

A Narrow Bridge

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FADE IN

We see a hand intently sanding an ornate book shelf. Billie Holiday plays softly in the background.

INT. JACOB'S WORKROOM -- NIGHT

JACOB FISCHER, 30's, an Orthodox Jew in traditional garb, white shirt, dark pants, *tzitzis* (traditional fringed undergarment), beard, and *yarmulka* (head covering), is putting the finishing touches on a massive hand-carved book shelf. With his sleeves rolled up and sweat on his brow, he is hard at work. He hums along with the music. The door opens, and RUTH, also 30's, Jacob's attractive, conservatively-dressed wife, sticks her head in.

RUTH

Come to bed, Jacob. You've been holed up in here for hours.

JACOB

I promised Mrs. Shapiro I'd have her bookshelf done by the weekend.

RUTH

(running her hand
over the carved
details)

It's really beautiful.

JACOB

Wait til I stain it.

RUTH

Now? It's past midnight.

Jacob turns off the CD and puts his arm around Ruth.

JACOB

You win.

He turns out the lights.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET DAY

Early morning rush hour on a Brooklyn street. A blast of New York diversity: Korean markets, Sikh pedestrians, Latino music, Indian restaurants, Orthodox Jews, black, white, old,

young. A public bus opens its doors and lets on waiting passengers. The doors close, the bus moves down the street, brakes at the light. We see Jacob, with a black coat and fedora, step out of his modest row-house and begin his walk to work.

EXT. NEWSTAND DAY

Jacob picks up the New York Post and tosses a bill to the vendor. The headline on the paper reads "Terror Alert in Greater New York Area."

JACOB
Mornin'.

VENDOR
Rabbi.

JACOB
I'm not a rabbi. I'm a cantor.

VENDOR
What's the difference?

JACOB
One talks, the other sings.
(a beat)
I'm the singer.

VENDOR
Oh yeah? So sing something.

Jacob leans in and sings along with the portable radio in the newstand.

JACOB
"You can't always get what you want
But if you try some time
You just might find
You get what you need."

The Vendor and Jacob playfully knock fists.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Love those oldies.

Jacob continues walking.

EXT. CROSSWALK DAY

Jacob stands at a busy crosswalk waiting for the light to change. He glances at the newspaper. DAVID, orthodox, 30's, steps up next to him.

JACOB

David! Good to see you.

They shake hands.

JACOB (CONT'D)

How's your mother?

DAVID

Good, thank God. Her new knee is better than the old one.

JACOB

No problem walking?

DAVID

Problem? I'm worried she'll take up soccer.

JACOB

She'd make a good goalie.
(they laugh)

DAVID

How's the furniture business these days?

JACOB

Can't complain. It pays the bills.
One job for my hands, one for my head.

(a beat)

Will I see you at study group tonight?

DAVID

7:30.

Jacob nods and they part ways.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Jacob enters a crowded kosher bakery and takes a number.
The Orthodox PATRONS -- young MOTHERS with BABIES in

strollers, TEENAGERS, older PEOPLE -- all wait for their turn.

INT. BAKERY -- DAY

As Jacob waits, he reads the newspaper. TWO ORTHODOX TEENAGERS banter as they stand in line. ZIMMERMAN, a fat boy, stands in front of them.

ORTHODOX BOY #1
Only one cherry Danish left and
Zimmerman's gonna get it.

ORTHODOX BOY #2
Quit shoving.

ORTHODOX BOY #1
Shut up asshole!

Jacob hits him playfully on the back of the head.

JACOB
Gentlemen. Nice to see you're
reviewing for anatomy class.

The boys exchange looks. Zimmerman crosses in front of Jacob, eating his Danish.

ZIMMERMAN
Hey Cantor, how'd the Knicks do last
night?

Jacob opens to the sports page.

JACOB
Big upset. They beat Miami by 12.

ZIMMERMAN
(to the boys)
Told you!

CLERK
Next?

JACOB
(conspiratorily)
They usually keep a few cherry danish
in back.

The boys approach the counter.

EXT. SYNAGOGUE DAY

Jacob unlocks the front door of the synagogue and enters with the bakery bag in hand.

INT. SYNAGOGUE DAY

Jacob passes JORGE, the janitor, a Latino man in his 60's, in the foyer and hands him the bag and coffee.

JORGE
(peering in the bag)
You know my weakness.

JACOB
Did you find the leak?

JORGE
Took care of it. Anything else?

JACOB
Enjoy your breakfast.

INT. SYNAGOGUE CLASSROOM -- DAY

Jacob stands in front of the class as his high school students wander in. They are Orthodox in dress and demeanor. As the boys take their seats, Jacob starts to hum a tune, a haunting *niggun* (melody) which will prepare the students for the serious study ahead.

At first, he hums softly, but as the boys settle down in their seats and begin to hum along, his humming grows more ecstatic. Soon the hum becomes a la-la-la and the room buzzes with energy. Finally, Jacob adds words to the melody, words in Hebrew.

JACOB
(singing)
Kol Ha'olam kulo gesher tzar me'od
Gesher tzar me'od...

The boys join him. By the second time through the song, Jacob has closed his eyes and seems to be in some kind of spiritual trance. Many of the students are similarly absorbed by the music. The singing comes to an end and Jacob returns to earth.

JACOB (CONT'D)
What do these words mean?
The whole world is a narrow bridge
And we must not be afraid.

Jacob holds out his arms as if balancing on a thin beam. He treads carefully, peering at the imagined dangers below.

JACOB (CONT'D)
A narrow bridge --
(a beat as he balances himself)
What's down there? Jagged rocks?
Rushing water? Animals with sharp teeth?
(a beat)
Pretty unlikely in Brooklyn. So what is it down there? What are we so afraid of?
(a beat to let the questions register)

Hands shoot up across the room.

JACOB (CONT'D)
(pointing to an older boy)
Avrum?

INT. FISCHER LIVING ROOM-- EVENING

Jacob sits at the piano with SARAH, 4, blonde ringlets, big eyes, pink cheeks, radiant with life and intelligence. The living room is filled with overstuffed and slightly worn furniture; although the room has been straightened up, it is evident that much-loved children live here. YOSSI, 9, athletic and all-boy, sits playing on the couch with MIRIAM, 6, an older version of Sarah. Jacob plunks out "Itsy Bitsy Spider."

JACOB
"The Itsy Bitsy Spider climbed up
the water spout..."

He nods to Sarah who hits the wrong note. He shows her the correct note before continuing

JACOB AND SARAH
 "Down came the rain
 And washed the spider out..."

He nods and she hits the correct note this time.

JACOB AND SARAH (CONT'D)
 "Out came the sun
 And dried up all the rain."

She hits the note again.

JACOB AND SARAH (CONT'D)
 "And the itsy bitsy spider
 Climbed up the spout again!"

Sarah plunks out a final rhythm

(bum, bum, bum, bum, bum -- bum-bum).

JACOB
 Very good!

He hugs her.

ANGLE ON

Yossi and Miriam are playing on the couch. Yossi is tapping out a song on Miriam's back.

MIRIAM
 Do it again.

He taps again, but harder.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
 Stop hitting me!

YOSSI
 I'm not hitting, I'm drumming.

MIRIAM
 Daddy!

JACOB
 Gently, Yossi.

They resume the game. Yossi rhythmically hits her back.

MIRIAM
I give up! What is it?

YOSSI
(singing and banging
the rhythm on her
back)
"If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands!"

MIRIAM
Daddy, he's hitting me again.

JACOB
Enough!

Ruth is heard calling them to the table.

RUTH (O.S.)
Stop the nonsense in there and come
to the table. We've got candles to
light.

JACOB
(to the children)
You heard your mother. Go!

Jacob picks Sarah up and carries her into the dining room.
Yossi continues to poke Miriam with the song rhythm as they
move to the dining room.

INT. FISHER DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ruth, Miriam, Sarah, and HAVA, 60, Jacob's mother, stand
together before the lit candles. The table is lavishly set,
with a bouquet of red roses in the center.

WOMEN
Le'hadlik ner shel shabbat...

FAMILY
Amen.

Jacob summons his children and warmly embraces them with his
blessing.

JACOB
May you grow to be strong and
righteous, may you become men and
(MORE)

JACOB (CONT'D)
women of truth who love the Lord and
serve Him. May God protect you and
keep you on this Shabbat and always.

Jacob kisses each of the children. He closes his eyes and hums softly to himself, deep in prayer. Yossi uses this opportunity to poke Miriam again. Miriam swats him away. Hava separates the children.

HAVA
(whispering)
Your father is praying.

Jacob motions for Ruth to come close to him.

JACOB
A prayer for my wife, who runs this
home and makes my life so easy. *Eshet
Hayil, mi yimtzah?*
(he continues to pray
silently)

HAVA
(to Ruth, softly)
Everyone says he looks like me, but
as he gets older, I think he looks
more like his father.

Jacob finishes the prayer and closes his book. He kisses Ruth and then hugs his mother.

JACOB
I miss him too, ma.

INT. FISHER KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Ruth is at the kitchen sink, while Jacob brings her the dishes.

JACOB
Dinner was delicious tonight.

RUTH
Uh-huh.
(pause)
I don't know what's gotten into Miriam lately. She's constantly starting fights with Yossi or picking on Sarah.

JACOB
Maybe she needs more attention.

RUTH
More attention? What do you want me
to do? Chew for her?

Jacob mimes being stabbed by her sarcasm. They smile at each other.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Hand me that platter.
(he passes it to her)
Are you coming to your sister's on
Sunday? I promised the kids they
could see the new baby.

JACOB
I can't -- starting a new study group.
You go. I'll come after lunch --
and then we can take the kids to the
zoo.

Hava enters the kitchen with the two girls and Yossi right behind. Each child carries a dirty dish.

HAVA
Here comes the dirty dish parade!
Jacob, put that pot down. I'll be
right there, Ruth.

JACOB
It's o.k., Mom. We can finish up.
You go relax with the kids.

The girls are now chasing each other around the kitchen.

HAVA
Come, girls. I'll read you a story.

They leave and Jacob embraces Ruth at the sink. He kisses her neck, and she giggles seductively.

JACOB
I love the way you smell.

RUTH
Quiet -- the children will hear you.

JACOB
(whispering in her
ear)
I love the way you smell.

She smiles, puts her soapy hands on her face, and kisses him: first on the eyes and then on the mouth.

RUTH
(whispering)
Let me finish.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET -- DAY

Jacob walks his family to the bus. Yossi is on one side, dribbling a basketball, and Jacob holds Sarah's hand on the other. The street is crowded with people heading out on this fine spring day. Ruth holds Miriam's hand. The children talk almost simultaneously, vying for Jacob's attention.

YOSSI
Saul said he'd teach me to do a lay
up --

JACOB
Good. Dribble with your left hand.
You have to be able to go to the
left.

Yossi switches to his left hand awkwardly, and they continue walking.

SARAH
When we get to the zoo, can we look
at the penguins a long time?

JACOB
(to Sarah)
A long time.
(to Yossi)
How're you doing with your free
throws?

MIRIAM
Don't forget the monkeys and the
seals.

JACOB
The monkeys are my favorite.

YOSSI
Nothing but net...

Ruth gives him a look.

YOSSI (CONT'D)
...sometimes.

MIRIAM
I can make free throws.

YOSSI
She grannies.

Yossi mimics throwing underhanded from a squatting position.

MIRIAM
So? They go in, don't they?

The bus approaches and the door opens.

RUTH
We'll see you after lunch.

Ruth gets on first, and Yossi and Miriam follow, bickering.

YOSSI
The back is empty. I call it!

MIRIAM
I called it first.

YOSSI
No you didn't.

MIRIAM
Yes I did. I whispered it.

RUTH
Will the two of you stop it?

Sarah motions for Jacob to bend down.

SARAH
(whispering)
I'm going to go to the back of the
bus and I'm going to wave to you.

JACOB
Okay, and I'll wave back.

SARAH
Until you can't see me anymore?

JACOB
Until you disappear.

Sarah boards the bus. She joins Ruth, Miriam, and Yossi in the back seat. Jacob watches the bus as it pulls from the stop. Sarah turns to her father, presses her face against the window, and waves. Jacob returns the wave.

He continues waving as the bus moves into traffic. As it enters the intersection, THE BUS EXPLODES IN A BALL OF FLAME. THE BUS IS INSTANTLY DESTROYED. THERE WILL BE NO SURVIVORS..

Jacob's world goes silent. In slow motion, all hell breaks loose. Chaos. Wounded PEDESTRIANS cover their faces and recoil from the horror. There is fire, shrapnel, and blood everywhere. The bus is a smoldering skeleton.

Jacob's face reveals a mixture of horror and disbelief. The screen fades to white as the sounds of the scene surge: sirens, screams, weeping, reality.

CUT TO:

INT. HAVA'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

It is *shiva*, the Jewish practice of staying home and receiving visitors for a seven day period after burial. Jacob, exhausted and dissheveled, wearing a torn jacket (to indicate mourning), sits on the traditional low chair in his mother's living room. RELATIVES and FRIENDS whisper softly, out of Jacob's earshot. David, whom we met earlier at the bus stop, talks with two other FRIENDS.

DAVID
I came to show respect -- but the truth is I'm terrified to leave the house. I'm afraid of everything.

FRIEND #1
And who isn't? I won't let my kids ride the bus.

FRIEND #2
In Israel, things explode all the time, and they just go about their business.

FRIEND #1

But this is Brooklyn, not Tel Aviv.

FRIEND #2

They want to make you afraid. That's the whole point.

DAVID

It will pass. I never thought we would go back to normal after 9/11, but we did.

FRIEND #2

I heard that the government has already made some arrests --

FRIEND #1

(looking at Jacob)

What good does that do him?

They look at Jacob. David approaches the RABBI, mid- 50's, Orthodox, traditional dress; they speak in whispers.

DAVID

He just sits. Doesn't talk. Doesn't move. I don't know what to do.

RABBI

There's nothing you can do.

(he looks at Jacob)

Don't leave him alone.

Hava hands NAOMI, Jacob's very pregnant sister, a plate of food.

HAVA

See if you brother will eat something.

