

R E V I V A L

b a s e d o n t h e n o v e l
b y **S T E P H E N K I N G**

a d a p t e d f o r t h e s c r e e n
b y **J O S H B O O N E**

s e p t e m b e r 2 0 1 5

M I C H A E L D E L U C A P R O D U C T I O N S

M I D - W O R L D P R O D U C T I O N S

OVER OUR **FANFARE** DEAFENING THUNDER RUMBLES AND CRACKS

CUT TO:

AN IRON POLE DRIVEN DEEP INTO THE ROCKY SUMMIT OF A MOUNTAIN

EXT. SKYTOP - CONTINUOUS

IT'S A LIGHTNING ROD. Twenty feet high. The clouds above it are BLACK and seemingly low enough to touch. Beyond the summit, a two-thousand-foot drop. Thunders BOOMS. It sounds like a tree branch loaded with ice snapping, only a hundred times louder. There's a *CLICK*, as if an invisible giant snapped his fingers, then a brilliant, blinding BOLT of LIGHTNING strikes the rod turning it BRIGHT BLUE for a fraction of a second. Then it GLOWS CHERRY RED. It VIBRATES in the ground. Then another lightning bolt hits it. On that strike we **CUT TO:**

BLACK and HEAR the frantic, incoherent voice of **JAMIE MORTON**. It's the frightened voice of a young man whose brain is stuck in a loop his mouth is unable to stop.

JAMIE

*Something. Something, something,
something. Happened. Happened.
Something happened. Something
happened, happened, something
happened. Happened. Something --*

CUT TO:

OPENING TITLES: "Tomorrow Never Knows" by **The Beatles** plays LOUD over MACROPHOTOGRAPHY of ANTS moving in narrow lines through a network of SUBTERRANEAN TUNNELS. Up close they look alien and monstrous. We watch the colony hard at work.

There are occasional, JARRING CUTS to accelerated *Koyaanisqatsi* and *Baraka*-esque footage of human beings as ants. Working in factories, on assembly lines, boarding and spilling out of subways. Congested sidewalks thick with commuters, time lapse footage of crosswalks, traffic, etc.

As the credits come to a close, the ant tunnel we're in is HIT by a DEVASTATING QUAKE. Everything SHAKES and CRUMBLES around us. The ants disperse in all directions. We follow ONE who DARTS around falling earth the size of boulders. She moves impossibly fast, navigating the collapsing tunnels in a desperate bid to escape the catastrophe. Another QUAKE HITS. The earth falls away around her and we are BLINDED by HARSH DAYLIGHT. Our hero ant emerges on a BATTLEFIELD. A dirt hill covered in GREEN TOY SOLDIERS.

WRITTEN IN THE DIRT is our first chapter mark:

I. T H E T E R R I B L E S E R M O N

EXT. MORTON HOUSE, FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Early 70s. JAMIE MORTON (6) directs an epic battle with his army of toy soldiers. They're scattered across the impressive hill he's made, accompanied by jeeps and trucks. Jamie makes MACHINE GUN NOISES and POUNDS the hilltop with rocks. Beside him is a camouflage cardboard footlocker. Stenciled on the front: **PROPERTY OF U.S. ARMY.**

Birds CHIRP. A dog BARKS. HAMMERING from the garage. THEN A **SHADOW** FALLS OVER JAMIE AND THE WORLD GOES STILL. Jamie looks up and sees a MAN. He blocks the afternoon sun, a silhouette surrounded by golden light. He bends down and the sun momentarily blinds Jamie, who raises a hand to shield his eyes.

MAN

Oh. Sorry about that.

He moves enough so that Jamie can look at him without looking into the sun. He's young - mid-20s - and handsome. His face is open and sincere. He wears a black jacket over a black shirt with a white clerical collar. He admires Jamie's toy soldiers. His brow is damp with sweat. He has a Bible under his arm and a canteen in hand for the heat.

MAN

That's quite an army you've got there.

JAMIE

Who are you?

MAN

Charles Jacobs.

REVEREND JACOBS (25) sticks out his hand. Jamie shakes it.

REVEREND JACOBS

When you go to church on Sundays from now on, I'll be there. I'm your new minister.

JAMIE

Reverend Latoure used to be our minister, but he died.

REVEREND JACOBS
I know. I'm sorry.

JAMIE
It's okay. Mom said he didn't suffer, only went straight to heaven.

JAMIE
My dad knows about you. He's a deacon. He gets to take up the collection plates.

REVEREND JACOBS
That's why I'm here. I wanted to meet all the deacons and their families. What's your name, son?

JAMIE
Jamie Morton. I'm six. Are you gonna pray? I don't think anyone's ever prayed in our front yard before.

Reverend Jacobs realizes how he looks kneeling in his outfit and laughs.

REVEREND JACOBS
No. I've got a little boy who'd get a kick out of all these soldiers.

JAMIE
He could play too! Where is he?

REVEREND JACOBS
Morrie's still in Boston, with his mother. There's lots of stuff to pack up. You'll meet him. They'll be here in a few days.

JAMIE
How old is he?

REVEREND JACOBS
Almost four.

Jamie, unable to control himself, blurts out:

JAMIE
I bet he still pees his pants!

The mature six-year-old laughs. Reverend Jacobs smiles, taking no offense.

REVEREND JACOBS
He does, but I'm sure he'll grow
out of it.

JAMIE
I tried to make some caves, but the
dirt's too dry.

Reverend Jacobs pokes a finger into Jamie's hill and watches
the dirt crumble and bury the hole.

REVEREND JACOBS
So I see. Can I show you something?

JAMIE
Sure.

Reverend Jacobs opens his canteen and pours water all over
the top of the hill.

JAMIE
It's a thunderstorm!

Jamie proceeds to make thunder noises.

REVEREND JACOBS
Uh-huh, if you like. With
lightning. Now look.

Reverend Jacobs pokes out two of his fingers like devil horns
and pushes them into the wet dirt.

REVEREND JACOBS
Presto. Caves.

He sticks a couple of Jamie's soldiers in the holes and
stands up, brushing off the knees of his jeans.

REVEREND JACOBS
They'll be tough to root out,
General, but I'm sure the Americans
will be up to the job.

JAMIE
Hey! Thanks!

REVEREND JACOBS
Sure thing. Just add more water if
it gets crumbly again.

JAMIE
I will!

REVEREND JACOBS
Your folks around?

JAMIE
My dad's in the garage putting a new clutch on the Road Rocket. Connie usually helps him, but he's on a ski trip. My mom and Claire are inside.

REVEREND JACOBS
I'm gonna go introduce myself. It was nice chatting with you.

JAMIE
You too!

Reverend Jacobs heads across the lawn to the house, calling back over his shoulder:

REVEREND JACOBS
Battle on, General Morton!

INT. MORTON HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

Jamie's father, RICHARD (40, blue collar), sits at the head of the table. He wears dirty coveralls with his name stitched on the left pocket. On the right it says MORTON FUEL OIL.

RICHARD
Well, Jamie, what did you think of our new minister?

JAMIE
I like him. He's nice.

CLAIRE (15 and pretty) offers her opinion.

CLAIRE
And handsome.

Jamie snickers and Claire elbows him playfully in the ribs. Their mother, LAURA (late 30s), frowns.

LAURA
I know you're a freshmen now, Claire. Just don't be a fresh girl.

Claire rolls her eyes at this.

LAURA
He's awfully young.

RICHARD
Yes, and his salary will reflect
that.

The front door BANGS and CONNIE (11), the middle child,
enters the dining room, peeling off a heavy jacket. There's a
bright red WELT across his throat.

LAURA
Connie! What happened?

RICHARD
What'd you do, Connie, run into a
tree branch?

Connie sits down at the table at an empty place setting and
starts dishing up food. His voice is hoarse.

CONNIE
Gosh, no, Dad. Me n Norm were
racing. We were side-by-side, going
like hell's kitchen--

Laura points her fork at him.

CONNIE
Sorry, Mom, like heck's kitchen.
Norm hit a mogul and just about
lost his balance. He stuck out his
arms like this--

Connie demonstrates, almost knocking over his glass.

CONNIE
--and his ski pole hit me in the
neck. It hurt like . . . you know,
bad, but it's--

Connie, throat irritated, drinks a big gulp of water. When he
finishes his sentence his voice sounds even hoarser.

CONNIE
-- better now.

Richard and Laura exchange a worried glance.

EXT. MORTON HOUSE - NIGHT

Connie looks through a telescope at the night sky, sharing
the view with Jamie. They marvel at the stars.

JAMIE
How many are there?

CONNIE
(very hoarse)
No one knows.

PRELAP: *KNOCK, KNOCK!*

INT. MORTON HOUSE - DAY

Laura opens the front door revealing Reverend Jacobs.

REVEREND JACOBS
Can you spare Jamie for an hour?
I've got something to show him.

Jamie appears at the door.

JAMIE
What is it?

REVEREND JACOBS
A surprise. You can tell your mom
all about it later.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Jamie and Reverend Jacobs leave the Morton property just as a
SCHOOL BUS drops Connie and Claire off.

CLAIRE
Where are you going?

JAMIE
To the parsonage. He's gonna show
me a surprise. Me. Not you guys--

REVEREND JACOBS
Don't be rude, Jamie. You're both
welcome to come. You must be
Connie.

Reverend Jacobs sticks out his hand and Connie takes it. His
voice is the thinnest whisper and the welt on his throat is
now a purple bruise.

CONNIE
*Nice to meet you. Sorry . . . I
hurt my neck.*

JACOBS
I'm sorry to hear that.

CLAIRE
We can't go. We've got homework.

She glances at Reverend Jacobs, then quickly away, as if she finds him hard to look at.

CLAIRE
Don't be too long. It's your turn
to set the table.

Jamie makes a face at her.

REVEREND JACOBS
I'll have him back shortly.

Connie and Claire head for the house. Once they're out of earshot:

JAMIE
She thinks you're handsome.

Reverend Jacobs laughs and they continue on their way.

EXT. PARSONAGE - DAY

A tidy white house with black shutters. Beyond it is the First - *and only* - Methodist Church of Harlow. Reverend Jacobs leads Jamie walk up the dirt driveway.

INT. PARSONAGE, GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Reverend Jacobs leads Jamie into a shadowy garage. Jamie is a little hesitant, maybe a little scared, as Reverend Jacobs leads him deeper into the gloom. Then Reverend Jacobs stops and points, and Jamie gasps at what he sees.

REVEREND JACOBS
Welcome to Peaceable Lake, Jamie.

JAMIE
Wow!

Jamie's attention is fixed on a table that takes up half the garage. On it is a rolling green landscape - the kind you see in toy shop windows with trains running through them - a countryside in miniature. Power pylons eighteen inches high march across it on a diagonal, and it is dominated by a lake of real water that looks bright blue even in the gloom.

REVEREND JACOBS

I got it set up it while I'm waiting for Patsy and Morrie to get here. I plan on moving it to the church basement. I think the kids will like it.

JAMIE

They sure will!

They gaze at the rolling hills, the threadlike power lines, the big blue lake. There are plastic sheep and cows grazing by the water and lots of streetlamps - which is a little odd seeing as there's no town or roads for them to shine on.

REVEREND JACOBS

I bet you could have quite a battle with your soldiers here, couldn't you?

JAMIE

Yeah! An entire war!

REVEREND JACOBS

That can't happen, though, because in Peaceable Lake, everyone gets along and no fighting is allowed. In that way it's like heaven. Now do you want to see a miracle?

Jamie nods, eyes wide with anticipation. Reverend Jacobs passes his hand slowly over Peaceable Lake. There's a low *humming* sound from beneath the table and all the little streetlights come on. They are bright white, almost too bright to look at, and cast a magical moony glow over the green hills and blue water. Jamie is mystified.

JAMIE

Gosh, how did you do that?

REVEREND JACOBS

God said, Let there be light, and there was light. Only I'm not God, so I have to depend on electricity. Which is wonderful stuff, Jamie. A miracle, really. And a mystery.
(points to a nearby shelf)
See that little red bulb?

JAMIE

Uh-huh.

REVEREND JACOBS

It's a photoelectric cell. I built that one myself. It projects an invisible beam. When I break it, the lights go on. If I do it again--

He passes his hand above the landscape and the lights dim and go out.

REVEREND JACOBS

You see?

JAMIE

Cooooool.

REVEREND JACOBS

You try it.

Jamie tries. At first nothing happens, then he stands on his tiptoes and his fingers break the beam. The humming beneath the table starts up again and the lights come back on.

JAMIE

What's that sound?

REVEREND JACOBS

Look under the table. Here, I'll turn on the overhead lights so you can see better.

He flips a switch and a couple of dusty hanging lightbulbs come on. Jamie looks under and sees three boxy things strapped to the underside.

REVEREND JACOBS

They're batteries, which I also made myself. Electricity is my hobby.

(grins like a kid)

Drives my wife crazy. Want to see one more miracle, Jamie?

JAMIE

Sure!

There is a second table, a workbench covered with tools, snips of wire, C and D cell batteries, and dismembered transistor radios. There's also a small wooden box. Reverend Jacobs gets it. Inside is a WHITE-ROBED FIGURE.

REVEREND JACOBS

Do you know who this is?

JAMIE

Jesus. Jesus with a pack on his back.

REVEREND JACOBS

Not just any pack; a battery pack. Look.

He opens the battery pack. Inside are what look like a couple of shiny dimes with tiny dots of solder on them.

REVEREND JACOBS

I made these, too, because you can't buy anything this small and powerful in stores. I believe I could patent them. Maybe some day I will.

He closes the top, rises to his feet, and carries Jesus to Peaceable Lake.

REVEREND JACOBS

I hope you noticed how blue the water is.

JAMIE

Yeah! Bluest lake I ever saw!

REVEREND JACOBS

Kind of a miracle in itself, you might say . . . until you take a closer look. It's really just paint.

He sets Jesus beside the lake.

JAMIE

I plan to use this in Sunday School - it's what we call a teaching tool - but I'll give you a little preview, okay?

JAMIE

Okay!

Reverend Jacobs reaches under Jesus's white robe, and the little figure begins to MOVE forward, gliding along the top of the water.

JAMIE

He's walking on water!

REVEREND JACOBS

Well . . . yes and no.

Jesus reaches the other side of the lake and almost topples over. Reverend Jacobs grabs it and turns it off.

JAMIE

What do you mean?

REVEREND JACOBS

See where he went into the water?

JAMIE

Yeah . . .

REVEREND JACOBS

Reach in there and see what you find. Just be careful not to touch the power lines.

Jamie reaches in cautiously. The water looks deep, but it's an illusion created by the blue paint of the reservoir and the lights reflecting on the surface. Jamie's finger only goes up to the first knuckle. His finger bumps against a near-invisible track Jesus walked on.

JAMIE

It's a magic trick!

REVEREND JACOBS

That's right.

JAMIE

Like Jesus walking on the water to that ship!

REVEREND JACOBS

Sometimes that's what I'm afraid of.

Reverend Jacobs stares at the lake. He looks sad and distant.

JACOBS

I muse on that, sometimes, Jamie. When I can't sleep. How a little paint can make shallow water seem deep.

JAMIE

(trying to cheer him up)
It's a really good trick.

From outside comes the SOUND of a car and a HONKING horn. Jacobs's eyes light up.

REVEREND JACOBS
 They're here! They're here, Jamie!
 Come on!

EXT. PARSONAGE - CONTINUOUS

Reverend Jacobs rushes outside, followed by Jamie. PATSY JACOBS (25, beautiful) stands with MORRIE (3, adorable) in her arms beside a car hitched to a U-Haul. She beams at him.

PATSY
 Hi, handsome!

MORRIE
 DADDY!!!!

Jamie watches, smiling, as Reverend Jacobs is reunited with his family. He showers them with kisses and they embrace. Picture perfect.

INT. CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

Reverend Jacobs introduces himself, Patsy, and Morrie to a congregation of about 80.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Connie's throat is examined by an OLD DOCTOR. Laura watches, concerned. The doctor asks Connie a question and Connie writes the answer down in a notebook.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Connie raises his hand and holds up a notecard with MAY I USE THE RESTROOM? written on it when he's called on. Everyone snickers. One boy throws a crumpled up piece of paper at Connie as he gets up from his desk.

INT. MORTON HOUSE, CONNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jamie enters Connie's room and finds him lying on his bed and weeping soundlessly. Jamie goes to him and touches his arm. *Get out!* he mouths. His eyes are swollen. *Get out, get out! Get the fuck out!* Jamie, shocked, flees the room.

INT. MORTON HOUSE - DAY

Laura and Richard argue in the kitchen.

LAURA

We have to take him to a specialist. That old fool George Renault can say whatever he likes, but I know what happened, and so do you. That careless rich boy ruptured our son's vocal cords.

RICHARD

We can't afford it, Laura. We're skating on mighty thin ice. You know what kind of winter it was--

LAURA

Take out a loan!

RICHARD

I may have to do that just to get us through the summer--

LAURA

He's your son!

RICHARD

I know he is, goddammit!

Laura BREAKS A DISH in the sink that she's washing and cries out. She WHIRLS around, showing a cut on her hand to Richard.

LAURA

Look what you made me d--

She sees Jamie standing in the doorway.

LAURA

Buzz off! Go out and play!

RICHARD

Laura, don't take it out on Ja--

She EXPLODES.

LAURA

Get out! God hates a snoop!

EXT. MORTON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jamie TEARS out of the house, crying.

EXT. PARSONAGE - CONTINUOUS

Patsy is planting flowers in the front yard. Morrie sits on the grass surrounded by toy trucks. Jamie comes running across the lawn, still crying.

PATSY

What happened, Jamie?

She puts her fingers under his chin and raises his head.

PATSY

Jamie, tell me what's wrong.

MORRIE

Why's he crying, Momma? Did something happen to Jamie?

INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Patsy leads Jamie into the garage. Reverend Jacobs is tinkering with a screenless television set.

PATSY

Charlie?

He turns and sees Jamie's tear-streaked face.

REVEREND JACOBS

I'll take care of him. Thank you, dear.

She goes. Reverend Jacobs slings an arm around Jamie's shoulders and produces a handkerchief from his back pocket. Jamie wipes his eyes and nose.

REVEREND JACOBS

What's got you in such a tizzy? Is it Con?

Jamie nods, eyes welling up again.

JAMIE

Dad and Mom can't afford a specialist for Connie. And he doesn't even look at the stars with his telescope anymore. And Mom and Dad had a big fight and she didn't sound like herself.

REVEREND JACOBS

Jamie, I want you to bring Con to see me tonight. Will you do that? I think I can help him.

EXT. PARSONAGE - NIGHT

Jamie, Claire, and Connie walk across the lawn, casting long shadows in the moonlight. Connie scribbles something down in his notebook and shows it to them: **THIS IS STUPID**. Claire grabs his arm and pulls him towards the garage. The side door is open and light pours out.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jamie and his siblings go inside. Reverend Jacobs gives Claire a hug and shakes hands with Jamie and Connie, who holds up his pad: **MORE PRAYER I SUPPOSE?**

REVEREND JACOBS

We might get to that, but I want to try something else first. Whom does the Lord help, Jamie?

JAMIE

Them that help themselves.

JAMIE

Ungrammatical but true.

He goes to his worktable and brings back what looks like a fat cloth belt. A cord dangles from it, going to a little white plastic box with a slide switch on top.

JACOBS

This is a project I've been tinkering with on and off for the last year. I call it the Electrical Nerve Stimulator.

JAMIE

One of your inventions?

REVEREND JACOBS

Not exactly. The idea of using electricity to limit pain and stimulate muscles is very, very old. Sixty years before the birth of Christ, a Roman doctor discovered that foot and leg pain could be alleviated if the sufferer stepped firmly on an electric eel.

CLAIRE
You're making that up!

She laughs in disbelief. Con isn't laughing. He stares at the cloth belt with fascination.

REVEREND JACOBS
Not at all, but electric eels are hard to come by, and even harder to put around a boy's neck. Which is what I intend to do with this homemade gadget of mine. Because Dr. Renault may be right about your vocal cords not being ruptured, Con. Maybe they only need a jump-start. I'm willing to conduct the experiment, but it's up to you. What do you say?

Con scribbles on his pad. He holds it up. **WILL IT HURT?**

JACOBS
I don't think so. The current's very low. I tried it on my arm and only felt a tingle. If there *is* pain, raise your hand and I'll kill the current right away.

