

HEREAFTER

written by
Peter Morgan

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FADE IN:

1

INT. HOTEL ROOM

1

Bright light. Sunshine.

The sound of tropical birdsong. And a gentle wind. The rustle of palm trees outside. And of distant waves lapping gently.

We're somewhere distinctly like heaven.

OVER THIS: an incongruously, restless, clicking sound.

A beautiful French woman in her mid 30's, sunkissed, sits in bed in a luxury hotel room, writing emails on her Blackberry, papers and work spread out on her bed.

She looks at her watch, 8:00am.

She rolls over, and gently shakes the sleeping figure next to her, that of her boyfriend. When she speaks, it's in her native French, (we see subtitles).

MARIE

C'mon. You need to get up.

A reluctant groan.

MARIE (CONT'D)

And you need to buy presents for your children before we leave.

Another reluctant groan.

DIDIER

I'll pick up something at the airport.

MARIE

No. Not good enough. Airport gifts are rubbish.

DIDIER

Please? Let me sleep. Just another half hour?

DIDIER turns over, buries his head under a pillow

MARIE

Fine.

MARIE pulls back her sheets. Throws on a sarong.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE (CONT'D)

If you won't buy presents for your children, I will.

'Buzzzzz' - her Blackberry vibrates with another message. MARIE reads.

MARIE (IN FRENCH (CONT'D))

(typing message)

It seems the posters have gone up.
Are all over Paris.

DIDIER rolls his eyes. MARIE types a quick reply.

MARIE (IN FRENCH (CONT'D))

Apparently you can't move for them.

DIDIER (IN FRENCH)

If you're going, ask them to prepare the bill, will you? And get them to send up some breakfast.

"Rrrriinnngg", MARIE's phone starts ringing...

DIDIER (IN FRENCH (CONT'D))

And take this bloody thing with you.

DIDIER throws MARIE's ringing phone. She catches it, and answers it as she goes...

MARIE

Hello?

MARIE steps out of the elevator, speaking into her telephone.

MARIE (IN FRENCH)

So how many have you seen? Really?
Where have they put them?

She walks through the lobby to reception. She reaches reception, puts her hand over the receiver, and speaks in near-perfect English.

MARIE

Good morning. Could you prepare the bill?

(CONTINUED)

2

CONTINUED:

3.

2

MARIE thinks, then.

MARIE

And could you send up some
breakfast? Coffee... and fruit?

MARIE rolls her eyes, "I must be mad", then walks out of
the hotel doors, continuing her conversation in French on
the phone.

MARIE (IN FRENCH)

They said there'd be 120 across
the city, How embarrassing. It's
one reason I was happy to be
away...

3

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

3

MARIE is hit by noise and heat. Busting streets, teeming
with life. She walks out into the streets, and towards
the markets, still speaking on the phone.

MARIE (IN FRENCH)

Listen, quickly go through today's
front pages with me..I won't be
able to go online before we
leave...

MARIE drifts through different markets stalls and trades.
Fruits, vegetables, household items, leather goods and
wood carvings.

MARIE smiles, enjoying the activity. Up ahead, she sees a
stall with masks. Wouldn't one of those be perfect for
the little boy? She turns to the TRADER, points to the
mask.

MARIE

How much?

MARIE pays for the mask, then takes it. She drifts off,
continuing to talk on the phone walking through more
stalls looking for another present.

Animals in cages. Blaring music. Cheap roadside
hairdressers.

Presently, she finds a jewelers' stall. MARIE stops. Sees
the stall owner has a DAUGHTER, (8) who's wearing a
brightly-colored bracelet.

MARIE smiles, points to the LITTLE GIRL's bracelet.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

You have more? Like this?

The STALL OWNER sees the bracelet. Smiles. Reaches into her bag and produces a number of bracelets in different colours...

MARIE picks one identical to the little GIRL's

MARIE

I'll take this one.

The GIRL smiles. MARIE takes out her purse, pulls out some money.

MARIE

How much?

But the STALL OWNER does not reply. Simply stares. Transfixed. Her lips begin to tremble. And points. MARIE turns to see what the fuss is about.

Only then do we catch the oncoming roar, and notice the ground is shaking.

MARIE

Oh, Jesus.

MARIE's eyes instinctively meet those of the little girl's.

The GIRL's eyes.

MARIE's eyes.

The GIRL's eyes.

MARIE's eyes.

'WWWHHHAAAAAAMMMMMMM', the 30 ft high Tsunami wave strikes them with the force of a hydrogen bomb, destroying everything in it's path.

MARIE is hurled fifty feet by the impact, sucked under water, along with bits of markets stalls, cars, other PEOPLE.

The sound of screaming. Pandemonium breaking out. DIDIER sits up in bed. He rushes over to the window..

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

Horrified, he looks out to see sheer devastation as the Tsunami sweeps all in it's path. Bodies bobbing helplessly in the water. People screaming. Buildings crumbling. Cars, boats, deck chairs in splinters. DIDIER's falls..

DIDIER

Marie..!

5 IN THE TSUNAMI

5

MARIE thrashes under water, her eyes bulging, desperate for air. Her mouth opens, her thrashing becomes frantic.

'Hhuurggh', she sticks her head above water, gasping urgently.

She reaches out, tries to hold onto a passing branch, but the branch is ripped out of hand, and she is pulled under again by the force of the wave.

'Hhuuuurrghh', MARIE sticks her head above water again, gasping desperately. It's critical now.

But she's sucked under again.

Her struggle continues, but it's in vain. Soon her movements become weaker, her eyes stare wildly as.

MARIE begins to black out, her brain starved of oxygen.

Her struggle subsides as her head lolls to one side.

Her eyes roll. Her mouth gapes open.

And as she drowns, as MARIE's body ceases to struggle, as the last flicker of life leaves her.

We CLOSE in on MARIE's face.

6 MARIE'S P.O.V:

6

All sound goes silent. We're in darkness. A light in the distance. The sound of gentle wind.

Time appears to stand still. The light in the distance becomes closer, and closer.

Then suddenly.

7 EXT. STREETS - DAY 7

'Wwhooooosh', MARIE is pulled from the water. The sound of shouting voices. Several pairs of hands tend to her.

Her eyes flicker open, barely conscious...

Her RESCUERS frantically perform resuscitation on MARIE. A cacophony of noise. Voices shouting instructions.

But to no avail. MARIE slips back into unconsciousness. Her head lolls lifelessly.

We CLOSE in again on MARIE's face.

8 MARIE's P.O.V: 8

The sounds of a gentle wind. The shadows of overhanging branches, or foliage. The light has grown closer.

For the first time we can make out amorphous shapes. Moving toward us. And colours.

9 EXT. STREETS - DAY 9

"Whoooshh", MARIE comes round again, as RESCUERS frantically pump her chest. Slap her cheeks.

Voices shouting in different languages, imploring her to "Stay with us", "Don't go", "C'mon".

But it's no use. MARIE is beyond help. Her head flops. Dead.

Slowly, with sadness, the RESCUERS give up, get to their feet. They did their best, but there are countless others crying out. They start tending to other cases.

When suddenly.

"Hhhurrrrghh", MARIE bolts awake, and violently vomits the water in her lungs, coughing and spluttering..

Her RESCUERS turn, seeing MARIE is still alive, and rush to her assistance.

MARIE is bewildered, shell-shocked, cannot understand what has happened. Overwhelmed, she begins to weep as people wrap her in towels, give her water to drink.

10 EXT. STREETS - DAY 10

An hour later: MARIE has found the strength to walk unsteadily through flooded streets.

A landscape of horror and devastation. There is nothing left of the market but debris.

MARIE stops and stares at where the jewelry stall was, where she bought the bracelet. Splintered wood and the occasional scattered bead are all that remain.

No sign of the LITTLE GIRL. Suddenly a voice calls out.

DIDIER

Marie!

DIDIER, running through the streets toward her.

DIDIER

Thank God!

MARIE and DIDIER fall into an embrace, hugging tightly.

DIDIER

Thank God! Thank God!

FADE TO BLACK:

11 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CHICAGO - NIGHT 11

A brownstone building, in a working-class suburb of Chicago. Snow covered streets.

CAPTION: "CHICAGO, USA"

We climb up the walls, and reach an apartment on the fourth floor.

12 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 12

Inside: we're in a modest apartment. Simple furnishings. Clean. Tidy. But masculine. No woman's touch here.

A Greek man in the 50's, (CHRISTOS), sits on his own in the sitting-room.

He's wearing black. Mourning. He checks his watch.

In the corridor outside, two silhouettes are arguing in urgent whispers.

(CONTINUED)

SILHOUETTE #1

How could you DO this? You know I don't do this anymore.

SILHOUETTE #2

Please. As a favor to me. He's a good client.

GEORGE LONEGAN, (40), (handsome, shy, soft-spoken, something about him that sets him apart), walks into the room, shaking his head.

GEORGE stares at the GREEK MAN, then takes a seat opposite him.

In the doorway, GEORGE's elder brother, BILLY appears. Less handsome than GEORGE, one of life's natural hustlers.

GEORGE

Okay..

CHRISTOS

...Christos.

GEORGE

...Christos, give me your hands - I'm going to hold them just until I get a connection. For the purposes of the reading, I'd like you to confine your answers to 'yes' or 'no'.

GEORGE takes a deep breath. Then, after bracing himself, steeling himself in anticipation of difficult experience.

He stretches out his hands, slowly, slowly...

And takes the GREEK MAN's hands

GEORGE closes his eyes. A jolt, almost like an electric shock. A flicker of pain behind the eyes, then.

After a beat, he lets the GREEK MAN's hands go. And.

GEORGE

A woman close to you has passed.

CHRISTOS

Yes.

GEORGE

A woman in middle-age. In her fifties?

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTOS

Yes.

GEORGE

Was this woman your wife?

CHRISTOS

Yes.

GEORGE

I'm picking up you were together a long time.

CHRISTOS

Yes.

GEORGE

But it was not always easy.

CHRISTOS

No.

GEORGE

I'm picking up that she was sick?

CHRISTOS

Yes.

GEORGE

Sick for a longtime. And had difficulty moving?

CHRISTOS

Yes.

GEORGE

Was she bed-ridden?

CHRISTOS

Yes.

A beat.

CHRISTOS

She had multiple-sclerosis.

GEORGE looks up.

GEORGE

I'm sorry.

He continues the reading.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

She wants to apologize to you. For
ruining the marriage.

CHRISTOS

It's not true.

GEORGE

She feels bad that you had to care
for her. Even when you were a
young man.

(a beat)

And wishes you would find someone
now. Before it's too late.

A beat.

GEORGE

Because you're not getting any
younger.

CHRISTOS

No.

GEORGE

Or slimmer.

GEORGE looks up.

GEORGE

She has quite a sense of humor.

CHRISTOS

Yes.

GEORGE

Now she's telling me to pay
attention.

GEORGE's smiles fades.

GEORGE

She has something important to
say.

GEORGE's listens.

GEORGE

She's giving me some kind of date?

GEORGE's listens.

GEORGE

June? In June.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTOS looks up. Suddenly serious.

GEORGE

Does that mean anything to you?
Was that when you got married?

Something in CHRISTOS's manner has changed.

CHRISTOS

(soft)

No.

GEORGE

Or when she passed?

CHRISTOS

No.

GEORGE

Because she's being quite specific
about the month of June.

GEORGE looks at CHRISTOS. No reaction.

GEORGE

Maybe I'm, wrong. It happens.

GEORGE shoots a look at the OTHER MAN.

GEORGE

It's been a while
(a beat)
Guess I'm a little rusty.

Afterward: the reading has finished. George says a
goodbye to CHRISTOS as he gets into the elevator.

CHRISTOS

(shaking hands)

Thank you. Thank you so much.

The OTHER MAN, (BILLY), and GEORGE hug.

BILLY

Thanks, kiddo. I owe you.

GEORGE nods..

BILLY and CHRISTOS get into the elevator. Close the
doors. GEORGE goes back into his flat.

14 INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

14

BILLY hits the button for the 'ground floor'. CHRISTOS shakes his head in disbelief, blown away.

CHRISTOS

That was incredible. Your brother.
I tell you, that guy's for real.

BILLY

I know.

CHRISTOS

No. I mean he's really for real.

(a beat)

Let me tell you, I was pretty skeptical before I came. All that psychic shit is mumbo fucking jumbo as far as I'm concerned.

(a beat)

But that...I mean.

(a low whistle)

...he knew stuff I've never told anyone! It's unbelievable.

The elevator doors open. They walk out.

CHRISTOS

He could make money doing that.

BILLY

He did. For a while. Good money.

(a beat)

Had an office, his own website.
Had newspapers articles, even a book written about him.

15 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

15

Billy and CHRISTOS walk out of the building. Breath steaming in the cold.

CHRISTOS

So what happened?

BILLY

He couldn't cope. Turned his back on the whole things. Said "...a life that's all about death is no life at all."

(a beat)

Now he works shifts in a factory.
Takes home two thousand a month.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILLY (CONT'D)
(taps head, 'insane')
But he says he's happy.

CHRISTOS stops. Looks up. Doesn't understand.

BILLY
He wasn't going to do another
reading again. But I persuaded him
to make an exception in your case.

They cross the street to the car...

CHRISTOS
Thanks. I won't forget this.
(shaking hands)
I'll call you Monday about that
thing.

BILLY
Great, appreciate it.

CHRISTOS is about to get into his car.

BILLY
So who's June? If you don't mind
me asking.

CHRISTOS looks up.

CHRISTOS
June Mendoza was my wife's nurse.
(a beat)
Looked after her for fifteen
years.

CHRISTOS stares.

CHRISTOS
And for ten of those fifteen years
I've been in love with her. But
felt too guilty to tell anyone.
(a beat)
Least of all June herself.

BILLY stares

BILLY
Right.

CHRISTOS is visibly thrown, then he and BILLY get into
their cars. Drive away. As they go, we reverse angle to
reveal.

16 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 16

GEORGE has been watching them from a window. He turns, letting the curtain drop...

17 INT. GEORGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 17

GEORGE gets into bed. Beside him, on a table, is a small CD/radio player. GEORGE lies down, makes himself comfortable, then presses, 'Play'.

Presently we hear: the deep, resonant voice of a world famous British actor-knight reading Charles Dickens. Deep, velvety tones.

ACTOR'S VOICE

"...we might have gone about half a mile and my pocket handkerchief was quite wet through, when looking out, to my amazement I saw Peggotty burst from a hedge. She jumped up onto the carriage. Not a single word did she speak, she squeezed me until the pressure on my nose was extremely painful, crammed some pieces of cake into my pockets and a purse which she put in my hand, then she got down and ran away. Presently, I noticed one of her buttons rolling around on the floor. I picked it up and treasured it as a keepsake for a long time..."

GEORGE listens, as the "Great Expectations" CD plays. Soon his eyes become heavy, and he falls asleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

18 EXT. LONDON SKYLINE - DAY 18

The craggy skyline of London. Chimney-stacks and TV aerials stretching into the horizon.

CAPTION: "LONDON, ENGLAND".

Over this: sound of a voice.

VOICE

All right...hold that, that's good! Now don't move! Three, two, one...

19 INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO - DAY

19

"Flash", a flashlight goes off.

Two 12 year old TWINS, (one wearing a distinctive baseball cap), are having their photographs taken.

We're in a photographer's studio. In a run-down part of town. Nothing fancy. Distinctly the low-end of the market.

Cheap and cheerful wedding-photos. Cheesy backdrops.

PHOTOGRAPHER

So, which one of you two is elder?

One TWIN puts up his hand. JASON. The confident one. The natural leader. The one wearing the baseball cap.

JASON

Twelve minutes.

PHOTOGRAPHER

You know, I think I could tell.