Naomi hands him the plate, and Jacob looks at her vacantly. He puts the food by his side. Naomi looks at Hava and shakes her head.

The RABBI distributes prayer books and the MOURNERS ready themselves for prayer. Jacob stands up and moves toward the bedroom. David follows at a discreet distance. Jacob enters the bathroom and closes the door. David waits outside.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jacob leans against the bathroom door. He is alone. The bathroom has two doors: one to the hallway and one to the bedroom. The mirror is covered in traditional mourning observance. As if driven by some unseen force, Jacob exits through the opposite door that leads to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Jacob looks out the window at the city below. He quietly steps out the door that leads to the outside.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

David is beginning to get concerned. He knocks softly on the bathroom door.

DAVID

Jacob, you o.k.?

When there is no response, the knocking becomes more insistent.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Yakov?

He jiggles the doorknob. The bathroom door is unlocked. David cautiously enters; Jacob is nowhere in sight.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS -- NIGHT

Jacob walks. He wanders in a fugue state through the streets, all the way across the Brooklyn Bridge.

INT. HAVA'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

A few mourners are gathered around David, Hava, and the Rabbi.

RABBI

Maybe he just went for a walk. I'm sure he'll show up.

HAVA

(breaking down)

I can't take any more of this.

David summons his WIFE to help Hava to her bedroom.

DAVID'S WIFE

Don't worry. Jacob just needed to be by himself for awhile. He probably went for a walk to get some air. He'll be home soon. Come, you need to lie down.

She escorts her to the bedroom.

RABBI

(to David)

If he doesn't show up soon, we'll call the police.

EXT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION -- NIGHT

Jacob gets lost in the crowd as he approaches the station.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION MEN'S RESTROOM -- NIGHT

Jacob enters the restroom and approaches the sink. A STREET PERSON is babbling to himself.

STREET PERSON

You crazy motherfucker. You crazy motherfucker. You think you can do that to me? I'll take a bomb and shove it up your ass. I'll blow you up from the inside, motherfucker.

Jacob freezes. A split second FLASHBACK to the bus exploding.

A Port Authority SECURITY OFFICER approaches the Street Person.

OFFICER

You finished your business in here?

STREET PERSON

I have to take a piss.

OFFICER

(indicating the urinal)

Well then, do it.

Street Person urinates on himself.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

I guess you're done. Move on out.

Street Person shuffles out of the bathroom. The officer follows.

Jacob stares at himself in the mirror. He touches his beard and fingers his earlocks. It's as if he is looking at a stranger. He moves in slow motion. His odd appearance catches the attention of a HOMELESS MAN giving himself a spongebath and a shave.

HOMELESS MAN
Did you catch that? Nutjob pissed himself.

Jacob is embarrassed but can't respond.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
Takes all kinds.

The Homeless Man throws away his razor, gathers his belongings, and leaves.

Jacob removes his jacket, *tzitzis* (prayer undergarment) and yarmulkah (head covering) and deliberately places them in the trash. He retrieves the razor from the trash and cuts off his earlocks. He lathers his face with the handsoap and starts to shave.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION -- NIGHT

Jacob wanders through the station in a trance-like state. With a clean-shaven face and only his shirt sleeves, he bears little resemblance to the orthodox cantor he was a few hours before. Over the loudspeaker, we hear:

PUBLIC ANNOUNCER
The Crescent Line will be departing
in 10 minutes from Platform 19.
Stops in New Jersey, Pennsylvania,
Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina,
South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama,
Mississippi, and Louisiana.

Jacob follows the voice and gets on the train.

EXT. TRAIN -- DAY

The train pulls out of Northeastern industrial town and into the vast countryside.

INT. TRAIN -- LATE AFTERNOON

Jacob is still asleep as the CONDUCTOR stops by. He wakes him up.

CONDUCTOR
Ticket?

Jacob doesn't respond.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
(louder)
Where you headin'?

Jacob looks confused.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
(louder still)
Where you going?

Jacob still doesn't respond.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
If you don't know where you're going,
I have to charge you for the end of
the line.

The conductor's walkie-talkie squawks.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
(into his walkie-talkie)
Yes. I speak Polish. I'll be right
there.

He turns and leaves the car.

INT. TRAIN -- NIGHT

Jacob is curled up in a ball like a child, deeply asleep, as the train hurls through the night.

INT. TRAIN -- CONTINUOUS

Jacob is dozing, his head against the window. The train has filled up. An elderly WOMAN comes down the aisle with her suitcases. She is about to sit down next to Jacob, but when he starts to make whimpering noises, she continues to the next available row.

EXT. TRAIN -- DAY

The train pulls into a small Southern town: Brent, Alabama. This is a town of approximately 5,000 people, predominantly black, average annual income of \$25,000.

INT. TRAIN -- CONTINUOUS

Jacob opens his eyes as the train comes to a stop. Disoriented, he gets off the train.

INT. HAVA'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Hava and the Rabbi are giving a report to an attentive plain clothes DETECTIVE. He takes notes and listen to the distraught family. Hava hands the detective a photo of a bearded Jacob with Ruth and the children.

HAVA

This was taken last year.

DETECTIVE

Thank you.

(he looks at the
picture)

I'm sorry for your loss.

(a beat)

I want you to understand that this could take some time. When an adult disappears of their own free will, there's not much to go on.

RABBI

So what happens now?

DETECTIVE

We add him to the Missing Persons Data Bank, post some bulletins. And we wait. Sometimes we get lucky.

On Hava's reaction.

EXT. SOUTHERN TOWN -- NIGHT

Jacob walks through residential streets and into the center of town. Many businesses are boarded up and the streets are sparsely populated. He walks and walks. Church bells ring in the distance. He finally stops to rest on the steps of the First Baptist Church.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

ROSIE YARBER, lovely Black woman in her early 30's, enters the kitchen of her simple wood-framed home directly across the street from the church. She takes a glass of water from the sink. The phone rings.

ROSIE

Yes, this is Rose Ellen Yarber.

(pause)

How did you get my number?

(pause)

No, I don't know where Robert Yarber is. We've been divorced for over a year.

(pause)

He doesn't return my phone calls either.

(pause)

He owes me money, too.

(pause)

It's not my problem anymore.

She slams down the phone.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

Son of a bitch.

She takes a long drink of water and collects her thoughts. She looks out from her window to see Jacob's resting figure on the church steps.

INT. ROSIE'S HALLWAY -- NIGHT

On her way back to bed, Rosie double bolts the front door lock.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- MORNING

LANGSTON YARBER, Rosie's 8 year old son, is seated at the kitchen table with a bowl of cereal. Rosie is rushing around the kitchen, trying to get herself ready for work and her son ready for school.

LANGSTON

Hey Ma. I got one for you. You'll like this--

(reading from the box)

What building has the most stories?

ROSIE
(distracted)
I don't know. I give up.

LANGSTON
The library!

ROSIE
Good one.
(a beat)
Did you pack your reading book?

LANGSTON
Yeah.
(she looks at him; he
takes the correction)
Yes Ma'am.
(she nods approvingly)

ROSIE
Do you want to buy your lunch today
or should I make you a sandwich?

Langston is reading the cereal box and ignores his mother.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
Langston Yarber, do you hear me?
I've got enough to do this morning
without having to repeat myself.

LANGSTON
Buy lunch.

Rosie fumbles for her wallet and leaves some bills on the table.

ROSIE
You come straight home today. No
dawdling.

LANGSTON
Yes Ma'am.

ROSIE
Uncle Mo will walk you to school.
Now go brush your teeth --

As Langston exits, Rosie walks down the hallway to a closed bedroom door. She knocks on the door.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Mo? I'm leaving.

(no response)

Faculty meeting.

(no response)

I got to go now. Langston is ready.

INT. MO'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

MO LACOMBE, 60's, grumpily opens the door. The television can be heard blaring in the background.

MO

Don't worry, Rosie. I've got it covered.

On the television screen:

NEWSCASTER

... The FBI continues to investigate leads on the Brooklyn terrorist attack. On a sad note, the bus driver died yesterday from wounds sustained in the bombing, bringing the death toll to 111.

Mo reluctantly shuts off the t.v.

MO

The world's on a short fuse and I got to get a boy to school.

EXT. ROSIE'S STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

Rosie throws her briefcase in the back of her old American sedan. She is about to start the engine when she sees Jacob sprawled out on the church steps. She quickly gets out of the car and walks back in the house.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Mo is pouring a cup of coffee as Rosie re-enters the house.

MO

Wha'd you forget?

ROSIE

Nothing.

(MORE)

ROSIE (CONT'D)

I just wanted to tell you to watch out for that white guy on the church steps. He's been there since last night.

(a beat)

Make him leave. We don't need some drunk hanging around here.

EXT. CHURCH STEPS -- MORNING

Mo carries Langston's back pack on their way to school. They pass by Jacob who is sleeping deeply on the church steps.

LANGSTON

What's wrong with him?

MO

Looks like he's pretty damn tired.

Mo takes Langston's hand.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM -- DAY

Rosie is teaching a World Literature class. The STUDENTS are a mixed group, mostly black, extremely attentive. They clearly love Rosie.

Across the top of the blackboard there is a heading: "CONFLICTS IN LITERATURE". Underneath, there is one column with the heading "Man vs. Man," with a list which includes "wars between countries, rich vs. poor, men vs. women, white vs. black, individual needs vs. social rules." Underneath a second column with the heading "Man vs. Nature," the list includes "floods, hurricanes, disease, wild animals, earthquakes, famine."

STUDENT #1

Why should I care about James Joyce?
I don't have a drop of Irish blood
in me.

(the class laughs)

ROSIE

Why should you care about Shakespeare
or Moliere or Sophocles? Why should
you care about any of the books you
read this year?

(MORE)

ROSIE (CONT'D)
 (the class gets serious)
 Because it tells you something about
 your world, yourself.

STUDENT #1
 People in my world don't talk like
 that.

ROSIE
 Yeah, but they care about the same
 things. They deal with the same
 conflicts. Come on, folks, there's
 one more category. Any ideas?

The class is silent.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
 (she points to the
 board)
 We came up with two categories: Man
 vs. Man, Man vs. Nature. These are
 both external conflicts. Think,
 people.
 (a beat)
 What's your biggest obstacle?

STUDENT #2
 I get in my own way.

ROSIE
 (excited)
 Right! Some of our toughest moments
 in life are when we're in conflict
 with ourselves.

Rosie turns and writes "man vs. self" on the board.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHURCH STEPS -- AFTERNOON

Jacob is lying on his back with his eyes open. Mo approaches
 with a sandwich and a cup of coffee. Jacob sits up.

MO
 Here. You look like you could use
 this.

Jacob looks at him and gratefully accepts the offering, but he doesn't reply. Jacob takes a huge bite.

MO (CONT'D)
You sure are hungry.

Jacob tears into the sandwich.

MO (CONT'D)
Where you from?

Jacob looks at him but doesn't talk.

MO (CONT'D)
You need help? You have family in
these parts?

Jacob looks at him blankly. Mo grows frustrated.

MO (CONT'D)
You speak English?

Jacob is confused. There seems to be some understanding in his look, but not enough to muster a response. Jacob finishes the sandwich.

MO (CONT'D)
Listen buddy, I don't know what your
story is, but people will be wondering
what you're doing hanging around
here. You're going to have to move
on.

Jacob doesn't move.

MO (CONT'D)
Move!
(he makes a gesture
to shoo him away)
You can't stay here.

Jacob gets to his feet and moves off. Mo watches him go. Then he takes out his keys and unlocks the church doors.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Mo goes about his chores -- sweeping the floors and tidying the pews. As he cleans the windows, he sees Jacob who has moved under a tree in the church yard. He shakes his head and goes on with his work.

EXT. CHURCH YARD -- LATER

Mo leaves the church and turns on the hose to water the flower bed. He notices that Jacob is no longer under the tree.

EXT. CHURCH ALLEY -- LATER

Mo goes out to the dumpster in the alley. He finds Jacob asleep on the ground. He loudly dumps the garbage, startling Jacob awake.

MO

Didn't I tell you to leave?

Jacob gets up and walks away from the church.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER'S LOUNGE -- AFTERNOON

Rosie sits with a stack of essays when EDMOND SCOTT, handsome, well-dressed black man in his mid 30's, enters the classroom.

EDMOND

So do you miss teaching in a big city school?

ROSIE

The work load's about the same. All these essays. That's the problem with teaching English. I want my students to write so they'll improve. But I can never keep up with all the reading.

EDMOND

That's the beauty of mathematics. It's either right or wrong.

(a beat)

I know you from church -- right?

ROSIE

First Baptist.

EDMOND

You're in the choir.

ROSIE

Soprano.

EDMOND

You know, I sing tenor. I've been thinking about joining the choir.

ROSIE

We always welcome another voice for God. Tuesday evenings, 7 o'clock.

An awkward silence. She focuses on her papers. He starts to leave and then turns back.

EDMOND

Would you like to have a cup of coffee with me when you finish your work?

ROSIE

Thank you, but I've got to get home. My son... I have a son.

EDMOND

And a husband?

ROSIE

(a beat)

No, no husband.

EDMOND

Well then, maybe another day?

ROSIE

(distracted by her work)

Maybe.

EXT. DOWNTOWN -- MORNING

Mo is driving into town to buy groceries. As he drives past the park, he sees Jacob slumped on a bench.

INT. GROCERY STORE -- LATER

Mo is at the check-out making small talk with LORETTA, an overweight, middle-aged cashier. She wears a yellow ribbon and an American flag on her apron.

MO

How's your boy, Loretta?

LORETTA

He'll be home in 32 days.

MO
 Countin' short. When I was in Viet
 Nam, that last month felt like a
 year.

LORETTA
 We just pray that he comes home safe.

MO
 I'll put in a good word for him on
 Sunday.

LORETTA
 Appreciate that, Mo.
 (she finishes ringing)
 That's 39 dollars even.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PARK -- LATER

Mo drives past the park. Jacob is no longer on the bench.
 Just to make sure he's gone, Mo drives around the perimeter
 of the park. No sight of him.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- THE NEXT DAY

Mo is washing dishes at the kitchen sink. He sees from the
 window that Jacob is back where he was the first morning he
 arrived in town -- on the church steps.

