

Wrestling With A Conscience

FADE UP FROM BLACK

EXT. THE COSMOS - NIGHT

We are slowly panning across the HEAVEN'S, heading towards the Milky Way Galaxy. We hear two voices speaking over the image, one male, SIMON, and one female.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Just approved... a 0204, subsection
67.

We hear a rustling of PAPERS.

SIMON (V.O.)
This one looks like it could be
trouble.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
EVERY 0204 subsection 67 is! We
can't afford to lose another one...
Not this early in the millennium.

SIMON (V.O.)
God help us.

The image ends up on the glow of the full moon in space.

Tilt down and reveal:

EXT. A SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

The moonlight shimmers off the surface of the water. STEVEN BURTON, 32, a slim, sandy-haired man, is in the deepest end. He hangs onto the side wall with one hand and a shapely woman's leg with another. The leg belongs to KIMBERLY, a very attractive woman in her late 20's. She is sitting on the edge of the pool, splashing Steven and playfully trying to get him off her leg.

KIMBERLY
Come on, you big baby. Stop
clutching the side and swim out to
the deep part.

Kimberly splashes him with more water. Steven becomes serious as he turns and looks out at the deep water in front of him. We can see FEAR on his face.

STEVEN
All right. But if I drown...

Steven hesitantly lets go of her and drifts out to the deepest part of the water.

KIMBERLY

Don't worry, you're a big boy.

Steven floats out to the center of the pool, and turns to face her, still frantically treading water.

STEVEN

OK, that wasn't so terr...

Suddenly he starts to struggle, and something PULLS him under the water. Panicking, he tries to reach up to Kimberly, but through the water he sees her get up and leave. He pushes himself up, head above the water.

STEVEN (cont'd)

KIMBERLY!

Steven is pulled back under the water. The pool surface DISAPPEARS. He struggles to move his body, but he is frozen. The water gets DARKER and the glow of the moon is rapidly diminishing. He tries to scream but nothing comes out.

Suddenly, reflected in the water around him, Steven sees a MIRROR IMAGE of himself. As he becomes fixated on the image, it abruptly changes into someone else: a rough-looking WOMAN IN PIRATE GARB. We see the look of anguish on their faces.

INT. A SPARSELY FURNISHED APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven abruptly bolts awake, screaming out in distress.

STEVEN

ARGGGHHH!!

Finally able to move his limbs, Steven knocks himself off the COUCH he had been sleeping on. The apartment is dark and disorderly. The only DECORATIONS are a row of old Frank Capra MOVIE POSTERS hanging on the wall. The soft glow of a TELEVISION SCREEN illuminates the room. Kimberly, laying next to Steven, is startled out of her sleep.

KIMBERLY

What was that?

Steven sits on the edge of the couch, catching his breath.

STEVEN

I don't know... I think I just had a bizarre dream.

KIMBERLY
(irritated)
You weren't supposed to be
sleeping.

Kimberly gets up and starts to pull herself together,
slipping on her SHOES and matting down her hair.

STEVEN
(animated)
I'm telling you, this freaked the
living Hell out of me. I was in
this pool, and I started to drown,
and there was this other face...

KIMBERLY continues to move around the room, collecting her
PURSE and CELL PHONE, and reaches for her COAT. Steven gets
up, trying to get her attention.

STEVEN (cont'd)
Hey Pumpkin, are you listening?

KIMBERLY stops momentarily to glare at him.

STEVEN (cont'd)
What's the matter?

KIMBERLY
(exasperated)
You fell asleep watching TV instead
of working on your script. I told
you I was only coming over if you
promised to keep working.

STEVEN
I'm sorry... but did you hear what
I said? There was someone else in
my reflection.

KIMBERLY
You just had a bad dream. Did you
do some work on your new resume?

Steven looks down at the SCATTERED PAGES of the resume on
his COFFEE TABLE. It looks like it hasn't been touched.

STEVEN
Yeah... a little. But I'm telling
you this was as scary as Hell.

Disgusted, Kimberly buttons up her coat and heads for the
door. Before she reaches it, she turns toward Steven.

KIMBERLY
Oh, I almost forgot...

She reaches into her purse and pulls out her cell phone. She starts scrolling through her text messages.

KIMBERLY (cont'd)
It's an ad for a new production company downtown. There's a good chance they are looking for help, even if it's only free-lance.

We hear the ping of Steven's cell phone. He doesn't look.

STEVEN
I doubt they would be interested in my work.

KIMBERLY
You haven't even looked at your phone! Just give them a chance. Give yourself a chance!

Kimberly reaches for the door. Steven moves toward her for a kiss, but she turns and offers him her cheek instead.

INT. STEVEN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Steven is locking up his door, on his way out DRESSED in his BEST SUIT. As he fumbles with his keys, DEBBIE, his attractive, twenty-something neighbor, comes out of her apartment. She is dressed in sweats, her hair a bit tussled, as she comes out for her paper. Seeing Steven, she is both excited and scared that he is seeing her in this condition.

DEBBIE
Well, hey there neighbor! I didn't expect to see you out here.

STEVEN
Hey Debbie, how are you?

Debbie messes with her hair.

DEBBIE
God, talk about a bad hair day. So what's with the suit? Wedding? Funeral? Sentencing?

STEVEN
None of the above. Just heading out to a job interview.

DEBBIE

Really? That's great Steven!

STEVEN

I haven't done anything yet.

DEBBIE

Don't be so hard on yourself. This is very exciting. You're getting yourself out there. It has to beat stocking groceries, right? By the way, you look sharp in that suit.

STEVEN

Oh, thanks. Why are you home today?

DEBBIE

I'm committing myself to perfecting the art of Feng Shui in my apartment, which will involve me lining up my TV remote, a never ending bowl of cereal, and lying horizontally on my couch all day. May the Chinese Gods smile upon me.

Steven laughs.

STEVEN

You never fail to crack me up. Or ever be lost for words.

DEBBIE

Oh you'd be surprised. There are many times I can't seem to come up with the right thing to say.

STEVEN

I find that hard to believe. Look, I gotta get flying... don't want to miss my big break.

DEBBIE

Right... sorry, didn't mean to slow you down. Let me know how it goes, OK? Or just talk loud in your apartment... these walls are like rice paper.

STEVEN

Oh wow, good to know. Okay, I'll let you know!

EXT. A CITY STREET - DAY

A trendy part of town. BANNERS hang down in store shop windows, advertising creative services and art supplies. Steven is walking and feeling a bit over-dressed. He fumbles with his CELLPHONE, staring down at the screen and excessively checking the address. He is very nervous.

EXT. AN OLD BROWNSTONE BUILDING - DAY

Steven looks up and reads the address on the old STONE ARCH surrounding the door.

STEVEN
(mumbling)
Fifteen Thirty Oak Street

He stares at the series of steps in front of him. He takes a deep breath, turns away, and faces the street.

STEVEN (cont'd)
Damn...

Steven quickly gathers himself and starts up the steps. He gets to the top and pauses again. Two men, 20's, come up the stairs, talking among themselves. They look at Steven.

MAN
Can I help you with something?

STEVEN
(stammering)
I was just checking my G.P.S.

He turns from them, and they resume their conversation. Steven rushes back down the steps and walks away swiftly.

STEVEN (cont'd)
(under his breath)
I can't believe what an idiot I am.

He stops himself, and turns back towards the building.

STEVEN (cont'd)
I can do this, it's no big deal!

He takes a few steps and peers inside the building. Suddenly, Steven sees a reflection of a LARGE ROUND FACE, with white hair sticking up. He leans in for a closer look, and the face silently cries out in agony. Steven gulps hard.

STEVEN (cont'd)
Maybe I'll just call...

He looks down on his cell phone.

ON THE SCREEN

We see the company's number. He scrolls past it. Next is Kimberly's number. He pauses, but scrolls through and finds Debbie's. He hits the call button.

ON STEVEN

As he places the phone to his ear.

STEVEN (cont'd)
Hey, how's the Feng Shui going?

INT. DEBBIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Debbie is spread out comfortably on her couch, surrounded by her cereal bowl and remote.

DEBBIE
Great, it's going well. I feel metaphysically better already. My Ch'i is in full recovery mode. Done with your interview already?

INTER-CUT -- PHONE CONVERSATION

STEVEN
Um, well, kinda sorta.

DEBBIE
What happened? Did you tell them about that body in your apartment? I mean the stench alone...

Steven is not in a playful mood and cuts her off.

STEVEN
Listen, could you meet me somewhere... like to talk?

Debbie sits up, realizing the seriousness of his voice.

DEBBIE
Sure, I can do that. Are you okay?

STEVEN
I think so. I just need a non-judgmental ear to bend.

DEBBIE
I minored in ear bending at
Columbia. Let me get spiffed up and
I'll be out the door.

INT. A LOCAL PUB - DAY

The place is filled with SHOPPERS, business lunches, etc.
Steven and Debbie are hunkered down in a corner booth.

STEVEN
I was completely panic-stricken. It
felt like every person on the block
was staring at me.

DEBBIE
Why would everybody be looking at
you? It sounds like you had a panic
attack. What does the gal pal say?

STEVEN
Kimberly? I imagine she will be
pissed. She isn't very
understanding about... things.

DEBBIE
I can tell.

STEVEN
What do you mean, you can tell?

DEBBIE
Well, I wish I could tell you it
was my amazing mental telepathy
skills...but honestly, it's the
whole thin walls thing.

STEVEN
Oh great, I can only imagine how
our conversations have sounded.

DEBBIE
Well, since you brought it up,
could I ask you a question?

STEVEN
Sure.

DEBBIE
Why do you stay with her?

STEVEN

We've been together for a long time.

DEBBIE

I understand, but does she give you what you need... now?

Steven's phone starts to ring. He looks down, see's Kimberly's number, and switches the phone off.

STEVEN

I don't know, honestly. But I think a big part of it is I have lost so much in the last year... my production job, my friends... so much of my own dignity, I guess.

DEBBIE

So you hold onto her?

STEVEN

It's all I have left... oh that and the great job working at Food King.

DEBBIE

It's keeping you afloat until you find something better. I respect that. Most people would.

STEVEN

Too bad Kimberly isn't one of them. If I'm not making a hundred K a year and taking her out for lobster she seems to be pretty irritable.

DISSOLVE TO:

Empty beer glasses. Steven turns his cell phone back on. Suddenly, text messages arrive in rapid succession.

DEBBIE

Holy crap, did you miss your drug pick up?

STEVEN

They are all from the Food King.

DEBBIE

Maybe there was a spill in aisle four...

Steven is not smiling. The expression drains from his face.

STEVEN

I was supposed to come in to work a shift this afternoon... damn!

DEBBIE

Can you call them?

Steven's barrage of text ends. One final "ping" hits.

STEVEN

Wait, someone left a message... I'm guessing it's them.

He hits the button and listens. His head slumps.

DEBBIE

Not good.

Steven tosses the phone down on the table.

STEVEN

They fired me. Dear God what now?

DEBBIE

Oh Steven, I am so sorry.

STEVEN

It's the story of my life. One unending nightmare after another.

DEBBIE

Oh don't say that. Things will get better. You are just in a slump.

She reaches out to touch his hand but he pulls it away.

STEVEN

You have no idea how bad it is. I swear to God, I don't even know why I try anymore.

DEBBIE

I am sure you have many good things in your life!

STEVEN

Have you ever seen "It's A Wonderful Life"?

DEBBIE

It's one of my favorites!

STEVEN

Well I guarantee you, if my guardian angel came down right now, and showed me how much better everyone's life would be if I wasn't in it, he would be personally pushing me off the bridge, begging me to end things.

DEBBIE

Don't say that Steven, that's horrible!

STEVEN

It's the bitter truth. I'm sorry, I can't sit here anymore, I have to go.

DEBBIE

No please Steven, don't leave like this...

STEVEN

I can't deal with this any longer.

Steven gets up and abruptly leaves.

INT. A SEEDY LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Steven stands at the counter, an endless supply of hard liquor bottles in front of him. The CLERK, a THIN MAN, is getting impatient with Steven's indecision. He pulls a POCKET WATCH out of his pants pocket.

THIN MAN

Look, I don't have all the time in the world...

STEVEN

I need something to numb the pain.

THIN MAN

Nothing stronger than Jaegermeister. Helps to chase away the demons... and quiet the voices.

STEVEN

Perfect.

The clerk turns and grabs the BOTTLE off the shelf. Steven rummages through his pockets and pulls out wadded up money and change. The clerk puts the bottle in A BAG.

EXT. A DARK AND DAMP ALLEY - NIGHT

Steven walks, head down. A dim street light casts a shadow, and we see TWO OTHER SHADOWS along side of him. Without warning, a RAT bolts out, startling him. He drops the bottle, shattering it and spilling the contents.

STEVEN

Rats!

He kicks the glass, and sees his reflection in the pool of spilled alcohol. Suddenly, he sees a different man, with a VERY THIN MUSTACHE. Steven looks behind him but there is no one there. He bends and stares at the image. The man appears to be screaming out in horror. Scared, Steven kicks the booze, destroying the image. He races out of the alley.

INT. STEVEN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Steven fumbles with his keys, opens the door to his apartment, and slams it. Debbie, hearing the noise, comes out of her apartment. She knocks on his door.

DEBBIE

Hey Steven, are you okay?

There is no response. She presses up against the door.

DEBBIE (cont'd)

Come on man, you ditched me in a bar, the least you can do is answer your door. What's going on?

Suddenly, Kimberly, well dressed in BUSINESS ATTIRE, comes into the hallway from the outside door. She sees Debbie standing at Steven's door, and gives her a discerning look.

KIMBERLY

Can I help you?

DEBBIE

Kimberly, right? I'm just the neighbor, Debbie.

KIMBERLY

Uh uh.

DEBBIE

Look, he is really upset. I'm just concerned.

KIMBERLY
(sarcastically)
Well thanks for the update. I'm
sure I can handle whatever drama he
is having now.

DEBBIE
Please just be gentle with him.

KIMBERLY
I got this... thanks anyway.

INT. STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The silence is broken by the sound of Kimberly opening the door and flipping the light switch.

KIMBERLY
My God, it's colder than Hell in
here. I'm surprised you don't
freeze to death.

STEVEN
Don't get my hopes up.

KIMBERLY
Not even funny. What's going on?
You have been ignoring my texts and
calls all day. Your little friend
next door is concerned too.

STEVEN
I lost my job at Food King today.

KIMBERLY
You mean like got fired?

STEVEN
Yes, exactly.

She sinks down in a chair, momentarily stunned. Her expression quickly changes to one of disgust.

KIMBERLY
Steven, how could you lose your job
at a lousy *supermarket*? (she
regroups) It's all right, we will
figure out something.

STEVEN
Don't you get it? I've failed
again! Every damn thing I have
tried in my life I have failed at!

KIMBERLY

You haven't failed. You just can't see beyond all of this. Damn it you are not a failure.

STEVEN

Who are you trying to convince, yourself or me? You just don't understand...

This lights a fuse under her.

KIMBERLY

I understand that you are your own worst enemy! You haven't failed, you have quit... again and again! You paint your entire world in this black color and I'm sick of watching you do it to yourself!

STEVEN

Save the Tony Robbins crap for someone else. You weren't there to see one more colossal humiliation!

KIMBERLY

A humiliation you could have prevented... I even handed you a golden opportunity and you did nothing with it!

STEVEN

I said I just wasn't right for it!

KIMBERLY

You are a liar! You never even bothered. I called and found out you never showed up! You were too damn scared to even try!

Steven doesn't respond. Kimberly's bubble has burst.

KIMBERLY (cont'd)

Every time you have come just inches away from your dreams, you've shot yourself in the foot! You are wasting all of your talent and time... And mine too.

STEVEN

I'm just a loser, a failure! Plain and simple... I have nothing to show for my life!

Kimberly is offended and hurt.

KIMBERLY
 NOTHING to show? What about ME?
 What about US?

Steven doesn't have the sense to respond. Kimberly is done.

KIMBERLY (cont'd)
 We've been together for years and I
 am tired of waiting to live my
 life. You never want to fight for
 yourself or your dreams. You have
 been working on your scripts for
 HOW long? You don't have a career,
 and do nothing to make it happen!

Steven sits there motionless as the torrent of anger and
 resentment crashes over him.

KIMBERLY (cont'd)
 And now things don't go right, and
 you want to blame the rest of the
 world instead of yourself. My God
 do you think that's what a Frank
 Capra would do? Damn it, why don't
 you take control of your life?

Steven, wallowing in self pity, just stares into space.

STEVEN
 But I'm so damned scared.

Kimberly has reached her end point and has no sympathy left.

KIMBERLY
 I can not... I will not continue to
 live like this! The truth is I am
 miserable Steven, and I am most
 miserable when I am with you!

This stabs Steven right in his heart. He drops his head and
 is visibly shaken, but does not try to address her.

KIMBERLY (cont'd)
 I can't help you Steven, no one
 can. I need to worry about myself.

Frustrated, she heads for the door. She looks at him one
 last time. He does not look up. Consumed with self-loathing,
 he is already slipping further into darkness.

KIMBERLY (cont'd)
 You want your self-fulfilling
 negative prophecy? Fine, now you
 can paint you whole life in black!

Disgusted, she leaves, slamming the door. It shakes the entire room, knocking the framed poster of "It's A Wonderful Life" off of the wall, SHATTERING the glass. Steven breaks down, bursting into tears and pounding his fists onto the table. The SHARDS OF GLASS slash up his hands, and they start to BLEED.

STEVEN
 Goddamn it! I've lost everything...

Suddenly, TWO SHADOWS APPEAR and hover over Steven, but he is unaware of them. He goes into a rage, TEARING the other CAPRA POSTERS off the wall. Next he turns to his computer, FLINGING IT across the room. Steven collapses on the floor.

STEVEN (cont'd)
 I'm never going to make it...
 there's nothing left for me.

He puts his head back into his hands, and notices the especially DEEP CUT on his wrist. He panics, but decides to do nothing to stop the bleeding. He closes his eyes.

IMAGE SUDDENLY TURNS TO BLACK AND WHITE

The two shadows step out of the darkness and materialize. There is a short, WELL-DRESSED STOCKY MAN, with the word FEAR burned into his forehead, and a TALL, VAMPY ATTRACTIVE FEMALE, with long nails and even longer legs. Burned into her forehead is the word DOUBT.

FEAR
 Our mission is almost complete.

DOUBT
 Just one more miserable breath...

Suddenly, a burst of LIGHT appears, and a beautiful ANGEL floats down into the apartment and lands next to Steven.

ANGEL
 Sorry to interrupt, but you two are
 a little... premature.

Fear and Doubt are flustered, and Doubt tries to interrupt.

DOUBT
 Wait a minute, you have no
 jurisdiction here. This is final!

ANGEL

Pardon me, but based on rule number 1017, subsection 67, they have issued a PDI.

FEAR

PDI? (tries to think) A Public Display of... Infection?

ANGEL

Not even close. A Proclamation of Direct Intervention. You should really study the book.

Fear and Doubt look momentarily confused, then quickly pull out a small YELLOW BOOKLET. We see the cover.

INSERT: "REGARDING MATTERS OF THE SOUL", CLIFF NOTES VERSION

The two begin rummaging through the booklet, panicking.

DOUBT

It's not in here! (to Fear) I told you this thing was worthless.

FEAR

But this soul defaults to us at the time of death!

ANGEL

This particular life has not yet expired.

The Angel bends down over Steven.

ANGEL (cont'd)

He has one breath left.

She moves her mouth over his, as if to kiss him. We see Steven's chest sink as she draws the last breath out of him.

ANGEL (cont'd)

Now I am taking the breath, and his soul, with me.

DOUBT

You can't do that! He's ours!

ANGEL

You two have had an unfair control over him for most of his life.

Her demeanor suddenly changes.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Now BACK OFF!

The two jump back, stunned and intimidated.

FEAR
(to Doubt)
Did you HEAR what she said?

DOUBT
Well, that was a bit harsh.

Suddenly, the soul of Steven RISES UP out of his body, and in total silence, the angel takes it by the hand and floats away into a mist. Fear and Doubt stand there, empty-handed.

EXT. HELL - ETERNAL NIGHT (COLOR)

A landscape of hot, bubbling LAVA. Rising in the center is a LARGE TOWERING BUILDING. FLAMES and SMOKE rise all around it. Sounds of AGONY fill the air. We close in on the large granite words "HELL, INC."

Down to a large glass DOOR just as a SATAN, ageless, in all of his Biblical glory, bursts through the door and is engulfed in a rush of STEAM. His face is RED and TWISTED HORNS protrude from his head. His eyes are yellow and intense, and his hands are CLAW-LIKE TENTACLES, yet he wears a very conservative pinstripe BUSINESS SUIT. ATTLA THE HUN, 40's, a HEAVYSET and well costumed MAN, walks feverishly alongside of him, trying to keep up.

SATAN
I can't believe it is finally the day. I have been waiting an eternity for this! Glorious!

EXT. A LARGE TRAIN STATION DEPOT - ETERNAL DARKNESS

Satan rushes out onto a large metallic platform, leans over, and wraps his twisted, red fingers over the railing.

SATAN (cont'd)
They are here.

Five TRAINS pull in directly below his platform. We tilt down and see doors opening and souls begin disembarking. GARGOYLE-LIKE HENCHMAN bark out orders, throwing and pushing the souls into separate lines.

HENCHMAN
Get over there, you worthless dogs.

The group is marched towards the GATES OF HELL, never far from the slashes of the Gatekeepers whip. The group is herded towards a LARGE, WOODEN DOOR, which is deeply carved with FACES OF HORROR. We see the look of despair on the new arrivals. The door swings open, and they cringe from the horror that they see inside (*although we never see it*). We see FLAMES reflected in their faces. The Gatekeeper cracks his whip and the souls began painfully marching inside. We hear CRIES OF TORMENT as they enter.

EXT. THE PLATFORM

Satan scans the minions looking for the one soul.

SATAN

Damn! Where is it? I don't see it!

Attila shrugs his shoulders again and grunts.

SATAN (cont'd)

He's not there! Someone is going to catch all Hell for this!

EXT. MAIN STREET OF PURGATORY - DUSK (BLACK & WHITE)

We see a large MCDONALD'S-LIKE SIGN, with the arches replaced by ANGEL WINGS. Underneath, how many billions of SOULS HAVE BEEN SAVED. Next is a sign pointing directly upward, reading "HEAVEN: DISTANCE - 1 SOUL SAVED." We end up on a large Gothic building, the "Purgatory Pit".

INT. THE PURGATORY PIT - NIGHT

It is a darkly lit stadium, with a WRESTLING RING. Two people are WRESTLING, as the crowd cheers. RAY, a small, thin man is being pummeled by a very large woman. The BELL RINGS, and he struggles to pull himself into his corner, where a HEAVY SET MAN with a CREW CUT, WALLY, The Wrestler, 50's, is standing. Ray grabs Wally by his shirt.

RAY

(breathlessly)

You've got to go in there for me!
After all, you're the wrestler, not me. I can't last against...

He glances at the woman pacing like a WILD ANIMAL.

RAY (cont'd)

(continuing)

...THAT!

The crowd begins to egg Wally on, with four individuals in particular really aggravating him with their taunts. SUTCLIFFE, a tall, skinny man, dressed in fine English garments; GWENDOLYN, a stocky, mannish-looking woman dressed in PIRATE CLOTHING; JEAN CLAUDE, a portly man with wild white hair and a big ruffled shirt; and TREVANIIO, a casually dressed man with a Salvador Dali-like mustache.

SUTCLIFFE

My dear man, are you going to let that man be sacrificed for you?

TREVANIIO

Of course he will, just like all the others! I think he is just too large to move.

GWENDOLYN

He's nothing but a bilge rat!

Wally turns and looks at them sternly.

JEAN CLAUDE

(nervously)

Um, what they all said.

We can see the frustration on Wally's face, but he is silent. He turns and calmly talks to Ray.

WALLY

Everybody with any smarts knows why I can't. Now get back in there.

The bell rings, and Ray staggers into the ring.

RAY

Hell can't be worse than this.

As soon as he steps in, we see Ray come FLYING OUT of the ring and end up THREE ROWS BACK in the stands. The final bell rings, and the place goes up for grabs. Suddenly, an announcement comes on over the loud speakers.

LOUD SPEAKER (V.O.)

Attention Angel Candidates...

The entire place goes dead quiet. We can't quite make out what is being said. We slowly scan the FACES of the audience, and see smiles. The people head for the exits.

The only person left is Wally. He slowly grabs his worn DUFFLE BAG, and reaching inside of his POCKET, pulls out a folded and worn PIECE OF PAPER.

He opens it up, looks at it for a second, folds it back up and heads up the STAIRS. He is the only person not in a hurry. He exits.

INT. A LARGE HALLWAY - DAY

In the center of the wall is a huge TIME CLOCK, and on one side is row after row of time cards. There is a sign above:

"ANGEL CANDIDATES, PUNCH IN OR YOU WILL NOT BE CREDITED"

A recorded, MONOTONE VOICE gives the same directions in various languages through the speakers. The people from the auditorium are lined up single file, patiently punching in their TIME CARDS. WE catch snippets of conversation.

CANDIDATE ONE

God, I pray it's my turn.

CANDIDATE TWO

I wonder what it will feel like to have wings.

CANDIDATE THREE

I can't wait to see my family.

Wally, last in line, seems disenchanted with the whole process. The person in front of him is pretty excited.

MAN IN LINE

Come on big guy, aren't you at least a little excited?

WALLY

I know I'll never be picked...

His voice trails off. He punches in, and we follow him into:

INT. THE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

The Angel Candidates enter the room. They rush to the front except for Wally. He immediately heads for the BACK ROW, and stares blankly at the side wall.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE BRIEFING ROOM

A group of TEN ANGELS, in all shapes, colors, and sizes, come FLOATING down out of the sky, cheerful and talkative as they land. The angels enter the auditorium.

INT. THE BRIEFING ROOM

THE COMMANDER, 60'S, A TALL, SHARPLY DRESSED MAN enters the room and it goes quiet. As he walks the front, we see his BREAST POCKET, which is loaded with MEDALS AND RIBBONS. He steps to the podium and places a stack of folders on top of it. Behind him is a LARGE MONITOR. He opens the first folder with absolute precision, and starts reading.

COMMANDER
Case number 32748, Houg Lee Soo...

A picture of Houg Lee appears on the screen.

COMMANDER (cont'd)
Father and farmer, is about to be involved in a serious accident, trapping him inside of his vehicle. You must help him stay alive.

There is a dramatic pause as the Commander turns the page.

COMMANDER (cont'd)
And the assignment goes to.. Angel Candidate Matesha Zombwae.

There is a noticeable shriek in the audience and MATESHA runs to the front of the auditorium like the WINNER ON A GAME SHOW. Madhu takes the folder from the Commander.

MADHU
Hello Matesha, I am your heavenly adviser Madhu. I am here to assist you in your preparations.

The two turn and walk hurriedly out of the auditorium. The Commander opens a second folder.

COMMANDER
Case number 327-2536, Zuzu Bailey-Richardson, President of Bailey Brothers Building and Loan...

Wally stares off into the distance.

THE LARGE CLOCK MOVES FORWARD IN TIME.

Back at the podium, the Commander is out of folders and begins to wrap up his proceedings.

COMMANDER
That ends the assignments for today.

There is a collective sigh of disappointment in the crowd.

COMMANDER (cont'd)
Be patient... your time will
come... um, in time.

He steps off the podium and begins walking away. Suddenly, SIMON, a short round man in his 50's, enters the room huffing and puffing. He has a CASE FOLDER under his arm. The Commander takes the folder, quickly glances over it, and walks up to the podium.

COMMANDER (cont'd)
This final case is a special one.

The eyes of the crowd grow wide in anticipation.

COMMANDER (cont'd)
Case number 327-0425, Steven J.
Burton, attempted to take his life
approximately one hour ago. A
Proclamation of Direct...

The Commander is surprised, and looks to Simon, who nods his acknowledgment while still trying to catch his breath. The Commander's voice has a new sense of urgency to it.

COMMANDER (cont'd)
A Proclamation of Direct
Intervention has been issued.

A gasp from the audience. The Commander turns the page.

COMMANDER (cont'd)
And the assignment goes to...

He pauses, and the crowd leans forward. The Commander silently reads the name to himself and is dumbfounded.

COMMANDER (cont'd)
There must be a mistake...

He steps down from the podium and consults with Simon. There is a brief but animated discussion that we can not hear. The crowd starts to buzz. Finally, Simon shrugs his shoulders and points upward. The Commander looks up, nods in resigned acknowledgment, and returns to the podium.

COMMANDER (cont'd)
The candidate for this assignment
is Walter Siemanski... more
commonly known as "The Wrestler".

The crowd lets out a collective gasp. Wally is in total shock. Bewildered, he approaches the podium.

SIMON

Hello Walter, come with me.

He grabs him by the arm and hurries off, talking quickly.

SIMON (cont'd)

This is the darnedest case I've seen in quite awhile. And we don't have a lot of time to prepare...

WALLY

I don't understand how I could have been picked for this.

SIMON

No one does, honestly, except for Him (*points his thumb upwards*). Now, hurry along, we have a lot to cover and Steven is on his way. Besides you have five lives to save, not just one.

Wally stops dead in his tracks.

WALLY

FIVE? Is mine one of them?

SIMON

Walter, you do a good job with this and you'll get your wings.

INT. THE HALLWAY

The two push through the big doors and continue talking. Simon hands Wally the file.

SIMON

You can start reading this.

WALLY

(sheepishly)

I never did learn to read good.

SIMON

How well do you listen?

He takes the folder and starts to read the case aloud.

SIMON (cont'd)

Steven J. Burton, 32 years old...

They disappear down a long corridor.

INT. OUTSIDE OF SATAN'S OFFICE - ETERNAL NIGHT (COLOR)

A large RED GLASS DOOR with a sign on it reading "SATAN-LUCIFER-DEVIL: President and CEO". It opens to reveal:

INT. SATAN'S OFFICE - ETERNAL NIGHT

Dark and eerie. The back wall is filled with organic looking MONITORS, each one filled with various forms of evil occurring across the world (fires, wars, civil unrest, reality TV). SATAN is seated behind an enormous CARVED DESK. Fear and Doubt argue their case before Satan.

FEAR

This is not my fault. If you had read the book...

DOUBT

Don't try to dump this on me.

SATAN

Enough! What in my domain happened down there?

FEAR

We had him in our grips and then.. It's all her fault!

DOUBT

Oh, big words for such a little sin. If it wasn't for you...

SATAN

Damn it, would you two shut up? If I wanted to hear Blame I would have called him in here myself!

DOUBT

They pulled a PDU...

FEAR

(interrupting)
No, it was a DUI... or was it a...

SATAN

What number was it?

Fear pulls out a scrap of paper with the number scribbled on it. Satan grabs it out of his hand.

SATAN (cont'd)
 So they pulled a zero two, zero
 four, sixty four on us, did they?

Satan pounds his fist on the desk, shaking everything.

SATAN (cont'd)
 Damn! We DO have to go to trial! We
 need representation!

Now really infuriated, Satan pushes past Fear and Doubt and
 rushes down the long corridor. Attila chases after him.

INT. MAIN OFFICE AREA

Row after row of OLD WOODEN DESKS. Papers stacked THREE FEET
 high. People from all periods of history toil away, BLOOD &
 SWEAT seeping from their pores. Satan shouts to those below.

SATAN
 Are there any lawyers in here?

Two thirds of the room stands up. Satan turns to Attila.

SATAN (cont'd)
 Damn, that was an incredibly *stupid*
 question to ask.

He turns to the crowd again.

SATAN (cont'd)
 All right, how many of you
 heartless degenerates are criminal
 defense lawyers?

The majority remain standing. Satan pulls Attila close.

SATAN (cont'd)
 I want you to go through there and
 pick out the most ruthless son of
 bitch and bring him or her to me!

Satan storms out. Attila looks out at the crowd and smiles.

ATTILA
 All right, line 'em up!

INT. SATAN'S OFFICE

Satan storms back in and immediately heads for the wall of
 monitors, pushing Fear and Doubt out of his way.

SATAN

Let's see who we are up against.

Satan plops down in his chair and starts playing with his REMOTE. The main monitor switches to an areal shot of Purgatory. He watches as Wally and Simon talk.

SATAN (cont'd)

They must be joking! I didn't realize HE had a sense of humor. Oh this should be a cake walk. I own that nibble-minded buffoon.

He grabs Fear and Doubt.

SATAN (cont'd)

Now you two get up there and see if you can't cause more headaches for these idiots. I've got work to do.

Fear and Doubt rush out of the room.

EXT. THE GATES OF PURGATORY - DUSK (B&W)

Steven floats out of the mist, the ANGELS ARMS wrapped around him. He is gently placed on the ground. The angel leans over him, puts her lips together, and GENTLY BLOWS on Steven. His eyes slowly start to open.

STEVEN SEES

The glowing angel, her image blurry but slowly coming into focus. He shakes his head, trying to adjust.

ANGEL

Goodbye Steven, and good luck.

The angel floats away, and Steven struggles to his feet, trying to reach out to her.

STEVEN

Wait a minute... who are you? And where am I?

The angel disappears. Steven notices his extended arm and sees the mark along his wrist. Dazed and bewildered, he is completely lost. Simon and Wally step out of the fog.

SIMON

Hello Steven, I'm so glad to meet you. Welcome to Purgatory!

STEVEN

Wait... did you say *Purgatory*?

SIMON

Yes, *Purgatory*, the holding area for souls between salvation and total damnation.

STEVEN

Purgatory? Oh I think I'm going to be sick.... who are you?

SIMON

My name is Simon, and I am your Heavenly Adviser.

STEVEN

Are you saying I am... dead?

SIMON

Not quite, but close. Now, hurry along, we don't have much time to prepare for your trial.

Simon grabs Steven's wrist by mistake.

SIMON (cont'd)

Oh dear, so sorry about that.

Simon lets go of his wrist. Steven looks down at it and starts to realize what he had done. The three walk through the gates and enter *Purgatory*.

EXT. THE STREETS OF PURGATORY - EVENING

They hurry along at a brisk pace, passing numerous large ANCIENT STRUCTURES. It looks like a horribly RUN-DOWN MAIN STREET. Steven, confused, listens intently as Simon speaks.

STEVEN

My head is pretty fuzzy... did you say my *trial*?

SIMON

Actually it's a tribunal... Technically speaking.

STEVEN

Why do I need a tribunal? What did I ever do that was so horrible?

SIMON

You are in danger of committing two
of the greatest sins known to man.

Steven looks down at his wrist.

STEVEN

I guess taking my life wasn't the
smartest idea... but what else?

SIMON

You'll have to figure that out for
yourself. It's not for me to say.

Simon reconsiders. He can't stop himself.

SIMON (cont'd)

God creates every one of us to some
definitive service, something that
you and you alone could do.

Steven ponders for a second.

STEVEN

Okay, so I admit that I didn't
finish any of my scripts... or make
any movies... or accomplish much of
anything... but isn't this rather
severe? I haven't really hurt any
one other than myself.

SIMON

Really? That's rather selfish
thinking young man. Not using the
talents that God has given you is
nothing to take lightly. I know He
certainly doesn't.

Wally, who has been following along silently, finally clears
his throat loudly to get Simon's attention.

WALLY

Ahem!

SIMON

I AM terribly sorry. Steven, allow
me to introduce the gentleman who
is responsible for saving your
soul, Wally Siemanski.

Wally just grumbles at him.

STEVEN
Him? I thought he was your
bodyguard.

Simon chuckles.

SIMON
Oh, I don't have a body. Here...

Simon grabs Steve's hand and passes it through his "body".

SIMON (cont'd)
See, nothing there, technically
speaking. Although I wouldn't
recommend doing that. The other
advisers are terrible gossips.

THE TOWN SQUARE

The three come upon the center of Purgatory, where all the streets converge. Situated in the exact center is a large, METALLIC SCULPTURE, soaring at least three stories high. Steven walks up to the sculpture, his mouth hanging open.

STEVEN
What is *this*?

SIMON
The symbol for all of Purgatory.

Steven steps up to the base, and there is a stone tablet with an inscription. He runs his finger along the letters.

STEVEN
(whispering)
Despair

SIMON
We really must keep going.

Simon grabs him by the arm and pulls him along to the:

SOULS MEETING HALL

Dark and worn, there are two large WOODEN DOORS and a large STONE PLATE engraved with the name. Simon pulls Wally aside.

SIMON
You may want to give us a minute.

Wally shrugs his acknowledgment. Simon reaches for the door, stops and turns towards Steven.

SIMON (cont'd)
Tell me Steven, do you believe in
past lives?

STEVEN
(sarcastically)
You are kidding me, right?

Simon stares at him, dead serious.

STEVEN (cont'd)
Well, no then, not really.

SIMON
That's too bad, because they are
very anxious to meet you.

INT. SOULS MEETING ROOM - DAY

Steven steps into the room and is in awe. It is a large drab room with COLUMNS rising up into the CEILING. Seated around a massive, CIRCULAR TABLE, are the four individuals from the wrestling match audience. The four lives slowly rise from their chairs and began to SMILE.

SUTCLIFFE, the tall, skinny one, approaches Steven first, his shoulders squarely back. He extends his hand.

SUTCLIFFE
Welcome, Steven, welcome! The name
is Henry Wadsworth Sutcliffe, an
actor of impeccable distinction...

TREVANIIO
(interrupting)
Allegedly.

SUTCLIFFE
(continuing)
And life number one.

GWENDOLYN, the husky woman, comes up from behind Steven and slaps him on the back. He almost falls over.

GWENDOLYN
Gwendolyn C. Moore, pirate of the
Spanish fleet... First mate and yer
second life. Sculpting was me
calling in life, and searching for
the lassie of my dreams was my
lifelong quest.

She pauses and stares off into the distance, smiling.

STEVEN

Lassie? Don't you mean...

The other three lives shake their heads "no". Abruptly, Gwendolyn snaps out of it and returns to her gruffness.

GWENDOLYN

Yer up, Claudie.

JEAN CLAUDE, a short and dumpy French man with wild white hair stands there, staring off into space.

JEAN CLAUDE

The what?... Oh yes, of course, introductions. Jean Claude Monret, classical composer...

TREVANIIO

Allegedly.

JEAN CLAUDE

Yes... third occupier of this... I mean, well you know, our soul.

TREVANIIO steps ahead of him and interrupts.

TREVANIIO

And of course, last but certainly not least...

THE OTHER THREE

Allegedly!

He turns his nose up at them.

TREVANIIO

(continuing)

Nicholas Trevanio. Painter Extraordinaire! Creator of visual masterpieces...

GWENDOLYN

Everyone grab yer crap nets.

TREVANIIO

And life numero quattro.

Steven, totally in shock, tries to spit out his words.

STEVEN

Wait... you are the ones that have been spooking me the past week!

JEAN CLAUDE
A haunting? Oh, how exciting!

SUTCLIFFE
And completely impossible you
imbecile.

STEVEN
I think I need to sit down... And
could use a drink.

TREVANIIO
Wonderful, another one of us with a
fondness for spirits!

Simon steps between all of them.

SIMON
Five different lives, all sharing
the same soul. Tell me Steven, how
does it make you feel?

STEVEN
(bewildered)
Like the nun who taught me about
the afterlife needs to revise her
curriculum.

Wally clears his throat off screen.

SIMON
Oh, yes, terribly sorry. Please
allow me to introduce the being
responsible for saving your soul.

With that Wally enters the room, and when he sees the four
lives, he instantly recognizes them.

WALLY
YOU!

FOUR LIVES
(in unison)
YOU?!

JEAN CLAUDE
Oh, dear me, we're doomed.

GWENDOLYN
We'll be fed to the fishes for
certain.

STEVEN
Do you guys know him?

TREVANIIO

Know him? We have been taunting him
for decades!

Sutcliffe pulls Simon aside.

SUTCLIFFE

He will not even fight for himself,
how in Heaven do you expect him to
fight for us?

JEAN CLAUDE

Oh dear, I can't imagine a worse
situation.

TREVANIIO

I don't know about the rest of you,
but I need a drink.

SIMON

Wait, hold on...

STEVEN

You don't mean liquor, do you?

TREVANIIO

Well, there may be no beer in
heaven, but there is plenty here.

The group heads for the door.

SIMON

We do not have time for such
diversions!

They all ignore him and push through the door.

INT. SATAN'S OFFICE - ETERNAL NIGHT (COLOR)

FLAMES lick at the window. Satan is seated and listening to
Attila as he introduces the attorney candidate.

ATTILA

Here's the next one master.

SPANULLI, a large, barrel-chested man in his 50's, steps
forward. His hair is SLICKED BACK and a BIG CIGAR sticks out
of his mouth. He is wearing 1920's era clothing.

ATTILA (cont'd)

Richard G. Spanulli, defense
attorney for the Gabrinelli crime
family during the 1920's.

(MORE)

ATTILA (cont'd)
 Was responsible for getting his
 clients off over forty times for
 various murders, robberies, and
 other acts of debauchery.

Spanulli takes a big puff of his cigar and blows smoke into
 the air.

SPANULLI
 Just doin' my job boss.

SATAN
 Oh he's perfect. Tell me, what does
 the G stand for?

SPANULLI
 Guilty as charged boss.

SATAN
 And guilty as sin... Defense
 attorney? Do you have what it takes
 to prosecute?

SPANULLI
 Prosecute, broil, filet... You name
 it boss.

SATAN
 Oh, you'll do wonderfully. And
 Master would be just fine.

SPANULLI
 Whatever.

EXT. INN OF LOST SOULS - EVENING (B&W)

It has all the appearances of an OLD ENGLISH PUB. Trevanio,
 Simon, and Wally are in the middle of a disagreement, and
 the others are nowhere to be seen.

TREVANIO
 (to Wally)
 Well, I can't say that I am very
 anxious to be seen with you either.
 Why don't you just sit alone in the
 corner like you usually do.

WALLY
 It beats talking to you bums!

Wally opens the door and storms inside.

SIMON

You know very well that I am not allowed in there.

TREVANIIO

Exactly! Arrivederci!

Trevaniio goes inside, leaving Simon standing there with folders in his hands.

SIMON

Wait, what about the trial?

He presses his face up against the glass. We tilt up to see the sign hanging over the doorway:

INSERT: INN OF LOST SOULS; MEMBERS ONLY

INT. INN OF LOST SOULS - EVENING

The bar is filled to standing room only, the patrons huddled around TABLES and a long, WOODEN BAR. Most of the crowd is joyous, but along the walls the tables are filled with SOLEMN-LOOKING CUSTOMERS, some of them softly PRAYING, others literally CRYING into their BEERS. Trevaniio enters the bar and everyone greets him.

CROWD

Trevaniio!!!

TREVANIIO

(in Italian)

Buonasera! Bere fino! Bere fino!

The crowd lifts their drinks and cheer. Trevaniio looks up to the second level and climbs up the stairs.

INN OF LOST SOULS - SECOND FLOOR

The group sits around a large table, drinking beers.

STEVEN

I'm trying to digest this whole situation. I still have no idea where in the Hell I am...

Suddenly, Jean Claude SLAPS his hand over Steven's mouth. The band screeches to a halt, and souls at other tables KNOCK OVER their drinks. The place goes completely silent. Jean Claude nervously looks around.

JEAN CLAUDE
It's all right, it's all right, he
didn't know any better.

The bar goes back to normal.

JEAN CLAUDE (cont'd)
Please Steven, be careful how you
use THAT word around here.

SUTCLIFFE
It does have a tendency to unnerve
every soul, living and otherwise.

STEVEN
Where were you all when I was down
on earth struggling? Do you know
how many times I prayed for help?

JEAN CLAUDE
Oh it wasn't possible to help.

TREVANIIO
You have to have a basic
understanding of how things work in
the cosmos.

SUTCLIFFE
Only angels have the ability to
travel through the different
dimensions, to be able to see what
is happening back on earth...

TREVANIIO
Or have any influence on events or
people.

GWENDOLYN
Because me mates and me never did
what we were supposed to, we
haven't become angels... obviously.

JEAN CLAUDE
We are all trapped here until your
life is... was... whatever...
exhausted.

STEVEN
That doesn't seem very fair.

SUTCLIFFE
What does not?

STEVEN

I don't understand how, in addition to my own shortcomings, I have to be held accountable for what all of you never achieved. Christ, I don't even know what you guys screwed up so bad in the first place.

JEAN CLAUDE

Please Steven, do not use that name in vain, especially in here.

SUTCLIFFE

Would it help if we explained our predicaments to you?

TREVANIIO

Marvelous idea! I'm beginning to have hope for you yet. My story starts in Vienna, which gave me numerous opportunities to hone my craft. None was bigger than when I was offered the commission to paint the brand new cathedral.

INT. SAINT ANDREWS CATHEDRAL VIENNA - DAY (1800) (COLOR)

The light shines through the STAIN GLASS WINDOWS, illuminating the cavernous room with a RAINBOW of light. A young Trevaniio stares at the gray, unfinished ceiling.

TREVANIIO (V.O.)

I knew I could do it. I could see the entire thing in my mind...

Young Trevaniio starts to map out with his hands where things would need to be positioned.

TREVANIIO (V.O.) (cont'd)

... a splash of sunlight, in vivid yellows...

INT. THE INN - NIGHT (B&W)

Trevaniio is standing there in the same pose as the younger version was in the flashback, enthusiastically mapping it out again in the air.

TREVANIIO

A chorus of bright blue angels over there...

INT. SAINT ANDREWS CATHEDRAL - DAY (COLOR)

The younger Trevaniio continues to look around.

TREVANIIO (V.O.)
 And, in a brilliant splash of
 purple, the majestic power of God,
 right there in the center.

Young Trevaniio lies on his back, about to apply the first
 brush stroke of purple paint to the center of the ceiling.
 The entire cathedral is filled with SCAFFOLDING.

TREVANIIO (V.O.) (cont'd)
 But... I couldn't do it. I was...
 terrified.

Young Trevaniio's hand begins to shake uncontrollably.

TREVANIIO (V.O.) (cont'd)
 In an instant, my mind became
 clouded with the maddening screams
 of voices...

The shadows of Fear and Doubt begin to materialize around
 Trevaniio.

TREVANIIO (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I became consumed with feelings of
 inadequacy.

The brush falls out of his hand, bouncing off the RUNGS of
 the SCAFFOLDING, hits the FLOOR and SPLATTERS paint
 everywhere. The priest comes rushing over.

PRIEST
 Dear God, are you all right?

Trevaniio tries to collect himself.

TREVANIIO
 No, actually I am not.

INT. TREVANIIO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Trevaniio is seen sitting at a small table, a half empty
 bottle of CHEAP WINE in front of him. He looks like hell.

TREVANIIO (V.O.)
 Lucky for me I found a solution for
 my... dilemma.

Trevaniio drops his head down on the table, drunk.

STEVEN (V.O.)
So you never did the ceiling?

EXT. SAINT ANDREWS CATHEDRAL - DAY

Trevaniio walks up to the door and stops. He reaches for the handle, and his hand begins to SHAKE uncontrollably again.

TREVANIIO (V.O.)
Oh, I tried to go back, but I
couldn't bring myself to go inside.

INT. TREVANIIO'S APARTMENT - DAY

The shades are pulled and the apartment is dark, except for a band of light coming in through the glass in the door. Trevaniio pours himself a GLASS of LIQUOR.

TREVANIIO (V.O.)
Although I continued painting, I
was so depressed and filled with
self-loathing that they never saw
the light of day.

Trevaniio finishes, steps back, admires the painting, then TOSSES it aside. He sits down and opens a bottle of wine.

MONTAGE

The PILE OF PAINTINGS gets deeper, as does the pile of EMPTY BOTTLES. The apartment condition gets worse and worse. Even rodents start to populate the apartment.

TREVANIIO (V.O.) (cont'd)
After a few years, it was just
myself and the rats.

Trevaniio slowly roasts a rat over an open fire.

TREVANIIO (V.O.) (cont'd)
Nicely roasted with just a slice of
turnip.

We see him sitting at his table pouring a glass of wine and the roasted rat on his plate.

TREVANIIO (V.O.) (cont'd)
A man does have to eat... and
drink.

INT. TREVANIIO'S APARTMENT (FLASHBACK)

Trevaniio, really drunk, gets in a violent rage, destroying all his paintings, PUNCHING HOLES in the canvases and ripping them off the walls. He piles them into his FIREPLACE and burns them all.

INT. INN OF LOST SOULS (B&W)

The group is rather somber. Trevaniio breaks the silence.

TREVANIIO

Far be it for me to bring down a party. Drink UP!

He downs his beer as the others look on. Sutcliffe, unwilling to let Trevaniio upstage him, stands, his tall thin body hanging over the others like a wisp of smoke.

SUTCLIFFE

(sarcastically)

What an inspiring story. I can feel the goose pimples already. Now, allow me to transfix you with the story of my LIFE. From my earliest age, all I ever wanted to do was perform in front of an audience. And I found a lovely and delicate muse to keep me inspired...

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. AN OLD ENGLISH GARDEN - DAY (1600'S) (COLOR)

A teenage Sutcliffe and ELIZABETH, a beautiful young girl are walking, holding hands and enjoying nature and love.

SUTCLIFFE

My heart, my dear, is forever at your service.

ELIZABETH

I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.

Sutcliffe is flustered, and his face beams bright red.

SUTCLIFFE

My, how I suddenly appear to be at a complete loss of words!

(MORE)

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)

I guess it proves beyond a doubt
how mediocre I am as an actor, for
I can't even hide my feelings.

ELIZABETH

But you are a brilliant actor... so
natural, so commanding. Do not cut
yourself such short shrift. Promise
me you'll never give that up.

SUTCLIFFE

Of course not. I know not what else
I would do with myself, nor what I
could do that would bring you the
same joy you appear to possess now.

The two embrace while surrounded by the colorful garden.

SUTCLIFFE (V.O.)

And so it was. We studied and
worked our way through the English
Theater community. It all went
incredibly well... until one
fateful night a few years later...

INT. AN OLD ENGLISH THEATER - NIGHT (1620)

An adult Sutcliffe steps out onto the stage. He stands,
prepared to speak, then HESITATES. He looks out into the
crowd. He breaks out in a COLD SWEAT. We see the dark shadow
of FEAR creeping over his shoulder. He is FROZEN.

ELIZABETH

(whispering O.S.)

Oh my dear, what color thine
eyes...

Suddenly the front of his pants begin to wet. An audience
member in the FRONT ROW notices this and starts to LAUGH.
Soon laughter spreads throughout the entire theater.
Sutcliffe opens his eyes and looks down at the STAIN. He
RACES off the stage.

SUTCLIFFE (V.O.)

There I was, standing in my own...
moisture, horrified and disgraced
beyond mere words.

The director grabs MIGUEL, 20, the understudy.

DIRECTOR

Get out there!

Miguel runs on stage. He delivers the lines, but it has none of the passion that Sutcliffe had.

MIGUEL

Oh, My dear, what colors thine eyes...

Off stage, Sutcliffe bows his head in shame. Elizabeth tries to offer words of encouragement.

ELIZABETH

It will get better, I promise you. Just wait until we get to the grand stage of the Round Theater.

SUTCLIFFE

I have never been so embarrassed in my life. I am truly humiliated.

ELIZABETH

I know you can do this lambkin, you just have to believe in yourself.

SUTCLIFFE

That always seems to be the tricky part, my dear.

Elizabeth reaches out for him but he brushes her aside and rushes off. We can see the hurt on her face.

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)

After that, I never stepped out on a stage again... nor did I see Elizabeth once more.

EXT. AN OLD ENGLISH STREET - DAY (1620)

A light rain falls. The theater company is loading up the last of its supplies into the back of wagons.

DIRECTOR

Come on, dear sweet Beth, tis time for us to leave... we can not attend here all day. We have a traveling show to perform for!

ELIZABETH

Yes, I understand... let us go.

She jumps into the back of the wagon and stares longingly down the street, with no sign of Sutcliffe anywhere. The wagon pulls away.

EXT. A SIMPLE ENGLISH HOME - DAY (1620)

Sutcliffe is in the window, his face half hidden by the drape he hides behind. He watches the actors company leave.

SUTCLIFFE (V.O.)

After that, I settled in the
mundane world of a clerk, keeping
accounts of the local businesses,
never to return to the stage.

INT. AN OLD ENGLISH OFFICE - DAY (1630)

A slightly older Sutcliffe is hunkered down at his desk, in a scene right out of Scrooges office in "A Christmas Carol".

INT. INN OF LOST SOULS (B&W)

A somber Sutcliffe concludes his story.

SUTCLIFFE

What greater punishment is there
than life when you've lost
everything that made it worth
living?... Will Shakespeare.

Sutcliffe starts to rise out of his chair and very dramatically raises his finger.

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)

And yet someday, I swear, I will
give...

The entire bar chimes in.

BAR PATRONS

The performance of a lifetime!

TREVANIIO

We have *all* heard that before.

Sutcliffe slumps down into his seat.

SUTCLIFFE

(under his breath)
Well, someday I *will*.

The group is interrupted by the low rumblings of the crowd. They are starting up an incoherent DRINKING SONG, but it sounds atrocious. To Jean Claude, nails on a chalkboard.

JEAN CLAUDE
God, they are terribly off key!

SUTCLIFFE
They are also deceased. I do not believe that they really care.

The noise gets progressively louder and more irritating.

JEAN CLAUDE
Every single night they attempt to sing that same insipid song.

GWENDOLYN
Well it *is* Purgatory.

TREVANIIO
Yes, Purgatory, not He... (he catches himself) ... down below.

JEAN CLAUDE
God, it is driving me mad!

TREVANIIO
Really? Who would notice any difference?

SUTCLIFFE
Well then, why don't you *do* something about it?

Jean Claude gets out of his seat. From across the bar Jean Claude makes EYE CONTACT with Fear. Fear raises his GLASS, as if to salute him, and Jean Claude sits back down.

JEAN CLAUDE
Well maybe just not now.

GWENDOLYN
We didn't think so.

SUTCLIFFE
How about you just move along with your story?

JEAN CLAUDE
(flustered)
Well, um yes, of course, well there isn't really much to tell...

EXT. PLACE DU MARCHÉ DES INNOCENTS - DAY (1790) (COLOR)

The cobblestone streets of Paris' largest OUTDOOR MARKET, filled with peddlers and merchants, hawking their wares. A young Jean Luc is seen selling vegetables.

JEAN CLAUDE (V.O.)

I worked in the Place du Marche Innocents, in Paris, selling my own vegetables. To pass the time, I would hum to myself, making up my own tunes.

A woman approaches, rocking her head to his tune.

CUSTOMER

I'm not familiar with that tune.

JEAN CLAUDE

(flustered)

It is my own.

CUSTOMER

Well it really is delightful. You should write it down.

Jean Claude is even more flustered, his face turns red.

INT. A FRENCH PEASANT HOUSE - NIGHT (1790)

Jean Claude is seen scribbling away at his TABLE, the room barely illuminated by the CANDLE LIGHT. He HUMS to himself, stares off into space, and writes it down. A large SMILE comes across his face. He hums it LOUDER. He claps his hands. He starts to write, then stops. His expression changes.

JEAN CLAUDE (V.O.)

What if they hated it? Or worse yet, what if they loved it? Would I ever be able to repeat the success? I soon discovered that it was infinitely easier to begin writing a new composition than it was to ever finish one.

STEVEN

So you never sold one?

JEAN CLAUDE

You can not sell what you haven't finished my friend. No one is interested in a half completed symphony.

EXT. A FRENCH COUNTRY BARN - DAY

Jean Claude puts his compositions in a box and closes it. He drops it into a hole and fills it with dirt.

JEAN CLAUDE (V.O.)
I ended up locking up all of the compositions in a box and buried them in my barn. They eventually made great compost.

We see them decaying away with the passage of time.

JEAN CLAUDE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Well at least they helped my vegetables grow. I had quite a harvest the following year.

INT. INN OF LOST SOULS (B&W)

STEVEN
What a sad story.

GWENDOLYN
All right matie's it's my time to tell me tale. It all started for me when I opened my own sculpture shop in my hometown of Ronda, Spain.

EXT. SMALL SPANISH TOWN - DAY (1500) (COLOR)

The old town is nestled high above a RIVER GORGE. Buildings are CRAMPED TOGETHER. A younger GWENDOLYN is just hanging a new sign for her shop. She has LONG HAIR and is dressed very feminine. She smiles proudly.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)
And it wasn't long before the local towns people showed me their appreciation.

INT. INSIDE GWENDOLYN'S SHOP - DAY (1500)

The place is filled with customers, who look over her wares.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)
One day, I laid me eyes upon the most beautiful lass I'd ever seen.

A striking women, ISABEL, early 20's, enters the shop. We see Gwendolyn catch a glimpse of her. Her eyes grow wide.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.) (cont'd)
Isabel... my bell of the ocean.

Isabel picks up a sculptured piece and brings it over to Gwendolyn.

ISABEL
Your husband does such incredible art...how much for this piece?

GWENDOLYN
Oh, there is no husband, Missy.
All of the work is my very own.

An older man, over hearing the comment, puts down the piece he was looking at, sneers, and leaves the shop.

ISABEL
What wonderful talent that you posses. I am Isabel and a great fan of your work!

She reaches out her hand, and Gwendolyn shakes it. You can see the sparkle in both of their eyes.

GWENDOLYN
(flustered)
I'm blushing... I mean I am Gwendolyn... but you could call me Gwen if you prefer.

ISABEL
Pleased to make your acquaintance, Gwendolyn. Now, how much to purchase this piece?

Gwendolyn smiles broadly.

GWENDOLYN
I'll make you a special deal. You can have it to for the price of coming back tonight and sharing a bottle of vino with me.

ISABEL
Deal, but only if you allow me to watch you work.

GWENDOLYN
I would be honored.

EXT. BACK OF GWENDOLYN'S SHOP - NIGHT (1500)

Gwendolyn and Isabel are talking, sharing VINO, and laughing. Gwendolyn's FORGE is red hot and casting a WARM GLOW over them.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)

And that was the start of an incredible ... relationship. At least it felt that way to me.

MONTAGE - GWENDOLYN AND ISABEL FALL IN LOVE

-- Gwendolyn and Isabel dance together.

-- Isabel brushes Gwendolyn's hair.

-- They share a romantic dinner together.

END MONTAGE

EXT. THE BACK OF GWENDOLYN'S STORE - NIGHT

Gwendolyn is seen creating a MAGNIFICENT NECKLACE. She holds it up to her face and we see her smile illuminated by the glow of the hot metal.

INT. GWENDOLYN'S SHOP - DAY

Gwendolyn paces the store. She keeps glancing at her clock, waiting in anticipation. Finally, Isabel enters the store. She is sullen, head down, unable to make eye contact.

GWENDOLYN

I was beginning to worry that you wouldn't make it. What's wrong, my dear?

Isabel looks nervously around. She can't look at Gwendolyn.

ISABEL

Nothing... I mean everything. I don't know what to think... or feel anymore.

Gwendolyn fumbles with the necklace, pulling it out of her pocket. She takes Isabel's hand and places it inside.

GWENDOLYN

I made this for you, to show you how I much I feel.

(MORE)

GWENDOLYN (cont'd)
I could make you the finest
treasures the world has ever seen.

ISABEL
I'm sorry, I can't... my family
would never approve.

She presses the necklace back into Gwendolyn's palm.

ISABEL (cont'd)
I can not see you anymore... it
wouldn't be appropriate. I am now
beholden to someone else.

GWENDOLYN
How can that be? How could anyone
love you as much as I do?

ISABEL
It doesn't matter... I must follow
the path laid out for me.

GWENDOLYN
God no, please.... we can take our
leave of this place... and sail
away together.

ISABEL
You live in a dream world... it is
sweet but not at all realistic. I
am sorry, I must go. Be well...

EXT. A CHURCH COURTYARD - DAY (1500'S)

Decorated heavily for a wedding. Isabel and her dashing
husband enter the courtyard to APPLAUSE from the crowd.
Gwendolyn stands alone in the back, TEARS streaming down.

INT. GWENDOLYN'S SHOP - DAY (1500'S)

Gwendolyn is alone, frantically cutting her long locks of
hair through her tears. Next we see her rummaging through
her closet, taking down all of her dresses and grabbing her
worst-looking blacksmith clothes.

EXT. THE BACK OF GWENDOLYN'S STORE - NIGHT (1500)

Gwendolyn stands at her red hot forge, tossing her dresses
into the fire. Next, we see her SHOP SIGN being tossed in
and bursting into flames.

EXT. GWENDOLYN'S SHOP - NIGHT (1500)

Gwendolyn exits the now empty shop with a sack of goods, passing under the barren sign post.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)
I grabbed me favorite sculptures,
threw them in a bag, and headed for
the coast.

EXT. COASTAL TOWN - DAY (1500)

Various ships are anchored along the docks. Gwendolyn is seen conversing with a PIRATE CAPTAIN, showing him what is inside her bag.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)
I was able to convince a pirate
captain that I had stolen me
sculptures instead of making them.

PIRATE CAPTAIN
I have no room for an artiste
aboard me vessel, but I can always
use someone who can scare up booty.

GWENDOLYN
I swear to you captain, I am
nothing but a pirate.

EXT. THE DECK OF THE PIRATE SHIP - NIGHT (1500)

We see Gwendolyn aboard the ship as it SAILS out to SEA.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)
I spent the better part of a year
on the high seas, earning me
stripes, pillaging and plundering
on the open seas.

EXT. VARIOUS SHIP DECKS - DAY (1500)

MONTAGE as we see various shots of Gwendolyn in sword fights, tying up prisoners, opening chests of gold, etc.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)
But eventually, we began to run
short of weapons and ammunition...
so the captain came up with a
solution.

EXT. DECK OF THE PIRATE SHIP - DAY (1500)

The captain drags Gwendolyn's bag out and EMPTIES the content out on the deck, SPILLING her STATUES and ART WORK for all to see. Gwendolyn is horrified.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

Seems we have plenty here to make new weapons!

The other pirates cheer. Gwendolyn struggles to speak.

GWENDOLYN

But captain, it's my art!

The other pirates GASP. The captain raises his sword and holds it to Gwendolyn's neck.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

Your ART? You swore to me that you were a pirate, not an artiste!

GWENDOLYN

What I meant was, it was my bounty... tees all I meant.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

Well tis easy enough to prove. If they aren't yours, you'll have no problem melting them down to make new daggers!

The crew CHEERS. Gwendolyn has a look of dismay.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)

It was tearing me up in me Gulliver, but I felt it was the only thing to do.

She fights back the TEARS as she MELTS DOWN her works of art. In the corner we see the shadows of Fear and Doubt. The last thing to go is the necklace. Suddenly the Captain reaches out and grabs it.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

If ye don't mind, I'll be keeping this for me self.

The captain smiles and stuffs it in his pocket.

INT. CAPTAINS QUARTERS - NIGHT

The captain SNORES loudly. A candle burns intermittently, struggling to stay lit. The door creeps open. Gwendolyn is seen entering the cabin.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)
 Later on, filled with guilt, I
 attempted to steal back the
 necklace from the captain.

Gwendolyn reaches for the necklace, and slowly starts to pull it away. The captain's hand SLAMS DOWN on hers.

PIRATE CAPTAIN
 Not so fast, rascalion.

We HEAR the cocking of FLINTLOCK GUNS. The captain LIGHTS a match and we SEE her surrounded by pirates, all with WEAPONS POINTED at her.

EXT. THE PIRATE SHIP - NIGHT

The ship BOBS in the rough seas. Nervously, Gwendolyn shimmies out along the plank, the others jeering her on. The captain smiles.

PIRATE CAPTAIN
 All right Mister, tis' your final
 chance. Admit to us all that ye are
 nothing but a lowlife artiste and I
might let you live.

The others jeer loudly. Afraid to face the ridicule of the others, she walks the plank instead.

GWENDOLYN
 I am nothing but a pirate!

PIRATE CAPTAIN
 You are a scallywag... and a liar!

The captain PUSHES HER off with his sword, PLUNGING HER into the water. Incapable of freeing her bindings, she STRUGGLES to escape, but her efforts only cause her to sink faster.

GWENDOLYN (V.O.)
 It wasn't long till I reached Davy
 Jones Locker.

We see the blank stare in her face as her life ends. The NECKLACE FLOATS DOWN and past her in the water.

INT. INN OF LOST SOULS - EVENING (B&W)

STEVEN

That's exactly what I saw in my
nightmare! I just assumed it was a
subconscious analysis of my life.

The group laughs. Wally is not amused.

WALLY

What a load of horse manure!

He storms out. The group laughs even harder.

EXT. INN OF LOST SOULS

Wally leaves, slamming the door so hard it rattles the SIGN.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INN OF LOST SOULS - NEXT MORNING

Simon floats down and looks down at his WATCH, which shows ten minutes to nine. He presses his face against the glass. The others are asleep, strewn out across the table. Simon begins pounding on the glass.

INT. INN OF LOST SOULS - MORNING

Steven slowly wakes up and stretches.

STEVEN

What an incredible dream...

His head falls back down on the table, which awakens Trevaniio.

TREVANIIO

Well, that certainly was a tide-me-
over now, wasn't it?

He SLAPS Steven on the back. Steven is suddenly wide AWAKE.

STEVEN

Oh my God, this isn't a dream...

Gwendolyn awakens, lifts up her head and belches.

GWENDOLYN

Good morning luvs!

STEVEN

It's actually a nightmare.

Simon pounds even louder on the window and gets Jean Claude's attention. He sees Simon pointing at HIS WATCH, frantically motioning for them to get out of the bar.

JEAN CLAUDE

(flustered)

I believe we are being summoned.

They all look up and see Simon frantically gesturing to them. They wave, then realize what he is motioning about.

SUTCLIFFE

My Lord, we are going to be late!

They rush out of their seats and race through the door.

EXT. INN OF LOST SOULS - DAY

Simon is standing there, tapping his foot. He takes a count.

SIMON

Wait, where is Wally?

They all look around bewildered.

STEVEN

I'll go find him, you guys run ahead.

SIMON

But this is *your* trial Steven.

STEVEN

I know, I know, but I don't think he'll come back with anyone else.

EXT. A DARK AND DREARY GARDEN - DAY

Steven enters into what looks like a WINTER GARDEN. However, the plants are all DYING AND TWISTING. SOULS sit quietly alone, concentrating on their individual plights. He finds Wally, who sits quietly alone. He doesn't look up.

WALLY

What do you want?

STEVEN

The trial is about to start... are you okay?

WALLY

I just want to be left alone.

STEVEN

Look, I've heard everyone's story... except for yours. Tell me how you ended up here.

WALLY

(indignant)

Why? So you can make fun of me like everyone else? Make fun of the way I talk, or pronounce things?

STEVEN

No... no I wouldn't do that to you. I would just really like to know.

Wally looks up at Steven.

WALLY

All right... as long as I could remember, I was not too good at nothing except for wrestling...

EXT. A CHICAGO ALLEY - DAY (1925) FLASHBACK (COLOR)

We see a CHUBBY KID, WALLY, 10, sporting a crew cut and wearing knee length pants, a suit coat and a too-short tie. His BUTTONS strain and his shirt barely reaches around his chest. A group of boys are following and TAUNTING him.

TALL KID

Hey fatso, why don't you go chase yourself.

He shoves Wally. Wally keeps walking.

SHORT KID

Get out of our alley or I'll smack you right in the kisser.

He also pushes Wally, KNOCKING HIS BOOKS to the ground. The kids laugh, and we can see the anger in Wally's face. Wally loses it. The buttons POP off his shirt Ala the Hulk. He rips off his shirt. The other kids are frozen in FEAR.

WALLY

HOLY KAPUSTA!

With that Wally EXPLODES. He picks up the tall kid and hurls him into a GARBAGE CAN. He turns and tackles the short kid, and PINS him. He looks at the others, then stands.

They all take a step back from him. We see Wally standing there, bare chested. He ROARS like a lion.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING RING - DAY (1940'S) (COLOR)

We see a now TWENTY SOMETHING Wally in exactly the same pose. We pull out to see it's a semi-pro WRESTLING MATCH. There are a handful of people in the crowd, and cigarette smoke hangs heavy in the air. Across the ring, his OPPONENT, 30, nervously paces back and forth. STAN, a thin balding man in his 50's, stands in the corner of the ring, coaching Wally. He speaks with a heavy Chicago accent.

STAN

Come on champ... enough with the theatrics, take him down!

Wally approaches, grabs the man by his shoulders, TWIRLS, and body SLAMS him to the MAT. The few fans paying attention CHEER. A woman, SOPHIE, smiles warmly at Wally. He looks up from the mat and suddenly his grimace turns to a smile.

REF

Three... two... one... Winner!

He grabs Wally's wrist and raises it up to the crowd. All of his attention, however, is on Sophie.

WALLY (V.O.)

And there she was, the most beauteous dame I had ever seen... With the prettiest name... Sophie.

Wally continues to lie on the other wrestle, completely oblivious to the ref trying to PULL HIM OFF and the other wrestler GASPING for air. Wally just smiles and stares.

WALLY (V.O.) (cont'd)

After that, me and Sophie were always together.

EXT. A CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Wally and Sophie, dressed as bride and groom, exit and are bombarded by RICE. Stan TAKES A PICTURE as they walk by.

INT. WALLY'S CRAMPED APARTMENT - HALLWAY OUTSIDE

Wally and Sophie playfully RACE each other to the threshold and playfully struggle to carry the other one over it.

WALLY (V.O.)

We was happy as two peas in a pod.
But I always felt bad that I
couldn't make things nicer for her.

EXT. A ROW OF SHOPS - DAY (1950'S)

An older Chicago neighborhood, where one entrance opens to two different STORES. One is a nice woman's CLOTHES STORE. Right next door, a SECONDHAND shop. Wally and Sophie walk up to the window, and Sophie SMILES broadly at a COAT.

SOPHIE

Oh, isn't this a lovely coat dear?

WALLY

(nervously)
Sure, sure it is Honey.

He pulls his HAND out of his pocket and begins to silently count the MONEY inside. Sophie, seeing this, turns her attention to the secondhand shop WINDOW and the rather PLAIN COAT displayed in it. She tries to make him feel better.

SOPHIE

Now, on the other hand, this one is
simply Divine.

She smiles warmly. Wally sheepishly nods his head. She grabs his arm and pulls him inside.

INT. CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL AMPHITHEATER - EVENING (1950'S)

The place is packed with SMOKE and SPECTATORS. It is loud and rambunctious. We slowly move down the aisle.

WALLY (V.O.)

TV came along... and all of a
sudden there was a ton of dough to
be made.

We end in the center of THE RING. Two wrestlers, in GARISH OUTFITS that look like they were pasted together by school kids, are dancing around each other. THE SHEIK, 30's, wears a flowing ROBE and HEADDRESS. He TAUNTS JOHNNY BEAUTIFUL, also 30's, with bright BLONDE hair and wearing a flamboyant SILK SHIRT. Johnny CHOKES the Sheik. The crowd goes WILD.

REF
Two... and One... WINNER!

The place goes up for grabs.

INT. CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL AMPHITHEATER LOBBY - EVENING

Wally pleads with Stan.

WALLY
I want to be in there... I want to
wrestle for TV.

STAN
(chomping on his cigar)
You don't want that. It's all show,
it's not sport. You're an athlete,
not a clown. Let's get out of here.

He grabs Wally by the arm, but he isn't budging.

WALLY
I don't care! If you can't do it
maybe someone else can.

STAN
Don't say that Wally. We're a team.

WALLY
I would do anything to get in
there.

A figure steps into the training room. He is a tall, THIN
MAN, dressed in a very sharp THREE-PIECE suit, and smoking a
CIGAR. He carries with him a BRIEFCASE.

THIN MAN
Just what I've waited to hear.

Stan cuts him off as he approaches Wally.

STAN
And just who the Hell are you?

THIN MAN
Nicely put... just call me, Mr.
Opportunity. Walter, you are just
the man I am dying to talk to.

He pushes past Stan and extends his hand to Wally. Wally
shakes it hesitantly.

WALLY

What is it you want from me?

THIN MAN

Oh my dear man, it's not what I
want, per se, it's what I can give.

He reaches into his briefcase and pulls out a paper.

THIN MAN (cont'd)

How about a TV contract for
starters?

Wally's eyes grow big, but Stan is OUTRAGED.

STAN

(to Thin Man)

Leave him alone or I'll toss you
out... we don't need no TV nothing.

WALLY

Wait a minute Stan... Let me see
what this says.

He pushes Stan aside, grabs the contract, and tries to read
it. He is obviously confused. The Thin Man pushes on.

THIN MAN

Don't worry about all of that
mumble jumble. This is your ticket
to fame and glory.

WALLY

And money to take care of Sophie?

THIN MAN

Yes, yes of course, more than you
could imagine... for Sophie... Or
any woman for that matter.

Stan has heard enough.

STAN

Champ, I'm begging you, don't do
this... you will regret it!

The Thin Man reaches into his breast pocket and pulls out A
POCKET WATCH, the same one as Satan's. He looks intently.

THIN MAN

We really don't have much time
Wally... I need your decision.

Wally gently pushes past Stan and holds out his hand, looking for a PEN. The Thin Man gladly produces one. Wally pauses for a moment, takes the pen and starts SIGNING. Stan drops his head, dejected.

STAN

Then this is goodbye champ... I can't do this with you.

Stan walks out. Wally makes a half-halfhearted attempt to stop him, but lets him go.

WALLY

I hope I am doing the right thing.

THIN MAN

Oh, you have no idea how much your life is going to change...

INT. CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

The place is packed and loud. Wally is seen wearing a PLASTIC CROWN, a long CAPE, and he has a large WHITE EAGLE on his chest. On the other side of the ring is TONY, 30's, large and dressed in a FUR COAT and wears LARGE FAKE GLASSES shaped like STARS. TWO TV ANNOUNCERS sit ringside.

BLACK AND WHITE KINESCOPE OF WRESTLING MATCH

Fade up from black on TV screen. The EMCEE, 30's, with jet black hair and wearing a sharp but cheap TUXEDO, enters the ring and grabs the OVERHEAD MICROPHONE.

RING EMCEE

This is a best two of three falls match with a thirty minute time limit. From Hollywood, at 282 pounds, Tony Tinseltown!

The camera awkwardly PANS over to Tony, who works the crowd into a frenzy merely by raising his ARMS. They ROAR.

RING EMCEE (cont'd)

And from Poland, weighing in at 275 pounds, for the first time in our ring, The Prince of Polonia!

Wally smiles and waves, but the crowd quickly starts BOOING him. His smile fades instantly. The referee walks out into the ring and starts going over the rules to the wrestlers.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Good evening ladies and gentleman
 and welcome to another exciting
 night of wrestling, live from the
 Chicago Amphitheater.

The bell RINGS and both wrestles come out into the middle of the ring. Tony immediately puts Wally into a head lock.

TV ANNOUNCER
 Referee Jimmy Kruze has started
 this match and the Prince is
 already in trouble!

The crowd CHEERS on Tony. Wally looks lost. Tony holds onto his neck and works up the crowd with his other hand.

TV ANNOUNCER (cont'd)
 It looks like his reign here will
 be a short one.

Wally, suddenly energized by the announcers comment, uses all of his strength and THROWS Tony across the ring.

TV ANNOUNCER TWO
 Holly Cow did you see that? The
 Prince is reborn!

Wally rips open his SHIRT and strikes his POSE.

WALLY
 HOLY KAPUSTA!!!

The crowd goes WILD! Wally quickly pins Tony, and the ref counts down the match.

REF
 Three... Two.... One... Winner!

Wally stands and soaks in the ADULATION.

TV ANNOUNCER
 What an amazing turnaround! I
 wouldn't have believed it if I had
 not seen it myself! Polonia and all
 of Chicago-land has a new Prince of
 the wrestling ring!

BACK TO AMPHITHEATER (COLOR)

Sophie is seen sitting near the ring, STANDING and APPLAUDING with the rest of the crowd. She is BEAMING.

WALLY (V.O.)

And Sophie really loved it. But as time went on, I discovered that the more violent I was, the more the crowd liked it... and the more dough I was able to make.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS - INTERNATIONAL AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

A QUICK SERIES OF MATCHES - Wally gets more and more violent in each match. Sophie's reaction begins to change dramatically. She is sickened by his violence. As time goes on, her clothes get better and better even as she chooses to sit further and further away from the ring.

END MONTAGE

Sophie stands at the door of the amphitheater, with STAN at her side. He shakes his head in disbelief at what he sees.

IN THE RING

Wally PUMMELS his opponent into the mat. Even the ref looks HORRIFIED, but the CROWD CHEERS. Wally soaks it all up.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CHICAGO AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT (1950'S)

Wally exits the building and is greeted by a large group of FANS, including numerous Bimbos, dressed seductively. He signs autographs like a ROCK STAR. A figure pushes through the group. It is Stan. Wally is a bit taken aback.

WALLY

Excuse me ladies, I think I just saw a ghost.

They all laugh at Stan's expense. Stan looks intense.

STAN

Hey champ, can I talk to you for a minute?

Wally laughs again.

WALLY

Sure, sure we can talk. I'll catch up to the both of you later.

The women walk ahead. Stan grabs Wally by the arm.

STAN
Just what the hell are you doing?

WALLY
Whatta mean? I'm enjoying life!

STAN
How about out there in the ring?
What do you call that? That poor
guy may never walk again! You're
going to kill somebody!

WALLY
(sarcastically)
Really? I guess I should listen to
you, the great genius. You know
what... I think you are jealous.

STAN
Jealous? Of what? You can't live
like this Wally. You need to
repent. You are scaring me... and
your wife!

WALLY
Oh nuts to you. I have plenty of
time to repent... when I'm done
enjoying myself. You're just a
washed up has-been.

Wally pushes Stan down to the sidewalk and walks past him.

STAN
Well at least I still have my soul.

INT. WALLY'S NEW SPACIOUS APARTMENT - EVENING (1950'S)

Wally comes in, tardy again. Sophie is AWAKE and PACKING.

WALLY
Sorry I'm late... Honey.

Sophie glares at him.

SOPHIE
Save it for one of your bimbos.

WALLY
What the hell is that supposed to
mean? And where are you going?

SOPHIE

I can't do this anymore... you are turning into an animal, in more ways than just one.

WALLY

Oh that's bull. Besides, isn't this what you wanted? A nice house, money to buy nice clothes?

SOPHIE

Not like this Wally. I'm sorry, but I need to leave... at least until you come to your senses.

WALLY

What does that mean?

SOPHIE

When was the last time you were here for supper? When was the last time we went to our favorite diner? You're too good for that now. You won't even go to church with me.

WALLY

Who has time for that nonsense? I am too busy making money and making you happy.

SOPHIE

Me happy? Are you kidding me? You don't get it, do you?

WALLY

I have no idea what makes you happy anymore.

Sophie is crushed. She fights back the tears.

SOPHIE

Exactly... And that's why I am leaving!

She SLAMS the door on her way out.

WALLY

Yeah, well who needs ya? (*under his breath*) There's plenty of other dames out there.

EXT. A DARK AND DREARY GARDEN - DAY (B&W)

The Four Lives have crept up on Steven and Wally, and silently listen to his story.

WALLY

Sophie left me, but like the chump
I was, I didn't care. After that,
it was nothing but booze, dames,
and piles of dough. And wrestling,
well what I was calling wrestling.

INT. CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT (COLOR)

TOM TENACIOUS, 30's, dressed in a cartoonish costume, stalks the ring against Wally. The crowd, as usual, is cheering on Wally, who plays into it. He is cocky and feeling invincible. Suddenly, Wally GRABS HIS CHEST and FALLS to the MAT. The whole building SHAKES.

BLACK & WHITE KINE-SCOPE OF THE MATCH

Wally lies there, not moving. He struggles to breathe.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Oh my God, The Prince of Polonia is
down... he's not moving!

Tom, believing it's part of his routine, JUMPS on TOP of WALLY and pins him to the mat. The crowd goes WILD.

TV ANNOUNCER TWO (V.O.)

The reign may be over folks!

Tom gets off of Wally and BASKS in the CHEERS.

BACK TO AMPHITHEATER (COLOR)

The ref hovers over Wally, counting down the fight and his life. With his last BREATH, Wally utters his final words.

WALLY

God help me... Sophie...

BACK TO GARDEN (B&W)

Wally reaches into his pocket and pulls out the folded piece of paper. He looks and passes it to Steven.

INSERT: A TATTERED WEDDING PHOTO OF SOPHIE AND WALLY

WALLY

This is my wife Sophie. She stood by me when I had nothing and she never once bellyached.

His voice is cold and monotone.

WALLY (cont'd)

And when I finally made it, I pushed her away. (whispering) God, what I wouldn't do to see her...

His voice trails off. He stares back at the picture.

WALLY (cont'd)

I never got to tell her one last time... that I loved her.

He glances skyward.

WALLY (cont'd)

I don't even know if she'd be waiting for me after all I've done. But if there is even the slightest chance... I would do anything...

His voice trails off again, trying to contain his emotions. Steven sense his opportunity.

STEVEN

How about helping us?

WALLY

You can only talk for yourself. I know what the rest of them think.

The Four Lives step forward and make their presence known. Gwendolyn and Trevaniio are crying on each others shoulders. Even Jean Claude seems touched.

JEAN CLAUDE

We would all be... *honored* if you would represent us.

SUTCLIFFE

I don't know if honored is the appropriate word, but...

Gwendolyn PUNCHES Sutcliffe's arm. Wally gets up and and there are heartfelt handshakes from the group.

INT. COURTROOM OF THE SOUL - MORNING

The courtroom is a large, CIRCULAR room. The richly tiled FLOORS surround a circular water fountain in the center. The BENCH and WITNESS STAND are at the front, and a large section of seats fill the back half circle of the room. The place is packed. Simon rushes in with Steven and the others.

SIMON

Let me go over the basics. There will be three judges chosen, one representing Heaven, one representing... that other place. And finally one who is impartial.

They reach the front and are seated at the defense table. Spanulli, dressed in an immaculate double-breasted suit, enters, his ever-present cigar sticking out of his mouth.

STEVEN

Who is that?

SIMON

I believe that is the prosecutor.

STEVEN

Oh great.

Spanulli approaches and hands his business card to Steven.

INSERT: RICHARD G. SPANULLI, SPECIAL PROSECUTOR TO SATAN

The card SMOLDERS in Steven's hand. He drops it. In walks Wally. His clothes are worn and tattered. The audience chuckles. The biggest laugh comes from Spanulli.

SPANULLI

Hey look, it's the janitor!

The audience laughs. He knocks his cigar ash on the floor.

SPANULLI (cont'd)

Why don't you get that for me?

Wally is ready to go into his battle rage but is held back by Simon.

SIMON

Don't take his bait, Walter, it's not worth the trouble.

Spanulli walks away, grinning smugly. The bailiff enters.

BAILIFF

All those who have matters before
this Court of Souls, come forth and
yea shall be heard. All rise.

The entire court rises.

BAILIFF (cont'd)

Presiding today, representing
Heaven, is the Honorable Cardinal
Francesco Barberini.

CARDINAL BARBERINI enters. He is tall and thin, 40's, with a
pointed brown goatee. He wears a 16th century CARDINALS red
choir dress: scarlet (red) CASSOCK, white ROCHET trimmed
with lace, and scarlet MOZETTA. Simon leans over and
WHISPERS into Steven's ear.

SIMON

(excited)

Cardinal Beberini was a patron of
the arts, the protector of the
Academy of St Luke, which was the
artist guild in Rome. He financed
churches that were built,
paintings, tapestries, art
library's, commissioned artists...
oh Steven this is a Divine choice!

Cardinal Beberini takes his place on the bench.

BAILIFF

Representing Hades is the Honorable
John Hawthorne.

In walks JOHN HAWTHORNE, 50's, with flowing LONG WHITE HAIR,
and dressed in a Colonial America judges outfit. His
demeanor is stern and mean.

SIMON

John Hawthorne was the judge who
presided over the Salem Witch
Trials, a man who always starts
with a presumption of guilt rather
than innocence. He sent thirteen
innocent people to death for the
crime of being witches, and has
never shown any remorse for it.

Hawthorne moves to his place behind the bench, without so
much as acknowledging Cardinal Beberini.

BAILIFF

And finally, representing Justice
itself, the Honorable Boa Zheng.

BAO ZHENG, Chinese, 60's, wearing a traditional Chinese Red
silk gown, and a Bao hat and waist band on. He has a BLACK
CRESCENT MOON tattooed on his forehead.

SIMON

Oh, excellent choice! Lord Bao is
the symbol of justice in all of
China! He has a strong sense of
fair play, Steven. He is incredibly
honest and upright, and believes in
finding justice without fear or
favor. Tough but fair.

The three judges sit, and the crowd follows suit. Cardinal
Beberini leans forward.

BEBERINI

The Court of Souls is now in
session. The matter before us today
is a most fundamental one. Every
individual is sent to earth with
his or her own unique talents and
gifts, given to them by God.

We pan the faces of audience as Berberini continues, each
time seeing someone who corresponds to his comments.

BEBERINI (cont'd)

Some are blessed with the skill of
medicine, repairing the fragile
physical shells that surround our
souls on earth. Some possess the
talent to work with numbers, or
chemicals, or the sciences.

We stop on Wally.

BEBERINI (cont'd)

While some of these gifts are
athletic in nature.

HAWTHORNE

(interrupting)

Yet for five centuries, over four
and half lifetimes, thous soul has
squandered its gift, running and
hiding from its fulfillment, and by
doing so, has deprived its fellow
man of its co-called rewards.

ZHENG

In four previous hearings it was determined that this soul would be allowed to return to earth, in the form of another individual, in a different period of time, so that it could change its way, without bias or preconceived ideas.

HAWTHORNE

Steven J. Burton, step forward.

Steven nervously stands and approaches the bench.

BEBERINI

On October 13, you Steven, took it upon yourself to end this most precious commodity, life itself. This hearing shall determine whether the course of events shall continue to unfold naturally.

ZHENG

Or if it is the decision of this judicial body, that this soul be allowed to return to earth and finish its duty once and for all.

HAWTHORNE

Invoking code 142801, it is also up to this body to determine whether this soul ever has or ever will utilize its gifts in the manner in which it was intended. If not, it automatically defaults to The Prince of Darkness, in accordance with the Hades Convention of 3 B.C.

BEBERINI

We will hear testimony from both sides.

HAWTHORNE

But seeing that this soul has failed on four previous occasions, it is clearly upon the defense to prove its case.

BEBERINI

I call upon the prosecution to open this hearing. The defendant may be seated.

Steven sits down next to Wally. Spanulli jumps to his feet. He can smell blood in the water.

SPANULLI

Your Honors, members of the audience, I will make this very short and get right to the point.

He turns and hovers over Steven.

SPANULLI (cont'd)

Have you ever done anything at all with this so-called talent? Isn't it true that you have failed at everything you have ever tried? Or worse, never even tried?

Steven swallows hard and turns to Wally for help. Befuddled, Wally stands but says nothing. The audience bursts out into laughter. Steven sinks in his chair. Spanulli continues on.

SPANULLI (cont'd)

We have seen no evidence of any form of desire or passion to reclaim this "gift", nor has he given this court any compelling reason to believe he would change his ways if sent back. Just like the previous four failures, it would be a tremendous waste of this court's time and resources to send him back.

The judges confer.

BEBERINI

Mr. Burton, do you or your counsel have a response?

Steven, the Four Lives, and Wally sit there dejected and dumbfounded. Simon jumps from his seat in the audience.

SIMON

Your honors, perhaps a short recess would be in order.

BEBERINI

Heavenly Adviser Simon, you are not allowed to interrupt these proceedings...

Simon pokes Wally. He stands.

WALLY

Your Honors... what he said.

The audience laughs again.

ZHENG

This court is in recess.

He pounds down his gavel. The court bursts out in LAUGHTER. Steven and the lives stand and start to leave. Spanulli walks over, takes a long puff on his CIGAR, and blows it in the direction of the defense bench. He smiles arrogantly as he looks down at his ROLEX OYSTER WATCH.

SPANULLI

I'll be home in time for supper.

EXT. COURTROOM OF THE SOUL - DAY

The group exits the courtroom, heads hanging low.

TREVANIIO

That certainly didn't go very well.

JEAN CLAUDE

Let's face it, we're doomed!

SIMON

(optimistically)

You know, maybe if you just put your heads together...

STEVEN

We'd suffer a concussion.

WALLY

And I thought you guys were supposed to be the creative ones.

SUTCLIFFE

I was just thinking...

The group leans in, excited.

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)

Maybe Hell is not such a bad place.

The group stops in its tracks.

TREVANIIO

You can not possibly be serious.

SUTCLIFFE

I am dead serious.

TREVANIIO

Is that a joke?

SUTCLIFFE

Me? Make a joke? In three hundred odd years have you ever once heard me tell a joke?

TREVANIIO

No, but I saw you naked once and I laughed for ages.

SUTCLIFFE

Droll, incredibly droll... Better a witty fool than a foolish wit.

Gwendolyn interrupts the exchange.

GWENDOLYN

Will you two shut yer blasted mouths for a second? We are about to be given no quarter!

JEAN CLAUDE

I don't know about the rest of you, but I am *frightened*.

The group drops their heads in silent recognition. Simon has seen enough.

SIMON

My, my what a pathetic bunch of characters you have all turned out to be.

WALLY

Excuse me Twinkle Toes, but you're not the one getting your butt kicked in there.

Simon gets into the Wrestlers face.

SIMON

Just because I'm an angel doesn't mean that I don't have feelings or a temper. Now I suggest you watch your outbursts before you hurt one and I lose the other.

STEVEN

I just don't think we are meant to go on.

A thought occurs to Simon, and he smiles.

SIMON

You know, I do not believe that Steven has seen *all* of Purgatory.

STEVEN

Pardon me if I'm not in the mood for the whole backstage tour.

SIMON

Please, I insist. Will the rest of you show Steven around? All except for you.

Simon puts his hand on Wally's shoulder.

SUTCLIFFE

Well, considering this is probably the last time any of us will see the old haunt...

EXT. MAIN STREET, PURGATORY - DAY

Steven and the Four Lives are walking silently through the "downtown". They continue walking until they encounter:

EXT. A SHUTTERED OLD MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The door is CHAINED SHUT and the theater light box display ("Heaven's Gate") is tattered and worn. The ticket box has a CLOSED sign dangling in its window. Steven stands in AWE.

STEVEN

No one ever told me that you had a movie theater! What happened to this place?

SUTCLIFFE

I believe there was a problem with the mechanical device used to project the image.

STEVEN

You mean the projector? Boy, I could probably fix that.

Steven walks up to the doors, but they are chained shut. He peers through the glass.

STEVEN (cont'd)
God, I'd kill to see what it looks like in there.

TREVANIIO
Well it hasn't been used in ages. I do not imagine that it has stood up very well.

JEAN CLAUDE
Do you really think we should go in there? We could get in trouble.

STEVEN
We're already on our way to Hell... How much worse can it get?

Steven, Trevaniio, and Jean Claude push against the door. It doesn't move. They ram it as hard as they can. It won't budge. Sheepishly, they all look at Gwendolyn.

GWENDOLYN
Step aside, you wimpy little landlubbers.

She grabs the chain and with one quick burst, pulls the links apart. The chain drops and she pushes it open.

GWENDOLYN (cont'd)
Mates, after you.

INT. THE MOVIE THEATER - DAY

They enter inside. It is DILAPIDATED, its once richly decorated interior now falling apart. It is cold and dark, and WATER DRIPS from the ceiling, freezing as it runs along the once ornate sides of the theater. Steven is overcome by a sense of sadness.

STEVEN
My God, I can't believe what happened to this place.

TREVANIIO
Just one more decrepit building in this "paradise".

SUTCLIFFE
It was a theater, you imbecile. A place of glory.

STEVEN

This is where magic is created!
People walk in here and are
transported to an entirely
different world. You can be in a
foreign country, or in space, or...

TREVANIIO

Purgatory?

STEVEN

Exactly.

Trevaniio begins to walk around. Steven sees something
scurry by his feet and is startled.

STEVEN (cont'd)

Oh geez, it's a ra...

Jean Claude slaps his hand over Steven's mouth. Sutcliffe
looks quickly towards Trevaniio and back again.

SUTCLIFFE

Do you think he saw that?

JEAN CLAUDE

God, I pray not.

TREVANIIO (O.S.)

I smell something good in here.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Steven and the Four Lives are back outside. His head hangs
low. Frustrated, he turns his head skyward.

STEVEN

God, why won't you help us? Damn
it, I'm never going to come up with
anything. Why are you doing this?

GWENDOLYN

Time to pack the knapsack.

JEAN CLAUDE

Really? What type of apparel shall
we bring?

SUTCLIFFE

Lightweight I would presume.

STEVEN

I was supposed to do something with
my life, accomplish something...

Steven, consumed with anger, picks up a rock and winds up,
ready to hurl it at the theater.

STEVEN (cont'd)

Damn it!

Just as he is about to release it, he stops.

GWENDOLYN

Go ahead, it'll make you feel
better.

STEVEN

(frustrated)

I can't, it's a movie theater.

He whips the rock in the opposite direction.

TREVANIIO

So what?

STEVEN

So... it would be like desecrating
a church.

SUTCLIFFE

That is a rather strong sentiment.

STEVEN

You don't understand. The greatest
passion in my life was the movies.
All I ever wanted to be was a
storyteller, a filmmaker. Instead,
I failed miserably, without ever
really trying.

GWENDOLYN

Aren't ya being hard on yourself?

JEAN CLAUDE

Well, it IS one of traits.

Suddenly Steven is struck by a moment of inspiration.

STEVEN

Wait a minute...

He leaves the words dangling. The others lean in.

SUTCLIFFE
(to Jean Claude)
Oh dear God, now he is starting to
speak like you do.

STEVEN
Wait a minute... I think I've got
it! I think I've got it!

He looks skyward.

STEVEN (cont'd)
Could it really be that obvious?
We've go to get back, right away!

Steven takes off and the others lag behind.

INT. A BACKROOM OF THE COURTHOUSE - DAY

Simon is dressing Wally in a nice white suit.

SIMON
(proudly)
There, this should give you all the
confidence in the world!

Wally awkwardly looks over the new threads. He fidgets with
his tie.

WALLY
This feels damn uncomfortable.

SIMON
We have to do whatever we can to
help you out. Appearances count in
peoples minds. And you know, it
wouldn't hurt if you prayed too.

WALLY
I can't do that. I'm angry at God.

SIMON
Why would you be angry with Him?

WALLY
Because of what he did to me.

SIMON
God can not be held responsible for
your actions. He gave you the
ability to make decisions and
choices on your own. It is not His
fault if you chose unwisely.

Wally lowers his head. He can not disagree.

SIMON (cont'd)
Now, stand tall and be ready for
the fight of your life. Steven
needs you.

The two walk out, with Simon talking softly to Wally.

INT. COURTROOM OF THE SOUL - DAY

Steven and the Four Lives are seated, as is the rest of the courtroom. Wally sheepishly enters in his new suit. The audience starts to giggle. Steven confers with Wally.

BAILIFF
All rise and ye shall be heard.

The judges enter the courtroom and sit.

BEBERINI
Mr. Siemanski, is your client
prepared to respond?

Wally stands and approaches the bench.

WALLY
I think he knows what to say now.

ZHENG
Let us hear from Mr. Burton... and
by the way, nice attire.

WALLY
(sheepishly)
Thank you.

The audience giggles. Steven approaches the bench.

STEVEN
Your honor's, you asked me to show
some passion, for anything having
to do with this gift. And honestly,
I thought I had lost it.

WALLY
Tell them about the movie theater.

STEVEN
Ever since I was a little boy, I
have been fascinated by movies, or
as you would call them, moving
pictures.

(MORE)

STEVEN (cont'd)

My fondest memories are of sitting in movie theaters, watching the flickering images dance across the screen... all of the stories and characters, love and death, friendship, adventure, laughter... and sharing all of that with a room full of people... your honors, it's like... well Heaven.

Zheng and Beberini smile warmly.

WALLY

I like movies too!

The audience chuckles. Wally turns red.

WALLY (cont'd)

(under his breath)

Well, I do.

STEVEN

(animated)

Maybe I'll never make it, but God, and this court, willing, I sure would love to try. That has become very clear to me. I am willing to make whatever sacrifices are needed. I'll work as hard as I can for as long as I can, till my very last breath if need be... if you just give me... give us... this one, gracious, last chance.

There is a *collective sigh* in the audience. The judges begin to confer. By the look of the once cocky prosecutor, he is ready to concede defeat.

SPANULLI

Your honors, I respectfully request a recess, so that I may consult with my mast... (*he coughs*) my client... as soon as possible.

HAWTHORNE

It only seems fair, considering the defendants have been given theirs.

The other two judges nod in agreement.

BEBERINI

Court is recessed for one hour.

He pounds his gavel down. The Four Lives and Steven begin congratulating each other.

SUTCLIFFE

Well spoken Steven, well spoken. I wish I had performed that well.

JEAN CLAUDE

Marvelous, simply marvelous!

SIMON

Hold on, I do not believe it is quite over.

INT. SATAN'S OFFICE - DAY (COLOR)

Spanulli is in conference with Satan. He appears calm, cigar dangling from his mouth as he speaks.

SPANULLI

It's just one lousy soul, right boss? Who cares?

He slaps Satan on the back. He is not amused.

SATAN

Who are you to decide what is important and what is not? Have you no idea what you have done?

SPANULLI

What's the big deal boss?

SATAN

(forcefully)

Hell is already over populated with murderers, thugs, and barbarians. Their minds, like yours, are simple and easy to manipulate. What I need is some creative thinking, new designs of evil and darkness. It's the only way I will win this battle, to regain what is rightfully mine!

SPANULLI

Yeah but boss...

SATAN

I have been watching this particular soul for over 500 years! I have thwarted every one of them each step of the way.

(MORE)

SATAN (cont'd)
 But this final life is more
 dangerous than all the others
 combined. He has the power to reach
 literally millions! Bringing them
 joy, laughter, and deadliest of
 all, hope. All those things I am
 working against!

SPANULLI
 You completely lost me.

SATAN
 I can not afford to have him
 destroying my work! Counselor, you
 are dismissed!

The door blows open and Spanulli is sucked out of the room.

INT. THE GREAT HALL - DAY

Spanulli is carried across the miles and miles of endless
 desks. He finally ends up in

INT. A SMALL SWELTERING OFFICE - DAY

The door slams him inside. He gets up and arrogantly brushes
 himself off. He looks around.

SPANULLI
 What, no window?

He chuckles, reaches into his pocket and pulls out a HANDFUL
 OF CIGARS. He takes a deep breath of their aroma. Satan's
 arm reaches into the office and grabs them away. The door
 slams again. We see numerous DEAD BOLTS, DOOR LOCKS, etc
 locking Spanulli in.

SPANULLI (O.S.)
 Nooooooooooooooooo!!!!

We can hear his yell echoing through the corridors.

INT. THE GREAT HALL - DAY

Satan storms down the corridor, briefcase in hand. Famous
 barbarians, including Attila, VLAD THE CONQUER, NAPOLEON,
 GENGHIS KHAN line the hallway and hand him LEGAL FOLDERS as
 he hurries by. He reaches the end of the hallway and steps
 into a LARGE ELEVATOR.

SATAN
No one touch the damn thermostat!

EXT. PURGATORY COURTYARD - DAY (B&W)

Various souls are sitting around, talking quietly or praying silently to themselves. Suddenly the sky DARKENS.

INT. COURTROOM OF THE SOUL - DAY

The crowd inside is also aware that something big is occurring. LIGHTS FLICKER AND DIM. There are rumblings in the air, and the crowd rushes to the door to see.

EXT. PURGATORY COURTYARD - DAY

Satan's elevator CRASHES though the cobblestones and ends up right in front of the "DESPAIR" STATUE.

INT. THE ELEVATOR

Satan has a look of anticipation.

SATAN
Did we make it all the way?

Satan looks up at the dial. It is stuck right on the PURGATORY sign.

SATAN (cont'd)
Damn! One of these days...

EXT. PURGATORY SQUARE - DAY

The elevator doors open and out steps Satan. The souls are petrified, but Satan just calmly brushes himself off.

SATAN
Could one of you fine souls please
direct me to the courthouse?

The souls, all shaking, raise their fingers and point in the same direction. Satan nods a thank you and heads off.

INT. THE COURTROOM - DAY

The crowd is pressed up to the door, trying to see who is coming. Steven, the Lives, and Wally get a look.

TREVANIIO

I don't believe it could be good news at this point.

The lights inside the courtroom go all the way down.

JEAN CLAUDE

(stuttering)

I... I... think we... might be in trouble here, folks.

The judges rise and look towards the door.

BEBERINI

Oh, Christ...

Satan is seen standing in the doorway.

SATAN

Wrong! Guess again.

The crowd scurries back to their seats, and Satan enters the courtroom. He scans the room, casting an EVIL EYE on the defendants. He approaches the bench.

SATAN (cont'd)

Your honors, if it pleases the court, I shall be taking over this case for the prosecution.

BEBERINI

On what grounds?

Satan is momentarily miffed, but regains his composure.

SATAN

By virtue of the fact that I may use any means to prove my case!

The judges nod their agreement. Satan walks over to the prosecution table, lays down his briefcase, and approaches Steven on the stand.

SATAN (cont'd)

This so called talent, this so called "Gift". Exactly what has it brought you in your lifetime? Nothing but pain and suffering! The reality is, my dear friend, that this is not a gift but a curse!

Satan pounds his fist down and makes his point. Steven jumps back in fear. The Four Lives prod Wally to respond, but he is too intimidated. He struggles to say something.

WALLY
Your honors, this is ...

Satan stares at him coldly.

WALLY (cont'd)
Really dumb.

SATAN
(sneering)
Well put, my caloric-ally
challenged friend.

WALLY
Don't forget about what we showed
you earlier... Steven's passion
counted for something, right?

SATAN
All the passion in the world is
meaningless if you don't have the
courage to use it.

The judges nod their agreement. Satan smiles, then turns his attention to the others.

SATAN (cont'd)
Why pick on just one of you?

Satan hovers over Steven and the Four Lives. Their heads hang as he goes down the line.

SATAN (cont'd)
Mr. Sutcliffe, your bodily fluids
left more of an impression on the
stage than your words ever did. Mr.
Monre, your so-called talents
literally turned into manure. Miss
Moore, you didn't even have the
courage to stand up for your own
uniqueness and suffered the
consequences. And Mr Trevanio, you
spent the best years of your life
living in squalor.

Satan turns and faces the judges.

SATAN (cont'd)
Path's not taken, lives not lived.

He turns and focuses all his attention on Steven.

SATAN (cont'd)

Which brings me to you, Mr Burton,
a man so tortured by his "gift"
that he couldn't hold onto
meaningful employment, and have
nothing to show for your life but
halfhearted attempts at relevancy,
constant struggles, and ruined
relationships... and you failed at
the most important task of all.

Satan grabs Steven's wrists and exposes them. There is a notable gasp from the crowd.

SATAN (cont'd)

(to Steven)

I understand, really I do. This so-called gift is actually a curse! Wouldn't your life had been better if you had not been burdened by this? Pursuing these dreams has done nothing but lead you to this heartbreak, time and time again.

Wally jumps up to counter the charge.

WALLY

It wasn't the dreams, it was them quitting so easily.

Satan presses his point.

SATAN

Semantics, my large fellow, simple semantics. A curse is still a curse. I believe the evidence proves that this gift is anything but, wouldn't you all agree?

The Lives, in a moment of weakness, reluctantly NOD their heads in APPROVAL. Wally, now panicking, tries to think of something fast, but he has nothing. An IDEA comes to Simon.

SIMON

May I approach the bench?

They nod their agreement. Satan bolts up.

SATAN

This is a trick, your honors! A blatant, cheap trick to deny me what is rightfully mine!!

Simon enters the front of the court and approaches the bench. He leans forward and whispers to the judges.

SIMON

Give us one day, and if they have not changed their minds, we will concede and Mr. Prince of Darkness can have this soul and these gifts.

The judges discuss it among themselves. They nod agreement.

BEBERINI

Mr. Adviser, please step back from the bench.

SATAN

What kind of deception is this?

BEBERINI

We shall reconvene tomorrow morning and ask each of these lives: is this a gift? If they are not unanimous in the affirmative, we shall award Satan this soul free and clear.

He pounds down his gavel. Satan grins.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE TOWN SQUARE OF PURGATORY - EVENING

Steven and the Lives are arguing.

STEVEN

This is not just about me, it's about all of us.

TREVANIIO

It's already too late for us, Steven! Our time has passed.

SUTCLIFFE

There's nothing we can do any way.

STEVEN

You all keep making excuses. Why don't you just admit that you can not and will not do anything?

They can't answer. Steven is at the end of his rope.

STEVEN (cont'd)
 I would have been better off if I
 had just been allowed to die. Damn
 you all for doing this to me!

Steven storms off, and Wally pushes through the crowd and
 pursues him. Dejected, they hang their heads in shame.

TREVANIIO
 (quietly)
 If I only had another chance, I
 would really do something...

SUTCLIFFE
 Incredible...

GWENDOLYN
 Beautiful...

TREVANIIO
 Something *straordinario!*

They all look skyward.

JEAN CLAUDE
 God, if only...

Simon, who has been listening from a distance, steps out of
 the shadows and towards the Four.

SIMON
 God gives every one of us our own
 unique gifts and talents. It is up
 to us to discover them, nurture
 them, and pursue them. To do
 anything less is an affront to God
 and a lessening of your own life.
 All of you are proof of that.

SUTCLIFFE
 Well that's all fine and good, but
 it does us no good now.

SIMON
 There are no restrictions here.
 There never have been, only those
 in your own minds. If you are
 sincere in your wishes, then let's
 see what you can achieve.

There is an excited expression on all of their faces. They
 split off in all directions. Simon, proud of himself, walks
 away with a big SMILE on his face.

Sutcliffe realizes that he doesn't have anything particular in mind. He sees Doubt approaching him. She grabs his arm.

SUTCLIFFE

What is it you want, *unfair* maiden?

DOUBT

Just a moment of your time. I want to show you something I knew that the others wouldn't have the *intelligence* to understand.

He tilts his head. She has his attention.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Gwendolyn assembles items for SCULPTING. She grabs scraps of metal, and next thing we see is the bright spark as she LIGHTS A WELDERS TORCH. She walks right up into the camera shot, which is titled up towards her. She grabs a long piece of rope, and swings it over head until it catches something.

GWENDOLYN

Oh Lassie, you are mine.

She starts to climb.

INT. UNRECOGNIZABLE DARK INTERIOR

Trevaniio is pacing around, giving DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS to a group of souls. He is very meticulous in his descriptions, and we can see the glimmer of inspiration in his eyes as he runs around, pointing and giving orders.

INT. THE INN OF LOST SOULS

The group is singing it's nightly rendition of the drinking song. Jean Claude practically kicks open the door.

JEAN CLAUDE

All right, it's time to separate the men from the boys... or at least from the high altos, and the women from the girls.

With that, he starts rummaging through the crowd, PULLING AND SORTING the souls into separate vocal sections.

EXT. A DARK AND DREARY GARDEN - NIGHT

Steven is sitting, slumped down with the other lost souls. Wally stands over him, trying to reason with him.

WALLY

I don't know very much, as a matter of a fact, most people consider me pretty dumb. But I have enough smarts to know that killing yourself is never the answer.

STEVEN

You don't know what it's like to not have any money, to be unable to do anything.

WALLY

I had all of the money in the world and it didn't bring me happiness.

Steven is unmoved. Wally continues on.

WALLY (cont'd)

I was like you... all I wanted was to be successful, at any cost. And that success cost me everything. You have a chance to go back and change your life! And all you can do is feel sorry for yourself. What I wouldn't do to be able to go back and fix my life!

Frustrated, he walks away, bumping into Simon as he does. Simon now stands over Steven.

SIMON

He has valid points, Steven.

STEVEN

(whispering)

I'm glad you think so.

SIMON

Don't bother whispering. The other souls can not hear you. They don't want to hear you. They are so caught up in their own problems they have shut out everything and everyone else around them. They could spend eternity doing nothing but worrying and wallowing in self-pity. If they could only see hope...

(MORE)

SIMON (cont'd)
 This can still happen to you, if
 you think that this is better than
 fighting.

Steven looks around the garden, and the magnitude sinks in.

STEVEN
 (quietly)
 Let's get out of here.

Simon smiles. Wally offers his hand and pulls Steven up. A woman runs up, trying to catch her breath.

WOMAN
 You are never going to believe what
 has happened. Come with me.

Wally and Steven look at each other.

STEVEN
 Oh, dear God, what now?

They look to Simon, who smiles and shrugs his shoulders.

SIMON
 Maybe you should go see.

They run off following the woman.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

They rush up to the closed doors of the building. Trevaniio is standing there, leaning up against the closed doors. His face and clothes are covered in various shades of paint.

STEVEN
 What in the world have you done?

A slight smile creeps over Trevaniio's face, and he speaks in a quiet yet cheerful voice.

TREVANIIO
 Never be surprised by what can come
 to you in those brief moments of
 divine inspiration.

With that, he opens the doors. Steven & Wally, their eyes opened wide, move past him and step inside.

BACK TO COLOR:

INT. MEETING BUILDING - NIGHT

Steven and Wally enter and a look of astonishment comes over both of them. The entire room is painted in GLORIOUS COLORS, the complete space transformed. Trevaniio walks up behind them and proudly shows off his handiwork.

TREVANIIO

Of course, I didn't actually paint it all by myself, but...it was my design... and direction.

STEVEN

Amazing!

Steven and Wally walk around and stare, as various souls continue to touch up the painting. Trevaniio very casually pulls out a nicely COOKED RAT on a stick and begins eating.

TREVANIIO

Kind of livens things up, wouldn't you say?

He is obviously very happy with himself, and Steven is impressed. A man rushes into the room.

MAN

You gotta come see this. It's... it's... incredible!

Steven and the others look at each other momentarily, then go rushing out of the building. The man notices the freshly painted room and stands in awe.

MAN (cont'd)

Brother, get a load of this!

EXT. THE CENTER SQUARE - EARLY DAWN

Steven, Wally, Trevaniio, plus a small entourage converge on the square. We see their faces smiling as they look skyward.

TREVANIIO

Oh my dear Lord, look what she's gone and done!

We see Gwendolyn as she pounds out a piece of metal and throws a TORCH on it. Casting off her welding mask, she looks down and sees the group that has gathered below her.

GWENDOLYN

AHOY, MATES! Grab a hold of this, I'm coming down.

She grabs the pile of rope and swings it down below her. Steven and Trevaniio take hold. She proceeds to triumphantly slide down the rope and lets out a boisterous yell.

GWENDOLYN (cont'd)
Yo Ho Ho!

TREVANIIO
And a bottle of rum!

He pulls a bottle out of his pocket and takes a big swig. Tasting the contents, he quickly corrects himself.

TREVANIIO (cont'd)
Actually, bourbon.

Steven, still looking skyward, is in total astonishment.

STEVEN
Have you decided what to call it?

She hesitates for a second.

GWENDOLYN
I call it... *HOPE*.

She looks skyward, and we see the "Despair" SCULPTURE. The arms that were spread over it's face now extend towards the Heavens, and the giant head tilts upwards. It even has a grin.

GWENDOLYN (cont'd)
Not bad for a two hundred year lay-off.

She notices that Jean Claude is not with them.

GWENDOLYN (cont'd)
Where is the wild-haired madman?

Everyone shrugs their shoulders.

WALLY
No one has seen him in...

They are interrupted by the soft sound of SINGING.

INT. INN OF LOST SOULS - DAYBREAK

Jean Claude, his eyes closed and an intense look on his face, is slowly CONDUCTING the singing. The simple drinking song becomes a GLORIOUS MELODY, which carries out to:

EXT. THE STREETS OF PURGATORY

As it pours out of the Inn, we see the sullen souls stopping and listening.

INT. THE BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING

The Commander has just entered, and is preparing to give out his assignments for the day. But the sound of the singing floats into the room, and the candidates are distracted by its beauty. They get up and begin to hurry out of the room.

COMMANDER

What in the world is...

The Commander, both intrigued and pissed at the same time, follows the crowd out the door.

EXT. THE CENTER COURT - MORNING

The entire court now is filled with souls, all of them reveling in the singing and the sculpture. The Commander is indignant.

COMMANDER

Those four idiots are making a mockery out of this place! This is Purgatory, not Eden!

Simon steps up and just smiles.

SIMON

I think it's kind of wonderful.

The souls from the Inn join the rest of the crowd, all of them SINGING. For the first time, a RAY OF SUNSHINE cracks through the gray, overcast sky, and it BATHES THE STATUE in a warm glow. Smiles fill the souls faces.

INT. A BEAUTIFUL OFFICE IN HELL - MORNING

Sutcliffe and Doubt enter. The office is richly decorated with FINE PAINTINGS and lavish ornamentation. Sutcliffe seems totally wonder struck by the surroundings.

DOUBT

I told you I was saving the best for last.

Sutcliffe moves around, running his hands along the large desks. He plops down in an overly PLUSH CHAIR and swirls around.

SUTCLIFFE

This is my chair?

DOUBT

This is your entire work area. What could be more ideal? And especially for you... the head of our new Speaker's Bureau.

Sutcliffe is sucking it all in, seemingly very impressed. She goes to the front of the office and opens the large doors. We see all Five of the Lives names have already been etched on the door. Sutcliffe beams.

DOUBT (cont'd)

What do you think of all of this?
Imagine the adulation of the other.
You'd be doing them a favor.

She runs her long nails through his hair.

SUTCLIFFE

Why, it's all so very wonderful.

With that, we pull all the way around to the other side. It is just an ILLUSION. The work area is actually everything you would imagine Hell to be. We move back to Sutcliffe's perspective again. Doubt goes in for the kill.

DOUBT

Everything that you've ever wanted,
more than you could ever dream of.
Just convince the judges this is
where you want to be.

SUTCLIFFE

But how do I do that?

She moves in close and we do not hear her words. Sutcliffe, however, nods in agreement.

INT. THE COURTROOM - MORNING

All of the principals except for Sutcliffe are there. The place is buzzing.

SIMON

Where in God's name is he?

TREVANIIO

Don't tell me he got into one of his snits.

The judges enter, and the audience rises. The judges, seeming a bit peeved, pause before speaking.

BEBERINI

The fact that you have transformed Purgatory for ages notwithstanding, we still have an important issue before us. Have each one of you decided where you stand on the issue of whether your talents are a curse or not?

WALLY

Your honor, all of us are not...

Sutcliffe enters. His head is down and he goes to his seat.

ZHENG

Each defendant rise and announce your intentions to this court.

HAWTHORNE

Do you believe that this is a gift?

Each one stands and speaks, then sits back down.

STEVEN

Steven J. Burton, affirmative.

JEAN CLAUDE

Jean Claude Monre, affirmative.

GWENDOLYN

Gwendolyn C. Moore, affirmative.

TREVANIIO

Nicholas Trevaniio, affirmative.

Trevaniio sits down, but Sutcliffe remains seated.

TREVANIIO (cont'd)

(to Sutcliffe)

Fine time to lose your voice.

Sutcliffe slowly rises to address the court.

TREVANIIO (cont'd)

What in God's name is he doing?

Sutcliffe glances over at Doubt and she nods ever so slightly to him. Wally picks up on the gesture.

WALLY

Oh, no, something bad is coming.

Sutcliffe begins his response.

SUTCLIFFE

Every one of us individuals had a unique gift, the ability to imagine and create things of beauty that no ordinary person could. The gift of seeing a piece of metal or stone, or the blank white of stretched canvass, and creating an image with the most basic material, truly is a treasure.

The judges smile in acknowledgment.

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)

And yet... all of us have squandered that very "gift"! We have tossed aside our dreams and ambitions only to live our lives in quiet desperation. And for what, I ask of you? To experience pain and torment? To suffer at the hands of fate, cursing the very existence of this "gift"? By that sin fell the angels.

The other Lives are in shock. Satan gleefully sucks it in.

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)

To spend our eternities tortured and full of remorse? As Shakespeare said, "Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt". No truer words have been spoken. We are a pathetic lot. I look upon the harsh reality and can not ignore that perhaps it is others that may make more of this than we collectively have. Gift? There isn't a sane member in this chamber who would consider it so.

The other Lives sense defeat.

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)
 Even amongst ourselves we
 apparently do not know what the
 others are thinking. While my other
 lives have had the opportunity to
 express their gift, I have been
 offered no such good fortune...

Sutcliffe raises his arm ready to bring down his final,
 damning point.

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)
 ...until now.

It hits Steven. He turns to the others.

STEVEN
 (whispering)
 Oh my God, he's acting!

The three look up and realize that Steven is right.

TREVANIIO
 NOW he's decided to find his voice?
 Che palla!

Sutcliffe goes into his big wind-up.

SUTCLIFFE
 And that is why, your honor's...

The crowd takes a deep breath. Satan hinges on every word.

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)
 ...there is no way in HELL that I
 would willing give up my gift or
 turn away from my other lives. This
 soul is united! Affirmative!

The crowd explodes in cheers. The others slowly rise from
 their chairs and give Sutcliffe a standing ovation.

GWENDOLYN
 The performance of a lifetime!

TREVANIIO
 The performance of five lifetimes!

JEAN CLAUDE
 (befuddled)
 What happened?

The crowd soon follows suit. Sutcliffe stands there, humbled
 and yet enjoying the adulation.

We can see the look of CONTENTMENT on his face, and his eyes well up with tears as he BOWS to each segment of the audience. Suddenly, the moment is ended as the entire room goes dark.

SATAN

Pardon me, but I'm not quite done with my argument. Fear! Doubt!

Fear and Doubt rush to Steven's side and begin to fill his head with negative talk.

FEAR

You will fail, you will surely be mocked and ridiculed.

DOUBT

You know you aren't good enough.

They SMOTHER him. We see Steven's POV. Things are incredibly FOGGY. He is losing touch rapidly. Satan faces the judges.

SATAN

All the talent in the world is meaningless unless you can stand up against these two. Your honor's, it is obvious that the defendant, like those before him, can not.

Cut to Steven, in a daze. We see the mental fog surrounding his head as the two continue to lie and entangle him. The Four lives turn to Wally for help.

SUTCLIFFE

My God, man, you have to do something!

TREVANIIO

You can't leave Steven like that, we're losing him... and our case!

Wally bolts up out of his chair, and then abruptly stops. Satan, sensing his fear, eggs him on.

SATAN

You don't have the guts to tangle with me, do you?

Wally moves as if he is ready to confront Satan face to face, then stops. The entire crowd stares at Wally. He stands there, INTIMIDATED and uncertain what to do.

SATAN (cont'd)

I own you, and have owned you since you sold your soul to me. You wanted a TV deal, and I gave it to you. I stuck to my end of the deal, but you wanted to back out... a last second plea for forgiveness is all that kept you from reporting to me the second you perished.

Wally stands there, pensive.

SATAN (cont'd)

Don't worry, you are not worth my time any more. I've gotten what I really wanted. Your honors, I formally release my claim upon his soul. (*turns to Wally*) Have a nice eternity.

Wally is in shock, overwhelmed by what he has heard.

WALLY

(to judges)

You mean, I'm free to go?

HAWTHORNE

If he has released his claim upon you, then yes, you are... but not right in the middle of this trial. You can wait outside.

Wally is still in a daze. He walks over to the table and hurriedly collects his papers. The Four Lives are shocked.

GWENDOLYN

What are you doing?

TREVANIIO

You're just going, like that?

JEAN CLAUDE

What about Steven? What about us?

WALLY

Didn't you hear what he said? I'm free to leave... I'm sorry.

SUTCLIFFE

Dear God... Hell is empty and all the devils are here.

Wally walks toward the doorway. He stops and looks back at the Four, and the audience.

He quietly drops his head and continues walking, leaving the courtroom. There is a loud groan of disgust from the crowd.

INT. THE HALLWAY - DAY

The crowd slowly parts as Wally walks through it. There are taunts and jeers. He moves quickly, with his head lowered, trying to get away from the mob.

INT. THE COURTROOM - DAY

Meanwhile, Satan is preparing to rest his case as Fear and Doubt tighten their grip around Steven.

SATAN

You see, your honors, I still have,
and always will have, control of
this soul. And it is finally mine!
There is no one to protect him now.

The Four Lives frantically confer. Finally, Jean Claude, shaking like a leaf, rises and addresses the judges.

JEAN CLAUDE

(pleading)

Your honor's... a very short
recess?

Before the judges can respond, Trevaniio and Sutcliffe bolt out the door. Jean Claude drops in his seat, exasperated.

INT. THE HALLWAY - DAY

Trevaniio and Sutcliffe push through, pointed in the right direction by the angry mob.

INT. THE WRESTLERS ROOM - DAY

Wally is packing his bag when the two burst in.

TREVANIIO

This is the biggest match of your
life. You're supposed to be
fighting for all of us. Damn it,
for once in your life think about
someone other than yourself!

WALLY

Look, I would love to fight... but
I can't... I don't know how.

(MORE)

WALLY (cont'd)

Not against this. Besides, I can leave, right now. You don't know how long I've waited to hear that!

SUTCLIFFE

Oh, don't I? And of course neither do the rest of us. We've only been here for centuries.

WALLY

I'm sorry, but I can go now.

TREVANIIO

What about Steven? He is supposed to be your friend. If you won't do it for us, then for God's sake man, do it for him.

SUTCLIFFE

Your abandoning him like you abandoned Sally.

The two are getting to him.

WALLY

Her name is *Sophie*... besides, this is not the same thing. I told you, I have no idea how to fight this!

TREVANIIO

Just go in there and do the best you can. God must have given you the gifts to confront this or he never would have put you up to it. We trust your instincts, man, maybe it's time you do the same!

WALLY

(frustrated and agitated)

Thanks! Nothing but a bunch of baloney! You're asking me to take on the Devil himself and you're giving me baloney. Save it for someone else.

SUTCLIFFE

Fine! If this is how you want to arrive at Heavens Gate, sneaking in through the back door and riding on the back of someone else's misfortune, no one can stop you. I am sure your *Sophie* would be very impressed. I, for one, am not.

They head for the door, then turn back for one last comment.

TREVANNIO

Here's one last bit of "baloney"
for you: the demon you are
fighting, my friend, is inside of
you. It has nothing to do with that
beast in there.

SUTCLIFFE

As far as I'm concerned, you can
spend the rest of eternity
wrestling with your conscience!

The two storm out, disgusted. Wally stops his packing and pauses. He slowly pulls out his wedding picture.

WALLY

Sophie, I tried so hard to get back
to you... and now that I finally
can... I don't know what to do.

He pauses for a moment, drops to his knees, and prays.

WALLY (cont'd)

Give me the strength I need. God,
only You can save my soul.

INT. THE COURTROOM - DAY

There is a noticeable buzz going through the hallway and it carries into the courtroom. Every one turns to see. Wally walks through the doorway, and the Four Lives smile. He walks to the table and doesn't acknowledge them. He very deliberately takes off his white jacket, NEATLY FOLDING it on the back of the chair.

SUTCLIFFE

What in the world are you doing?

He reaches down and begins to untie his shoes. Satan, still in total control of Steven, looks on, bewildered.

SATAN

What the devil...?

Wally kicks off his shoes, causing a spontaneous groan of disgust from the Four Lives.

TREVANNIO

Oh my God, he's going to suffocate
the poor bastard.

Wally pauses, takes a deep breath, and begins to crack his knuckles methodically. The judges, as well as everyone else, begin to catch on. Satan pleads to the judges.

SATAN
(sternly)
This is a violation...

The judges are already ahead of him.

BEBERINI
Mr. Siemanski, may I remind you that you are not to use physical violence! That is what landed you in Purgatory to begin with!

Wally slowly opens his eyes, enraged. Satan pleads.

SATAN
Your honors...

With that, Wally rips open his shirt and the crowd gasps.

WALLY
HOLY KAPUSTA!!!!

He THROWS HIMSELF ONTO Satan, Steven, Fear and Doubt, knocking them all down on the floor. The entire crowd, lead by the Four Lives, STANDS UP and leans forward, trying to see what is happening. Suddenly Wally stands and THROWS SATAN across the front of the room. The crowd gasps again. Satan isn't quite sure what has hit him.

Wally peels Doubt off of Steven, and FLINGS HER across the front of the room also. The crowd cheers! Wally just SNARLS AT FEAR and he jumps off of Steven and scurries behind Satan and Doubt. Wally grabs Steven by the collar and begins to shake him vigorously.

WALLY (cont'd)
Come on damn it, shake it off.
You've come too far to give up now!

The clouds around Steven begin to break up. Satan rushes up to the judges bench.

SATAN
Your honor's, this is totally out of order!

HAWTHORNE
You're absolutely right! Mr. Siemanski, you are in contempt!

Wally doesn't really give a damn, and he continues to plead with Steven.

WALLY

Please, buddy, snap out of it! Damn it, stand up for yourself!

Finally, Steven comes out of it, shaking off the last remnants of the fog. He struggles to his feet, and the Four Lives cheer. Satan is furious, and points his long, twisted finger at Steven from across the room.

SATAN

You've never fought for anything in your entire life! God damn it, don't you dare start now!

Satan rushes towards Steven, but Simon sticks out his leg and TRIPS HIM. Satan goes flying across the floor. Furious, he looks up at Simon. Simon puts on an innocent smile and looks skyward with his eyes. A GLOWING HALO appears around his head. Satan STANDS. Wally comes from behind and body slams him back to the floor.

SATAN (cont'd)

Get off of me, you fat, disgusting waste of a life!

WALLY

Don't you talk to me like that you son-of-a-bitch!

The crowd gasps. They wait for Satan's wrath. Steven closes his eyes and begins speaking softly.

STEVEN

I do have faith in myself.

Satan, sensing his power over Steven suddenly diminishing, screams out to Fear & Doubt.

SATAN

Don't just stand there, GET HIM!

Doubt begins to approach, pouring on her seductive power. Steven continues his reciting. Doubt, feeling her power weakening, rushes towards Steven. Finally convinced of his own words, he opens his eyes.

STEVEN

(forcefully)

Damn it, I do have faith in myself!

Fear and Doubt go flying, and end up behind Satan. The Four Lives cheer! Satan goes into WRATH MODE against the Six. He is enraged! He begins to draw all of his power. Wally rushes to the table.

WALLY

This isn't just Steven's fight,
it's all of yours! The only way to
defeat this is to stand together.

The Four Lives look at each other.

SUTCLIFFE

If we do this, it will have to be
all of us.

The Four Lives stand, even as Jean Claude SHAKES like a LEAF. Sutcliffe and Trevaniio LOCK ARMS with Wally. The five form a barrier in front of Steven, anticipating a horrific impact. Seeing this, Steven cuts into the center of the line.

STEVEN

This will only work if I stand up
for myself.

GWENDOLYN

If ALL of us stand up for
ourselves!

The room SHAKES, and the gallery clears.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM - DAY

The crowd rushes out of the courtroom, panicked.

INT. COURTROOM OF THE SOUL - DAY

Beberini and Zheng cower down behind the bench. Hawthorne stands there, watching with excitement in his eyes.

ZHENG

Get down man!

HAWTHORNE

Are you jesting? And miss this? Not
on your life!

He stands triumphantly, hands on his hips.

SATAN

I am tired of playing these games!
I have been waiting for centuries
and now will take what is mine!

Suddenly Satan creates a MASSIVE BALL of EVIL PLASMA. It glows RED and has ELECTRIC IMPULSES all around it. Fear and Doubt STARE at it with reverence. He raises it over his head. The six brace for impact. Satan HURLS IT at them!

Suddenly, a GOLDEN SHIELD surrounds the six, causing the evil to HIT AND DISINTEGRATE. The concussion opens a LARGE HOLE in the middle of the courtroom, and Satan, Fear & Doubt are sent HURLING back to HELL. A TORNADO of FIRE, WIND, DUST, SMOKE, etc. Then nothing. The lights flicker on.

The six, realizing they're alive, look around and see Simon standing at the door to the chamber.

SIMON

God thinks anyone willing to stand
firm against evil, not to mention
body slam it, deserves a little
protection.

The Four Lives, Wally and Steven slowly stand and congratulate each other. Beberini and Zheng stand and take their places back on the bench.

BEBERINI

Mr. Burton, approach the bench.

Steven slowly approaches, being careful to avoid the new hole to Hell. Beberini jots down a note and passes it to Zheng, who passes it along to Hawthorne (O.C.).

BEBERINI (cont'd)

Are there any objections to this
verdict?

Zheng shakes his head "no". We pan over to Hawthorne. He is completely COVERED IN SOOT, and his HAIR SHOOTS UP in every direction. He starts to speak and a PUFF OF SMOKE comes out instead. He clears his throat and stares straight ahead.

HAWTHORNE

No objections.

BEBERINI

Then it is the decision of this
tribunal, with no objections, that
this soul be given one more chance.

ZHENG

It is very obvious from what we
have seen that this life is not yet
exhausted.

The Lives and Simon break out in applause. Steven is
overwhelmed with emotions. They all hug.

STEVEN

Your honor's, I respectfully
requests your verdict, concerning
my friend...

TREVANIIO

(interrupting)
You mean our friend, Wally.

The judges talk among themselves. The tension builds in the
room. They break up their discussion.

ZHENG

Mr. Siemanski, approach the bench.

Wally steps forward.

BEBERINI

By virtue of the fact that you
convincingly saved this soul from
immediate damnation, and have given
it another chance to succeed, you
are highly commended by this court.

There are smiles of expectation.

HAWTHORNE

However, because you obtained these
results by violating the
instructions of this judgmental
body, it is my opinion that you
remain here in Purgatory!

Wally, his head down and shoulders slumped, sighs.

ZHENG

One moment Mr. Siemanski.

The judges lean back and confer. Hawthorne is animated in
his objections, but the other two calmly sit there and
rationalize back. Disgusted, Hawthorne comes down from the
bench and stands over the hole. He shakes his fist.

HAWTHORNE

Damn you all! I abstain!

He throws himself into the hole and is sucked back into Hell. There is a cloud of smoke and then nothing.

BEBERINI

Mr. Siemanski, with a vote of two for, and one abstention, your soul has been saved. You may pass on.

Wally is overcome with emotion. The others cheer.

WALLY

If you don't mind me asking, when...

BEBERINI

Immediately, my friend. As a matter of fact, I believe that they are sending someone down to greet you.

With that, a tremendous smile finally comes over his face and he can barely contain himself. Steven and the others rush over to congratulate him, but he is so excited that he barely acknowledges them. Suddenly, in the back of the courtroom, a BRIGHT BLUE LIGHT bursts forth from what was the ceiling. As the light expands, and begins to fill out, a large, WHITE STAIRCASE gradually appears. The stairs head directly into the sky, and there is a bright white light at the highest point. Wally cautiously moves towards them.

Out of the light steps the figure of a woman, her body wrapped in a BRIGHT WHITE GOWN, light shimmering off of every surface of her body. It is Sophie, his wife, and his eyes EXPLODE WITH GLEE. She comes down only to the point where we can make her out. She smiles broadly, and places her hand on her hip, does her best Mae West impression.

SOPHIE

Hey big boy, why don't you come up and join me for an eternity?

With that, Wally lets out the roar of his battle cry.

WALLY

HOLY KAPUSTA!

He BOUNDS up the stairs and reaches the top. He picks up his wife, smothering her with his hug. Steven runs to the edge of the stairs, and calls out to Wally.

STEVEN

What about the others? Are they going with you?

WALLY
 (smiling)
 I have no idea. But thank you for
 giving me this.

He turns and looks down at the Four Lives.

WALLY (cont'd)
 I thank all of you from the bottom
 of my big, fat Polack heart.

Wally turns and grabs his wife's hand. They race up the remaining steps and approach the light. Another figure steps out of the light. It is Stan, his coach.

STAN
 How ya doin' Champ? Welcome home...
 Now I noticed you dropped your
 shoulder a bit during that take
 down of Satan...

Wally smiles and puts him into a HEADLOCK. The three walk into the light, and there is one final burst of energy. The entire staircase suddenly disappears. The Four Lives smile brightly, and collectively they sigh.

ALL FOUR
 (in unison)
 What a nice story!

They all realize what they had done and stand there looking at each other, and giggle. Steven turns to the bench.

BEBERINI
 Mr. Burton, we are anxious to see
 if you can correct the course of
 your life through your actions, not
 just your words.

STEVEN
 I will your honors, I swear. What
 about the others?

ZHENG
 That depends entirely upon you.

BEBERINI
 Before you leave, there is one last
 condition. Come with us. This court
 is adjourned.

The Judge pounds down his gavel.

INT. THE PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

Steven works on the PROJECTOR in an incredibly cramped position. SCREWDRIVER wedged in his mouth and a RATCHET to tighten something. Gwendolyn holds a FLASHLIGHT.

STEVEN

I think that should do it!

The MOVIE PROJECTOR sparks to light, and a small cloud of dust is kicked up as the reels move for the first time in ages. Steven's face is ILLUMINATED by the bulb.

INT. ELECTRICAL CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Trevaniio, Sutcliffe, and Jean Claude are standing over a GIANT ELECTRICAL PULL SWITCH. Steven and Gwendolyn enter.

STEVEN

OK, ready when you are.

The three jostle for position, and collectively pull down on the switch. There is a spark and a puff of smoke.

EXT. THE THEATER MARQUEE - DAY

The old and worn lights crackle to life. The crowd cheers.

INT. THE THEATER LOBBY - DAY

Steven and the Four Lives come out into the lobby and confront the Judges.

STEVEN

So...?

BEBERINI

You are free to go back, my son.
And God bless you.

STEVEN

He already has.

BEBERINI

Make something decent and I'll see
that it plays up here.

Beberini smiles, and walks out with Zheng. Steven watches as they float away towards Heaven.

TREVANIIO

I think it's time to go out and
greet our adoring crowd.

Trevaniio locks arms with Gwendolyn and Jean Claude, but
Sutcliffe pulls away.

SUTCLIFFE

Oh, please! Let's get this
indignity over with.

The three walk through the glass door and the crowd outside
bursts into cheers. Sutcliffe is right behind them. He
pushes open the door and is greeted by cheers.

SUTCLIFFE (cont'd)

(sarcastically)

Yes, I know, aren't we terrific...

The door shuts, and Steven and Simon are alone inside.

STEVEN

God, I'm going to miss this place.

SIMON

You've done a great thing here,
Steven... you all have. You've
taken a major step towards the
Fulfillment.

STEVEN

What's that?

SIMON

You are in a unique position. You
can utilize the talents of all the
others and combine them into one
art form, making movies. You just
have to make it happen. My work
here is done. It's time for me to
head back... and you as well.

Simon heads for the lobby doors and opens them.

STEVEN

But how do I...?

Suddenly, the lights inside the lobby begin to come on, and
something catches Steven's eye. A light illuminates the
poster of "It Happened One Night".

STEVEN (cont'd)

What is that doing in here?

Simon shrugs his shoulders and smiles. He FLOATS OFF into the clouds. Steven looks around, and the entire lobby is now filled with Frank CAPRA MOVIE POSTERS. He hears the PROJECTOR STARTING UP. Through the theater doors he begins to hear "It's A Wonderful Life" playing. He walks towards the double doors and pushes through.

EXT. THE MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The Four Lives stand there looking in towards the theater. Behind them the crowd cheers.

GWENDOLYN
Good-bye Steven, and good luck.

JEAN CLAUDE
God bless you, Mate.

There is a very short man holding up a rat in each hand, and Trevaniio is trying to choose between them.

TREVANIIO
Oh, I think I'll take that one.

SUTCLIFFE
(towards the theater)
Hurry up and get me out of here!

INT. THE MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Steven slowly walks forward. The entire movie house has been RESTORED to its original OPULENCE. He walks out from under the balcony and the entire splendor opens up to him. LARGE, RED VELVET CURTAINS drape the entire front of the house. All along the side walls are BEAUTIFUL LIGHT FIXTURES, each one illuminating the walls in a different color of light.

Above him, a STARRY NIGHT lights up his face. The theater is empty, except for a lone figure in the center row. The film abruptly stops playing. The man gets up from his seat and begins walking towards Steven.

FRANK
I've been waiting to see you. You know, you certainly have had an interesting life... so far that is!

The stranger steps out of the shadows, and suddenly Steven recognizes him. It is FRANK CAPRA, 50, wearing a sweater and casual clothes. The color rushes out of Steven's face. Frank extends his hand.

FRANK (cont'd)
Hi kid, the name's Frank... Frank
Capra. You might have heard of me.

Steven is speechless.

FRANK (cont'd)
Come on, walk with me.

The two walk to the center row of the theater. Frank
gestures to the movie screen.

FRANK (cont'd)
You know, I just don't understand
what they are doing with movies
anymore. All of this shooting,
killing, blood... and lots of...

He struggles to find the words.

FRANK (cont'd)
Bosoms, you know? What in God's
name ever happened to telling a
good story?

He motions for Steven to slide into a row. They grab a seat
in the middle. Capra slumps down in his seat, hanging his
legs over the seat in front of him.

FRANK (cont'd)
God, I could never get away with
sitting like this up there.

STEVEN
You mean Heaven?

FRANK
Naturally.

STEVEN
I didn't realize Heaven had movie
theaters.

FRANK
Of course they do, kid, but none of
those multiplexes kind. We're
talking palaces... Cathedrals to
the art of film.

As they continue to talk, the stars circle above them. Capra
offers Steven some popcorn.

FRANK (cont'd)

Here's the thing kid... nobody ever said being a filmmaker would be easy. Nothing worthwhile in life ever is. You have to possess the passion burning inside of you. You have to feel like if you don't make movies you'll just go crazy.

STEVEN

What about the fear? How did you eliminate that?

FRANK

Are you kidding me? Every new film terrified me! What if it fails, what if I fail? What if it just *stinks*? God, I was convinced that Wonderful Life would be a disaster. And the damn thing didn't make any money. But I discovered something very important along the way: fear is a constant presence in every persons life. Anyone who tells you differently is full of bull. I'll let you in on a little secret - your desire to succeed just must be stronger than your fear.

Steven settles in for a long conversation.

STEVEN

I could stay here forever just talking about films with you!

The projector runs. The curtains open. We see the scene of Steven destroying his apartment. Steven is fixated on Capra and doesn't even notice. Frank shouts to the booth.

FRANK

What, no trailers?

Steven turns to look at the screen. He is in shock.

STEVEN

Oh my God, it's my life! This is right when Kimberley left.. and the start of this nightmare.

Capra pops a kernel in his mouth.

FRANK

She was no good for you, Steven.
Trust me, I know about these
things. You can't make films unless
you understand human nature.

STEVEN

I guess I'm destined to be alone in
my life.

FRANK

Hey, you left right in the middle
of the second act. That wasn't the
climax. It's one of the great
things about life - every once in
awhile you get a second chance...
at life, and even love. Sadly,
sometimes we don't realize it till
we are down to our last breath.
Then we discover that it was right
in front of us the whole time.

A new image comes on the screen.

INT. STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paramedics hover over Steven's body, trying to revive him.
Debbie is standing in the background, sobbing silently. She
folds her hands across her chest.

DEBBIE

Please God, don't take him... I'll
do anything, just bring him back...

Steven is overwhelmed by the footage.

STEVEN

I don't remember any of this
happening. Kimberley stormed out of
the apartment and...

FRANK

Steven, it is happening right now.

Steven stares at the screen, momentarily stunned.

STEVEN

So *Debbie* is the one who saves me?

FRANK

As far as I could tell, she was the
one that really cared about you all
along. Why are you so surprised?

Steven, filled with a new sense of urgency, jumps up.

STEVEN

I've got to get back, right away!
How do I do it?

Capra smiles.

FRANK

What about our long conversation
about films?

STEVEN

I'm sorry but I don't have time. I
need to get back... now!

Capra gets up, and they walk back to the center aisle.

FRANK

That's the spirit! Just step
through the screen and you'll be
back. Now go and live your life.
And for God's sake, have some fun!

Steven rushes to the front of the theater. Capra walks behind. Steven climbs up on the stage and is ready to step into the image. The flickering light dances along his body. He turns to say goodbye.

FRANK (cont'd)

I've got to be heading back myself.
I start shooting in half an hour.

STEVEN

You mean, you're still making
films... up there?

FRANK

Of course I am! I mean, I'm in
Heaven... (he laughs) What else
would I be doing?

STEVEN

How can I ever thank you?

FRANK

Just follow your dreams, kid,
follow your dreams. And remember
this one last thing... the greatest
sin of all...

He points at Steven's chest.

FRANK (cont'd)
Is to die with the music still
inside of you.

Steven puts on a huge smile, turns and leaps into the image. The screen is filled with bright light.

INT. STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Suddenly, Steven's spirit re-enters his body, and with a gasp, he comes back to life. Debbie bursts into tears of happiness, and he tries to gather the strength to speak.

STEVEN
(whispering)
It's OK. I'm going to be all right.

Paramedics lift Steven onto a gurney and rush him out.

DISSOLVE TO:

A montage of scenes showing Steven's return to life. Coming back to his apartment, getting back at his computer and his script. Taping and re-hanging his movie posters. Throwing open the window. Laughing and playing with Debbie, proposing to her, getting married; carrying her over the threshold.

INT. STEVEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Steven is up late at night, working on his computer. We see him working on page 124 of a script titled "Wrestling With A Conscience". He types "Fade Out", leans back in his chair, and sighs. He turns off the computer and light and slips into bed. Debbie wakes and puts her head on his chest.

DEBBIE
Did you finish?

STEVEN
(exhausted)
It is finally done.

DEBBIE
(soft whisper)
I'm so proud of you.

With that she falls back asleep. Steven closes his eyes and SMILES CONTENTEDLY. Suddenly, Steven hears HIS COMPUTER turn back on. He slowly sits up and the SOUND OF KEYS being punched can be heard. He gets up cautiously and walks over to the computer. He leans forward and begins to read out loud what is being typed out on the screen.

STEVEN

The greatest sin of all is to die
with the music... the paintings ...
the sculptures ... and the
performance... still inside of you.

On the last letter, a FINGER MATERIALIZES, and then the
entire figure does. It is Sutcliffe! Gwendolyn, Trevaniio,
and Jean Claude then materialize, DRESSED LIKE TOURISTS, and
carry SUITCASES. Steven is overjoyed to see them.

STEVEN (cont'd)

What are you doing here? I thought
you couldn't ascend until...

SUTCLIFFE

Correct, and thanks to you...

JEAN CLAUDE

It is finally our turn.

STEVEN

But I haven't done anything yet.

TREVANIIO

What are you talking about? Look at
everything that you have changed!

STEVEN

Yeah, but the script...

GWENDOLYN

The fact that you finished is
important enough.

JEAN CLAUDE

You see, you've already taken the
first and most important step.

SUTCLIFFE

You have set the wheels in motion.
You are finally on the path of
fulfilling your destiny.

Gwendolyn walks over to the edge of the bed and smiles.

GWENDOLYN

Wow, she really is...

STEVEN & THE OTHERS

Yummy!

The others walk over and smile as they gaze upon the
sleeping Debbie.

STEVEN
Don't I know it!

JEAN CLAUDE
I'm glad to see that after all of
this time one of us got it right.

Suddenly, there is a burst of bright light coming from the living room.

SUTCLIFFE
Looks like it's time.

STEVEN
Wait, you're leaving already?

The Four pick up their bags and head out of the bedroom.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Right there in the middle of the room is the Heavenly Staircase! The Four walk to the bottom of the stairs.

JEAN CLAUDE
We just wanted to say an
appropriate good-bye.

They all stand there silently for a second, tears welling up in all of their eyes. Finally, Gwendolyn breaks the tension.

GWENDOLYN
We are all too damn emotional.

Sutcliffe tries to maintain his demeanor

SUTCLIFFE
(voice cracking)
Speak for yourself.

For the first time they all hug, and each one closes their eyes. At that moment, they are encircled in a BLUISH LIGHT, which swirls around them like a mist. Rising above them, we can see the GHOST-LIKE OUTLINE of the soul itself, made whole again. It appears to be smiling. It slips back down into the Five Lives. They pull apart from each other.

STEVEN
Boy that was weird.

TREVANIIO
Yeah, let's not do that again.

They grab their bags and start to bolt up the stairs when Sutcliffe stops in his tracks.

SUTCLIFFE

I'm sorry, but I am not going to go blasting up a flight of stairs. It would be...undignified! Besides, I don't have the energy, what with this traveling through the dimensions and all...

Before he can finish, the staircase disappears.

TREVANIIO

Now look what you've done, you pig headed...

GWENDOLYN

Snobby, arrogant...

SUTCLIFFE

(under his breath)
Sticks and stones.

JEAN CLAUDE

Just plain... nasty...

They are interrupted by another burst of light, and an ELEVATOR appears. It is the old-fashioned kind, with the gate across the front. Inside is a gorgeous REDHEAD FEMALE ANGEL, who pulls back the gate. The four approach, and Sutcliffe rubs his hands along the shiny, white surface of the gate.

ANGEL

Yes, it's Pearl... Hop in.

Gwendolyn is first, and she looks the angel up and down.

GWENDOLYN

Now that's *really* yummy!

The angel looks at Gwendolyn, and to the astonishment of all, smiles back warmly.

ANGEL

You're not too bad yourself.

A huge smile bursts across Gwendolyn's face.

GWENDOLYN

(sighing)
Ah, Heaven!

We see the big PULL HANDLE, like the one Satan used earlier. The Four Lives grab hold and move it to "Heaven". The gate closes, and the elevator begins to ascend. We see Steven standing there in his boxer shorts, waving goodbye.

STEVEN

Good luck! Don't trash the place.
(softly) I'm going to miss you...

Steven slowly fades out as a swirl of clouds surrounds the elevator.

INT. STEVEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Steven crawls back into bed, and Debbie begins to stir.

DEBBIE

Is everything okay, sweetie?

Steven smiles broadly.

STEVEN

Everything is wonderful.

DEBBIE

(fading out to a whisper)
What a nice story...

Debbie falls back asleep and Steven closes his eyes. We pull away and carry out through the window.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

We continue to pull away and dissolve into a cloud.

ANGEL (V.O.)

Here we are folks!

THE FOUR LIVES (V.O.)

It's beautiful!

ANGEL (V.O.)

Top floor! Everybody out.

We hear the Pearly Gate open up.

WALLY (V.O.)

Well, look who finally made it!
HOLY KAPUSTA!

EXT. PURGATORY COURTYARD - NIGHT

The camera ends up in front of the sign at the entrance to Purgatory. The "Number of Souls Saved" flips over FOUR TIMES. The camera tilts up towards the Heavens.

EXT. THE COSMOS - NIGHT

The stars fill the screen, and as the credits roll, four new stars pop up and shine brightly.

FADE TO BLACK.