"Flash", a photo catches the boys' laughter.

PHOTOGRAPHER

And you're Marcus..?

JASON

No, he's Marcus.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Right.

JASON

The quiet one.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I was going to say the handsome one.

"Flash", another photographer catches the BOYS' laughter.

JASON

I'm Jason.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Got it. Jason the elder.

('flash')

The chatter-box.

('flash')

The smart-arse.

(CONTINUED)

16.
19

19 CONTINUED:

The boys laugh again. "Flash" another photo.

20

20 INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO - OFFICE - DAY

The two boys meticulously count out their money from their savings boxes.

The PHOTOGRAPHER hands over a large, wrapped print.

21

21 EXT. COUNCIL ESTATES - NIGHT

A tough, run-down, inner city council estate in central London. Once a beacon of hope. Now a ghetto of social exclusion.

Tower blocks. Labyrinthine walkways. Vandalized amenities. Graffiti on walls.

JASON and MARCUS arrive. Walk to their elevator. We notice they now carry plastic BAGS. They have done the shopping.

22

22 INT. TOWER BLOCK - APARTMENT - NIGHT

The PHOTO of the two boys sits in prime position. Propped up on the kitchen table. Along with a small cheap cake. And a candle.

JASON sits at the table, doing his homework. MARCUS stares at the TV.

JASON

What's the matter?

MARCUS

I don't understand it. Can I copy yours?

JASON

No.

MARCUS

Please? It has to be in tomorrow.

JASON

Tough bananas.

23

23 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The TWINS clean their teeth. In silence.

24 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 24

The TWINS tuck themselves up. Put themselves to bed.

At the moment, the door opens.

....and the silhouette of the twins' MOTHER staggers in. They peer though the door, and watch as...

25 INT. FLAT - SAME TIME 25

The MOTHER walks in, visibly worse for wear. Almost senseless. Intoxicated.

She walks right past the table with the PHOTOGRAPH. Goes to the fridge, rattles around for a drink.

26 INT. TWINS' BEDROOM - SAME TIME 26

The TWINS watch their MOTHER stagger around the apartment, absorbed in her oblivion.

The pain etched in their eyes.

27 INT. FLAT - SAME TIME 27

The MOTHER goes into her bedroom. Closes the door.

28 INT. TWIN'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME 28

The TWINS look at one another. Trying to hide their disappointment. The TWINS go back to bed.

JASON

She'll see it tomorrow.

MARCUS nods. The TWINS go back to bed.

JASON

Good night.

MARCUS

Good night.

'Click', JASON turns the light out.

29 EXT. COUNCIL ESTATES - THE FOLLOWING DAY 29

"Bang", "bang", "bang".

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: 18.
29
A MAN, a WOMAN and a uniformed POLICE OFFICER stand outside the twin's flat, knocking on the door.

30 INT. BEDROOM - DAY 30
"Bang, bang", JASON bolts upright in this bedroom. Walking rapidly.
His face still creased with sleep, he goes to the window, looks through a crack in the curtains, and peers out.
Seeing who it is, JASON' face falls.
JASON
Shit.
JASON hurriedly shakes MARCUS awake.
JASON
Wake up!
JASON rushes out of the room. MARCUS wakes.
JASON
Social Services.

31 EXT. DOORSTEP - APARTMENT - DAY 31
The MAN and a WOMAN from SOCIAL SERVICES stand outside the TWINS' flat. "Knock, knock", the MAN knocks again at the door.
The WOMAN crouches down, and peers through the letter-box.
WOMAN
Jackie! Are you in there? C'mon, open up!

32 INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - SAME TIME 32
JASON, pulling on his school uniform, opens the door to his mother's bedroom. He stares inside, then his face falls.
His mother, (JACKIE), lies on the bed, passed out. Fully clothed.
An empty, used syringe on her bed.

(CONTINUED)

The room is a disgrace. Ashtray on the bed. Filthy sheets, unwashed in weeks. Clothes and food strewn on the floor.

JASON stares. Becoming emotional. But he swallows it. No time for that now.

"Knock, knock", the SOCIAL SERVICES WOMAN bangs at the door.

WOMAN

Open up, please!

MARCUS appears in the doorway. Half asleep. Also pulling on his school uniform.

JASON

Wake her up. Make her look better.

JASON rushes out, (past the kitchen table where the photograph and the cake remain untouched), and goes to the front door.

MARCUS stares at his mother. He touches her hand, which is scarred by needle track-marks.

The WOMAN from the SOCIAL SERVICES speaks through the letter-box. A warm smile.

JASON

She's not here. She's gone to the shops.

'Slam', he closes the letter-box. Sticks a chair in the way.

The WOMAN straightens, shoots a look at her COLLEAGUE.

WOMAN

"Gone to the shops."

MAN

Fine. We'll wait.

In neighboring flats. People peer out. What's going on?

Inside the flat, JASON empties all the contents of the fridge back into the plastic bags.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

In another room: MARCUS puts on his mother's face.
Straightens her clothes.

35 EXT. DOORSTEP - SAME TIME

35

A SOCIAL WORKER calls through the door.

MAN

Boys, it's no use. We know you're
covering for her.

The two BOYS bundle their mother out of the bathroom
window at the back of the flat.

A final warning from the SOCIAL WORKER comes through the
door.

MAN

If she's not here in five minutes,
we're going to have to call the
police child protective unit.

'Snap', the door opens. JASON stares out.

JASON

You can come in and wait for her,
if you want.

The SOCIAL WORKERS look at one another, then go inside.

36 INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - DAY

36

The SOCIAL WORKERS enter the flat, and look around it.
The WOMAN looks inside all the bedrooms.

We notice the mother's bedroom has been tidied up.
Presently, the sound of a voice, from behind them.

JACKIE

Oh, hello? What brings you here?
I hope the boys have offered you
some tea. I bought some Jaffa
cakes . Who wants some?

The MOTHER walks in, carrying the shopping bags. The
SOCIAL WORKERS stare at one another.

37 INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - LATER

37

An hour later: the SOCIAL WORKERS have gone. JACKIE sits
at the table, hugging her boys.

(CONTINUED)

JACKIE

Marcus, do something for me, will you? Go to the cupboard. There's a red box. At the back.

MARCUS gets up, and goes to a cupboard. From the back of the cupboard, he pulls a BOX, which he gives to his mother.

JACKIE takes a small key from a chain around her neck, and opens the red box. She takes out an envelope.

JACKIE stares at it.

JACKIE

Take this to the chemist. He'll know what to do.

MARCUS takes the prescription. JASON watches, then.

JASON

I'll do it. Marcus hasn't done his homework, yet.

JASON picks up his mother's mobile telephone.

JASON

Call me on this. I'll talk you through it.

JASON shoots a meaningful look at MARCUS, "Just do it", takes the prescription, and goes.

JACKIE

But keep it short, It's expensive.

MARCUS takes a seat at the table, opens his notebook, and dials a number on the phone.

'Ring', the phone rings. JASON answers it, and speaks while he walks through the council estates.

JASON

It's OK, forget the homework, you can copy mine.

JASON opens the envelope, pulls out a prescription.

JASON

I want you to look up 'Naltrexone'.

39 INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - SAME TIME 39

MARCUS types the words into the computer, pretending to do his homework. (We intercut between the two as necessary).

MARCUS
 (reading/hushed tones)
 "Naltrexone blocks the effects of heroin and other opiates such as Morphine, and Dihydrocodeine. Detoxification can take between a week and one months."
 (a beat)
 Does that mean she's stopping?

JASON
 Yeah. I think that's exactly what it means.

40 INT. CHEMIST - DAY 40

JASON speaks into the telephone as he gets the drugs from the pharmacist.

JASON
 This is great.
 (kisses medicine bottle)
 She's never done this before. Up to now it's just been promises.

JASON pays, then goes.

41 EXT. STREETS OUTSIDE CHEMIST - DAY 41

JASON walks out of the chemist shop, onto the streets.

JASON
 Just think - it'll be like living in a normal family for once.

Up ahead, three OLDER TEENAGERS, tough, lean against a wall. JASON attempts to walk by. But one of the OLDER KIDS steps out, blocking his path.

JASON tries to walk past, but the ELDER BOY lunges aggressively, tries to snatch the phone.

JASON
 Hey! Fuck you..!

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

JASON tries to snatch it back, but one of the other BOYS throws a punch, which JASON skillfully ducks.

JASON throws a punch back at the ELDER BOY, grabs his phone, then runs as fast as he can.

The ELDER BOYS give chase, one takes a desperate swing, trying to hit JASON. JASON swerves out of the way, his foot hits the side of the curb.

BYSTANDERS cover their mouths in concern, the traffic on the street is fast-travelling.

JASON regains his footing, but one remaining ELDER TEENAGER is still ahead. JASON tries to run past him.

But the TEENAGER blocks his path, lunging at JASON as he runs past.

JASON slips. Losing his footing.

He stumbles - falling into the street.

An approaching CAR tries to avoid JASON.

The ELDER TEENAGERS watch in horror.

JASON's face, realizing the terrible danger...

Screeching brakes...but it's too late.

"CCCCRRRUUUUNNNNNNCCCHHHHH" - the CAR hits JASON with devastating force.

JASON's eyes widen in horror.

A BYSTANDER screams.

JASON flies through the air, his tiny, vulnerable body already lifeless.

The sound of pandemonium breaking out.

42 INT. APARTMENT - COUNCIL ESTATE - DAY

42

MARCUS is still on the phone. The unmistakable sound of a commotion. Raised voices.

MARCUS

Jason..!

The sound of screaming. The phone goes dead.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

MARCUS

Jason?!

No answer. MARCUS drops the phone, runs out of the apartment.

43 EXT. ESTATE - DAY

43

MARCUS runs across the estate.

44 EXT. ESTATE - DAY

44

MARCUS takes the short-cut which JASON had taken. Then he hears it.

The sound of screaming.

MARCUS turns a corner, drawn by the sound, then sees what any twin most dreads.

His brother on the floor, in the middle of the street, in a pool of blood.

PEOPLE stand over JASON's body. MARCUS pushes through the CROWD, falls to his knees, and holds his brother.

JASON is shaking. An eleven year old boy. His eyes open in fear. He squeezes his brother's hand.

MARCUS

Who? Don't...don't go. You can't.

But JASON dies in his arms

MARCUS

Noooooo!!!!

FADE TO BLACK:

45 EXT. BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

45

An AIR FRANCE 747 roars down the runway..

46 INT. 747 - DAY

46

We're in the first class cabin.

MARIE stares out of the window. Her food untouched. Lost in thought.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

DIDIER sits beside her, reading newspapers which carry stories about the Tsunami.

MARIE

I feel terrible. I should have stayed. Reported the story.

DIDIER lowers the paper.

DIDIER

After what happened to you?
They've sent a crew from the Hong Kong bureau.

MARIE

Never done that before. Run away from a story.

DIDIER reaches over. Gives her hand a squeeze. But MARIE does not respond. She continues to stare out of the window. As the plane travels through clouds.

White clouds. Sunshine. Somewhere distinctly like heaven.

47 EXT/INT. PARIS AIRPORT - NIGHT

47

MARIE and DIDIER climb into a taxi.

48 EXT. TAXI - MARIE'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

48

The taxi pulls up outside MARIE's apartment block. A smart, fashionable address.

Inside: DIDIER looks at MARIE.

DIDIER

You OK?

MARIE

Yeah.

Their hands hold for a beat, a last squeeze...

DIDIER

You want me to come in with you?

MARIE

I'll be fine.

DIDIER leans over, kisses her good night.

DIDIER

I love you.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

MARIE nods. She gets out of the car, then...

MARIE

Oh, I almost forgot.

She opens her bag, pulls out the two gifts for his kids she had clung onto the whole time.

Like her. A little frayed. A little worse for wear. But intact.

DIDIER's face: visibly moved.

49 EXT. MARIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

49

The taxi drives off. Marie is about to turn, and go into her apartment, when she stops.

Across the street is a vast POSTER of MARIE, endorsing a cellphone, (or Amex card, or broadband connection, some other symbol of 24/7, successful, metropolitan, workaholic life).

MARIE stares at the poster, then turns and goes inside.

50 INT. MARIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

50

MARIE enters her flat. Turns on the lights.

51 INT. MARIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

51

MARIE soaks in the bath.

52 INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

52

MARIE opens her mail. Invitations. More invitations. Work engagements.

On the wall: photographs of MARIE with famous people. Various broadcasting and journalistic awards.

A TV plays in the corner. Using computer imagery, SCIENTISTS explain how and why the Tsunami happened. Why it caused such devastation.

MARIE stares at the screen. It's the team from Hong Kong reporting on the Tsunami.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: 52

The FEMALE REPORTER is a beautiful, young Asian woman. Doing a good job, too. Images of villages under water. Buildings destroyed. Bodies awaiting identification.

We CLOSE on MARIE's face as she watches.

53 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 53

MARIE sits in her bed. Tries to read. Tries to work. A pile of books and articles by her bedside.

But she cannot concentrate. She takes a bottle of pills from a drawer. Takes one.

Then turns, and hits the light.

54 EXT. TELEVISION STUDIO - PARIS - THE FOLLOWING DAY 54

A complex of buildings. Major television studios in the heart of Paris.

55 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - MAKE UP - DAY 55

MARIE is being made-up. A MAKE- UP ARTIST puts the finishing touches to MARIE's hair. We notice bouquets of flowers everywhere in MARIE's room.

MARIE stares at her reflection in the mirror. She checks whether there is any sign of the turmoil within.

None.

56 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY 56

MARIE walks out onto the floor. The studio falls silent, then gradually, a round of applause from everyone watching.

MARIE

Thank you.

Greetings from well-wishing TECHNICIANS and CAMERAMEN. MARIE kisses several 'hello'.

MARIE takes her seat. TECHNICIANS fix sound-microphones and cables.

57 INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

57

MARIE's face on TV monitors. DIDIER sits in the production gallery, watching her. He's the show's producer.

DIDIER scrutinizes her face on TV monitors in close-up. He speaks into a microphone. (As before, all dialogue is in French. We see subtitles).

DIDIER

You ok?

In the studio, MARIE nods.

MARIE

Fine.

DIDIER

OK, good luck everyone.

DIDIER speaks into the microphone.

DIDIER

Places everyone. On air in five..four..three..two...

Urgent signature tune music, current affairs-style. MARIE shuffles the papers on her desk. Takes a swig of water. Waits for her cue.

DIDIER

And cue Marie...

MARIE looks straight into the camera, reads from an autocue.

MARIE

Good evening. In tonight's show, the Chief Executive of Etolie clothing manufactures, Guillaume Berni, who's company has been using child labor in South East Asia as our investigation revealed.

58 INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

58

LATER: the talk show is in full swing. We pic up MARIE and the Chief Executive mid-combat.

(CONTINUED)

BERNI

...it's easy for us in the West to criticize labour practices in the Third World, but the truth is these factories play a vital role in the industrial development and evolution of poorer nations.

MARIE, however, is unable to concentrate.

Suddenly around MARIE, in the TV studio, all sounds goes silent.

The executive continues to talk, but we hear nothing.

MARIE'S P.O.V: we're in darkness. A light in the distance. The sound of a gentle wind.

As before: colours gradually becoming visible. The light in the distance becomes closer, and closer.

Then suddenly.."WHOOOSH"

MARIE emerges again into the television studio, as the CHIEF EXECUTIVE continues to protest his innocence.

BERNI

...and let's be quite clear about this - wages we're paying are incrementally higher than local wages, which is why there is no shortage of people willing to work there...

In the production gallery: DIDIER leans forward, speaks into the microphone.