MO
 (to himself)
 Like a damn lost dog.

EXT. CHURCH STEPS -- CONTINUOUS

Mo crosses the street and approaches Jacob. He sits down
 next to him.

MO
 You got nowhere to go?
 (pause)
 You don't look dangerous to me.
 (pause)
 Just down on your luck. And you
 smell pretty ripe. You could use
 some soap and water. Come with me.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Mo takes Jacob into the church caretaker's room, a bare basement room with a cot, toilet, sink, and shower. He keeps up a steady banter.

MO

I used to live here until Rosie moved back to town. Says it ain't right for me to be by myself all the time. Besides, she needs help with the boy. I'm pretty good with kids -- never had any of my own.

He pulls out a blanket and a towel from under the bed.

MO (CONT'D)

You get yourself cleaned up, have a decent night's sleep. I'll see that you get something to eat. But tomorrow, you've got to move on. Go home.

(a beat)

You got a home, don't you? I guess that don't matter much. You just can't stay here.

Jacob sits down on the bed.

MO (CONT'D)

You understand me? This is just for tonight.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- MORNING

Mo is preparing a large breakfast. Langston is engrossed in his cereal box. Rosie pours herself a cup of coffee.

ROSIE

(to Langston)

I won't be home til 9. Back-to-school night. You and Uncle Mo can fend for yourselves.

(she notices that Mo is cooking)

You eating eggs with the yolks?

MO

I'm making eggs with some yellow in 'em --

ROSIE

The doctor said that's not good for you.

MO

Yes, he did. He did, he did... I guess we won't tell him.
(he winks at Langston)

Mo continues to put the plate together without comment.
Rosie sips her coffee.

MO (CONT'D)

Where's the strawberry jelly?

Rosie indicates with her head. Mo puts the jelly on the toast. Rosie watches curiously.

ROSIE

(to Langston)

Stop messing around and eat your breakfast. It makes your body run all day.

MO

I think I'll eat mine while I fix that shaky pew down front.
(a beat)
See you all later.

Mo puts on an extra shirt from the back of the chair and leaves with the plate. Rosie watches him cross the street through the window.

ROSIE

(cleaning up)

O.K., let's get a move on. We're gonna' be late.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- MORNING

Mo knocks softly and enters the room. Jacob is awake but not moving.

MO

Not a bad bed, huh?
(pause)

I brought you something to eat.

Jacob rises to his feet and takes the plate from Mo.

MO (CONT'D)
I brought you a clean shirt, too.

Mo peals off his outer shirt and gives it to Jacob.

MO (CONT'D)
You can eat, change, and head back
to wherever you came from. Is that
clear? You eat --
 (he mimes eating)
You change --
 (he mimes changing
 his shirt)
You go.

Mo makes a "move on" gesture.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET -- DAY

Hava gets off the bus and walks down the street. She
approaches Jacob's row house and opens the mailbox.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE IN BROOKLYN -- ESTABLISHING SHOT

Hava opens the door with her key and enters.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Hava glances at the envelopes and adds them to the
considerable pile on the entry hall table. She looks around
the house -- quiet, painful -- and leaves.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

A NEIGHBOR, a young mother of Ruth's age and dress, is
returning home with groceries and sees Hava in the yard.

NEIGHBOR
Any word, Mrs. Fischer?

HAVA
Not yet. The police say all we can
do is wait.

Hava turns on the hose and starts watering the lawn.

NEIGHBOR
Can't somebody else do that?

HAVA

What? I should let his garden die?

NEIGHBOR

If you need help, let me know. My son can take care of the yard.

HAVA

I don't mind. Really. It gives me something to do.

She points the hose toward the flower bed.

EXT. CHURCH -- LATER

Mo is watering the flowers in front of the church. Jacob approaches.

MO

The train station is straight through town. Just stay on this road. I've got to get to work.

Mo goes into the church.

INT. CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

Mo picks up a broom and sweeps the entry way. Jacob appears.

MO

Ever notice how some jobs never get done? Like laundry or food shoppin' or this here sweepin'? You do 'em and then you do 'em again.

(a deep sigh)

Fine way to mark time.

Jacob takes the broom from him.

MO (CONT'D)

You want to finish here? It ain't my favorite job. I'm happy to hand it off.

Mo watches Jacob sweep.

MO (CONT'D)

It occurs to me that you might have missed today's train.

(MORE)

MO (CONT'D)

You can stay for a bit downstairs --
but you gotta stay out of sight. If
Rosie finds out I let you stay, she'll
rip my head off.

A barely perceptible smile flickers across Jacob's face.
He continues to sweep the entry.

MO (CONT'D)

There's some cookies in the pantry --
left over from the Senior Citizens
meeting. That'll have to do for now.

Jacob acknowledges his words and continues to work.

MO (CONT'D)

Remember -- stay out of sight.

Jacob nods.

INT. CHURCH -- EVENING

The First Baptist CHOIR, some twenty singers of varying age and type, has gathered to rehearse. A PIANIST accompanies them. MR. DAY, 40's, the wiry, animated choir director, leads them in a vocal warmup. Rosie and Edmond are among the singers though they do not sit together.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- EVENING

Jacob awakens to the sound of the warm-up. He listens attentively. The music rouses him from his bed and his stupor.

INT. CHURCH BALCONY -- CONTINUOUS

Jacob spies on the choir. He is careful to stay out of sight.

INT. CHURCH -- LATER

The Choir finishes the last 15 measures of an uplifting rendition of Psalm 30. It is an energetic song, with rhythmic clapping and effortless harmonies.

CHOIR

You turned my mourning into dancing,
My sadness into gladness;
My glory will sing your praise --
Forever.

There is a hush when the song is finished.

MR. DAY

Great work. That'll be it for
tonight.

(a beat)

Let us join hands in prayer.

The choir comes together and joins hands in a circle, bowing
their heads. They hum and sway to an implicit beat.

MR. DAY (CONT'D)

Jesus -- bless these souls who lift
their voices in prayer and joy so
that they might be closer to your
goodness.

CHOIR

Amen.

The choir sways, all heads down. One heavy set WOMAN slowly
lifts her head and claims focus.

WOMAN

(in a deep voice,
singing)

Oh Lord --

The others give vocal consent and encouragement.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh Lord, sweet Lord of mine -- Please
send your light to my sister
Marguerite and her boy Byron. Shine
on him so he can rise above his
addiction.

CHOIR

Amen.

A MAN lifts his head.

MAN

Sweet Jesus --

The choir consents.

MAN (CONT'D)

Take care of my granddaughter Keisha.
(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

She's taking her final exams to become a nurse. She works hard. Give her the strength to accomplish her dream.

CHOIR

Amen.

The choir continues to sway for a moment. No one else comes forward with a personal prayer.

MR. DAY

Thank you all. I'll see you Sunday.

The members of the choir break the circle and reach for their jackets to leave. Edmond approaches Rosie. Putting her arm through the sleeve of her sweater, Rosie accidentally hits him in the eye.

ROSIE

I'm so sorry. I didn't see you.
(Edmond holds his
hand over his eye)
Oh my God -- did I hurt you?

EDMOND

No problem. I was planning to wear a patch anyway. I'm trying to be more gangsta'.

Rosie laughs reluctantly.

EDMOND (CONT'D)

It's nothing. Really.

MISS MARY, an elderly singer, catches on to the flirtation.

MARY

It's about time you two got together.

ROSIE

What are you talking about, Miss Mary?

MARY

I think you know.

ROSIE

Mr. Scott and I need to discuss some school business.

MARY
Discussin's always good.

Edmond winks at Miss Mary.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- LATER

Jacob's POV: Jacob watches Rosie as she says good night to the other choir members, then crosses the street and enters her home.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT -- DAY

Jacob is cleaning the storage basement when Mo passes by.

MO
What the hell have you done in here?

Jacob looks up from his work. He is dusty and sweaty, but the room sparkles.

MO (CONT'D)
I'll be damned!
(pause)
Nobody's touched this room in years...
(pause)
Except to throw in something that
don't have a proper place.

He examines the well-organized shelves.

MO (CONT'D)
You're good...

Mo slaps him on the back, and Jacob attempts a smile.

MO (CONT'D)
You remind me of my old friend Sam.
He's been gone now 'bout 10 years.
A real stickler for order. Everything
clean and neat. Even lined up his
shoes by color.
(a beat)
That's what I'm gonna call you.
Sam.

INT. CHURCH BALCONY -- SUNDAY MORNING

Jacob spies on the congregants as they enter the chapel, exchange greetings, and take their seats.

INT. CHURCH -- CONTINUES

The Church is near capacity. PASTOR JOHNSON, 50's, portly, fastidious, and appropriately pompous, signals to Mr. Day and the choir members rise to their feet. A BAND (keyboard, guitar, bass, and drums) plays with the choir, giving the music presence and volume. The Choir sings an enthusiastic gospel song, and the CONGREGATION joins in. Edmund looks at Rosie who is lost in the music.

INT. CHURCH BALCONY -- CONTINUOUS

Jacob is entranced by the choir's devotion and energy. FLASHBACK to his own congregation in Brooklyn when worshippers were singing with great passion. Jacob can't make sense of the image as the choir ends the powerful song.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET -- DAY

Hava is walking slowly. It is a brutally hot day, and CHILDREN play in open fire hydrants on the street. Hava stops and sits on a bench to catch her breath. As she observes the children at play, tears stream down her face.

INT. BROOKLYN DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Hava is sitting on the examination table as DR. MARSHALL, mid 50's, listens to her heart.

DR. MARSHALL

The stress test and the EKG both look normal, Hava. Everything is fine. You've got the heart of a woman half your age.

HAVA

Then why do I have these pains?

Dr. Marshall knowingly pats her on the back.

INT. CHURCH STEPS -- MORNING

Jacob stays out of sight, watching Rosie get in her car and leave for work. He then begins to sweep the entrance, piling the leaves which have accumulated during the night.

INT. CHURCH --EVENING

It is the prayer circle at the end of choir rehearsal. The circle breaks up, and the members reach for their jackets and bags.

MR. DAY

I want everyone here at 8:45 on Sunday. Don't be late. You need to be seated on the pulpit with your robes on BEFORE 9 a.m.

The members start to chat as they gather their things.

MR. DAY (CONT'D)

One more thing. People, are you listening?

(they quiet down)

We're gonna start working on the songs for Gospel Sunday next week. Unless you're dead or dying, I expect you to be here for rehearsal every Tuesday. No exceptions.

The choir acquiesces with "Yeah, yeah. We'll be here. We're gonna win this year, etc." They file out.

MR. DAY (CONT'D)

Rosie, you mind locking up tonight? My wife's back is acting up and she needs me.

ROSIE

No problem.

EDMOND

You need help?

ROSIE

Nah --

EDMOND

Should I wait for you?

ROSIE

I'm just walking across the street.

EDMOND

I was wondering -- are you busy Saturday night?

ROSIE

Oh, I'm sorry. Langston and I have plans...

Mr. Day hands her the keys.

MR. DAY

Isn't Langston coming to the Youth Ministry sleepover?

ROSIE

(caught)

Right. Slipped my mind.

MR. DAY

Don't forget the lights.

Mr. Day exits.

EDMOND

Good. So then you're free.

ROSIE

I guess so.

EDMOND

I'll pick you up at 7.

Edmond exits.

INT. UTILITY ROOM -- EVENING

Rosie goes into the utility room to flip out the lights. She literally runs into Jacob. It scares the hell out of her. Jacob reacts in surprise and fear.

ROSIE

What are you doing here?

(pause)

Have you been hiding in here all this time?

(pause)

Jacob, contrite, cannot respond with words. He nervously tucks in his shirt.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Is that Mo's shirt? That Mo and his damn bleeding heart.

(MORE)

*

ROSIE (CONT'D)
 (angrily)
 Why can't you speak? I heard you
 make a noise.

Her anger makes Jacob cringe.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
 That's it. I'm putting an end to
 this. You can't be lurking around
 here at all hours scaring people.

INT. PASTOR'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Rosie, Pastor Johnson, and Mo are in a heated meeting.

ROSIE
 He's a drunk.

MO
 He ain't no drunk. He's a lost
 soul who needs a helping hand.

ROSIE
 What if he's a criminal on the run?
 What if he's a pedophile? You want
 him around Langston?

MO
 He's nice.

ROSIE
 So. Pedophiles seem nice.

MO
 He's lost.

ROSIE
 He's creepy. He doesn't talk.

MO
 (to Pastor Johnson)
 I don't see why we need to run him
 out of town for being quiet.

ROSIE
 (to the Pastor)
 I think we should call the police.

PASTOR

Has he broken the law?

MO

No. Matter of fact, he's been helping me around here. Been doin' a good job. Did you see the basement?

ROSIE

Big deal -- the man can use a broom. First Baptist can't be responsible for someone like that.

PASTOR

Rosie may have a point here. We don't know anything about him. Don't know where he comes from. Maybe the best way to help him is to call the authorities.

MO

So they can lock him up?

(a beat)

He ain't sick in the head. Sick in the heart -- maybe. Something happened to him. He ain't no damn criminal, and he ain't gonna hurt nobody. I can tell.

ROSIE

So now you're a psychic?

(emphatically)

I don't want him around.

PASTOR

(to Rosie)

No sound ought to be heard in the church but the healing voice of Christian charity.

(a beat)

I've seen him. He's not asking for much. Let him stay for the time being.

ROSIE

(to Mo)

Keep a close eye on him. I don't want to say "I told you so."

INT. ROSIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Mo looks out the window as Edmond pulls up to drop Rosie off.

INT. EDMOND'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

ROSIE
I had a really nice time.

EDMOND
Me too.

An awkward moment.

EDMOND (CONT'D)
Let me walk you in.

ROSIE
No, it's o.k. Well... thank you...

She leans forward clumsily and they brush lips. She opens the car door.

EDMOND
Rosie?

ROSIE
Yes?

EDMOND
I'll see you tomorrow.

ROSIE
I guess so.

EXT. ROSIE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Rosie walks to the door. Edmond waits for her to get in before pulling away from the curb.

INT. ROSIE'S HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Rosie enters the house. Mo sits on a chair in the living room.

MO
Uh-huh.

ROSIE

Uh -huh. What's that supposed to mean? Why do I feel like I'm in high school again? Living in this run-down house, being spied on through the window...

MO

I wasn't spying. I was flat out watching.

(a beat)

Seems like a real nice fellow.

ROSIE

Edmond is nice.

MO

That's all?

ROSIE

That's all.

MO

Don't be too picky, young lady. You don't want to end up old and alone.

ROSIE

I wish everybody would stop pushing so hard. I can't afford another mistake. I wasted ten years on one man. Put him through school. Tried to straighten him out. And what do I have to show for it?

MO

A wonderful son --

ROSIE

Please -- I don't need you or anyone else to tell me that my son is a blessing. And if I want to be picky about a man in my life, then too damn bad.

MO

I guess it don't feel right ending up back where you started.

ROSIE
It's not what I had in mind.
(softer)
Was Langston o.k. this evening?

MO
Better than o.k. He beat me three
times in checkers.

On Rosie's pleased reaction.

EXT. ROAD -- DAY

Mo and Jacob are bouncing along the road toward the local shopping complex one town over.

INT. MO'S TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Jacob sits in silence as Mo prattles on.

MO
The way I see it either we get you a jacket and some warm clothes or we're gonna be accused of freezing you to death.
(pause)
You're not from the South, are you Sam?
(pause)
If you was from the South you'd know that winter can get pretty damn cold...
(pause)
No blizzards or nothin' but we get frost. I once knew a man who fell asleep at a bus stop and lost his toes.
(pause)
Well, I didn't know him really. But I heard about him. Actually, I read about him in *Readers' Digest*.

They hit a pothole. They hear the steady flap of a flat tire.

MO (CONT'D)
Son of a gun! You hear that? We got a damn flat.

He pulls over. They get out of the car and survey the damage.

MO (CONT'D)

Okay, Sam -- gonna put you to work.

(pause)

Get me the jack and the spare.

Jacob goes to the back of the truck. He's not sure which of the tools to take. Mo grows impatient and walks around to see what's going on. Jacob is standing there, confused.

MO (CONT'D)

You ain't never changed a tire?

(pause)

Where the hell you from?

(pause)

Okay, listen up -- a man needs to know this kind of thing...

EXT. WALMART PARKING LOT -- DAY

Mo and Jacob park and enter the store.

INT. WALMART -- CONTINUOUS

GREETER

Hello and welcome to Walmart! Can I help you with anything?

MO

Winter coats.

GREETER

Back right corner.

MO

This store has everything a man could want, and if it don't, the rest is at Sears. Those two stores and you're set.

They arrive at the coat section.

MO (CONT'D)

What color do you like?

(he holds up a red
plaid)

You don't look like a red plaid guy to me.

(he holds up a nylon
ski parka)

How 'bout this? It's warm.

Jacob puts the jacket on and looks at himself in the mirror.

MO (CONT'D)
It won't show dirt.

He hands him a ski hat and glove combo.

MO (CONT'D)
Take this too. You lose 90% of your
body heat through your head...
(pause)
I read that in *Readers Digest* too.

Jacob looks at the price tag on the jacket.

MO (CONT'D)
You can work it off.

JACOB
Thank you.

MO
Well how do you like that? He speaks!

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- LATER

Mo drops Jacob in front of the church parking lot. Langston is shooting hoops. He's pretty bad.

MO
Langston! Come on home. Time to
set the table.

LANGSTON
Let me make one more basket --

On the third attempt, he makes the shot. He dribbles past Jacob on his way to the car.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- LATER

Jacob stands in front of the mirror with his new coat on. He examines his face, studies his eyes, tries different poses. He is trying to remember something.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- EVENING

Rosie, Mo, and Langston are eating dinner.

LANGSTON
Did you hear, Ma? He talked today.

ROSIE
What?

LANGSTON
He said "thanks."

MO
He said a lot more than that. I actually coaxed a couple of sentences out of him.

ROSIE
So what did he say?

MO
He said he didn't know where he was from and he can't remember nothin'.

ROSIE
I told you it was an act.

MO
Just because a man don't tell you his life story don't mean he's trying to put one over on you. I'll tell you this much -- he's a city boy. Didn't know how to change a flat tire.

ROSIE
I don't trust him.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- EVENING

Langston is working on the computer. We hear game noises. Mo approaches with cookies and milk and looks at the screen.

MO
You doin' homework?

LANGSTON
Yes, no... sort of... I'm playing a math game. .
(struggling for an answer)
Nine times nine, nine times nine?

MO

81.

LANGSTON

You sure?

MO

Yep. There's a trick to the nine tables. The right answer always adds up to nine. Nine times nine is 81. Eight plus one is...

LANGSTON

Nine! You're a genius!

MO

Good. Now I want you to look up something on the computer for me. Look up the word amnesia. A-M-N-E-S-I-A

LANGSTON

There --

MO

Get up. Let me read that.

MONTAGE -- MOS -- JACOB RE-ENTERS THE WORLD OF THE SPEAKING

EXT. ROSIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

We see Rosie struggling to maneuver trash cans to the front of the house. Jacob waves to her from the front lawn of the church where he is raking leaves. He crosses the street and attempts to help her. They have a short conversation as she at first refuses his help and then finally acquiesces.

INT. CHURCH OFFICES -- DAY

We see Jacob knock on the Pastor's door. He enters and the Pastor hands him a list of chores. They discuss.

INT. DINER -- NIGHT

We see Jacob sitting alone in a small coffee shop. A WAITRESS approaches and pours him coffee. He orders his meal, and they exchange pleasantries.

INT. CHURCH -- AFTERNOON

Jacob is painting the door moldings.

MO
Put that brush down.

Jacob looks up quizzically.

MO (CONT'D)
You got that pasty look, what happens
to white folks when they stay inside
too much.
(leaning in)
I say we do us some rabbit huntin'.

JACOB
Rabbit?

MO
What, you don't like rabbit?

JACOB
I don't know.

MO
It's gotta be cooked right or it
gets stringy. I know how to do it
with tomato sauce and potatoes.
(winking)
Fill you up. Let's get to it.
(a beat)
You do know how to use a gun, don't
you?

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Mo reaches up to the ledge behind the door and pulls out a
key. He then pulls out a rifle case from under the bed and
unlocks it. He hands the rifle to Jacob.

MO
Here. This one's perfect for a
beginner.

On Jacob's reaction.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD -- LATER

In a field somewhere between town and the woods, Mo has lined up a few old coffee cans for target practice. Mo is showing Jacob how to load the rifle. Jacob clumsily follows his directions.

MO

Now what I want you to do is line up
the can -- like we did before we
loaded -- then breathe out slowly.
And while you're doin' that, squeeze
the trigger.

Jacob follows the directions and shoots, but the can doesn't move.

JACOB

Missed it.

Mo takes the rifle, loads it, and gives it back to Jacob.

MO

You know I never do get when people
call huntin' a sport. More like a
necessity. I was never interested
in a pair of antlers on the wall,
and I don't care much for venison --
too chewy and a hell of a lot of
work to gut the damn thing. But
rabbit or squirrel? Well, you're
just doin' that to fill your belly.
No different from fishin'.

Mo adjusts Jacob's hold on the gun.

MO (CONT'D)

My daddy gave me a 22 when I was
younger than Langston. Never
understood how the rest of the world
looked at guns til I was in Nam.

(a beat)

Alright -- line it up. You want it
to crest right over the sight. Now
breathe and... pull the trigger.

Jacob repeats his actions and shoots, but the can still doesn't move.

MO (CONT'D)

Give me that.

Mo takes the gun from Jacob and reloads it.

MO (CONT'D)

I guess it's safe to assume that you were never in the military. Combat changes you. War's a hell of a lot different than huntin'. You learn to think weapon, not firearm. That's the lesson.

(a beat)

Never pull a gun on a man unless you're prepared to use it.

JACOB

Makes sense.

MO

You're not much for talkin', are you?

JACOB

Not much to talk about.

MO

No memory, no stories. They're in there... just gotta shake 'em out.

Mo hands the gun back to Jacob.

MO (CONT'D)

Again -- line it up. Breathe out. Squeeze the trigger.

Jacob follows the direction but flinches as he squeezes the trigger, momentarily closing his eyes. When he pulls the trigger -- click -- nothing happens. He looks at Mo.

MO (CONT'D)

(holding up the bullet)

You're waiting for the noise and the kick. You're expecting it and you get all knotted up. Let it go.

Mo takes the rifle, loads it, and hands it back.

MO (CONT'D)

Go on.

Jacob lines up the can, breathes out, pulls the trigger, and nails the can.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS -- LATER

Jacob and Mo stand quietly in a thicket, watching a wild rabbit make its way out of the underbrush in the distance. Mo taps Jacob and indicates the rabbit with his eyes. He puts his fingers to his lips and then points at Jacob's rifle. Jacob understands.

Slowly and silently, Jacob lifts his gun to the ready position. He clicks the safety. The click causes the rabbit to turn toward them, perk up his ears, and freeze. The rabbit's eyes are wide and innocent. Jacob pulls the trigger and the rabbit's head explodes. FLASHBACK to Sarah's eyes, wide and innocent, in the final moment before the bus explodes.

MO

You did it! Right between the eyes...
a perfect kill.

As Mo bags the rabbit, Jacob stands confounded -- a single shudder runs through his body.

MO (CONT'D)

(noticing Jacob's
reaction)

Maybe this wasn't such a good idea --

He takes the gun out of Jacob's hands.

MO (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's go home.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROSIE'S YARD -- LATER

Mo whistles as he skins the rabbit. His hands are bloody. Langston watches Mo. Jacob is withdrawn.

MO

It takes a long slow simmer to make
rabbit tender. Ya got to spice it
up, so's it don't get gamey on ya.

(MORE)

MO (CONT'D)

But if you do it right, mmmmmm...
Nothing better.

Jacob gets up, moves away, and vomits. Mo watches. He motions for Langston to give Jacob a glass of water. Langston cautiously approaches Jacob.

LANGSTON

You o.k.?

JACOB

I'll be fine. It was the smell.
(he sips)
Thank you.

LANGSTON

You don't have to tell me. Every
time he guts a critter I have to
breathe through my mouth.
(he demonstrates)
I just plug up my nose and take little
breaths through my mouth so I don't
get the taste on my tongue.

Jacob vomits again. Langston is disgusted. Almost involuntarily, Langston plugs his nose, opens his mouth, and takes quick little breaths.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- LATE AFTERNOON

Jacob is sanding down an old rocker. Langston is practicing shooting hoops. We watch Jacob and hear the steady sound of the ball in the background.

Jacob stops working and watches Langston. Langston dribbles around the court, faking his imaginary opponent, shooting and missing. The sound makes Jacob instantly FLASHBACK to walking with his son as he bounced the basketball.

Jacob approaches Langston.

JACOB

Learn to dribble with your left hand.
If you only use your right -- you
can only go right. The other guy
figures that out pretty quick.

Langston tries to dribble with his left hand.

LANGSTON
It feels weird.

Jacob comes over, motions for Langston to give him the ball.
Jacob dribbles with his right hand.

JACOB
Try to steal.

Langston tries to steal the ball, and Jacob deftly switches
to his left hand. Langston tries to adjust but Jacob switches
back.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Don't watch me. Watch the ball.

They repeat the process. This time Langston anticipates the
move and manages to get the ball.

JACOB (CONT'D)
You do it.

Langston dribbles with his right, switches to the left
awkwardly.

LANGSTON
Damn.

JACOB
You need to practice. Dribble with
your left hand for one week.

Langston uses his left hand.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Move around while you're doing it.
One week. Then I'll teach you to
crossover.

EXT. ROSIE'S SCHOOL -- AFTERNOON

Mo sits in his truck in the faculty parking lot as the
students file out at the end of the day. Edmond is walking
to his car and sees Mo.

EDMOND
Hey Mo. What are you doing here?

MO

Came to get Rosie. Her car's in the shop.

(a beat)

You doin' anything special for vacation?

EDMOND

Just Christmas day with my mama.

(a beat)

What about you?

MO

Sleeping. Spending time with Langston. Cooking.

EDMOND

You cook?

MO

Damn right. And I'm a good cook too. But Rosie does the pie.

(a beat)

You want to come for Christmas dinner?

EDMOND

I'd love to. Can I bring something?

MO

Sure. How 'bout your mother?

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

Mo and Rosie are preparing Christmas dinner: Rosie pulls the ham out of the oven while Mo busies himself with side dishes.

MO

What's wrong with Sam?

ROSIE

You already invited Edmond and his mother.

MO

Then one more person at the table won't make a difference.

ROSIE

I don't want that man at my holiday table. He's your charity case, not mine.

(a beat)

I told you -- he gives me the creeps.

MO

Man shouldn't be by himself on Christmas eve. Not very Christian of you.

ROSIE

(sighs)

All right, Mo. You win. Go invite him.

(a beat)

And pick up a pint of heavy whipping cream before the stores all close.

He exits. Rosie moves to the sink to wash some dishes and watches Mo get in his truck. Langston comes in with a half-built Lego rocketship.

LANGSTON

Look, Ma.

ROSIE

(stopping to wipe her hands)

That's really something.

LANGSTON

Come see the launch pad.

She follows him into the living room.

EXT. CHURCH ALLEY -- AFTERNOON

Jacob is dumping the trash as Mo drives by. Mo honks the horn and signals for Jacob to approach. Mo rolls down the window.

MO

Gotta make a last minute run to the market. Keep me company.

Jacob gets in.

INT. WINN-DIXIE SUPERMARKET -- AFTERNOON

The supermarket is filled with last minute shoppers; Christmas music is heard in the background. Mo and Jacob are in the dairy aisle.

MO

You know -- Rosie and me were talkin'.
Sure would be nice if you'd join us
for Christmas dinner.

(a beat)

Langston asked too.

Jacob doesn't respond.

MO (CONT'D)

I don't know how that woman was going
to serve pecan pie without whipped
cream.

(he stops and picks
up the cream)

You like pecan pie?

JACOB

Maybe.

Mo picks up a Christmas decoration: a kitschy electric candelabra with "Merry Christmas" in red glitter. He looks at the price.

MO

If you wait til the last minute, the
price comes way down.

He puts the ornament in his basket. As they're walking toward the cashier, a young MOTHER scolds her CHILD as he runs wildly through the store.

MOTHER

Jacob!

The boy continues to run down the aisle.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Jacob, you come here right now!

The boy slams into Jacob's legs. Jacob bends down and hands the crying child to his mother.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(to Jacob)

I'm sorry.

(to son)

Behave yourself or Santa Claus is gonna forget to come to our house.

The child squirms from his mother's grasp.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Jacob Tuttle, what did I just say?

The focus returns to our Jacob and Mo.

JACOB

(softly)

That's my name.

MO

Huh?

JACOB

My name is Jacob.

INT. MO'S TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER

MO

You got a last name, Jacob?

JACOB

I can't remember.

MO

Maybe your memory will work better after you eat some of that pecan pie.

Jacob stares out the window.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

There is a tree with gifts in the corner of the room.

ROSIE

(starting to pick up)

We're going to have to tidy up before everyone gets here.

She starts to pick up Langston's toys when Mo comes back.

MO

You win, Rosie. He doesn't want to come.

ROSIE

(satisfied)

I can't say I'm sorry.

(a beat)

But I'll make him a plate. Langston, when you finish cleaning up, take a plate to Sam at the church.

MO

Jacob. His name is Jacob.

Langston and Rosie look at Mo.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- DAY

Langston knocks softly on Jacob's door. He carries the Christmas candelabra that Mo bought in the market and a foil-covered plate of food.

LANGSTON

I don't know why you won't come over for Christmas. You can't be by yourself on Christmas --

JACOB

I don't mind, really.

LANGSTON

Well at least you should have a present.

(he shows him the ornament)

(a beat)

Can I call you Jacob now?

JACOB

Sure.

Langston plugs in the candelabra.

LANGSTON

The lights on this thing are so cool.

The twinkling lights trigger another FLASHBACK: the red glitter becomes the red bouquet on the shabbat table and the candelabra morphs into the shabbat candles.

Jacob sees Ruth lighting the candles with the children nearby.

LANGSTON (CONT'D)

You o.k.?

Jacob sits down shakily. He nods. It takes a moment for him to recover from the powerful memory.

Langston goes to leave. At the door he turns.

LANGSTON (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas.

JACOB

Thank you. Thank your mother for me too.

Langston exits. Jacob turns off the lights on the ornament. In semi-darkness, he takes the plate in his lap, cuts off a bite, and slowly chews.

INT. ROSIE'S DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Edmond, his mother, Rosie, Mo, and Langston are assembled at the table. They join hands in prayer.

MO

(to Langston)

You want to start?

LANGSTON

Dear Jesus. This is Langston Yarber, and I just want to say thank you for my family, and for the food, and for the super-builder lego set that I think I'm gonna get.

All the guests smile warmly and say "amen."

MO

Edmond?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH STEPS -- CONTINUOUS

Jacob looks in on the family gathering in Rosie's house.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSIE'S DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

MO

Lord, thank you for the blessings of
Christmas, for the bounty of food we
are about to eat, and for the love
of our family and community.

There is a chorus of "amens" and a knock on the door. Mo
signals for Langston to open. It is Jacob, holding his full
plate.

LANGSTON

Oh good -- you changed your mind.
(to Rosie)
Hey Mom. Jacob's here.

Rosie looks accusingly at Mo as he pulls an extra chair to
the table and the guests adjust accordingly.

MO

Come sit by me. Do you folks know
Jacob? He works at the church.

Edmond rises and shakes his hand.

EDMOND

Edmond. Merry Christmas. This is
my mother, Mrs. Scott.

Jacob nods to Mrs. Scott.

ROSIE

(with forced politeness)
I'm glad you decided to join us.
You're just in time to eat...

Rosie adds a place setting from the sideboard to the table,
and Jacob takes a seat.

LANGSTON

Wait! We can't eat until Jacob offers
thanks.

ROSIE

Be still, Langston. We don't want
to put him on the spot.

MO

Sure we do.

(to Jacob)

It's our Christmas tradition. You
don't wanna break tradition.

Jacob hesitates. They all exchange looks. Jacob closes his eyes.

JACOB

Blessed are you, oh God, who has
kept us alive and allowed us to enjoy
this season... this shining moment
in time.

There is a long beat as they respond to the beauty of his words with genuine "amens." Edmond looks at Rosie who is fixed on Jacob's face. She has warmed to the stranger at her table.

ROSIE

O.k. Let's eat.

INT. JACOB'S SISTER'S BROOKLYN APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Hava sits with her daughter's family around the Shabbat dinner table. The new BABY is in Naomi's arms, the HUSBAND, and three school-aged CHILDREN have finished the festive meal.

The husband leads the family in the traditional Grace after Meals (*Birkat Hamazon*). As the prayer transitions into the lively *Na'ar Hayiti*, the family boisterously sings and bangs the table with their hands in rhythm. Hava bangs along, until her pounding becomes something else -- forceful, frustrated, angry. All eyes turn to her as they slowly stop participating, and she becomes the only one hitting the table. She realizes what she's doing.

HAVA

(a beat as she attempts
to collect herself)I'm sorry. I got carried away.
Excuse me.

She pushes away from the table and exits in uncomfortable silence.

CHILD

What's wrong with Grandma?

NAOMI

She has a headache from all the noise.

INT. DARKENED BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Hava lies on the bed. Naomi enters and sits down next to her.

NAOMI

Mom?

(no response)

Mom, are you o.k.?

HAVA

When your father died, I thought the sadness would kill me. I was afraid to go in the bedroom because I might smell him on the pillow or in the closet. The pain was overwhelming...

(a beat)

When Ruth and the children... Jacob was in such pain... Incredible pain. Like being burned alive. And I couldn't do anything to help him.

(a beat)

Do you know that if you surround a scorpion with a ring of fire and it has no way out -- no escape -- it will sting itself to death before the fire does its job.

(a beat)

Do you think your brother is alive?

NAOMI

Mommy -- don't.

HAVA

If that happened to me, I'm not sure I would want to be.

The baby starts to cry in the other room.

HAVA (CONT'D)

Go -- your child needs you.

NAOMI

Get some rest.

(kissing Hava's cheek)

I love you, Mom.

Naomi exits and shuts the door behind her. Hava takes the pillow and places it over her face to stifle her sobs. She weeps.

EXT. ROSIE'S SCHOOL -- AFTERNOON

Rosie, carrying stacks of papers, is walking to the parking lot when the sky opens up and begins to pour. She tucks the papers under her sweater as she sprints for her car.

INT. ROSIE'S CAR -- AFTERNOON

The rain continues to come down in buckets. Rosie is a few blocks from home, when she sees Jacob walking, carrying plastic market bags. She pulls over.

ROSIE

Hop in. You look like you could use
a ride.

JACOB

Thank you. Are you sure?
(he refers to the
water streaming from
his clothes and hair)
I'm soaked.

ROSIE

Me too.

He gets in the car.

JACOB

Thank you.

ROSIE

(a beat)
I love the rain. I just want to go
home and get in bed with a good book.

JACOB

You read a lot?

ROSIE

Well, you're making progress. That's
the first time you've asked me a
question.

(MORE)

ROSIE (CONT'D)

(a beat)

My momma used to take me to the library every two weeks and I would check out a stack of books. I'd usually finish them all before the two weeks were up.

She stops at a stop sign. A long moment: rain falls, the windshield wipers beat in rhythm. Rosie tries to fill the awkward silence.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

So, do you have a favorite book?

JACOB

No... Maybe... I can't remember.

He turns to look at her and their eyes connect. There is a moment of intimate connection until Jacob becomes aware that he is dripping profusely.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm ruining the seat.

ROSIE

It's only water.

Rosie smiles kindly.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

I have lots of books you can borrow.

They look at each other for a long beat. A horn beeps impatiently from behind, intruding on the moment. Rosie signals her apology to the driver behind and steps on the gas.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Rosie sits at the kitchen table late at night grading papers. The storm rages outside. She takes a break to doodle on her legal pad a growing list of Jacob's characteristics: Educated. Good with children. Hard-working. City. Carpenter? Coach? Teacher? Man vs. self.

INT. CHURCH -- MORNING

Congregants have gathered for a Baptism. Jacob observes the scene.

He no longer hides, but he keeps to the back of the church. On the pulpit stand Pastor Johnson and a young COUPLE with a new BABY.

PASTOR

It is with great joy that we welcome new life. By standing before this congregation with your new son, you willingly affirm your promise before God to love this child and raise him in a home that honors the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Pastor takes the baby from the parents and holds him up. The baby starts to cry.

As he comes out of the flashback, the baby's cries become wails.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

I see we've got a future member of the choir.

The congregation laughs. The Pastor hands the baby back to the mother.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

Please welcome to the fold Damien Trumble, first born son of Loneese and William Trumble.

FLASHBACK: Jacob holding his own son at a similar gathering. Jacob is disturbed by the image. He is getting closer to his past, but he still can't remember.

INT. CHURCH HALL -- MORNING

Mo hands Jacob a piece of cake from the reception.

MO

You all right?

JACOB

(stunned)

I have a child.

MO

What?

JACOB
I have a child.
(a beat)
I'm a father.

Jacob is clearly quite shaken. Mo places his hand on Jacob's shoulder to steady him.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I keep seeing things, but I can't
place any of 'em.

MO
What do you see?

JACOB
It's like I fell asleep in the light
and woke up in the dark. I don't
know where I am or what time it is.
I just know that I missed something --
something important -- and I can't
remember what it is -- or where I'm
supposed to be. The only thing I
know for sure -- is that it's all my
fault.

MO
You'll figure it out. Take your
time.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- EVENING

Mo enters the kitchen carrying some loose dirty clothes.
Rosie is sitting with a pile of essays and her legal pad
with the list of Jacob's attributes.

MO
Can you throw these in the washer,
Rosie?

ROSIE
Now I've got to do his laundry?

MO
It was my idea. Man's only got two
shirts. He's been washing them out
in the basement sink. And they ain't
gettin' clean.

ROSIE

Does he tell you anything?

MO

The other morning at the baptism --
clear as day -- he said he has a
child.

ROSIE

That's it? What else did he say?

MO

If I push him, he shuts down.
(a beat)
But he's sure good with his hands.
He can fix anything, build a
bookshelf, paint a door.

ROSIE

What would make someone like that
walk out of his life?

INT. ROSIE'S UTILITY ROOM -- NIGHT

Rosie checks the label on Jacob's shirt as she throws it in
the washer. "Meyer Brothers, New York". It is clearly a
well-made shirt.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Rosie sits at the table, sipping tea, planning a lesson.
Rosie adds "father" and "New York" to the list of
characteristics on her doodling pad.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- DAY

As Jacob shaves, he hums a gospel tune that he heard earlier.
He hums the chorus over and over, but can't quite remember
how the song ends. He is puzzled.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

The church is quiet. Jacob is looking through the sheet
music at the piano bench. He studies each piece of music
for a few moments, humming each melody, until he finds the
song that was stuck in his head the night before. Then he
sits down at the piano and starts to play the notes and sing
along.

Rosie enters the church with Jacob's laundry in her hand. She sits down in a pew and listens while Jacob plays and sings. She is impressed.

Jacob notices her and abruptly stops playing, embarrassed by his own enthusiasm for the music. Rosie puts the laundry down on a pew and approaches the piano.

ROSIE

Don't stop.

JACOB

I had the melody stuck in my head
all night.

He plays a few bars.

ROSIE

It's one of my favorites.
(she sings a few bars)

JACOB

You have a lovely voice.

ROSIE

So do you.

FLASHBACK to Jacob singing in front of his congregation.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Jacob?

He lightly touches the keys of the piano in a haunting chord. The sound hangs in the air.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

How do you do it?

JACOB

What?

ROSIE

How do you get through every day not
knowing where you come from and where
you're going?

JACOB

I don't think about it.

ROSIE
Someone must have taught you piano.
It takes years to be this good.

Jacob closes the piano.

JACOB
I don't have any answers.

Rosie retrieves the laundry from the bench.

ROSIE
I brought your shirts.

JACOB
Thank you.

An awkward moment between the two.

ROSIE
You should play the piano more often.

She leaves and he watches her.

INT. CHURCH -- EVENING

The choir has gathered to rehearse. Jacob works quietly in the back of the church, taking books down from the shelves, dusting, and returning them to their place.

SINGER #1
It's almost 8 o'clock.

Mr. Day's cell phone rings.

MR. DAY
Yes?

SINGER #2
He's never late.

MR. DAY
(closing the phone)
Sorry, folks, that was Curtis. He
got rear ended on his way here.
Nothing serious, but he's not gonna
make it tonight.

The Choir is clearly disappointed.

Rosie gets up and approaches Jacob.

ROSIE
Our accompanist can't come tonight.
Will you help us out?

Jacob looks at her curiously. She hands him a sheet of music.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
It's nothing fancy. Just chord us.

Jacob sits down at the piano and opens the sheet music. He sight reads the opening perfectly. The choir looks at each other, impressed.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH -- LATER

Jacob and the choir finish rehearsing the last song of the night.

MR. DAY
That'll be it for tonight, folks.

Wordlessly, the choir members come together, join hands, and sway. Edmond moves in next to Rosie. Jacob tries to leave but is pulled into the prayer circle.

MR. DAY (CONT'D)
Lord, oh Lord, bless these souls who
lift their voices in prayer and joy
so that they might be closer to thy
goodness.

CHOIR
Amen.

MR. DAY
And bless our friend Jacob here who
has helped us to lift our voices --
and stay in tune...

CHOIR
(half-laughing)
Amen.

Off on Jacob's sheepish smile.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- EVENING

Rosie stands with Edmond beside his car. Her attention is on Langston shooting baskets at the end of the dimly lit parking lot.

EDMOND

I got tickets for the symphony.

ROSIE

In Birmingham?!

Rosie notices Jacob leaving the church. Jacob approaches Langston and holds up his hands, asking for the ball. Langston tosses him the ball and they begin to play.

EDMOND

You act like it's the end of the world. It's only two hours away.

(a beat)

Will you come?

Rosie observes the obvious connection between Langston and Jacob. Langston nails a basket and Jacob tousles his hair. The student has clearly acquired the skill.

EDMOND (CONT'D)

Will you come?

ROSIE

Let me think about it.

Rosie's attention becomes focused on Langston and Jacob. A small smile flickers across her face as she watches them play. Edmond follows her gaze.

EDMOND

O.k. then... you think about it.

ROSIE

Langston! Enough! It's a school night.

CUT TO:

A door which reads "Rita Thomas, PhD./ Guidance Counselor"

INT. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE-- DAY

Rosie, with her legal pad in hand, is questioning RITA THOMAS, friendly, middle-aged, overworked high school guidance counselor. Huge piles of papers and files clutter her desk.

ROSIE

He can do all this stuff -- read music, build things, teach Langston to play basketball -- but he can't remember who he is. I don't get it. Is he bullshitting us?

RITA

Could be.

(a beat)

You know, it is possible to retain semantic memory and lose episodic memory.

ROSIE

In English --

RITA

A person with amnesia can remember how to do some things, like speak a language or perform a task -- and not remember anything about his past. Rare, but it happens.

ROSIE

Like in a soap opera when someone gets knocked on the head?

RITA

Could be -- it's triggered by either physical or emotional trauma.

ROSIE

How long does it last?

RITA

Varies. He might never remember, or he might have sporadic memories, or he could suddenly recall everything. If he's for real, it's happening for a legitimate reason. His brain's way of protecting him.

On Rosie's reaction.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- EVENING

The door is open. Jacob lays on the bed reading a book.
Rosie sticks her head in.

ROSIE
Remember that song you liked?

JACOB
Which one?

Rosie sings a few bars. Jacob hums along.

ROSIE
We'll be singing it tonight. Maybe
you can help out.

INT. CHURCH -- EVENING

Rosie and Jacob enter the chapel as the singers assemble for rehearsal.

EDMOND
Hey Rosie.

ROSIE
Hello Edmond. I'm just tryin to get
Jacob here to join the choir.

EDMOND
Another voice for the Lord?

ROSIE
This one can sing.

EDMOND
(attempting repartee)
You sayin' you don't like my voice?

ROSIE
Did I say that?

Off on Edmond's rejected expression.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- NIGHT

It is late at night. The sound of breaking glass startles Jacob into consciousness. He lays still and strains to listen.

INT. CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

The church is illuminated only by the moon coming through the stained glass windows.

SKINHEAD #1
Follow me. Watch the glass, man.
(drunken laughter)
Shhhh...

Three SKINHEADS make their way into the church. They are drunk, hell-bent on vandalizing the church. SKINHEAD #1 holds a bottle of beer; SKINHEAD #2 has a can of spray paint; SKINHEAD #3 holds a baseball bat.

Skinhead #1 pours the remnants of his beer on a cart of hymnals. He laughs maliciously.

SKINHEAD #1 (CONT'D)
I got to take a leak.

SKINHEAD #2
Me too.

They stagger up to the podium, urinate on the lecturn with bravado, and then knock it over.

SKINHEAD #2 (CONT'D)
Watch this.

Skinhead #2 sprays paint on the pew.

SKINHEAD #1
Fuck that shit.

He points to the crucifixion mural. Skinhead #2 sprays a big "X" over the face of black Jesus.

SKINHEAD #3
He's a fuckin' artist.

SKINHEAD #1
And you're shit-for-brains -- what
are you waitin' for?

SKINHEAD #3 swings a bat at the pews, knocking some over, damaging others. SKINHEAD #2 paints a swastika on the wall.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jacob has heard enough. He reaches up to the ledge for the key to the rifle case.

INT. CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

The skinheads continue their destruction. Jacob enters the chapel carrying the rifle. Having second thoughts, he leans the rifle against a back pew where it is unseen by the skinheads.

JACOB

Hey -- what are you doing?

SKINHEAD #2

Who the hell is that?

JACOB

You're not supposed to be in here.
Get out.

SKINHEAD #3

Go fuck yourself.

JACOB

I'm calling the police.

Jacob turns to go, and Skinhead #3 swings the bat at a stained glass window, shattering it. Jacob turns back vehemently, body tense with anger, clenched fists at his side. His eyes fall on the gun; he chooses not to pick it up. He takes steps toward the skinheads.

JACOB (CONT'D)

(deliberately)

Put - the - bat - down.

The skinheads exchange looks. This will be fun.

SKINHEAD #3

Calm down, buddy. Nobody wants to
get hurt. We were just havin' some
fun.

JACOB

Fun?

SKINHEAD #3

O.k., o.k., maybe we had too much to drink. We didn't think it was a white church.

JACOB

It's not.

The three skinheads exchange furtive glances.

SKINHEAD #3

So then big fuckin deal. What do you care?

JACOB

This is a house of God...
(he sees the swastika)
Asshole.

SKINHEAD #3

You hear what he called me, boys?
This fuckin' prick doesn't know how to show respect.

Skinhead #3 approaches him threateningly, wielding the bat like a ninja.

SKINHEAD #3 (CONT'D)

(teasing)

Come on, nigger lover. Wanna play?
(he pulls the bat back)
Come on, let's play. Batter up.

He pulls the bat back. As he starts to swing toward Jacob's body, he checks the swing.

SKINHEAD #3 (CONT'D)

Man, this is too fuckin' easy.

He lowers the bat, laughs to himself, then violently and unexpectedly shoves the end of the bat into Jacob's stomach. As Jacob doubles up, the skinhead drops the bat and lands a solid punch to Jacob's face. Jacob falls backward as blood gushes from his nose. Lying on the floor, he sees the rifle against the pew.

JACOB

O.K., O.K. You win.

SKINHEAD #3
 Damn right I win.
 (he kicks him in the
 side)
 Now get up off your sorry ass and
 talk to me with respect.

Jacob, in pain, slowly pulls himself up, using the pew to stand. As his hand clears the back of the pew, he grabs the rifle then turns and aims it at Skinhead #3.

JACOB
 Is this respectful enough?

The skinheads exchange glances. Skinhead #1 throws his beer bottle at Jacob's head who deflects the bottle with his arm, causing the rifle to lurch into the air.

SFX: GUNSHOT.

INT. MO'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Mo's eyes spring open.

INT. CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

SKINHEAD #2
 You don't look too familiar with
 that rifle, buddy. Why don't you
 just put it down?

JACOB
 (cocking the rifle)
 Back off.

Jacob points the gun at Skinhead #2's heart. Jacob's eyes dart back and forth between the three skinheads. They smell his vulnerability and start to move in.

SKINHEAD #2
 You don't want to hurt anybody.

JACOB
 Don't move.

Skinhead #2 and Skinhead #3 exchange looks of understanding. Skinhead #2 takes another step closer.

SKINHEAD #2
 You gonna shoot all three of us?

Suddenly, Skinhead #3 charges Jacob. In a split second decision, Jacob switches the rifle's angle from Skinhead #2's heart to Skinhead #3's leg. He pulls the trigger.

SFX: GUNSHOT.

Skinhead #3 is shocked, his eyes wide open, like Sarah's eyes before the bus exploded. Skinheads #1 and #2 flinch at the noise, just like the bystanders at the bus explosion. FLASHBACK to the instant that Jacob's family died. He surfaces from the flashback to the cry of the wounded skinhead rolling around on the ground, holding his leg.

Mo rushes into the church. He carries his rifle.

MO

What the hell is goin' on here?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH -- LATER

The sun is coming up after this long night. An ambulance pulls away from the front of the church. A police car sits nearby. SKINHEADS #1 and #2, hands cuffed, heads down, are being led by two POLICEMEN to the waiting car.

INT. CHURCH -- MOMENTS LATER

Pastor Johnson, Rosie, and Mo are examining the damage, cleaning up what they can. Jacob sits in a pew. He is dazed.

The Pastor walks over to Jacob.

PASTOR

Could have been a lot worse. The police say they won't press charges. Self defense.

(to Jacob)

Why don't you get some sleep? We'll put this place back together in the morning.

Jacob doesn't even acknowledge him. He moves solemnly to his room. Pastor, Mo, and Rosie watch him go.

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Jacob stands at the sink washing his battered face. A soft knock is heard. Jacob opens the door.

It is Rosie. He moves away from the door, leaving her room to enter.

ROSIE

You o.k.?

Jacob shrugs his shoulders.

JACOB

I shot a man.

ROSIE

He'll be fine.

(a beat)

Sit down. Let me take care of that.

Distraught, Jacob sits on the cot. Rosie sits next to him and starts to clean his face.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

You were very brave.

JACOB

(in shock)

I shot a man... I had every intention of killing him... At the last second, I changed my mind.

ROSIE

Then you didn't have every intention.

JACOB

(his eyes fill with tears)

It was the sound of the rifle and the look in his eyes... his eyes. It made me think of something, like I was supposed to remember something, and then it all went away. I can't find the thought again.

(he closes his eyes)

I - can't - find it.

(he opens his eyes)

What if when I was real, I killed someone? What if that's what I'm trying to see?

ROSIE

You're real now. You're not a killer. You're a good person.

JACOB

Am I? I don't know what kind of
person I am.

(a beat)

I'm made up. No beginning, no end,
no one...

Vulnerable, childlike, Jacob sits with his hands open in front of him, beseeching, lost. As the import of the realization crashes in on him, his shoulders drop and true despair surfaces. He begins to cry -- desolate, inconsolable. The purity of his pain compels Rosie to embrace him, quieting and calming him as she would comfort a crying child. He allows her to hold him.

ROSIE

(continuing to comfort
him, she kisses his
cheeks, his forehead)

Shhhh, it'll be o.k. You'll figure
it out. You're a good man. A good
man.

Jacob allows himself to receive her comfort as he yields to his emotions. The moment turns to one of heat and human desire as sexuality becomes the way to offer comfort. As they move toward each other, we DISSOLVE.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- MORNING

MO

It's gettin' late. Where's your
mama?

(looking upstairs,
loudly)

Rosie?!

LANGSTON

I didn't see her.

MO

Must be sleeping.

(a beat)

Some crazy white boys broke into the
church last night.

LANGSTON

What?

MO

They were drinkin'. Thought it might
be fun to destroy some property.
One of 'em came at Jacob with a
baseball bat. He shot him.

LANGSTON

Did he kill the guy?

MO

Nah. But he stopped him real good.
Got him in the leg.
(to Langston)
Go see if your mama is up. Time to
get a move on.

Langston leaves. Mo moves to the sink. He sees Rosie leaving
the church and angles himself so she can't see him. He's
not fast enough, and Rosie catches a glimpse of him. She
knows she's been caught. He busies himself cleaning the
kitchen as she walks in.

ROSIE

Good morning.

Langston re-enters.

LANGSTON

Hey ma. Where were you?

ROSIE

I got up early and went for a walk --
(a beat)
In the field behind the church.

LANGSTON

Did you hear? Jacob shot a man.

ROSIE

I know.

MO

You takin' the boy to school today?
You're gonna be late.

ROSIE

I'll drop him off on my way to work.
(to Langston)
Finish your cereal. I'll be right
down.

INT. CHURCH -- AFTERNOON

Mo and Jacob are cleaning up the church. They put the lecturn back in its place and examine it.

MO

Looks o.k. to me. Just stinks.

JACOB

Pigs.

Jacob moves to the pews and examines the damage.

MO

You and Rosie seem to be getting along.

JACOB

(ignoring the question)

I can help you with these pews.

MO

She's been through a lot. Deadbeat husband and all.

JACOB

Just need a few sheets of mahogany and a good sander.

INT. ROSIE'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Rosie is busy with packages from the market.

MO

What are you doin'?

ROSIE

Unloading groceries.

MO

(a beat)

What are you doin' with Jacob?

ROSIE

We've been talking.

MO
Nothin' more?

ROSIE
What does that mean?

MO
I thought you didn't like him.

ROSIE
(indignant)
And why is it your job to say I do?

EXT. POLICE STATION -- DAY

Rosie pulls up at the police station and gets out of the car.

INT. POLICE STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

Rosie talks to OFFICER MICHAELSON, 40'S, at his desk.

MICHAELSON
(laughs)
Do you know how many people go missing each year? Tens of thousands. Some are foul play, most just folks who got sick of their lives and walked out.

ROSIE
But he says he can't remember who he is.

MICHAELSON
This is the same guy who shot that skinhead?

ROSIE
Yeah. Someone must be looking for him.

Michaelson shoots her a skeptical look.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
Isn't there a list of some kind?

MICHAELSON
The FBI keeps a data base.

He jots down a web site address and hands it to her.

MICHAELSON (CONT'D)
Public information --
(a beat)
Have you ever thought maybe he doesn't
want to get found?

On Rosie's reaction.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Rosie is at the computer, futilely searching the FBI data base. She passes the picture of Jacob with Ruth and the children. He looks nothing like that man in Orthodox garb. She moves on, quickly growing frustrated by the sheer volume of faces.

ROSIE
(to herself)
Worse than a needle in a haystack.

Langston comes in the room and opens the refrigerator.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
What are you looking for?

LANGSTON
I don't know.

Langston shrugs his shoulders.

LANGSTON (CONT'D)
I'm bored.

ROSIE
Me too.

Rosie turns off the computer; we hear the AOL sign-off.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
How 'bout a game of cards?

Langston's face lights up. This is what he needs.

LANGSTON
You sure?

ROSIE

I'm sure.
 (drawing her son toward
 her in a warm embrace)
 Have I told you that you are one
 terrific kid?

LANGSTON

 (rolling his eyes)
 You tell me every day.

ROSIE

Close your eyes.

She kisses his eyes.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Do you know what that means?

LANGSTON

No.

ROSIE

It means that I love you. Only people
 who love you will kiss you on the
 eyes.

INT. CHURCH -- EVENING

Jacob is sanding the wood and meticulously fitting pieces
 onto the damaged pews. He hums the tune that we heard in
 his Brooklyn life, "The World is a Narrow Bridge." Mo walks
 in with a few sheets of mahogany.

MO

I hope this'll be enough.

JACOB

 (looking up)
 Looks fine to me.

MO

 (inspecting the work)
 Nice work, Jacob.

Rosie comes in.

MO (CONT'D)

Hey Rosie.

JACOB
(shy, awkward)
Hello.

ROSIE
How's it goin'?

JACOB
Should have everything back in order
by Sunday.

An uncomfortable silence.

MO
Well, I gotta check on... something.
Mo leaves. Jacob returns to the work at hand.

JACOB
Can you hand me that *schlissel*?

ROSIE
The what?

JACOB
The -- the --
(grasping for the
word)
wrench.

ROSIE
Why do you call it a
(awkwardly)
schlissel?

JACOB
I don't know. That's the first thing
that popped into my head.

She rummages around in the tool box.

ROSIE
I need to talk to you about the other
night... I made a mistake. That...
We ... can't happen again.

He looks at her for a long beat.

JACOB
O.K.

She pauses then hands him the wrench. Their hands touch as she gives him the tool.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Thank you.

ROSIE

You're welcome.

The moment is heavy with stifled sexuality and sadness.

THE INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Rosie drinks tea and studies the list of Jacob's characteristics. She adds "carpenter?" and "German?" to the list.

INT. CHURCH -- MORNING

The Church is near capacity; congregants are buzzing and attentive. Pastor Johnson steps to the podium.

PASTOR

Having others to share our burdens
is the unspoken gift of belonging to
a congregation. Last Thursday night,
every one of us shared in such a
burden, the burden of hate, when
vandals damaged property and defiled
our house of worship.

(a dramatic pause)

But look around -- you will see very
little out of place. That is because
we have a hero among us. That hero
is our good friend, Jacob, who put
his fear aside and acted for the
good of this community.

(he turns to Jacob

who is caught off

guard by the attention)

On behalf of the entire congregation,
and in the name of our God and savior
Jesus Christ, I offer you thanks and
benediction.

(Amens)

Pastor Johnson signals to Mr. Day. Mr. Day gestures for the choir to stand and sing. The band and choir begin a rousing gospel song. Rosie beams to Jacob as the choir's voices blend in boisterous unison.

Jacob wears a robe and sings with the choir, standing in the back row. He keeps rhythm with a tambourine.

EXT. ROSIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Rosie pulls up in front of the house. She takes her briefcase from the back and starts toward the front door when she notices that the lights are on in the church sanctuary.

ROSIE
(muttering to herself)
And they complain about the electric
bill.

INT. CHURCH -- NIGHT

All lights are on in the sanctuary. Jacob is at the piano. He plunks out the notes for a gospel version of "The World is a Narrow Bridge," the melody he sang with his class in Brooklyn before the tragedy. He mouths the words in English and writes down the notes on a piece of sheet music. He is so absorbed in the music that he doesn't notice that Rosie has come in.

JACOB
You gotta walk,
Move on,
You gotta walk.
The world is a very narrow bridge,
Lord, a narrow bridge.
As we travel,
Wrong may seem right
We need help to cross the darkness,
Lord,
Before we reach the light
Lord, we need the light.

He makes some notations on the page and then looks up to see Rosie.

ROSIE
(she approaches the
piano)
Beautiful.
(she picks up the
music and sings
haltingly)
It's a strange and winding journey,
Made of hopes and dreams and fears.
(MORE)

ROSIE (CONT'D)

It's a journey cross a narrow bridge,
Gotta suffer through our tears.

Jacob sings with her on the last few lines. Their voices blend effortlessly, and their bodies move closer together. Rosie pulls back and composes herself.

JACOB

It's for Gospel Sunday. Do you think they'll like it?

ROSIE

Of course they will.
(a beat)

Jacob glows with pride. His smile melts her resolve -- but then she remembers what she's doing.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

I've got to go.
(she turns)
Turn out the lights when you're done.

Rosie exits. Jacob plunks out bum, bum, bum, bum, bum -- bum-bum. FLASHBACK to Brooklyn when he played the piano with his daughter Sarah.

INT. PASTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Rosie is standing by the photocopy machine as Pastor Johnson enters.

ROSIE

Good afternoon, Pastor.
(excited)
We've got a new song for Gospel Sunday. Jacob wrote it. I think we can win this year.

Rosie passes him a copy and leans over his shoulder.

PASTOR

He sure knows how to write a song.
These are beautiful lyrics.
(a beat)
Look at this --

He points to some scrawled Hebrew letters at the top of the page.

ROSIE
What is that?

PASTOR
Hebrew letters. Those are Hebrew
letters.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET -- DAY

The scene opens on stroller wheels and the sound of a baby squawking. We widen out to see Hava pushing the baby in the stroller.

HAVA
Oysh -- such a big noise from such a
small package.

She reaches in her purse, takes out a cracker, and hands it to the baby.

HAVA (CONT'D)
Here -- this should make you happy.
(to herself)
How did I know? Because I'm a
brilliant grandma. That's how.

The baby drops the cracker and Hava steps on it.

HAVA (CONT'D)
And I should have stock in the cracker
company.

She gives the baby another cracker and crosses the street. The stroller gets stuck on the far curb.

HAVA (CONT'D)
This is not a walk -- it's a mountain
climbing expedition.

A YOUNG MOTHER with a CHILD notices her difficulty and picks up the front end of the stroller.

HAVA (CONT'D)
Thank you. I'm not used to this new
stroller. I'm babysitting for my
daughter.

WOMAN
No problem.
(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(joking)

Want to come to my house? My mother
lives in Indiana.

HAVA

(laughing)

Sorry -- I've got my hands full.

She walks away and the baby squawks again.

HAVA (CONT'D)

What? You want more? You're not a
baby, you're a vacuum.

INT. ROSIE'S CAR -- DAY

Rosie is looking for an address as she drives through a middle
class Birmingham neighborhood. She pulls up in front of a
modest reform synagogue.

INT. RABBI'S OFFICE -- DAY

The RABBI is a young, good-looking guy, dressed in khakis
and a button down shirt, hardly the rabbinic type. Rosie
knocks tentatively on the office door and sticks her head
in.

ROSIE

I'm looking for the rabbi.

RABBI

That's me. Rabbi Klein. But you
can call me Ed.

(extending a warm
handshake)

What can I do for you, Ms...?

ROSIE

Yarber. Rosie. First of all, I
have regards for you from Pastor
Johnson.

RABBI

From First Baptist?

ROSIE

That's the one. Pastor Johnson
suggested that I call on you.

(MORE)

ROSIE (CONT'D)

I have a question.
 (she removes the lyrics
 from her bag)
 I want to know what this means.
 (she points to the
 Hebrew letters in
 the corner)

RABBI

That's Hebrew. It's an abbreviation.
Be'ezrat hashem.

ROSIE

What does it mean?

RABBI

Literally, "with the help of God."
 It's a sign of faith. Orthodox Jews
 put it on everything they write --
 because everything they do should
 remind them of God's grace.
 (he looks at the lyrics)
 Who wrote this?

ROSIE

Jacob. He's a homeless man that our
 church took in. Turns out he's a
 terrific musician.

RABBI

Interesting... These words are the
 teachings of a great rabbi from the
 18th century.

ROSIE

We're planning to sing this on Gospel
 Sunday.

RABBI

It's an inspiring competition. I
 wish you luck with it.
 (a beat)
 This Jacob... He never mentioned
 being Jewish?

On Rosie's reaction.

INT. ROSIE'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Rosie gets back in the car and pulls out the legal pad with the list of Jacob's characteristics. She adds Jewish to the list.

INT. CHURCH -- EVENING

Jacob is at the piano, putting together the harmonies and making notations on his sheet music. He is elated, absorbed in the music. Rosie enters breathlessly, carrying the legal pad.

ROSIE

Jacob --

JACOB

(distracted)

Hello Rosie.

ROSIE

I need to talk to you --

JACOB

Listen to this.

(he continues to play)

This is going to be great. We'll start with the altos...

(he plays a few notes)

Add the bass...

(he plays a few more notes)

...everyone will expect the sopranos to lead, but I'll have them do harmonies.

(he plays all three together)

Music. I feel like a cloud is lifted from me.

Rosie has so much to tell him, but she hesitates, seeing his happiness.

ROSIE

Good... that's good.

Edmond comes in with Mr. Day and a few of the other choir members.

Rosie shrugs her shoulders and walks away, frustrated. She takes her seat among the other choir members.

MR. DAY
(checking his watch)
Is everyone here? We need to get started.
(to Jacob)
You ready?

JACOB
Tell me when.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Rosie sits with a cup of tea at the computer. She is once again searching the FBI data base. She scrolls through many pages of faces. She passes the picture of Jacob and his family that she saw earlier but ignored. This time she pauses and looks carefully. She reads the text and then zooms in on the bearded face. She has found Jacob.

From the FBI picture, she then puts "Brooklyn Bus Bombing" into Google. With another click, she is looking at the headline from The New York Times of the previous year: "111 Perish in Worst Terrorist Incident Since 9/11" She scrolls through the text to find a sidebar with a photo of Jacob's wife and three children with its own headline: "Mother and Three Children Die on Bus, Leaving Father and Community Bereft."

She knows who Jacob is. She understands what he has lost. Tears stream down her cheeks.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- DAY

Jacob, Langston, and a few of the OTHER BOYS are shooting some hoops, killing some time, having fun. Lanston is making his shots; he is greatly improved. A large school bus pulls up with a hand-lettered sign along the side: "GOSPEL SUNDAY" It seems that the entire community of First Baptist is there: young and old, choir members, deacons, and clergy. They all carry baskets and picnic boxes for the celebration afterward.

MARY
(to another choir member)
I made that corn bread that you like so much.

CHOIR MEMBER

And I made my mama's lemon meringue.
Hope it don't sweat. I don't know
if I added enough cream of tartar.

EDMOND

I'm getting hungry thinkin' about
all that good food.

MR. DAY

Let's make sure we have a first place
reason to celebrate.

MARY

Amen to that!

They laugh good-naturedly as they board the bus.

JACOB

(holding the basketball)
Come on boys. If you behave
yourselves, I'll let you beat me
later.

Langston takes his hand and they get on the bus. Mo and
Rosie are among the last to board, burdened with boxes and
bags for the picnic.

INT. BUS -- CONTINUOUS

Jacob waits for Rosie and helps her with the bundles.

JACOB

Here -- let me take that.

ROSIE

Thank you.
(a beat)
How you doin' today?

JACOB

A little nervous. But I feel great.

LANGSTON

(to Jacob)
Sit with us.

JACOB
If it's o.k. with your mom.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS -- MOMENTS LATER

Jacob is squeezed on the school bus bench between Langston and Rosie. Langston is bursting with excitement. Rosie is troubled. This is hardly the time to discuss Jacob's past.

EXT. CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH -- DAY

Calvary Baptist is a slightly larger version of First Baptist. A sign in front of the church reads "WELCOME TO GOSPEL SUNDAY." The parking lot is filled to capacity with buses and cars.

INT. CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH -- DAY

The congregation is packed. FIVE CHOIRS are seated in groups toward the front, each distinguished by the color of their robes. Mr. Day, Edmond, Rosie, and Jacob sit together, waiting nervously for their turn to perform. The audience fills in the rows behind. Mo and Langston sit with other members of First Baptist. Calvary Baptist's REVEREND, a powerful man in his 40's, stands on the dais.

REVEREND
Before we get started, I'd like to introduce this year's judges. First off, from Atlanta, Georgia, the Reverend Dr. Reginald Drummond, Director of Music at Chapel on the Way.

(Reverend Drummond rises and the audience applauds)

Next, Mrs. Susan Scott, Chair of the Department of Music at Birmingham Central High.

(Mrs. Scott rises and the audience applauds.)

And returning to us for the second year, from Nashville, Tennessee, the host of the Gospel Hour on WPRZ, Mr. Eugene Warner.

(MORE)

REVEREND (CONT'D)
 (Mr. Warner waves and
 the audience applauds)
 Without further ado, I'd like to
 call forward Mr. Barrett and the
 Prince of Peace Choir.

What follows is a montage of inspirational gospel: intense, joyful, spiritual, toe-tapping music. We hear the high point of each song.

CUT TO:

The Prince of Peace choir, some FORTY SINGERS, begins. Their song is traditional gospel. Soon the whole congregation is clapping and singing with the chorus.

Mo and Langston look at each other with concern. This is great music, a hard act to follow.

CUT TO:

The second song we hear is from Calvary Baptist. This is a somewhat smaller group, about THIRTY SINGERS. Their song is accented by an African percussion group. Their robes also reflect a devotion to their African roots.

Mr. Day and Jacob exchange glances of admiration for the choir -- and worry.

CUT TO:

The third song we hear is from the Resurrection Ministry. This is an all female choir who sings a capella, about THIRTY SINGERS. Different women take turns singing solos.

CUT TO:

The fourth song is from First Baptist. Mr. Day leads the band and the choir in Jacob's composition. Jacob sings a solo; his voice and demeanor are pure devotion.

Although each of the choirs is impressive, there is something that sets Jacob's performance above the rest.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY PARK -- AFTERNOON

First Baptist has gathered in the sprawling community park. The older CHILDREN play Frisbee, baseball, and jump rope; the TODDLERS chase each other between their mothers' skirts. The SENIORS have congregated on camp chairs in the shade. The DEACONESSES are busy arranging the huge quantities of food on long tables.

There is a buzz of energy and excitement that can come only from winning.

Jacob and Mo are standing in the food line. As people walk by, they shake Jacob's hand and offer words of congratulations.

CONGREGANT #1

Good job. We got the gold!

JACOB

It was Mr. Day and the choir.

CONGREGANT #2

Stop being so modest. It was you.
Who would think a skinny white guy
could have such a big sound?

Jacob laughs warmly as he shakes everyone's hand.

CONGREGANT #2 (CONT'D)

The judges loved it.

MO

Seems like yesterday I scraped you
off of them church steps. You
couldn't even say your name, let
alone sing.

PASTOR

(warmly putting his
arm around Jacob)

God gives the heart a voice to sound
its joy and calls it music. I hope
you will continue to share your voice
with First Baptist.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY PARK -- MOMENTS LATER

Rosie, Mo, Langston, and Jacob are sitting at a picnic table. They have finished their plates and are enjoying the moment. Edmond observes them from a few tables away.

ROSIE

(beaming)

I can't remember a Gospel Sunday
that I enjoyed this much. Even when
I was a kid.

LANGSTON

When we gonna finish the basketball
game?

ROSIE

Gonna? Gonna?

LANGSTON

Yes, ma'am. When are we *going to*
finish the basketball game?

JACOB

How about now?

Jacob picks up a basketball and tosses it to him. They bounce the ball back and forth between them as they move toward the basketball court. Edmond approaches Rosie and sits down next to her.

EDMOND

You know, I used to be a pretty good
ball player in my day. Maybe I can
show Langston a few moves.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Mo and Rosie are putting away the picnic things and cleaning up from the day's festivities.

MO

(holding up the picnic
basket)

Where the heck does this thing go?

ROSIE

Way up on the shelf in the back
closet.

MO

Crazy to have something that you use
once in a while take up so much space.

ROSIE

Sort of like your brain.

Mo shoots her a look, acknowledging the joust.

MO

Watch it...

Mo puts the basket away and comes back into the kitchen.

ROSIE

(getting serious)

Uncle Mo.

Mo stops and focuses on her.

MO

Uh oh. I better sit down. You never
call me Uncle Mo unless you mean
business. What'd I do wrong?

ROSIE

You didn't do anything. I just need
some ideas... some advice.

Rosie takes some folded papers out of her purse. She hands
him the first sheet. It is the list from the yellow legal
pad that she has been compiling of Jacob's qualities and
characteristics. Mo fumbles around for his reading glasses,
and then he studies the list.

MO

What is this exactly?

ROSIE

Those are all of Jacob's qualities,
his characteristics.

MO

I imagine he knows this about himself.

ROSIE

I've been doing some research on the
Internet and I'm pretty sure I figured
it out. Who he is, I mean, and why
he can't remember.

She hands him the print-out from the Missing Persons data base.

MO
I'm glad he got rid of the beard.

ROSIE
That's not all.

She then hands him the article from the New York Times.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH -- NIGHT

Jacob, alone in the church, admires the plaque that is displayed on an easel in the entry: FIRST PLACE/ GOSPEL SUNDAY.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Mo puts down the article and breathes deeply.

MO
(slowly)
He watched his whole family die.
That's gotta mess you up.

ROSIE
What do I do with this? He seems so happy.

MO
"Seems" is the right word. He ain't happy. He's ignorant. He needs to know.

ROSIE
You tell him.

MO
That's not for me to do -- or for you either.
(pointing to the article)
Says here he's got a mother. I'll bet she's missin' him.

On Rosie's reaction.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE -- MOS -- ROSIE SEEKS OUT HAVA

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET -- DAY

Rosie exits the Brooklyn subway station in Jacob's neighborhood. She is absorbed in the sights, smells and sounds of Orthodox Jews, Sikhs, Hispanics, Indians, Koreans, etc. who all live and work in this bustling environment. Each storefront has its own language, music, and clientele. As she walks down the street, she passes Jacob's synagogue, the kosher bakery where he shopped, the corner where he last saw his family. She pulls a piece of paper from her purse and stops a young MAN for directions.

EXT. HAVA'S HOME -- DAY

Rosie rings the bell and waits. Hava dries her hands on a dish towel as she opens the door. She leaves the screen door shut as Rosie tells her who she is and that she knows where her son is. Hava's face softens with emotion. She opens the screen door and leads Rosie into the house.

INT. HAVA'S DINING ROOM -- LATER

Hava and Rosie sit in the living room with a green photo album open between them. Empty tea cups sit on the table by their side. They are flipping slowly through the pages of the album, as Hava points out Jacob's family history. They touch the pictures as Hava shares Jacob's past.

CUT TO:

INT. HAVA'S KITCHEN -- LATER

Rosie is rinsing out the tea cups while Hava puts things away.

HAVA

I can't believe it. My Jacob sings gospel.

ROSIE

And very well -- our church won a gospel festival with a song he wrote for us.

HAVA
(incredulous)
Jacob writes gospel?

ROSIE
He even uses a tamborine.

Hava imagines it and laughs.

HAVA
Tell me -- the song he wrote --
did it have Jesus in it?

ROSIE
The world is a very narrow bridge,
Lord, a narrow bridge.
As we travel,
Wrong may seem right
We need help to cross the darkness,
Lord,
Before we reach the light
Lord, we need the light.

HAVA
Jacob didn't write those words.

ROSIE
I know. The rabbi in Birmingham
told me that.

HAVA
Did he tell you who wrote it?

ROSIE
Some rabbi from the 18th century.

HAVA
Rabbi Nahman. He was the founder of
our movement. He believed in the
power of joyful celebration.

Rosie looks at her quizzically.

HAVA (CONT'D)
It's a simple theory: if God exists
in every moment and God is joy, then
there is never a moment when we should
not rejoice.

ROSIE
(they smile at each
other)
So you'll come with me?

HAVA
I need to pack.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Jacob is painting the trim around a window in the church. He stands on a ladder and painstakingly attends to the detail of the repair.

Rosie and Hava are at the back of the church. Hava holds the green photo album in her arms. Rosie points to Jacob at the far corner.

ROSIE
There... that's Jacob.

There is a moment as Hava takes it in. Hava looks around the church: the pews, the stained glass, the mural of black Jesus, the cross, the man at work.

She watches him. It is indeed her Jacob.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
I'll get him for you.

HAVA
(stopping her)
No... this is my job.

A moment's hesitation and then Hava purposefully walks down the aisle to the man on the ladder.

Rosie watches her then quietly closes the door, leaving them alone.

Hava stands near the ladder. Jacob works intently, humming to himself. He feels her eyes on him.

HAVA (CONT'D)
Ya'akov?

Jacob slowly turns and looks. Their eyes meet; they are the same eyes. Jacob recognizes the familiarity. He is drawn from the ladder to directly in front of her. His eyes search and re-search her face.

JACOB
I know you, don't I?

HAVA
And I know you.
(she reaches up and
brushes his hair out
of his eyes)
I know you better than you know
yourself right now.
(a beat)
I always thought that you looked
like your father, but everyone else
said you looked like me.
(she pats the photo
album)
Come... somewhere private. I have
a story to tell you.

CUT TO:

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- LATER

The photo album lies open on Jacob's lap. Jacob and Hava sit on the bed. Jacob touches the photo of his wife and children.

JACOB
I loved them, didn't I.

HAVA
And they loved you.

Jacob's mouth opens in anguish, but there is no sound, as if he has just suffered immediate and incomprehensible pain. He rocks back and forth. Then a deep breath in and he covers his face and keens. Hava holds him as they rock, weeping for all that has been lost -- and found.

EXT. ROSIE'S BACKYARD PORCH -- EVENING

Mo and Hava sit on rocking chairs on the back porch. It is early summer, a glorious evening. They sip iced tea.

HAVA
(stiffly)
I want to thank you, Mr. Lacombe.

MO
Call me Mo.

HAVA

I want to thank you for everything
you've done for my son.

MO

It was the right thing to do.

HAVA

Is Mo short for Moses? I had an
uncle named Moses.

MO

Maurice. But Mo will do.

HAVA

(graciously)

Hava.

A moment's silence as they rock their chairs and sip their
drinks.

HAVA (CONT'D)

(adjusting her head
covering)

You know, Mo, in my tradition, I
shouldn't be sitting here with you.

MO

Why not?

HAVA

A man and a woman. Alone. People
would talk.

Mo laughs, a good deep belly laugh.

MO

I don't think you have anything to
be afraid of. Two old goats like
us.

This time Hava laughs with him.

HAVA

It feels good to laugh.

MO

Nothing wrong with it.

HAVA

Sometimes you think you'll never
laugh again...

Her voice trails off for a long beat.

MO

When Elsie passed, I didn't want to
eat again. I thought it wasn't fair
that I could still taste a warm apple
pie, and she couldn't... That woman
loved apple pie.

HAVA

We're human. We're programmed to
find joy again.

MO

I could use some of that apple pie
right about now.

HAVA

I make a mean apple strudel.

MO

I'm sure you do.

Another silence... They rock.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- DAY

Langston and Jacob are shooting hoops in the parking lot.
Langston has improved even more. He is trying to pass Jacob
on his way to the net.

JACOB

Remember what I said. Put the ball
where you're going, not where you
are.

LANGSTON

Like this?

Langston breaks away and passes Jacob, going all the way to
the basket. He misses the lay-up, but his movements are
fluid.

JACOB

Thatta' boy!

LANGSTON
But I missed the shot.

JACOB
Who cares? You took the shot.
(running out of breath)
I'm getting too old for this.

Jacob sits down on a nearby bench. Langston follows.

LANGSTON
Do you live with your mother?

JACOB
No. She lives nearby. Just a short
bus ride.

LANGSTON
When I grow up, I'm going to live
right next door to my mom.

Jacob smiles warmly at the young boy's innocent wishes.

LANGSTON (CONT'D)
Does this mean you're going home?

INT. CARETAKER'S ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Hava knocks on the door and pushes it open. Jacob is lying
on the cot. He is awake but deep in thought.

HAVA
Ya'akov?

Jacob sits up. She sits down next to him.

HAVA (CONT'D)
This is not your home. These are
good people here, but they're not
your people. You need to be with
your own.

INT. CHURCH -- MORNING

Sunday morning worship: a full house dressed to the nines,
deaconesses in white, Pastor Johnson, the choir, Mo and Hava
in the second row.

PASTOR

O Lord --
You have tried my heart,
You have visited it in the night,
You have tested me.
 (he stops reading and
 looks up)
You -- have -- tested -- me.
 (a long beat)
How many of us here have been tested
by the Lord?
 (a murmur of
 acknowledgment)
How many of us have overcome sadness,
pain, illness, disappointment, and
loss?
 (the congregation
 responds)
Raise your hand if you have overcome.

Hands go up slowly all over the church. Among them are
Rosie, Mo, and then Hava. When Jacob sees his mother's hand
go up, he slowly raises his own.

EXT. ROSIE'S BACKYARD PORCH -- EVENING

Jacob and Hava sit on the rockers on the back porch.

HAVA

These are lovely chairs, Jacob.
Your father was a scholar, but making
things with his hands gave him a
different kind of satisfaction. You
got my eyes -- his hands. I can't
even sew a button on a pair of pants.
 (chuckling)
What can you do?

ROSIE

 (joining them on the
 porch)
Excuse me. I didn't know... I'll
come back.

HAVA

 (getting up and taking
 in the situation)
No. I was just going inside. The
night air is delicious but I've had
enough. *Gute nacht, zisse kinder.*

Rosie looks at Jacob for translation.

JACOB
Good night, sweet children.

Hava hugs Rosie and kisses her on the cheek as she leaves.
There is a long beat of uncomfortable silence.

ROSIE
So... now what?

JACOB
What if I said that I wanted to stay
here?

Rosie looks at him and studies his face.

ROSIE
(slowly)
I would call you a liar.

JACOB
Too much pain back there.

ROSIE
The pain will follow you no matter
where you live.

JACOB
Or who I care about --

ROSIE
(a beat))
.... or who cares about you.

Rosie sits on his lap and takes his hand. Their hands
intermingle -- so different yet so much the same. The image
speaks volumes.

JACOB
There is so much to wonder at in
this world.

She puts her head on his shoulder, leans into his neck, and
they rock. The starry Southern night surrounds them. The
rocker creaks gently as it cradles them.

ROSIE
Who are we to question God's plan?
(MORE)

ROSIE (CONT'D)

We did what we were supposed to do.

(a beat)

We breathed life into each other.

JACOB

I'm going home.

ROSIE

I know that.

JACOB

I will think of you every day for
the rest of my life.

They look at each other.

ROSIE

Close your eyes.

Jacob closes his eyes and Rosie gently kisses each one. He slowly opens his eyes.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Now me.

She closes her eyes and Jacob takes her face in his hands and kisses her closed eyes. She opens her eyes. It is understood. Only people who love you kiss your eyes. She leans on his shoulder and they rock.

EXT. TRAIN STATION -- MORNING

Jacob carries his coat and a backpack with all his possessions. Mo carries Hava's small suitcase. Mo hugs Hava, and she boards the train. Jacob leans into Langston and offers his hand. They hug. Mo goes to shake Jacob's hand, and they embrace in an all-enveloping bear hug.

EXT. HILLSIDE -- MORNING

Rosie's car sits on a hill above town.

INT. ROSIE'S CAR -- MORNING

Rosie sits behind the wheel gazing out at the town as the train pulls out of the station and moves off into the distance.

EXT. SYNAGOGUE -- DAY

It is Sabbath morning at Jacob's Brooklyn synagogue. Orthodox MEN and WOMEN stream through the doors, greeting each other. WOMEN with baby strollers and ELDERLY MEN are the last to enter. Among the stragglers are Hava and Jacob. Jacob once again wears traditional clothing and fedora.

INT. SYNAGOGUE -- DAY

The service is already in progress when Hava and Jacob quietly enter. The MEN are crowding the podium as the sacred Torah scrolls are removed from the ark. Jacob takes a seat near the back of the men's section. As he sits down, he takes out a tallit (prayer shawl) and reverentially puts it over his shoulders. Hava goes to sit with her daughter and the other women. Several WOMEN embrace her, and a buzz travels through the congregation. Slowly, all eyes turn to Jacob.

The Rabbi leads a processional of the Torah scrolls through the synagogue. As is customary, congregants lean forward to touch the sacred scrolls with their prayer books and prayer shawls. When the Rabbi sees Jacob, he stops, leans over, and extends his hand. As Jacob shakes his hand, their eyes connect and in that instant, Jacob is home. The Rabbi pulls Jacob from his seat and brings him up to the podium. Jacob looks out at the congregation and sees the loving faces of his mother, Naomi, students, and friends. With great emotion, Jacob leads the singing. He is back where he belongs.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

The choir is singing a beautiful, upbeat gospel song. Rosie looks out and sees Langston and Mo. She then looks at Edmond, also singing in the choir, who smiles at her warmly. It is evident that the connection between them will flourish.

The music of First Baptist blends with the music of Jacob's congregation, creating a new melody as we

FADE OUT: