUMBER is 6735.

TOM looks for the street sign. It's blocked by a tree. He walks into the street to see better. As he does, Stan does a U-turn on the bike and looks up just in time to see Tom. Stan does a double take, weaves to avoid him, and crashes into the curb, skyrocketing into the air as before. Tom watches for a moment, then moves until the street sign is visible. It says: "Corrado St." and underneath, "Kearney Mesa."

TOM opens his eyes. His hand is still on Chuck's brow.

TOM

I got it! Okay, here goes...

He focuses again. Chuck's eyes open.

CHUCK

Coronado!

... then he grabs his head, wincing at the sound of his own voice.

TOM

No! Corrado! Corrado! Chuck!

Tom squeezes Chuck's shoulder with his other hand, surprised he can feel him. Chuck winces in pain. He's about to pass out.

STAN

Tom.

TOM

What?

STAN

Never mind.

Chuck opens his eyes and says:

CHUCK

6735 Corrado. Kearney Mesa. April.

Tom cheers. Stan turns away in disgust.

TOM

Okay. Now how do we get him there?

EXT. PARADISE - BRIDGE OVERLOOK - NIGHT

Jonathan stands on the hill overlooking the Bridge and Chasm. At nighttime the Bridge is even more stunning than during the day. He consults his Record, and strides toward the Bridge.

INT. TAXI - OUTSIDE APRIL'S HOME - DAY

Chuck is lying in the back seat, hands over his eyes. Someone KNOCKS on the window. He opens his eyes. It's Josh. Chuck manages to get the door open and Josh helps him out. He pays the driver and turns to the boy, who beams up at him.

JOSH

I dreamed about you last night.

Josh leads Chuck across the lawn like a blind man. When they get to the porch, April appears, surprised.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Told you, Mom.

INT. APRIL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

April sits Chuck down on the sofa. She sees how sick he looks and how he winces at the noise. She lowers her voice.

APRIL

Chuck, what are you doing here? You're sick! Josh, get a glass of water. Here, Chuck, lie back.

April puts a throw pillow under his head and Chuck lies back. Josh runs back into the room, sloshing a glass of water. April gives Chuck a sip.

CHUCK

Came to visit. Hope your husband don't mind.

APRIL

Tom's been dead for over a year.

CHUCK

Your new husband.

April and Josh exchange a look.

APRIL

Chuck, I'm not married.

TOM (O.S.)

You hear that? She's not married!

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals Tom and Stan. Tom pounds Stan on the back. Stan moves away. April puts her hand on Chuck's forehead.

APRIL

You're burning up.

CHUCK

I'll be okay.

STAN

No, you won't.

TOM

Yes, he will.

CHUCK

Had a dream last night. About Tom. Said he'd been in Heaven.

JOSH

Cool!

CHUCK

He also had a message for you.

With great difficulty, he sits up. He opens his eyes, sees April's concerned and frightened look. He pats her hand weakly.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I know what you're thinking, April,
but it's true. It really is.

APRIL

I know you think it is.

JOSH

What did my daddy say?

STAN

Yeah!

Tom looks daggers at Stan, who sticks his tongue out at him.

APRIL

Chuck, some dreams seem so real.

JOSH

I wanna know what Daddy said!

APRIL

Josh! Hush!

He sticks his tongue out at her. Tom whirls on Stan, who shrugs.

JOSH

Does he have angel wings?

APRIL

Josh! That's enough!

JOSH

Or a harp? Does he have a harp?

APRIL

That's it. Go to your room. Now.

JOSH

No! I wanna hear about Daddy!

APRIL

Excuse us.

She grabs Josh and hauls him out of the room. Josh wails emphatically. Chuck leans back, his hand over his eyes.

TOM

What a mess.

He gets up. FOLLOW HIM as he goes into the kitchen. Josh is whimpering and April is wetting a hand towel.

APRIL

Some dreams seem very real, but they're not. They're pretend.

JOSH

I dreamed about Chuck and now he's here.

APRIL

That's a coincidence. Chuck is old. He misses your daddy, like we do.

Josh sits there, looking hard at April, his mouth set. April sees it's useless to say more. She holds out the wet towel.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Here. Put this on his forehead.

Josh takes the wet towel and leaves. April leans on the sink. Tom comes up behind her and puts his arms around her, nuzzling her neck. She can't feel him, but something makes her emotional and a tear spills onto her cheek.

JOSH (O.S.)

Mom?

April turns. Josh's face is white.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You better come.

INT. APRIL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

April and Josh run in. Chuck is on the floor. April rolls him over. Tom looks at Stan, whose eyes are slits, watching Chuck.

TOM

Stan! Do something!

STAN

Me? You started this!

APRIL

Josh! Call 911!

April pumps Chuck's chest. Tom feels Chuck's head and prays:

TOM

Please, God, don't take him.

Stan drops to his knees, clasps his hands, and looks heavenward.

STAN

Not until we're done using him!

TOM

Shut up! Please, don't let him die.

INT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

April and Josh sit among a crowd of people. She stares blankly into the distance, so much so that she almost doesn't hear:

ORDERLY (O.S.)

Are you with Charles Blankenship?

April manages to nod. The Orderly gestures down the hall.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)

Room 315. Down the hall. I'll look after your son. I'm Lucky.

He points to his name badge. April stands and gives Josh a look. He nods; he'll be okay. She starts down the hall.

APRIL

I hope so.

INT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - CHUCK'S ROOM - NIGHT

April enters. It's dark, except for a light over the bed. Chuck's chest rises and falls. She pulls a chair over and sits, taking his hand in hers.

TOM (O.S.)

I wonder what she's thinking.

DOLLY TO REVEAL Tom and Stan just behind April.

STAN

She's wondering if he's gonna die. That ought to concern you, too.

TOM

I didn't mean to hurt him--

STAN

You didn't give a damn about what it did to him! The whole time you were thinking about you! And for what? Your precious message is still undelivered!

Tom stares at Chuck. He takes a step closer. Stan reacts.

STAN (CONT'D)

Don't you dare!

TOM

I have to.

STAN

You'll kill him! Is that what you want?

TOM

I'll just ask him how he's doing.

Tom puts his hand on Chuck's head. Stan throws his hands up in dismay.

TOM (CONT'D)

Chuck? Can you hear me? Are you okay?

CHUCK (O.S.)

Tired. Very tired...

His voice comes as if from a great distance, hollow and tinny.

TOM

I'm sorry, pard. Really sorry.

CHUCK (O.S.)

So tired. I didn't get a chance...

TOM

It's okay, Chuck. It's okay.

CHUCK

When I get better...

Tom opens his eyes. He's standing by April, who is still holding Chuck's hand, her vacant eyes looking out the darkened window.

TOM

She's here. If you could just--

STAN

Why you selfish...

CHUCK

I'll try.

With great effort, Chuck opens his eyes. April reacts.

APRIL

Chuck! You gave us quite a scare.

CHUCK

Scared me, too, April. Before I go, I gotta tell you something.

APRIL

Don't talk like that--

CHUCK

I have a message from Tom.

April drops her head. Chuck takes her hand. Tears squirt from his eyes with the effort. He takes a deep breath.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Open your heart, child. Tom...

... And then his eyes roll back. The EKG alarm SHRIEKS.

TOM

Chuck! No!

APRIL

No! Chuck!

The door flies open and in rush **TWO NURSES**. One pushes April away and starts working on Chuck. She yells at the other:

NURSE #1

Call the code!

Nurse #2 runs from the room. Tom and Stan stand by, helpless.

TOM

This is not happening.

STAN

Oh, you ain't seen nothing yet.

He points. Tiny blue particles of light gather around Chuck's body, assume his shape, then move to one side, reforming there. In a moment, Chuck's spirit stands next to Tom. Nurse #1 pumps his chest and the EKG siren SCREAMS. Chuck stares at his body.

CHUCK

Well, I guess that's it for me.

TOM

Chuck, I'm so sorry.

Nurse #2 rushes in with the defrib cart. She hands the paddles to the Nurse #1. Chuck and Tom watch with grim fascination.

CHUCK

It's okay.

NURSE #1

Clear!

She places the paddles on Chuck's chest, flips the switch. Chuck's body arches grotesquely. Hundreds of streaks of blue light arc out toward Chuck's spirit, which falls back into Tom's arms, moaning in pain.

NURSE #1 (CONT'D)

Anything?

Nurse #2 listens through her stethoscope. She shakes her head. The blue arcs jump and spit, connecting Chuck's spirit with his body, making him shake and jitter. He turns miserably to Tom.

CHUCK

I don't wanna go back.

NURSE #1

Charging!

The machine CYCLES. Tom turns to see Stan leaning against the windowsill, arms folded, scowling. He turns to Chuck.

TOM

Then don't. Stand back.

This brings Stan live. He points at the blue arcs.

STAN

Now wait a minute. He has to go back.
See the sparks? It isn't his time.

Tom steps between Chuck's body and his spirit, interrupting the sparks, which whip and snap, then one by one, they find Tom, and soon all the sparks are connected to him. He shudders, stumbling back, knocking Stan to one side.

NURSE #1

Ready? Clear!

She puts the paddles on Chuck's chest. The machine WHINES up. She jolts Chuck's body again. Tom is slowly moving toward the bed, as if in a trance. Stan comes closer, careful to avoid the neon sparks.

STAN

This is a really bad idea.

Tom doesn't acknowledge him. He stares ahead, tears in his eyes. He takes another step toward April.

TOM

She's lost so many people. No reason,
no point to all this. It's all
darkness to her.

STAN

You'll be damned if you do this.

Tom turns to Stan. His mind is made up.

TOM

I'm damned if I don't.

He places his hand on Chuck's forehead, closing his eyes. The blue sparks pop and fizz, a sinuous cable joining them.

NURSE #1

Last time!

She places the paddles on Chuck's chest. The blue arcs fly about like lightning, walking along the metal bedstead, connecting to the lamp above, making Tom's eyes glow like white hot coals. His head lolls back and he suddenly disappears.

NURSE #2

Wait! Wait! I've got a pulse!

She's listening through her stethoscope. April springs forward, taking Chuck's hand. Nurse #1 steps back wearily.

APRIL

Come on. Come on! Chuck!

NURSE #2

Pulse is steady. Holding.

April bends and kisses Chuck's forehead. He opens his eyes.

CHUCK

Still here.

APRIL

Shh. Don't talk.

CHUCK

April. It's wonderful to see you.

APRIL

Shh.

CHUCK

But can you see me?

APRIL

See you?

The Nurses exchange a look. April leans in, perplexed.

CHUCK

Really see me?

APRIL

Yes, Chuck, I see you. What is it?

CHUCK

Look deeper, Hon.

APRIL

Deeper?

CHUCK

I keep my promises, Sweetheart.

APRIL

Oh, Chuck.

CHUCK

You asked me if He exists. He does.
He loves you, and so do I.

With great effort, Chuck points to his head, his heart, and to April, mouthing their secret code: "I... love... you..."

April looks around, stunned. The Nurses focus on their work. Doubt and hope do battle on April's face, but hope wins.

APRIL

Tom? Is that you? Is it really you?

CHUCK

I've missed you so much.

Tears flow. Chuck raises a gnarled hand and wipes them away.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I love you, April.

APRIL

Me too you!

CHUCK

But I can't stay.

APRIL

No! Tom! Don't go!

CHUCK

I'll be waiting for you, April.
Never doubt. Never.

The EKG alarm SCREAMS. April sobs, bent over his body. Nurse #1 puts her hand on April's shoulder. She looks up and understands that they can't try again. She turns back and studies Chuck's face. Then, wiping her tears away, she points to her head, her heart, and to Chuck.

APRIL

I... love... you...

ANOTHER ANGLE - TOM finds himself on the floor. The spirit Chuck helps him to his feet. Chuck shakes his head.

CHUCK

Boy! That was quite a show!

STAN

Hang on. It's a double feature.

Up in the corner, a white light appears. The WHISPERING starts and the light grows. Chuck takes a step toward it.

CHUCK

That's it for me.

TOM

Sorry. You weren't supposed to die.

CHUCK

It's okay. I miss my Carolyn.

He moves toward the Light. A brilliant pulse and he's gone. The room is once again in darkness. April sits next to Chuck's body, crying quietly. Tom places his hands on her shoulders.

TOM

I wish I knew what you were thinking.

A VOICE (O.S.)

Another skill you lack.

Tom whirls and sees Jonathan, whose face is a rictus of anger and judgment. He is flanked by **TWO HUGE MEN** in white suits, hands clasped behind their backs.

TOM

I did what I had to do.

JONATHAN

You did nothing, except seal your own fate.

STAN

Says you.

Jonathan looks up. Stan steps from the darkness.

JONATHAN

Who are you?

STAN

Who are you?

JONATHAN

I asked you first!

STAN

But I asked you louder!

TOM

Forget it. You'll never get a straight answer out of him.

JONATHAN

We'll just see about this! What is your name?

Jonathan's pen is poised over the Record. Stan yawns.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Well?

STAN

Deep subject.

TOM

Here we go.

JONATHAN

Whoever you are, I demand to know
your name and your business here!

Stan pantomimes Jonathan's body language. Tom shakes his head.
Jonathan is livid. He turns to his security detail.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Seize him.

The two Security Men cross and take Stan's arms, lifting him
off the ground. He makes running motions in the air, laughing.
They bring him to Jonathan, holding him tightly between them.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

I don't know who you are or what
you're doing here, but I have a
feeling--a very strong feeling--that
you are quite a catch, my obnoxious
little friend. We shall see how funny
it is when you stand before the
Council.

This gets Stan's attention. Immediately, his demeanor changes.
He points a bony finger at Tom.

STAN

It was all his idea!

JONATHAN

So much for honor among thieves.

He nods and the Security Men disappear, along with Stan. Jonathan
turns to Tom, who kneels in front of April.

TOM

I love you, April.

JONATHAN

I doubt even that is sufficient to
save you now.

INT. PARADISE - COUNCIL BUILDING - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Tom and Jonathan appear. There is Stan, still held between the
Security Men. He isn't smiling now. He gestures for Tom to help
him. Jonathan gives them both a withering look and goes to the
two big doors, opening them wide. It is dark inside. They enter
the chamber. Tom takes his place at the end of the table, Stan
on his right with the Security Men, and Jonathan on his left.

Here and there, you can see a hand or the outline of a face in
the table place lights. Anatoli's head looms above his chair.
The doors close silently behind Tom, leaving him in darkness.
Anatoli stands.

ANATOLI

Thomas Philip Waring, you have been brought before the Council to answer serious charges. Jonathan?

JONATHAN

Aside from various misdemeanors, the Defendant has committed numerous felonies, including violations of several Prime Directives. The misdemeanors are--

A VOICE

Since violation of a Prime Directive merits expulsion from Paradise, all lesser crimes are of no importance.

ANATOLI

Yes. Continue with the Primes.

JONATHAN

Yes, sir. There are five counts: Count One: Defendant did, with evil intent and subterfuge, leave Paradise without permission.

TOM

I just walked across the Bridge!

ANATOLI

You will get your chance to respond to the charges.

JONATHAN

Count Two: Defendant made unauthorized use of the Portals.

A number of Council members converse in low tones.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Count Three: Defendant manipulated a mortal being into performing actions against his will--

TOM

That's not true!

Tom slams his hand on the table. Stan laughs. Tom turns and sees Stan beaming at him like a proud father. Anatoli turns to Stan.

ANATOLI

Is it true?

STAN

Absolutely.

TOM
 (to Stan))
 Don't help me, okay?

Stan shrugs and steps back. Jonathan steps forward.

JONATHAN
 Count Four: Defendant unlawfully
 entered into the mortal body of
 Charles Blankenship, and did take
 possession of said body for his own
 selfish purposes.

Jonathan looks at Tom for a rebuttal. Tom stares at the floor.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
 And finally, the most serious charge
 of all: Defendant, through the misuse
 of said body, did effectively cause
 Mr. Blankenship's death.

A murmur rises around the table. Jonathan closes his Record.

A VOICE
 Charles Blankenship has passed over?

JONATHAN
 Yes. He is dead.

ANOTHER VOICE
 Before his time?

Tom nods slowly. Jonathan digs an elbow in his ribs.

TOM
 Yes.

Slowly, the chairs turn toward Anatoli, who stands.

ANATOLI
 Your defense, Mr. Waring?

TOM
 I made a promise to my wife.

ANATOLI
 That's your defense? A promise?

Tom nods. Anatoli looks around. PAN as each book is slowly closed and removed from the table. RETURN TO Anatoli, who looks gravely at Tom. Over Tom's shoulder, Stan has turned his back on the proceedings. Anatoli gives no notice.

ANATOLI (CONT'D)
 Thomas Philip Waring, you have been
 found guilty of violation of the
 (MORE)

ANATOLI (CONT'D)

preeminent Prime Directive. You robbed an innocent mortal of his life for your own selfish purposes. Because you are unfit to dwell in Paradise, you are hereby remanded to Hell, where you shall remain, worlds without end. It is so ordered.

CHORUS OF VOICES

Amen.

TOM

I have something to say. You call this place "Paradise," but for me, to be here with no hope of seeing my wife again, it was Hell. I did what I believed was right, and I'd do it again, if I had to.

ANATOLI

So be it.

Anatoli closes his book and looks up.

ANATOLI (CONT'D)

Master?

Tom looks up and follows Anatoli's gaze. He's looking at Stan.

Stan turns, and as he does, he transforms, growing taller. By the time he completes his turn, the short, bald, hook-nosed miscreant has been replaced by a tall, regal being with flowing white hair. His eyes are like twin suns and his countenance is blinding.

Behind Tom, Jonathan is sinking to his knees, his mouth working, but nothing coming out. The magnificent being looks at Tom, and Tom falls to his knees as well.

TOM

My God.

GOD

Thomas. My son.

Tom looks up. God touches him on the shoulder and light grows from that point, until Tom's entire body glows. He stands. God waves his hand and the room lights come up. The Councilmen are standing, their faces glowing. And they're smiling... at Tom.

GOD (CONT'D)

Well done. Well done indeed.

ANATOLI

It was our pleasure. Tom was splendid.

He begins to clap. Soon he is joined by the others. Tom looks around in surprise. Jonathan kneels behind him, amazed. Anatoli crosses to Tom and puts his hand on Tom's shoulder.

ANATOLI (CONT'D)

After we opened the Window on April's life and you left so discouraged, some of us doubted you. But your love was strong and you would not give up. I am so proud of you!

He gives Tom a bone-crushing hug, then releases him, tears welling in his eyes. God places his hand on Anatoli's shoulder.

GOD

Thank you, my friend.

Anatoli goes to his seat. God motions for Jonathan to stand.

GOD (CONT'D)

This was your test, too, Jonathan. We will talk about it soon, but in the meantime, think about why you did what you did.

Jonathan looks like a condemned man. God turns to Tom.

GOD (CONT'D)

Now, we must go. There is something important we must do.

He steers Tom out of the room.

INT. PARADISE - COUNCIL BUILDING - ELEVATOR - DAY

God and Tom are alone. Tom looks at God, who is watching the counter tick down, rocking on his heels. He feels Tom's look and gives him a wink. Tom looks away, not knowing what to think.

INT. PARADISE - COUNCIL BUILDING - ELEVATOR/MAIN FLOOR

The doors open and Tom and God enter the busy reception area. No one recognizes God except a small, frail woman, who freezes, mouth agape, eyes wide. As they pass, God stops.

GOD

Rachel, I'm so glad to see you.

RACHEL

You know me? You know my name?

GOD

Of course. Never doubt.

RACHEL

I won't.

God holds her hand for just a moment, then releases her. Her hand begins to glow, like an incandescent infection which spreads up her arm.

As they walk away, Tom looks back and sees Rachel, still standing there, watching them, the light growing in her until she is almost too bright to look at. And yet people pass her without a second look. God is holding the main door open for Tom, who sees it and hurries through it.

EXT. PARADISE - COUNCIL BUILDING - PLAZA - DAY

Tom and God walk across the plaza.

TOM

How come no one recognizes you?

GOD

How come you didn't, Tom?

He points to the window they're passing. In the reflection, WE SEE Tom and Stan walking along, Stan doing his awkward shuffle, his back bent, Tom next to him. DOLLY TO REVEAL Tom and God walking, even as we can still see Tom and Stan in the reflection.

TOM

I wasn't looking, I guess.

They leave the plaza and walk down the boulevard, surrounded by people. As they pass, God touches a man with a sour look on his face. As the light infects the man, his countenance changes, even though he doesn't register the touch. God turns to Tom.

GOD

Isn't life amazing? What an incredible gift! The Continuum, all for us!

TOM looks around and suddenly, things seem very different.

TOM'S P.O.V. - THE PEOPLE are different. Happier. The colors are more vivid, the smells more intoxicating. People are laughing, couples walk holding hands, and children scamper about, playing. Tom stops, cocking his head.

TOM

Listen! Hear that? The music?

It is the most transcendent music in the universe, flowing from everything and everyone, infusing everything with light. The scene grows brighter, as if dark glasses had been removed. Tom looks around in wonder. His face shows the joy of discovery.

TOM (CONT'D)

I've never heard anything like it.
I can't describe it. It's...

GOD

It's life. It exists in every moment,
in every person, in every thing.

TOM

How come I didn't hear it before?

God claps Tom on the shoulder, the answer self-evident.

GOD

You always thought of life as a test,
didn't you, Tom? A test that ended
when you died, right?

TOM

I thought Heaven was a place, you
know, where you... retire.

This gets God laughing, and his laugh causes the flowers to
perk up and radiate light. He claps Tom on the shoulder.

GOD

Like Club Med! Well, I guess you
could call the Continuum a test, but
I like to think of it as a string of
opportunities, one after the other,
to learn about love. And that learning
never ends.

TOM

Even for you?

GOD

Even for me.

They turn down a quiet side street and stop before a nondescript
gray metal door. God opens it and Tom enters.

INT. PALOMAR HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Tom suddenly realizes he's in the hospital gown. He grabs the
back, closing it. His feet are bare.

TOM

Where are we?

A woman in a pink striped apron pushes an old man in a
wheelchair. As they pass, God touches the man and he perks up,
smiling. The light grows in him.

TOM (CONT'D)

What's happening? More testing?

GOD

I'm giving you another chance.

TOM

You mean I get to go back to my family? To April? Like before?

GOD

Not exactly. Someone is entirely different than before.

Tom blushes, embarrassed. They stop in front of a closed door.

TOM

But I thought it was against the rules to go back to Earth once you've died.

GOD

That's generally true.

TOM

So... why me? How do I rate?

GOD

Well, it's been a long time since I heard a prayer of such remarkable faith. I had to answer it.

Tom lowers his head, embarrassed.

TOM

But I never prayed...

God reaches and opens the door. He shakes his head.

GOD

I wasn't talking about you.

THE DOOR OPENS and reveals April kneeling at Tom's death bed, holding his hand, her head bent, crying quietly, murmuring. Dr. Gardener and the Nurse linger near the door, talking softly.

APRIL

Don't take him, God. Please...

Tom turns to God, speechless.

GOD

It's true.

TOM

I don't know what to say!

GOD

Say thank you.

TOM

Thank you.

GOD

No. Thank her. She's the reason for all of this. One thing: your memory of Paradise is fading; your memories of Earth are restored. You're mortal again, with only your heart to guide you.

TOM

Will it be enough?

GOD

Always has been. Tom, I'm counting you to bring her back to me.

TOM

How do I do that?

GOD

Love her. That's all. Just love her.

TOM

I'm sorry about Chuck. Would you tell him? That I'm sorry?

GOD

Tell him yourself. He's as alive as are--or will be. You passed away a year before Chuck. We're back in that time. Chuck is with your son in the waiting room. Now, you do me a favor.

TOM

Anything.

GOD

Tell Chuck I'm watching over Carolyn until he comes home.

Tom nods. God takes him in his arms, hugging him, whispering:

GOD (CONT'D)

You come home, too, Tom. And bring your family with you.

TOM

I will.

GOD

Good boy.

God pushes Tom toward April. Tom looks back.

TOM

See ya, Stan.

God smiles and disappears. No flash of light. He just disappears.

Tom reaches for April. A blue spark jumps from his hand to his body the bed. Another, then another, until a flood of sparks are arcing between the two Toms. The room grows bright and Tom is pulled toward himself on the bed.

In the rain-streaked window, Tom watches himself glow, then dissolve a million tiny suns that flow toward his body. He's gone.

April jumps, then turns to Dr. Gardener.

APRIL

I felt something!

Dr. Gardener crosses and places two fingers against Tom's neck. He flips on the EKG machine. The green line jumps regularly.

DR. GARDENER

I don't believe it.

He places a stethoscope on Tom's chest. Tom opens his eyes. April squeezes his hand, tears flowing down her cheeks.

APRIL

Oh, Tom! I thought I'd lost you!

She bends over him, kissing him, tears falling on his face.

TOM

Never.

DR. GARDENER

His signs are spectacular!

April holds Tom's face in her hands.

APRIL

You hear that? You're spectacular!

TOM

No. You are.

APRIL

Oh, Tom. I love you!

TOM

Me too you.

HOLD ON THEM as they kiss and embrace.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. PARADISE - THE INFINITE STAIRWAY

Chuck is in his pajamas. After looking around, he starts ascending.

A VOICE

Hey! Wait up!

Chuck looks back. There, taking the steps two at a time, is Stan, arms pumping inside the sleeves of an oversize tunic. He stumbles into Chuck, who steadies the little man, concerned.

CHUCK

You okay?

STAN

Just bushed from the climb. My name's Stan.

CHUCK

I'm Chuck. You boot it, too?

STAN

The bucket?

CHUCK

Yep.

STAN

Mind if I tag along?

CHUCK

Not at all. I'd like the company.

They ascend together.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Have you seen me before? 'Cause I feel like maybe I know you.

STAN

We probably know some of the same folks.

CHUCK

Yeah. Probably.

STAN

Hey, look! We're almost there!

Chuck looks up, sees the stairs end. He runs the last few steps.

EXT. PARADISE - GATEWAY PLATFORM - DAY

Chuck bursts through the curtains. In the center of the platform is a knot of people. They give way TO REVEAL Carolyn, in a white dress, looking lovely. She runs toward Chuck. He sweeps her into his arms and they kiss like newlyweds. People surround them, clapping Chuck on the shoulder, cheering.

FROM THE STAIRS, Stan watches. The Rotund Man notices Stan and winks at him. Stan winks back. The Rotund Man turns to Chuck.

A VOICE

Excuse me.

Stan turns to see Jonathan staring meekly at the ground.

STAN

Why, hello, Jonathan! How are you?

Jonathan looks up warily.

STAN (CONT'D)

I don't bite.

JONATHAN

Yes, you do.

STAN

Well, maybe sometimes.

JONATHAN

I just wanted to say I'm sorry for what I did, getting in Thomas's way... I was just doing my job.

STAN

Oh, Jonathan. You were doing so well. Don't blow it.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry. I'll do better.

STAN

You already are.

Stan touches Jonathan's shoulder. The light creeps up Jonathan's arm. In a moment, he is radiant, his eyes glistening with the understanding that this is God, and they are friends.

STAN (CONT'D)

I love you, Jonathan. Remember that.

JONATHAN

I will. I promise.

STAN

Careful! You know what happens when you make promises!

JONATHAN

Yes, sir, I do: Miracles!

Stan descends the stairway. Jonathan turns to the group of people. He straightens his suit, raises his chin (he's Jonathan, after all) and strides toward the crowd, which parts for him.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Charles Medford Blankenship?

Chuck turns. Jonathan takes his hand firmly in both of his.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Welcome home.

HOLD ON him as Chuck, unable to contain himself, hugs Jonathan fiercely. At first, Jonathan is surprised, but then he softens, and hugs Chuck in return.

FADE OUT.

THE END