DIDIER

Like malnourished twelve year old kids working in labour camp conditions, with carcinogenic chemicals for \$17 a week? OK, jump in, Marie. Let him have it!

But rather than cut the executive off, MARIE appears to be distracted, has difficulty concentrating.

MARIE'S P.O.V:

The sound of a gentle wind. The light has grown closer.

For the first time we can make out amorphous shapes. Moving toward us. And colours.

(CONTINUED)

We CLOSE in again on MARIE's face, then suddenly.

"WHOOOOSHH", she is brought around by the sound of DIDIER's shouting voice in her earpiece.

DIDIER

Marie, did you hear me? Jump in!!

In the studio: camera TECHNICIANS flinch hearing DIDIER's shouting in their earpieces.

Even the EXECUTIVE appears bemused.

Then, suddenly MARIE shakes herself out of it...

MARIE

...you really think that kind of justification will satisfy french customers buying clothes...if they were to know the conditions under which they have been produced...

Nervous looks around the studio.

MARIE stares at her reflection in her dressing-room. Removing her make-up. DIDIER appears in the doorway.

MARIE

I'm sorry...that was unforgivable.

DIDIER

We'll take care of it in the edit. NO one will notice. My fault. A defensive Chief Executive was a tough welcome back.

(a sympathetic smile)

You want to go out? Get something to eat?

MARIE

No. I'm fine.

DIDIER

Sure?

MARIE manages a polite smile.

DIDIER

I'll see you tomorrow.

He smiles, is about to go, when.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

Didier...

DIDIER turns.

MARIE

I think something might have happened to me out there.

DIDIER

Yes. You had a close escape.

MARIE

No, I mean, something really happened to me. When I went under. I saw these...visions.

Silence. MARIE opens her mouth, wants to explain, but cannot...

MARIE

I don't know.

DIDIER shrugs.

DIDIER

Concussion. You banged your head.

MARIE is about to protest, then smiles.

MARIE

You're right. Yes.

She kisses DIDIER good night.

MARIE

I'll see you tomorrow.

MARIE turns and walks away. DIDIER watches her go. A flicker of concern on his face.

The following day:

A large production meeting is in progress; PRODUCERS, EDITORS, RESEARCHERS - some two dozen people sitting around a large office.

Production issues are being discussed, topics for forthcoming shows.

(CONTINUED)

PRODUCER (IN FRENCH)

..Ok, two of the right wing newspapers claim Sikhs were out in the streets burning cars, looting shops...others say the unrest was deliberately created by elements within nationalist parties in order to cast negative suspicion on racial minority.

As the debates continue, DIDIER looks over the room at MARIE.

She is sitting, staring out of the window. Lost in thought.

A flicker of concern on DIDIER's face. She would normally be leading these discussions.

This is not the normal MARIE. Not by a long way.

EXT. CAR PARK - TV STUDIOS - DAY

Afterward: DIDIER and MARIE walk out of the TV studios. DIDIER comes up to MARIE.

DIDIER

Listen, I've got to work late and finish some things.

MARIE

Okay. See you in the morning.

MARIE kisses him goodbye. She turns, walks over to her car. DIDIER watches her for a moment, then.

DIDIER

May I say something you might find difficult to hear?

MARIE turns.

DIDIER

I think we may have rushed you back too soon.

A beat.

DIDIER

Physically you're fine. But something about you...since the accident...

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

DIDIER stares at her.

DIDIER
Don't you think you should take
some time to get over what
happened? Just a couple of weeks.

MARIE
Get over it?

DIDIER walks with her to her car.

DIDIER
You know how you've always said
you wanted to find some time to
write.
(a beat)
That book idea of yours - you know
Michel would snap that up in a
second, and pay good money.

MARIE
I know. But that would take time.

DIDIER
So? This will all be here waiting
for you. The important thing is to
get you right. You're too
important to us.

MARIE looks at DIDIER

MARIE
Let me think about it.

MARIE kisses him goodbye, gets in her car, and drives
off.

FADE TO BLACK:

62 EXT. CHICAGO - FACTORY - DAY 62

We're high over a large, automobile factory on the
outskirts of Chicago.

63 INT. FACTORY - DAY 63

GEORGE, in blue work clothes and hard-hat, is driving a
fork-lift truck in a huge factory.

He is lost in his work.

64 INT. BOARDROOM - FACTORY - DAY

64

Up above GEORGE, on the first floor: a meeting is taking place in the boardroom, between management and union representatives.

Some fifteen or twenty people. Heated discussion. People visibly in disagreement.

One or two workers on the factory floor notice the meeting taking place. Look up. Whisper ominously to one another.

One of the managers looks down, and notices their attention. She closes the blinds as the meeting continues.

65 INT. FACTORY - DAY

65

GEORGE has finished his shift. He walks past a group of other WORKERS.

WORKER

Hey, you see that meeting taking place today on the first floor? The head office guys and the union?

GEORGE

No. I didn't see that.

WORKER

They were in there all afternoon. Makes you think the rumor's right.

GEORGE

What rumor?

WORKER

That they're letting 30% of the workforce go? You've heard that, right?

GEORGE

R-right.

WORKER

Say, what's the matter with you, today?

GEORGE

Nothing. Didn't sleep well, that's all.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

GEORGE closes his locker, walks away.

WORKER

See you tomorrow.

The WORKER casually offers his hand.

GEORGE

Yeah, see you tomorrow.

GEORGE discreetly avoids the handshake. He goes.

66 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - DAY 66

GEORGE showers. Steam billows.

67 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - DAY 67

GEORGE dresses. Thinks long and hard. Cannot decide which shirt.

68 EXT. ADULT EDUCATION CENTER - NIGHT 68

To establish: a local college. Sprawling buildings.

69 INT. ADULT EDUCATION CENTER - NIGHT 69

A number of adult education classes are in progress. Ballroom dancing. Foreign languages. Car maintenance. Pottery.

Dozens of ADULTS are enrolling for classes. Today is the first day of the new semester.

Among the many rooms, we pick out one.

70 INT. KITCHENS - NIGHT 70

Large kitchens, belonging to a huge College.

An Italian TEACHER, (Chef), checks the time, then claps his hands. Thirty PUPILS of all ages and sizes turn to face him. Among them, GEORGE.

TEACHER

Right, welcome all of you to this ten week course in Italian cuisine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TEACHER (CONT'D)

My name is Carlo, some of you know me already, you've done some of my other courses, those of you that don't, bona sera - and you'll call me 'Chef'. Mostly we'll be working in pairs throughout the course, so one of the first things we have to do today is pair you all up.

Nervous laughter. Eyes dart anxiously in the room. Sizing one another up. GEORGE scans his fellow PUPILS. Looking hopefully for a suitable partner.

TEACHER

I notice some of you have come in twos already. Others have worked together before.

GEORGE watches as PAIRS fall into place, a natural process of selection. The oldest PAIR, the youngest PAIR, two redheads.

TEACHER

Now, who's left?

Just when it looks like GEORGE is to be paired with a rather uninteresting looking WOMAN.

'Crash', the doors to the kitchens burst noisily open, and a latecomer come through.

MELANIE

God, I'm sorry! I'm so sorry I'm late!

It's an attractive WOMAN in her mid to late 30's.

MELANIE

...roads were closed because of that snow...plus that jerk in registration took an age processing my applications
(tailing off)
Am I too late?

TEACHER

NO. Not at all. What's your name?

MELANIE

Melanie.

(CONTINUED)

TEACHER

Ok, Melanie, we were just pairing people off. Why don't we put you with?

His eyes come to rest on an elderly man. He's about to choose him, then he sees GEORGE.

TEACHER

What's your name?

GEORGE

George.

TEACHER

Melanie with George. Alice, you're with?

ELDELY MAN

Tony.

MELANIE smiles, "Hi", offers her hand, but GEORGE avoids shaking it. Everyone is paired up, and delighted. The TEACHER opens a bottle of red wine.

TEACHER

Right, in exercise classes they warm up with stretches. We're going to warm up with a glass of Barbaresco, a beautiful wine from the Piedmont region in North Western Italy, made from the Nebbiolo grape.

A ripple of excitement as Carlo distributes glasses of red wine. It's a great ice-breaker. He flicks on some wonderfully romantic Italian music...

TEACHER

...and some music. Because cooking is ALL the senses. The nose, the eyes, the palette, AND the ears...

MELANIE removes her coat, comes over to GEORGE...

TEACHER

And tonight, we start at the beginning, the cornerstone of so much of Italian cooking - the classic tomato sauce - from Toscana. And in preparation, we need chopped tomatoes, chopped garlic, chopped basil, chopped onions, a LOT of chopping...

(CONTINUED)

The TEACHER goes to his station and starts chopping with a dizzying blur of movement. Everyone gasps, and tries to copy.

MELANIE and GEORGE watch as some of the other COUPLES, (who've brought their own knives), chop at speed, expertly...

MELANIE

God, some of them are really good.

(begins chopping
slowly)

Is this your first time.

GEORGE

(concentrating)

Yes.

MELANIE

Mine, too. Y'know, I read in the brochure, that the course builds to a competition.

GEORGE

I saw that. To be judged by local restaurant critics.

MELANIE

I don't think we should get our hopes up?

GEORGE

Why not? We still have ten weeks.

MELANIE

That's true.

GEORGE

And we haven't cut off our fingers yet.

MELANIE

That's a good attitude.

They continue preparing their food.

Afterward: the class is finished. GEORGE watches MELANIE walk to her car.

She turns, waves at GEORGE.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

MELANIE

See you next week!

GEORGE smiles. Waves back.

72 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

72

GEORGE gets off the bus, walks back towards his apartment, humming the Italian music. Smiles to himself. A spring in his step.

It's clear he liked MELANIE. Liked her a lot.

73 INT. APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

73

Elevator door open. GEORGE gets out. He walks towards his apartment, then stops in his tracks.

Sitting on the steps outside his door, is an AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN in her 50's. Visibly emotional. Distraught. Seeing GEORGE, she gets to her feet.

CANDACE

George Lonagan?

GEORGE

Yes.

CANDACE

I hate to bother you...I'm Mr. Andreou's neighbor.

GEORGE stares, 'Who?'

CANDACE

The Greek guy? Mid-50's? Who lost his wife? I believe you recently did a reading for him.

GEORGE

I'm sorry, Miss...

CANDACE

Candace.

GEORGE

Let me stop you right there. Because I don't do readings any more.

(CONTINUED)

CANDACE

You did one last week. For Mr. Andreou.

GEORGE

He's an associate of my brother's. It was an exception. Apart from him I haven't done one in years.

CANDACE

Please? I give you my word I won't tell anyone.

GEORGE

I'm sorry.

CANDACE

I brought money. Everything I have. I lost my child. My only child. My beautiful baby girl...

GEORGE stares, as the WOMAN breaks down, opens her bag, producing all her savings.

GEORGE

Don't you understand? I don't WANT your money.

GEORGE unlocks his door, goes inside.

GEORGE

I don't DO this anymore. Leave me alone.

'Slam', he closes the door.

GEORGE breathes out, shocked by his anger. From outside, he can hear the sound of CANDACE's tears.

GEORGE's face: haunted by the sound of her crying.

GEORGE is sitting in the spectator's seats with his brother BILLY, while BILLY's children play in the pool.

It's a Sunday afternoon. Families with children everywhere.

GEORGE and BILLY shout encouragement at two little GIRLS, BILLY'S children, (aged 8 and 6).

GEORGE

So, another person came to see me.
For a "reading".

(a beat)

Thanks to your friend Mr. Andreou.

BILLY

What? I told that Greek jerk to
keep his big mouth shut.

(calling out)

Go girls!

GEORGE

Well, he obviously didn't.

BILLY

I'll have another word with him.
Make sure it doesn't happen again.

A silence. Then.

BILLY

And?

GEORGE

And what?

BILLY

Did you do it?

GEORGE

What?

BILLY

The reading?

GEORGE stares.

GEORGE

You don't get it, do you? You
think because it pays money...

(searches for words)

...because I CAN...I should just
do it.

BILLY

(shrugs)

Yeah, I do. I also think because
you have a GIFT, you have a DUTY
to do it.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

GEORGE

It's not a gift, Billy. It's a curse.

GEORGE gets to his feet.

GEORGE

You have no idea...it ruins any chance of a normal life. You feel like a freak.

GEORGE walks away.

BILLY

Freak or no freak...it's who you are. What you are
(calling after him)
You can't keep running away from that.

76 INT. GEORGE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

76

"Snap", GEORGE opens the medicine cabinet in his bathroom. He looks for a bottle of pills, visibly emotional, hands shaking. He is about to take one...

...then stops, decides against it, he closes the cabinet door.

77 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

77

GEORGE lies in bed. The comforting, reassuring tones of Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations" and the famous actor's voice come from the CD player...

ACTOR'S VOICE

"..to divert his thoughts from this melancholy subject, I informed Mr Micawber that I relied on him for a bowl of punch, and led him to the lemons. His recent despondency, not to say despair, was gone in a moment.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

ACTOR'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I never saw a man so thoroughly enjoy himself amid the fragrance of lemon-peel and sugar, and the smell of burning rum, as he stirred, and mixed, and tasted, and looked as if he were making, instead of punch, a fortune for his family to last for all posterity.."

FADE TO BLACK:

78 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

78

An inner-city cemetery, in the middle of London. In the middle, a small, plain church.

The sound of pipe organ music and a small number of singing voices can be heard from inside.

A large number of brightly-dressed SIKH MOURNERS arrive for their ceremony, which is obviously next up.

They greet one another, breath steaming in the cold, and wait their turn outside the church. They shiver in the icy rain.

Stamp their feet. Check their watches.

79 INT. CHURCH - SAME TIME

79

Inside an almost empty, non-denominational church: the piped music and singing comes to an end.

Standing in the front row, MARCUS holds the hymn book, but is unable to sing. He stares ahead. Rigid.

Raised on a stand, is his brother's COFFIN.

A PRIEST steps up. From his manner it's clear, the PRIEST has never met JASON, or his mother. Standard text. No frills.

In and out in less than twenty minutes.

The PRIEST can see the shivering SIKHS huddled in the doorway, waiting outside. An elderly SIKH who will conduct the next service, is waiting in the wings.

The PRIEST puts his foot on the gas. Phones in his standard address, only the individual name requires alteration...

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST

Death is not final, it is merely the beginning, gateway to an afterlife that reflects our conduct here on earth. God in his infinite generosity created heaven, which is where Jason is now. Surrounded by all the angels and saints. Looking down at us.

Among the congregation, a few rows back, we pick out the SOCIAL WORKERS.

Their eyes are on JACKIE, the mother, who's head lolls. She sways from side to side, supported by two equally stoned, fellow ADDICTS.

MARCUS stands alone. Neglected. (We notice he holds JASON's distinctive baseball cap in his hand).

PRIEST

And so we commend Jason's body to dust, his soul already in God's care.

The PRIEST discreetly presses a hidden button. With a great, grinding noise, sliding doors open, and a old, worn-out conveyor belt starts.

JASON's coffin starts with a jolt, and slowly disappears through the doors and into the furnace beyond.

MARCUS stares. Rooted to the spot.

PRIEST

Jason's ashes will be made available at the back of the church. In the meantime, if you wouldn't mind, I'd like you to leave through the front door.

The MOURNERS begin to filter out, as in the back of the church, the SIKH GROUP begin to filter in, grateful to get out of the cold.

SIKH WOMEN carry in a large picture of the deceased, a smiling, elderly bearded MAN, and prop it up on the altar.

Waiting for the ashes, MARCUS shivers in the cold. The SOCIAL WORKERS come up to him.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

80

SOCIAL WORKER

We're so sorry.

MARCUS stares. Unable to speak. The SOCIAL WORKER opens her mouth, is about to say something, then decides against it.