Connie scribbles on his pad again. **DO IT.** Jacobs nods and puts the belt around Con's neck. There's fear in his eyes but maybe hope too. Claire takes Jamie's hand in hers, squeezing it tight. Reverend Jacobs bends down, looks directly in Con's eyes, and says:

REVEREND JACOBS
Expect a miracle.

Reverend Jacobs slides the switch on the top of the control box and there is a faint *humming* sound. Con's head jerks. His mouth twitches first at one corner, then at the other. His fingers flutter rapidly and his arms jerk.

REVEREND JACOBS
Does it hurt?

His finger hovers over the switch, ready to turn it off.

REVEREND JACOBS
If it hurts, hold out your hands.

Con shakes his head. Then, in a voice that sounds as if it were coming through a mouthful of gravel:

CONNIE
Doesn't . . . hurt. *Warm.*

Jamie and Claire exchange a glance. Jacobs smiles, excitedly.

REVEREND JACOBS
Don't try to talk. Not yet. I'm
going to run the belt a little
longer. Remember to hold out your
hands if it starts to hurt.

Con doesn't hold out his hands, but his fingers continue to move up and down, as if he were playing an invisible piano. His upper lip lifts in an involuntary snarl, and his eyes spasm and flutter.

CONNIE
I . . . can . . . talk again.

REVEREND JACOBS
Hush.

Jacobs pushes the switch and the faint hum dies. He removes the belt. Con's hands go immediately to his neck.

JACOBS
Now, Con, I want you to say, "My
dog has fleas, they bite his
knees." But if your throat starts
to hurt, stop at once.

CONNIE
My dog has *fleas*, they bite his
knees.

Connie's voice is strange and grating.

CONNIE
I have to spit.

REVEREND JACOBS
Does your throat hurt?

CONNIE
No, just have to spit.

Claire opens the shed door. Connie leans out, clears his throat - which produces an unpleasantly metallic sound like rusty hinges - and hocks a loogie. He turns back to them, massaging his throat with one hand.

CONNIE
My dog has *fleas*.

The words are clearer now, more human.

CONNIE
They bite his *knees*.

Tears of relief rise in his eyes and spill down his cheeks.

REVEREND JACOBS
That's enough for now. You must
drink a lot of water. Tonight and
tomorrow. Until your voice sounds
normal again. Will you do that?

CONNIE
Yes.

REVEREND JACOBS
When you get home, you may tell
your mother and father hello. Then
I want you to go into your room and
get down on your knees and thank
God for bringing your voice back.
Will you do that?

Connie nods vehemently. He's crying hard now, completely
overwhelmed. Jamie and Claire are choked up too.

INT. MORTON HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard and Laura sit on the couch, a big space between them,
watching *MASH*. Laura bends down to unsnarl the yarn in her
basket when Con walks in, followed by Jamie and Claire.

CONNIE
Hello, Mom. Hello, Dad.

They stare at him, mouths open. Then Laura SCREAMS and FLIES
out of her chair, kicking her knitting basket over, and
sweeps Connie into her arms, weeping.

LAURA
Say something else! Say something
else so I don't think I just
dreamed it!

CLAIRE
He's not supposed to--

CONNIE
I love you, Mom. I love you, Dad.

Richard is up now too and takes Con by the shoulder, looking
closely at his throat.

RICHARD
Thank, God. Thank God, son.

Jamie and Claire look at each other, wondering if God's the one they should be thanking.

INT. CHURCH, BASEMENT - SUNDAY MORNING

Sunday School. Peaceable Lake is set up on one side of the basement. Reverend Jacobs dazzles the KIDS with another of his contraptions. LONG SPARKS - nearly blinding - climb two TV rabbit wires that jut up from a footlocker sized box.

REVEREND JACOBS
Kids, electricity is the basis of all life. Science teaches us that electricity is the movement of charged atomic particles called electrons. That's science, and science is fine, but it's also *finite*. There always comes a point where knowledge runs out. And that's where religion comes in.

Reverend Jacobs sprinkles some powder over his device and the climbing sparks turn different colors. Everyone oooohs.

REVEREND JACOBS
Electricity is one of God's doorways to the infinite.

INT. CAR - DAY

An OLD LADY is behind the wheel. She drives carefully around a tight and treacherous curve and SLAMS on her brakes.

There's been a terrible CAR ACCIDENT. A familiar car, once hitched to a U-Haul, is upside down and burning in the road. The smoking front end of a pickup truck pulling a potato digger is smashed against it.

A WOMAN staggers up the middle of the highway towards the old woman's car. The old woman climbs out to help.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The woman has a dripping bundle clasped to her breast with one arm. One arm is all PATSY JACOBS can use, because the other has been torn off at the elbow. Blood pours down her face. A piece of her scalp hangs beside her shoulder, bloody locks of hair blowing in the breeze.

Her right eye is on her cheek. All her fragile beauty has been torn away in an instant.

PATSY
Help my baby!

The old woman begins to scream as Patsy falls to the ground.

EXT. PARSONAGE - DAY

Laura, Jamie's mother, knocks on the door. Reverend Jacobs opens it and looks at her through the screen. He holds a large book in one hand called *Protons and Neurons: The Secret World of Electricity*.

REVEREND JACOBS
Laura? Are you all right? You're very pale. Come in, come in.

INT. PARSONAGE - CONTINUOUS

LAURA
There's been a terrible accident.

The look of concern on Reverend Jacobs's face deepens.

REVEREND JACOBS
Dick or the kids? Sit down, Laura, you look ready to faint.

LAURA
Charles, it's Patsy. And Morrie.

He sets the big book carefully on a table in the hall.

REVEREND JACOBS
How badly are they hurt?

LAURA
Charles, you must prepare yourself for a terrible shock.

Reverend Jacobs takes her by the shoulders.

REVEREND JACOBS
How bad? Laura, how badly are they hurt?

Laura begins to cry.

INT. CAR - LATER

Laura drives. Charles sits shell-shocked beside her.

REVEREND JACOBS
 Patsy can't be dead. It's
 Wednesday. Wednesday is Prince
 Spaghetti Day, that's what Morrie
 says.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - LATER

Laura brings a shell-shocked Charles into the funeral home. Organ music, low as a whisper and somehow awful, comes from overhead speakers. Richard Morton is waiting there.

RICHARD
 Charlie, I'm so sorry for your
 loss. We all are.

He hugs Reverend Jacobs, but Jacobs doesn't hug back. He just stands there with his hands at his side.

REVEREND JACOBS
 I'll see them now.

RICHARD
 Charlie, you need to hold on for a
 bit. Just until Mr. Peabody makes
 them presenta--

Jacobs walks past him and through the viewing parlor. He disappears down the hall. Richard and Laura exchange a glance and Richard hurries after him. We stay with Laura. Then a SCREAM rises from the back of the funeral home, an inconsolable banshee wail.

REVEREND JACOBS (O.S.)
*Where's his face? Where's my little
 boy's face?*

INT. WEST HARLOW METHODIST CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

Every pew is full. Jamie sits with his family in the third row between Connie and Claire. Their mother's face is serene, but her white-gloved hands clench her softcover Bible with enough force to bend it into a U. Reverend Jacobs enters the sanctuary through the side door. Every eye follows him to the pulpit. Once there, he opens the large Bible.

REVEREND JACOBS

"For now we see through a glass,
darkly; but then face to face: now
I know in part; but then shall I
know even as also I am known."

Reverend Jacobs closes the Bible with an audible *thump*. The sanctuary is dead quiet. His head is bowed. When he finally looks up and shows his calm, composed face, a faint sigh of relief ripples through the congregation.

REVEREND JACOBS

This has been a hard and troubled time for me, I hardly need to tell you that. I've spent much of the time between the day of my loss and this Sunday morning in reflection and study. I'd like to add *in prayer*, but I've gotten on my knees time and again, and have not sensed the presence of God. So reflection and study have had to suffice.

Silence from the congregation. Every eye on him.

REVEREND JACOBS

The Castle Rock library has *The New York Times* on microfilm. I went day after day, I scrolled until my head ached, and I want to share some of the things I found.

From the pocket of his black suit coat he takes out some index cards.

REVEREND JACOBS

In June of last year, three small tornadoes tore through the town of May, Oklahoma. There was property damage, but no one was killed. The townsfolk flocked to the Baptist church to sing songs of praise and offer prayers of thanksgiving. While they were inside, a fourth tornado - a monster F5 - swept down on May and demolished the church. Forty-one people were killed. Thirty others were seriously injured, including children who lost arms and legs.

He shuffles the top card to the bottom of his little stack and moves on to the next.

REVEREND JACOBS

October of last year. A hurricane swept onshore near Wilmington, North Carolina, and killed seventeen. Six were children at a church day-care center. A seventh was reported missing. A little boy. His body was found a week later, in a tree.

People shift uncomfortably in their seats.

REVEREND JACOBS

This item concerns a missionary family ministering to the poor with food, medicine, and the gospel in what used to be the Belgian Congo and is now, I believe, Zaire. There were five of them. They were murdered. It was implied that their killers were of a cannibalistic bent.

A disapproving mutter arises. Jacob hears and raises one hand in an almost benedictory gesture.

REVEREND JACOBS

Reading these stories provided some comfort to me, because they prove that I'm not alone in my suffering. The comfort is only small, however, because such deaths - like those of my wife and son - seem so cruel and capricious. Christ ascended to heaven in his body, we are told, but all too often we poor mortals here on earth are left with ugly heaps of maimed meat and that constant, reverberating question: Why? Why? *Why?*

He studies his flock, a faint smile touching the corners of his lips, the light from the stained glass putting blue and red diamonds on his cheek.

REVEREND JACOBS

Let us say plainly what Saint Paul meant when he spoke of that darkened glass. He meant we're supposed to take it all on faith. If our faith is strong, we'll go to heaven, and we'll understand the whole thing when we get there.

(MORE)

REVEREND JACOBS (CONT'D)

As if life were a joke, and heaven the place where the cosmic punchline is finally explained to us. "Oh, yeah! Now I get it!" It's dinned into our ears from our earliest days: heaven, heaven, heaven! We will see our lost children, our dear mothers will take us in their arms! That's the carrot. And the stick we're beaten with is hell, hell, hell! A Sheol of eternal damnation and torment. We tell children as young as my dear lost son that they stand in danger of eternal fire if they steal a piece of candy or lie about how they got their shoes wet.

Jamie listens to the terrible sermon with both horror and fascination. Both Claire and Jamie's mom are crying silently. Jamie doesn't notice. He hangs on every word.

REVEREND JACOBS

There is no proof of these after-life destinations; no backbone of science; only the bald assurance, coupled with our powerful need to believe *that it all makes sense*. But when I saw the mangled remains of my boy, who wanted to go to Disneyland much more than he wanted to go to heaven, I had a revelation. Religion's the theological equivalent of a quick-buck insurance scam, where you pay your premium year after year, and then, when you need the benefits you paid for so - pardon the pun - so religiously, you discover the company that took your money does not, in fact, exist.

There is soft feminine sobbing now and masculine rumblings of discontent throughout the sanctuary. A few people in the back get up and leave, heads down, shoulders hunched.

REVEREND JACOBS

We've got the Catholics, the Episcopalians, the Methodists, the Baptists, Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, and half a hundred more.

(MORE)

REVEREND JACOBS (CONT'D)
 Each and every one thinks they're
 the only ones with a direct line to
 the Almighty. And I haven't even
 mentioned the Muslims, or the Jews,
 or Buddhists. This babble of
 conflicting beliefs cancel each
 other out and leave nothing --

A RED-FACED MAN stands up.

RED-FACED MAN
 You need to sit down, Reverend.
 You're not yourself.

Reverend Jacobs does not sit down.

REVEREND JACOBS
 Our religion was built on the
 blood, bones, and screams of those
 who had the effrontery not to bow
 to someone else's idea of God.

That's when the walkouts begin in force. Jacobs pays no mind.

REVEREND JACOBS
 The Romans fed Christians to the
 lions; the Christians dismembered
 those they deemed to be heretics.
 Millions have been burned, shot,
 hung, racked, poisoned,
 electrocuted, and torn to pieces by
 dogs all in God's name. For what?
Faith?

An UNSHAVEN HULK OF A MAN stands up in the rapidly emptying
 church.

UNSHAVEN HULK OF A MAN
 Rev'run, I heard there was a bottle
 of hooch in the glovebox of your
 car. Mert Peabody said when he bent
 over to work on your wife, she
 smelt like a barroom. So there's
 your reason. You ain't got the
 spine to accept the will of God?
 Fine. But leave these other ones
 alone.

Jacobs stops cold. He grips the pulpit, eyes blazing in his
 white face, lips pressed together so tightly his mouth has
 disappeared. Jamie's father stands up.

RICHARD
 Charles, you need to step down.

REVEREND JACOBS

Yes. You're right, Dick. Nothing I say will make a difference anyway.

Tight on Jamie. From the look on his face we know that's not the case.

REVEREND JACOBS

Just one more thing. We came from a mystery and it's to a mystery we go. If you want truth, a power greater than yourselves, look to the lightning - a billion volts in each strike, and a hundred thousand amperes of current, and temperatures of *fifty thousand degrees Fahrenheit*. That's five times hotter than the surface of the sun! There's a higher power in that, I grant you. But here, in this building? No. Believe what you want, but I tell you this: behind Saint Paul's darkened glass, there is nothing but a lie.

Reverend Jacobs leaves the pulpit and exits through the side door. Jamie and his family sit in stunned silence in the nearly empty sanctuary.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Jamie's dad is under the car on a Crawligator, a caged light in one hand.

JAMIE

Daddy? Can I ask you a question?

RICHARD

As long as it's not about that goddamn mess this morning.

JAMIE

Was what Mr. Easterbrook said true? Was she drinking?

The moving light beneath the car goes still. Richard rolls himself out and looks up at his son.

RICHARD

It doesn't matter. George Barton had an epileptic seizure. He was on the wrong side of the road and she came around a blind turn.

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

People always want a reason for the bad things in life. Sometimes there ain't one, Reverend was right about that. All the rest was just the bullshit of a grief-struck man, and don't you forget it.

EXT. PARSONAGE - DAY

There's a Ford Fairlane with rust on the rocker panels and a crack in the passenger side window sitting in the driveway. The trunk is up. Jamie peeks in and sees two suitcases and an oscilloscope.

INT. SHED - DAY

Reverend Jacobs puts electronic equipment into a crate. His clerical collar is gone. When he sees Jamie, he smiles sadly.

REVEREND JACOBS

Jamie! "Thou art Alpha and Omega!"

JAMIE

What's that mean?

REVEREND JACOBS

Revelation, chapter one, verse eight. 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.' You were the first kid I met when I came to Harlow, and you're the last.

JAMIE

Connie wanted to come with me to say thank you, but he's got . . . uh . . . I think it's soccer practice today.

REVEREND JACOBS

That's okay. I doubt if I really did anything.

Jamie is shocked.

JAMIE

You brought his voice back! You brought it back with your gadget!

REVEREND JACOBS

Oh yes. My gadget. The Electrical Nerve Stimulator.

(MORE)

REVEREND JACOBS (CONT'D)
 I doubt it had anything to do with
 your brother's recovery. You see, I
 built it that very day, and powered
 it with a very small Japanese-made
 motor I filched from one of
 Morrie's toys.

JAMIE
 No. It was a miracle.

REVEREND JACOBS
 Jamie, have you ever noticed Con's
 fingernails?

JAMIE
 Sure! He bites them like crazy! My
 dad offered him a buck if he'd stop
 for a week, but he couldn't!

REVEREND JACOBS
 He's a nervy one. It's just the way
 your brother's built. When he got
 hit in the neck with that ski pole
 and lost his voice, he started to
 worry it would never come back. And
 when it didn't, he told himself it
 never would.

JAMIE
 But Dr. Renault said --

REVEREND JACOBS
 Renault's a fine doctor. But Connie
 wasn't convinced because Renault
 isn't convincing. He's able to
 treat the body, but the mind? Not
 so much. And that's where half the
 healing takes place, maybe more.

He turns to the parsonage, which already looks abandoned, and
 sighs.

REVEREND JACOBS
 Perhaps my gadget did *something* - I
 have every reason to believe the
 theory behind it is valid - but I
 really doubt it. I believe I
 tricked your brother. It's a skill
 they try to teach in divinity
 school, although *they* call it
 kindling faith. I was always good
 at it, which has caused me to feel
 both shame and delight.

(MORE)

REVEREND JACOBS (CONT'D)

I told your brother to expect a miracle, then I turned on the current and activated my glorified joy buzzer. As soon as I saw him twitching his mouth and blinking his eyes, I knew it was going to work.

JAMIE

He wouldn't come with me today. I lied about that. I asked him to, but he was scared.

REVEREND JACOBS

Never be angry at him for that. And never tell him what I've told you. He probably wouldn't lose his voice again, but he might. Will you promise me?

JAMIE

I promise.

REVEREND JACOBS

Good. Come on, kiddo. I've gotta get going.

Jacobs lifts the wooden crate.

EXT. PARSONAGE - DAY

Jamie and Jacobs finish loading his car.

JAMIE

When you were talking in church, you said lightning was, like, fifty thousand degrees. Is that true?

His face kindles as it only does when the subject of electricity comes up.

REVEREND JACOBS

Completely true! Except maybe for earthquakes and tidal waves, lightning is the most powerful force in nature. More powerful than tornadoes and much more powerful than hurricanes. Have you ever seen a bolt strike the earth?

JAMIE

Only in the sky.

REVEREND JACOBS

It's beautiful. Beautiful and terrifying. If you ever want to see one up close, go to Skytop.

JAMIE

What's that?

REVEREND JACOBS

You know Goat Mountain Resort, where Connie had his accident?

Jamie nods.

REVEREND JACOBS

Just before you get to the gatehouse, there's a gravel road that splits off from the main one. It ends at an outlook called Skytop. I never took you kids there, because it's dangerous. At the summit there's an iron pole twenty feet high driven deep into the rock. Skytop's a special place. It *draws* the lightning, and that iron rod is its focal point.

He looks dreamily off toward Goat Mountain, which dominates the rolling hills of western Maine.

REVEREND JACOBS

The thunder's louder there, Jamie, and the clouds are closer. The sight of those stormclouds rolling in makes a person feel very small. You know when the lightning's going to come, because there's a feeling in the air. Your hair stands on end and your chest gets heavy. You wait, and when the thunder comes, it doesn't boom. It *cracks*, like a branch loaded with ice finally giving way, only a hundred times louder. There's silence . . . and then a *click*, sort of like the sound an old-fashioned light switch makes. Then the lightning comes. You have to squint, or the stroke will blind you and you won't see that pole go from bright blue to purple-white and then to red . . . cherry red like a horseshoe in a forge.

JAMIE

Wow.

Reverend Jacobs blinks and comes back from his reverie.

REVEREND JACOBS

Sorry, kiddo. Sometimes I get carried away.

JAMIE

It sounds awesome.

REVEREND JACOBS

Oh, it's way beyond awesome. Go up there sometime when you're older and see for yourself.

Reverend Jacobs closes the trunk.

JAMIE

Where will you go?

REVEREND JACOBS

No idea, but I think I'll know it when I get there.

JAMIE

I'm never gonna see you again.

REVEREND JACOBS

Never say that, Jamie. Paths cross all the time in this world of ours, sometimes in the strangest places.

Jamie's eyes well up and he hugs Reverend Jacobs. Jacobs hugs him back.

REVEREND JACOBS

Don't you cry on me. My heart's already as broken as I can stand.

EXT. PARSONAGE - CONTINUOUS

Reverend Jacobs pulls out of the driveway. He calls out the window to Jamie.

REVEREND JACOBS

I left something for you in the parsonage basement. If you want it. Key's under the doormat.

Jamie runs out onto the dirt road and we get an epic shot of Jacobs's car driving off into a giant sun. Jacobs sticks his hand out the window and waves goodbye.

INT. PARSONAGE, BASEMENT - DAY

Jamie turns on the light and goes down the stairs. Sitting in the middle of the room, on a table, is PEACEABLE LAKE and the little wooden box. Jamie takes Electric Jesus out and sets him on the edge of the lake where the track is. He's about to switch him on, but stops, his face contorting with rage. He swings his arm and knocks Electric Jesus across the room.

