

SAVING GRACE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

The sun dips low beyond the sea, as an orange glow fills the evening sky. Waves crash gently on the sand, and a steady ocean breeze cools the earth.

The beach is deserted, except for a MAN (40's), handsome and fit, and a WOMAN (40's), a blonde angel in a flowing white cover-up. They lay on a blanket near the water, laughing and holding each other.

THE WOMAN

gets up from the blanket, and heads toward the surf. When she gets to the point where the sand meets the sea, she turns and playfully urges the man toward the water.

THE MAN

smiles, and shakes his head.

THE WOMAN

not deterred, urges him a bit more fervently, but he won't budge. She presses her hand to her lips, and blows him a kiss.

Suddenly without warning, a huge wave CRASHES over the woman from behind, and drags her out to sea.

THE MAN

screams, but nothing comes out. He lunges for her, but she is already gone.

We hear the sound of an alarm clock BEEPING loudly!

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The same Man from the previous scene occupies one half of a queen-sized bed. The man is TOM LARSON, and he is jolted from his sleep by the sound of his alarm clock.

A bit dazed, he pops up and quickly glances over his shoulder to the other side of the bed. He is alone.

He smacks the alarm clock to silence the sound.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Masculine and modern. Framed advertisements hang on the wall, next to several plaques that read, "2007, 2008, 2009..." followed by the words, "ADVERTISING'S MAN OF THE YEAR."

Tom sits with his back to his desk, staring blankly out the window. He doesn't notice his boss, WALTER (50's), as he enters the doorway.

WALTER

Tom.

Tom swivels around in his chair.

TOM

Hey.

WALTER

Are those budget reports ready?

TOM

Yeah, just about.

WALTER

Good. We're gonna meet at three fifteen.

Tom checks his watch.

TOM

Perfect.

Walter begins to exit, but then turns back.

WALTER

Tom, let me ask you something -- Is everything OK?

TOM

Sure -- why?

WALTER

Nothing. See you at three fifteen.

Walter exits.

Tom turns his attention to his computer, but before he can gain his focus, OLIVER (30'S), Tom's co-worker/friend enters the office. He's slick -- designer style, not a hair out of place.

OLIVER

What was that about?

TOM

Nothing.

OLIVER

Looked like something to me.

(waits in vain for a  
reply)

Hey, you have time for lunch?

TOM

No. I have to finish these budgets.

OLIVER

Come on. I'm sure you were here  
till they turned out the lights  
last night.

Tom mulls it over.

TOM

I guess I could use a break.

OLIVER

Great. Let's go.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Modern and chic; the kind of place you might take a potential  
client, or impress a first date.

Tom and Oliver sit a table near the back. Their Waiter is  
just re-filling their water glasses.

OLIVER

(to Waiter)

Thanks.

The waiter nods, and leaves the table.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Wow. So how long ago did this  
start?

TOM

A few weeks ago.

OLIVER

And it's the same dream every time?

TOM

Only the ending. They all start out  
different, but they all end the  
same way.

OLIVER

It sounds like maybe you're a bit worried.

TOM

I'm not worried.

OLIVER

When was the last time you talked to her?

TOM

Two weeks, maybe longer.

OLIVER

Is that unusual?

TOM

It's been this long before.

OLIVER

Still think it was the right decision?

TOM

Probably. Who knows.

(beat)

Let's talk about something else.

Oliver sips from his water glass.

OLIVER

Let's talk about Cynthia.

TOM

What about her?

OLIVER

Well, just the fact that you're seeing her again tonight.

TOM

It's nothing serious.

OLIVER

Nothing serious?

TOM

It's just dinner.

OLIVER

You mean, you're just making her dinner. There's a big difference.

(MORE)

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Going to dinner implies one thing --  
inviting a beautiful woman over for  
a dinner that you made with your  
own two manly hands; something  
totally different.

Tom checks his watch.

TOM

We should probably get going.

He motions for the waiter.

OLIVER

Yeah, it's about that time.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA CITY STREET - DAY

Tall buildings mark the city skyline, interrupted only by a small, Gothic style church, and a few small pubs. The street is busy with the hustle and bustle of the afternoon business crowd.

Tom and Oliver are walking down the sidewalk, battling the crowds to make time.

Up ahead, an older STREET EVANGELIST stands on the corner SHOUTING the gospel to passers by. As Tom and Oliver reach the street corner, the no walk sign flashes red. The evangelist turns his attention to Tom.

STREET EVANGELIST

God has a message for you today.

Tom ignores him, and the evangelist continues with his proclamation.

STREET EVANGELIST (CONT'D)

Salvation is for every man willing  
to put aside the things of this  
world, and live for the Creator.  
Jesus loves you, son.

Tom keeps his gaze straight ahead.

STREET EVANGELIST (CONT'D)

Do you know that he can offer you  
salvation from all your wicked  
ways, and a peace that defies all  
understanding? You must get right  
with God.

TOM  
(to Oliver)  
Come on.

Tom steps into the street, and looks for a break in the oncoming traffic.

OLIVER  
What are you doing?

Tom sees a small gap in the traffic, and takes off across the street. Oliver follows after him.

They both reach the other side safely, and continue up the sidewalk.

OLIVER (CONT'D)  
What, do you have a death wish?

TOM  
No, I'm just in a hurry.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

A long, wooden table dominates the room, surrounded by plush leather chairs. Framed advertisements hang at intervals on the walls. In a large display case against one wall, several golden awards stand proudly displayed, side-by-side.

Well dressed AD EXECS fill the chairs around the boardroom table. Walter is standing at the head of the table ADDRESSING them.

Tom rushes in with reports in hand.

WALTER  
There he is.

Tom heads over and takes his place at the other end of the table.

TOM  
Sorry I'm late.

WALTER  
No need to apologize.

TOM  
Shall we get started?

WALTER  
There's no need.

TOM  
What do you mean?

WALTER  
There's no need. We got it.

TOM  
We got it?

WALTER  
We got it. Just heard fifteen minutes ago. We got the entire account.

TOM  
That's great. But, they haven't even seen our full proposal yet.

WALTER  
Doesn't matter. I guess they liked what they saw, and I guess they liked you. We have a meeting with Joe and their marketing group tomorrow morning to work out the details.

TOM  
Let's get back to work then.

WALTER  
This is a huge deal, Tom. Take a moment -- savor it.  
(looking around at the other team members)  
I'm giving you all the rest of the day off. Go home, celebrate, get some rest. Be back here ready to work early.

All of the Execs APPLAUD.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Go. Get outta here.

With the meeting adjourned, everyone gets up from the table, and begins to exit the boardroom.

As Tom begins to gather his things, a young, MALE INTERN approaches him.

MALE INTERN  
(nervously)  
Uh, Mr. Larson.



Tom continues what he's doing, never looking up.

TOM

What is it?

INTERN

If you ever have a few extra minutes, um, could I possibly sit down and talk with you about what it takes to be successful in this business... like you? It's a school project.

TOM

I don't have time for that.

Tom brushes past him, and heads for the exit.

INTERN

OK, thanks.

INT. TOM'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Modern, intimate and high-end. The floor and counters are spotless, and not a fork, or cup is out of place. An answering machine sits on the counter top; a blinking red light signaling that new messages have been saved.

Tom enters the kitchen carrying a bag of groceries. He puts the bag down on the counter, and presses the BLINKING RED LIGHT on the answering machine. A YOUNG MAN'S voice can be heard:

YOUNG MAN (V.O.)

Good afternoon. This message is for Mr. Tom Larson. This is Pete with The Children's Heart Association, and I just wanted to call and thank you for your generous donation of fifteen hundred dollars...

Tom presses a button, and the answering machine responds with "NEXT MESSAGE."

CAROLINE (V.O.)

Tom, it's Caroline. I tried to call your cell, but I guess you changed your number again. Listen, I know things aren't good, but it's about Rachel. She ra...

Tom presses the delete button on the answering machine. A voice recording confirms, "MESSAGE ERASED."

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Tom sits at the dining room table, finishing up the meal that he's prepared. He's traded the shirt and tie, for a cashmere sweater, and a pair of gray dress pants.

Across from him sits CYNTHIA (20's). She has long dark hair, that falls gently around the soft features of her flawless face. A sleek black dress, indicates that this is no friendly dinner.

A bottle of wine and some candle light set the mood.

CYNTHIA

I had no idea you were such a good cook.

TOM

One of my many talents.

CYNTHIA

Well then, maybe you should fill me in.

Tom takes a sip of his wine, and swishes it around in his mouth.

TOM

I think it's probably better that we keep things the way they are for now.

Cynthia starts to get up from the table, but Tom reaches across and grabs her wrist.

TOM (CONT'D)

Hey. I'm sorry. Sit.

CYNTHIA

Why?

TOM

Because you know you want to...

She's not amused.

TOM (CONT'D)

... and, because you know I want you to.

She mulls it over for a moment, and then falls back into her chair.

CYNTHIA

I can't keep doing this with you,  
Tom. I need more. I deserve more.

TOM

It's not that simple. You know  
that. Now, can we just relax, and  
have a good evening?

CYNTHIA

I don't know.

TOM

Come on. Please... Besides, we  
haven't even gotten to dessert. It  
took me a very long time to make,  
and I don't want to eat it alone.

CYNTHIA

You made dessert?

TOM

I did.

CYNTHIA

I don't believe you.

TOM

I can prove it. Apron, rolling pin,  
chef's hat. The whole nine yards.

She tries to hold back a smirk.

CYNTHIA

In that case, I guess you're  
forgiven.

Cynthia slides her chair out, and gets up slowly from the  
table. She walks around to where Tom is seated, and wraps her  
arms gently around his neck. She leans in, and speaks softly  
in his ear.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

I'll take mine in the bedroom.

She grabs his hand, pulls him up from the table, and leads  
him out of the dining room.

INT. FOYER - LATE NIGHT

Tom and Cynthia stand at the front door, facing one-another.  
Both appear a great deal more disheveled than earlier in the  
evening.

CYNTHIA  
Call me tomorrow?

TOM  
I might be at the office late. I'll  
try.

She gives him a quick peck on the lips, opens the door, and heads out into the cool night's air.

He watches her from the doorway, as she makes it down the steps, turns at the sidewalk, and heads out of sight.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tom stands at the sink in sweatpants and a t shirt. He brushes his teeth, and then places his toothbrush in the holder next to a worn, pink toothbrush.

He flicks the bathroom light off, and heads into the...

BEDROOM

where he sets his alarm on the bedside table, climbs into bed, and switches off the lamp. Darkness.

INT. BALLROOM - FORMAL DINNER PARTY - NIGHT

The room is large and opulent; befitting of wealth. Several lavishly dressed, round tables surround a long, rectangle-shaped dance floor. The room is crowded with well-dressed invites, and a BUZZ with conversation.

Tom, in a tuxedo, stands near the Champaign table holding a full glass in each hand. He seems to be scanning the crowd for someone when finally his attention is drawn across the room to...

THE BLONDE WOMAN

from the beach, standing outside on a balcony. She smiles, and with her two index fingers she draws a big heart in the air, then blows him a kiss.

TOM

laughs and shakes his head. He raises the glasses in the air.

THE BLONDE WOMAN

waves him over with her hand. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a large gust of wind blows her back against the railing of the balcony.

TOM

throws the glasses down on the table, and attempts to push his way through the crowd. It's no use. He can only watch as...

THE BLONDE WOMAN

tries to hold on as another huge gust of wind blows her over the railing. She is no match for it's power, and she finally lets go, disappearing from sight.

TOM

is finally able to push his way through the crowd, and make it to the balcony. He peers over the edge. He tries to scream, but nothing comes out.

We hear the sound of a telephone RINGING LOUDLY!

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Tom is jolted from his sleep by the sound of the telephone ringing on the night stand. He picks up the receiver and holds it to his ear.

TOM

Hello!

There is no response.

Tom sits up on the edge of the bed.

TOM (CONT'D)

Hello...

Again, silence. Tom listens for a moment longer before finally hanging up the phone.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Tom is dressed for work and standing by the counter pouring coffee. There is a LOUD KNOCK at the front door.

INT./EXT. LIVING ROOM/FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Tom stands at the window peering through the blinds.

## FRONT PORCH

Two soldiers, in dress uniform, stand at Tom's front door.  
SOLDIER #1 KNOCKS, again.

SOLDIER #1  
Let's go. No one's home.

SOLDIER #2  
Wait.

Soldier #2 uses the fleshy underside of his fist to BANG on the door as loudly as possible. They give it another moment. Still no answer.

SOLDIER #1  
Come on. We'll come back.

They start down the steps toward the sidewalk. They only make it a few feet before the door is ripped open behind them, and Tom appears in the doorway.

TOM  
Can I help you?

The two men turn back, simultaneously.

SOLDIER #1  
Thomas Larson?

TOM  
Yes.

SOLDIER #1  
Sir, is your wife Grace Larson?

TOM  
That's why you're here, isn't it?  
To tell me that my wife is dead.

SOLDIER #2  
No, sir.

TOM  
Why are you here then?

SOLDIER #2  
Listen, Sir. Your wife is missing.

TOM  
What do you mean missing?

SOLDIER #1  
Maybe we should speak inside.

TOM

No. This is just fine.

SOLDIER #1

Sir, your wife was with a group of marines providing aid in northern Afghanistan. Two days ago, their security convoy was ambushed -- scattered the group all over the area. We don't know much more than that at this time.

TOM

Two days ago, and you're just now getting around to telling me?

There is a moment of awkward silence.

SOLDIER #2

We're sorry to have to inform you of this, sir.

TOM

I'm sure you are, but it's not your wife.

SOLDIER #2

Sir, if I may. I can't begin to imagine what you're going through right now, but I can offer this. Your wife was an angel -- to a lot of soldiers over there, including me.

Tom notices the man's left arm. There is a metal hook where his left hand should be.

SOLDIER #2 (CONT'D)

I hope everything turns out OK.

TOM

What are the chances she's still alive?

SOLDIER #1

We don't know, sir. We've been instructed to have you call Lt. Barrow, at the Navy Yard. He'll fill you in as things develop.

The Soldier fishes in his shirt pocket for the information. He pulls out a folded piece of paper, and hands it to Tom.

Tom closes the door leaving the two men standing on the porch.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom is at his desk sorting papers and placing them in folders. The task seems last minute and chaotic.

Unfinished, he stops what he's doing, and leans back in his chair. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the piece of paper that he received from the soldier. He unfolds it, and lays it on the desk. He picks up his phone and dials.

TOM

Lt. Barrow, please... I've already done that. Do you have any idea when he'll be back?... Yes, it's urgent. I've been trying to get a hold of him...

Just then, Walter pops into the doorway.

WALTER

Are we ready?

Tom places his hand over the receiver.

TOM

Yeah, be there in a minute.

Walter speeds away, and Tom takes his hand off of the receiver.

TOM (CONT'D)

Please just have him call me. Tom Larson. He has my number.

Tom hangs up the phone, gathers together as much of the mess on his desk as he can, and heads out.

INT. BOARDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The client president, JOE, several EXECUTIVES from the client company, and several AD EXECS from yesterday's meeting are gathered around the boardroom table. There are storyboards on an easel at the head of the table, and each member of the group is in possession of one of Tom's folders.

Walter is standing next to the storyboards.



WALTER

Ladies and gentlemen, shall we get started.

The low HUMM of conversation in the room slows until it becomes complete silence.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Thank you all for attending today. The purpose of this first meeting is to nail down the specific details of the campaign, to start to develop what our working relationship will look like, and to ensure that we're all on the same page before we send anything out to sea. I personally don't want to waste too much of your time with my gibber jabber, so let's get to the people who have something important to say.

(looks over at Tom)

Tom.

Tom stands up, and walks over to the easel. Walter gives him a pat on the back, and then takes his seat.

TOM

Thanks, Walter.  
(to the group)  
Good morning.

Several people respond with GOOD MORNING.

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm Tom Larson, as many of you already know. My purpose with this campaign is to be your liaison between our agency and your organization. Everyone should have received a folder from me when you arrived. Within that folder is a breakdown...

Suddenly, Tom's cell phone begins RINGING in his pocket. He pulls it out, and looks at the caller ID.

TOM (CONT'D)

Pardon me. I need to take this.

Tom leaves the boardroom in a hurry.

Walter stands up.

WALTER  
Sorry about the interruption,  
folks. He'll be right back.

Walter's interjection does little to quell the annoyance on many of the attendee's faces. There's a moment of awkward silence.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
So, has anyone seen any good movies  
lately?

JOE  
The Waiting Game.

There are a couple of QUIET CHUCKLES and SNEERS from the group.

Walter nods his head; a look of dismay on his face.

After another awkward moment, Tom reenters the boardroom. He heads over to where he was previously seated, and begins to gather his things.

TOM  
Sorry to have to do this, but I  
need to leave.

Many in the group look at one another in confusion, and small conversations begin to start up.

When Tom has all that he came in with, he hurries out of the boardroom.

Walter follows after him into...

THE HALLWAY

where Tom is racing toward the lobby.

WALTER  
Tom!

Tom doesn't respond. Walter catches up with him.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Where are you going?

TOM  
Sorry, I'm gonna need to take the  
rest of the day.

WALTER

Tom, what are you talking about?  
We're in the middle of a very  
important meeting.

TOM

I understand that. Something's come  
up.

WALTER

Am I missing something here? Your  
responsibility to this deal has not  
changed. You need to forget about  
whatever it is, and get back in  
there.

TOM

I can't. Not today. I'm sorry.

Tom continues through the lobby, and out of the building.

Walter throws his hands in the air in frustration, spins  
around, and heads back toward the boardroom.

INT. PHILADELPHIA NAVY YARD - GUARD STAND - DAY

A small, wooden structure stands at the entrance to the navy  
yard. A lone, uniformed GUARD occupies the structure.

Tom's car pulls up to the guard stand. The guard steps out,  
and approaches Tom's window.

GUARD

Can I help you, sir?

TOM

I'm here to see Lt. Barrow.

GUARD

Your name?

TOM

Tom Larson.

GUARD

Wait here.

The Guard re-enters the guard stand. After a moment, he  
emerges again with a clipboard in hand. He hands it through  
the window to Tom.

GUARD (CONT'D)  
I'm gonna need you to sign right  
here, Sir.

Tom takes the clipboard, signs his name, and hands it back to the guard.

GUARD (CONT'D)  
(pointing beyond the  
barricade)  
Straight ahead, till you can't go  
any further. Then make a right.  
First building on your left.

The hydraulic barricade rises, and Tom accelerates through the gate.

INT. LT. BARROW'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

LT. LANCE BARROW (50's), sits behind a metal desk, rifling through paperwork. From all appearances, he is more brains than brawn. A YOUNG SOLDIER knocks on his open door.

LT. BARROW  
Yes?

YOUNG SOLDIER  
Mr. Larson here to see you, sir.

LT. BARROW  
Show him in.

The Young Soldier leaves for a moment, then returns with Tom in tow. The lieutenant stands as they enter.

LT. BARROW (CONT'D)  
(motioning to an empty  
chair)  
Come in. Have a seat.

Tom sits where instructed. The Young Soldier exits, closing the door behind him.

Lt. Barrow extends his hand to Tom.

LT. BARROW (CONT'D)  
Lieutenant Lance Barrow.

Tom receives his handshake.

TOM  
Tom Larson.

Lt. Barrow sits, and slides his chair into his desk.

TOM (CONT'D)

You're not an easy person to get a hold of.

LT. BARROW

Well, unfortunately I'm operating in crisis mode right now... Mr. Larson, I just want to say that I'm very sorry to be meeting you under these circumstances. Times like these are never easy on anyone, and I'm sure you never in a million years thought...

TOM

Do you know where my wife is?

LT. BARROW

Well, sir, not at the moment.

TOM

That seems to be the common consensus around here?

LT. BARROW

Mr. Larson, I assure you there's absolutely nothing to worry about. We've had some contact with units in that area, and we're prepared to do anything we need to in order to ensure everyone's safe return.

TOM

Pardon me, Lieutenant, if I'm not totally reassured.

LT. BARROW

Mr. Larson, I understand your concern. I promise your wife is not gone. Just unaccounted for at the moment.

TOM

Well, thank you. That'll certainly help me sleep better tonight.

Lt. Barrow gets up from his chair, walks around to where Tom is seated, and sits down on the desk in front of him.

LT. BARROW

Listen, Tom, I promise you I'm doing the absolute best that I can under the circumstances. The unit that your wife was travelling with is full of some of my best men. Young men that I consider to be like sons. I have a personal stake in ensuring that I bring every one of them home -- safely. And, trust me when I say that I don't take that responsibility lightly.

Tom sits back in his chair and takes a deep breath.

TOM

And, what am I supposed to do while I'm waiting for you to play hero.

LT. BARROW

Well, first of all, try not to worry. Leave that part up to me. I know you took time out of your day to come talk with me, but the best thing you can do is go home for now, spend time with good friends, and I'll be in touch when I hear something.

Tom gets up from the chair, and starts for the door. He twists the handle, and begins to pull the door open.

LT. BARROW (CONT'D)

I'll be praying for us both.

Tom turns back.

TOM

I think we're both gonna need more than that.

He walks out the door.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Tom is driving home from the Navy Yard. At a red light, he grabs his cell phone from the seat beside him. He scrolls through until he finds the name "OLIVER", presses "SEND," and holds the phone up to his ear. The light turns green.

INT. OLIVER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Oliver is sitting in his chair, behind his desk. Sitting on top of the desk, in front of him, is a beautiful, young, FEMALE INTERN. The door and the blinds are both closed.

FEMALE INTERN

Are you sure it's OK that I'm in here?

Oliver reaches past her and spins the gold nameplate around at the front of the desk.

OLIVER

Who's name is on there?

FEMALE INTERN

Yours.

OLIVER

Then, I guess it's alright.

His cell phone begins BUZZING in his pocket. He pulls it out, and looks to see who's providing this unwanted interruption.

FEMALE INTERN

Should I go? Do you need to take it?

OLIVER

No, no, no, no. It's not important.

He silences the phone, and puts it back into his pocket.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Where were we?

INT. CAR

Tom ends the call and throws his phone back in the passenger's seat. The phone bounces off of the seat, and lands on the floor. He leans over to the passenger's side to pick it up.

When his eyes return to the road, a city bus has stopped just in front of him. Tom slams on the brakes, and screeches to a halt, narrowly missing a collision with the back of the bus.

INT. CITY BUS

The bus is crowded; standing room only.

RACHEL (15), dressed in all black and listening to music in her headphones, is standing holding onto the metal pole. The driver opens the door, and Rachel battles the crowd to reach the exit. She steps out of the bus and onto the sidewalk. She looks around, and takes in her surroundings.

EXT. LARGE APARTMENT BUILDING - ESTABLISHING.

A massive high rise flanked by other large downtown buildings. Expensive, luxury vehicles line the street out front.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

The lobby is grand, and filled with high end, modern chic furniture. Hand cut marble tiles on the floors and walls enhance the appearance of opulence. A concierge stands at the ready, behind his desk, waiting to serve at all hours.

A uniformed DOORMAN holds the door open, as Tom enters.

DOORMAN  
Evening, Mr. Larson

Tom walks past the doorman, briskly through the lobby, and makes his way to the elevator. He presses the "UP" button.

APARTMENT BUILDING - SEVENTH FLOOR

The elevator doors open, and Tom steps out. He turns, and walks down the main hallway past one door, then a second, until he reaches the third door marked "718." Tom stands in front of the apartment, and KNOCKS. After a moment, the door swings open and Cynthia lunges forward and wraps her arms around Tom's neck. She kisses him passionately, and pulls him inside.

INT. CYNTHIA'S APARTMENT

Cynthia falls back against the wall, still clinging to Tom. She closes the door with her foot. Tom gently unhinges Cynthia's arms from around his neck, and pulls away from her lip lock.

CYNTHIA  
What's wrong?

TOM  
Nothing. Can we just talk for a minute?



CYNTHIA  
Of course. Come in.

She takes his hand and leads him down the hallway to the...

LIVING ROOM

where Tom takes off his coat, lays it across a chair, and has a seat on the couch.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)  
Are you hungry? Do you want something to eat?

TOM  
No, I'm fine. I would take a drink though.

CYNTHIA  
Sure. Wait right here.

She heads off to the kitchen to make him a drink.

CYNTHIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Scotch? Bourbon?

TOM  
That's fine.

We hear the CLANGING and BANGING of glasses and bottles coming from the kitchen.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)  
Which one?

TOM  
Either is fine.

There is more NOISE from the kitchen.

Tom rests his head on the back of the couch. He takes a deep breath, and lets out a large sigh.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)  
Rough day?

TOM  
A slight understatement.

Tom appears to be growing increasingly anxious. He runs both hands through his hair, and then stands up from the couch.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Listen, I shouldn't have come here.

CYNTHIA

What?

Tom grabs his coat from the chair and puts it on.

TOM

I shouldn't be here.

CYNTHIA

I'm sorry, give me just a minute.

Tom turns and walks briskly down the hall, opens the door and exits the apartment.

Just as the door closes behind him, Cynthia emerges from the kitchen with two glasses of scotch in hand. She sets the glasses down on the coffee table, and then looks around the room as if Tom had somehow managed to find a hiding place.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Tom?

With no reply, she heads down the hall, opens the door, and peeks out into the...

MAIN HALLWAY

where she just catches a glimpse of the elevator doors closing.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL CITY STREET - SAME TIME

Upper middle class. A series of brick row-homes line the street, shaded by tall maple trees displaying the fiery red and yellow glow of early fall.

Rachel wanders down the street, checking the house numbers to a piece of paper that she holds in her hand. She finds one that matches (Tom's house), and walks up the steps. She knocks, and steps back from the door. No answer.

She steps off the porch, and wanders into the . . .

ALLEY

that separates this row of homes, from the next. Walking along the brick wall, she finds a window that is just out of reach. Rachel scans the alley for something she can climb up on. She spots a trash can, and runs to retrieve it.

Rachel places the trash can upside-down under the window. She climbs on top, and with both hands, gives the window a little push. Success! It opens about two inches.

She pushes it open the rest of the way, pulls herself up, and begins to wiggle her way in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Contemporary, but comfortable. The living room is well kept, and doesn't show a lot of signs of recent use.

Rachel falls in through the window, and lands with a THUD on the floor. Once inside, she throws her backpack down, and surveys her new surroundings.

INT. HOTEL BAR - LATER

The place is empty, except for a few out-of-towners. An aging cover band is stuffed in the corner playing spot on renditions of 80's slow jams.

Tom is seated at the bar alone. He's got something on the rocks in his hand. He guzzles it down, and indicates to the BARTENDER that he's ready for another.

A YOUNG MAN and WOMAN approach the bar arm-in-arm; her head on his shoulder. Her hair is done up, and she's wearing a tank top that reads, "BRIDE." Of all the empty seats, they sit right next to Tom.

The bartender drops off Tom's drink.

BARTENDER  
(to the young couple)  
What can I get you guys?

YOUNG WOMAN  
Something special, and expensive.

YOUNG MAN  
But go easy on us. We're headed to  
Tahiti, early.

BARTENDER  
Congratulations.

YOUNG WOMAN/MAN  
Thanks.

BARTENDER  
I've got just the right thing. Be  
right back.

The bartender wanders down the to the end of the bar to mix his concoction.

Tom sips his drink, and does his best to be unnoticed by these two strangers.

YOUNG MAN  
(to Tom)  
You here on business?

TOM  
No.

He takes another gulp, and looks away.

YOUNG WOMAN  
We just got married.

TOM  
Congrats.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Are you married?

TOM  
Yes.

YOUNG MAN  
It's amazing, isn't it?

TOM  
Sure is.

Tom sips from his glass again.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Do you have any kids?

TOM  
No.

Tom chugs what's left of his drink, lays some cash on the bar, and heads for the exit; leaving the young man consoling his new bride who appears horrified at the thought that she may have said something wrong.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom pulls his car up to the curb out front. He climbs out, and heads up the walkway to...

THE FRONT DOOR

where he fumbles with his keys for a moment, before locating the correct one. He unlocks the door and pushes it open. He steps inside.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Tom enters and closes the door behind him. He notices the SOUND of the T.V. coming from the living room. He freezes for a moment, and then looks around for a weapon. He grabs an umbrella from a vase near the front door.

LIVING ROOM

Tom steps slowly from the hallway, into the living room, clutching the umbrella like a baseball bat. He sees the silhouette of a young girl sitting on his couch, watching his T.V.

TOM

HEY!

The girl screams, and jumps up from the couch. Tom instantly recognizes her as his niece, RACHEL.

TOM (CONT'D)

Rachel!

RACHEL

You scared me half to death!

TOM

I scared you? You're in my house.  
How did you get in here?

RACHEL

The door was unlocked.

TOM

That's a lie.

RACHEL

OK, I came in through the window.

TOM

I'm calling the police.

RACHEL

You can't call the police. I'm your niece.

TOM

You broke into my house.

RACHEL

I had to. There was no other way in  
-- By the way, you can put the  
umbrella down. I think the threat  
to your life is over.

Tom looks down at the umbrella that he's still clutching tightly. He sets it down against the wall.

TOM  
Why are you here?

She folds her arms, and flops down on the couch.

RACHEL  
That's just rude. I need an invitation to visit my uncle?

TOM  
Rachel, I haven't seen you since you were in diapers.

RACHEL  
I was ten.

TOM  
Does your mother know you're here?

RACHEL  
Do you really think I'd be allowed to come all the way down here without my mother knowing?

Tom calls her bluff with a disbelieving look.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
No.

TOM  
You need to call her, right now.

RACHEL  
I can't.

TOM  
Then I'll call her.

Tom turns quickly, and heads for the kitchen. Rachel springs up from the couch, and gives chase.

RACHEL  
No! Please!

KITCHEN

Tom heads straight for the phone on top of the counter. He picks it up, and turns to Rachel, who's right on his heels.

TOM  
What's your number?

Rachel grabs his arm, pleading.

RACHEL  
Please don't call her.

TOM  
I'm calling her. You can either  
give me her number, or I'll find it  
on my own.

RACHEL  
Pleeeaaaase! You can't.

TOM  
And why can't I?

RACHEL  
Because I can't go back there right  
now. You don't know what it's like.

TOM  
Unfortunately, I do.

Tom thinks it over for a moment, and then hangs up the phone.

RACHEL  
Thank you.

TOM  
Don't thank me.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom pushes the door open, and holds it open as Rachel enters.  
He throws her backpack on the bed.

TOM  
Don't break anything. You'll be  
gone in the morning?

RACHEL  
(sighs)  
Yes.

Tom backs out, and shuts the door behind him. Rachel looks  
around the room, then walks over and flops down on the bed.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

The room is dark; Rachel is asleep on the bed. She is awakened by LOUD SOUNDS, coming from the living room downstairs. She sits up on the bed.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The living room is now a complete mess. The coffee table is full of empty takeout containers and the floor is strewn with Tom's worn clothing.

Tom is fixing the couch like a bed, smacking the cushions to level them out, when Rachel walks in.

RACHEL  
Can't sleep?

TOM  
No, not really.

RACHEL  
Something on your mind?

TOM  
No. Go back to bed.

Rachel walks over and takes a seat on the arm of the couch.

RACHEL  
You wanna talk about it?

TOM  
I said nothing's wrong.

He grabs two nearby pillows, and throws them down next to her on the couch.

RACHEL  
OK, so why are you sleeping on the couch?

TOM  
That's none of your business.

RACHEL  
Does it have something to do with your wife?

TOM  
No.



RACHEL

I noticed she's not here. Did she leave you?

TOM

Why do you ask so many questions?

RACHEL

I'm just trying to help.

TOM

Well I don't need any help. Not to mention, I'm not in the habit of taking advice from fourteen year olds.

RACHEL

I'm fifteen.

TOM

Same difference.

RACHEL

I might be young, but I know a lot more than you think.

TOM

I'm sorry, I didn't realize you have so much life experience.

RACHEL

Yeah, well when you've been through what I've been through you tend to grow up pretty fast.

TOM

I know exactly what you've been through, Rachel.

RACHEL

And maybe one day you'll get around to facing it.

TOM

Rachel, go to bed.

RACHEL

You know, you weren't the only one that lost him.

TOM

Rachel, go to bed!

Rachel jumps up, and storms out.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM - MORNING

It's slightly past dawn, but still somewhat dark as the morning sun is hiding behind some ominous clouds. Rachel is asleep on the bed. She is awakened by a loud BANGING on the door.

She sits up.

RACHEL

Yes?

The door opens, and Tom, dressed in a suit, pokes his head in.

TOM

You're still here.

RACHEL

Don't worry, I'll be gone by the time you get home. As instructed.

TOM

Don't forget anything. I don't want to have to track you down.

RACHEL

Thanks.

Tom pulls the door closed.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom is sitting behind his desk looking over some reports. Walter enters the doorway, and taps gently on the door frame. Tom looks up from his work.

TOM

Walter.

WALTER

Tom, can I speak with you for a minute?

Tom lays the report he was reviewing down on the desk.

TOM

Sure. Come in.

Walter enters, and closes the door behind him. He takes a seat in a chair across from Tom.

TOM (CONT'D)

If this is about yesterday, I just want to apologize. I don't like to make a habit of abandoning my responsibilities, but I had something come up that I couldn't ignore.

WALTER

No, Tom, don't worry about that.

Walter looks around the room, as if trying to find something to help him get the words out.

WALTER (CONT'D)

You said you had something important come up, and it may be none of my business, but that's exactly what I want to talk to you about. Tom, is there something going on with you I should know about?

TOM

No -- Nothing serious.

WALTER

Nothing serious?

TOM

Everything's fine. I swear.

WALTER

Good.

Walter looks Tom over as if somehow he knows he's lying.

TOM

So, how much damage did I cause?

WALTER

Not too much, I don't think.

TOM

Really?

WALTER

Well, the good news is that you have a chance to make up for it. We're meeting again today at three fifteen.

TOM

Great.

WALTER

I somehow convinced Joe that you're not a total flake, and persuaded him to come back... You know, Tom, this is a huge opportunity.

TOM

I agree.

When all is said and done, a deal like this can really be a game changer for you. Do you know what I'm trying to say?

TOM (CONT'D)

I think so.

WALTER

I was gonna wait till the deal was final to ask you this, but how does your name on the front door next to mine sound?

TOM

Partner?

WALTER

If you're able to take this thing to end, you'll leave me with no choice. That's what you want right?

TOM

Of course.

WALTER

Good... Good.

Walter stands up from the chair.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Three fifteen.

He opens the door, and exits the office.

Tom sits back in his chair; an excited smile on his face. The moment of reverence is broken when Tom's cell phone begins RINGING on the desktop.

TOM

Hello, Tom Larson ...Yes, she's my niece ...That's terrible, but why are you calling me? ...no ...yes... no, I understand ...OK. I'll be right down.

Tom hangs up the phone, and tosses it down on the desk in frustration.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Tom sits alone in a chair by the door. Rachel is led into the room by a male POLICE OFFICER. Tom stands up, as they enter.

POLICE OFFICER  
She's all yours.

TOM  
Thanks.

The Police Officer exits the way he came in. Tom and Rachel are alone.

TOM (CONT'D)  
You got arrested for shoplifting?!

RACHEL  
Save it.

She walks to the last chair at the end of the row, and flops down with her arms folded.

TOM  
Oh, really?. I'm the only chance you have of getting outta here right now. Do you see anyone else lining up to bail you out?

RACHEL  
You didn't have to come.

TOM  
Is this your way of thanking me for giving you a place to sleep last night?

RACHEL  
Oh yeah, you were oh so hospitable.

TOM  
Well, it beats the alternative.

A FEMALE OFFICER in the back office approaches the glass window to the reception area, and slides it open.

FEMALE OFFICER  
Larson ...Rachel.

Rachel stands up on Tom's urging, and together they approach the window. The Female Officer passes a clipboard, through the window, to Tom.

FEMALE OFFICER (CONT'D)

Since she's fifteen, we need a parent or guardian signature. At the X.

TOM

And, what if I'm neither?

FEMALE OFFICER

Well, today's your lucky day.

Tom hesitates, looks over at Rachel, and then back at the clipboard in his hand.

FEMALE OFFICER (CONT'D)

You thinkin about leavin her here?

TOM

It's that obvious?

FEMALE OFFICER

Yes, and I don't blame ya - but you see, then I gotta take care of her. So think again. Sign.

Tom scribbles his signature on the form, and then hands the clipboard back through the window. The Female Officer hands Tom a piece of paper.

FEMALE OFFICER (CONT'D)

Here's the court order regarding her community service. Make sure she completes it by the date on the form, or there will be a warrant for her arrest.

TOM

Can we get her stuff?

FEMALE OFFICER

She didn't come in with anything.

TOM

It's a black backpack. She should've had it when...

FEMALE OFFICER

I'm sorry, but like I told you, she didn't come in with anything.

The female officer slides the glass window closed.

RACHEL

My stuff is at your house.

Tom looks at Rachel in disbelief.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE - LATER

Tom's car is parked at the curb, running. Tom is sitting inside with the window rolled down, staring at the front door. He BEEPS the horn.

The front door swings open, and Rachel emerges with her backpack on and her headphones in. She shoots Tom a nasty look, closes the door, and walks down the steps with deliberate slothfulness.

INT. CAR - MOVING

Tom is driving; Rachel rides shotgun. Rachel has her headphones in, and she's staring out the window. It's awkwardly silent.

Tom pulls up in front of an old, Gothic style church that is squeezed in between some tall, more modern structures. He shuts the car off, and begins to open the door. Rachel pulls the headphones from her ears.

RACHEL

What are we doing here?

TOM

Well, I have to go back to work,  
and you have a debt to pay to  
society.

Tom climbs out of the car, and shuts the door. Rachel jumps out of the passenger side, and follows after him as he rounds the car and heads for the steps of the old, stone church.

RACHEL

At a church?!

TOM

Yes. Unfortunately, you lost your  
right to make choices when you  
became a runaway juvenile  
delinquent.

Tom reaches the stairs and begins his ascent with Rachel right in tow.

RACHEL  
Anywhere but here, please.

TOM  
Come on. My wife loved this place.  
Maybe you will too.

RACHEL  
I highly doubt it.

Tom reaches the large, wooden doors, and yanks them open with a tug. He steps inside. Rachel follows reluctantly.

INT. SANCTUARY - MOMENTS LATER

Decadent and very old; it's a large echoing space, with a high ceiling, and rows upon rows of wooden pews. A massive wooden cross hangs in the front, above the alter.

Tom and Rachel stand in the aisle near the back. Tom looks around for any sign of life. All is quiet.

RACHEL  
I don't think anyone's here. Let's  
just go.

TOM  
The door was open, there must be  
someone here.

Tom proceeds toward the front of the Church. Rachel stalls for a moment and then follows, begrudgingly. Tom reaches the front of the sanctuary, and stops.

TOM (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
Hello?

Tom's voice echoes through the cavernous space. Tom and Rachel stand silently for a moment waiting for a reply.

RACHEL  
See, I told you. No one's here.

Suddenly, a man steps out from a door behind the stage. PASTOR RAY LATAND (50's), fit for his age, and dressed in a dirty white T-shirt and jeans. He's holding a dirty rag and a wrench.



PASTOR RAY  
Hi. Can I help you?

TOM  
We're looking for the Pastor.

PASTOR RAY  
You found him. And, for what it's worth, part time plumber.

He walks down the aisle to where they're waiting.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)  
Ray Latand -- Pastor Ray. I'd shake your hand, but...

He looks down at his soiled hands.

TOM  
No problem.

PASTOR RAY  
What can I do for you?

TOM  
Well, I'm Tom Larson. I think you know my wife.

PASTOR RAY  
Grace.

TOM  
That's right.

PASTOR RAY  
How is she? Have you heard from her?

TOM  
She's fine -- and this here is Rachel.

Tom puts his hand on Rachel's back, and pushes her forward.

TOM (CONT'D)  
She was just wondering if there was anything she could do to help out around here for a while. A little community service project she's working on.

PASTOR RAY

Oh, I see. Well, there's always plenty to do around here.

(to Rachel)

When were you thinking about coming in?

RACHEL

I'm not really...

TOM

Do you have anything she could do for you now?

PASTOR RAY

Sure, I think I could find a few things.

TOM

Ok, great.

(looks at his watch)

I actually have to run, but she's all yours.

Tom starts back up the aisle toward the exit.

PASTOR RAY

Tom.

Tom stops, and turns back.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)

What time will you be back to pick her up?

Tom snaps his fingers in remembrance.

TOM

Oh, right, I almost forgot. Do you guys have any type of facility for runaways, or people with nowhere to go?

PASTOR RAY

Like a shelter?

TOM

Right, a shelter.

PASTOR RAY

No. How about we say six?

TOM

Ok.

Tom turns and continues up the aisle. He exits the way he came in, leaving Pastor Ray and Rachel standing alone in the front of the church.

PASTOR RAY  
Just a guess, but he's not your  
father?

RACHEL  
Fortunately, no -- He's my uncle.

PASTOR RAY  
I'm assuming you're not very close.

RACHEL  
Very perceptive. No wonder they let  
you fix the toilets.

Pastor Ray lets it slide.

PASTOR RAY  
Well, it looks like it's just you  
and me.

RACHEL  
Just tell me what you want me to  
do.

PASTOR RAY  
Any good at fixing pipes?

RACHEL  
Are you serious?

PASTOR RAY  
Don't worry, I'm not either.  
(points to the pew)  
Have a seat. Let's talk a bit.

RACHEL  
I'd rather not. I just wanna get  
this over with.

PASTOR RAY  
OK -- I understand. Well, if you  
want, there's a vacuum in that  
closet over there.

Pastor Ray points to a door at the side of the sanctuary.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)  
Come get me when you're finished,  
and we'll figure out something else  
for you to do.

He starts toward the door at the front of the sanctuary where he came in.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)  
I'll be in the back doing more  
damage. Come get me if you need me.

INT. CAR - MOVING SLOWLY - LATE AFTERNOON

Tom is sitting in traffic, and growing more agitated with every minute that passes. He checks his watch, and then slams both hands down on the steering wheel.

TOM  
Come on!

He BEEPS the horn several times in a row.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Let's go!

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAY - EVENING

A disheveled, sweaty Tom is racing down the hallway, almost barreling through anyone who gets in his path. At the end of the hall he turns swiftly into the . . .

BOARDROOM

where Walter sits alone at the opposite end of the table awaiting Tom's arrival. Walter has his arms crossed, and is wearing a scowl. The emptiness of the boardroom and solo presence of Walter stops Tom in his tracks.

TOM  
I know what you're going to say.  
I'm sorry. I can explain.

WALTER  
Tom, there's no need. Let's go  
somewhere and talk.

TOM  
Can't we talk right here?.

WALTER  
Let's get some fresh air.

Walter gets up from the table and walks over to where Tom is standing. He puts his arm around Tom's shoulder, and ushers him out of the Boardroom.

EXT. CITY PARK - EVENING

The bright colors of fall paint a beautiful panoramic across the landscape of the park. People, dressed for the cool fall weather, are walking about enjoying the scenery and each others company.

Tom is seated on a wooden bench, overlooking the park. Walter approaches carrying a coffee in each hand. He passes one off to Tom, and then sits down on the bench next to him.

WALTER

(looking around at the activity in the park)

Tom, you know I value you as not only a great employee, but as a person too. Heck, you've been with us so long you're like family.

He looks directly at Tom, pats him on the knee, and then looks off in the distance again.

WALTER (CONT'D)

That's why I don't really know how to get this out.

TOM

You don't have to. You're about to ask me to leave.

WALTER

I hate this, Tom. I really do.

He looks back over at Tom again.

WALTER (CONT'D)

It's not for good. Just take a little time off. Get yourself right.

TOM

How long?

WALTER

I don't know. As much as you need.

TOM

I don't need any time, Walter. I'm fine.

WALTER

Come on, Tom. You're late to work, you're skipping important meetings, when you're at work, you're not at work. You don't have to tell me what's going on, that's fine, but you do need to get it straightened out.

TOM

You're asking me to give up my whole career.

WALTER

No one's asking you to give up your career, Tom. Just a few months. Come back when you're ready.

Tom looks around the park for a moment to let the conversation sink in.

TOM

And, what if I say no.

WALTER

Tom -- I'm not asking.

INT. CHURCH - SANCTUARY

The sanctuary is empty except for Rachel who is moving along the pews, straightening the hymnals as she goes. She has her headphones in, and she's quietly singing along to the music.

BEN LATAND (22), slim, fit and dressed for the beach, walks down the pew behind where Rachel is working, stopping right behind her.

BEN

Hey.

Rachel doesn't hear him over the music in her headphones. Ben reaches over, and pulls one of the earbuds from her ear. Startled, she jumps and spins around.

RACHEL

Hey! What do you think you're doing?!

She yanks the other earbud from her other ear.

BEN

I just wanted to tell you that you're done for the day. It's almost six.

RACHEL

Wonderful. Thanks.

BEN

So, you're free to go whenever.

RACHEL

OK.

BEN

Sorry. I didn't introduce myself. I'm Pastor Ray's nephew, Ben.

He extends his hand. Rachel looks at it reluctantly, but then she obliges.

RACHEL

And, does your uncle know you have a habit of sneaking up on unsuspecting people and scaring them half to death?

BEN

Not all people. Only the ones with beautiful voices.

RACHEL

Yeah, well you wouldn't have known that if you hadn't snuck up on me.

BEN

I'm sorry about that. Honestly... Well, I'll let you get out of here.

RACHEL

Thanks.

Ben heads back down the pew, and out into the center aisle. He turns back.

BEN

I'll see you tomorrow.

RACHEL

(with a sarcastic smirk)  
I guess you will.

Ben turns back around, and continues up the aisle. Rachel, intrigued, keeps her eye on him as he leaves.

EXT. CHURCH - FRONT STEPS - LATER

Rachel is seated on the top step, staring down at the ground in front of her. The sun is setting over the buildings in the distance.

The door opens behind her, and Ben steps out. Rachel doesn't look up.

BEN

Hey. You're still here.

He turns around to lock the door behind him.

RACHEL

Yeah.

BEN

What time is your ride supposed to be here?

RACHEL

Six.

Ben pulls his cellphone from his pocket, and checks the time.

BEN

It's six forty eight.

RACHEL

Yeah, I know.

BEN

Well, come on. I'll give you a ride home.

RACHEL

No thanks.

Ben takes a seat on the step next to her.

BEN

Come on. I promise it's been at least a month since my last accident.

RACHEL

That's reassuring, but I'm OK. I'll just walk.

She gets up, and starts walking down the steps. Ben follows after her.



BEN  
Come on. I'll even let you ride up  
front.

RACHEL  
You don't give up, do you?

Rachel reaches the sidewalk and takes a left turn. Ben is still on her heels.

BEN  
Well, I can't let the most talented  
girl in Philadelphia walk home  
alone in the dark.

RACHEL  
Sweet. You must win a lot of hearts  
with your charm.

BEN  
What'dya say?

She stops to mull it over.

RACHEL  
Fine.

BEN  
Really?!

RACHEL  
Yes, but hurry up before I change  
my mind.

BEN  
I'm right over here.

He heads for an old junker parked at the curb. Rachel rolls her eyes, and then follows behind him.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben's car PUTTERS and CLANGS up to the curb. Rachel hops out of the passenger's side, retrieves her backpack, and then pokes her head back in.

RACHEL  
Thanks for the ride.

BEN  
No problem. I'll see you tomorrow.

RACHEL

Right.

She swings the door shut, and then runs around the front of the car to the sidewalk. Ben HONKS the horn as he drives off.

Rachel walks with determination up the walkway to the front porch, and then stomps up the stairs. She stands in front of the door and KNOCKS. She waits a moment, but there is no answer. She KNOCKS again, and stands back. Suddenly, the door swings open, and Tom steps into the doorway.

TOM

Yes.

RACHEL

Did you forget something?

TOM

Not that I recall.

RACHEL

You were supposed to pick me up at six o'clock.

She pushes past him, into the foyer.

TOM

Rachel, we've discussed this. One night. You need to go back home.

RACHEL

I already told you. I can't.

TOM

Well, you can't stay here.

RACHEL

Then where am I supposed to go?

TOM

That's not my problem.

She stares at him, disgusted.

RACHEL

Fine.

She storms back out the open door, and onto the porch. Tom closes the door behind her.

He stands silent by the door for a moment. Suddenly, he hears Rachel and another female voice ARGUING outside. He peers through the peep hole.

EXT. WALKWAY

Rachel is standing on the walkway out front arguing with CAROLINE (43); addicted to something and wearing it well. Caroline has her arms opened wide toward Rachel, but Rachel is trying to slip past her.

RACHEL  
Just leave me alone.

CAROLINE  
(tears in her eyes)  
Rachel. Sweetheart, please come here. I've been so worried about you.

Realizing she doesn't stand a chance of slipping by, Rachel stops trying, but she doesn't get any closer to Caroline's embrace.

RACHEL  
No thank you. I'd rather not.

CAROLINE  
Rachel, please. I need you to come home.

RACHEL  
Why? So I can wait on you while you're passed out all day and night?

CAROLINE  
Rachel, please.

RACHEL  
Just go away and leave me alone!

Rachel tries to push past her again, but Caroline wraps her up in a tight embrace. Rachel wiggles loose, and pushes Caroline to get away from her.

CAROLINE  
Don't push me! You disrespectful brat! You're a child, Rachel. You need to grow up.

RACHEL  
I need to grow up?! Look at you. A forty three year old woman who can't keep a job, or her legs closed. You care more about pills and Jack Daniels than your teenage daughter.

Caroline slaps Rachel across the face.

CAROLINE

How dare you? Maybe your father  
could have done a better job with  
you if he hadn't been such a  
coward, and taken the easy way out.

Tom rips the door open, and storms out onto the porch.

Rachel takes the opportunity, and runs up the stairs and into  
the house.

TOM

(to Caroline)

You need to leave right now.

Caroline grabs her head, and begins to sob.

CAROLINE

I'm sorry... I'm so sorry.

TOM

That's the smartest thing I've  
heard you say since you've been  
here. Leave -- Now.

Tom walks back in the house, and slams the door, leaving  
Caroline crying alone on the walkway.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tom is standing outside of the door to the spare bedroom.  
Beyond the door can be heard SNIFFLING, and the faint WHIMPER  
of crying. Tom taps on the door gently, and then opens it.

SPARE BEDROOM

Rachel is sitting on the bed, wiping her eyes. She's trying  
to hold back a flood of tears.

Tom steps in.

TOM

You OK?

RACHEL

I'm fine.

TOM

You don't seem fine.

RACHEL  
Why did you call her?!

TOM  
I didn't.

RACHEL  
Oh right. She just happened to know  
where I'd be.

TOM  
I guess so. Trust me, I had every  
reason to, but I didn't.

RACHEL  
Yeah, well I can't go back there.

TOM  
I know that. That's why I sent her  
away.

Tom walks over and sits at the end of the bed.

TOM (CONT'D)  
I want you to listen to me. That  
stuff she said about your father.  
That's not true.

The flood gates begin to open up a bit, tears begin rolling  
down Rachel's cheeks, and her lip begins to quiver.

RACHEL  
I can't talk about this.

TOM  
You have to know this, Rachel. Your  
father definitely had his problems,  
but he loved you -- like nothing  
else.

Rachel puts her head in her hands, and begins to all out sob.  
Tom sits motionless for a moment, unsure what to do. Then,  
awkwardly, he moves over to where she is seated, and puts his  
arm around her. She puts her head into his chest, and just  
cries.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

The place is pretty empty, except for the regulars.

Tom and Rachel sit in a booth, eating greasy spoon type food.  
There's no conversation to this point; just eating and the  
muffled sound of the music coming from Rachel's headphones.

She pulls her earbuds from her ears.

RACHEL  
Would it be OK if I asked you a question?

TOM  
Sure, I guess.

Rachel looks down at her food, and begins moving it around her plate with her fork. She looks across at Tom.

RACHEL  
That stuff you said about my dad. Is that true?

TOM  
What? That he loved you?

RACHEL  
Yeah.

TOM  
Of course it's true.

RACHEL  
What was he like? I don't remember much.

Tom takes a sip of his drink.

TOM  
He was a good man. Everyone liked him very much.

RACHEL  
But, what was he really like -- with me?

Tom takes a moment to mull over the question.

TOM  
He was proud to be a father. It was the greatest thing that ever happened to him. You could tell that.

Tom looks out the window, and goes somewhere else for a moment.

TOM (CONT'D)  
I remember when he showed up on my doorstep the night he found out you were coming.  
(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

He rode his bike all the way in the pouring rain, because he wanted to tell me in person. He was banging on the door like a madman, and wouldn't stop till I came down and let him in. He was soaking wet, when I finally got there. I'd never seen him like that before. So happy. So in love with you already.

(beat)

He wasn't a man that dreamed of the things most people do. Money, success. None of that. His dream was a little girl with a pink dress, and a bow in her hair. And, he was content. He really was.

Just then, Tom's cell phone begins BUZZING on top of the table. He looks at the caller ID screen, and then answers.

TOM (CONT'D)

Hello, this is Tom... I'm fine. How are you?...

Tom listens intently for a moment. The tension in his face begins to loosen a bit, and he almost smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)

That's great... OK, I will. I'll be there as soon as I can.

Tom ends the call, grabs his coat from beside him, and shoves his phone in the pocket.

TOM (CONT'D)

We have to go.

RACHEL

What's going on?

TOM

I'll explain in the car.

He flags the waitress, and she walks over to the table.

WAITRESS

Can I get you guys anything else right now?

TOM

No, thank you. Just the check.

WAITRESS

Sure thing.

She roots through her apron, and pulls out the check. She lays it on the table in front of Tom, and walks away.

Tom roots through his pocket for some cash. He slaps it down on the table, grabs his coat, and begins to slide out of the booth.

TOM

You ready?

RACHEL

Sure.

Rachel inches her way to the end of the booth.

INT. NAVY YARD OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tom is running down the hallway, with Rachel trying to keep up. He arrives outside of Lieutenant Barrow's office. A short row of wooden chairs lines the wall just outside of the door.

TOM

Wait here.

Rachel has a seat in one of the chairs.

Tom bursts into...

LT. BARROW'S OFFICE

where the Lieutenant is sitting behind his desk, doing his normal paper pushing.

LT. BARROW

Mr. Larson.

TOM

I heard you have something.

LT. BARROW

Tom, have a seat.

TOM

I'm OK.

Tom begins to anxiously pace the room.



LT. BARROW

Here's the deal. We don't want to get too ahead of ourselves here, but I've received word that we've rejoined a fragment of the group with their unit.

TOM

Was Grace with them?

LT. BARROW

Grace was not with them, but we've gotten positive reports, and we're closing in on the hillside where the rest of the group is said to be.

TOM

But, they're saying she's alive.

LT. BARROW

I can't confirm that, but like I said, we're receiving positive reports. -- I want you to listen to something.

The Lieutenant turns his laptop toward Tom. He uses the trackpad to navigate to a sound bite on his desktop.

LT. BARROW (CONT'D)

Tom, let me know if this sounds like Grace's voice, please.

Lieutenant Barrow presses play. A female voice can be heard repeating calmly "WE'RE OK, WE'RE OK", but the rest of the recording is so broken that it's hard to make out what else she says.

TOM

Can you play that again?

The Lieutenant presses play, and the short recording runs all the way through again.

TOM (CONT'D)

That's her. That's Grace.

LT. BARROW

Are you sure?

TOM

I know my wife's voice. That's Grace.

LT. BARROW

OK.

Lt. Barrow spins his computer back around.

TOM

That means she's alive, right?

LT. BARROW

I don't want you to get too excited, Tom. We're not sure when that recording was taken.

TOM

But she sounds OK. Right?

LT. BARROW

In the recording, yes, she sounds OK.

Tom takes a moment to gather his thoughts.

TOM

Do you think she's alive?

LT. BARROW

Tom, I don't want to speculate. As I said we've received several reports...

TOM

I understand the need for protocol in a situation like this. And, I'm not even saying I blame you for following it. All I want to know -- man-to-man -- do you think my wife is OK?

The Lieutenant shoots Tom a hard look.

LT. BARROW

I do.

TOM

Thank you... Thank you.

INT. NAVY YARD OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

Tom and Rachel are asleep side-by-side on the wooden chairs outside of Lt. Barrow's office.

Looking weary, the Lieutenant steps into the hallway. He puts his hand on Tom's shoulder.

LT. BARROW

Tom.

Tom stirs, and then sits straight up in his chair.

LT. BARROW (CONT'D)

Tom, why don't you take your niece  
and go home for now.

TOM

Did you find her?

LT. BARROW

Not yet, but I think we're very  
close.

TOM

Then I'm staying.

LT. BARROW

Tom, we have everything under  
control here. I promise we'll let  
you know as soon as we have  
something.

Rachel begins to come to.

Tom stands up from the chair.

TOM

Can I talk to you privately for a  
moment?

LT. BARROW

Sure.

The two men move further down the hallway, out of earshot of  
Rachel.

TOM

If things end up turning out for  
the worst, will you do me a favor,  
and let me know personally? I don't  
want to get that news from  
strangers.

LT. BARROW

Let's not plan to cross bridges we  
haven't arrived at yet.

Tom nods.

TOM  
It's just that, it's a bridge I  
don't want to end up crossing  
alone.

Tom looks down at the ground.

LT. BARROW  
You have my word.

INT. CAR - MOVING - MORNING

Tom is driving, and Rachel is sitting in the passenger's seat with her headphones in. She's staring out the window. Tom looks over at her, and taps her on the shoulder. She pulls the headphones from her ears.

TOM  
Do you always listen to music?

RACHEL  
Pretty much.

TOM  
Is it some sort of way to distract  
yourself from the world?

RACHEL  
No, I just love music.

TOM  
Oh. Well, that's a good reason to  
listen to music.

RACHEL  
Yeah.

Rachel looks out the window again.

TOM  
What kind of music do you like?

RACHEL  
What's with all the questions?

TOM  
I don't know. I'm just -- trying to  
get to know you a little bit.

Rachel shoots him a disbelieving look.

RACHEL  
You don't have to pretend to be  
interested in my life.

TOM  
If I wasn't interested I wouldn't  
have asked.

RACHEL  
I like all kinds of music. Anything  
that speaks to me.

TOM  
Speaks to you?

RACHEL  
Yeah. Like anything that moves me,  
inspires me.

TOM  
That's great -- See. That's  
something I didn't know about you.

Rachel stares out the window again.

RACHEL  
I'm gonna be a singer.

Tom looks over at her.

TOM  
You are?

RACHEL  
Yup. If I can ever get out of  
nowheresville.

TOM  
I wouldn't exactly say that, but  
OK. So, that's your dream, huh? To  
be a singer.

RACHEL  
Yeah.

She puts her headphones back in, and commences watching the  
scenery pass by out the window.

Tom taps her on the shoulder again. She removes her  
headphones once more.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Yeah?

TOM  
Thanks for coming with me.

RACHEL  
Sure.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Pastor Ray is out front, painting the railing that leads up the front steps.

Tom's car pulls up, and Rachel jumps out of the passenger's side. Before Tom can pull away, Pastor Ray flags him down.

PASTOR RAY  
Tom.

He walks across the sidewalk, and around to the driver's side.

Tom rolls the window down.

TOM  
You do just about everything around here, don't you?

PASTOR RAY  
Yeah, I guess it comes with the territory.

Pastor Ray leans in the window.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)  
Are you in a hurry?

TOM  
Yeah, kind of.

PASTOR RAY  
Do you have a minute? I just wanted to talk to you about something.

TOM  
I had a bit of a long night. I was hoping to just go get something to eat, and some coffee.

PASTOR RAY  
Great. Let me go get cleaned up.

Pastor Ray runs back across the sidewalk, up the steps, and disappears into the church

TOM

OK.

EXT. STREET FESTIVAL - DAY

A street festival stretches several city blocks. Food vendors, artists, crafters, musicians, etc.

Tom is leaning against a light post, looking on, and trying to avoid the rush of rabid patrons.

Pastor Ray arrives carrying two cups of coffee. When he's within reach, he hands one to Tom.

The two men step off the curb, into the wild scene.

PASTOR RAY

Hey listen, I was thinking about something. It might be good for Rachel if she comes to church on Sunday mornings. Might give her a little perspective.

TOM

Oh? -- And, you're planning on asking her?

PASTOR RAY

Certainly.

TOM

Good luck with that.

PASTOR RAY

You don't think she'll come.

Tom takes a sip of his coffee.

TOM

I think it may take a miracle.

PASTOR RAY

I also thought maybe you could come with her -- for support.

TOM

No offense Pastor, but the whole church thing is not for me.

PASTOR RAY

I see.

Pastor Ray stops to inspect one of the vendor's tables.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)

Do you mind if I ask why? Curious minds.

TOM

The God thing. It just never made sense to me.

PASTOR RAY

So you don't believe there's a God?

TOM

There was a point in my life where I thought I might -- years ago. Grace's influence I guess.

The two men continue walking.

PASTOR RAY

So, what changed your mind?

TOM

It just didn't seem logical to me.

PASTOR RAY

Sometimes the greatest things in life defy logic. Like love.

TOM

Love?

PASTOR RAY

Don't tell me you don't believe in love either.

TOM

Not sure I understand it.

PASTOR RAY

Oh?

TOM

You start to love someone to the point that you think you can't live without them, only to have them taken away. How can a God, who supposedly cares about us, take away the people we love most?

PASTOR RAY

Well, who do you suppose allowed you to love in the first place?



TOM

If it was God, then it must all be a cruel joke. I see more pain and suffering in this world than love and happiness.

PASTOR RAY

That's a perspective problem.

TOM

Oh, really?

PASTOR RAY

What do you consider pain and suffering?

TOM

Losing the people you love most, sickness, wars, people being raped and murdered everyday.

PASTOR RAY

What's wrong with those things?

Tom looks at him like he's gone crazy.

TOM

They're horrible, evil things.

PASTOR RAY

Who says?

Now, Tom is really giving the pastor a curious look over.

TOM

Anyone who's lived through them. Which is pretty much everyone.

PASTOR RAY

Well, if there's evil, then there must be good, right?

TOM

I suppose.

PASTOR RAY

And, where do you think we get this idea of good?

TOM

I really don't know.

PASTOR RAY

Tom, think about this. The evils of this world, like pain and suffering, exist because there is good. If we didn't know good, or God didn't exist, then there would be no such thing as evil, or pain and suffering. We would all just be another species living out the code of our DNA. There would be no bad or good, or love for that matter. Just existence. Survival.

TOM

That still doesn't explain why all of these things are allowed to happen.

PASTOR RAY

God gave us free will, like any good parent. He didn't want a robotic creation, He wanted us to choose to love him. Some choose to do so, and some don't. Those of us that believe know that this isn't our home. God is preparing a beautiful place for us when we leave this earth, but while we're here there is evil that exists. John 10:10 says that, The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, but God made a way out for us through His son Jesus Christ. Jesus even says, "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world."

Tom takes another sip of his coffee, and lets this new perspective sink in.

TOM

I'd never thought about it that way.

PASTOR RAY

I don't mean to overwhelm you, Tom. I just want to give you something to think about before you rule God out completely.

TOM

I understand.

PASTOR RAY  
Oh, before I forget.

Pastor Ray reaches into his back pocket, and pulls out a small, worn, leather Bible. He hands it to Tom.

TOM  
What's this?

PASTOR RAY  
It's a Bible.

TOM  
I don't know if I'm ready for all  
of this.

He tries to hand the Bible back to Pastor Ray.

PASTOR RAY  
Open it up.

Tom pulls back the front cover, and sees an inscription that reads, "GRACE LARSON."

TOM  
Why do you have this?

PASTOR RAY  
Grace left it behind when she went  
overseas.

TOM  
Why wouldn't she take it with her?  
She never goes anywhere without  
this thing.

PASTOR RAY  
Maybe she didn't intend to take it  
for a reason.

Tom looks down at the bible for a moment.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)  
Do me a favor. Open it up when you  
get home, read a few verses. Give  
it a chance.

Tom nods.

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Tom walks into the bedroom with Grace's bible in hand. He sits down on the bed, pulls back the front cover, and runs his finger over the inscription of Grace's name.

Tom closes the bible, opens the top drawer on the night stand, and places the bible inside.

As Tom starts to close the drawer, he stops. Something inside has caught his attention. He reaches in and pulls out his wedding ring. He slips it on his finger, and stares at it.

INT. CHURCH - HALLWAY - DAY

Rachel, wearing yellow rubber gloves up to her elbows, is wiping down the windows with cleaner and a rag. Suddenly, she hears the muffled SOUND of a PIANO and a YOUNG MAN'S VOICE spilling through the door that leads into the sanctuary. She stops what she's doing, and listens for a moment.

Rachel puts the cleaner and rag down on a small table, and then walks over to the door. She pulls it open, and steps into the...

THE SANCTUARY

where Ben is on the stage playing the piano and singing. Rachel stands there listening, enraptured in the beauty of the song. Ben stops playing, and looks over at Rachel.

BEN

Hey. Come down here.

Rachel is startled that he noticed her standing there.

RACHEL

No. Sorry. I should get back to what I was doing.

BEN

It's fine. I won't tell your boss.

Rachel removes the rubber gloves, and sets them on the back of a pew. She walks down the aisle, climbs the steps, and heads over to where Ben is seated at the piano.

BEN (CONT'D)

What do you think?

RACHEL

Of the song?

BEN

Yeah.

RACHEL

It sounded really good.

BEN

Thanks. I'm still working out some of the timing.

RACHEL

You wrote that?

BEN

Yeah, I've been working on it for a while though.

RACHEL

You're very talented.

Ben slides over, and pats the empty space on the bench next to him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

No way.

BEN

Come on. I want to hear you sing it.

Rachel backs away a few steps.

RACHEL

I can't. I have too much to do.

BEN

I told you, it's no big deal. Come on. Just a few minutes, and then I'll let you get back to your work.

Rachel folds her arms, and tries to stay put. After a moment, she gives in, and takes a seat next to Ben on the piano bench.

He slides the music over on the stand in front of her.

RACHEL

What's it about?

BEN

It's a love story. And, believe it or not, it's about you.

RACHEL

Me?! It can't be about me, because I don't believe in love.

BEN

Come on. Of course you do. This is the greatest love story ever told. It's about one Man who loved both of us so deeply that He would go to any measure to have a relationship with us.

RACHEL

And, who is this Man? Because, all the ones I've ever known have been selfish liars.

BEN

His name is Jesus, and trust me, He's not like anyone you've ever known.

RACHEL

And, why would He care about me?

BEN

Because you're the very reason He lived, and the reason He died. And, because of sin, we can't save ourselves, so He loved us enough to do it for us.

Rachel sits quietly, thinking it over.

BEN (CONT'D)

It's all in the song. Come on, let's give it a try... I'll tell you when to come in.

RACHEL

I've never done this before.

BEN

That's OK. It's just you and me. I'll guide you.

Ben puts his fingers to the keys, and begins playing. He reaches the part where Rachel is supposed to come in.

BEN (CONT'D)

OK.

She hesitates.

Ben stops playing.

RACHEL  
 Sorry. I told you I don't know what  
 I'm doing.

BEN  
 It's OK. Try it again.

He starts the song over. He reaches her entrance once again.

BEN (CONT'D)  
 OK.

Rachel begins to sing the words from the sheet music; a bit shaky and soft at first. As her confidence begins to mount, her angelic voice shines through.

She looks over at Ben. He glances back at her and smiles, then returns to the sheet music; but Rachel is transfixed. She can't take her eyes off of him.

Suddenly, she hops up from the piano bench.

BEN (CONT'D)  
 What's wrong?

RACHEL  
 I really need to get back to work.

BEN  
 OK.

She turns, and starts to head off of the stage.

BEN (CONT'D)  
 Hey.

Rachel stops and turns back around.

BEN (CONT'D)  
 You should think about singing this  
 in church with me sometime. I can  
 ask Pastor Ray if it's OK that we  
 spend time practicing.

RACHEL  
 No, I don't think so.

She spins back around, heads down the steps, and then back up the aisle to where she entered the sanctuary.

INT. CAR - MOVING - EVENING

Tom pulls up out front of the church. Rachel is seated on the top step, waiting for him. She hops up, runs down the steps, and jumps in the car.

Tom pulls away from the curb. He looks over at Rachel, who has her earphones in again. He suddenly yanks the wheel to right, making an abrupt turn.

Rachel pulls her headphones from her ears.

RACHEL

Where are you going?

TOM

I wanna show you something.

EXT. GARAGE - EVENING

A small, brick, one car garage in a residential street alleyway. It's surrounded by small tenant buildings.

Tom's car pulls up out front of the garage. He jumps out of the driver's side. Rachel leans across the center console.

RACHEL

What are we doing here?

TOM

Come on. I have something I think you'll like.

Tom shuts the door.

Rachel opens her door slowly, and climbs out.

Tom has already unlocked the garage, and is waiting for her. When she arrives at his side, he raises the door and flicks on the light. Inside is an art studio, jam packed with paintings and sculptures.

RACHEL

Wow. What is this place?

TOM

It's Grace's studio. I rented it for her so she'd have a place to do what she loves.

RACHEL

She's an artist.



TOM

Go ahead.

Rachel looks at Tom, and then steps into the garage. She looks around, and examines Grace's artwork with wonder as she moves through the space.

RACHEL

She's very good.

TOM

She'd be happy to hear you say that.

RACHEL

How long did it take her to do all of these?

TOM

I don't know. She spent hours here. Sometimes I didn't think she'd come home at all.

Tom begins to wander around himself, and take in each piece -- every one a vivid memory.

Rachel picks up a small painting of a man and woman laying on a beach. She closely examines the detail -- the woman in the picture is pregnant.

RACHEL

Thank you for bringing me here.

TOM

Sure.

RACHEL

Look at this one.

Tom looks over as Rachel holds up the painting of the two people on the beach. He sets the piece that he was holding down, walks slowly over to where Rachel is standing, and takes the painting out of her hands.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Is that you and her?

TOM

Yes.

RACHEL

She was pregnant. Do you have a child?

Tom looks at Rachel sharply.

TOM

No.

He lays the painting down on an old, wooden desk that's positioned against the wall.

RACHEL

So wait, what happened to the baby?

TOM

Just forget about it.

RACHEL

No. That's not fair. You're the only one that gets to ask questions?

TOM

She died. About three weeks after that trip.

RACHEL

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

TOM

It's OK...

Tom walks back over to the other side of the room -- his back to Rachel. There's a quiet pause as Rachel tries to think of something to say.

RACHEL

Tom.

He turns around.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I'm sure everything will be OK.

TOM

Thanks... Why don't you just get back to looking around?

Tom turns away from Rachel again, and tries to compose himself.

Rachel begins rummaging around the old, wooden desk where Tom laid the beach painting. She slides open the top drawer, and sees a small handgun inside. She pulls it out.

RACHEL  
What is this?

Tom spins around, and shes Rachel holding the gun. He lunges forward, takes the gun out of her hand, and places it back in the drawer.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Why is that in here?

TOM  
I got it for Grace as protection --  
in case anyone ever tried to break  
in.

RACHEL  
That's scary.

TOM  
Yeah. -- She hated it too...  
Come on, I think we should go.

RACHEL  
We just got here.

Tom heads over to the garage door, and waits for Rachel. She walks slowly and reluctantly through the door. Once she's through, he turns off the lights, and then pulls the door shut.

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom is sitting on the bed, next to the night stand. In his hand, he holds the piece of paper with Lt. Barrow's number on it. He picks up the phone, and dials.

TOM  
It's Tom Larson... Right. I just  
thought maybe you would have heard  
something today... I understand...  
OK, I'll call back tomorrow...

Tom hangs up the phone. He slides open the top drawer of the night stand and drops the paper in. He closes it, and stares at the drawer for a moment.

He slides the drawer open again, and pulls Grace's Bible out. He flips open the front cover, and runs his finger over the inscription. He starts to flip through the pages. Suddenly, a letter falls out and lands on the floor. Tom bends down, and picks it up.

He unfolds the letter, and begins to read. As he scans the words from left to right, his eyes turn a shade of bright red, and tears begin to well up. The emotion mounts, as he continues reading. When he can read no further, Tom drops the letter in his lap. He sits quietly on the bed, tears rolling down his face.

INT. CHURCH - SANCTUARY - DAY

Ben is on the stage, rehearsing at the piano. Rachel walks in, and heads down the aisle to the edge of the stage. Ben stops playing.

RACHEL  
Hey.

BEN  
Hey.

RACHEL  
Do you have a minute?

BEN  
Sure.

RACHEL  
I just wanted to apologize -- for walking away yesterday.

BEN  
Don't worry about it. No big deal.

RACHEL  
Well, I felt really bad about it, and I'm sorry.

BEN  
Really, it's OK.

RACHEL  
OK, good...

Rachel turns, and begins back up the aisle. She only gets a few feet before she stops and turns back.

Also -- I was thinking -- if it's not too much trouble I'd like to give it another try.

BEN  
The song?

RACHEL

Yeah.

BEN

Great! Get up here.

Rachel walks over, and hops up on the stage. She runs over, and sits down next to Ben on the piano bench. He begins playing.

INT. SANCTUARY - EVENING

Rachel is standing in the back of the sanctuary, gathering her things to go home.

Ben enters through the door beside the stage, and jogs up the aisle.

BEN

Hey. I have a few things to finish up, but then I'm headed over to Nappoli's to grab something to eat. You wanna come?

RACHEL

Um, sure. I just need to call my uncle and let him know.

BEN

OK. Come grab me when you're ready.

RACHEL

OK.

Ben heads back down the aisle.

Rachel pulls her cellphone from her backpack, and dials Tom's number. She holds the phone to her ear. There's no answer. She hangs up.

Just then, the door at the back of the sanctuary swings open, and Tom walks in.

TOM

Hey. You ready?

RACHEL

Actually, I was just trying to call you. If it's OK, I'm gonna go get some food with Ben.

TOM

Oh -- OK.

RACHEL

I'm sorry.

TOM

No, that's fine. Have fun.

RACHEL

Thanks.

Rachel hurries down the aisle, toward where Ben exited.

Tom walks over and rests his hands on the back of the last pew. He stands silently for a few moments, looking around the sanctuary.

He walks down the aisle until he reaches the front of the church, and takes a seat in the second pew. He bows his head, and closes his eyes.

Pastor Ray enters the sanctuary, and notices Tom sitting in the pew. He walks over, and takes a seat in the pew behind him. Tom opens his eyes, and looks straight ahead.

PASTOR RAY

I didn't mean to disturb you.

TOM

No problem.

PASTOR RAY

Mind if I come up?

TOM

Sure.

Pastor Ray gets up, and moves to the pew where Tom is seated.

TOM (CONT'D)

Rachel made plans with your nephew,  
so I thought since I was here I'd  
just sit for a minute.

PASTOR RAY

Done that myself many nights.  
(looks around the  
sanctuary)  
It's a good place to take a rest.

TOM

Seems to be.

PASTOR RAY

Anything on your mind?

Tom hesitates for a moment.

TOM

The letter. Did you know about that?

PASTOR RAY

Ah. You found it. Yes, Grace asked me to read it before she left.

TOM

I don't understand. How could she have known?

PASTOR RAY

About what was going on, or that you'd end up here?

TOM

Either. It's like she knew what would happen even before it happened.

PASTOR RAY

Have you considered that maybe Grace wasn't working alone?

Tom gives him the "I don't understand" look.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

TOM

So you're saying that God somehow gave my wife a glimpse into the future?

PASTOR RAY

I'm saying that when God wants to reach you, He uses any means possible. Grace has been praying for you for many years. It seems that God has a plan for you, Tom, and all you have to do is listen.

TOM

God wouldn't want to have anything to do with someone like me.

PASTOR RAY

That same thought has crossed the mind of every person He's ever tried to reach, including yours truly.

TOM

Right -- No offense, but I don't think our paths are exactly parallel.

PASTOR RAY

The point is that nobody's path is parallel with God's. That's why we needed a Savior, and that's why He sent us One.

TOM

Well, that sounds great for everyone else, but I don't think there's salvation for someone like me. Not after the things I've done.

PASTOR RAY

Salvation is for everyone, Tom... You see that cross up there.

He points to the enormous wooden cross hanging behind the stage.

TOM

Yeah.

PASTOR RAY

Jesus carried that burden for you. Grace is a gift, Tom. You don't have to pay the price, you just have to know the cost.

Tom stares at the cross.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)

Let me ask you a question. If you were sure that God is truly trying to reach you, would you want to have a relationship with Him?

TOM

You know, if you had asked me that a few days ago, I would have said no. But now I'm beginning to think I need to.



PASTOR RAY

He loves you, Tom. And, He only wants what's best for you.

TOM

Supposing I can have a relationship with Him, what would I need to do?

PASTOR RAY

Do what any of us has to do. Admit that you've failed. Ask for His forgiveness. Tell Him that you love Him, and that you want Him to be in your life.

TOM

Is it really that easy?

PASTOR RAY

It really is.

Tom looks at the cross again to think it over.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)

Can I do something for you, Tom?  
Can I pray for you?

Tom looks over at him.

TOM

OK.

Pastor Ray puts his arm around Tom's shoulder, bows his head, and closes his eyes. Tom bows his head, and closes his eyes.

PASTOR RAY

Lord Jesus. Search my brother Tom's heart. Lord, know that he is in need of your unending love. Come into his heart, and save him from the man he once was. He knows that he's made mistakes, Lord, but he wants to know your perfect grace. Speak to him, and help him to listen to your voice. Give him guidance, and let him know that no matter what he's done in his life, he is your child, and you will always love him. Help him to give his heart fully to you, King Jesus, and to know that even in the worst times, you are there. I thank you that you've brought Tom into my life, Lord.

(MORE)

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)  
It's in your perfect, life-changing  
name, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Tom and Pastor Ray both open their eyes.

TOM  
Thank you.

PASTOR RAY  
Anytime.

INT. NAPPOLI'S PIZZA - EVENING

A little, Italian pizza shop. The place is mobbed with locals who know how good the cook is.

Ben walks in with Rachel in tow. He cranes his neck to search the crowd for his friends. He spots them in the back corner of the restaurant.

BEN  
(turning to Rachel)  
Come on.

He takes Rachel by the hand, and leads her through the crowd to where his friends WILL, BRIAN and KAITLYN are seated at a high top table.

BRIAN  
(over the noise)  
Hey. There he is.

BEN  
Hey guys. This is Rachel.  
(turns to acknowledge her)  
She's a friend who's helping out at  
the church.

Rachel gives a shy smile, and a wave.

Will, who is seated at the end of the table, extends his hand to Rachel.

WILL  
Hi, Rachel. I'm Will. Nice to meet  
you.

RACHEL  
You too.

Brian reaches over Will, and shakes Rachel's hand.

BRIAN

Brian.

RACHEL

Hi. Nice to meet you.

Ben walks around behind Kaitlyn who is seated across from the other two, and puts his hands on her shoulders.

BEN

And, this lovely lady is my girlfriend, Kaitlyn.

KAITLYN

Hi, Rachel. It's nice to meet you.

Rachel ignores her greeting.

RACHEL

Your girlfriend?

BEN

Of four years today.

He and Kaitlyn look at each other lovingly.

RACHEL

You never told me you had a girlfriend.

BEN

I didn't? I'm sorry. I guess we were so busy rehearsing.

Angry, confused, upset -- Rachel storms away from the table, and starts fighting her way through the crowd, toward the exit.

BEN (CONT'D)

(to his friends)

I'll be right back.

He chases after Rachel, but can't catch up to her. She exits the restaurant into -

THE BUSY STREET

where she bolts down the sidewalk. Ben runs to catch up with her.

BEN (CONT'D)

Rachel.

RACHEL  
(still walking)  
Go away.

BEN  
Rachel. What's the problem?

She stops, and spins around.

RACHEL  
The problem is that you never told  
me you had a girlfriend.

BEN  
I don't understand why that's a  
problem.

RACHEL  
Because I thought that this was...  
nevermind.

BEN  
A date? You thought this was a  
date?

Rachel nods, and looks away.

BEN (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, Rachel. I guess I should  
have been more clear.

She turns around, and hurries off down the sidewalk.

BEN (CONT'D)  
Rachel.

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tom is seated at the kitchen table with Grace's bible, and a stack of photos in front of him. He's flipping through the photos. He comes to one in particular and stops.

INSERT - PHOTO

of a younger Tom and Grace at her graduation from nursing school. They are smiling, and Tom has his arm around her. She is wearing a nursing cap, and proudly displaying her nursing pin.

Tom stares at the photo for a moment, and then places it on the table. He opens the bible to a random page, and begins reading silently to himself. After reading a verse or two, he closes his eyes and bows his head.

TOM

God. I don't really know where to begin. This is all new to me -- The one thing I do know is that of all people, I don't deserve your love. But, from what I've been told, you love me anyway. And, if that's the truth, then I just want to ask your forgiveness for the things that I've done. I don't want to be the person that I was anymore. Please help me change. I can't do it by myself... Amen.

He opens his eyes, and sits quietly.

Suddenly, he hears the SOUND of the front door BURST open. A moment later Rachel rushes into the doorway of the kitchen. She's been crying, and appears visibly upset.

TOM (CONT'D)

Rachel -- What are you doing home?  
I thought you were with Ben.

RACHEL

Yeah, well clearly I'm not.

Tom gets up, and walks over to where she's standing.

TOM

What happened?

RACHEL

Nothing.

TOM

Well, it doesn't appear to be nothing.

RACHEL

Can you just drive me to Nappoli's Pizza?

TOM

Is that where you just came from?

RACHEL

Yes.

TOM

Why do you need to go back?

RACHEL  
I did something stupid, and  
embarrassing, and I need to explain  
myself. Can you just take me?

TOM  
I'm not sure that's the best idea.

RACHEL  
Are you kidding me?! I don't need  
your opinion, I need your help.

TOM  
I'm trying to help you.

RACHEL  
No, you're not.

TOM  
Just sit down, and we'll talk about  
it.

RACHEL  
I don't want to talk about it. I  
just want you to drive me there.  
Please!

TOM  
Not right now, Rachel. Not while  
you're like this.

RACHEL  
You're so selfish. All you care  
about is yourself.

She storms out of the kitchen.

TOM  
Rachel.

The front door swings open, and SLAMS shut.

Tom leans against the door frame, and runs his hand through  
his hair.

Suddenly, there's a KNOCK at the door. Tom walks into -

THE FOYER

where he yanks the door open. Standing on the other side is  
Lieutenant Barrow and another YOUNG SOLDIER. Tom looks into  
the Lieutenant's sad eyes, steps through the door, and sits  
down in the doorway.

Lieutenant Barrow and the Young Soldier place their hands gently on Tom's shoulders. Tom puts his head in his hands, and begins weeping.

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - LATER

Tom storms into the room, and heads right for the night stand. He rips open the top drawer, and pulls out Grace's bible. He turns, and heads back out of the room.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Tom is standing in front for the big, wooden doors, yanking on them with all of his might. They won't budge.

He turns around, walks over and has a seat on the front steps.

Tom pulls Grace's letter from his coat pocket. He unfolds it, and begins to read it to himself. As tears begin to roll down his cheeks, he stands up and turns around, crumples up the letter, and throws it at the door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tom, looking worse for wear, is standing outside of Cynthia's apartment, BANGING loudly on the door. A young FEMALE NEIGHBOR opens her door, and steps into the hallway, in her pajamas.

FEMALE NEIGHBOR

She's not home. She went out.

TOM

Do you know when she'll be back?

FEMALE NEIGHBOR

No idea.

TOM

Thanks.

The neighbor retreats back into her apartment, and closes the door.

Tom heads to the elevator, and presses the "DOWN" button. After a moment, the doors slide open. To Tom's surprise, Cynthia is preparing to exit the elevator with a DATE -- a handsome older man, slightly gray, with an expensive but eccentric fashion sense.

CYNTHIA

Tom!

Cynthia and her date step from the elevator before the doors close.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

TOM

I need to talk to you.

DATE

(to Cynthia)

Is everything OK?

CYNTHIA

Yes, it's fine. Tom is an old friend -- Why don't you go inside, and I'll be in in a minute.

She pulls the key from her purse and tries to hand it to him.

DATE

Actually, I think I'll just take off.

CYNTHIA

No, really. It's fine.

Cynthia's date kisses her on the forehead, and then heads back to the elevator.

Cynthia hurries for her apartment door.

Tom follows after her.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

TOM

I just need to talk to you.

CYNTHIA

I've called you a million times. You can't just show up out of nowhere, and expect me to drop everything.

She unlocks the door, steps inside the apartment, and turns to block the doorway.

TOM

I know. I'm sorry.



CYNTHIA

So what, am I just supposed to let you in, and act like nothing happened?

TOM

I said I'm sorry. Can we just talk?

She stares at him intently for a moment, and then backs out of the doorway to let him in.

Tom steps inside.

INT. CYNTHIA'S APARTMENT

Tom follows Cynthia down the hallway, and into -

THE LIVING ROOM

where she sits down on the couch. Tom sits down at the opposite end.

CYNTHIA

So what do you want to talk about?

TOM

Um, I don't know. I owe you an explanation for what happened the other night.

CYNTHIA

Hold that thought.

She gets up from the couch, and heads for the kitchen.

Tom sits anxiously as he waits for her to return. After a few moments, Cynthia returns with two drinks in her hands. She hands one to Tom, and sits down next to him.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

OK, what were you saying?

TOM

Well, I was just starting to say that...

Cynthia reaches over, and runs her hand through Tom's hair. She slides a little closer to him, so that she's practically on top of him.

TOM (CONT'D)

I was saying that we...

Cynthia starts to lean in slowly. Tom reaches over, and places his hands gently on both sides of her face. Their lips are almost touching when Tom notices the wedding ring on his left hand. He jumps up from the couch.

CYNTHIA  
What are you doing?!

TOM  
I'm sorry. I can't do this.

CYNTHIA  
Tom. What is your problem?

TOM  
I have to go. I'm sorry.

Tom places the glass down on the table, and heads down the hallway, toward the door.

CYNTHIA  
If this is what you want, then  
don't come back.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The place is packed with happy hour layovers; the atmosphere is jovial.

Tom is seated at the bar, polishing off a whisky on the rocks. There are several empty glasses in front of him.

He flags the BARTENDER to indicate that he's ready for another drink. The bartender walks over.

BARTENDER  
That's it my friend. You're done  
for the night.

TOM  
Are you serious?

BARTENDER  
Very.

TOM  
Just get me another one.

BARTENDER  
Can't do it. Don't you think you've  
had plenty?

TOM

As long as I'm paying the tab, let me worry about that. Just get me another one.

Just then, Tom feels someone wrap their arm tightly around his neck from behind. He spins around to see who's got him in a headlock. It's Oliver.

OLIVER

My old friend. Where have you been? I've been trying to get a hold of you.

TOM

I've been around.

OLIVER

I must've been turning over the wrong rocks.

Oliver notices all of the empty glasses in front of Tom.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

What's with all this? Your girl stand you up or something?

TOM

No.

OLIVER

You look terrible. What's going on with you?

TOM

Nothing.

OLIVER

Come on. Is all of this because Walter gave me the Henderson account?

TOM

Grace is dead.

Oliver squeezes in between Tom and patron sitting next to him.

OLIVER

Tom -- that's terrible. I... I don't really know what to say.

TOM

It's fine.

OLIVER

What are you gonna do?

TOM

Bring her home. Bury her.

OLIVER

Yeah... Well, maybe it's better off  
this way.

TOM

What?

OLIVER

I'm sorry. I didn't mean anything  
by it.

TOM

No. You obviously meant something  
by it.

OLIVER

It was stupid. I'm sorry --  
Let me buy you a drink.

Oliver flags the bartender. He walks over.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

(pointing to the empty  
glasses)

Two more.

The bartender leans on the bar, and gets in Tom's face.

BARTENDER

I told you you're done. Take a  
hint, and get out of here.

Tom picks up one of the empty glasses in front of him, and  
throws it behind the bar, just missing the bartender and  
smashing several bottles behind him.

TWO BOUNCERS push through the crowd, and grab Tom by each  
arm. They begin to escort him from the bar.

EXT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The door flies open, and the two bouncers toss Tom out into  
the street. He lands on his side with a THUD, and then rolls  
several times. Bouncer #1 walks over to Tom, reaches in his  
pocket, and pulls out his keys.

BOUNCER #1

You can come back and get them in  
the morning.

Bouncer #1 walks back into the bar. Tom stammers to his feet.

EXT. CITY STREET

Tom limps over to where his car is parked at the curb. He takes off his jacket, wraps it in a ball around his hand, and smashes in the passenger's side window.

He leans in the broken window, opens up the glove box, and searches inside until he finds a key ring with a few small keys on it.

He emerges from the window, and heads down the sidewalk.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Grace's studio is dark and quiet. The door swings open, and Tom's shadow stumbles in. He flicks on the light to reveal an even more disheveled Tom than earlier, carrying an almost empty whisky bottle in one hand.

He stumbles around the studio, bumping into anything that gets in his way. He picks up a few of the paintings, examines them, and then puts them back down.

Tom makes it over to the old, wooden desk in the back of the garage. He sees the painting of him and Grace at the beach sitting on top of the desk. He picks it up, and stares at it. Tears start rolling down his cheeks.

Tom sits down on top of the desk, still staring at the painting. He reaches down, and slides open the top drawer. He reaches in, pulls out the handgun, and raises it slowly to his head.

TOM

God, why did you let this happen?  
This is not the way it was supposed  
to end.

Tom begins to squeeze the trigger.

TOM (CONT'D)

What do you want from me, God?!

Suddenly, Tom's cell phone begins RINGING loudly in his pocket. He drops the gun on the desk, and pulls out his phone. The caller ID reads, "RACHEL." He answers.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Hello... Yes, this is him... Is  
everything OK?... Of course, I'll  
be right there.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Rachel is laying in a hospital bed with wires and tubes protruding from everywhere. She's unconscious. A nurse is checking her vitals, and documenting them on a clipboard.

Tom bursts into the room, and directly over to her bedside.

TOM  
(to the nurse)  
Is she OK?

NURSE  
Are you her father?

TOM  
No. I'm her uncle. She lives with  
me.

NURSE  
Sir, you don't look so good. Are  
you OK?

TOM  
I'm fine. What about her?

NURSE  
Her vitals look good, at this  
point. We're just gonna monitor her  
for the next couple of days, and  
make sure that she comes out of it  
OK.

TOM  
What happened?

NURSE  
She took a high dosage of a drug  
called Demerol, and mixed it with  
some heavy drinking. When they  
brought her in, she was  
unconscious. We've stabilized her,  
but until she wakes up, we won't be  
sure what kind of damage she's  
done.

TOM  
What kind of damage are we talking?

NURSE

Let's try not to worry about that right now. Just be a comfort to her. Hold her hand. Talk to her -- I have to go order some medications for her. I'll be back in a little bit.

TOM

OK, thanks.

The nurse leaves the room.

Tom looks around at the tubes and wires connected to Rachel's body. He takes her hand, and looks into her face.

TOM (CONT'D)

Rachel, I'm so sorry. I should have been there for you...

He lowers his head, trying to hold himself together.

TOM (CONT'D)

I've been so self absorbed. When your father died...

(choking back tears)

When your father died, I didn't know how to handle it. That's no excuse, but I couldn't see that by being selfish with my own feelings, I wasn't there for the people that needed me most after he was gone. And, I owe you an apology. And, I want you to know that I truly do want you to be a part of my life.

Tom drops to his knees at Rachel's bedside, still holding tightly to her hand. He bows his head, and closes his eyes.

TOM (CONT'D)

God, I understand why you spared my life tonight -- Please help Rachel now, God. Please spare her life too, and give me another chance to be to her what I wasn't able to be even to my wife... Please.

Tom looks up at Rachel's lifeless face -- tears streaming down his cheeks.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - LATER

Tom is slumped in a chair in the waiting room, nearly asleep.

Pastor Ray and Ben walk in. They spot Tom across the room.

BEN  
I'm gonna head back.

PASTOR RAY  
OK. I'll be back in a minute.

Ben heads down the hallway.

Pastor Ray walks over to where Tom is seated. Tom has his eyes closed, and doesn't notice him.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)  
Tom.

Tom opens his eyes, and sits up straight.

TOM  
Hey.

Pastor Ray sits in the empty chair next to him.

PASTOR RAY  
How are you?

TOM  
It's been a rough night.

PASTOR RAY  
I can imagine.  
(beat)  
I heard about Grace, Tom. I can't tell you how sorry I am.

TOM  
Thank you -- I know you were close.

PASTOR RAY  
She meant a lot to a lot of people.

Tom nods.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)  
How are you holding up?

TOM  
The best I can... It's hard to explain. I don't have any delusions about the fact that I'm probably the worst husband that ever put a ring on someone's finger, but that doesn't mean I didn't love her. I did. I do.



PASTOR RAY

I believe you.

TOM

When I first heard, I thought maybe I was being punished. Like, maybe God was waiting to cause me pain for all the pain I've caused others. But, then I remembered what you said, and what I read.

The pastor looks at Tom curiously.

Tom reaches beside him, and picks up Grace's Bible. He opens it to a page that he has marked.

TOM (CONT'D)

(reading)

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

PASTOR RAY

Ahh. And, did you begin to feel a little lighter?

TOM

I sat here and read it again, and again, and again, and it just all started to make sense... I know Grace didn't die because God had some vendetta against me. Grace died because of choices that were made by imperfect people in an evil world.

PASTOR RAY

That's right.

TOM

I also know that she's living -- with the One that gives life. And, I know that despite it all, because He loves me too, I can live as well.

PASTOR RAY

God's love never fails.

TOM

Some things just defy logic, right?

PASTOR RAY

Right. I'm happy that you've come to realize God does love you, and that He has a plan for your life.

TOM

Unfortunately because of some other bad decisions, that plan is lying a hundred feet away in a hospital bed.

PASTOR RAY

Don't worry. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world -- He has it in His hands.

Tom looks intently at Pastor Ray.

TOM

Thank you -- for everything.

PASTOR RAY

No need.

TOM

I mean it.

Pastor Ray takes Tom's hand, and holds it between his hands.

PASTOR RAY

I would do the same for anyone I care about.

Tom's eyes begin to redden.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)

Before I go back, is there anything I can do for you right now?

Tom thinks it over.

TOM

Actually, there is something. But, after you visit with Rachel.

Pastor Ray smiles. He stands up, pats Tom on the shoulder, and heads down the hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Tom is seated at Rachel's bedside, reading the Bible. She has still not come to.

Pastor Ray walks in the room, carrying two cups of coffee.

Tom looks up from his reading.

PASTOR RAY

Morning.

He hands one of the cups to Tom.

TOM

Morning.

PASTOR RAY

How's she doing?

TOM

Still asleep. She's been making some strange groaning sounds. Not sure if it's good or bad.

PASTOR RAY

It sounds good.

Tom gets up, and pulls a chair over for the pastor. Pastor Ray takes a seat.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)

Thanks... Your car is in the parking lot. Second row, near the walkway.

TOM

Thanks. I owe you.

PASTOR RAY

It was my pleasure. Bit of a breezy ride though.

TOM

Yeah, sorry about that. Long story.

PASTOR RAY

You can tell me over breakfast sometime... By the way, I have something for you.

Pastor Ray reaches into his coat pocket, and pulls out Grace's letter, which he's uncrumpled and folded neatly. He hands it to Tom.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)

I found it laying on the sidewalk,  
near the church steps. I figured it  
must've fallen out of your pocket.

Tom unfolds the letter, and stares at it.

TOM

Thank you. I never thought I'd see  
it again.

PASTOR RAY

Important things have a way of  
coming back to us with a little  
help from our friends.

Tom continues staring at the words on the paper.

TOM

Her words -- they're so kind? Can  
you imagine? She's writing to her  
lying, cheating spouse, and all she  
can do is point out what small  
redeeming qualities I have left.

PASTOR RAY

Oh, don't be too hard on yourself.  
But, you're right, she was very  
kind... If you don't mind my  
asking, how did you come to find  
yourselves travelling two separate  
paths?

Tom diverts his gaze from the page, to the floor.

TOM

When we lost our child, I just  
stopped caring, but she didn't. I  
started to only focus on the things  
that I thought couldn't hurt me. I  
started ignoring her needs, working  
all the time, doing what I wanted,  
when I wanted. So I guess in the  
end, all of this is my fault.

PASTOR RAY

I wouldn't say that. She went of  
her own free will.

TOM

Yeah, but I didn't do anything to  
stop her.

PASTOR RAY

She loved helping people. I'm not sure you could have stopped her if you tried.

Tom nods. He turns his attention back to Grace's letter.

TOM

How could she forgive me?

PASTOR RAY

Grace understood forgiveness because she was forgiven herself. Once you grasp the beauty of God's mercy and grace, you no longer need to be trapped by anger and vengeful thoughts.

Tom lets that sink in.

TOM

I guess what I'm really asking is, how can I ever forgive myself?

PASTOR RAY

Are you sorry for what you did?

TOM

Of course.

PASTOR RAY

Have you asked God's forgiveness?

TOM

Yes, many times.

PASTOR RAY

I'm not saying that what you did was right, but you made a mistake. You've repented. Christ died so that we can be stripped of the one thing that stands in the way of us having a relationship with Him; sin. And, He wants us to accept that free gift. The apostle Paul said, I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

TOM

So, because Christ forgave me, I should forgive myself as a way to show that I'm truly changed.

PASTOR RAY

Exactly. You have to. Otherwise,  
how can we be different for those  
around us, who need us.

The pastor looks at Rachel, lying in the hospital bed. Tom's eyes follow suit, and his face seems to express his understanding.

PASTOR RAY (CONT'D)

Well, I need to get going. If  
there's anything you need while I'm  
gone, you know how to reach me.

TOM

You've already done enough.

Pastor Ray smiles, and gets up from his chair.

PASTOR RAY

I'll be back later.

He pats Tom on the shoulder, and then walks out.

SERIES OF SHOTS

HOSPITAL GIFT SHOP - DAY

Tom is wandering around the gift shop, grabbing snacks, magazines, etc. -- it appears that he's preparing to stay as long as needed. He notices a rack of stuffed animals, and walks over, scanning the options for just the right one. He finally notices a small, stuffed teddy bear, and he grabs it off of the rack.

HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Tom enters the room carrying his supplies, and the small teddy bear that he's gotten from the gift shop. He walks over, and gently places it next to Rachel on the bed. He reaches over, and caresses her head, as she lays there motionless.

HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Tom stops one of the doctors as they pass by Rachel's room, to ask about her progress. The doctor pulls Rachel's chart from the rack by the door, and looks it over. When he's reviewed it, he appears to be telling Tom that they're not sure of Rachel's prognosis yet.

HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Tom, Pastor Ray and Ben are having dinner together, and sharing stories. The atmosphere is light, and Tom is smiling.

HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Tom, Pastor Ray and Ben are standing around Rachel's bed, with their heads bowed, praying.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Tom is asleep in a chair at Rachel's bedside. Rachel begins to stir. Tom opens his eyes, and sees her waking up. He jumps up from the chair.

TOM

Rachel.

She opens her eyes, and looks at him.

TOM (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

RACHEL

What happened to you? You look awful.

Tom laughs. Then he leans down, and gives her a big kiss on the forehead. She just lays there staring at him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Are you OK?

TOM

Yes -- I am.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Rachel's backpack is sitting on the bed, and she is stuffing all of her personal belongings into it.

Tom walks in the room, pushing a wheelchair.

RACHEL

I can walk.

TOM

Hospital policy.

Rachel rolls her eyes.

RACHEL  
I'm so glad to be getting out of  
here.

TOM  
Do you have everything?

RACHEL  
Yeah, I think so.

Rachel zips up her backpack, and then walks over and plops  
down in the wheelchair.

TOM  
OK, lets go.

Tom pushes Rachel out of the room, into -

THE HALLWAY

They begin down the hall, when Rachel suddenly puts her feet  
down on the floor. The wheelchair comes to a screeching halt.

RACHEL  
Hold on.

She jumps up from the wheelchair, runs back down the hallway,  
and back into -

THE HOPSITAL ROOM

where she begins searching all around the hospital bed. She  
looks high and low, and then finally crouches to look under  
the bed. She reaches under, and pulls out the teddy bear that  
Tom had given her.

Rachel runs back out of the room, into -

THE HALLWAY

where she races back to the wheelchair and takes a seat once  
again, clutching tightly the stuffed bear.

As Tom watches the scene unfold, he can't help but smile.

INT. CHURCH - GRACE'S FUNERAL SERVICE

The casket is piled high with flowers, and hundreds fill the  
pews. In the front row is Rachel, Pastor Ray and Ben.

Tom has just walked up to the podium. He clears his throat,  
and takes a deep breath.



TOM

Thank you all for coming. Grace would have been touched -- A wise man once told me, "You don't have to pay the price of salvation, you just have to know the cost." I think every time we suffer a loss in this life, we get a tiny glimpse of what God goes through whenever one of His is lost. Grace, my beautiful wife, certainly was not one of God's lost sheep. She was faithful, and kind, selfless, and loving. Romans 8:28 tells us that, "all things work together for the good of those who love God." Grace certainly loved God in life, and in death. And, although God did not take Grace from us as punishment, He is using her life and her death as a way to work good in our lives. Although I feel the full weight of her loss, through this tragedy I have come to know my Savior, and His great grace. I think that would have been enough for Grace. I miss my wife terr...

Tom begins to choke up, but composes himself.

TOM (CONT'D)

...I miss my wife terribly. But, I know that I'll see her again. And, until I do, God has a plan for me in this life. So, along with all the tears and well wishes, let's celebrate the incredible person that Grace was because of what Jesus did in her life. And, let's praise Him, that He loved us enough to give us Grace.

Tom walks away from the podium, descends the steps, and walks over to the casket. He places both hands on top, and leans in.

TOM (CONT'D)

(in a whisper)

Grace. I love you, and I can't wait to see you again.

## EXT. GRAVEYARD - GRACE'S BURIAL

Grace's casket sits above a freshly dug grave. All of her friends and family stand around the casket.

Pastor Ray stands at a small podium next to the grave, addressing the group.

PASTOR RAY

One thing that Grace loved was the expression of God's beauty through art. She also loved to worship God in music. So, we have a special piece of music that will be sung by Grace's niece, Rachel.

(looks at Rachel)

Ready?

Rachel steps out from the crowd, and walks over to the podium.

Ben heads over with his guitar in hand, and takes his place next to Rachel. He looks over at her, and she looks back at him. Ben begins playing the song that he and Rachel had been rehearsing.

When it's time, Rachel begins to SING. Her voice is beautiful and moving.

## EXT. GRAVEYARD - DANNY'S GRAVE

A large gravestone that reads, "DANNY LARSON - BELOVED HUSBAND AND FATHER - IN HER EYES I FOUND LOVE - 1971-2010."

Rachel is seated on the ground in front of the gravestone. Tom walks up behind her, and stands next to her.

TOM

I can't believe it's been 5 years.

RACHEL

It still hurts. Is it supposed to?

TOM

Not a day goes by that I don't wish my phone would ring, and I'd pick it up, and he'd be on the other end spouting off one of his stupid jokes.

Rachel manages a smile.

Tom sits down on the ground next to her. For a moment, there's a reverent silence.

TOM (CONT'D)

Rachel, I can never be to you what your father would have been. And, I can't replace him in your life. But, I want you to know that I love you, and I'll do everything I can to protect you, and make sure that you have the best life possible. The life that God intended for both of us to have, together.

She wraps her arm around him, and lays her head on his shoulder.

RACHEL

I know. I love you too.

The two of them sit together -- silently, peacefully -- staring at Danny's gravestone.

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

The door swings open, and Tom walks in lugging a couple of large suit cases. Following him through the door are Caroline -- still strung out -- and Rachel.

TOM

Come on, upstairs. I'll show you your room.

Tom starts up the steps. Caroline and Rachel continue to follow after him.

CAROLINE

Thanks so much for doing this. I promise as soon as I'm able to, I'll be out of here. I promise I won't be a burden.

TOM

You can stay as long as you need to.

They reach the top of the stairs, and start down...

THE HALLWAY

until they reach the bedroom door across from Rachel's room. Tom bumps the door with his shoulder, and it swings open. He walks in, and drops the suitcases just inside the door.

TOM (CONT'D)

This is it.

Caroline steps into the room, and looks around at her new surroundings. Her eyes begin to redden, and tears well up. She turns to Tom, and puts her hands to his cheeks.

CAROLINE

You're a wonderful man for doing this. I don't know how I can thank you.

TOM

Stop thanking me. I'm happy to do it, as long as you're getting better.

CAROLINE

I promise

TOM

Why don't you get some rest.

Tom looks at Rachel.

TOM (CONT'D)

You ready?

Tom and Rachel exit the room, closing the door behind them.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A long, empty stretch of beach. The sun is shining, and the waves are crashing gently on the shore.

Tom sits on a blanket with Grace's bible open next to him -- the pages blowing gently back-and-forth with the steady ocean breeze.

Rachel comes bounding up from the waters edge. She gets a few feet from Tom, and waves him on with her hand.

RACHEL

Come on. It's fun!

TOM

I'll be right there.

Rachel runs back down to the water, and jumps into an oncoming wave. She LAUGHS with delight.

Tom sits on the blanket watching Rachel splash around in the water for a moment. Then he stares off into the horizon -- a peaceful, joyful look on his face.

FADE OUT.

THE END