Now's not the time.

MARCUS turns to see the urn containing JASON's ashes is brought out. Unclaimed.

All heads turn and watch as MARCUS steps forward. Takes the ashes.

Voices fall silent. It's a heartbreaking sight. One twin holding the ashes of the other.

81 INT. MARCUS'S FLAT - NIGHT 81

The urn containing JASON's ashes stands on a mantle-piece.

MARCUS stares at it through a crack in the doorway.

82 INT. MARCUS'S FLAT - NIGHT 82

MARCUS lies in bed. Alone. He stares at his brother's empty bed beside him. JASON's baseball cap by his side.

MARCUS

Good night, Jase.

'Click', he turns out the light.

83 INT. SOCIAL SERVICE OFFICES - DAY 83

Busy social services offices. Phones ringing. Strips lighting.

In the far corner, a conference room, inside which we can make out MARCUS and his MOTHER in a meeting.

84 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 84

A conference room, where one of the SOCIAL WORKERS is talking. All eyes are on MARCUS.

(CONTINUED)

SOCIAL WORKER

It won't be for long. It's what we call a "short-term placement"

(a beat)

Just until your mother feels better.

MARCUS stares at his mother. Confused.

SOCIAL WORKER

The couple we have in mind have a lot of experience. And live close to where you live now.

(a beat)

Of course you'll stay at the same school.

MARCUS turns. Stares at his MOTHER. Not understanding.

MARCUS

I don't want to go with anyone else. What's the matter? I want you. Where are you going?

JACKIE turns to the SOCIAL WORKERS...

JACKIE

Give us a minute?

The SOCIAL WORKERS nod. They get up and go. MARCUS is left alone with his mother...

A silence, then...

JACKIE

Look...I need a little time, to sort myself out. I'm not running away, I promise. I could stay with you now...and I want to so much...but chances are...I wouldn't make it...I'm not strong enough...

She takes MARCUS's hand...

JACKIE

I don't expect you to understand...for me to leave you now must feel like the worst thing in the world...but I promise...I'm not going to let you down...

(squeezes hand tightly)

I promise.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: 84

MARCUS stares. JACKIE is visibly still stoned. Inside his whole world falling apart, but putting on a brave face...

85 INT. SOCIAL SERVICE - OFFICE - DAY 85

MARCUS watches from a distance as his mother signs the consent forms in another room.

86 EXT. SOCIAL SERVICES - DAY 86

The SOCIAL WORKERS watch, as.

MARCUS and his MOTHER say goodbye on the steps outside the social workers offices.

They separate. MARCUS's mother walks off towards a waiting CAR.

MARCUS watches her, hoping she'll turn around. Change her mind. Come back to get him.

But she doesn't. She cannot. She walks off. Not daring to look round. MARCUS stares. His heart cracks.

The SOCIAL WORKERS go to get him.

FADE TO BLACK:

87 EXT. PARIS SKYLINE - DAY 87

The unmistakable Parisian skyline.

88 EXT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - DAY 88

A modern, fashionable, prestigious, up-market political publishing house. Posters on the wall, publishing awards.

High-brow, political, cultural, cutting-edge.

89 INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - DAY 89

In a conference room: MARIE is pitching her 'take' on her political/historical book.

MARIE explains how she sees the basic structure of the book. The political-biographical split.

Half-a-dozen EDITORS and EXECUTIVES listen intently...asking questions.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

89

Nods of approval. The meeting is going well.

MARIE turns, looks out of the window as she speaks.

She sees: her POSTER hangs in a conspicuous place across the street.

MARIE allows herself a private smile of satisfaction as she continues.

Soon. The meeting wraps up. Everyone gets to their feet, shaking or hands.

It's evidently gone very well.

90 EXT. RESTAURANT - PARIS - NIGHT

90

To establish: a restaurant in a gorgeous, hidden square. Snow lies on the ground.

91 INT. RESTAURANT - PARIS - NIGHT

91

In the bar: a WAITER pours a bottle of champagne. DIDIER and MARIE sit at a table celebrating her "sale"...

DIDIER

Congratulations..!

They click glasses.

DIDIER

The timing couldn't be better. Politically, there's nothing going

DIDIER

on now anyway. You can write a book you've always wanted to write, get some rest. I tell you, come summer, you'll be back in the office with a best-seller under your belt, a big fat renegotiated contract...

MARIE

(an ironic smile)

"Stronger than ever".

DIDIER

Exactly. Adapting and turning misfortune to your advantage. That's what I've always liked about you. Never been a victim.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

Right.

MARIE withdraws her hand.

MARIE

Never a victim. Never vulnerable.
Never complains.

MARIE smiles to herself, then the WAITER comes, and indicates their table is ready.

DIDIER

Great, let's eat. I'm starving.

MARIE and DIDIER walk over to their table, take their seats, and begin to look at the menus.

MARIE makes her choice. Puts down her menu. A silence, then.

MARIE

Let me ask you a question. What do you think happens when we die?

DIDIER looks up. Removes his glasses.

DIDIER

What a question.

MARIE

So?

DIDIER

We die. Lights go out. That's it. Why?

MARIE

Nothing? Just blackout?

DIDIER

Total blackout. Plug pulled out. Zap. The eternal void.

MARIE

You don't think it's possible there's something...

DIDIER

What?

MARIE

I don't know...something.
Hereafter.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

DIDIER

No, I don't.

DIDIER indicates for the waiter to come over.

DIDIER

Besides - you don't think if it was anything, someone would have discovered it by now? And there'd be proof?

MARIE smiles to herself...

MARIE

I guess.

The WAITER arrives. DIDIER starts to give his order.

92 INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - PARIS - DAY

92

The following morning: MARIE sits in her apartment. She turns on her computer. Plugs in the internet cable.

She opens a few books, the research on Mitterrand. Spreads out her work, and begins to read and make notes...

We CLOSE on her typing on her computer:

"...unifier of the French left? Or destroyer of it's dreams?"

"...a legacy of phone-tapping, illegitimate children, scandals..."

"...radical economic and political reforms...abolition of the death penalty..."

"...Mitterrand died of cancer in Paris on 8th January, 1996."

MARIE stops...unable to focus. Her thoughts wander...her concentration drifts. She considers something.

Then decides against it. MARIE returns to her writing and compiling notes, but before long.

Her concentration drifts again.

She goes online.

MARIE goes to 'Google, is about to type something in, but stops.

(CONTINUED)

She must be mad.

But then she decides to do it anyway.

And types in...

"NEAR DEATH"

MARIE hesitates for a beat, almost embarrassed by herself.

Then hits 'Enter'.

In 0.67 seconds, the search yields a staggering 78,000,000 results.

MARIE looks surprised. She puts on her glasses, scrolls down the hits..

Dipping her toes in..

"Near-death. Experiences and the afterlife..."

"Over 3,000 documented Near Death experiences..."

"The Near-Death Experiences Research Institute, (NDRI), Geneva, Switzerland..."

MARIE takes a closer look.

She clicks on Near Death Research Institute, and starts reading.

"...part of the internationally-renowned Elizabeth Rousseau Foundation..."

A photograph appears of an elder French Doctor. Elizabeth Rousseau MD.

"...Dr Rousseau is a psychiatrist and the author of the groundbreaking "On Death and Dying". She has earned her position as the world's leading authority on the subject of death..."

MARIE continues reading.

"...after earning her medical degree at the University of Switzerland in 1967, DR ROUSSEAU continued her studies in New York, completing her degree in Psychiatry in 1973. She then worked with the dying in a hospice for twenty-five years..."

MARIE scrolls down.

"...DR ROUSSEAU is the author of more than a dozen books. She has been awarded over 25 honorary doctorates from major universities all over the world..."

MARIE is totally engrossed. She clicks on the webpage for the Elizabeth Rousseau Foundation. It reveals a Swiss address.

FADE TO BLACK:

The sound of an American voice:

VOICE (O.S.)
OK, everyone, ready? Blindfolds
on...

In the adult education class: MELANIE puts on the blindfold, and GEORGE holds a tray with various small spoons, each containing different ingredients...

(All the other students are also split into pairs; one blindfolded, the other not)

TEACHER
It you want to be a good cook,
first we need to work on your
palette...to stimulate your
imagination, your senses...No
good being an expert chopper,
dicer, roaster, toaster if you
can't give names, colors and even
shapes to flavors...

GEORGE picks up the first spoon...

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Okay, you ready...?

MELANIE smiles, opens her mouth in expectation. GEORGE feeds her the first ingredient. GEORGE can see what it is - "Crushed water chestnut".

TEACHER

Okay, spoon number one. This isn't easy..So don't worry if you can't immediately identify it...let's start with trying to describe it. What's the texture? What's the consistency?

MELANIE starts to chew the food, thinking, savoring.

MARIE

(laughing nervously)

I have no freakin' idea what this is...but it's not a fruit. It's kind of nutty, but kinda sweet, too.

GEORGE writes down her comments, then takes the next spoon, and feeds the blindfolded MELANIE that...

MELANIE

So, how are we going to do this? We could make up a whole load of crap, or we could cut to the chase, and be honest with one another.

GEORGE

About?

MELANIE

About why we're both doing night school classes.

(tasting it)

Something 'oakie' about that. Nutmeggie.

GEORGE writes down her comments.

MELANIE

You're not going to tell me it's just because you want to make the perfect spaghetti Vongole, right?

GEORGE

No, not entirely...

(CONTINUED)

MELANIE

Ok, I'll jump in. I'm doing this because I'm new to Chicago, because I'm looking to make new friends, and who knows, if I'm lucky, maybe even meet the man of my dreams.

MELANIE takes GEORGE hand, and guides the spoon toward her mouth. It's as if GEORGE receives a shock.

Her touch has an immediate impact.

A flicker behind his eyes, a stab of pain, then he delicately removes his hand from hers, breaking the connection.

GEORGE

Why did you move to Chicago?

MELANIE

Because I got dumped by someone in Pittsburgh.

GEORGE

I'm sorry.

MELANIE

Not quite at the aisle. But pretty close. Down-payment on the wedding dress, honeymoon booked, that kind of thing.

(gestures)

It's OK. I'm over it. Just about. Not at all, actually.

LATER: GEORGE is blind-folded, and MELANIE is spoon-feeding him. There is something very sexy and intimate about it.

MELANIE

How about you?

GEORGE

Well, like you, I recently made a big change to my life. I wanted to reevaluate things...

(a beat)

Change my priorities.

MELANIE

What was the change? Divorce?

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

No, no. Nothing like that. No.

(a beat)

...a job. Something I needed to put behind me...that was making any kind of life impossible.

MELANIE

You're not going to tell me what it was?

GEORGE

Would you mind if I didn't?

(a beat)

Don't worry. I'm not a criminal or anything.

95 EXT. ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE - NIGHT

95

Afterwards: GEORGE and MELANIE exit the college and walk toward their cars.

MELANIE

Wasn't that great?

GEORGE

Yeah, fun.

MELANIE

God, and it's made me so hungry!

GEORGE

Me, too.

MELANIE

You want to get something to eat?

GEORGE

Sure. There's a place nearby everyone says is good.

MELANIE

Place nearby? Are you kidding? We're experts ourselves now.

96 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

96

GEORGE and MELANIE enter his apartment, both carrying shopping bags.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Make yourself comfortable, I'll take care of this.

MELANIE takes off her coat.

MELANIE

Don't be silly. I'll help you. We're partners, remember? Make some room.

GEORGE and MELANIE begin washing, chopping, and preparing the food. A good team.

MELANIE

So, been in Chicago long?

GEORGE

Born and bred. Grew up on the South side.

MELANIE

That you? As a kid?

MELANIE indicates photographs all over the kitchen. George looks up..

GEORGE

Yeah. And my brother, Billy.

MELANIE

Let me tell you, you got the looks.

GEORGE

Well, he got everything else.

MELANIE

These his kids?

GEORGE

Yeah.

MELANIE

Cute.

GEORGE

Thanks.

MELANIE reaches another photo.

MELANIE

This his wife?

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Yeah

MELANIE notices another picture.

MELANIE

Who's this?

MELANIE notices a bust of the 19th century MAN, too.

MELANIE

Some kind of ancestor?

GEORGE

That's Charles Dickens.

MELANIE

Oh.

GEORGE

I'm a fan. A HUGE fan. People go on and on about Shakespeare, and he's great, of course, but Dickens..? I like to listen to the CD's.

(a beat)

Here, let me get that.

GEORGE reaches over, to help MELANIE light the stove

GEORGE

There's a knack.

His arm goes through hers, a moment of intimacy, as he flickers the gas-ignition in a special way.

'Rrrringg', the phone rings on the other side of the kitchen. GEORGE flickers with irritation.

GEORGE

Leave it. Let it ring.

The answer-machine picks up the phone. GEORGE and MELANIE Presently, a VOICE comes out.

BILLY (O.S.)

Hey, it's Billy. Just to say I finally caught up with our Greek friend, and told him to keep his mouth shut.

GEORGE hears BILLY's voice and looks up.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY (O.S.)

So you can relax, there shouldn't
be any more freaks knocking on
your door asking for readings.

GEORGE stops preparing the food, puts down his knife.

BILLY (O.S.)

I have to say, though, he did make
a point of saying again how
brilliant he thought you were. And
with so many fakers out there,
someone who had a proper gift...

GEORGE walks over to the answer-machine.

BILLY (O.S.)

Funny, he said he looked up your
old website, too. Said it was
still there.

"Click", GEORGE turns off the machine, cutting off
BILLY's voice.

GEORGE

Sorry about that.

GEORGE smiles, avoiding her eyes. Then goes.

MELANIE

W-wait a minute. What "proper
gift"?

GEORGE

Hmmm? Oh, nothing.

MELANIE

No, I'm interested. What gift?

GEORGE stares at MELANIE, wondering whether he can trust
her. Then.

GEORGE

The job I had was as a psychic.

MELANIE

What?

GEORGE sees her incredulous look.

GEORGE

I know...but it's true
(a beat)

I had an illness. As a child.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

An infection, which turned into a fever, which turned into inflammation of the brain, and spinal chord. Encephalomyelitis.

(a beat)

And they had to operate.

(taps head)

In the back, here. It was a complicated procedure. Eight hours. And they nearly lost me. On a number of occasions.

(a beat)

Anyway they fixed the illness but they must have messed up something else, because not long afterwards I started getting these migraines.

(a beat)

Then nightmares. Then these...connections.

(a beat)

Then, one day, I was with a friend, and I had a vision...Of a woman. A crystal clear vision.

(a beat)

I described her to him, and it turns out the person I described was the exact description of his mother. Someone I'd never met. Who'd died the previous week.

GEORGE looks up at MELANIE.

GEORGE

You're not laughing yet?

MELANIE

No, I'm not.

GEORGE

Of course I dismissed it as a coincidence. But as time went on, I had more and more of these...'things'. Connections...

(a beat)

The doctors ran a few tests, told my parents I'd developed 'passive schizophrenia', and gave me some pills. Which stopped the visions, but which pretty much stopped everything else, too.

(a beat)

So I was faced with a choice.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I would either live the rest of my
life with these
hallucinations...with no apparent
way of switching it off.

(a beat)

Or have no life at all.

MELANIE

Oh my God.

GEORGE turns, sees the oven. His face falls.

GEORGE

Damn, now the food has overcooked.

MELANIE

Can I ask you a question?

GEORGE rushes to the cooker, deals with the food.

GEORGE

We're in luck. I think it's still
OK.

MELANIE

George..?

GEORGE does not need to look. Knows already what the
question is.

GEORGE

Would you mind if I said the
answer is 'no'.

MELANIE

You don't even know what I was
going to asks.

GEORGE

Yes, I do.