JAMIE

*You're not real! You're not real!
It's all a bunch of lies! Damn you,
Jesus! Damn you, Jesus! Damn you,
damn you, damn you!*

Jamie runs up the stairs, crying so hard he can barely see.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Early 80s. FINGERS ON ELECTRIC GUITAR STRINGS. Jamie's fingers. JAMIE (16 now) is on stage with a band of like-minded teenage boys at a high school dance. They're covering "**Can't Seem To Make You Mine**" by The Seeds. On the banner behind them is our next chapter mark:

2. P O R T R A I T S I N L I G H T N I N G

Jamie's eyes are fixed on ASTRID SODERBERG (17, blonde and drop-dead gorgeous, she wears a GOLDEN CROSS around her neck). She looks up at him from the dance floor with luminous eyes as she laughs and dances with HER GIRLFRIENDS. The eye-play between them is intense.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - LATER

Jamie downs punch at the refreshments table with his bandmates. He watches as some BORING GUY tries to talk to Astrid across the room. She's polite, but glances away from him while he's talking and finds Jamie's eyes.

JAMIE

Be back. Gonna catch a smoke.

The LEAD SINGER hollers after him.

LEAD SINGER
Jamie, we're back on in five! Don't
get lost!

Jamie slips out the EMERGENCY EXIT, locking eyes with Astrid again on his way out the door.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS

Astrid steps outside and joins Jamie.

ASTRID
Got another smoke?

JAMIE
Sorry, I bummed this one myself.
You can have a drag if you want.

It becomes immediately clear that Astrid doesn't smoke. The drag she takes sends her into a coughing fit.

JAMIE
You don't smoke, do you?

ASTRID
(still recovering)
No. I thought you'd think I was
cooler if I did. You're a really
good guitar player.

JAMIE
Thanks! I haven't seen you around.
Where do you go to school?

ASTRID
Castle Rock. My folks think I'm
staying the night at my friend
Carla's. They're really strict.
They think school dances encourage
sinful behavior.

JAMIE
They're right. Look at you. Already
smoking and talking to guy who
hasn't stepped foot in a church in
years. What would they think?

They stare at each other, both grinning like idiots.

JAMIE

Want me to teach you to smoke so
you look like a pro next time
you're trying to impress someone?

ASTRID

Okay.

Jamie takes a drag and closes the distance between them. He puts his hand on the nape of her neck and leans in like he was going to kiss her, but stops just shy of her lips. He blows a little smoke in her mouth. Astrid takes it in, and exhales without coughing this time.

JAMIE

See? Here, you try. Just go easy.

Astrid takes the cigarette from him and takes a smaller drag. She leans in to blow some in Jamie's mouth and he takes her face in his hands and KISSES her. **PRELAP**: BOOMING THUNDER

INT. JAMIE'S CAR - DAY

Jamie and Astrid pass a joint back and forth as they drive up a twisting gravel road on Goat Mountain. The sky is filled with black storm clouds. A few drops splash the windshield.

ASTRID

Jamie, I have to be home before
dark. Where are we going?

JAMIE

A place someone told me about a
long time ago. Trust me, it'll be
worth it.

The trees pull back and Astrid gasps and sits up straight in her seat.

EXT. SKYTOP - CONTINUOUS

Ahead is the summit. The IRON POLE Jacobs promised is there, jutting towards monstrous black clouds. Nearby is an OLD CABIN with a sagging roof and broken windows. Thunder RUMBLES. Jamie parks and they hop out.

ASTRID

Oh my God, was this here all the
time? And you never took me?

Jamie looks around, taking it all in.

JAMIE

I never took myself. My old minister told me about it.

ASTRID

I though you didn't go to church.

JAMIE

I haven't been since I was a kid.

ASTRID

But you believe in God, right?

JAMIE

No.

A BRILLIANT BOLT OF LIGHTNING comes down from the sky. Jamie nearly jumps out of his skin and Astrid SCREAMS. Then there's a *click* as if God snapped his fingers. A second bolt FLASHES down and STRIKES the iron rod, turning it bright blue. Jamie and Astrid shut their eyes instinctively to keep from going blind. When they open them again, the pole GLOWS CHERRY RED. Follow-thunder BELLOWS.

JAMIE

We better get inside!

He points at the slumping remains of the cabin. They run towards it, hand in hand. As they do, it begins to HAIL.

ASTRID

Ouch, ouch, *ouch!*

Astrid yells but she's laughing at the same time. They run for the open door. Astrid darts inside. Jamie follows just as lightning FLASHES again. This time it's preceded by a *snap* instead of a *click*.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

ASTRID

Jamie! *Look!*

Jamie turns back just in time to see BALLS OF ST. ELMO'S FIRE BOUNCE and ROLL down the summit's scree-littered slope. One by one they POP out of existence.

ASTRID

This is fantastic! How can you not believe in God when you see a miracle like this?

JAMIE
*It is a miracle! The miracle of
 nature!*

They watch as the HAIL turns to RAIN and it comes down in a DELUGE. Through the open door, Skytop is BLOTTED out, but the IRON ROD is visible as it's STRUCK repeatedly. They cling to each other, watching in awe as it GLOWS BLUE, then RED, then fades, only to be STRUCK again. Jamie and Astrid start making out. It gets heated fast.

ASTRID
 I want you.

Her voice is so low Jamie barely hears her over the rain.

JAMIE
 Huh?

ASTRID
 I said I want you. I want to make
 love to you. Now.

JAMIE
 Now?

ASTRID
 I told you there'd be a right time,
 and this is definitely it.

Cue "A Whiter Shade of Pale" by Procol Harum. Astrid throws her arms around him and jumps up on him, locking her thighs around his hips. They KISS fiercely, hands roaming. The cabin LEAKS on and around them. Jamie carries Astrid across the room to an old mattress shoved in a corner where the roof is still whole. They fall on it, soaking, and peel each other's clothes off.

ASTRID
 This doesn't feel wrong.

JAMIE
 It's not.

ASTRID
 I love you.

JAMIE
 I love you too.

**MACRO: AN ANT TRUNDLES ACROSS THE MATTRESS UNAWARE OF THE
 NAKED GIANTS HAVING SEX ON IT**

INT. SCHOOL, HALLWAY - DAY

"A Whiter Shade of Pale" continues. ON A MAN'S BACK as he walks purposefully down an empty high school hallway. We follow him but never see his face. He turns a corner and enters . . .

INT. SCHOOL, CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

. . . a classroom where a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN (30) grades papers. A nameplate on her desk says: **MS. MORTON**. She looks up, sees him, and freezes.

BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN
You're not supposed to be he--

The man raises a GUN and SHOTS HER IN THE HEAD. She FALLS out of her chair, and out of frame. The shooter moves forward, AIMS DOWN and FIRES TWO MORE TIMES, then points the gun at his own temple and BLOWS himself out of frame. **"A Whiter Shade of Pale"** plays LOUD.

CUT TO:

BLACK

We hear Laura Morton's broken voice over a long distance phone call.

LAURA
Jamie . . . something happened.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Mid-80s. Jamie (21, long hair and an earring), CONNIE (25), and their parents, RICHARD and LAURA, stand around the open grave of CLAIRE MORTON with the rest of the mourners. A PASTOR reads from the Good Book about seeing through a glass darkly.

EXT. CEMTERY - AFTER

Jamie stops at the grave of PATSY and MORRIE JACOBS. He takes a bottle of whiskey from his coat, takes a big swig, and is about to put it away when Connie appears at his side. Jamie offers and Connie, looking out for their folks, sneaks a sip.

CONNIE
You remember the Terrible Sermon?

JAMIE
Yes. Very well.

CONNIE
We were all so shocked at the time,
we chalked it up to grief. But you
know what? I think I'd like to find
Reverend Jacobs and shake his hand.
He was brave to say those things. I
think every word was right.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Early 90s. Jamie (now 27 and skinny as a rail) watches TRUE ROMANCE in a nearly deserted movie theater. He bites a straw in half and uses it to snort heroin off the back of his hand. Returns his attention to the screen, stoned out of his mind, as Clarence and Alabama fall in love over a "Sgt. Fury and his Howling Commandos" comic book.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

A SHARP KNOCK awakens Jamie with a start in a roachpit of a motel. He's soaking wet. So is the bed. He pissed himself while he was in a heroin-induced slumber. He gets up and zombie shuffles to the door. Dirty clothes are strewn across the floor. He almost trips over his guitar case. He opens the door and sees a BAND VAN with a WHITE LIGHTNING logo on the side TEAR out of the parking lot. A note is taped to his door. Jamie reads it: *You missed your last show. You're fired. If you don't clean up your act, you'll be in prison a year from now. That's if you're lucky. Dead if you're not.*

INT. MOTEL, OFFICE - DAY

Jamie, hiding behind dark sunglasses, speaks to the HARD-FACED COUNTRY GIRL (50s) behind the counter.

HARD-FACED COUNTRY GIRL
Your group's already checked out.

JAMIE
I'm aware. I'm no longer with the
band.

She raises an eyebrow.

JAMIE
Creative differences. I'll be
staying another night.

HARD-FACED COUNTRY GIRL
Uh-huh, okay. Cash or credit?

Jamie gives her a credit card. She runs it.

HARD-FACED COUNTRY GIRL
Declined. Which makes me dubious
about taking cash. Supposing you
have any.

Jamie gives her the best smile he can muster.

JAMIE
The card's good. They made a
mistake. Happens all the time.

HARD-FACED COUNTRY GIRL
Then you'll be able to rectify it
at some other motel. There's four
more down the block.

JAMIE
Try the card again.

HARD-FACED COUNTRY GIRL
Honey, I look at you and I don't
have to.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Quick cuts. Jamie packs his shit up, counts his cash, shoots up the last of his heroin. Looks at that note again. The word **DEAD** jumps out at him. He flips it over, revealing that it was written on the back of a flyer for the **TULSA STATE FAIR**.

EXT. TULSA STATE FAIR - SUNSET

Cue "**Jockey Full of Bourbon**" by **Tom Waits**. Roller coasters WHIRL and TWIRL, trailing HAPPY SCREAMS behind each HAIRPIN TURN and suicidal PLUNGE. The midway is congested with customers lined up for fried dough and hot dogs.

Jamie wanders through the crowded amusement park, past the shooting gallery, Skee-ball, and the Wheel of Fortune. He's sick and feverish. His eyes move, scanning faces on the fringes of the crowd, on the lookout for a dealer.

He comes across a mini-golf course filled with LAUGHING TEENAGERS. A GUY with shifty eyes and unwashed hair discreetly takes cash from TWO GIRLS and palms them something in return.

They split and shifty eyes spots Jamie, instantly sizes him up for what he is, and motions for him to follow him somewhere more discreet. James starts to follow, but stops suddenly, hearing something in the distance. A strange ELECTRIC CRACKLE followed by APPLAUSE, LAUGHTER, and CRIES OF AMAZEMENT. Jamie forgets the dealer and heads towards those sounds. As he nears the source, an AMPLIFIED VOICE grows louder and clearer, and each crackle is accompanied by a BRIGHT BLUE FLASH that reminds us of the lightning on Skytop. **"Jockey Full of Bourbon"** grows quieter and quieter.

AMPLIFIED VOICE

Now that you have seen the power of my Lightning Maker - the only one in the world, I assure you - I'll give you an *amazing* demonstration before I open my Electric Studio and offer you the chance to sit for the photographic representation of a lifetime! But I'll need a volunteer so you'll see *exactly* what you'll be getting for the best ten dollars you ever spent!

Jamie follows that voice to a CROWD of 50 or 60 RUBES standing in front of a raised stage. The CANVAS BACKDROP is 6- FEET WIDE and at least 20 HIGH - A MOVIE SCREEN TURNED ON IT'S SIDE. On it is the IMAGE of a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN on a BALLROOM FLOOR. Her black hair is piled atop her head. Her strapless evening gown is cut low, the tops of her breasts curve above it. Diamond earrings and blood red lipstick. Above the giant raven-haired beauty, a sign in LIGHTS reads: **PORTRAITS IN LIGHTNING**. Facing the canvas is AN OLD-FASHIONED CAMERA ON A TRIPOD that has a BLACK DRAPE the photographer can throw over his head in the back. Next to it is a FLASH-POWDER TRAY on a post.

THE SHOT: CUE David Bowie's **"The Man Who Sold the World"** and we SWOOP OVER THE CROWD to the stage, taking everything described above in in a SINGLE SHOT that culminates in our arrival in CLOSE UP on THE HOODED MAN whose voice we've been hearing amplified through a microphone. Right before we hit him that flash pan IGNITES in a BURST OF ELECTRIC BLUE FIRE. Then **CHARLES JACOBS** (now mid-forties, mustache) THROWS BACK THE HOOD. He's become a BLACK-SUITED, TOP-HATTED CARNIE.

JACOBS

Volunteer? May I have a volunteer?
It's perfectly safe, I assure you!
Come on, folks, I always heard
Sooners were famous in the Lower
Forty-eight for their bravery!

Jamie stares at his old minister from the back of the crowd. A couple of MEN raise their hands, but Jacobs laughs and points at the beautiful girl looming over his shoulder on the giant canvas.

JACOBS

I'm sure you men are brave as the devil on Saturday night, but none of you would look good in a strapless. I want a *gal*. A *pretty gal*! A pretty little *Sooner gal*!

The men in the crowd HOOT and HOLLER. Jacobs points his cordless microphone toward someone in the front row.

JACOBS

How about you, miss? You're about as pretty a gal as anyone could ask for!

The PRETTY SOONER GAL (blonde, we don't see her face) protests, but her friends are having none of it. They push her forward, and she mounts the steps to the stage, tanned thighs flashing beneath the frayed hem of her short denim skirt. Her top leaves a flirty inch of midriff revealed. WHISTLES from some of the men in the crowd.

Jamie moves through the crowd towards the stage. All the colors in the park seem BRIGHTER now, the carousel calliope and the screams from the roller coaster LOUDER. Seeing Jacobs again, coupled with his fever, has sent Jamie into a twilight world that feels more like a dream than reality. Think nightmarish Oliver Stone/Bob Richardson frames. "The Man Who Sold the World" continues, growing in volume.

JACOBS

Every pretty girl carries her own positive charge!

Jacobs SWEEPS off his tophat and the tray beside the camera EXPLODES again with something that's certainly not flash powder. The canvas backdrop LIGHTS UP IN A DAZZLING BLUE GLARE and the face of the girl in the evening gown is blotted out. Jamie winces. The crowd oohs and ahhs. As the dazzle fades Jamie sees - or *thinks he sees* - the face of the HARD-FACED REDHEAD who kicked him out of the motel earlier. Then the ballroom girl returns in her low-cut spangly gown.

On stage, Jacobs puts his arm around the pretty Sooner gal and turns her to face the crowd. It's ASTRID. She hasn't aged a day. On Jamie's reaction, "The Man Who Sold the World" peaks in volume and fades to nothing over a

FLASH CUT: ECU. *Astrid blows cigarette smoke into Jamie's open mouth. Their lips nearly touching.*

Then we're back and it's not Astrid, it's the pretty little Sooner gal. Jacobs's ASSISTANT, a KID with zits and a bad haircut, trots out with a chair and places it in front of the camera. He then makes comic business of dusting off Jacobs's old-fashioned coat.

JACOBS
Sit down, dear. I promise you a
shockingly good time.

His assistant does a little electric jitter. The audience yuks it up as she takes a seat in the chair. Jacobs's eyes find Jamie, pass on, then come back. After a second's consideration they move on again.

PRETTY SOONER GAL
Will it hurt?

JACOBS
Not a bit. And unlike any other
lady who dares to step forward,
your portrait will be . . .

Jacobs turn to the crowd and looks directly at Jamie.

JACOBS
. . . absolutely free.

His assistant fastens a white silk blindfold over her eyes.

PRETTY SOONER GAL
Who wants --

Jacobs promptly puts his microphone in front of her mouth, amplifying her.

PRETTY SOONER GAL
-- a picture of me wearin a
blindfold?

The audience eats this up.

JACOBS
My dear, I think you'll be
surprised.

Jacobs turns to address the crowd.

JACOBS

Electricity! Although we take it for granted, it's the greatest natural wonder of the world! It's the foundation of our modern civilization! Some claim to understand it, ladies and gentlemen, but none understand the *secret* electricity, that power which binds the very universe into one harmonic whole. Do *I* understand it? No, I do not. Not fully. Yet I know its power to destroy, to heal, and to create magical beauty! What's your name, miss?

PRETTY SOONER GAL

Cathy Morse.

JACOBS

Cathy, you've heard the old saying beauty is in the eye of the beholder--

CATHY MORSE

Yes, of course.

JACOBS

You and I and everyone here are going to witness the truth of that saying tonight, and when you leave here, you'll have a portrait you can show your grandchildren. One they'll show *their* grandchildren! And if those as-yet-unborn ancestors don't marvel over it, my name's not Dan Jacobs.

On Jamie. *But it isn't.*

JACOBS

Now, ladies and gentlemen, you may want to shield your eyes!

Jacobs's assistant covers his own. Jacobs whirls, and disappears beneath the black cloth on the back of the camera.

JACOBS

Close your eyes, Cathy! Even beneath the blindfold, an electrical pulse this powerful can be dazzling! I'll count to three! One . . . two . . . and . . . *three!*

The air THICKENS with STATIC. Jamie and the crowd shuffle back a step or two. Then comes a hard *click* and the world LIGHTS UP in a BLUE BURST OF ELECTRICITY. *Aaaahhh*, goes the crowd. And when they can see again and realize what's become of the canvas backdrop: AAAAAAHHHHHHH!

The low-cut evening gown, the inviting curve of bosom, the hairdo, all the same. But the breasts are smaller now and the hair blonde instead of black. The face has changed too. It's Cathy Morse standing there on the ballroom floor. 20 feet high. The diamond earrings are there, and although the real Cathy's lipstick is candy pink, the lipstick on Giant Cathy is bright red. Did I mention Giant Cathy isn't wearing a blindfold?

The crowd EXHALES a low gust of astonishment. Jacobs pops out from beneath the black cloth and pulls a plate from the back of his camera. He shows it to them, and they go AAAAHHHHH again. Jacobs bows, then turns to Cathy, whose eyebrows are furrowed in puzzlement above her blindfold.

JACOBS

You may take off your blindfold,
Cathy. It's safe now.

She slips it down and he holds out the plate to her. We see the picture on the plate: Cathy, our pretty little Sooner Gal, has taken the place of the beautiful woman in the photo. Her hands go to her mouth. Jacobs is right there, mike in hand, ready to catch her reaction.

CATHY

Oh my God . . .

JACOBS

Now turn around!

She stands, turns, looks, and REELS BACK at the sight of herself 20 feet high. Jacobs steadies her. Then Giant Cathy does a fashion-model turn, revealing the back of her gown, which is cut much lower than the front. She looks over her shoulder at everyone and WINKS. People GASP. There are a few SCREAMS as well. Jamie watches in feverish wonder.

CATHY

Oh my fuckin God!

The crowd LAUGHS and CHEERS. Cathy turns bright red and they cheer even harder. On the canvas, Giant Cathy changes. The blonde hair grows muddy. The features fade, but those red lips remains bright, like the grin of the Cheshire Cat. The original girl reappears on the canvas.

JACOBS
But *this* version will never fade!

He holds up the old fashioned plate again.

JACOBS
My assistant will print and frame
it for you, Cathy. You can pick it
up before you go home tonight.

Jacobs's assistant collects the plate and Cathy from Jacobs.
He leads her offstage while Jacobs looks calmly out at the
crowd, knowing he's got them right where he wants them.

JACOBS
Who's next, folks?

HANDS CLUTCHING MONEY FLY INTO THE AIR. People argue over
who's next. Jacobs smiles and his eyes fall on Jamie once
more. Jamie stares up at the giant ballroom girl through
delirious, feverish eyes. Jacobs glances back at the canvas,
concerned, but all is as it should be. When his eyes return
to Jamie, he sees Jamie's roll back in his head. Jacobs
watches as the skinny junkie in the oversize Kurt Cobain
sweater hits the ground like a bag of bones. **CUT TO BLACK**

INT. BOUNDER - NIGHT

Jamie awakens. He's in a bed in an RV, a Bounder to be exact.
He sits up, slick with sweat and shivering. **A SHADOW FALLS
OVER HIM**. It's Jacobs. He holds out a glass of OJ with a
straw sticking out of it. Jamie takes a sip.

JACOBS
Slow, Jamie.

Jamie sips some more, then tries to take the glass and chug
it, but Jacobs holds it away from him.

JACOBS
Slow, I said.

Jacobs gives him another sip.

JAMIE
I need to score.

JACOBS
Yes. I saw the tracks. I intend to
maintain you until you've beaten
whatever bug you've got. Otherwise
you'll just throw up whatever I
feed you, and we can't have that.
(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Not when you look to be at least
fifty pounds underweight.

From his pocket, Jacobs produces a brown gram bottle. A small spoon is attached to the cap. Jamie reaches for it but Jacobs shakes his head and holds it away from him like the OJ.

JACOBS
Same deal. I do the driving.

He unscrews the cap, dips out a tiny spoonful of grimy white powder, and Jamie snorts it up his right nostril. Jacobs dips again and Jamie treats the left one.

JAMIE
Where'd you get it?

JACOBS
I've been working amusement parks
and the carny circuit for a long
time now. If I couldn't find drugs,
I'd be either blind or an idiot.
It's why you came here, wasn't it?

JAMIE
I need more. I need a shot.

JACOBS
No. A shot's what you want. I have
no interest in helping you get
high. You need to rest. If you're
better in the morning, we'll
discuss many things, including how
to remove that monkey from your
back.

JAMIE
Give me a little more. *Please.*

Jacobs considers, then parcels out two stingier hits. *Snort.*

JACOBS
Giving heroin to a man with a bad
case of the flu. I must be crazy.

JAMIE
You knew me. I could see it. How?

JACOBS
Because your mother lives in your
face, Jamie. Your ID confirmed it.
I hope Laura's well.

JAMIE
She's dead. Her and Claire both.

Jamie lays back down.

JACOBS
I'm sorry to hear that.

JAMIE
There's a claim ticket in my wallet
for my bag and my guitar. The
clothes don't matter, but the
guitar does.

JACOBS
Bus station or train station?

JAMIE
Greyhound.

JACOBS
I'll take care of it.

JAMIE
Why are you calling yourself Dan?

JACOBS
Because it's my name. Charles
Daniel Jacobs. Now go to sleep.

INT. BOUNDER - DAY

Jamie and Jacobs sit at his dinette. Jamie eats eggs. He's
still shaky. His guitar leans nearby.

JAMIE
The trick with the picture. How'd
you do it?

JACOBS
Trick? You wound me. The image on
the backdrop's coated with a
phosphorescent substance. The
camera's also an electrical
generator. The flash is very
powerful and very special. It
projects the image of the subject
onto the girl in the evening dress.
It doesn't hold for long; the
backdrop's too large. The pictures
I sell, on the other hand, last
much longer.

JAMIE

Long enough so she can show it to her grandchildren?

JACOBS

Well, no.

JAMIE

How long?

JACOBS

Two years. Give or take.

JAMIE

By which time you're long gone.

JACOBS

Indeed. But the pictures that matter . . .

(taps his forehead)

Up here. For all of us. Don't you agree?

JAMIE

But . . . Reverend Jacobs . . .

JACOBS

Please don't call me that. Plain old Dan will do. That's who I am now. Dan the Lightning Portraits Man. Or Charlie, if that's more comfortable for you.

JAMIE

But she turned around. The girl on the background did a complete 360.

JACOBS

A simple trick of motion picture projection. Do you want to get better, Jamie?

JAMIE

I feel a little better. Must have been one of those 24 hour things.

JACOBS

I'm not talking about the flu.

JAMIE

I'm fine.

Jacobs takes out the little brown bottle and holds it out to Jamie, swinging it on its little silver chain. Jamie reaches for it. Jacobs pulls it back.

JACOBS

I believe I can cure you with an electrical treatment.

JAMIE

Cure me the way you did Connie?

Jacobs looks surprised and laughs.

JACOBS

You remember that.

JAMIE

Of course. How could I forget it?

JACOBS

A dubious cure at best. More likely the placebo effect. I'm offering you an *actual* cure.

JAMIE

From Dan the Lightning Portraits Man?

JACOBS

You're judging me by my carny persona. But that's all it is, Jamie, a persona. When I'm not wearing my costume and making a living, I try to tell the truth. In fact, I mostly tell the truth when I'm working. That picture *will* amaze Cathy Morse's friends. Now stop dodging and answer me. Do you want to get better or not?

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

An all-but-destitute strip mall in a forlorn industrial zone. Jacobs parks the Bounder in front of an abandoned auto body shop and he and Jamie climb out.

JACOBS

The portraits are really just a way of supporting myself while I conduct my experiments.

(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)
I've come a long way since my
pastoral days, but I've still got a
long way to go. You have no idea.
Come in, Jamie. Come in.

INT. AUTO BODY SHOP - CONTINUOUS

They step inside a large garage. Air conditioners WHISPER. Jacobs flicks a modified bank of switches and a dozen brilliant lights come on. Jamie shields his eyes and looks around. He sees work tables covered with scavenged electrical equipment. Thick cords snake every which way. Some disappear into metal containers that could be Craftsman tool chests; others loop back to dark equipment on the tables. Jamie shudders and rubs his arms.

JACOBS
The air conditioners are my own
design. As for the lights, you
could wrap a hand around the bulbs
without burning yourself. Or even
heating your skin for that matter.

Jamie reaches up towards one, then thinks better of it.

JAMIE
Charlie, you're not messing around
with anything radioactive, are you?

JACOBS
Nuclear's a dead end. Energy for
idiots. Electricity breeds
electricity, if you know what
you're doing. Let's leave it at
that. Come over here, Jamie.

Jacobs leads him to the work tables.

JAMIE
There doesn't seem to be much here.
I expected more.

JACOBS
(cheerily)
Flashing lights! Chrome-plated
knife-switches sticking out of sci-
fi control panels! Star Trek
telescreens!

JAMIE
It just seems kind of sparse.

JACOBS

It is. I've gone about as far as I can for the time being. I've sold some of my equipment. Other stuff - more controversial stuff - I've dismantled and put in storage. I've done good work here in Tulsa, especially considering how little spare time I have. Keeping body and soul together is an annoying business, as I'm sure you know. But yes, I've made some progress toward my ultimate goal--

JAMIE

Your ultimate goal being what?

Jacobs grabs a paint-spattered wooden chair and sits it in front of a black box that looks like a Marshall amp.

JACOBS

Sit here.

Jamie sees a FADED PHOTOGRAPH on the table. He reaches for it and Jacobs makes a move as if to stop him, then just stands there. It's PATSY AND MORRIE.

JAMIE

We used to call him Tag-Along-Morrie.

JACOBS

Did you?

JAMIE

Yeah. And we were all in love with your wife. Claire too. I think Mrs. Jacobs was who she wanted to be.

Jamie sets the photo down.

JACOBS

What happened to Claire?

JAMIE

Her psycho ex-husband killed her. He shot her in the head . . . *three times*, Charlie. How could someone do a thing like that? Mom got cancer very soon after. You never remarried?

JACOBS

No. Patsy and Morrie were all I wanted. Needed. There's not a day I don't think of them, not a week I don't dream they're okay. It was the accident that was the dream, I think. Then I wake up. Tell me something, Jamie. Do you ever wonder where Claire is? Or your mother? *If they are?*

JAMIE

No. The Terrible Sermon took care of that.

JACOBS

Is that what they called it when I left?

JAMIE

Yeah.

Jacobs turns on the thing that looks like a Marshall amp and it emits a low, almost musical HUM.

JACOBS

Did you ever make it up to Skytop, Jamie?

JAMIE

I did. I took my first girlfriend there during an epic storm.

(nostalgic)

Astrid Soderberg . . .

JACOBS

Astrid Soderberg. I'm sure she was as unique as her name. How was the lightning?

JAMIE

Spectacular. Everything you said it would be and more.

JACOBS

I'm glad you went. Would you like a small pick-me-up before we begin?

He produces the brown bottle, considers it, then hands it to Jamie.

JACOBS

Since we can hope this will be your last, why don't you do the honors?

He doesn't have to ask twice. Jamie takes two heaping snorts and sits down in the chair, smiling. Jacobs retrieves the little brown bottle and opens a cabinet. He brings out a pair of battered, taped-up headphones with crisscrosses of metal mesh over the earpads and plugs them into the humming device. He holds them out to Jamie.

JAMIE

If I hear "Stairway to Heaven," I'm out of here.

Jacobs smiles and says nothing. Jamie puts them on.

JAMIE

Have you tried this on anyone else?
Will it hurt?

JACOBS

It won't hurt.

Jacobs shoves a mouthguard in Jamie's mouth.

JACOBS

Just a precaution.

Jacobs walks back to thing that isn't a Marshall amp and takes a white plastic box no bigger than a doorbell from his pocket and presses the button.

JACOBS

I think you'll--

There's a *CLICK* so loud the rest of what he says is lost and we **CUT TO:**

BLACK

JAMIE

*Something. Something, something,
something. Happened. Happened.
Something happened. Something
happened, happened, something
happened. Happened. Something --*

BACK TO:

INT. AUTO BODY SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Jacobs bends over Jamie. The headphones are gone.

JACOBS

Stop that. You're all right.

He doesn't sound sure. He sounds scared. One of Jamie's hands SHOOTs up into the air like a second-grader who knows the right answer.

JAMIE
Something. Something. Something.
Happened. Happened, happened.
Something happened.

Jacobs SLAPS him hard. Jamie JERKS backwards. He lowers his hand and the broken record player in his mouth stops spinning.

JACOBS
What's your name?

JAMIE
Jamie Morton.

JACOBS
Middle name?

JAMIE
Edward.

JACOBS
My name?

JAMIE
Charles Jacobs. Charles *Daniel*
Jacobs.

JACOBS
See if you can stand up.

Jamie rises from the chair and staggers. Jacobs catches him by the elbow and steadies him.

JACOBS
Good so far. Now walk across the
room.

He does, at first weaving like a drunk, but steady by the time he returns to Jacobs.

JACOBS
Good. Let's head back to the
fairgrounds. You need to rest.

JAMIE
Something *did* happen. What?

JACOBS
A minor restructuring of your
brainwaves, I believe.

JAMIE
You believe.

JACOBS
Yes.

JAMIE
But you don't *know*?

JACOBS
I've found certain important books
very difficult to obtain, and I
have a long way to go in my studies
as result. Sometimes that means
taking small risks. Acceptable ones
only. You're fine, aren't you?

EXT. AUTO BODY SHOP - DAY

Jacobs locks up. Jamie reaches for the Bounder's passenger door and his hand goes straight up in the air instead. For a tense moment, it seems like it may not come down. Then it does. He and Jacobs exchange a glance.

JACOBS
That will pass.

JAMIE
How do you know, if you don't know
exactly what you did?

JACOBS
Because I've seen it before.

INT. BOUNDER - DAY

As Jacobs drives, he offers Jamie the bottle of heroin.

JACOBS
You can have this if you want it.

Jamie glances at the bottle.

JAMIE
Later, maybe.

JACOBS
Jamie, would you like to work for me?

JAMIE
Doing what?

JACOBS
Playing the guitar, of course!
Something suspenseful, something
that will put it in the rubes'
heads that the girl might actually
get fried.

JAMIE
Like "House of the Rising Sun."

JACOBS
Yes! Exactly! Tell me, Jamie, can
you tie a tie?

JAMIE
Sure.

JACOBS
Just don't get too wedded to the
job. I intend to move on when the
fair closes down.

JAMIE
Move on where?

JACOBS
I'm not sure, but I've gotten used
to traveling alone. Just so you
know.

CUT TO BLACK

JAMIE
*Something. Happened. Something
happened. Something, something.*

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS, MIDWAY - NIGHT

Jamie Morton, naked save for one sock and with a piece of
rubber tubing wrapped around his bicep, stands under an icy
rind of moon.

JAMIE
Something happened.

He has a FORK in one hand and POKES his swollen upper arm with it over and over. Blood beads up from a dozen pricks.

JAMIE

Something.

(stab)

Something happened.

(stab-stab)

Something--

We hear a *click* and the fork tumbles out of his hand. He looks around. He clearly has no idea where he is or how he got there. He unwraps the makeshift tourniquet and looks up at the moon, dumbfounded. Runs off through the sleeping fairgrounds.

INT. BOUNDER - LATE AFTERNOON

Quick cuts. Jamie, distracted, tunes his guitar. Jacobs gets on his costume. As Jamie ties Jacobs's tie:

JAMIE

Charlie, something happened I need to talk to you about.

JACOBS

What?

There's a KNOCK at the door. Jacobs goes to answer it, checking his watch.

JACOBS

If it's not important, I wish you'd come back la--

A BIG PISSED-OFF FARMER BARGES in and PUNCHES him. Jacobs STAGGERS backwards, falling on his ass.

PISSED-OFF FARMER

Goddamn you! This is all your fault! She'll have a record that'll follow her 'round the rest of her life 'cause of you!

He bends down and seizes Jacobs by the lapels. Jamie grabs an empty pot from the sink and BONKS him on the side of the head. The farmer lets go of Jacobs and looks at Jamie in astonishment. Tears leak from the corners of his eyes. Jacobs scoots away from him, lip split and bleeding.

JAMIE

Sir, please calm down! We don't know what you're talking about!

PISSED-OFF FARMER

I'm talking about my daughter! I'm talking about Cathy Morse! That huckster told her the picture was free 'cause she got up onstage, but it wasn't! That picture's cost her plenty! Ruined her life's what it did!

Jamie sets the pot aside and approaches the farmer cautiously. Now that his initial fury has been vented, he just looks sad and bewildered. Jamie puts a gentle hand on the big man's shoulder.

JAMIE

Come on outside. Let's get some fresh air and you can tell me all about it.

PISSED-OFF FARMER

Who are you?

JAMIE

His agent.

PISSED-OFF FARMER

Yeah? Can you give me compensation? Because I want it. The lawyer's fees alone are 'bout to half kill me.

(points at Jacobs)
On account of you!

JACOBS

I . . . I have no idea what you're talking about, sir, I assure you.

Jamie leads the farmer out the door.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

A table shaded by canvas umbrellas. Jamie brings the farmer a Coke.

JAMIE

Tell me what the problem seems to be, Mr. Morse.

PISSED-OFF FARMER

That picture he took of her's the problem. She walked around with it damn near everywhere.

(MORE)

PISSED-OFF FARMER (CONT'D)

Her friends made fun of her, but
 she didn't care. She told 'em
"That's how I really look." I tried
 to get the notion out of her head.
 My wife told me to leave her be,
 that it'd pass on it's own. But it
 didn't.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

CATHY MORSE, our pretty little Sooner gal, STRIDES with purpose into a jewelry store carrying a SHOPPING BAG. She blows past a SALES CLERK - *May I help you, miss?* - and goes to a glass display case. She produces a HAMMER from her bag and SHATTERS the case. An ALARM sounds. She ignores it, reaching into the case. The broken glass CUTS HER ARMS. She brings out a pair of DIAMOND EARRINGS and shows them to the bewildered clerk, BLOOD DRIPPING from her arms. She EXCLAIMS over the ALARM:

CATHY

*These are mine! They go with my
 dress!*

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

The farmer gets up, clutching the remains of his Coke. He looks at the drying blood on his knuckle as if he didn't know where it had come from.

PISSED-OFF FARMER

Siccin the cops on him wouldn't do
 no good, would it? After all, all
 he did was take her picture. Hell,
 it was even free.

He starts off, then turns back to Jamie.

PISSED-OFF FARMER

Has he done it before, mister? Has
 he knocked other ones for a loop
 the way he knocked my Cathy?

FLASH CUT: *Jamie, stark naked, pokes his arm repeatedly with a fork under that icy rind of moon and says "something happened" over and over.*

JAMIE

No, sir. Not at all.

PISSED-OFF FARMER
Like you'd say, even if he had.
Being his agent and all.

The farmer goes, head lowered, not looking back. Jamie watches him disappear into the crowd, shame on his face.

INT. BOUNDER - MOMENTS LATER

Jacobs, agitated, holds ice to his fattening lip and tries to get presentable for the night's show.

JACOBS
Tie my tie for me again, will you?
We're late.

JAMIE
You need to fix her. The way you
fixed me. With the headphones.

JACOBS
Do you think Daddy Dearest would
let me within a mile of her?
Besides, what's wrong with her -
this compulsion - it'll wear off on
its own.

JAMIE
It will?

JACOBS
Yes. She'll be fine, and any lawyer
worth his salt will be able to
convince the judge she wasn't
herself. It's a slap on the wrist.

JAMIE
Are you sure? Because there's
something wrong me with me too.

JACOBS
What?

JAMIE
I had a blackout or I was
sleepwalking, I don't know what. I
woke up naked out in the
fairgrounds in the middle of the
night. I was trying to inject smack
into my veins with a fork.

Jamie rolls up his sleeve and shows Jacobs the marks.

JACOBS
You'll be fine. They'll pass.

JAMIE
You're learning as you go, aren't you? All your customers are actually guinea pigs. They just don't know it. I was a guinea pig.

JACOBS
Did I free you from heroin addiction or not?

JAMIE
Yes.

JACOBS
Is that not worth a few bouts of sleepwalking?

They stare at each other, eyes locked. Jamie wants to say no . . . But he can't.

JACOBS
Please, tie my tie.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY

Jamie walks through the fairground, eating a burger. He comes to the place where the Bounder should be parked. It's gone.

EXT. AUTO BODY SHOP - DAY

Jamie climbs out of a CAB and rushes to the door. It's open.

INT. AUTO BODY SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Jamie's guitar case and duffle bag sit in the middle of the bare garage. There's an envelope taped to his case. Inside is cash, an Amtrak ticket, and a note. Written on it is the name and address of man named **Hugh Yates** in Colorado. Below the address, Jacobs has scrawled: ***This man will give you a job, if you want it. He owes me. Thanks for tying my tie. CDJ.*** Jamie stands there in that empty space.

JAMIE
(a whisper)
Something happened to me here.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

TIGHT ON A FOGGY MIRROR. On it is our next chapter mark:

3. A F T E R E F F E C T S

A HAND WIPEs away the glass REVEALING **JAMIE MORTON** (now 40s, same haunted eyes). The lower half of his face is covered in shaving cream. He's about to make the first cut with his razor but stops, feeling a tickle in his nose.

Jamie brushes it with his finger, nose wiggling. He sniffs and we ZOOM IN on his irritated nostril. Jamie brushes it again - this time with his palm - and leans into the mirror to see what the hell is going on in there when A BIG ANT CRAWLS OUT of his nostril and gets stuck in his shaving cream. Jamie CRIES OUT IN FRIGHT and we **CUT TO BLACK:**

JAMIE

*Something. Happened. Something
happened. Something, something.*

EXT. FREEWAY - DAWN

A SPEEDING CAR ROARS past Jamie - HORN BLARING. It misses him by inches just as he AWAKENS from a blackout. He stands in the MIDDLE OF A FREEWAY. He wears a pair of boxers and there's a necktie wrapped tight around his arm. In his hand is a TOOTHBRUSH.

JAMIE

Jesus!

Jamie stumbles towards the breakdown lane, TRIPS, lands on the road with an *oomph!* and SCRAMBLES back to his feet as another car nearly SQUASHES him. *HONNNKKK!* The car CLIPS him - *OWW!* - sending Jamie SPINNING. The driver HOLLERS from an open window - *FUCKING BUM!!!* Jamie - terrified - DASHES across the other lanes and LEAPS over the concrete wall.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING

Jamie, scratched up and bloody, tries the door. He's locked himself out. Groans.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CONTINUOUS

Jamie scales the wall of his apartment building, climbing from one balcony to the next. An OLD LADY watering her plants eyes him suspiciously. Jamie gives her an awkward wave.

INT. JAMIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jamie comes in through the sliding glass door.

JAMIE

Sarah?

Jamie spots his T-shirt on the floor, grabs it and pulls it over his head.

JAMIE

Sarah?

Into the bedroom he goes. The bed is covered in NEWSPAPER and MAGAZINE CLIPPINGS. The empty box they were stored in sits on the edge of the bed. The closet door stands open. There's a space on the top shelf where that box obviously belongs. Jamie sighs and looks down at the spiderweb of news stories. Many are about an EVANGELIST named **PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS**.

We see stories about MIRACULOUS HEALINGS at TENT REVIVALS attended by THOUSANDS, comparisons to Oral Roberts, debunking articles calling Jacobs a FRAUD, as well as seemingly unrelated items about MYSTERIOUS DEATHS and people exhibiting STRANGE BEHAVIOR.

INT. JAMIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jamie eats cereal in front of the TV. He watches "**THE DANNY JACOBS HOUR OF HEALING GOSPEL POWER**" grimly. He's showered, with a bandage affixed above his eyebrow - a blossom of blood growing at it's center. There on the screen is **CHARLES DANIEL JACOBS** (now 60s) speaking directly to the camera.

JACOBS

God heals like lightning!

Cut to a TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY giving his testimony in front of a MASSIVE TENT. The bottom of the screen reads: **ROBERT RIVARD, HEALED OF MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY, ST. LOUIS, MO.**

ROBERT

When he grabbed onto my head, I could feel the holy rings right here. Then I heard a snap, like a stick breaking.

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)
*I may have passed out for a second
 or two. Then this... I don't
 know... warmth went down my legs...
 and...*
 (starts crying)
*And I could walk! I was healed! God
 bless Pastor Danny!*

PRELAP: AN ANIMAL CRIES LOUDLY.

EXT. WOLFJAW RANCH - DAWN

Establish a sprawling ranch high up on the Western Slope of the Rockies. That unnerving animal wailing continues loudly.

INT. WOLFJAW RANCH, STABLES - CONTINUOUS

A concerned Jamie, guitar case in tow, walks quickly down the double line of stalls towards HUGH YATES - 60s, think Kurt Russell - who stares sadly into one of the stalls. Just as Jamie reaches him we hear a GUNSHOT and reveal that a RANCH HAND has just put down a HORSE with a BROKEN LEG.

HUGH
 Goddamn shame.

JAMIE
 Sorry, man.

Jamie CLAPS Hugh on the back and eyes the dead horse warily. Hugh looks at him, sees he's all banged up.

HUGH
 The fuck happened to you?

JAMIE
 We've been asking that question since the day we met, Hugh, and I still don't have the answer.

HUGH
 Again? Christ, man, I'm sorry.
 Fucking Mondays.

Hugh throws his arm around Jamie's shoulders and leads him away from the grisly sight.

EXT. WOLFJAW RANCH - MORNING

Jamie and Hugh walk across the ranch. The view is breathtaking.

JAMIE

I've woken up in strange places before, but never like that.

HUGH

You ever thought about strapping yourself in at night?

JAMIE

That's not funny. I could've been killed.

HUGH

Kid, relax--

JAMIE

Don't call me that--

HUGH

Jamie, slow down.
(grabs Jamie's arm)
Stop a second, will you?

JAMIE

(irritated)
What?

HUGH

Look around.

Jamie looks around theatrically.

JAMIE

There. Happy? Can we go to work now?

HUGH

We're standing on one of the most beautiful places in the world and we're alive. Neither of us would be here if not for the 'Rev--

JAMIE

That's easy for you to say. You haven't had an episode in five years.

HUGH

Four. Four years, three months, eight days. You want to know why mine stopped? Because I stopped spending every minute of my life waiting for the next one to happen. Look around, man.

(MORE)

HUGH (CONT'D)
You're missing all this all the
time. It's a miracle we're here,
and if you just looked at things
that way, you'd be a much happier
person, compadre.

JAMIE
Are you done?

HUGH
I'm just trying to help. Look, take
the morning off. Meditate. Studio
2's free. I'll cover for you.

EXT. WOLFJAW RANCH, STUDIO - MORNING

An impressive recording studio. Jamie plugs in his GUITAR, closes his eyes, and plays. We PUSH in on him as a look of peace descends over his face. Music fills the world.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jamie, soaking wet and out of breath, takes a seat across from the enigmatic SARAH (40s, attractive, turtleneck).

JAMIE
Sorry I'm late. It's really coming
down out there.

SARAH
Jamie . . . that's my brother at
the bar. Do you see him?

Jamie glances over and her HUSKY BROTHER gives him a wave. He doesn't look friendly.

JAMIE
Yeah . . . Why's your brother here?

SARAH
He's not gonna hurt you--

JAMIE
Why would he hurt me?

SARAH
Because you hurt me. During your
blackout last night.

She pulls down her turtleneck revealing a bruise.

JAMIE

Jesus.

SARAH

I tried to stop you from leaving -
I was afraid you'd hurt yourself -
and you grabbed my neck. I was so
scared.

JAMIE

Sarah, I don't remember. I'm so
sorry--

He leans forward to touch her and she RECOILS. Her husky
brother nearly jumps off his bar stool. Sarah waves him off.

SARAH

I can't see you anymore. You're a
good person, but you could've
killed me. I'm not pressing
charges, but you have to promise me
you'll get help. Real help. That
televangelist you're obsessed with
is not going to heal you--

JAMIE

Heal me? He did this to me!

SARAH

What are you talking about?

JAMIE

I was a drug addict--

SARAH

A drug addict?

JAMIE

He healed me, and I've been fucked
up ever since.

SARAH

(gets up)
I have to go.

JAMIE

He's hurt other people too, Sarah!
I'm not crazy!

Jamie starts to get up and Sarah's Husky Brother PINS him
back in his seat.

HUSKY BROTHER
You're never to see her again, you
understand me?

He PUSHES Jamie HARD, sending his chair TOPPLING backwards.

HUSKY BROTHER
You're lucky you're crazy!

SARAH
Enough! Let's go!

She drags him out of the restaurant. Jamie lays there on the floor, stunned and humiliated. Everyone stares.

INT. DIVE BAR - LATER

Hugh enters and takes a seat at the bar next to Jamie, who's a couple drinks in.

HUGH
What happened?

JAMIE
I hurt Sarah during the blackout.

HUGH
Jesus. Is she okay?

JAMIE
Luckily. I'm a danger to myself and others. I think I need to check myself into a hospital.

HUGH
(gets up)
Come on. You and me are gonna take a little trip.

JAMIE
Where?

HUGH
To find the 'Rev, and see if he can help you. He's got a tent revival in Texas tomorrow.

INT. AIRPLANE HANGAR - NIGHT

Hugh pulls a cover off of a single-engine CESSNA.

JAMIE

Two guys with a history of sudden
blackouts flying a plane together?
Maybe not the best idea.

HUGH

Jamie, thing about being rich is...
(tosses him headset)
you can afford to live dangerously.

INT. CESSNA - NIGHT

Hugh pilots the Cessna. Jamie stares out the window at a sky
so crowded with stars it seems almost unreal.

HUGH

I'm sorry you're going through
this. I know it was easier when I
was going through my thing too. We
talked more. It's why I think he
sent you my way. So we could keep
an eye on each other.

JAMIE

Know what's funny? Before today, I
could almost have lived with the
blackouts. It's the dreams. I've
always felt . . . *something* lurking
behind them. A malevolent presence.
It's female.

HUGH

A chick?

JAMIE

I always hear a woman whispering my
name.

HUGH

Hell, I'll trade that dream with
you. I never had bad dreams but the
thing with my eyes was terrifying.
Even thinking about now, I . . .

Hugh stops talking. His eyes locked in a stare. Suddenly the
Cessna noise gets LOUDER. Jamie notes the ALTIMETER dropping.
The horizon in front of them moves upward as the plane starts
to TIP DOWNWARD.

JAMIE

Hugh? HUGH!

Hugh doesn't respond. BLACKED OUT. Jamie grabs his shoulders and SHAKES HIM.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
HUGH! WAKE UP! WE'RE GONNA DIE!!

The Cessna is TREMBLING. DROPPING. Jamie grabs the steering wheel, and Hugh finally SWATS his hands away.

HUGH
Whoa, whoa, don't go touching my yokes now.

Jamie looks at him in disbelief as a calm Hugh gently pulls the plane out of it's certain-death dive. He CACKLES.

HUGH
Got you good, didn't I?

JAMIE
Are you serious?!?

HUGH
Four years, three months . . .
(checks his watch)
Nine days. You should've seen your face!

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - NIGHT

Establish. A MASSIVE TENT planted in the middle of a deserted fairground. Crowning the tent is a HUGE ELECTRIC CROSS. From inside comes the sound of LOUD GOSPEL MUSIC and the even-louder rhythmic CLAPPING of a very large audience.

INT. REVIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Several thousand people. Jamie and Hugh watch from the sidelines as a BAND plays on stage. In front of them are a dozen African American GOSPEL SINGERS led by a BALD BLACK MAN who weighs nearly 300 pounds. Hugh shouts in Jamie's ear.

HUGH
I'll be damned! That's Al Stamper. Used to be with the Vo-Lites. He was skinny as a rail back then and had a fro big enough to hide a coffee table in. I thought he was fucking dead. All the coke he snorted, he should be.

The song CLIMAXES and the CROWD goes wild. AL STAMPER addresses them once things die down.

AL
I was a big sinner --

HUGH
(to Jamie)
Told ya!

AL
-- Now, praise God, I'm just a big eater. I was saved by the grace of Jesus and healed of my addictions by Pastor Danny Jacobs.

Praise Jesus! someone shouts from the audience.

AL
That's right, brother, praise his name! Now I want all of you to give it up for the man who changed my life. He's gonna change yours too! Pastor C. Danny Jacobs!

The crowd stands. The applause is DEAFENING. The tent lights go out and PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS steps into a SPOTLIGHT on stage. His mouth is a pale line. His eyes blaze. Then he SMILES and that smile lights up his whole face.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
Sit, brothers and sisters. Let us take fellowship together.

They sit in a great rustling SWOOSH. The tent grows quiet.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
I bring you good news that you have heard before: God loves you. Yes, every one of you. Those who've lived upright lives and those who are neck-deep in sin. When God gives us burdens and afflictions, he does so in love. Can he not lift those burdens and afflictions in that same spirit of love?

An exultant SHOUT comes from Wheelchair Row: *Yes, praise God!*

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
I stand before you, a wanderer on the face of America, and a vessel of God's love. Will you accept me as I accept you?

They shout that they will.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
Once I was married, and had a
little boy. There was a terrible
accident, and they drowned.

The audience MURMURS - almost MOANS. Many of the women are
crying, some of the men as well. Hugh leans over to Jamie.

HUGH
Didn't you say they were in an
accident?

JAMIE
They were. Why would he lie about
that?

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
I turned my face from God then, and
I cursed Him in my heart. I
wandered in the wilderness far from
God, but I never wandered from the
memory of my wife and my little
boy. I put off the teachings of
Jesus, but I never put off this.

He raises his left hand, displaying a gold band that seems
too wide and thick to be an ordinary wedding ring.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
And then one day, I had a
revelation from God even as did
Saul, on the road to Damascus.

God's word! a MAN SHOUTS, lifting his hands heavenward.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
God told me I had work, and that my
work would be to lift the burdens
and afflictions of others. He came
to me in a dream and told me to put
on *another* ring, one that would
signify my marriage to the
teachings of God through His Holy
Word and the teaching of His son,
Jesus Christ. I was in Phoenix
then, working in a godless carnival
show, and God told me to walk into
the desert without food or water.
He told me that in the wilderness I
would find the ring of my second
and final marriage.

(MORE)

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS (CONT'D)

He told me if I remained true to
that marriage, I would do great
good, and be reunited with my wife
and son in heaven, and our true
marriage would be re-consecrated by
His holy throne, in His holy light.

Cries and ejaculations from the crowd. A WOMEN in a trim
business suit and heels falls into the aisle and begins to
testify in a language that seems solely comprised of vowels.
Jamie leans into Hugh and whispers:

JAMIE

*He doesn't believe a word of it.
It's all a lie. They must see that.*

Hugh doesn't hear Jamie. He just stares, transfixed, at
Pastor C. Danny Jacobs. The tent is a tumult of gladness,
Jacobs's voice rising above it, pounding through the *hosannas*
by the grace of electricity. The band begins to play as he
speaks, whipping the crowd into further frenzies.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS

All day I walked. When the sun set,
the night was dark with clouds, not
a star to be seen. But just after
midnight, those clouds parted and a
ray of moonlight shone down on a
pile of rocks. I went to them, and
beneath it, I found . . . this.

Pastor C. Danny Jacobs holds up his right hand On the third
finger is another thick gold band. The audience bursts into
APPLAUSE and HALLELUJAHS.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS

Are there those among you who would
be healed? Are there those among
you with heavy burdens that they
would lay down, and afflictions
they would be free of?

The congregation agrees LOUDLY. The Wheelchair People and the
chronics in the first couple rows stare raptly. There are
bandages and disfigurement, and oxygen masks, and withered
limbs, and braces. The GOSPEL CHOIR begins to sing softly.
USHERS appear like magic. Some begin organizing a line down
the center aisle of those hoping to be healed. Others - *many*
others - circulate in the crowd with large wicker collection
baskets that fill up quickly.

JAMIE

(mutters)
Unbelievable.

A WOMAN IN A WHEELCHAIR is the first in line to be healed.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
What's your name, dear?

WOMAN IN WHEELCHAIR
Rowena Mintour. My husband and I
came all the way from Des Moines.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
Faith brought you here today,
Rowena. Tell me of your affliction.

WOMAN IN WHEELCHAIR
I have terrible arthritis. I can't
walk anymore.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
God heals like lightning, Rowena.
Do you believe that?

WOMAN IN WHEELCHAIR
Yes, I do. I really do.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
Are you ready to have this burden
lifted from you?

She nods, tears spilling down her cheeks. Jacobs GRASPS HER HEAD IN HIS HANDS, pressing the rings to her temples and her face to his chest. He closes his eyes, his lips moving in silent prayer. Suddenly she JERKS. Her hands FLY up to either side and FLAP.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
WALK, ROWENA! YOU ARE HEALED!

She stares into Jacobs's face, her eyes wide with either astonishment or the aftermath of a jolt of electricity. Then she stands up. The crowd BELLOWS *hallelujahs*.

PASTOR C. DANNY JACOBS
Walk to your husband and praise
Jesus with every step!

Rowena embraces Jacobs, kissing his cheeks. Then she TOTTERS away, holding out her arms to keep her balance.

Just then, Jamie's attention is RIPPED from the stage by GAGGING SOUNDS and a SWOOSH of clothes beside him. He turns just in time to see Hugh RUSH out of the tent.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Jamie comes out and sees Hugh throwing up beneath a pole light. When he touches him, Hugh JERKS and STUMBLES, almost slipping in his own vomit. The panicky gaze he turns on Jamie is that of an animal caught in a forest fire.

JAMIE

Hugh? Are you okay?

HUGH

It was a prismatic.

He straightens up, gasping, and wipes his mouth on his sleeve. His face is dead white. His hands tremble.

HUGH

I felt it coming on when he showed off those rings of his. Everything went *sharp*. Then . . . when he started healing folks . . . the colors . . . they got so bright. Shattered everything. Then . . . then all those fragments came together again, but the colors didn't go away. They danced and twisted all around me. It was like looking through a prism. It was like I could see through the world, and there was another world right behind it. A *realer* world. And the people . . . they weren't people anymore.

JAMIE

What were they?

Hugh reaches out and grasps Jamie's shirt. It's the grip of a drowning man. His eyes are huge and horrified.

HUGH

Ants. Huge ants. Browns one and black ones and red ones. They were all staring at him with dead eyes and that poison acid they use was dripping from their mouths. You too, Jamie. I turned to you and I was standing next to a huge ant. There were colors all around you, all the colors of the rainbow, but your eyes were dead, like the rest of them. And your mouth was full of poison.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Jamie and Hugh sit in the back of a cab in silence. Hugh's eyes are closed and he has the window down. The night air cools his face.

DRIVER

You're friend okay, mister?

JAMIE

He's fine. Food poisoning.

HUGH

If I ever see anything like that again, I'll kill myself.

JAMIE

Don't say that.

HUGH

Jamie, don't ever mention Jacobs to me again. Never. If you do, we're done. Are we clear on that?

Jamie nods, too stunned to speak.

HUGH

Good.

EXT. MONTANA - DAY

Establish Big Sky Country.

EXT. JACOBS ESTATE - DAY

A wrought-iron gate flanked by signs: PRIVATE PROPERTY on one side, NO TRESPASSING on the other. Jamie presses the button on the intercom box and waits. A MAN'S VOICE - familiar, a deep baritone - issues from it.

MAN'S VOICE (INTERCOM)

How may I help you?

JAMIE

I'm here to see Pastor Jacobs.

MAN'S VOICE (INTERCOM)

Pastor Jacobs doesn't see callers without an appointment.

JAMIE

I think he'll make an exception for me. Tell him Jamie Morton's here.

MAN'S VOICE (INTERCOM)

I'm sorry, I can't let you in without an appointment. Is there anything else I can help you with?

Irritated, Jamie gets out of his car, a file folder in hand. Walks to the gate.

JAMIE

Nope. I'll help myself.

He CLIMBS the ornate gate.

EXT. JACOBS ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

A vast estate on sprawling grounds. There are several large outbuildings. Jamie trespasses up the driveway. AL STAMPER - that deep baritone from the intercom - opens the front door, but not wide enough to be inviting.

JAMIE

Hello, Mr. Stamper. Jamie Morton.
I'm a big Vo-Lites fan.

Jamie sticks out his hand. Al doesn't take it. He eyes the folder under Jamie's arm suspiciously.

AL

I don't know what you want, but Pastor Danny doesn't need anyone disturbing him. He's got a lot of work to do.

JACOBS (O.S.)

Jamie Morton!

Al reluctantly opens the door wider.

AL

Come on in.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

JACOBS comes down the hall towards them.

JACOBS (O.S.)

You *do* turn up at the most opportune times!

He passes Stamper as if he weren't even there. He wears no holy rings on his hands, just a simple gold band, thin and scratched, on his left ring finger. He shakes Jamie's hand.

JAMIE

It's good to see you, Charlie.
We're a long way from our carny
days, aren't we?

JACOBS

Long, long way. Al, Jamie and I
have a lot to talk about. We'll be
in the library. Attend to the mail.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

Jacobs leads Jamie down the main hall, footfalls echoing.

JACOBS

How's your family?

JAMIE

Dad passed away last spring. Connie
and I are the only Mortons left.
He's still stargazing in Hawaii.

JACOBS

A fellow explorer of the outer
limits. How wonderful! And does he
still have his voice?

JAMIE

Let's have a seat, Charlie.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE, LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

They enter a circular room. Thousands of books on curving shelves. Large windows look out on a spectacular view.

JAMIE

Healing pays well.

JACOBS

In all sorts of ways. I don't need
to ask if you're still off the
drugs. You look healthy. In the
pink, as they say.

They sit. Jacobs crosses his right leg over his left, using his hands to help it along.

JAMIE
Arthritis?

JACOBS
Yes, but not bad.

JAMIE
Why don't you heal yourself? Curing arthritis is your bread and butter, right? Should be a cinch. Or maybe you're afraid of the aftereffects. Is that why Al can't stop eating?

Jacobs raises a hand in a *stop* gesture.

JACOBS
Enough insinuations. You don't need to make them with me, Jamie. Our destinies are too entwined for that.

JAMIE
I don't believe in destiny any more than you believe in God.

JACOBS
You will. Before you leave here today. Mark my words. I'll make you a believer again. Now tell me why you came, and I'll tell you why I'm glad to see you.

JAMIE
I came to tell you you're done. No more healing. It all stops. Today.

JACOBS
And why would I do that when it's done so much good for so many?

JAMIE
The last time we met you told me my aftereffects would pass with time. They haven't. They've gotten worse. The same goes for our mutual friend, Hugh Yates. And Robert Rivard. Do you remember him?

JACOBS
The name rings a faint bell, but I've healed so many.

JAMIE

From Missouri? Muscular dystrophy?
His video's on your website.

JACOBS

Oh, yes, of course.

JAMIE

His MD's gone, but so's his mind.
He's walking, but never farther
than the corner of his room at
Gad's Ridge Psychiatric Hospital.
He's been classed semicatatonic.

FLASH CUT: *ROBERT RIVARD stands in the corner of his tiny room staring blankly at the wall. Drool runs down his chin.*

JACOBS

I'm very sorry to hear that.

JAMIE

Then you'll probably be sorry to
hear about Patricia Farmingdale.
You cured her of peripheral
neuropathy in Cheyenne, Wyoming.
She poured salt in her eyes,
presumably to try and blind
herself. She has no memory of doing
it, let alone why.

FLASH CUT: *PATRICIA FARMINGDALE pours salt in her eyes and grinds it into her corneas with the palms of her hands.*

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Then there's Emil Klein in San
Diego. You healed him of a neck
injury. He now has the periodic
compulsion to go out into his
backyard and eat dirt.

FLASH CUT: *We PUSH IN on EMIL KLEIN (50s, pudgy, balding, did I mention stark naked?). He crouches like an animal in his backyard under a full moon and stuffs giant handfuls of dirt in his mouth. He chews and chews like a horse. Then, as if he hears our approach, he SNAPS to attention like an animal and we see the whites of his eyes staring right at us.*

JAMIE (CONT'D)

And I know you remember Cathy
Morse, your pretty little Sooner
gal--

Jamie opens the folder he brought with him and passes Jacobs a newspaper clipping. It reads: **WOMAN IN DEATH JUMP FROM CYRUS AVERY MEMORIAL BRIDGE**

FLASH CUT: *CATHY MORSE - still that pretty little Sooner gal, albeit an older one - steps off the bridge, face placid.*

JAMIE (CONT'D)

There's more.

Jamie gives Jacobs the folder. Jacobs flips it open, glances at it's contents, tosses it back to him dismissively.

JACOBS

I have my own list, and it's much longer. I've been doing this for forty years, Jamie. You think I don't know about the aftereffects?

JAMIE

I think you don't care.

JACOBS

Suppose I were a neurosurgeon and you came to me with a malignant brain tumor, one not impossible to operate on, but very difficult. Very risky. Suppose I told you that your chances of dying on the table were say . . . twenty-five percent. Wouldn't you still go ahead, knowing that the alternative was a period of misery followed by certain death? Of course you would. You'd beg me to operate.

JAMIE

Cathy Morse didn't beg you for anything. And you made her jump off a building.

JACOBS

I didn't know then what I know now.

JAMIE

You knew enough.

They stare at each other. Then Jacobs rises to his feet, grimacing with discomfort.

JACOBS

You came a long way to scold a tired old man who once saved your life.

(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Come with me, Jamie. I want to show you something.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE, JACOBS'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jacobs sits down in front of a computer displaying a screen saver of endlessly galloping horses. He taps a key and those horses give way to a plain blue desktop with only two folders on it. They are labeled **A** and **B**. He clicks **A**, revealing a list of names and addresses in alphabetical order. He scrolls through them. James watches over his shoulder.

JACOBS

Do you know what these are?

JAMIE

Cures, I'd assume.

JACOBS

Verified cures, all affected by administration of electrical current to the brain - although not the sort of current any electrician would recognize. Over thirty-one hundred in all.

Jacobs closes file **A** and opens file **B**. More names and addresses.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

These are the ones who've suffered significant post-cure aftereffects. Eighty-seven in all. That's less than three percent of the total. Once there were over a hundred and seventy names, but many have stopped having problems - in medical parlance, they have resolved. You seem to be a part of an even smaller percentage, less than one percent to be exact, where the problems persist.

(lets that sink in)

Less than one percent, Jamie. Out of 3200. Jonas Salk didn't have a record that good.

JAMIE

You're not Jonas Salk. You're Josef Mengele.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

And if you don't stop these experiments for good, I'm taking what I know to the press. Last time I checked, the news loves dragging a hypocrite holy man over the coals. One way or another, you're finished. So what's it going to be?

JACOBS

(considers it, but...)

My work is too important to stop. Even for self-preservation.

JAMIE

(gets up, grabs file)

Fine. See you on the front page.

JACOBS

However, if you're so convinced my work needs oversight... who better to oversee it than you?

Jamie stops.

JAMIE

I'm not playing henchman to a mad scientist. You've already got an Igor.

JACOBS

Not a henchman. A chaperone.

(gets up)

Al wants no part of my scientific work; even though he knows it's the basis of my cures, he thinks it's blasphemous. You and I no longer harbor such illusions.

(beat)

You've been there with me since the very beginning, Jamie. You were always my conscience. And now I'm reaching the final steps of the journey I started way back then in that little garage. Stay here. Be my conscience again. Reign me in from the lesser angels of my nature. You can keep me from going too far. You're the only one who can do it. And together we can unlock the mysteries of the universe.

JAMIE

Destiny, huh?

JACOBS
Perhaps more than you know.

Jacobs picks up a letter off a stack of today's mail.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Is it destiny that a letter arrived
earlier today? The same day you
happen to show up on my doorstep?

JAMIE
A letter from who?

JACOBS
(reads)
"Astrid Soderberg". A girl as
unique as her name.

Jamie is stopped in his tracks.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
But unfortunately suffering from
that most common of diseases. She
has cancer, Jamie. Of the lungs.

FLASH CUT: ECU. Jamie blows cigarette smoke into Astrid's open mouth. Their lips nearly touching.

Jamie snatches the letter from him.

JACOBS
In old age arrives the bill for the
mistakes charged in our youth.

Jamie's eyes scan the handwritten letter. He looks like the
ground just fell out from underneath him.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Astrid's going to die, Jamie. I can
heal her. I can save her life. But
I just don't know if I should do it
now, after that stern talking-to
you gave me.

Jacobs knows he has Jamie by the balls now. Jamie lowers the
letter...

JAMIE
Weeks? She only has weeks?

JACOBS
Just to arrange for the air travel
will take time, Jamie.
(sits down, victorious)
(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Well... Partner... You're our
conscience. What should we do?

Jamie frowns. Checkmate.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jacobs and Jamie enter. Al sorts through a plastic mail bin filled with envelopes. He opens them, separating the letters from the cash. There's an appalling pile of cash in the middle of the table.

JACOBS
Al, you're relieved of your duties.
Consider the cash on the table your
severance package.

AL
Are you serious?

JACOBS
Did you know that the staff
involved in the Manhattan Project
shrank steadily before the first A-
bomb test at White Sands? Here's a
little-known rule about scientific
research: as one progresses towards
one's ultimate goal, support
requirements tend to shrink.

Al shoots a furious steaming glare at Jamie.

EXT. JACOBS ESTATE, GROUNDS - LATER

Al angrily loads a suitcase into his car. Behind him, Jacobs leads Jamie across the vast property.

JACOBS
To be frank, it was exhausting
having to feign religious piety in
front of Al. I can't tell you what
a relief it will be not having to
pray before meals again.
(arm around Jamie)
Jamie, which building do you think
is my lab?

JAMIE
The barn?

Jamie points to the barn. It's the largest. Jacobs smiles. He leads Jamie towards what looks like a HUMBLE TOOLSHED, produces a key ring, and opens the door, revealing . . .

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

. . . small, sterile workspace. A chair and a worktable with nothing on it but a few notebooks and a computer. Boxes that look like silver-plated cigarette cartons HUM like amplifiers on standby. On the floor is a green box the size of a hotel mini-fridge. On top of it is a TV monitor. Jacobs CLAPS his hands softly and the monitor's screen lights up, showing a series of columns - red, blue, and green - that rise and fall in a way that suggests respiration.

JAMIE

The Clapper. Nice. This is where you work?

JACOBS

Yes.

JAMIE

Where's the equipment? The instruments?

Jacobs points to the Mac, then to the monitor.

JACOBS

There and there. But the most important part . . .
(points to his own temple)
Up here. You happen to standing in the world's most advanced electronics research facility. The things I have discovered in this room make Edison's Menlo Park discoveries pale in comparison.

Jamie gazes around at what would look like almost nothing if not for that constant *hum* that suggests sleeping power.

JAMIE

Prove it.

Jacobs stares at Jamie. The HUM in the room gets LOUDER. The LIGHTS in the room get IMPOSSIBLY BRIGHT. Jamie squints.

JACOBS

Keep your eyes open.

Jamie obeys . . . and gradually Jacobs' body becomes TRANSPARENT, like looking at an X-RAY.

We can see his beating heart, his bones, his lungs inflating and deflating. The WALL behind him becomes SEE-THROUGH as well. We can see AL'S CAR driving away outside.

JAMIE

What are you doing...

Suddenly, it's like we can see through ALL OF REALITY, to what lies behind it: a WALL comprised of gray stones covered in ivy. The ivy resembles skeletal hands grasping each other. Jacobs is reduced to a nervous system with eyeballs.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

That's enough! That's ENOUGH!

WOOOMMMMM. The hum lowers, the lights dim. Everything returns to normal.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

How did you do that?

JACOBS

The secret electricity. I'm currently harnessing it through geothermal means.

(pats the green box)

It makes for quite the spectacle. But unfortunately, for my purposes, it's a dead end. It's not enough power. I need more.

JAMIE

Not enough power? You just altered reality!

JACOBS

Altered? Or *revealed*? What is reality? Is this all there is, or is there something more? The key to unlock that mystery is the secret electricity. And the search for it, the quest to harness it - has become my whole life.

JAMIE

This is what you've been doing all this time? You're crazy.

JACOBS

I'm not the first. Most have kept their discoveries to themselves, just as I have. Because the power is enormous. Unknowable, really.

JAMIE

You're messing with something very dangerous, Charlie. What if you were wrong? The Terrible Sermon, all of it--

JACOBS

I'm not wrong.
(assures himself)
I'm not wrong.

JAMIE

How do you know? Right now I feel just like how I feel when I wake up from the blackouts. Like something's used my body like a puppet. Something... else.

JACOBS

You're suffering from a neurological disorder. It's all in your head, Jamie.

JAMIE

You're not listening. I can feel evil in here like it's a real thing and not just an idea.

JACOBS

Evil is a real thing. But I assure you, it doesn't come from the heavens.

(turns out the lights)
Only from us.

CUT TO:

JAMIE and ASTRID are YOUNG AGAIN. They KISS. He blows cigarette smoke into her mouth. Her tongue caresses his. She breaks their kiss and Jamie sees with horror the ASHEN FACE, the DUSTY EYES, the SLACK MOUTH. SMOKE DRIFTS out of it. Astrid is a CORPSE. Her LIPS RISE in a GRIN.

ASTRID

Something happened, didn't it, Jamie? Something happened, and Mother will be here soon.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE, JAMIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jamie JERKS AWAKE with a GASP. He stands naked in the corner of the room, the pen from the bedside table in his hand.

He JABS his forearm over and over where there is a small but growing constellation of blue dots. He drops the pen on the floor and staggers backwards.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE, HALLWAY - MORNING

Tight on the MAHOGANY BOX Jamie carries under his arm. He and an energetic Jacobs walk side by side down the hallway.

JACOBS

We'll do our business in the East Room. It's my favorite at this time of day. If you and I didn't know God is a profitable and self-sustaining construct of the worlds' churches, the morning light would be almost enough to make us believers again.

They reach the door. Jacobs knocks curtly, opens it, and ...

INT. JACOBS ESTATE, EAST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

... steps inside.

JACOBS

Jenny and Astrid! My two favorite ladies! I trust your flight was pleasant!

JENNY KNOWLTON (African American, 50, think Viola Davis in an RN outfit) gives his outstretched hand a token touch. **ASTRID** (50 now and wasted away to nearly nothing) makes no attempt to raise her own hand. She's hunched in a WHEELCHAIR, an OXYGEN MASK over the lower half of her face, and a TANK on a CART beside her. Jamie sees her from the doorway and his face goes SLACK. Jenny whispers something to Jacobs, too low for Jamie to hear, and he nods vigorously.

JACOBS

Yes, we must waste no time. Astrid is in pain. We've withheld her meds - they depress brainwaves. Jamie, would you --

He looks around, sees Jamie isn't there, realizes he's still standing in the doorway, and beckons to him impatiently. Jamie steps into the room.

JACOBS

I've brought a very special visitor
for you, my dear. He's really the
reason we're all here today.

Astrid glances at Jamie with the disinterested eyes of one
expending all her energy to cope with her pain. She shows no
recognition, only looks down at her lap. Then her head JERKS
up. Her mouth falls open inside the transparent mask. She
covers her face with her hands, knocking the mask aside.

ASTRID

Jamie?

Her voice is hoarse. Tears of disbelief in her eyes.

JAMIE

Yeah, honey. It's me.

He gets on one knee, like he's about to propose. He takes one
of her hands, turns it over, and kisses her palm. Jacobs has
drawn Jenny away and is conversing with her quietly, giving
Jamie and Astrid their moment of privacy.

ASTRID

What are you doing here?

JAMIE

I've known Charlie since I was a
little kid. He's my old reverend,
the one who told me about Skytop,
remember? I opened your letter.
When I got to the end and saw your
name, the whole world fell out from
under me.

ASTRID

You should go away. I don't want
you to . . . to see me like this. I
don't want *anyone* to see me like
this.

JAMIE

I just see that girl I bummed a
cigarette to. This is on me too. I
couldn't let you die. Not like
this.

ASTRID

Cigarettes. What a stupid way to
kill yourself. Do you want to know
something funny? I still want them.

She laughs, and that turns into a harsh chain of coughs that clearly hurts her.

ASTRID

Something . . .

(a deep, wheezing breath)

Something tricks us. That's what I believe.

JAMIE

It's so good to see you.

ASTRID

You're a beautiful liar. You kept your hair. It's lovely and thick. I lost mine.

JAMIE

It'll grow back.

ASTRID

No, it won't. This . . .

She looks around. Her breath whistles like a child's toy.

ASTRID

A fool's errand. And I'm the fool.

JAMIE

Astrid . . .

Jamie lifts her chin up gently, revealing the same GOLD CROSS around her neck from when she was a teenage girl.

JAMIE

Expect a miracle.

ASTRID

I thought you didn't believe in miracles.

Jamie removes the cross from her neck.

JAMIE

You still do. I've gotta take this off. You can have it back after we're done.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE, EAST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

TIGHT ON the MAHOGANY BOX as Jamie opens it.

JACOBS

It won't take long, my dear, and there will be no pain. I expect you'll pass out, but most people have no awareness of that.

Inside the box, each item nestled in its own velvet-lined depression, are two stubby rods tipped with black plastic, and a white control box with a slide switch on top.

JACOBS

I never make absolute guarantees, but I believe that in short time, you're going to feel much better. Let's begin.

Jacobs plucks the rods from their nesting places and touches the black tips together.

JACOBS

Jamie, take the control and move that slide switch the tiniest bit. Just a nudge. You'll hear a click.

Jamie does as he's told and Jacobs pulls the tips apart. There is a brilliant BLUE SPARK, and a brief but powerful *MMMM* sound. It doesn't come from the rods but from the far side of the room, like some weird electrical ventriloquism.

JACOBS

Excellent. We're good to go. Jenny, you need to place your hands on Astrid's shoulders. She'll spasm, and we don't want her to come around on the floor, do we?

JENNY

Where are your holy rings?

Jenny looks and sounds more doubtful by the second.

JACOBS

These are better than the rings. Much more powerful. More *holy*, if you like. Hands on her shoulders, please.

JENNY

Don't you electrocute her!

ASTRID

That's the least of my worries, Jen.

JACOBS
Won't happen. Can't.
(taps the rods together)
The energy I intend to tap - energy
present in this room, all around us
at this very moment - can't be
measured by ordinary instruments.
It is essentially *unknowable*.

Jamie grimaces at that word.

ASTRID
Please just do it.

JACOBS
Put your hands on her shoulders. Be
prepared to press down hard. You
won't hurt her.

JENNY
It wasn't like this at the revival.
Not at *all*.

JACOBS
Perhaps not, but this *is* revival.
You'll see. Jamie, when I place the
tips of the rods on Astrid's
temples, slide the switch. Count
the clicks as it advances. When you
feel the fourth one, stop and wait
for any further instructions.
Ready? Here we go.

Jacobs puts the tips of the rods in the hollows at the sides
of Astrid's head, where delicate blue veins pulse.

ASTRID
So nice to see you again, Jamie.

Jamie gives her a reassuring wink and Astrid closes her eyes.

JACOBS
She may be frisky, so be ready to
bear down. All right, Jamie.

Jamie pushes the slide switch. Click . . . and click . . .
and click . . . and *click*. Nothing happens.

JACOBS
Advance two more clicks, if you
please.

Jamie does so. Still nothing. With Jenny's hands on her shoulders, Astrid is more hunched over than ever. Her whistling respiration is painful to listen to.

JACOBS

One more.

JAMIE

Charlie, I'm almost at the end of the --

JACOBS

Did you not hear me? *One more!*

Jamie pushes the slide. There is another click, and the hum on the other side of the room grows much louder, not *mmmm* but *MMMOWWW*. Jenny cries out. Astrid JERKS in the wheelchair, a spasm so powerful it FLINGS Jenny backward and almost off her feet. Astrid's wasted legs SHOOT OUT, relax, then SHOOT OUT AGAIN. A SECURITY ALARM begins to BRAY. Astrid PISTONS her arms up, one right in front of Jenny's face as she comes back to put her hands on Astrid's shoulders again.

JACOBS

Shut it OFF!

Jacobs SNATCHES the control box out of Jamie's hands and slides the switch back to the off position. Astrid begins making a series of GAGGING sounds.

JENNY

Pastor Danny, she's choking!

JACOBS

Don't be stupid! Jamie, watch her!

He rushes off to shut off the alarm. Astrid's eyes open, only there are no eyes, just BULGING WHITES. She gives another myoclonic jerk, then slides forward, legs KICKING and JERKING. Her arms FLAIL like a drowning swimmer. The alarm BRAYS and BRAYS. Jamie GRABS Astrid by the hips and SHOVES her back in her chair before she can land on the floor. Foam drizzles from one side of her mouth. The alarm finally quits and Jacobs returns. He bends forward, hands on his thighs, observing Astrid's convulsions with interest but no concern.

JENNY

We need a doctor! I can't hold her!

JACOBS

Did you expect it to be easy? It's cancer, for God's sake. Give her a minute and she'll be --

ASTRID

There's a door in the wall.

That hoarseness has left her voice. The convulsions have stopped. Her eyes roll back down in their sockets . . . but not together; they come down one at a time. When they're back in their place, it's Jacobs they are looking at.

ASTRID

You can't see it. It's small and covered with ivy.

JAMIE

What?

ASTRID

She waits on the other side, above the broken city. Above the paper sky.

JACOBS

Who?

(he takes one of her hands)

Who waits?

ASTRID

She.

JACOBS

Who, Astrid, *who*?

She says nothing at first. Then her lips stretch in a terrible grin that shows every tooth in her head.

ASTRID

Not the one you want.

Jacobs SLAPS her. Astrid's head JERKS. Spittle FLIES. Jamie SHOUTS in surprise - *Hey!* - and GRABS his wrist when Jacobs raises his hand to do it again. Jamie stops him with an effort, but Jacobs is stronger than he has any right to be.

JENNY

You can't hit her!

She lets go of Astrid and comes around the wheelchair to confront him.

JENNY

You lunatic, you can't hit h--

ASTRID

Stop.

Her voice is weak but lucid.

ASTRID
Stop it, Jenny.

Jenny looks at Astrid. Her eyes widen at what she sees: a delicate pink wash of color beginning to rise in Astrid's pale cheeks.

ASTRID
Why are you yelling at him? Did something happen?

On Jamie and we **FLASH CUT TO:** *A CU of a younger Jamie just seconds after Jacobs conducted the current of secret electricity through his brain that cured him of his heroin addiction. He says: Something happened. Something happened, happened, something happened. Happened. Something--*

BACK TO:

Astrid turns to Jacobs.

ASTRID
When are you going to do it? You better hurry, because the pain is very . . . very . . .

They all stare at her.

ASTRID
Wait.

She touches her chest. She cups the wasted remains of her breasts. She presses her stomach.

ASTRID
You did it already, didn't you? I know you did, because there *is* no pain!

She pulls in a breath and lets it out in an incredulous laugh.

ASTRID
And I can breathe! *Jenny, I can breathe again!*

Jenny goes to her knees, raises her hands to the sides of her head, and begins to recite the Lord's Prayer so fast she sounds like a 45 rpm record on 78. Jacobs gives Jamie a bemused look. Astrid tries to get out of the wheelchair, but her wasted legs won't hold her. Jamie gets her before she can do a face-plant, and puts his arms around her.

JAMIE

Not yet, honey. You're too weak.

He eases her back into her seat.

JACOBS

Astrid, can you tell me who the president is?

She looks bewildered at the question but answers with no hesitation.

ASTRID

Obama. And Biden's the vice president. Am I really better? Will it last?

JACOBS

Yes and it will, but never mind that now. Tell me--

ASTRID

I can breathe. I can actually *breathe* again.

She's crying. Jacobs SNAPS his fingers in front of her eyes like a stage hypnotist.

JACOBS

Focus, Astrid. Who brought you here?

ASTRID

J-Jenny. You healed her of her back problems at one of your revivals and she begged me to write you.

JACOBS

What did you have for supper last night?

ASTRID

Sloop. Sloop and salad.

He SNAPS his fingers in front of her swimming eyes again. She blinks and recoils. The muscles beneath her skin seem to be tightening and firming before their very eyes. It's wonderful and awful.

ASTRID

Soup. Soup and salad.

JACOBS
Very good. What is the door in the wall?

ASTRID
Door?

JACOBS
You said it was covered in ivy. You said there was a broken city on the other side.

ASTRID
I . . . don't remember that.

JACOBS
You said *she waits*. You said . . .
He peers into her uncomprehending face and sighs.

JACOBS
Nevermind. You need to rest, my dear.

ASTRID
I suppose so, but what I'd really like to do is dance. Dance for joy.

She and Jenny beam at each other. Jacobs pats her hand.

JACOBS
In time you will.

Jacobs glances back at Jamie, who looks deeply unsettled.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE, ASTRID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jamie enters Astrid's room. A suitcase is open on the bed. It's already packed.

ASTRID
Watch this, Jamie!

She gets out of her wheelchair and totters three steps to a chair. She holds onto it for balance while she turns herself around, then collapses into it with a sigh of relief.

ASTRID
Not much, I know--

JAMIE
Are you kidding? That's amazing!

ASTRID

I think I owe you as much as I owe him, don't I? Come here.

He goes and kneels at her side.

ASTRID

Could I have a kiss, Jamie? While we're alone? I know I'm not much to look at, but--

Jamie takes her face in his hands and kisses her.

ASTRID

You meant the world to me too.
(strokes back of his head)
Still such wonderful hair, going gray or not. Life leaves us so little, but it's left you that.

INT. JACOBS ESTATE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

JAMIE

There may be aftereffects.

JENNY

Pastor Danny filled me in-- Mr. Jacobs, I mean.

JAMIE

You never had any after he healed you?

JENNY

No, none. He said she might be prone to sleepwalking until her brainwaves straighten back out. I'm an RN. I've seen that behavior in people who overdo stuff like Ambien and Lunesta.

FLASH CUT: *Emil Klein STUFFS dirt in his mouth.*

JAMIE

It's very important that you call us if she exhibits any strange behavior.

EXT. JACOBS ESTATE - MORNING

Jamie helps Jenny load their things into a chauffeured SUV while Jacobs gives Astrid some final instructions.

JACOBS

Astrid, when you see your doctor and he expresses amazement, all you're to tell him is that you and Jenny prayed for remission and your prayers were answered. His own belief - or lack of it - in the efficacy of prayer won't matter; either way he'll be forced to accept the evidence of his MRI pictures. Not to mention your happy smiling face.

She reaches out and grasps his hand.

ASTRID

I don't know how I can ever thank you, Pastor Danny--

Jacobs frowns but doesn't correct her.

ASTRID

-- and I certainly can't repay you, but I'll bless you in my prayers for the rest of my life. And I'm never going to touch another cigarette.

JACOBS

You won't want to. All I ask is that you leave my name out of this. I have a great deal of work to do, and the last thing I need is hordes of sick people coming up here in hopes of being cured. Do you understand?

ASTRID

Yes.

JACOBS

Miss Knowlton?

Jenny jerks as if Jacobs had pinched her bottom.

JENNY

Yes. I understand.

JAMIE

Relax, Charlie. They're not gonna rat you out.

Jamie helps Astrid out of the wheelchair and into the SUV. He belts her in and kisses her forehead.

JAMIE
Enjoy your life.

ASTRID
Come see us one day.

JAMIE
I will.

She ruffles his hair and gives him a peck on the mouth as Jenny gets in. Jamie closes the door and the SUV pulls away.

JACOBS
Miss Knowlton doesn't like me much now that I've left Team Jesus, does she?

JAMIE
Scared of you is what she is.

JACOBS
Ten years ago, I couldn't have cured our Miss Soderberg. Perhaps not even five. But things are moving fast now. Will those women keep their mouths shut?

JAMIE
Yes.

As the SUV turns the corner, TWO LARGE MOVING VANS pull into the driveway.

JAMIE
Are we going somewhere?

Jacobs claps Jamie on the back.

JACOBS
Home. For the grand finale.

CUT TO:

A MIND-BENDING VIEW OF THE UNIVERSE. Our final chapter mark is written across it in the STARS.

5. R E V I V A L.

INT. MAUNA KEA OBSERVATORIES - NIGHT

CONNIE MORTON (50s) observes our universe through one of the largest TELESCOPES in the world in HAWAII. Rambling romantically to his MALE PARTNER (50).

CONNIE
 Hundreds of billions of galaxies.
 A hundred billion light years
 across. And that's only the
observable universe.

MALE PARTNER
 What's beyond that?

CONNIE
 Exactly. Nobody knows. But Alan
 Watts has a saying... "For every
 inside, there's an outside."

His cell phone rings. He checks the caller ID and answers it with a smile.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
 Hey, Jamie!

JAMIE
*You wouldn't believe where I'm
 standing.*

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jamie kneels down outside their childhood home, and picks up a decades-old TOY SOLDIER that was half-buried in the front lawn. The house has changed, but not so much that it isn't instantly recognizable.

CONNIE
Where are you?

JAMIE
 Outside our old house in Harlow.

CONNIE
*You're kidding me? What are you
 doing there?*

JAMIE
 Seeing an old friend. I thought
 maybe I'd fly out and see you after
 I'm done.

CONNIE
I'd love that.
 (peeks in his telescope)
*Let me know when you're close and
 you can wave through the window.*

INTERRUPTED by INCOMING CALL: "JACOBS". Jamie reluctantly takes it.

JACOBS (O.S.)
 Jamie, it's time.

Jamie frowns. Jumps back to Connie on the line.

CONNIE
Jamie? You there?

JAMIE
 I'll do that, Connie. I'll wave to you.

EXT. SKYTOP - EVENING

"*Shining*"-level aerial shot follows Jamie's car towards a SKI RESORT. The camera continues swooping up the mountain, following a CABLE CAR SKI LIFT upward, upward... to the mountain peak, which houses a giant LIGHTNING ROD and ADJACENT LODGE that we instantly recognize from years ago when Jamie took Astrid here.

We've returned to SKYTOP.

EXT. GOAT MOUNTAIN RESORT, FRONT GATE - DAY

Jamie pulls up to SAM, the security guard.

SAM
 Hello there, Mr. Morton!

JAMIE
 Sam. How's the weather treating you?

SAM
 Storm comin'! Big one! If yer goin' up there, don't plan on coming down anytime soon!

INT. GOAT MOUNTAIN RESORT, MAIN PARLOR - DAY

The main parlor is all glass, giving us a view of Skytop in the distance. Jamie comes inside and finds Jacobs staring through the glass at that iron pole, lost in thought.

JAMIE

I went and saw the house I grew up in this morning. I was remembering the day we met. I was so young, but it's a clear memory.

JACOBS

For me as well.

JAMIE

A shadow fell over me. I looked up and it was you. I feel like your shadow's been over me my whole life. What I ought to do is drive away from here right now and get out from under it.

JACOBS

But you won't. You want the same thing I want, whether you know it or not.

We hear the sound of DEEP, HAUNTING BELLS RINGING.

JAMIE

What's that?

Jacobs points out the window at a 15-FT TALL HANGING SET OF WIND CHIMES in the yard. Swaying in the breeze, ringing like a grandfather clock through the entire property. They STOP.

JACOBS

When the chimes won't stop, it will be time. Help me to my quarters. I need to conserve my strength. I have one more thing to do, and when the time comes, I must be strong enough to do it.

CUT TO:

Jamie stands in front of his childhood home. Only now it looks exactly as it did then. It's as if he's stepped into the past. He crosses the lawn, pausing to marvel at the dirt hill he made as a child. All the little green soldiers are there. Jamie opens the front door and steps inside. His family is waiting for him there in the dining room. Not the whole family; just the dead ones. His parents and Claire.

Claire has two bullet holes in her face. Sitting on the table is a mold-covered birthday cake. The frosting HUMPS UP, BREAKS APART, and a BLACK ANT the size of a pepper-shaker crawls out and up Claire's arm. It disappears inside one of the bullet holes. All three sing "Happy Birthday" to him, but the words have changed. "Something happened . . . TO YOU! Something happened . . . TO YOU! Something happened, dear Jamie, something happened TO YOU!" As they sing, the cake gives birth to more huge ants. They crawl out and all over his dead family.

INT. GOAT MOUNTAIN RESORT, JAMIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jamie wakes up SCREAMING.

INT. GOAT MOUNTAIN RESORT, KITCHEN FREEZER - CONTINUOUS

Jamie comes downstairs and finds Jenny in the WALK-IN FREEZER, putting eggs into a bowl.

JAMIE

Jenny?

She CRIES OUT, startled.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

JENNY

I came for eggs.

JAMIE

You know that's not what I mean.

JENNY

I can't tell you. I made a promise.

She tries to leave. He blocks her path to the freezer door.

JAMIE

Break it.

JENNY

(shakes her head)

I signed a contract. I owe a debt, same as you. I have to go, Jamie. He doesn't want us talking.

JAMIE

Who's watching out for Astrid while you're here? Somebody better be.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)
I don't know what Charlie told you,
but there really are aftereffects--

JENNY
She's well cared for, you don't
need to worry about that. Now let
me get by. I can't be away for
long.

JAMIE
Why can't you be away for long?

JENNY
Jamie, please... I'm cold.

We can see her breath. He relents and lets her pass by.

EXT. GOAT MOUNTAIN RESORT, SIDE EXIT - MOMENTS LATER

Jamie watches, arms crossed, as Jenny walks off towards the
CABLE CAR in the distance.

INT. GOAT MOUNTAIN RESORT, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jamie wanders the halls and into a LIBRARY.

INT. GOAT MOUNTAIN, LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Jamie wanders the vast shelves. He notices a glass, climate-
controlled room in the corner. The air HISSES when he opens
the door. The books inside look ANCIENT. He flips through one
that's on display and sees MONSTROUS CREATURES, MAGICAL
SYMBOLS and CONSTELLATIONS drawn on AGED YELLOW PAPYRUS. He
lands on a drawing of an IVY COVERED DOOR. Jamie's eyes WIDEN
as the drawing comes to life. THE DOOR OPENS WIDE, revealing
the VAST COSMOS. There's a HISSING SOUND.

JACOBS (O.S.)
The author of that book went mad,
you know.

Jamie looks up and sees Jacobs standing in the doorway
surrounded by GRAY STONES covered in SKELETAL IVY.

JAMIE
Jesus!

Jamie SLAMS the book shut and the world rights itself
instantly.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

These aren't science books.

JACOBS

Be careful with that. It's the only copy left. The Catholic Church destroyed the others. The author ended his days in a German castle studying math and eating bugs. He grew his fingernails long, tore out his throat with them one night, and died at the age of thirty-seven, painting equations on the floor of his room in blood.

JAMIE

(pats the book)

Oh good, 'cause I was worried these might be the rantings of a lunatic.

JACOBS

The histories of such visionaries were written by people interested in making sure no one else followed their paths.

JAMIE

Maybe that's because there's certain paths no one should ever go down.

The wind chimes ring in the distance outside.

JACOBS

It's too late to turn back now.

EXT. GOAT MOUNTAIN RESORT, FRONT PORCH - DAY

A preoccupied Jamie sits on the front porch watching the storm gathering. The giant set of WIND CHIMES go off in the yard. They aren't stopping. Gulp. *They aren't stopping.*

INT. GOAT MOUNTAIN RESORT, JACOBS'S SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

Jamie enters Jacobs's suite and finds him sitting in front of an HD TV watching the Weather Channel. A red band runs across the bottom of the screen. A severe weather warning. Jacobs turns to him, eyes bright.

JACOBS

Be ready to go at a moment's notice.

JAMIE
To Skytop. Is this it?

JACOBS
Almost. Over a hundred lightning strikes an hour in the Albany area. Isn't that wonderful?

PRELAP: THUNDER RUMBLES

INT. GOAT MOUNTAIN RESORT - EVENING

The lights are out. Jamie moves through the house with a FLASHLIGHT.

JAMIE
Charlie? Charlie?

JACOBS (O.S.)
In here!

Jamie finds Jacobs in the dark, mahogany box under his arm.

JAMIE
Power's out. You know where the fuse box is?

JACOBS
(excited)
It doesn't matter now. Help me to the kitchen.

Jamie helps him along through the resort to the kitchen.

JAMIE
(shouldering the old man's weight)
Sure you couldn't afford a couple nurse aides up here? Maybe one of those chairs that moves up the steps?

JACOBS
I made a great deal of money playing Pastor C. Danny Jacobs. But instead of spending it on private jets, heated doghouses, and gold-plated bathroom fixtures, I spent mine on two things. One was privacy.

JAMIE

What's the other? I'm guessing it wasn't the power bill.

JACOBS

Private investigation firms. They helped me track aftereffects, as you know, but I also tasked them with finding and tracking certain people suffering from certain diseases. Comparative rarities. Eight such illnesses in all. Starting ten years ago, they found several dozens of these unfortunate sufferers, and sent me regular updates.

JAMIE

Why them?

JACOBS

So I could narrow them down. So I could find the one I've always thought of as Patient Omega.

JAMIE

Your last cure.

JACOBS

You could say so. Yes, why not? Which brings us to the sad story of Mary Fay, who was given a number of blood transfusions after a terrible car accident. Unfortunately, the blood was tainted by the infectious prion that causes mad cow disease.

JAMIE

Jesus.

JACOBS

Jesus can't help Mary Fay.

JAMIE

But you can? You're not a God.

JACOBS

No. But tonight, we might find out who is.

Thunder BOOMS before Jacobs can respond. The lights come back on. They're in the kitchen. Jacobs studies the darkening sky through the window. Lightning flashes in the distance.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
We must hurry. I don't intend to miss my appointment with the lightning. I've been waiting for it my whole life.

EXT. CABLE CAR (LEADING UP TO SKY TOP) - NIGHT

Looking tiny against the EXPANSIVE VISTA of the mountain, travels a lone dangling CABLE CAR. Slowly crawling upward towards Skytop.

INT. CABLE CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Jamie looks out the window. It's SO FAR DOWN. Gives him the willies. He turns back to face Jacobs... and sees Jacobs LOADING A REVOLVER.

JAMIE
Where the hell did that come from?

JACOBS
(doesn't look up)
Astrid spoke of a certain door.
It's the door into death, and
sooner or later each one of us
grows small, reduced to nothing but
mind and spirit, and in that
reduced state we pass through it,
leaving our bodies behind like
empty gloves.

Jamie watches with growing trepidation as old shaky hands carefully load bullet after bullet into the cylinder.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Sometimes death is natural, a mercy
that puts an end to suffering. But
all too often it comes as an
assassin, full of senseless cruelty
and lacking any vestige of
compassion.

He LOCKS the cylinder into place. Examines the gun.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
My wife and son, taken in a stupid
and pointless accident, are perfect
examples.
(absentmindedly points the
gun at Jamie)
(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Your sister is another. They are
three of billions.

Jamie backs away. Jacobs isn't really AIMING the gun at him per se, but anytime he references Jamie, Jacobs carelessly points the barrel in his direction. Like a teen in an afterschool special.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
For most of my life I've railed
against those who try to explain
that stupidity and pointlessness
with prattlings about faith and
children's stories about heaven.
Such nonsense never comforted me,
and I'm sure it never comforted
you. And yet . . .
(the gun points at Jamie)
you were right, Jamie. There is
something.

Thunder CRACKS hard enough and close enough to shake panes of window glass in their frames. Jamie JUMPS, thinking it was a gunshot. He's really on edge.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
In my experiments I've glimpsed
intimations of that something. I've
seen its shape in every cure the
secret electricity has effected. I
even know it from the aftereffects,
some of which you have noted. Those
are trailing fragments of some
unknown existence beyond our lives.
Everyone wonders at one time or
other what lies beyond the wall of
death. Today, Jamie, we'll see for
ourselves.

He raises the gun... then hands it to Jamie.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
I don't expect you'll need to use
it, but if you do, ... don't
hesitate.

A relieved Jamie takes it from him.

JAMIE
Why would I need to use this?

JACOBS
I want to know what happened to my
wife and son.
(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)

I want to know what the universe
has in store for all of us once
this life is over, and I intend to
find out.

Jamie opens the cylinder and lets all the bullets FALL OUT.

JAMIE

We're not meant to see.

JACOBS

Can you tell me you don't think
about Claire every day? That you
don't wonder if she still exists
somewhere? Of course you do, and
we'll have answers shortly. Mary
Fay will give them to us.

JAMIE

How? How can she if you cure her?

JACOBS

I *can't* cure her. Mary Fay's
disease can't be cured by the
secret electricity. That's why
she's Patient Omega.

EXT. SKYTOP - NIGHT

The cabin where Jamie and Astrid made love is gone, but for an instant, illuminated by a flash of lightning, Jamie sees it as it was as they get out of the Cable Car. Then it's gone and in its place stands a little COTTAGE. The door BURSTS open and Jenny comes out. A stethoscope loops around her neck.

Jacobs walks with such purpose to the cottage he doesn't notice Jamie's not with him. Jenny meets him and helps him to the door. Thunder rolls. Lightning FLASHES. The pines and spruces around the cottage BEND and BOW in the RISING WIND. Jamie remains at the Cable Car. BAD VIBES.

JENNY

Jamie! Inside! Come on!

Jamie nods. He reaches back into the Cable Car and grabs those BULLETS. Second thoughts.

INT. SKYTOP (COTTAGE) - CONTINUOUS

Jenny tries to close the door but can't fight the HOWLING wind. Jamie manages, but has to put some real muscle into it. The cottage's wooden bones CREAK around them.

JACOBS

Should we toast to the success of
our endeavor? There's half a
bottle of whiskey in the kitchen.
Unless you've polished it off, Miss
Knowlton?

Jenny shakes her head. Her face is pale, her eyes large and shining with terror. She jumps at every CLAP of thunder.

JENNY

I don't want to drink, and I don't
want to toast anything. I just want
this to be over. I was crazy to get
involved.

JACOBS

Go on, Jamie. Bring three. And
speedily. Tempus fugit.

INT. COTTAGE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jamie quickly pours three glasses. Eyes the IRON POLE outside through the window.

INT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

When Jamie returns to the living room, Jenny is gone. Lightning FLASHES blue in the windows; the lamps and overhead FLICKER, then come back bright.

JACOBS

Jenny needed to see to our patient.
I'll drink hers. Unless you want
it, that is.

JAMIE

Did you send me to the kitchen so
you could talk to her, Charlie?

JACOBS

Nonsense.

Jamie gives him his glass.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Here's to--

Jamie tosses his off before Jacobs can finish.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

You find me odious, don't you? I'm sorry you feel that way. More than you'll ever know.

JAMIE

Not odious, scary. I find anyone scary who's monkeying around with forces beyond their comprehension.

JACOBS

They won't be beyond my comprehension much longer.

Jacobs takes his drink. Grabs his mahogany box. Motions to the room.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

After you.

The wind rises to a SHOUT, and the first erratic bursts of rain strike the house, hitting so hard they sound like thrown pebbles.

INT. MARY FAY'S DEATH CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The room is a nest of shadows in spite of a table lamp. Through a large east-facing window, a tarnished silver curtain of rain obscures our view.

MARY FAY is a still figure in a hospital bed surrounded by dark monitors and an IV pole. Jenny stands beside a now useless ventilator, wringing her hands. Jamie slowly approaches the bed. He stares at Mary Fay's beautiful, upturned face. Alabaster skin and luxuriant masses of dark chestnut hair. Her eyes are closed. Thick lashes lay against her cheeks. Her lips are slightly parted. A sheet is pulled up to her shoulders. Her clasped hands lay on it, above the swell of her breasts.

JACOBS

Miss Knowlton turned off Mary Fay's ventilator as we were coming here from the resort. She's been dead for almost fifteen minutes. Her blood is cooling. The computer inside her skull has gone dark.

JAMIE

She's dead? You think . . . you
actually think . . . you can bring
 her back?

JACOBS

Yes. It's taken years of study and
 experiment to reach this point, but
 yes. Using lightning as a road to
 the secret electricity and the
 secret electricity as a
 thoroughfare to *potestas magnum*
universum, I intend to bring Mary
 Fay back to some form of life. I
 intend to learn the truth of what's
 on the other side of the door that
 leads into the Kingdom of Death.
 I'll learn it from the lips of
 someone who's been there.

JAMIE

You're insane. I won't play any
 part in this.

JACOBS

Mary Fay agreed to this experiment.
 There are no victims here.

There is a FLASH of lightning, and from the mahogany box, a
 poisonous greenish-purple WINK of LIGHT SHOOTS through a gap
 in the latch, there for one second, gone the next. Jamie and
 Jacobs both saw it. They exchange a glance.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

You *can* find out what happened to
 your sister Claire. You might even
 be able to speak with her . . .
 hear her tell you that she loves
 you. Wouldn't that be wonderful?

Thunder ROARS. Jacobs GRABS Jamie by the arm.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Damn it, Jamie, *don't* you want to
 know? That's a large part of what
 brought you here. You want to know.
 Just as I do. The only one here
 against her will is poor Jenny. She
 came to pay a debt of love. Which
 gives her a nobility we cannot
 share.

There is a faint *clicking* sound, then another stroke of
 lightning.

Jenny JUMPS in fright. In the momentary glare, Skytop is revealed in the distance through the window. Jamie sees it and turns to Jacobs, who holds the box out to him.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Help me, Jamie. We must be swift.
Take it and open it. I'll do the
rest.

JENNY

Don't. For the love of God, let her
rest in peace.

Her voice barely registers over the drumming rain and screaming wind. Jacobs doesn't hear her, but Jamie does. He ignores her and opens the box. There are no rods inside, no control box. A METALLIC HEADBAND has taken their place, as thin as the strap on a young girl's dress shoe. Jacobs takes it out box carefully - reverently - and gently pulls it. Jamie watches in wonder as the metal stretches. There's a faint *clicking* sound and another stroke of lightning comes. When it does, a GREEN RADIANCE dances across the headband.

JACOBS

Miss Knowlton, lift her head for
me.

Jenny shakes her head so hard her hair flies.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Jamie. You do it.

Jamie moves to the bed like a man in a dream. Another *click*. Another FLASH of lightning. Thunders ROARS, shaking the house. The bedside lamp goes out. For a moment, the room is plunged into shadows, then a generator CLATTERS to life.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Quickly!

His voice is pained. Jamie sees burns appearing on Jacobs's palms where the headband rests, but he doesn't drop it.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Quickly, before lightning strikes
the pole!

Jamie lifts Mary Fay's head. Her chestnut hair falls away from her perfect - and perfectly still - face in a dark flood that pools on the pillow. Jacobs bends over her, breathing in harsh, excited gasps.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Her hair . . . get her hair out of
the way.

He turns accusingly to Jenny, who cowers in the corner.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Damn you, I said to cut it!

Jamie lifts her hair and Jacobs slips the thin band of metal over her forehead, so it lays tight against the hollows of her temples.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

All right.

Jamie lays the dead woman's head gently back on the pillow.

JAMIE

Where's the control box? Where's
the connection to that pole out
there?

Jacobs looks at him like he's an imbecile.

JACOBS

There's no way to control the power
that lies beyond the lightning. It
would fry even a titanium box to a
cinder. As for the connection . . .
it's you, Jamie. Haven't you
guessed even yet why you're here?
Did you think I brought you to cook
my *meals*? The secret electricity
has never left you, or any of the
people I cured --

JAMIE

Cursed. Charlie, you have to stop
this.

JACOBS

Stop? Are you insane?

JAMIE

There's something waiting on the
other side. Astrid called it
Mother. I don't think you want to
meet her, and I know I don't.

JACOBS

Either help me, or shoot me.

Jamie bends to strip the metal circlet that lay across Mary Fay's brow. Jacobs GRABS Jamie in a bearhug and pulls him away from the bed, holding him with all the strength of his obsession. He GRABS the GUN out of Jamie's waistband. Jamie KNOCKS it out of his hand. They STRUGGLE IN SILHOUETTE against the large window.

Outside, the wind ROARS at hurricane velocity. Time SLOWS ever so slightly - the world QUIETS - and we hear STATIC ELECTRICITY. Jamie and Jacobs pause in their struggle as all the hair on their bodies stiffen. This time there's not a *click*, there's a deafening SNAP. Jenny SCREAMS in terror.

They all watch in awe as a JAGGED BRANCH OF FIRE shoots down from the black clouds and STRIKES the iron pole on Skytop, turning it BLUE. Jamie grabs his skull and SCREAMS, doubling over.

FLASH CUT TO: Gray stones held together by ancient mortar and covered with ivy. The ivy is dead, and the branches look like grasping skeletal hands. There's a small door hidden in the wall covered with the dead ivy. Through a rusty keyhole we hear A CHOIR OF SCREAMS. The door is opening.

BACK TO:

As the electric fire coating the pole on Skytop fades to cherry red like a branding iron fresh from the fire, Jamie's agony fades to whimpers. Though they were locked in battle just moments before, Jacobs is at his side and seems genuinely concerned.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Jamie! What happened?

JAMIE

I heard them . . . I heard them screaming.

JACOBS

Who?

Thunder ROLLS and rain SWOOSHES down in a rush, accompanied by a RATTLE of hail.

JENNY

Oh my God! Oh my God, look at it!

The circlet around Mary Fay's head GLOWS A BRILLIANT, PULSING GREEN. Jacobs abandons Jamie and rushes towards the bed. The green glow begins to fade when a fresh bolt of lightning STRIKES the pole. The choir in Jamie's head SHRIEKS again. He squeezes his eyes shut and puts his hands over his ears.

Jacob stares down at the corpse of Mary Fay with wide, fascinated eyes. Drool drips from the frozen side of his mouth. This time the band passes from GREEN to coruscating WHITE, too dazzling to look upon. As that white lights fades from the circlet, the look of agony on Jamie's face fades. The hail gives a final, furious RATTLE, then quits. The rain slackens. Lightning FORKS into the trees beyond Skytop. The storm is moving east.

Jenny abruptly BOLTS from the room, leaving the door wide open. We hear her CRASH into something on her way out of the house, then the BANG of the front door flying open and hitting the wall.

Jamie and Jacobs take no notice. Jamie finally reaches the bed. Jacobs is bent over the dead woman. The circlet is only dead metal now.

JACOBS

Wake up.

No response.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Wake up!

He shakes her arm, gently at first, then harder.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Wake up! Wake up, damn you, wake up!

Mary Fay's head wags from side to side as he shakes her, as if in negation. He shakes her so hard it seems like she's going to fall off the bed.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

WAKE UP, YOU BITCH, WAKE UP!

Jamie grabs Jacobs by the shoulder and hauls him away from the bed. They stagger backwards in an awkward dance and crash into the bureau where a certain revolver lies in wait. Jacobs turns on Jamie, his face wild with fury and frustration.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Let me go! I saved your miserable useless life and I demand you --

Then something happens. From the bed comes a low HUMMING SOUND. Jamie and Jacobs turn their attention to Mary Fay. She hasn't moved, but her hands are splayed at her sides now, thanks to Jacobs's shaking.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
She's returning.

His eyes are huge and bulging from their sockets.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
She's reviving. She's *alive*.

JAMIE
No.

If Jacobs hears Jamie, he pays him no mind. He lurches towards Mary Fay's deathbed like Ahab on the deck of the *Pequod*, dragging his bad leg. His tongue laps at his mouth on the side that isn't frozen. He gasps for breath.

JACOBS
Mary. Mary Fay.

Jamie follows and the humming sound comes again, low and toneless. Jamie looks down at Mary Fay's face in horror. Her eyes remain shut, but move beneath her lids, as if in death, she dreams.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Do you hear me? If you hear me,
give me a sign.

The humming continues. Jacob puts the palm of his hand on her left breast, then turn to Jamie, grinning.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
No heartbeat. Yet she lives. *She lives!*

He turns back to her and lowers his half-frozen face until its only inches from her dead one.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Mary! Mary Fay! Come back to us!
Come back and tell us where you've
been!

Mary Fay opens her eyes. They are blue at first. Bright blue. And utterly blank. They seems to stare at the ceiling through Jacobs's avid face, and through the ceiling, and through the cloudy sky beyond. Then they come back. They register him, and some understanding - some comprehension - comes into them. She makes that humming sound again and she does it without drawing a single breath.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Where have you been, Mary Fay?
(his voice trembles)
(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Where have you been, what did you
see there? What waits beyond death?
What's on the other side? Tell me!

Mary Fay's head begins to PULSE, as if the dead brain within has grown too big for its casing. Her eyes DARKEN, first to lavender, then purple, then indigo. Her lips draw back in a smile that widens and becomes a grin. It grows until they can see all of her teeth. Her head PULSES on the pillow. Growing. *Bloating*. Then she SEIZES Jacobs's hand. He CRIES OUT and FLAILS for balance with his free hand. Jamie takes it, and the three of them - two living, one dead - are joined.

The moment this happens the room they stand in becomes thin and transparent, as does the rest of the cottage, Skytop, and all that lies beyond it.

Jamie and Jacobs look around in wonder. The whole living world looks like an illusion. Nothing but a scrim, as flimsy as an old nylon stocking. The *true* world is behind it. As it crystallizes, their looks of wonder turn to horror.

EXT. THE NULL - CONTINUOUS

Basalt blocks rise to a BLACK SKY punched with HOWLING STARS. Those blocks look like the remains of a vast ruined city. It stands in a barren landscape. A wide and seemingly endless column of NAKED HUMAN BEINGS trudge through it, heads down, feet stumbling. This nightmare parade stretches all the way to the distant horizon.

Driving the humans are ANTLIKE CREATURES, most BLACK, some the DARK RED of venous blood. Some crawl, some stand upright. When humans fall, the ant-things LUNGE at them, BITING and BUTTING, until they gain their feet again. YOUNG MEN and OLD WOMEN. TEENAGERS with BABIES in their arms. CHILDREN try to help each other along. On every face is the same expression of blank horror.

They march beneath the howling stars, they fall, they are punished and chivvied to their feet with gaping but bloodless bite wounds on their arms and legs and abdomens. Bloodless because they are dead.

The foolish mirage of earthly life has been torn away and instead of the heaven preachers of all persuasions promise, what awaits us all is a dead city of cyclopean stone blocks below a sky that is itself a scrim. This horror is the afterlife, and it is waiting not just for the evil ones among us but for all of us.

Jamie and Jacobs look up, trying to comprehend what they are seeing. The howling stars aren't stars at all.

They are holes, and the HOWLS emerging from them come from the true *potestas magnum universum*. Beyond the sky are *entities*. They are alive, and all-powerful, and totally insane.

Jamie rejects this reality with all his might.

JAMIE

No!

The marching dead turn towards his voice. The ant-things do likewise, mandibles gnashing, loathsome, intelligent eyes glaring.

Overhead, the black paper sky TEARS OPEN with a TITANIC RIPPING SOUND and an ENORMOUS BLACK LEG COVERED WITH TUFTS OF SPINY FUR PUSHES THROUGH IT. Through the rip in the firmament, there are insane lights and colors never meant to be looked upon by mortal creatures. The colors are alive. They remind us of Hugh's prismatic. They remind us of rainbows.

A whisper: Mother

That obscene leg stretching down from the sky to silence Jamie's voice of negation ends in a VAST CLAW made of SCREAMING HUMAN FACES.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

No! No, no, no, no!

Jamie tries to let go of Jacobs's hand, but he's clutching Jamie's like a manacle. Jamie pulls with all his might, freeing himself from his grasp just as Mother GROPEs for him, meaning to yank him up into the unknowable universe of horrors that waits beyond that black paper sky. Jamie goes TUMBLING backwards and that horrible reality DISAPPEARS.

INT. MARY FAY'S DEATH CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

He lands on the floor of the cottage in the room where Mary Fay died. Jacobs stands beside the bed. Mary Fay - or whatever dark creature Jacobs's secret electricity has summoned into her corpse and dead brain - still grips his hand. Her head has become a pulsing jellyfish with a human face crudely scrawled upon it. Her eyes are a lusterless black. The dead woman who was no longer dead GRINS EAR TO EAR. The lower half of her face has become a black pit that trembles and throbs. Jacob stares at her with bulging eyes. His face has gone a cheesy yellow-white.

JACOBS
 Patricia? Patsy? Where are you?
 Where's Morrie?

The thing speaks for the first and last time.

MARY FAY
*Gone to serve the Great Ones, in
 the Null. No death, no light, no
 rest.*

JACOBS
 No.

His chest hitches and he screams it.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
No!

He tries to pull back. She - *it* - holds him fast. From the dead woman's gaping mouth comes that BLACK LEG with a flexing claw at the end of it. The claw is alive; it's a single face now instead of the many we saw in the Null. It's MORRIE'S. Little Tag-Along-Morrie. And he's SCREAMING. Jacobs joins him. Jamie watches from the floor in horror.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
*"But when that which is perfect is
 come, then that which is in part
 shall be done away..."*

We hear a tenebrous rustling sound as that black, furry leg passes between Mary Fay's lips. The black eyes of the thing that had been Mary Fay BULGE and SPREAD. They merge over the bridge of the nose and become a single enormous orb that stares at Jacobs with blank avidity. Jacobs whispers:

JACOBS (CONT'D)
"I see through a glass darkly."

The Thing GRABS Jacobs by the throat. It LIFTS him high into the air. Jacobs STRUGGLES to no avail. His head SNAPS back and he makes a GARGLING sound. He makes one final, galvanic effort to free himself from the IRON GRASP grasp of the thing that is trying to come through from that insane netherworld to no avail.

The Thing SQUEEZES and CRUSHES Jacob's neck. Jacob's eyes freeze into a dead stare. It releases him. Jacobs FALLS and LANDS HARD on the floor next to the bed. His lifeless body COLLAPSES onto his knees and falls forward with his head against the bed. He's dead. By sheer chance - or fate - the position his body landed in against the bed makes it look like he's PRAYING. A fitting end.

The Thing turns its unspeakable attention on Jamie, who scrambles to his feet. It THROWS back the sheet and struggles to rise, that black insect's leg still extruding from its gaping maw of a mouth. Now PATSY'S FACE has joined Morrie's. They are melted together, WRITHING.

Mary Fay's bloated, pulsing face darkens, as if she were strangling on the thing inside her. That one smooth black eyes stares at Jamie, who sees reflected in it the cyclopean city and the endless column of the marching dead.

Jamie scans the floor... then grabs the REVOLVER. He fires over and over at the thing trying to rise from Mary Fay's deathbed. The gun ROARS. Repeated muzzle FLASHES in the gloom. The melted faces of Jacobs's long dead family SCREAM with mouths that have MERGED. The thing FLAILS and FALLS BACK onto the bed, causing Jacobs's body to fall sideways. He THUMPS to the floor on his side, knees still bent.

FLASH CUT TO: The ivy-covered door SLAMS shut.

BACK TO:

Jacobs. His eyes are wide open but already glazing. An unutterable expression of horror is stamped on his features. The thing that was Mary Fay is no longer moving. The obscenity that came out of her mouth lay limp, trailing on the pillow. Jamie covers his eyes and SCREAMS. He SCREAMS and SCREAMS and SCREAMS. Then he turns and runs out of the room.

INT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jamie comes out of the room and trips, SMACKING his head on a table. He lands on the floor with a THUD.

INT. COTTAGE - MORNING

Jamie opens his eyes. He sits up, touches his forehead. A nasty gash. Dried blood. A few broken branches lay on the carpet, blown through the open door Jenny left open when she fled. Jamie gets to his feet, unsteady, and leaves the cottage, the branches crunching like bones under his feet.

EXT. SKYTOP - CONTINUOUS

Jamie steps out into the morning light and sees a BRILLIANT RAINBOW bend its many-colored arc over the entire breadth of the wilderness beyond Skytop. The sight of it makes him cover his eyes in revulsion in horror.

Jamie takes out his cell phone and tries to call Jenny. The line RINGS and RINGS and RINGS with no answer.

Cue "A Whiter Shade of Pale" LOUD

EXT. ASTRID & JENNY'S HOUSE - MORNING

JENNY - exhausted, dark circles under her eyes - pulls into the driveway. She drove through the night to get home to Astrid. She gets out of the car and goes to their door. When she opens it, Astrid, EYES WHITE, LEAPS ON HER LIKE A LION AND PLUNGES A BUTCHER KNIFE INTO HER THROAT. Jenny FALLS backwards, her blood PAINTING the welcome mat. We hear the muffled sound of her PHONE CHIRPING as Astrid removes the knife from her lover's throat and PLUNGES it into her own heart.

INT. WOLFJAW RANCH, STUDIO 1 - DAY

HUGH - EYES WHITE - enters the studio with a SHOTGUN and BLOWS AWAY the band recording there mid-song. Then he BLOWS HIS OWN HEAD OFF, painting the control booth glass MAROON.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

AL STAMPER - EYES WHITE, and still as fat as ever - chases terrified DINERS around the restaurant with a STEAK KNIFE, stabbing as many as he can.

EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

People RUN SCREAMING from the restaurant. Al chases them outside, GRABS HIS CHEST, and dies of a heart attack in the street.

INT. ROWENA MINTOUR'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

ROWENA MINTOUR, who we watched C. Danny Jacobs heal of arthritis at the tent revival, SMOTHERS her husband to death in bed, EYES WHITE.

INT. ROWENA MINTOUR'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rowena steps into a bathtub filled with plugged in appliances and does the jitterbug.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

A MOTHER and SON, EYES BULGING, lay dead in the green grass of an idyllic backyard. Their mouths OVERFLOW with the dirt EMIL KLEIN stuffed in them to choke them to death. He stands nearby, completely naked, EYES WHITE. He douses himself in lawnmower gas and sets himself on fire.

EXT. HIGH RISE, ROOF - NIGHT

PATRICIA FARMINGDALE, WHITE EYES scarred from grinding salt in them, takes a swan dive off the roof of her apartment building. She doesn't make a sound on her way down.

"A Whiter Shade of Pale" fades over . . .

CUT TO:

. . . An open SCRAPBOOK filled with newspaper clippings of some of the horrible events we just witnessed. In CUT OUT LETTERS, our last **TITLE CARD**.

CODA

EXT. HAWAII - MORNING

Establish in all of its breathtaking beauty.

INT. JAMIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jamie opens a prescription pill bottle and shakes out two anti-depressants into his hand. Takes them.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

Jamie runs on the beach. He looks incredibly healthy and strong.

INT. GYM - MORNING

Jamie works out like a mad man with a demanding TRAINER. *"Get it, Jamie. Get it."*

INT. SOUP KITCHEN - DAY

Jamie serves food to the less fortunate.

INT. JAMIE'S CAR - DAY

Jamie drives along the coast.

THERAPIST
Have you murdered anyone?

JAMIE
No.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Jamie sits on the couch across from his THERAPIST.

THERAPIST
And you obviously haven't committed suicide. Unless I'm hallucinating you, that is.

JAMIE
You're not.

THERAPIST
The impulse isn't there?

JAMIE
No.

THERAPIST
Not even as a theoretical possibility? One that comes to you in the dead of night, perhaps, when you can't sleep?

JAMIE
No.

THERAPIST
Tell me, Jamie, why are you the special lemming who feels no urge to jump off the cliff? Why are you immune?

JAMIE
Sometimes I think she's saving me for last.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Jamie is led by a DOCTOR down a long corridor to a patient's room. As they walk, we hear a GHOSTLY WHISPER.

It's a woman's voice. Mother's voice. *Jamie . . . Come . . . Come to me and live forever.*

Jamie flinches, but continues on, pretending he didn't hear it. They come to a door. The doctor lets Jamie in and closes it. On the door is the patient's name and a medical chart. We PUSH in on it. **CONNIE MORTON. SEMICATATONIC.**

INT. CONNIE'S ROOM - DAY

Jamie sits with Connie on the edge of his bed, holding his hand.

JAMIE
You're too thin, buddy. You need to eat more.

Jamie leans his head on Connie's shoulder. Connie stares blankly ahead.

JAMIE
I love you, Connie.

That whisper again: *Jamie . . .*

Jamie looks up at that voice. The hospital walls, a soothing pastel yellow, have been replaced with gray stones held together by ancient mortar and covered in ivy. The ivy is dead and the branches look like grasping skeletal hands.

CUT TO:

BLACK

"In the Sweet By-and-By" by Johnny Cash plays over the closing credits. Like the opening, there are There are occasional, JARRING CUTS to accelerated *Koyaanisqatsi* and *Baraka*-esque footage of human beings as ants. When we cut to this footage, Johnny Cash is silence and **"Tomorrow Never Knows"** BLARES loudly, giving people another final JOLT as they exit the theater.