GEORGE turns.

GEORGE

You were about to ask the same
question everyone ask.

(a beat)

You were going to ask me to do a
reading for you?

GEORGE summons the courage, finding this difficult.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Look, Melanie, I barely know you - but I like you. A lot. Really a lot. Enough for me to ask you if there's any way we could go back in time? Pretend the phone never rang?

(a beat)

Or that we could pretend you never heard my brother's message? And we never had this conversation?

MELANIE

Why?

GEORGE

Because once we open the door, and go down that road...any chance we stood of having something normal...will just be gone. It just will.

(a beat)

Believe me. I have enough experience of that now.

GEORGE shrugs, trying to explain.

GEORGE

Sometimes in life knowing everything about one another is good

(a beat)

But mostly it's better to hold some things back

MELANIE

I hear you

MELANIE stares at GEORGE..

MELANIE

But you can understand I'm curious.

GEORGE

Yes, I can.

GEORGE starts to serve up the food. Then notices MELANIE is staring expectantly at him.

MELANIE

Please..?

(CONTINUED)

MELANIE takes GEORGE imploringly by the hand, and immediately GEORGE stiffens, as if receiving a shock.

A connection happens. GEORGE stares at her. A flicker of sadness behind his eyes, then..

GEORGE

OK, a lady. Tall. Thin...brown
Hair.

MELANIE

My mother.

GEORGE

I'm feeling a pain in my chest.

MELANIE

That's how she died. Of a heart
attack.

GEORGE removes his hand. Turns away.

MELANIE

Wait...there's something else.

GEORGE

No, there's not. C'mon, let's eat.

MELANIE

Please, there is. I can tell.

GEORGE walks out, carrying dishes of hot food.

MELANIE

What's the matter..?

MELANIE becomes flirtatious.

MELANIE

Don't you think I could handle it?

Their lips are almost touching. GEORGE stares, then

GEORGE

All right. Last time we touched I
saw a man. Dark hair.

MELANIE

My father.

GEORGE

Passed away not long ago?

(CONTINUED)

MELANIE

Last year.

GEORGE

And all he kept saying, all I kept hearing was.

MELANIE

Was what..?

GEORGE

How sorry he was.

MELANIE

What for?

GEORGE

For what he did to you.

MELANIE's face changes.

GEORGE

All that time ago.

MELANIE backs off.

GEORGE

And he hoped you could one day forgive him.

MELANIE stares.

GEORGE

I'm sorry.

A silence. MELANIE feels sick.

MELANIE

No, I'm sorry. For pressing you like that.

MELANIE moves away from GEORGE, Suddenly the whole atmosphere has changed.

MELANIE

Maybe we shouldn't have gone there.

MELANIE smiles awkwardly.

MELANIE

I don't know what to say.
(a beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Except, if I go now, if we draw a line under this...

(a beat)

Pretend it never happened...

(a beat)

We'll be OK, I'm sure.

GEORGE

Good.

MELANIE

We still have the competition to win, right?

GEORGE

Right.

MELANIE puts on her coat.

MELANIE

I should've listened to you. To much knowledge, and all that.

MELANIE kisses GEORGE on the cheek.

GEORGE

See you next week?

MELANIE

You betcha.

MELANIE manages a brave smile. Then goes. Closes the door behind her.

97 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 97

MELANIE walks to the elevator. Presses the button. She waits for the elevator to arrive.

She gets into the elevator, waits a moment - tries to fight it - but cannot. She bursts into tears.

98 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 98

GEORGE watches from a window as MELANIE walks to her car.

GEORGE hopes she will look up. Smile. Offer some signal that all is well.

But she doesn't. Her car's engine starts. She drives away.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

98

OVER THIS: the sound of the famous actor's voice.

ACTOR'S VOICE (O.S.)

"...the old unhappy feeling that
had once pervaded my life...came
back like an unwelcome
visitor...and deeper than ever..."

99 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

99

GEORGE lies in bed, the recording of David Copperfield continues. GEORGE stares, his eyes open.

ACTOR'S VOICE

"...it addressed me like a strain
of sorrowful music...a hopeless
consciousness of all that I had
lost... all that I had ever
loved...and all that remained was
a ruined blank and waste...lying
around me...unbroken to the dark
horizon..."

FADE TO BLACK:

100 EXT. FOSTER PARENT'S HOUSE - DAY

100

A car pulls up outside a small, tidy house in a small, tidy street.

The door open. The SOCIAL WORKERS get out. Followed by MARCUS. Who carries bags. His entire worldly possessions.

Including the framed PHOTOGRAPH of him and his brother.

101 INT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

101

The SOCIAL WORKERS watch as.

MARCUS is introduced to his new caregivers. Professional FOSTER PARENTS. A kind couple in their mid-fifties.

FOSTER MOTHER

Hello Marcus. I'm Angela. And this
is David. We'll be looking after
you for a while.

The SOCIAL WORKERS watch as.

The FOSTER PARENTS ask MARCUS countless questions.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

FOSTER MOTHER

What do you like to eat in the mornings?

Silence

FOSTER MOTHER

We're porridge eaters here. Do you like porridge, Marcus?

Silence

FOSTER MOTHER

Or Cornflakes?

102 INT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

102

MARCUS is shown his room for the first time.

FOSTER FATHER

This is your room.

The FOSTER FATHER smiles.

FOSTER FATHER

Our last boy, Ricky, moved out about a month ago.

Inside: signs of a previous occupant. Posters of rockstars, footballers, pretty girls on the wall, etc.

FOSTER FATHER

Turned 18. Got his first job, as a security guard.

MARCUS looks into the room.

FOSTER FATHER

Go on. It's all yours now.

But MARCUS remains in the doorway. As if paralysed. Staring. Apparently unable or unwilling to enter.

The FOSTER PARENTS exchange looks. Not understanding.

The SOCIAL WORKER watches MARCUS closely. Sees MARCUS is staring at the bed.

The SOCIAL WORKER thinks, then takes the FOSTER FATHER to one side, and whispers into his ear.

103 INT. MARCUS'S ROOM - DAY 103

The SOCIAL WORKER and FOSTER FATHER struggle to move a second bed into MARCUS's bedroom.

104 INT. MARCUS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 104

MARCUS lies in bed, staring at the empty bed across the room. His "brother's" empty bed.

MARCUS stretches out his hand. Hoping to touch something. Feel something.

MARCUS

Good night, Jase.

105 INT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - SAME TIME 105

Standing in the corridor outside, we reveal the FOSTER MOTHER and FOSTER FATHER are listening.

They look at one another. Visibly concerned.

106 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 106

The following day: MARCUS, (now wearing JASON's baseball cap), is in a classroom.

Lost in thought.

A TEACHER ask a question. A sea of hands go up. MARCUS, however, is miles away. Distracted.

107 EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY 107

SCHOOLKIDS play in the yard. Raucous laughter. One CHILD is not taking part. Stands to one side.

It's MARCUS. Wearing the baseball cap. Standing alone. Lost in thought.

The same TEACHER stares. Concerned.

108 INT. SCHOOL - DAY 108

MARCUS stands in a corridor alone. In the classroom, his TEACHER is talking to the SOCIAL WORKERS.

Concerned looks. Lowered voices.

109 INT. CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

109

MARCUS sits in a chair, wearing the baseball cap, opposite a female child psychologist in her 40's.

PSYCHOLOGIST

So - thanks for coming to see me, Marcus.

(surreptitiously
checks her files)

Your care worker referred you to me.

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST

She said you might have been feeling a little sad. Is that right? About your brother?

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST

What was his name.

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST

I've got "Jason" down here. Is that right? Is it Jason?

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST

You know I say this to all my boys and girls, it really helps if we can manage to talk. It makes things a whole lot better.

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST

All right. I tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to shut up. And not say a word. And leave it up to you.

(a beat)

And if you want to sit here in silence, that's fine.

(a beat)

And if there's something you want to say to me...anything at all. That's fine, too.

(a beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

PSYCHOLOGIST (CONT'D)

Or ask me.
(a beat)
Anything at all.

Silence.

110 EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

110

Bells ring. It's lunchtime. Everyone heads for the canteen. One TEACHER calls out to MARCUS.

TEACHER

Lunchtime, Marcus. Coming?

MARCUS shakes his head.

Without offering an explanation, MARCUS head down the corridor in the opposite direction.

The TEACHER watches him go.

111 INT. COMPUTER ROOM - SCHOOL - DAY

111

MARCUS sits in the computer room.

MARCUS stares at the computer screen. Presently, he types into the computer.

"WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DIE?"

Then hits, 'Enter'.

4,140,000 replies in 0.36 Seconds.

Among the results, we pick out.

A number of YOU-TUBE links. MARCUS looks left and right, makes sure no one is watching, then.

Hits on the links. Starts watching.

YOU-TUBE video 1 - a bearded orthodox Islamic teacher, speaking in English with a heavy accent...

ISLAMIC TEACHER

...the Angel of Death comes to you, and will find you - no matter where you are hiding. Even if you are hiding in like a rich man in a Castle, the Angel of God will find you...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

ISLAMIC TEACHER (CONT'D)
 (begins singing in
 Arabic)

YOU-TUBE video 2 - lush music, a deep-voiced, soothing
 voice over...

ANNOUNCER

The Living Church of God presents
 the following video, hosted by Dr.
 Roderick C. Meredith.

DR. MEREDITH

Hello. A number of us are probably
 too frightened to ask, "What
 happens to us when we die?" But
 the good news is, if you believe
 in Christ you have nothing to
 fear...

MARCUS clicks "Stop". He starts typing in a new search.

"TALK TO THE DEAD"

MARCUS hits "Enter". Immediately 4,976,866 answers.

"CAN THE LIVING TALK TO THE DEAD?" "12 WAYS TO TALK TO
 THE DEAD"

MARCUS stares at the findings. He scrolls through the
 websites. Starts reading.

FADE TO BLACK:

112 EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 112

"Whoosh", a high-speed TGV train roars through the
 french countryside.

113 INT. TGV TRAIN - DAY 113

MARIE sits in the train. Several books, (In French), are
 spread out on the table in front of her.

We see their titles: "On Life after Death", "Questions and
 Answers on Death and Dying", "The Five Stages of Dying".

The train heads East, towards snow-capped Alps.

114 EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - SWITZERLAND - DAY 114

MARIE's taxi snakes through gorgeous mountain passes.

115 EXT. HOSPICE - SWITZERLAND - DAY 115

MARIE's taxi pulls up outside a beautiful, modern building high up in the Alps.

MARIE pays. Gets out.

116 INT. HOSPICE - SWITZERLAND - DAY 116

MARIE enters the hospice. Gorgeous surroundings, beautiful views. She walks to a desk.

MARIE

Marie Lelay. To see Dr. Rousseau.

The RECEPTIONIST asks MARIE to take a seat, then picks up a phone, dials.

MARIE walks over to a seating area, then notices a door leading to the 'Hospice'. The door is slightly ajar.

MARIE goes through the door.

117 INT. HOSPICE - CORRIDOR - DAY 117

MARIE walks down a corridor. On either side, private wards. The decor is tasteful. Mountains in the distance.

MARIE walks past the wards, then stops. Something has caught her attention.

A family - FATHER, MOTHER, HUSBAND - is gathered around the bedside of a DYING WOMAN, not much older than MARIE.

Hospital STAFF have tactfully, discreetly given the FAMILY space and privacy.

The DYING WOMAN is pale, her breathing shallow and irregular, evidently moments away from the end.

The family hold the DYING WOMAN, and each other, as her final journey begins.

Presently, the WOMAN's breathing stops. The struggle goes. A look of peace comes over her face.

The FAMILY bursts into tears.

But MARIE stares at the DEAD WOMAN, Profoundly curious. Almost an envy, (if it's possible), in her face.

Then, from behind MARIE, a voice.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

ROUSSEAU
What wouldn't we give to know
exactly where she's gone.

MARIE turns, DR. ROUSSEAU offers her hand, smiling.

ROUSSEAU
Though from what you wrote in your
letter, perhaps you know already.

DR. ROUSSEAU extends her hand.

ROUSSEAU
Elizabeth Rousseau.

MARIE
Marie Lelay.

118 EXT. GARDENS - INSTITUTE - DAY

118

MARIE and DR. ROUSSEAU sit in an office. Through the window, we see well-kept gardens where several dying PATIENTS are being visited by their relatives.

MARIE
...a garden, I think. Tranquil.
Flowers.

ROUSSEAU
A feeling of weightlessness?

MARIE
Yes.

ROUSSEAU
A 360 perspective? No sense of
linear time? Or motion?

MARIE
Yes.

ROUSSEAU
But all-knowing. All sensing.

MARIE
Exactly.

ROUSSEAU
You know, as a scientist, and
atheist, my mind was closed to
such things. Absolutely.

(a beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROUSSEAU (CONT'D)

"Afterlife". "Near death experiences".

ROUSSEAU gets up, walks towards a filing cabinet.

ROUSSEAU

Like everyone else, I thought people saw bright lights, Eden-like gardens and so forth because they were culturally conditioned to do so...

(a beat)

But twenty-five years in a hospice, working with people many of whom were pronounced dead, but who then miraculously survived...

(a beat)

...the accounts of what they actually experienced were so strikingly similar..it couldn't just be coincidence.

(a beat)

Add to that the fact that when they had these experiences they were almost all UNconscious - a state in which my enemies agree the brain cannot create fresh images.

MARIE

So you think I really did experience something?

ROUSSEAU

Oh, yes.

ROUSSEAU stares at MARIE...

ROUSSEAU

I think you experienced death.

MARIE stares: her smile fades.

DR. ROUSSEAU and MARIE are sitting in the doctor's well-appointed office.

ROUSSEAU

When I first came across this...I thought I'd made a huge breakthrough.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROUSSEAU (CONT'D)

Significant evidence that pointed to the existence of consciousness beyond death? What a story. So I went public. In medical journals, in newspapers, on television. But instead of the bouquets and congratulations I was expecting I was subjected to the most vicious and sustained attacks...it was vile, you have no IDEA. But that's what you get if you dare to offer up a view of the afterlife with conflicts with the religious lobby. Imagine, I was called a 'witch'! In the twenty first century!

MARIE

But surely you had proof? Hard, scientific evidence?

ROUSSEAU

Yes. But because much of it was testimony from people, many of whom, my detractors argued, were in highly emotional states or on powerful drugs...they said it was bad science.

ROUSSEAU shrugs...

ROUSSEAU

So that put an end to that. At least in public. Privately, it's been a different story...

ROUSSEAU goes to a safe at the back of her office...

ROUSSEAU

A number of scientists took pity on me, and wrote to me, saying they'd been working confidentially on similar lines. And sent me their findings. About a dozen of them. All over the world. Brilliant work.

ROUSSEAU opens the safe, pulls out several files...

ROUSSEAU

And it's all here.

120 EXT. HOSPICE - SWITZERLAND - DAY

120

ROUSSEAU walks MARIE out, to her waiting TAXI. We notice MARIE is now carrying several packages and box files.

ROUSSEAU

I'm afraid if your journey is anything like mine, it won't be an easy one. It's a lonely furrow to plough.

MARIE turns, and shakes hands with DR ROUSSEAU.

ROUSSEAU

People become quite irrational around this subject. Quite hostile, even.

(a beat)

But the evidence is irrefutable. I tried. Good luck.

ROUSSEAU looks at MARIE.

ROUSSEAU

Maybe someone in your position, with your influence can change that.

ROUSSEAU hands MARIE the box.

121 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

121

MARIE sits at her desk, beside her ROUSSEAU's empty box. Scattered all over the desk are.

The files of DR. ROUSSEAU's research. No sight of Mitterrand books. MARIE stares at one piece of evidence, then another.

Drawings. Graphs. Pieces of film. MARIE is lost in her work. Someone on the verge of a major discovery.

In the corner, a TV plays. Presently, the familiar sounds of a programme's theme music.

MARIE freezes, stops typing, and looks up.

ON TV: MARIE's replacement, an attractive ASIAN FEMALE PRESENTER addresses the camera.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

PRESENTER (IN FRENCH)

Good evening. With the media group Vivendi joining electrical giants VFM in announcing higher than expected quarterly profits, we ask is talk of economic downturn in France premature?

MARIE gets up from her chair, walks closer, stares at the screen.

It's the same beautiful ASIAN PRESENTER that had been flown in at short notice to do the Tsunami story...

MARIE watches the TV for a beat.

The new PRESENTER is anything but a disaster. In fact, she's confident, relaxed and authoritative. And gorgeous.

MARIE watches the TV for a beat, then switches it off.

She goes back to her desk, looks at the research material on her desk.

She looks first at the material for her commissioned book on Mitterrand.

...then at the material from DR ROUSSEAU

MARIE thinks for a beat, then, she turns on her computer, pours herself a glass of wine, and begins writing.

FADE TO BLACK:

122 EXT. FACTORY - CHICAGO - DAY 122

High up over the sprawling automobile factory. A mass of chimney stacks, the abstract beauty of heavy industry.

123 INT. FACTORY - DAY 123

GEORGE is hard at work. Driving his forklift truck.

124 INT. LOCKER-ROOM - FACTORY - DAY 124

LATER: GEORGE is showered and changed. He's finished for the day.

He is on his way out of the factory, when he is called back by the SUPERVISOR.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

SUPERVISOR

Got a second?

125 INT. SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE - DAY

125

The SUPERVISOR shows GEORGE into his office, where one or two members representing management and the union are also sitting...

SUPERVISOR

You're probably aware, there's been a lot of talk flying around recently about cutbacks...

GEORGE

I heard.

SUPERVISOR

Anyway, seems the suits have got together with the unions, and have come up with some packages for anyone willing to consider voluntary redundancy.

GEORGE

Voluntary redundancy..?

SUPERVISOR

If you ask me, the deal is pretty good. You'd get a year's salary in your pocket, with continued health insurance for five years.

GEORGE

I don't understand. What's this got to do with me?

126 EXT. ICE RINK - NIGHT

126

GEORGE and his brother BILLY sit in the bleachers, watching a professional ice-hockey game.

BILLY

It's a fucking scandal
(gestures angrily)
You've worked there three years.
Never take a day off sick, always
on time...

GEORGE

They said it was nothing personal.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Bullshit.

GEORGE

That they're just trying to protect the guys with wives and children.

BILLY

You should go see a lawyer.

GEORGE

I can't afford a lawyer.

BILLY

(calling out)

Shoot you dumb fuck!

BILLY throws up his hands in frustration.

BILLY

Look, if you want me to help find you another job, I will. Just say the word.

(a beat)

But you know what I think you should do.

GEORGE rolls his eyes.

GEORGE

Yes, I do.

BILLY

The website is still there, waiting. It would be different this time.

(a beat)

We could control it!

(shouts out)

Pass! You fucking moron! Pass!

(a beat)

Just one or two appointments a day. We wouldn't give out your phone number. Wouldn't expose you to any media.

(a beat)

We learned the lessons last time.

BILLY passes GEORGE a beer.

BILLY

At least THINK about it?

(CONTINUED)

79.
126 CONTINUED: 126

GEORGE stares ahead. Granite-faced.

127 INT. ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE - NIGHT 127

GEORGE arrives at the cooking class. He watches from the side as other COUPLES are already hard at work, preparing a dish.

As expected, no sign of MELANIE. The TEACHER looks up, smiles sympathetically.

TEACHER
No problem. I'll step in, and partner up with you, George . You and me, let's win this thing, right?

GEORGE
(a brave smile)
Right.

128 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 128

GEORGE sits at home, eating a perfectly prepared dish all on his own.

Suddenly GEORGE sits up, cries out in frustration.

GEORGE
AAAARRRRGGGGGHHHHH!!!!

He throws the perfectly prepared dish against the wall.

FADE TO BLACK:

129 EXT. SOCIAL SERVICE - OFFICE - LONDON - DAY 129

A modest, red-brick Government building in London - a tough, inner city neighbourhood.

130 INT. SOCIAL SERVICE - OFFICE - LONDON - DAY 130

'Rrrriinnng,' the phone rings. The SOCIAL WORKER answers:

SOCIAL WORKER
Hello?

FOSTER FATHER
Clare? It's Dennis...I think you should come over...

131 INT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY 131

The SOCIAL WORKER examines an empty biscuit tin.

SOCIAL WORKER
How much was there?

FOSTER FATHER
About two hundred pounds.

FOSTER MOTHER
We've tried calling the school. He never got there.

SOCIAL WORKER
Okay, let me know if he comes back. I don't want to involve the police at this stage, that's really a last resort...And you've no idea where he might have gone?

Both shake their heads.

132 EXT. A SQUARE IN CENTRAL LONDON - DAY 132

MARCUS stands outside a grand, nineteenth-century building in central London.

A plaque beside the door announces: COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC STUDIES. MARCUS pushes open the door and enters.

133 INT. RECEPTION - COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC STUDIES - DAY 133

MARCUS enters the college foyer. He notices a row of leaflets and flyers for various MEDIUMS, CLAIRVOYANTS and PSYCHICS. He notices one with the words "TALK TO THE DEAD" written large.

Behind him, a RECEPTIONIST is talking to a VISITOR.

RECEPTIONIST
I'm afraid our Senior Sensitive, Mr. Hewitt, is very busy. The earliest he could see you is six weeks time.

MARCUS stands nearby, takes several leaflets.

VISITOR
Oh dear.

(CONTINUED)

RECEPTIONIST

Mrs. Joyce our Junior Sensitive is doing a public reading here tonight if you're interested, in the lecture theater.

VISITOR

Alright, I'll try my luck.

The VISITOR goes. The RECEPTIONIST notices Marcus.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

MARCUS shakes his head. He grabs some more leaflets, and goes.

134 INT. TERRACED HOUSE - NORTH LONDON - DAY

134

A MAN in his late 40's, bearded, knit sweater, is seated in a chair, eyes closed.

CHANNELLER

Okay, what I'm doing now, I'm closing my eyes and opening my channels to the spirit world. And as I go into a trance, my spirit guide will speak to you through me.

We pull back to reveal MARCUS, sitting opposite. The CHANNELLER starts to sway, then speaks in a deep voice:

CHANNELLER

Who summons me from the spirit world?

A long pause. The MAN opens one eye.

CHANNELLER

Say your name.

MARCUS

Marcus.

The CHANNELLER closes his eye again.

CHANNELLER

Welcome Marcus, my name is Yoshi...

135 INT. OFFICE - DAY

135

We are in what looks like a doctor's surgery, spotless.

A MAN with greying hair is tinkering with a sophisticated looking tape recorder sitting on a desk, and a microphone that hangs from the ceiling. MARCUS watches, fascinated.

MAN

What I'm doing is I'm adjusting the levels of the microphone. Do you do physics at school?

MARCUS nods.

MAN

Then you'll know that all matter vibrates at various speed. But the spirit world operates at levels far higher, hence we cannot hear them with normal hearing. We need an omnidirectional, supercardoid condenser mike...

The MAN makes some final adjustments to a dramatic-looking piece of equipment.

MAN

Right, we're ready.

He presses "record" on the machine. The wheels begin turning.

MAN

Are you there..?
(checks notes)
...Jason? Your
brother...Marcus...is here...Is
there a message for him?

A long silence. MARCUS strains to listen. Nothing but tape hiss. OVER THIS:

WOMAN'S VOICE

Concentrate...and look deep into the mirrors.

136 INT. DARKENED ROOM - SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

136

A middle-aged LADY with blue-rinsed hair and horn-rimmed glasses stands beside MARCUS in a candle-lit room full of reflective glass...

(CONTINUED)

MIDDLE-AGED LADY

It was the ancient Greeks who first discovered it. 'Psychomanteum' they called it. The reflective surface being a conduit to the afterlife. Nowadays we call it "mirror gazing."

She turns to MARCUS. His heart is beating fast.

MIDDLE-AGED LADY

You might not be able to speak to him...but you'll see him...If you really want to, that is.

MARCUS stares hard at the mirrors, trying to see deeper, searching for something.

MIDDLE-AGED LADY

Did you see him?

MARCUS stares. Sees nothing but his own reflection

MARCUS

No.

137 INT. LECTURE THEATRE - COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC STUDIES - 137
EVENING

Warm applause from the audience as MRS JOYCE walks on stage. She is a plump, middle-aged woman. Cheap, sensible shoes.

MRS JOYCE

Thank you for that welcome, my name is Ellen Joyce, and I'm the Senior Sensitive here at the London College of Psychic Studies...

We see MARCUS in the audience.

138 INT. LECTURE THEATRE - LATER 138

The session is well underway.

MRS JOYCE

...she says she was there when you graduated...she was very proud.

The MAN's eyes fill with tears.

(CONTINUED)

MRS JOYCE

Because she never had the chance
to go to college herself?

WOMAN

No.

MRS JOYCE

She wishes she'd had the chance
like you. She wants you to keep it
up.

MAN

I will, thank you.

There's a round of applause.

MRS JOYCE takes a deep breath, closes her eyes. After a
moment she opens her eyes, looks round the room.

MRS JOYCE

I'm getting a strong feeling over
this side of the room. Someone
whose name starts with a "J".

There's a flash of recognition in MARCUS's face.

MRS JOYCE

Does the letter "J" mean anything
to anyone?...Anyone?

Hesitantly, MARCUS raises his hand.

MRS JOYCE

Don't be shy. Tell us your name,
please?

MARCUS

Marcus.

MRS JOYCE

Marcus...Stand up so we can see
you.

MARCUS stands.

MRS JOYCE

Marcus you've lost someone
recently. Was it someone close to
you?

MARCUS nods.

(CONTINUED)

MRS JOYCE

He's telling me his name. It's
Joe, or Jack.

MARCUS

Jason.

MRS JOYCE

Jason. That's right. He was very
close to you, wasn't he?

MARCUS nods.

MRS JOYCE

Part of your family?

MARCUS nods.

MRS JOYCE

Is it your Dad?

MARCUS stares. A ripple of sympathy in the room.

MRS JOYCE

I'm getting a feeling, all over my
body. In my bones. An
illness...Like cancer. Did your
Daddy die of cancer, Marcus.

MARCUS still can't speak.

MRS JOYCE

Poor child, you probably don't
know what cancer is. Well daddy
says please don't be sad, and to
look after mummy for him, will you
do that for him?

(before MARCUS can
answer)

Give him a round of applause
ladies and gentlemen.

The audience applauds. MARCUS remains standing.

The FOSTER FATHER is on the phone to the social worker,
the FOSTER MOTHER by his side.

FOSTER FATHER

No, still no sign...I think we
might have to call in the
police...

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED:

139

The FOSTER FATHER looks up, then sees MARCUS approaching the front door.

FOSTER FATHER
(into the phone)
Hold on, he's here...I'll call you
right back.

He hangs up the phone. MARCUS opens the door and walks in. Looks at them both.

MARCUS
I'm sorry.

And without another word he turns and leaves the room. The FOSTER FATHER is about to go after him to admonish him, but the FOSTER MOTHER catches his arm.

FOSTER MOTHER
Leave him be...

140 INT. MARCUS'S ROOM - NIGHT

140

MARCUS is in his room. He sits at his computer, thinks - then opens a search engine, and types.

"GENUINE ABILITY TO TALK TO THE DEAD."

He hits 'enter'.

A host of sites pop up. MARCUS begins to sift through. Then one catches his eye.

'GEORGE LONEGAN'.

He hits enter. Up comes GEORGE's website advertising his unique talent, along with dozens of 'astonished' and 'awestruck' testimonials.

MARCUS stares. He sees a phone number...

MARCUS prints out the home-page, and takes a pen. He circles the telephone number for George Lonagan.

141 EXT. STREET - DAY

141

The following day: MARCUS is in an internet cafe/call shop, on the way to his school...

He dials the number on his hand. We hear a long distance tone, then an automated voice cuts in.

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED:

141

AUTOMATED VOICE

This number is no longer in service. Please check the number you have dialed and try again

MARCUS checks, then redials...

AUTOMATED VOICE

This number is no longer in service. Please check the number you have dialed and try again.

MARCUS stares. Visibly disappointed. Then hangs up.

142 EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAY

142

MARCUS walks out of the internet cafe/call-shop. He walks out onto the street, then disappears down into the underground station on his way to school.

143 INT. UNDERGROUND STATION - DAY

143

MARCUS joins the other PASSENGERS and takes the escalator down, down, deep into the underground.

144 INT. UNDERGROUND STATION - DAY

144

MARCUS walks onto a platform packed with morning newspaper-reading, coffee-drinking COMMUTERS on their way to work.

A Tube train roars in. Amid a cacophony of loudspeaker announcements, doors open, and people struggle to get on.

MARCUS pushes towards the carriage, but suddenly, in the throng, MARCUS is jolted by some unseen person, and.

JASON's baseball cap is knocked off his head...

The cap falls to the floor, and is in danger of being trampled by other PASSENGERS.

MARCUS falls to his knees and frantically reaches for the cap, between legs...

PASSENGERS shout at MARCUS, "Hey!" And step over him to get onto the train.

But MARCUS is not deterred. He gets his hands on the cap, and gets to his feet.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

145

It's July 7th 2005.

FADE TO BLACK:

146 EXT. PARIS SKYLINE - DAY

146

High over the unmistakable skyline of Paris. Late Autumn.

The same smart publishing house as before.

147 INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - DAY

147

MARIE waits in the reception area. Through a glass wall, in a neighboring office, MARIE notices...

Half-a-dozen STAFF members huddled around a television. Talking in a hushed, concerned voices.

ON TV: rolling-news footage from London. Breaking News as the British capital is apparently under attack. Six terrorist bombs having gone off in a co-ordinated attack.

MARIE watches as her replacement news ANCHOR, (Jasmine), is reporting from the studio in Paris...

JASMINE (ON TV/IN FRENCH)

...an apparently co-ordinated attack, the bombs going off at the height of the morning rush hour...

A SECRETARY emerges. Visibly shaken.

SECRETARY (IN FRENCH)

Sorry, we're running a little late. Everyone's been distracted by this.

The SECRETARY indicates the office.

SECRETARY (IN FRENCH)

Would you like to come in?

She leads MARIE into the conference room. In the background, the television continues to play.

148 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

148

Sitting round the table: the same group of EXECUTIVES and EDITORS as before. MARIE sits in the vacant chair at the end of the table.

(CONTINUED)

EXECUTIVE

Marie, I have to be honest, I'm a little confused. I was under the impression we'd commissioned a book about the life and times of Francois Mitterrand. Instead you give us the first three chapters of -
(reading the manuscript title)
"Hereafter: A Conspiracy of Silence."

MARIE

I realize it's not what you were expecting.
(a beat)
But I remember you once said there weren't enough surprises in publishing anymore.

EXECUTIVE

Well, this certainly was a surprise.

Silence.

EXECUTIVE

...I'm not sure where to begin.

MARIE

Did you at least think it was INTERESTING?

EXECUTIVE

Of course, it's interesting -- you've always had a great nose for a story, but the fact is we are a political publishing house...

MARIE

This is a political story...

EXECUTIVE

...and this kind of material, however fascinating, is a specialist market...

MARIE

Why? Why does no one want to deal with this? What is everyone so afraid of?

People in the room avert their eyes in embarrassment.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

This is hard, scientific evidence.

EXECUTIVE

Marie..

MARIE

...from well-known scientists
forced to work in secret, a Nobel
Prize winner, hounded by the
organized religious lobby. I
think that's something worth
writing about, don't you?

(a beat)

More than some philandering,
embezzling old politician.

EXECUTIVE

Yes, but any book like that would
almost certainly have to be
written in English for the
American market.

MARIE

It happened to ME, Michel. I saw
it myself...where we're
going...what we'll experience.
Each and every one of us.

(a beat)

Doesn't that INTEREST you?

Silence. People in the room clear their throats.

EXECUTIVE

We commissioned a book on the life
and times of Francois Mitterrand.
Now why don't we discuss you
starting to write that, or me
getting my money back.

MARIE tails off. Stares out of the window.

Where her poster had hung, now a completely different
poster hangs.

MARIE and DIDIER sit opposite one another.

MARIE

It was so humiliating. They
looked at me as if I'd lost my
mind.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARIE (CONT'D)

(a beat)

These are the same people that six months ago were on their knees, wanting anything. ANYTHING by the great Marie Lelay.

(a beat)

You'd better give me my job back, Didi. There's a limit to how much humiliation I can take. I noticed today, even my posters have been taken down.

(a beat)

Why didn't you tell me?

A silence. DIDIER averts his eyes..

DIDIER

What about your book?

MARIE

I'll finish that in my spare time.

(a dismissive wave)

It's causing me far too much trouble as it is.

MARIE notices DIDIER's expression.

MARIE

What's the matter?

DIDIER

Look...getting your job back...might not be as easy as you think.

MARIE

Why? It was only a temporary break. And done on YOUR advice.

DIDIER

I know...but what I...what WE could never have foreseen is...that you talking in public about...being associated with that kind of thing would make it difficult...or impossible...for Someone in your position...to Be taken seriously...

MARIE stares...

MARIE

But I never WANTED to write it. It was YOUR idea...

(CONTINUED)

DIDIER

It was my idea you should write about Francois Mitterrand.

MARIE

So what are you saying?

DIDIER

I'm saying take some more time...finish this book...get it out of your system...then come back...I'm sure things will be different...

MARIE stares, horrified.

MARIE

It's the girl, isn't it? My replacement?

DIDIER

C'mon...

MARIE

I've watched her a couple of times. She's good.

DIDIER

Not as good as you.

MARIE

You sleeping with her?

DIDIER

What? How can you say such a thing?

MARIE

You always told me to ask the tough questions.

DIDIER is silent. MARIE stares.

MARIE

Oh, my God...you ARE.

MARIE stares. A knife in her heart. She suddenly feels sick. She gestures to the WAITER to bring the bill.

MARIE

It's funny. Who'd have thought it. A few months ago I was successful. Rich. And a poster-child for a certain way of life. I was happy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

MARIE (CONT'D)

And fulfilled.
(a beat)
By my work. By you.

MARIE knocks back her brandy.

MARIE

You know all this only came about
because you couldn't be bothered
to buy your children's presents?

DIDIER looks up.

DIDIER

I don't understand.

MARIE

Doesn't matter.

MARIE looks up, gestures to the WAITER. Asks for the
bill. She walks out, ignoring the other diners who
recognize her, and call out to say hello...

OVER THIS: the sound of a ringing phone.

150 INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

150

MARIE comes back into her apartment, to find the
telephone ringing. She goes over to it, answers it.

MARIE

Hello?

At the other end, the same publishing EXECUTIVE from the
earlier scene, (we intercut as necessary).

EXECUTIVE

Marie? It's Michel. Listen, I feel
terrible about our meeting earlier
today. This book is clearly very
important to you.

(a beat)

I think everyone was a little
thrown, you know? By events in
London.

(shudders privately)

Anyway, I made a few calls, and
I've got the name of a couple of
publishers that I think would be
interested. One American, one
English...

(a beat)

Have you got a pen?

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED: 95.
150
MARIE scrambles to find a pen and paper.
MARIE
Yes. Go ahead.

151 INT. POST OFFICE - DAY 151
MARIE stands at a post office counter with two wrapped parcels, (containing copies of her book).
She hands them over the COUNTER. Then watches as the parcels are put into large sacks, and disappear.
FADE TO BLACK

152 EXT. OFFICES - CHICAGO - DAY 152
A low rise office building in a Chicago suburb. OVER THIS: the sound of a voice.
BILLY (V/O)
Anyways, I thought we could use this as a group reading room.

153 INT. OFFICES - CHICAGO - DAY 153
BILLY shows GEORGE through the offices of "GEORGE LONEGAN Inc". He shows him an empty room with chairs in it.
GEORGE
I don't understand. What 'groups?'
BILLY
...where I thought you could go larger groups , up to twenty people at a time. It'd mean they could pay lower rates.
(gestures)
Whatever. Just an idea.
BILLY leads GEORGE down a corridor...
BILLY
Anyway, this would be your own private consulting room.
GEORGE peers inside.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

And right next door, would be my room. From where I'd take care of everything.

(a beat)

Make sure you have nothing to worry about.

GEORGE

I don't understand. What about the rest of your business?

BILLY

Of course, I'd have to give them up. Not right way, of course. But when things take off...

GEORGE stares. Like a man condemned.

BILLY

Now let's get you home, and get you some rest. First day tomorrow, and you have three appointments already...

154 INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

154

GEORGE sits alone in his apartment eating a meal for one.

We notice it is the same meal he learned to cook with MELANIE.

GEORGE chews. Thinking. What kind of life is this?

155 EXT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

155

The following morning:

BILLY's car pulls up. BILLY gets out, whistling, in a sharp suit. He crosses to the door and rings GEORGE's buzzer. He waits. No reply. Presses it again. Still no reply.

GEORGE's neighbor opens her window.

NEIGHBOR

'You Billy Lonagan?

BILLY

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED:

155

NEIGHBOR

Before he went, your brother asked
me to give you this?

She hands BILLY a letter. BILLY stares quizzically.

BILLY

'Went?' Went where..?

...then he opens the letter. Starts reading. Over this:
we hear GEORGE's voice...

GEORGE (V.O.)

Dear Billy...

156 EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

156

A taxi passes under a sign for the 'Airport'...

GEORGE (V.O.)

I'm sorry...I guess there's
nothing I'll ever be able to say
to persuade you...

157 INT. TAXI - DAY

157

Inside the taxi: GEORGE is the passenger, staring out of
the window.

GEORGE (V.O.)

...that what I have isn't a gift,
but a curse...

158 INT. AIRPORT - DAY

158

A packed airport terminal. GEORGE walks through, carrying
his bags.

GEORGE

I know you feel what I have comes
with a duty to help others...

159 INT. AIRPORT - DAY

159

GEORGE stands in line to check in.

GEORGE (V.O.)

But right now the person I most
need to help is myself...

160 EXT. RUNWAY - DAY 160

A 747 roars down the runway. Pulls up into the sky.

GEORGE (V.O.)
So I've decided to take some time
out.

161 INT. AIRPLANE - DAY 161

GEORGE is cramped in an aisle seat. But comfort is no matter. There's a contentment to him we've not seen before.

GEORGE (V.O.)
I don't know what the future will
bring, or when I'll be back. So,
don't wait up, so to speak.

GEORGE puts his book down. Starts sleeping.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Love to Jenni and the kids
(a beat)
Your baby brother, George.

162 EXT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - BLOCK - SAME TIME 162

BILLY finishes reading the letter, His smile fades.

BILLY
Godammit...

'Crash', BILLY kicks his car. The alarm goes off.

FADE TO BLACK:

163 EXT. LONDON - DAY 163

London's skyline, sprawling into the horizon.

164 EXT. BOROUGH COUNCIL - LONDON - DAY 164

The local council HQ: home to the social services in Marcus's inner city neighborhood.

165 INT. SOCIAL SERVICE OFFICES - DAY

165

The FOSTER PARENTS talk opposite the SOCIAL WORKERS in a meeting. Talking in low voices. Visibly concerned.

SOCIAL WORKER

So, how's it going?

FOSTER FATHER

Not good. The fact is...it's been almost a year and he's still not talking...not communicating at all...

FOSTER MOTHER

His attendance at school is terrible. When he DOES go, his teachers all say they can't reach him.

FOSTER FATHER

We've had challenging cases in the past, but this is a whole new level of...

SOCIAL WORKER

Of what..?

FOSTER FATHER

(shrugs)
...damage, I suppose.

166 INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICES - CORRIDOR - DAY

166

MARCUS is standing outside the office. He can hear the voices from inside come through the door.

SOCIAL WORKER

What about the mother? Would it help if we arranged a meeting in the day centre she's attending?

FOSTER FATHER

We could try. But I doubt it.

FOSTER MOTHER

Our understanding is the twin that died, Jason..was very much the star. Mother's favorite. If he'd have been the one who survived it might have been a different story.

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED:

FOSTER FATHER

And you know yourself the recovery rates in substance abuse cases like this.

SOCIAL WORKER

Yes. Very low.

MARCUS's face: having overheard this, he turns, and walks off down the corridor outside.

167 INT. SOCIAL SERVICE OFFICES - DAY

167

The SOCIAL WORKERS wrap up the meeting.

SOCIAL WORKER

So? What's the best way forward? Are you all right for a little bit longer?

FOSTER MOTHER

Yes. But not too long, please. We're running out of ideas. And it's taking it's toll.

FOSTER FATHER

We're taking him to meet our previous child Ricky today. Who knows? Maybe one kid talking to another.

SOCIAL WORKER

Let's hope so. Review in three months time? If no progress, then we'll have to start thinking about a care home.

Nods all round. People get to their feet.

CUT TO:

168 EXT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - LONDON - DAY

168

A well-appointed hotel, in the heart of the city.

169 INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - LONDON - SAME TIME

169

MARIE is in her London hotel-room, getting dressed. Smartly. OVER THIS: we hear a phone-call. An AMERICAN voice.

(CONTINUED)

ARONSON (O.S.)
Marie Lelay?

MARIE (O.S.)
Yes..?

ARONSON (O.S.)
This is Richard Aronson of
Aquarius Books in Sante Fe,
California.

MARIE (O.S.)
Excuse me?

ARONSON (O.S.)
Aquarius Books in Santa Fe
California. A few months ago you
sent us your book.

(a beat)
I'm just ringing to say now much
we like it. I'm sorry its taken so
long. But we loved it. And would
like to publish it.

MARIE (O.S.)
Really?

ARONSON (O.S.)
In fact, we'd like to print it in
time for a Book Fair that takes
place in London in the Spring.
You're based in Paris?

MARIE (O.S.)
Yes.

ARONSON
So if we were to ask, going to
London wouldn't be inconvenient?

MARIE (O.S.)
No. Not at all.

ARONSON (O.S.)
Because it occurs to me that would
be a good opportunity to do some
publicity. Maybe a reading. It's
an incredible story...

MARIE bends down, and picks up a book. Her book. Newly
published. MARIE puts it in her bag...checks her
appearance in the mirror, and goes.

CUT TO:

170 EXT. DOUGHTY STREET - LONDON - DAY 170

A Georgian terraced house in central London. A TOUR GROUP comes to rest outside.

TOUR GUIDE (V.O.)

...and here we are, 48 Doughty street, Charles Dickens' home in London where he lived with his wife Catherine and their children.

(look up)

Anyone know how many children?

Among the TOUR GUIDE we pick out GEORGE, who stares up at the house in wonder. He speaks under his breath, (no one hears).

GEORGE

Ten.

TOUR GUIDE

Ten! Isn't that incredible? He had ten children!

171 INT. 48 DOUGHTY STREET - LONDON - DAY 171

The TOUR GROUP enters the house.

TOUR GUIDE

Right, here we are in the main hallway. This is the view that would have greeted the author as he walked in each time. Everything has been preserved exactly as it was...

172 INT. 48 DOUGHTY STREET - LONDON STUDY - DAY 172

The TOUR GROUP enters the study.

TOUR GUIDE

...and here we are in the study. And there the thing I expect most of you have come to see. Dickens's desk, where he wrote most of his books.

GEORGE's face, as if in trance, he walks toward the desk.

(CONTINUED)

TOUR GUIDE

Beside the desk are several illustrations for 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood', the novel Dickens was writing at the time of his death.

GEORGE moves closer, stretches out, almost touches the desk.

TOUR GUIDE

Beside them, a painting loved by Dickens's fans. Anyone know it's name?

GEORGE quietly, under his breath. No one hears.

GEORGE

"Dickens' Dream".

TOUR GUIDE

"Dickens' Dream". It shows the author asleep at his desk with characters from his novels floating in the air around him...

GEORGE looks at the pictures of DICKENS - then stops.

ON CANVAS: a painting of a MAN asleep, surrounded (haunted?) by floating, mysterious characters that inhabit his consciousness.

GEORGE's face: a moment of connection between them.

The TOUR is over. GEORGE is on his way out, when he sees something, then STOPS.

A poster on the wall with a FAMOUS ACTOR advertising a forthcoming reading to publicize the AUDIO CD for "LITTLE DORRITT". GEORGE takes a closer look...

GEORGE

May I?

The TOUR GUIDE nods.

TOUR GUIDE

Of course. Help yourself.

GEORGE looks at the date...

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED:

173

GEORGE
What's the date today?

TOUR GUIDE
14th.

GEORGE looks at the date on the poster. "14th".

CUT TO:

174 INT. TUBE STATION - LONDON - DAY

174

MARCUS stands on the platform with his FOSTER PARENTS. With a deafening roar, the TRAIN emerges from the darkness and enters the station.

FOSTER MOTHER
I'm sure you'll like Ricky. He was about your age when he first came to us, and just as shy. Now he's all grown up, with a job and his own flat...

MARCUS and his FOSTER PARENTS board the train.

175 EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAY

175

MARCUS and his FOSTER PARENTS cross the road toward a large convention centre, passing under a billboard: "45th LONDON INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR, MARCH 12th - 21st".

176 INT. CONVENTION CENTRE - LOBBY - DAY

176

A young, uniformed SECURITY GUARD approaches them. This is RICKY. He embraces the FOSTER PARENTS confidently.

FOSTER MOTHER
Well, look at you! I wouldn't have recognized you!

FOSTER FATHER
Not going to arrest us, are you?

RICKY
Not if you behave yourself.

MARCUS watches their easy, intimate, loving banter.

FOSTER MOTHER
Marcus, this is Ricky.

(CONTINUED)

RICKY

All right.

He offers his hand. MARCUS walks past. RICKY and the FOSTER FATHER exchange looks, then spar playfully as they go inside.

177 INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - DAY

177

RICKY leads them toward a cafe stall.

RICKY

Fancy a coffee first?

FOSTER FATHER

That's a good idea...Marcus?

MARCUS shrugs.

MARCUS

Can't I just look around?

The FOSTER PARENTS exchange looks. The FOSTER MOTHER gives a little nod to her husband.

FOSTER FATHER

All right, but meet us back here
in an hour.

MARCUS nods. He wanders off into the crowds. The FOSTER MUM stares after MARCUS, concerned.

FOSTER MOTHER

It's been nearly a year and he
hardly talks to us.

RICKY

Neither did I, remember?

FOSTER MOTHER

But this one's different. Not like
you.

RICKY smiles, puts his arm around her in encouragement, then leads her to a cafe.

RICKY

C'mon, let's get that coffee.

178 INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - ELSEWHERE - DAY

178

MARCUS, meanwhile, skulks along past one stall after another.

Authors and sales people selling books of all shapes and sizes on every subject under the sun - fly-fishing, weight loss, political thrillers, children's books, biographies.

MARCUS drifts through the stalls, finding nothing of particular interest. He passes a stall where a well-known Shakespearean ACTOR, a knight of stage and screen.

...is doing a reading to promote an audio CD.

ACTOR

"...Little Dorrit received a call that same evening from Mr Plornish who, having intimated he wished to speak to her privately through a series of noticeable coughs..."

MARCUS walks past the stall. But our CAMERA stays.

179 INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - ELSEWHERE - DAY

179

The ACTOR is reading to a rapt audience.

ACTOR

"...obtained an audience with her on the common staircase outside the door..."

His voice is soothing and seductive. And immediately familiar to us. It's the same actor who's readings GEORGE listened to.

ACTOR

"There's been a lady at our place today, Miss Dorrit, wishing to know whether you could visit her tomorrow morning..."

The reading finishes.

And there, among the CROWDS applauding, is GEORGE himself. Staring in awe. A child in the presence of his hero.

(CONTINUED)

The ACTOR begins singing copies of the CD. Among the waiting CROWDS, is GEORGE, who reaches the front of the queue and hands his copy of the CD to the ACTOR to be signed.

ACTOR

To..?

GEORGE

George. George Lonegan.

To the ACTOR obliges.

GEORGE

It's really..a great honor. I'm a fan. A big fan. You have no idea.

The ACTOR hears George's accent.

ACTOR

You're a long way from home.

GEORGE

Yes.

ACTOR

Thank you. Good luck.

The ACTOR moves on to other fans. GEORGE smiles to himself, 'wow', and moves on.

GEORGE wanders through the stalls, still smiling to himself, staring at his CD.

He drifts down one aisle, then another. He passes a stall where a reading is taking place. He hears a WOMAN's voice.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

"...whether what I saw was a genuine glimpse of the afterlife of just a concussed fantasy, I'll probably never know..."

GEORGE freezes, and turns.

MARIE

"...I arrive at the end of my journey with as many questions as I started with..."

On a podium for a PUBLISHING HOUSE, he sees a beautiful FRENCH WOMAN (40), on stage, reading from her book in English.

(CONTINUED)

As she continues reading, GEORGE moves closer through the crowd, intrigued.

MARIE

"...I certainly never imagined I would be exposed to THAT kind of of prejudice and closed-mindedness..."

GEORGE moves closer. Riveted by what's he's hearing, but also, quite obviously entranced by MARIE.

MARIE

"...we obviously still have a long way to go before we will be able to deal with death and what follows in anything approaching a sensible fashion..."

When suddenly, from behind him, a VOICE.

VOICE

Wait a minute...

GEORGE stops, turns. And finds himself confronted by a twelve year-old boy with intense, staring eyes...MARCUS.

MARCUS

I recognize you...

GEORGE stares...

MARCUS

You're that psychic.

GEORGE

I'm sorry, you're mistaken.

GEORGE tries to give MARCUS the slip, but he follows.

MARCUS

Yes, you are.

GEORGE smiles uncomfortably, pushes through CROWDS.

MARCUS

You're George Lonagan...

GEORGE tries to lose MARCUS, irritated to be missing MARIE, who is wrapping up her reading.

180 INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - DAY 180

GEORGE weaves between the stalls, lengthening his stride, trying to lose MARCUS. But the determined twelve-year-old is hard to shrug off.

MARCUS keeps GEORGE in his sights.

181 INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - DAY 181

GEORGE weaves through CROWDS, removes his jacket so as not to be so easily recognizable.

SHOOTING FROM ABOVE: GEORGE performs an elaborate figure eight through the exhibition centre, bobbing through CROWDS.

Finally, he finds his way back to the stall where the FRENCH WOMAN was reading. The woman who had made such an impression on him.

But by the time GEORGE pushes through the CROWD to reach her.

MARIE has gone. In her place: a bearded MAN is reading from his book about the power of Healing Hands.

GEORGE's heart sinks. Frustrated. He turns to some people who are listening.

GEORGE

The woman that was reading here?
The French woman? You have any
idea where she went?

But the PEOPLE shrug, 'No.' GEORGE stands on tiptoe, cranes his neck, looking for MARIE in the crowds.

But no sign.

GEORGE curses, "Damn", visibly frustrated, then goes up to the stall, and buys one of MARIE's books.

GEORGE looks up to see MARCUS has found him again, and is heading toward him.

GEORGE's eyes close. He takes the book, then goes right up to the BOY.

GEORGE

What is it? What do you want from
me?

(CONTINUED)

181 CONTINUED:

181

MARCUS opens his mouth, is about to reply.

GEORGE

If it's a reading...I've got bad news. I don't DO that anymore.

GEORGE stares at MARCUS.

GEORGE

Now leave me alone.

GEORGE turns, and walks off. MARCUS watches him go.

182 EXT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - DAY

182

GEORGE emerges from the exhibition centre, onto the street. He looks behind.

No sign of MARCUS.

GEORGE breathes out, 'Thank God'. That did it. That shook him off. GEORGE heads off down the street.

But our camera remains still. And presently, weaving through the CROWDS, at a distance...

...we see MARCUS.

183 INT. CAB - DAY

183

GEORGE hails a cab. Gets in.

GEORGE

Lancaster Hotel, please.

The cab moves off. George climbs in. Relaxes. But soon the cab stops moving.

It's a traffic jam.

GEORGE

It's all right, I'll walk.

He hands the DRIVER some money and gets out.

GEORGE gets out, then stops in his tracks. In the distance, he sees MARCUS is walking along the pavement. Catching up fast.

GEORGE starts walking. Trying to lose MARCUS.

184 EXT. STREETS OF LONDON - DAY 184

MARCUS walks down street after street. GEORGE quickens his stride. MARCUS starts to run, catching him up.

Eventually, GEORGE reaches his hotel and turns inside.

185 INT. HOTEL - DAY 185

GEORGE enters his hotel. He hastens through the lobby. Jumps into the elevators. The doors close.

MARCUS enters through revolving doors. Walks through the lobby. He searches for GEORGE, but he's gone.

MARCUS is forced to give up. Frustrated.

186 INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY 186

GEORGE enters his room. Locks the door. Safe. He crosses to the window, pulls back the curtains and looks:

Way down below: MARCUS is waiting across the street. GEORGE thinks for a moment, then changes his mind.

GEORGE lets the curtain drop.

187 INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER 187

GEORGE has a shower. He emerges from the bathroom, drying his hair. He orders room service.

GEORGE crosses to the window. Looks out. MARCUS is still there. Shivering.

188 INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER 188

GEORGE sits in his room, eating his lunch. Channel-flicking on TV. Watching the news.

GEORGE finishes eating.

GEORGE goes to the window. Pulls back the curtains. MARCUS is still there.

GEORGE sighs, a long, deep sigh.

189 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HOTEL - EVENING 189

MARCUS waits, shivering. GEORGE emerges from the hotel, crosses the road to him, They look at each other in silence.

GEORGE
We'd better get you inside.

GEORGE heads back across the road. MARCUS follows.

190 INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - EVENING 190

MARCUS eats hungrily. GEORGE watches him.

GEORGE
How did you recognize me? From the website?

MARCUS nods. Carries on eating.

GEORGE
Always said that photo was a mistake.

191 INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING 191

GEORGE enters, followed by MARCUS.

GEORGE
You'd better sit down.

MARCUS sits on the couch. Then notices MARIE's book on the table.

GEORGE takes a seat opposite him, takes a deep breath, then.

GEORGE
OK, a few ground rules before we start.

MARCUS
I'm sorry about the woman.

GEORGE
What woman?

MARCUS
The woman at the book fair.

MARCUS indicates MARIE's book.

(CONTINUED)

MARCUS

I could tell, you liked her.

GEORGE looks at the book.

GEORGE

No, I didn't.

MARCUS

Yes, you did. So I'm sorry. For taking you away.

GEORGE

I don't know WHAT you're talking about.

GEORGE's face: a flicker behind the eyes.

GEORGE

Now...let's do this.

GEORGE sits in a chair opposite MARCUS.

GEORGE

OK, I'm going to hold your hands for a minute, it seems to help, then I'll let go. Don't worry..I won't be closing my eyes, or going into any trace.

GEORGE sits in a chair opposite MARCUS.

GEORGE

OK, I'm going to hold your hands just for a minute, to get a connection, then I'll let go.

GEORGE takes MARCUS's hands. Holds them. He concentrates. A flicker of pain behind the eyes, then...

GEORGE lets go of MARCUS's hands.

GEORGE

Someone close to you has passed?

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

A male.

MARCUS

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

He was young when he died.

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

Was this person your brother?

MARCUS nods.

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

Your older brother.

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

But not by much, he says.

GEORGE looks up. Tails off..

GEORGE

...by just a few minutes.

GEORGE looks at MARCUS.

MARCUS averts his eyes.

GEORGE suddenly realizes what he's dealing with.

His eyes fill with compassion...

GEORGE

Sorry, kid.

GEORGE instinctively stretches out his hand. Then GEORGE stops himself, closes his eyes.

GEORGE

I need to concentrate. This guy talks a lot. And fast.

MARCUS smiles, recognizing Jason. Nods.

GEORGE

He says there's so much he wants to tell you. He's saying you wouldn't believe how it is.

(a beat)

How you can be all things.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(a beat)

And all at once.

(a beat)

And the weightlessness.

(a beat)

He says it's cool.

Tears appear on MARCUS's cheeks.

GEORGE

He's laughing now. He has a funny laugh.

MARCUS nods.

GEORGE

He says how you always looked up to him, relied on him to make the decision. And how you sometimes used that as an excuse?

MARCUS nods.

GEORGE

He says you can't do that any more. Now you're on your own.

MARCUS stares. Then GEORGE continues.

GEORGE

Now he's saying something about a hat? A cap?

MARCUS looks down at JASON's baseball cap...

GEORGE

He's telling you not to wear it anymore. Because it was his.

MARCUS stares in disbelief. Only JASON could have known that.

GEORGE

Which is why he knocked it off your head that day.

GEORGE looks at MARCUS.

GEORGE

Do you know what he's talking about?

MARCUS nods. Tears welling.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

He says "Good job he did", too.

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

And that's the last time he's
looking after you.

GEORGE's eyes flicker.

GEORGE

I'm sorry. I'm losing him. He's
going now.

MARCUS

No, Jase. Don't go..!

MARCUS's shoulders shake violently

GEORGE

...he says...

...but in the way he says it, the look on his face, we
realize JASON has already gone, and it's GEORGE speaking
here, not Jason...

GEORGE

...if you're worried about being
on your own, don't be. You're not.
Because he is you.

(a beat)

And you are him.

(a beat)

One cell.

(a beat)

One person.

(a beat)

Always.

MARCUS's face swells with emotion. GEORGE's too...

MARCUS

(through tears)

I miss you...I miss you Jase...I
miss you so badly...

GEORGE stares. We close on his face. The reading has
clearly had a profound affect on him. Humbled, shaken.

MARCUS looks up.

(CONTINUED)

MARCUS
Where's he gone?

GEORGE shrugs. His voice cracks.

GEORGE
Sorry, kid. I don't know.

MARCUS
But you've done all those readings.

GEORGE
I still don't know. Sorry.

A beat.

GEORGE
C'mon. Let's get you home.

DISSOLVE TO:

192 EXT. FOSTER PARENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT 192

Several hours later. It's dusk now. GEORGE watches from his taxi as...

MARCUS stands opposite the foster parents' house. He takes a deep breath. Then rings the doorbell.

GEORGE waves from his taxi, then drives off...

193 INT. HOTEL - NIGHT 193

Later that night: George is in his hotel-room, reading MARIE's book.

"RRRIINNNGGGG", the phone rings. GEORGE picks it up...

GEORGE
Hello?

A familiar voice the other end.

MARCUS
Four Seasons.

GEORGE
What?

(CONTINUED)

MARCUS

That's the name of the hotel where she's staying.

GEORGE

Who?

MARCUS

The woman you like.

GEORGE

What?

MARCUS

I rang the publishers. Said I'd heard her speak, and wanted to drop off a letter saying how interesting it was. Anyway, that's the name. Four Seasons.

GEORGE

W-ell, that's all very interesting. But what does that have to do with me..?

"Click", the line goes dead. GEORGE's face: thrown.

GEORGE

Well, I'll be.

194

EXT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - DAY

194

GEORGE stares at the hotel. Shaved. A nice shirt. Holding MARIE's book. He shakes his head to himself...

GEORGE

I must be crazy.

195

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

195

GEORGE enters a busy hotel lobby. Walks through the many visitors and guests milling about, having tea, etc.

He walks in, goes up to the RECEPTION...

GEORGE

Marie Lelay, please.

The RECEPTIONIST punches a number. Listens, then turns to GEORGE...

(CONTINUED)

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry. No answer from the room.

GEORGE

Right. Pity. Thank you.

RECEPTIONIST

Would you like to leave a message?

GEORGE

No. It's fine. Thank you.

GEORGE smiles politely, and walks off. The RECEPTIONIST goes back to her work.

Presently, GEORGE comes back...

GEORGE

Actually, yes. I would like to leave a message. You have paper? And pen?

MARIE returns to her hotel room, and opens the door. As the door opens, it moves a letter...

MARIE bends down. Picks it up. Opens the letter.

Four densely written pages of admiring prose fall out. MARIE stares, sits down, and begins to read.

The following say: MARIE walks through crowded, sunny London streets, and reaches an open-air cafe.

She checks her watch, then scans the crowds. Looking for someone.

Sitting at one of the tables, GEORGE looks up and sees her.

He is about to call out, then he stops, and savors the moment. Where she's still a stranger. Standing alone on a sidewalk. While the innocence is still perfect.

GEORGE's face: he's never seen anyone so beautiful in his life.

Then he gets to his feet, and calls out...

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED:

GEORGE

Marie?

MARIE turns. Her eyes meet GEORGE's. A smile breaks out on her face. MARIE walks towards him, her hand extended...

The rest is history.

FADE TO BLACK:

198 EXT. DAY-CENTRE - REHAB BUILDING - DAY 198

High up over: a clean, modern, government-sponsored day-care centre in a tough borough of inner London.

199 INT. DAY-CENTRE - CORRIDORS - DAY 199

MARCUS is led through a simple corridor by the SOCIAL WORKERS & FOSTER PARENTS. (We notice the baseball cap is gone).

Strip-lighting, notice on the walls. Fire extinguishers. They pass rooms where meetings are in progress. Therapy groups.

At the end of the corridor, they reach a door. The time has come. The FOSTER PARENTS stop, and turn. Look at MARCUS...

FOSTER FATHER

Good luck.

MARCUS nods. The FOSTER FATHER goes leaving MARCUS alone. He straightens. Take another deep breath. Waits for a moment, then...he knocks.

From inside the sound of his mother's voice...

JACKIE (O.S.)

Come in.

200 INT. VISITING-ROOM -DAY-CENTRE - DAY 200

MARCUS opens the door to see his MOTHER inside. JACKIE looks unrecognizable. Almost a year clean, the color back in her cheeks, her hair shiny and healthy.

MARCUS

Mum..?

(CONTINUED)

200 CONTINUED:

200

JACKIE gets to her feet, and walks towards MARCUS, opens her arms, and holds him tight.

JACKIE

Baby...

MARCUS is enveloped by her arms. She holds MARCUS tight.

JACKIE

BABY.

JACKIE kisses his hair, his eyes, his face...

JACKIE

I've missed you so much...

201 EXT. DAY-CENTRE - GARDENS - DAY

201

An hour later: the SOCIAL WORKERS & FOSTER PARENTS watch from inside their office as..

MARCUS and his MOTHER walk in the gardens of the day centre, talking freely. JACKIE throws back her head, laughing...

The rest is history, too.

FADE TO BLACK: