

The Darien Club

by

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"No man bruises his finger here on earth unless it was  
so decreed against him in heaven."

*Talmud, Hullin 7b*

**COMPLETE DARKNESS**

Labored breathing and wheezing, a child dying...

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

Empty and long as far as the eye can see, boiling sun overhead. Tall fields of wheat shoot up on each side.

MICHAEL RENE (33)

stands in the middle of the road. He's not the child. He could be his father. His face defies time and place. He's the guy next-door, the man in the news, the captain of a ship.

We've seen him before. We trust him and want to be his friend. Yet, we sense that beneath that confident exterior lies a world of pain.

MICHAEL

Darien, where are you?

He runs into the field, arms parting the wheat. The wheezing grows louder, more intense. A wind kicks up.

OMINOUS BLACK CLOUDS

quickly gather and the sun disappears. It becomes night.

MICHAEL

stops. He's startled by

A BLACK HORSE

which appears out of nowhere. The animal is restless, snorting, neighing. Michael approaches, trying to appease it.

MICHAEL

Easy, boy...

The horse gets spooked and suddenly rises up on its hind legs, trying to knock Michael over. One of the hoofs grazes Michael's face, creating a GASH on his cheek.

Michael stumbles and falls flat on the ground.

THE HORSE

towers over him. And just as

THE HOOFS

hit the ground, Michael rolls over. The horse trots off into the night and disappears. As Michael runs his fingers over his bloodied cheek

A CHILD'S HAND

clutches Michael's wrist.

DARIEN POPE (9)

lies next to Michael, wheezing, holding on to Michael's wrist for dear life. The boy is barefoot. He wears a WHITE GAUZE MASK over his face and a tattered night gown.

The boy's entire body is bloodied and bruised, and covered with dirt. He's in shock.

MICHAEL

Darien...

Michael pries the boy's hand loose and kneels down beside him, removing the gauze mask. Darien is a skinny kid, pale skin, blond hair and intense eyes.

MICHAEL

It's gonna be okay.

Michael sits him up, patting his back, trying to loosen the phlegm in his lungs. The boy is choking. He gazes at Michael, his life quickly draining, eyes begging for mercy.

MICHAEL

Don't give up on me. I'm right here.

The wind grows stronger. Michael stares up at the black sky. Then at the boy, who has stopped breathing, head hung low...

MICHAEL

Darien!

Michael shakes the lifeless body, patting the boy's face.

MICHAEL

Darien, come back!

Suddenly, Darien's body becomes erect, his eyes and mouth agape. An eerie sound whooshes out of his mouth, a long bubbling sigh as he releases the remaining air in his lungs.

As if a marionette released from its strings, the boy collapses and dies.

MICHAEL

Darien!

It starts to pour, sheets of RAIN drenching Michael with apocalyptic intensity.

MICHAEL

Don't leave me...

Michael rocks the boy in his arms, GRIPPING him tightly.

MICHAEL

WHY? WHY?

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Let go!

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. NEW YORK SUBWAY TRAIN - MOVING - MORNING**

Michael awakens from what was a DREAM, gasping, his right hand tightly gripping the jacket of the WOMAN sitting next to him. He releases the coat and looks at her.

WOMAN

Freak...

She gets up and quickly retreats to the other end of the cab. All eyes are on Michael. That's because he has a nasty GASH ON HIS CHEEK --

He stares down at his bloody fingers...

**INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY**

Michael spills out of the car, dodging boarding passengers...

**INT. SUBWAY RESTROOM - DAY**

Michael splashes water from the sink on his face, trying to stop the bleeding. He stares at his reflection on the cracked mirror.

He dons a wool cap, parka, three-day beard. He hasn't slept in days. He looks like shit. Michael produces a small notebook and pen. He flips through

PAGES

filled with rough sketches of Darien. One of the pages has a log of his dreams. He's up to number 74. His unsteady hand quickly scrawls another entry. Number 75...

**EXT. 14TH STREET EXIT - MORNING**

Michael bounds up the stairs, braving the heavy rain. His breath condenses, his sanity quickly evaporating as he trudges down the street.

He comes to an intersection and stops. He feels light-headed, his eyes have trouble focusing. He starts to cross the street.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

The world spins. Sounds become distant--

AN AUTOMOBILE BUMPER

stops inches from Michael's knees.

MICHAEL

freezes and stares at the Driver who glares at him, wipers swishing back and forth. Michael crosses to the other side.

**INT. L'HIRONDELLE KITCHEN - DAY**

Michael pushes through the swinging doors. We're in the bowels of a fancy brasserie. He peels off the wool cap and crosses the kitchen as if a general inspecting his troops.

If he's having problems, he's not letting it show. A COOK mutters as the iron chef passes.

COOK

Elvis is in the building.

MICHAEL

Cecile!

CECILE (24), pretty, French accent, skips over, clipboard in hand. She's got eyes for Michael.

CECILE

*Bon jour.* Sleep well?

She points to the gash on his cheek.

CECILE

Your face...

MICHAEL

Today's fish special. Grilled tuna livornaise, roasted potatoes and grilled eggplant.

She jots that down. He samples the liquid at a stock pot.

MICHAEL

More bones!  
(to Cecile)  
The order come in?

She chases after him and rattles off, forgetting to breathe.

CECILE

Twenty cases mesclum fifteen cases  
G.P.O.D. seventy count potatoes three  
cases beef tenderloin three poly milks  
and three fifty pound blocks sweet  
butter.

MICHAEL

Call *Gourmand* for the *feuille de brik*  
and have the compressor in freezer one  
fixed.

Michael enters his office, which he shares with his partner.

RUSTY

Mornin'. How'd you sleep last night?

RUSTY WALDMAN (30'S)

A mountain of a man who chomps on life as vigorously as he does the ever-present unlit cigar clenched between his teeth. He wears a button down shirt, slacks, shiny shoes.

MICHAEL

Will everyone please stop asking how I slept every five seconds.

Feeling a little wounded, Cecile makes herself scarce.

RUSTY

In case you haven't noticed, she's got the hots for you.

Michael tries to ignore that. He reaches for the first aid kit and produces some gauze and disinfectant. He stands in front of the small mirror on the wall and treats his cheek.

Lining the wall are several framed articles on the restaurant, and about Michael. He's quite the star chef.

RUSTY

What happened to your face?

MICHAEL

My face is fine.

RUSTY

Got a call from Echeverria. Said you threatened to kill him.

MICHAEL

Actually, I threatened to bash in his headlights if he ever shows up in my kitchen again.

RUSTY

Why don't you let me do my job?

Michael hangs up his coat, kicks off his shoes and changes into his checks, chef's jacket, clogs and apron.

MICHAEL

He's been late three times in a row and he's shorting us.

RUSTY

He's threatening to sue. Attempted assault and battery.

MICHAEL

Let me guess. You're banging his daughter and you're afraid she'll cut you off.

Rusty drops the cigar into the ashtray and shuts the door.

RUSTY  
Who told you that?

Michael doesn't answer. Rusty knows he's been had.

RUSTY  
Claire and I've been seeing a marriage counselor.

MICHAEL  
Yeah? How's that going?

The irony of that question isn't lost on either one of them. They both laugh. Michael finishes dressing. He gets up.

MICHAEL  
Look, even if I were to apologize, what makes you think he won't sue?

RUSTY  
I don't give a crap about that. It's you I'm worried about.

Rusty seems to have misplaced something. Michael reaches behind Rusty's ear and produces the stogie as if a MAGICIAN.

MICHAEL  
Well don't be.

Rusty helps himself to the cigar. Michael exits the office and yells out, clapping, rallying the troops.

MICHAEL  
Alright, people! Let's get this show on the road.

**INT. L'HIRONDELLE - NIGHT**

Dinner is in full swing. The place is packed. We follow a Waiter into the kitchen, a beehive of activity. The printer pumps out orders nonstop.

Michael carefully slices a large piece of beef with a sharp knife. He yawns big. Rusty runs in, excited.

RUSTY  
The editor of Santa Barbara Magazine wants to meet you.

MICHAEL  
Tacho, still waiting on that chiffonade! And let's get this food off the window. Now!

RUSTY  
Table three. Don't disappoint me.

Rusty doesn't wait for Michael to protest and quickly exits through the swinging doors. Michael looks after him. He yawns again. He sees something...

He rubs his unbelieving eyes, which seem to deceive him.

DARIEN

stands on the other side of the swinging doors, staring at Michael. Darien is clad in his nightshirt and gauze mask. Patrons and staff walk by, totally unaware.

MICHAEL

stares back, eyes transfixed as the doors swing back and forth. He wants to move or say something, but the boy's gaze locks him in some sort of paralyzing trance.

--and just as suddenly as he appeared, Darien is gone.

COOK (O.S.)  
Boss? Boss?!

Michael snaps out of it and glances over at the Cook, who gazes down at the counter, grimacing. Michael follows the Cook's gaze --

A POOL OF RED BLOOD

quickly forms around Michael's hand. He almost **CHOPPED OFF** the tip of his **LEFT INDEX FINGER** with the knife.

MICHAEL

doesn't react...

**INT. E.R. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT**

Rusty chats on his cell while flipping through magazines.

RUSTY  
...no, they were able to save it...I  
can't force him...I know...trust me,  
I've tried.....I feel the same way...

An article in

NEW YORK MAGAZINE

catches Rusty's attention: "WHO IS THE REAL MICHAEL RENE?"

RUSTY

has seen it before. He pushes the magazine away.

RUSTY  
Alright...I'll try not to be too  
late...don't worry...love you.

He hangs up. He looks up to see

MICHAEL

standing twenty feet away, finger heavily bandaged...

**INT. RUSTY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Double parked in front of Michael's building. Rusty turns to Michael, who sits in the passenger seat, lost in his thoughts.

MICHAEL

Do you believe in fate?

RUSTY

Do I believe that someone or something up there is pulling my strings and I have no choices in life? Absolutely not.

MICHAEL

Maybe choice is only an illusion.

RUSTY

Sean's death was a tragic accident. A random occurrence in a universe where things often don't make sense.

MICHAEL

Then why bother getting up in the morning?

RUSTY

Buddy, it's been over a year...

MICHAEL

(half question, half statement)

And I need to get over it...

RUSTY

Look, it was a horrible thing. It's been hard on all of us--

MICHAEL

I saw Darien at the restaurant again.

Rusty has heard this before. He sighs.

MICHAEL

Waking hallucinations. My unconscious playing tricks on me to get my mind off the pain. That's what my shrink thinks.

RUSTY

Maybe he's right...

Michael glances at Rusty. He opens the car door...

RUSTY

I don't think you're crazy...

MICHAEL

But?

That's as far as Rusty is willing to go.

MICHAEL

Thanks for the ride.

Michael steps out. He closes the door and heads into his building. Rusty looks after him with grave concern.

**INT. MICHAEL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Michael reaches into the frig for a beer. He uncaps it and takes a long swig. HENRY, his black cat, jumps on the counter and rubs up against Michael, meowing. Michael pets him.

MICHAEL

I know...

**INT. SEAN'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Michael flips on the light. He walks in. There's a small bed, piles of toys, books, clothes -- and

A TRICYCLE

in the corner. All relics of a life taken too soon.

A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH

of his four year old son, SEAN, sits on the night table. He's a cute, happy kid with dark hair and slightly olive skin (and he looks nothing like Darien).

MICHAEL

stares at it longingly. He grabs the stuffed bear on the bed and brings it up to his nostrils. He inhales, taking in the scent as if it were life-giving. He closes his eyes...

**EXT. PARK - DAY (HOME VIDEO)**

A beautiful winter day. A thin layer of snow covers the ground. Michael, who's behind the camera, follows

TRACKS

on the ground made by Sean's TRICYCLE as he furiously wheels away from Michael and toward his mother, LAYLA (27). She has exotic good looks, dark skin, piercing green eyes.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

I'm coming to get you!

Sean hides behind his mother, who looks into the camera as if gazing into Michael's soul. Sean giggles and shrieks...

CUT TO:

**INT. MICHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Michael sits on the living room floor in front of the TV, watching the video, hugging the bear, drowning in his pain...

**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Michael pops a couple of sleeping pills into his mouth, chasing them with some water. This is all too much for him...

**INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Michael passed out on the bed, Henry next to him. The room is sparsely furnished -- no bed frame or night table.

**EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT**

Michael walks out into the roof, barefoot. His movements are deliberate yet restrained. He approaches the ledge and steps up onto it.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

He stares down at the abyss. STRANGE VOICES whisper in the background -- a ceremonial chant in an ancient tongue...

MICHAEL

is suddenly overcome by numbing calmness. Whatever happens next has already been sealed.

Michael inhales deeply...and leaps off the roof, arms extended, diving into the pool of his own despair --

Prelap the PHONE RINGING...

**INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Michael bolts up in bed, drenched in sweat. He was dreaming.

He looks over at the alarm clock. It's 3:15 A.M. He turns on the lamp and fumbles with the receiver. He brings it to his ear.

MICHAEL

Hello?

No answer. The line goes dead. Michael hangs up. A beat. He senses something. So does Henry, who freaks out and jumps off the bed. Michael presses the speaker button...

LABORED BREATHING AND WHEEZING on other end. There's a lot of static. Michael grabs the receiver.

MICHAEL

Hello? Who's there? Hello!

The line goes dead again. Michael slams the receiver as his heart pounds in his chest. He suddenly feels a CHILL and his body quivers uncontrollably.

He gets a hold of himself and he grabs the receiver one more time. We hear the dial tone. He punches \*69.

RECORDED MESSAGE (V.O.)  
The number you're trying to reach is  
outside the calling zone...

Michael hangs up. A beat, then we prelap:

RECORDED MESSAGE (V.O.)  
...please dial your telephone number  
and press pound...

**INT. RUSTY'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

Rusty, Michael and CLAIRE (30), Rusty's wife, sit in the living room, listening to Michael's voicemail on the speakerphone.

Michael looks as if he had another sleepless night.

Rusty and Claire are still in their pajamas. The apartment is spacious and tastefully decorated. Claire holds one of Darien's sketches in her hand.

RECORDED MESSAGE (V.O.)  
You have no new messages in your  
mailbox, twenty saved messages. Your  
voicemail is full. Press one to  
play...

He does.

RECORDED MESSAGE (V.O.)  
Sent at three-fifteen A.M.

They hear the familiar wheezing and labored breathing.

RECORDED MESSAGE (V.O.)  
Press two to save...

He does.

RECORDED MESSAGE (V.O.)  
Press one to play...

He does.

RECORDED MESSAGE (V.O.)  
Sent at three-fifteen A.M.

Labored breathing and wheezing. He presses "2" and "1" again then he hangs up.

MICHAEL  
They were all the exact same message  
recorded at the exact same time. Three-  
fifteen A.M. The phone company  
couldn't explain it. Nor could they  
track the number.  
(more)

MICHAEL (cont'd)

But they did tell me the calls all originated from Grand Island, Nebraska.

Rusty and Claire glance at each other. Claire places the sketch on the coffee table.

RUSTY

Sounds like a prank to me.

CLAIRE

Two years ago Anna, our housekeeper, lost her grandmother to cancer. They were very close. About a month after her grandmother passed, Anna received a call in the middle of the night. All she could hear was the distant voice of a woman singing a nursery rhyme. Her grandmother used to sing to her the very same rhyme when she was young. She never heard from her again.

RUSTY

(derisively)

Anna is also a medium and reads tarot cards. Which makes her infinitely qualified to clean our house.

CLAIRE

I just think her grandmother wanted to tell her that she was okay and had arrived on the other side.

RUSTY

She also claims to have been an Egyptian Pharaoh in a previous life. You believe in reincarnation, don't you, Michael?

CLAIRE

Shut up, Rusty.

(to Michael)

You two should really talk.

(yells out)

Anna, will you be a dear and come in here?

(to Michael)

You ever consider that it might be your son trying to contact you?

ANNA (55)

the MULATA housekeeper, enters. A small WOODEN CRUCIFIX hangs from her neck. She holds a vase with yellow flowers with both hands.

ANNA

*Si, señora.*

CLAIRE

Anna. Please tell Mr. Rene about the phone call from your grandmother. You know....

RUSTY

Michael doesn't believe any of that supernatural mumbo jumbo. Besides, the sketch looks nothing like Sean.

He holds up Darien's sketch then drops it on the coffee table.

CLAIRE

I'm just asking Michael to keep an open mind, that's all.

RUSTY

You're putting idiotic ideas in his head.

MICHAEL

(trying to get a word in edgewise)

Guys...

As they bicker, Michael watches Anna approach the sketch. Something about it disturbs her terribly. Meanwhile Rusty gets up and walks over to the bar.

DARIEN'S EYES

seem to stare right through her.

ANNA

is momentarily paralyzed with fear.

CLAIRE

This from the man who wanted to try an open marriage...

RUSTY

Congratulations. You just managed to turn the conversation into a therapy session. Maybe Michael might be interested in hearing the lurid details of our sex life.

MICHAEL

Guys!

They stop and look at Anna who looks clearly perturbed.

CLAIRE

Anna, what's wrong?

Anna hastily exits the room.

CLAIRE

Anna..?

Claire goes after her. Rusty turns to Michael.

RUSTY

Drink?

Michael indicates "a little one" with his fingers.

**EXT. RUSTY'S BUILDING - MORNING**

Still reeling from what just happened, Michael hails a cab...

**INT. CAB - DAY**

Michael climbs inside.

MICHAEL

Fourteenth Street and Eighth Avenue.

The CABBIE steps on it and turns around for second...

CABBIE

Traffic's kind of heavy. Mind if I take--

MICHAEL

WATCH OUT!

Michael points straight ahead --

ANNA

stands in the middle of the street, right in the path of the cab, staring at Michael zombie-like.

THE CABBIE

jams on the break--

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Michael and the Cabbie jump out.

CABBIE

I didn't see her. She came out of nowhere...

Several people rush over. Anna lies on the ground, in shock. Michael kneels down beside her.

MICHAEL

Call nine-one-one!

CABBIE

...she came out of nowhere...

Michael places his rolled up jacket under Anna's head. She pulls Michael in and mutters:

ANNA  
*El niño. Salve el niño. Salve el  
 niño...*

A crowd forms as her words ring in Michael's ears...

**INT. HOSPITAL I.C.U. - DAY**

Anna lies on a bed in a coma. Michael stands next to her, keeping vigil. Claire and Rusty enter. Rusty hands Michael a cup of coffee and puts a hand on his shoulder.

MICHAEL  
 She kept repeating the same words over and over again. "The boy. Save the boy."

Rusty doesn't comment.

**INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY**

Rusty leans into Michael, screaming sotto voce.

RUSTY  
 ...You're about to throw all logic out the window based on what? Some voodoo horseshit my maid fed you? Buddy, you gotta do something. You can't go on like this. It's hurting you, it's hurting the business. I beg you. Go back to therapy. That or take a damn vacation. But do something...!

**EXT. HOSPITAL ROOF - DAY**

Michael stands on the roof, alone with his thoughts. He stares at the city, Rusty's words still resonating in his head...

**INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Michael is asleep, having the Darien dream again. His eyeballs rapidly shift under his eyelids, his head moving from side to side, moaning...

**EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY**

Labored breathing and wheezing...Michael runs into the field, arms parting the wheat. Suddenly, menacing black clouds quickly gather. The sun disappears. The world becomes dark.

Michael stops. He stares up at the sky. Out of nowhere,

A BLACK HORSE

appears. The animal is restless, snorting, neighing, glaring at Michael.

MICHAEL  
 Easy, boy...

As he tries to appease the beast, it suddenly rises up on its hind legs, trying to knock Michael over --

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Michael violently awakens as he swats the lamp next the bed, knocking it to the floor. He sits up on the bed, sweating...

**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Michael empties out a bottle of sleeping pills into the palm of his hand. He stares at the stash thinking the unthinkable.

He then reconsiders, and closes his fist around the pills, leaning against the sink, staring at his tortured reflection on the mirror.

**INT. I.C.U. - DAY**

Anna is still in a coma. She's alone in the room.

MICHAEL

stands outside the viewing window, staring at her, looking frazzled from yet another sleepless night...

**INT. L'HIRONDELLE KITCHEN - DAY**

Busy lunch hour. Michael puts finishing touches on an elaborate dish. He has trouble keeping his eyes open. The whole thing collapses.

Frustrated, Michael pushes the plate away and it falls on the floor, shattering, bits of porcelain and food flying all over the place. Everyone stops and stares.

Michael holds out his hands, which are shaking. He yells out.

MICHAEL

What the hell are you all looking at?  
Get back to work!

A beat. Everyone returns to work.

**INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Michael sits on the bed, light on.

THE ALARM CLOCK

reads 3:14 A.M. After a few beats it jumps to 3:15 A.M.

MICHAEL

waits for something to happen, but nothing does. Anxious, he hits the speaker button on the phone. All we can hear is dial tone --

HENRY

the cat suddenly jumps up onto the bed, startling Michael--

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN - DAY**

Wooden pews face the altar which is surrounded by stained glass windows and tall, vaulted ceilings. A PRIEST offers wafers to the penitent as he performs morning mass.

MICHAEL

sits a few rows back, thinking, watching...

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Hands tucked in his jacket, Michael swims through a sea of humanity. He glances at the faces of strangers, who stare back at him with blank expressions.

He stops at a busy intersection...

A BLACK HORSE

clip-clops and stops a few feet from Michael, helmeted COP on top.

MICHAEL

who's becomes very uncomfortable. Sensing his unease, the horse also becomes edgy, shifting about, snorting, neighing. The animal gets up on its hind legs.

COP

Easy there!

Michael tries to get out of the way. The Horse almost hits him. Michael trips and falls on the ground.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

The Horse hovers over him, trying to buck its rider, its EYES staring at Michael.

THE HOOFS

hit the cement just as Michael rolls over. The Cop finally controls his animal and steps off the horse. Several people come to Michael's aide, helping him to his feet.

COP

Sir, are you okay?

Michael doesn't answer. He backpedals and disappears into the crowd...

**EXT. STOREFRONT - DAY**

Michael just dialed a number on his cell phone. It rings several times. A voicemail picks up.

MAN'S RECORDED VOICE (V.O.)  
Hello, this is Charlie Glassman at the West Village Counseling Center. Please leave a message after the tone. And if this is an emergency, please hang up and call --

Michael hangs up...

**EXT. CEMETERY - SUNRISE**

It's snowing. Michael kneels in front of a gravestone: "SEAN RENE \* January 8, 2000 - June 21, 2004 \* Beloved Son." Michael glances skyward, as if expecting an answer from God.

MICHAEL  
WHY? WHY?

But no answer comes, just snow flakes drifting down to earth, each one different, yet all the same.

**INT. MICHAEL AND RUSTY'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING**

Rusty sits at his desk doing paperwork, unlit cigar in his mouth. A knock at the door. Rusty glances up.

RUSTY  
Yeah?

Cecile walks in and hands Rusty a small envelope. She watches as Rusty opens it. There's a note inside. Rusty reads it. His face drops.

RUSTY  
Shit!

Angry, Rusty tosses his cigar at the wall, startling poor Cecile.

RUSTY  
SHIT!!!!

**INT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT - DAY**

Michael stares out the window. He holds a pen in

HIS RIGHT HAND

which rests on the tray next to his "dream notebook," open to a page with a new sketch of Darien.

## A FLIGHT ATTENDANT

places a beer and a cup on his tray and a soft drink in front of the OLD LADY (98) sitting next to him. She's reading a book, "The Reincarnation of Peter Proud."

Michael pours the golden liquid into the empty cup. He takes a drink.

OLD LADY  
Handsome boy your son.

Michael glances at her and smiles. He's not in the mood to explain. Yet he feels compelled to say something. She puts the book down and sips her drink.

MICHAEL  
I always thought if I came back I'd like to be a cat.

OLD LADY  
I'd much prefer to be a hummingbird. Think of all the freedom and all the flowers...

MICHAEL  
Well, if I come back as a cat I promise to stay out of your way.

They both smile and drink up.

OLD LADY  
First time in Grand Island?

Michael nods.

OLD LADY  
My sister lives there. It's our ninety-ninth birthday on Thursday. Can you believe that?

MICHAEL  
Happy birthday.

OLD LADY  
I'm moving in with her. I've lived alone in a big house most of my life. But when you get to be my age it's not practical anymore. No sir, not practical anymore...

Just then, the plane starts to RATTLE AND SHAKE.

CAPTAIN'S VOICE (V.O.)  
Ladies and gentlemen, sorry about that. We've hit a little turbulence. I ask that at this time everyone return to their seats and buckle up. I apologize for the inconvenience.

Michael and the Old Lady buckle up. Suddenly, the plane DROPS a few hundred feet. Passengers scream.

Michael becomes tense, grabbing both arm rests. He closes his eyes. He suddenly hears the familiar WHEEZING sound. He looks at the Old Lady who's having an asthma attack.

MICHAEL

You alright?

She can barely breathe. The plane LOSES MORE ALTITUDE again and goes into a NOSE-DIVE. OXYGEN MASKS DROP. Everyone puts them on, including Michael--

He looks over at the Old Lady, who's still WHEEZING, unable to put on the oxygen mask. Michael tries to help her, but she refuses him--

MICHAEL

Do you have an inhaler?

She points under the seat. Michael takes off his oxygen mask and bends over. He yanks out her purse and opens it. But he can't find the inhaler.

The Old Lady is getting worse, and the airplane keeps nose-diving. Michael turns over the purse. No inhaler.

MICHAEL

Could it be somewhere else?

She points to the overhead compartment. Despite the fact he can barely keep his balance, Michael unbuckles his seat belt and jumps over her.

He tries to get the overhead compartment open, but the latch won't give. He looks down at the Old Lady who's getting worse. He's finally able to open the overhead compartment.

MICHAEL

What does it look like?!

Gasping for air, she mutters:

OLD LADY

Blue bag...

Michael finds the blue bag. He pulls it out and unzips it. He sees the inhaler and grabs it.

As the airplane continues to nose-dive, Michael uncaps the inhaler and brings it to the Old Lady's mouth. She places her hand on his and they both pump.

Within seconds her airwaves open up and she coughs. She looks over at Michael, her eyes smiling with gratitude. Just then, the airplane levels out and everyone breathes a sigh of relief.

Everyone but Michael who's shivering, as if overcome by a freezing wind. His frightened eyes stare at

DARIEN

standing at the end of the aisle, wearing his tattered nightgown. All of a sudden, Darien opens his mouth and lets out a glass-shattering SHRIEK--

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. CENTRAL NEBRASKA REGIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT**

--the SHRIEKING continues. But this time it comes from a small CHILD trying to get away from his mother.

Michael stands a few feet away, next to the baggage rotunda, talking on his cell phone. His bandaged finger is killing him. He cups the phone against his ear.

MICHAEL

...for a moment there I thought...no, I'm alright...what did you find out about the compressor? I don't care what they say. Call again...no, I don't need to talk to him. Tell him I'll check in later...it's not necessary...don't worry...bye.

He hangs up. Someone taps him on the shoulder. Michael whirls around. It's the Old Lady -- or rather, her IDENTICAL TWIN.

OLD LADY'S TWIN

We wanted to thank you again.

He sees the Old Lady a few feet away, being pushed on a wheelchair by an airport attendant. She waves at him. He waves back.

The Twin joins her sister and off they go as Michael looks after them.

**INT. AIRPORT BATHROOM - STALL - NIGHT**

Michael is bent over the toilet, retching...

**EXT. CAR RENTAL - NIGHT**

It's freezing, snow all over. Michael exits the building, key and duffel bag in hand. He walks over to a small sedan and climbs inside.

**INT. SEDAN - NIGHT**

Michael flips on the reading light and opens a map. He ponders for a second. What is he doing here? He then reaches into his pocket and pulls out his wallet. He fishes out a

TATTERED SNAPSHOT

of Sean, his son.

MICHAEL

lays it against the steering wheel, staring at as if it were his anchor to reality. He starts the engine...

**EXT. CUSTER MOTEL - NIGHT**

The sedan pulls into the parking lot.

**INT. CUSTER MOTEL - RECEPTION - NIGHT**

Michael enters. He rings the bell on the counter. A GIRL (5) walks up.

GIRL

Can I help you?

The MANAGER, the Girl's dad, enters from the back and deposits his daughter on the counter.

MICHAEL

I'd like a room.

MANAGER

It's thirty-nine dollars a night.

Michael pulls out his credit card. The Girl grabs it and hands it to Dad, who in turn slides the register over. Michael fills it out.

MICHAEL

Any place to catch a bite around here?

MANAGER

Try Cassi's. It's the bar around the corner. Right off Walnut. That's if you're not picky.

GIRL

(mimicking her Dad)

That's if you're not picky.

The Manager hands Michael his room key. And the Little Girl hands Michael his credit card. Michael smiles at the Girl.

He then reaches behind her ear and produces a quarter, which he holds up for her to see. The Little Girl looks on with awe, then helps herself to it. Mike winks at her and exits.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Michael heads down the street, bundled up in his down jacket, wool cap and gloves. He walks past a toy store. He stops at the window and looks in. There's a TRICYCLE on display.

Michael stares at it -- then at his own

## REFLECTION ON THE GLASS

It brings back memories. All of a sudden, he HEARS the VOICES whispering the ancient chant...

Reflected on the glass, he sees Darien in his night gown, pedaling a tricycle in the middle of the street, going around in circles, laughing...

MICHAEL

whirls around. Darien has stopped, man and boy lock stares. Darien reaches down and grabs a PEBBLE off the street. He slings it at Michael, who ducks--

The pebble hits the glass, cracking it, becoming imbedded.

Michael turns around. He takes off his glove and digs out the pebble. But when he turns back to look at Darien, the boy is gone.

Knees weak, heart racing, Michael walks out into the street, which is empty. All of a sudden, a HORN startles him--

Michael snaps out of his waking dream. No Darien, only an idling truck in front of him, and

THE PEBBLE

in his hand.

**INT. CASSI'S BAR - NIGHT**

Michael enters. The place is dark, yet cozy, with only a few customers. Country music plays in the jukebox. A bit shaken, Michael lumbers over to the bar and parks himself on a stool.

CASSI QUINN (31)

moseys over. She's tall, pretty, unassuming. She's an old soul and can mix it up the best of them.

MICHAEL

Shot of tequila, neat. Make it a double, actually.

CASSI

Are you okay? You look a little pale.

Cassi pours a shot into a glass. Michael knocks it back. Then indicates he wants another.

EVER (O.S.)

Cheers.

EVER (50), a drunken patron, lifts his mug. Michael ignores him. Cassi places a bowl of pretzels in front of Michael. Ever stumbles over and helps himself to a couple.

EVER

Did you know that durin' the energy crisis things got so bad they turned off the light at the end of the tunnel?

(chortles)

Get it? The light at the end of the tunnel...

CASSI

Ever, don't bother the customers.

He wraps his arm around Michael. Cassi pours Michael another shot.

EVER

You ain't from here, are you?

CASSI

I'm warning you.

Ever waves his arm dismissively and wobbles back to his seat.

CASSI

Sorry about that.

Cassi watches as Michael knocks back the shot. A beat. He notices that she's staring at him.

CASSI

So...how long have you been a cook?

Michael knits his brow.

CASSI

Grill marks on your arm.

Cassi places her exposed

FOREARM

next to Michael's. Both of their arms are covered with GRILL MARKS.

CASSI

leans in and utters semi-confidentially.

CASSI

If you're looking for work I could use someone during the lunch shift.

MICHAEL

Afraid I wouldn't be much good to you.

CASSI

I'm Cassi, by the way.

MICHAEL

Michael.

They shake -- several times. Cassi takes her hand back.

CASSI  
Kitchen's about to close. Did you  
want..?

MICHAEL  
I'll have a burger. Make it pink.

CASSI  
Coming right up.

Cassi walks over to the kitchen window and yells out while she taps a little bell.

CASSI  
Burger, rare with fries!

MICHAEL  
Men's room?

Cassi points. Michael gets up.

**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Michael flushes the urinal and goes over to the sink to wash up. He gazes at his reflection in the mirror and runs his fingers over the scar on his cheek.

He looks at the pebble in his hand --

Just then, Ever bursts into the bathroom and goes to pee. As Michael heads out...

EVER  
You better watch out...

Michael stops.

EVER  
She's one of them.

Michael exits.

**INT. CASSI'S - NIGHT**

Michael returns to his stool. Waiting for him are the burger and fries. He lifts the bun and peeks at the meat.

CASSI  
Harlan, you burnt the meat again!

MICHAEL  
--It's okay

CASSI  
How about the fries?

Michael tastes one, his expression noncommittal.

CASSI

Excuse me...

Cassi takes the plate away. She slides it through the kitchen window and yells at Harlan.

CASSI

And do up a new batch of fries, will ya?

(to Michael)

Are you sure you don't want a job?

Michael smiles...

**EXT. CASSI'S BAR - LATER**

Michael exits. Cassi runs out after him...

CASSI

You left this behind.

Michael stops. She hands him his wool cap.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

They share an uncomfortable pause.

MICHAEL

Well, I should...

He's about to step away. He gets a thought.

MICHAEL

The name Darien...that ring a bell?

She thinks about it and shakes her head.

MICHAEL

Good night then.

CASSI

Good night.

Michael walks away. All of a sudden...

CASSI (O.S.)

Michael Rene, the chef, right?

He stops and turns.

CASSI

I read about you. Sorry about your kid.

He nods. Then walks away...

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Michael enters. He removes his jacket and sits on the bed. He rubs his throbbing finger.

He reaches into his duffel bag for a bottle of painkillers and some bottled water. He helps himself to a pill and pops it into his mouth. He chases it with the water.

He checks the drawer on the night table. He finds a bible, a pen, some notepaper, the TV remote. He grabs the remote and turns on the TV. The news is on.

On the shelf beneath the drawer he finds a local telephone book. He pick it up, opens it and starts to flip through it, not sure what he's looking for...

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER**

Michael has fallen asleep on top of the covers, the telephone book open on the bed next to him.

THE TV

plays the Amityville Horror...

MICHAEL

wakes up. As he goes to turn off the TV, the movie catches his attention. He gets an idea. He picks up the telephone book and flips through

THE YELLOW PAGES

He comes upon a large ad for Falconer Realty: "SPECIALIZING IN HISTORICAL HOMES."

MICHAEL

tears out the page.

**INT. ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Michael tosses and turns under the covers, having the dream again. But this time it seems more intense. He's also shaking, his teeth chattering, his breath condensing.

The room is very COLD...

**INT. MICHAEL'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING**

Sunlight hits Michael's eyes. He awakens and clears the cobwebs off his face. He notices something. Stunned by what he sees, he dismounts the bed and approaches

THE MIRROR

hanging on the opposite wall. Scrawled in blood in big letters is the word "DAD".

MICHAEL

touches the mirror. That's when realizes that

HIS INJURED FINGER

is exposed and covered with dried blood.

MICHAEL

picks up the discarded bandage from the floor. With it, he frantically wipes the mirror, smearing the blood...

**INT. FALCONER REALTY - DAY**

A chime on the front door announces Michael's entrance. There are several small desks, but no one around.

Michael notices a framed photograph on the wall of a jockey on a BLACK thoroughbred horse with a big WHITE SPOT on its neck. He approaches and gazes at the photo.

CUT TO:

**EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

The black Horse with the Cop rears up on its hind legs, snorting and neighing.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

as the Horse tries to buck its rider, its EYES staring at Michael...

JARED (V.O.)

Can I help you?

CUT BACK TO:

**INT. FALCONER REALTY - DAY (RESUME ACTION)**

Michael snaps out of it. He turns to see

JARED FALCONER (45)

the diminutive jockey on the photograph. He leans against a cane with his left hand, his right hand contracted into a tight grip, the result of a spinal injury.

JARED

"Sweet Thing." Fonner Park. Nineteen eighty-seven. She threw me and broke my neck. They said I was clinically dead for almost twenty minutes. But I pulled through. I never raced again. She wasn't supposed to either, but I bought her and brought her back. And wouldn't you know it? First big race she breaks her leg. I was forced to put her down...

Jared lets out a reverential sigh.

JARED  
Jared Falconer.

Jared offers his shriveled hand. Michael shakes it.

JARED  
What can I do you for, Mr..?

MICHAEL  
Rene. Michael Rene. I understand you  
specialize in historical homes.

JARED  
You have a price range or location in  
mind?

Jared limps over to his desk. Michael joins him. Jared pulls  
out a listings book and flips through it.

JARED  
This one's in excellent shape. A  
little pricey, but definitely worth it  
if you want move in condition. Then  
there's this one. Built in the  
thirties by Robert LeRoy Cochran, then  
Governor of Nebraska. No one's lived  
in it for years. The house needs a bit  
of work. His estate is willing to sell  
at a motivated price if you get my  
drift.

(a beat)  
That's not why you're here, is it?

MICHAEL  
I'm looking for someone. A child. He's  
about ten years old.

Michael places one of the Darien sketches in front of Jared.

MICHAEL  
His name is Darien.

Jared glances at the sketch...

JARED  
Never seen him before.

MICHAEL  
Are you sure?

JARED  
Positive. I suggest you visit the  
police department. I can point the  
way.

MICHAEL

That won't be necessary. If anything comes to mind, I'm staying over at the Custer Motel. Sorry to have bothered you.

Michael retrieves the sketch and gets up.

JARED

Good luck to you.

Michael offers a gratuitous smile and exits.

**INT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - LATER**

Michael sits behind the wheel, on his cell phone, staking out Falconer Realty.

MICHAEL

...he knows something. I'm sure of it.

INTERCUT WITH:

**EXT. L'HIRONDELLE - DAY**

He's talking to Rusty, who paces in front of the restaurant, smoking a cigar.

RUSTY

Or maybe he knows absolutely nothing and--

MICHAEL

--it's all a big coincidence? Part of the random universe where things happen for no reason?

Rusty remains quiet.

MICHAEL

...last night. I used my own blood...I wrote the word "dad" on the mirror while I slept. But I used my left hand. I'm right handed.

RUSTY

You were sleepwalking.

MICHAEL

The phone calls. You don't really believe they were pranks, do you?

RUSTY

I don't know what to believe...

A beat. Rusty's silence wreaks of skepticism.

MICHAEL

You think it was me. You think I recorded all those messages.

RUSTY  
Jesus Christ...

MICHAEL  
I bet you're also gonna tell me what happened to your housekeeper was somehow related to my psychological problems.

RUSTY  
She said "save the boy." She was being familiar. You're the boy. She wanted to save you from yourself.

MICHAEL  
So she stepped in front of a car?

We stay with Michael as Rusty continues talking on the other end. Michael is staring at

JARED

who just stepped out of his office and locked the front door.

MICHAEL

watches as Jared hobbles over to his car and climbs inside.

MICHAEL  
I gotta go...

Michael hangs up.

He sees Jared fire up the engine and back out. He drives past Michael, who stoops down so that he won't be seen. Michael starts the engine and gives chase.

**EXT. HIGHWAY 30 - DAY**

Jared's car zooms past. Moments later, Michael follows. We're in the country, vast fields covered with snow.

**INT. JARED'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Jared veers into a smaller road.

**INT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - MOVING - DAY**

Michael also turns onto the road.

**INT. JARED'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Jared pulls into South Pond Drive. Ahead is an old two-story Victorian with a campanile, white columns, several porches (aka the "Pope House").

Next to the house is a small barn, a woodshed, a big old tree with a rubber tire hanging from a rope, and the skeleton of an ancient tractor.

**EXT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - DAY**

Michael slows down about an eighth of a mile from the Pope House...

**INT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - MOVING - DAY**

In the distance, Michael can see Jared exit his car and walk toward the house.

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - DAY**

Michael's sedan rolls up and stops next to Jared's car. Michael disgorges. He glances up at the sky, which is covered with grey clouds. Michael proceeds toward the house.

He peers through the windows. He walks over to the front door. He tries the doorknob...

**INT. POPE HOUSE - DAY**

Michael enters. He immediately feels a chill down his back. He stops. The house makes him uneasy. The place is furnished, most of it covered with white sheets.

He notices several crucifixes hanging on the walls, as well as pictures of Jesus and Mary. No family photographs anywhere.

MICHAEL

Hello?

**INT. DINING ROOM - DAY**

Michael peeks inside. No sign of life.

**INT. STAIRCASE - DAY**

Michael slowly walks up...

**INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - DAY**

Michael sticks his head into a couple of the empty rooms.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY**

Furnished with an old bed with a tall wooden headboard and a rocking chair in the corner. The bed is made, as if waiting for someone to lie on it.

Michael enters. He approaches the window and looks out.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Jared hurries away, cutting a path through the snow.

MICHAEL

tries to open the window, but it's stuck. He taps his fingers against the glass and yells out.

MICHAEL  
Mr. Falconer! Wait up!

But Jared can't hear him. As Michael turns to leave the room, he notices something under the bed. He bends over and pulls out a a cloth sac about 2 feet long.

He undoes the tie at the top and reaches in...producing an undressed

PLASTIC DOLL

feet first. The head is missing.

MICHAEL

shakes out the sac.

The Doll's head falls out and rolls on the floor. Michael picks it up, and screws the head onto the body of the doll. He peers into

THE DOLL'S EYES

quickly realizing that is bears an eerie resemblance to Darien.

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - DAY**

Michael runs out and follows Jared's trail.

**EXT. FROZEN POND - DAY**

Michael arrives at the edge of the pond next to a wooden landing. Jared stands in the middle of the pond, his back to Michael.

Jared turns around. He stares at Michael and gives the ice a couple of taps with his cane -- the ice cracks and several chunks split off. Jared falls into the freezing water--

Michael runs to him, slipping on the ice a couple of times. He reaches the hole in the ice and drops to his knees.

MICHAEL  
Take my hand!

Jared's arm's shoots out a couple of times.

JARED'S P.O.V.

He's drowning...

MICHAEL

has no choice, he jumps into the water...

## UNDER WATER

Michael struggles to rescue Jared. The holes above them is quickly closing. Michael grabs Jared's limp body. His mouth is wide open, so are his eyes, death written all over them.

Michael attempts to climb out of the hole, but he hits his head against the ice -- the hole is closed.

Michael releases Jared's body, which drifts away and sinks to the bottom of the pond.

Michael is trapped. He's quickly running out of air. He panics. He pounds his fists against the icy roof, but to little avail.

Unable to hold his breath any longer, he releases the air in his lungs. Bubbles quickly rise and gather against the icy roof...

CUT TO:

**INT. POPE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY**

Michael finds himself on the floor, choking, desperately gasping for air, the doll still in his hand. The whole thing was some sort of dream--

He grabs on to the bed and stands back up. He hears the sound of an engine starting. Michael staggers over to the window and looks out.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Jared drives away...

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - DAY**

Michael runs out of the house. It's too late. Jared's gone. Michael looks around. All of a sudden he sense something and glances down at the ground. He sees

TRACKS

on the thin layer of snow.

MICHAEL

bends down for a closer look. The tracks seem to go for a while. Michael gets up and follows them. He comes to the back of the house.

That's where he tracks stop. In front of a

RUSTY OLD TRICYCLE

lying on its side.

MICHAEL

approaches with halting steps, heart thumping in his chest. He bends down to inspect the tricycle. He then looks up to see

A GRAVESTONE

a few feet away. It's covered with snow.

MICHAEL

walks over and wipes off the snow.

THE GRAVESTONE

reads: "DARIEN POPE \* December 9, 1899 - June 21, 1918".

MICHAEL

thinks back...

**EXT. CEMETERY - SUNRISE (FLASHBACK)**

Sean's gravestone: "SEAN RENE \* January 8, 2000 - June 21, 2004".

CUT BACK TO:

**EXT. BACK OF POPE'S HOUSE - DAY (RESUME ACTION)**

Michael stands as he continues to stare at the date on the gravestone: "June 21st".

He backpedals. He stumbles and falls. It starts to snow. Michael squirms away and rises to his feet. He runs...

**INT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - DAY**

Michael turns the key several times, but the engine is flooded. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his cell phone. He tries to dial, but can't get a signal.

Frustrated, he pounds his fist on the steering wheel.

**INT. POPE HOUSE - PARLOR - DAY**

Michael finds a phone. He lifts the receiver, but there's no dial tone.

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - LATER**

A nasty flurry has completely covered the sedan with snow.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Michael tosses one more log into the fireplace. He considers tossing the Doll as well, but he decides against it. Michael plops down on the floor, his back to the sofa.

He tries the cell phone again, but still no signal. He snaps the cell phone shut.

He throws the Doll onto the coffee table, where he notices a pile of unopened mail next to an old bible and some old magazines. He inspects

THE MAIL

Mostly junk addressed to "MILLICENT BOSUSTOW."

MICHAEL

rifles through the magazines. He finds an old copy of New York Magazine, open to

AN INSIDE PAGE

with the same article Rusty was reading in the E.R.: "WHO IS THE REAL MICHAEL RENE?"

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT**

It's still snowing.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Michael has fallen asleep on the sofa. The fire has almost died, embers crackling.

ON MICHAEL'S EYES

He's having a violent dream, his eyeballs wildly shifting...

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

We flash through several quick cuts:

- 1) MICHAEL STANDS ON THE EMPTY ROAD.
- 2) DARK CLOUDS MOVE IN. THE WORLD BECOMES BLACK.
- 3) P.O.V. OF THE BLACK HORSE TOWERING OVER MICHAEL.
- 4) DARIEN LIES ON THE GROUND AT MICHAEL'S FEET, WHEEZING.
- 5) MICHAEL ROCKS A MORIBUND DARIEN IN HIS ARMS.
- 6) A TEAR OF BLOOD STREAMS DOWN MICHAEL'S CHEEK.
- 7) POURING RAIN DRENCHES MICHAEL AS HE STANDS OVER THE DEAD BOY, ARMS EXTENDED SKYWARD, YELLING OUT AT GOD. A WHITE LIGHT EXPLODES AND FILLS THE SCREEN--

MATCH CUT TO:

**E.C.U. A FLAME**

at the end of a candle. We WIDEN to reveal a ceremonial altar lined with dozens of lit BLACK CANDLES. At the foot of the altar we find several ancient Egyptian artifacts.

We can HEAR a MALE VOICE humming a chant in a foreign tongue, much like what Michael heard in his waking dreams. The voice belongs to

A MAN

donning a black hooded robe, standing in front of the altar, head bowed. A staff of Osiris hangs from a chain around his neck. The mood is somber and foreboding. We're inside a BARN.

The Man lifts his head and lowers the hood -- it's Michael! He continues chanting, trance-like. Sensing something he stops--

THE SILHOUETTE OF A BOY

spies on him from the entrance of the barn. It's

DARIEN

dressed in 1918 garb: knee-highs, booties, shorts, white shirt, jacket with the sleeves too short. Darien bolts --

**EXT. BARN - DAY - 1918**

Michael, who's shed his ritual vestments, runs out after him. He's dressed in modern-day clothes.

MICHAEL

Darien..!

Not seeing the boy, he stops. We notice the house is in its prime. So is the tractor, the work shed, etc. It's summertime.

A YOUNG MAN WITH LONG BLOND HAIR (25)

also wearing modern-day clothes, stands in the adjoining field, staring at Michael with a dour expression. It's as if he wants to say something, but can't.

He and Michael stare at each other for a beat, though it seems as if an eternity. And just as Michael is about to step toward him--

SMASH CUT TO:

**EXT. FIELD - DAY - 1918**

Michael finds himself at the pond. Darien skips rope on the landing, singing:

DARIEN

I had a little bird, its name was  
Enza. I opened the window, and in-flu-  
enza...

MICHAEL

Darien...

Darien stops singing and skipping. But he doesn't answer.

CASSI (O.S.)

Why don't you answer your father?

CASSI

stands a few feet away looking particularly radiant. She wears modern-day clothes and holds a yellow, American Basswood flower in her hand.

A wooden crucifix hangs from her exposed neck (the same crucifix Rusty's maid was wearing).

DARIEN'S HAND

slips into Michael's and squeezes.

MICHAEL

glances down at the boy.

DARIEN

Come and meet my friend?

CASSI

Go inside and wash up for lunch.

DARIEN

But, mom...

CASSI

Run along now.

DARIEN

You never let me have any fun.

Darien releases Michael's hand and heads toward the house. He throws Michael a quick glance before disappearing.

Cassi breaks into a big smile and runs into Michael's arms, hugging him tightly.

CASSI

God, I missed you...

Michael loses himself in the hug.

CASSI

Dwight, why did you stay away so long?

MICHAEL

A man's work is never done.

CASSI

A boy needs his father, you know?

MICHAEL

I'm here now.

CASSI

My daddy says that traveling around the country doing magic shows and talking to the spirits pretending to be the reincarnation of King Tut is no way for a man to make a living.

MICHAEL

I'm not pretending. That's the true nature of my soul.

CASSI

Your soul belongs here with your wife and son, King Tut.

She teases him with the flower, and leans in, almost kissing his lips.

CASSI

Remember how we used to make love in the field?

She hands him the yellow flower. She then gives him that "catch me if you can" look and runs off.

MICHAEL

Where're you going?

She runs into the field, laughing. Michael runs after her. But she's gone. Nowhere to be seen. He does a 360, yelling out:

MICHAEL

Rachel! Where are you?!

**INT. POPE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING - PRESENT DAY**

Michael comes to with a start--

MICHAEL

...Rachel!

He lies on the sofa, bundled up into a little ball, shivering, teeth chattering, his body covered with frost.

THE REAL CASSI

stands over him.

CASSI

It's okay.

Cassi wears a heavy coat and her breath condenses. That's because the room is like a freezer case, walls and furniture covered with frost.

Michael looks around. He can't believe his eyes. Cassi helps him up.

CASSI

Let's get you outta here.

Cassi offers her hand. Michael relents. Then takes her hand...

**INT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - LATER**

The both sit in the car, engine idling, heat blowing. Michael has gotten some color back on his face. He sips coffee from a plastic cup belonging to a thermos.

MICHAEL

What happened to me?

CASSI

You found what you were looking for.

Michael half-glares at her.

CASSI

You almost froze to death? Isn't that enough for you?

MICHAEL

What are you doing here?

CASSI

I saved your life, that's what I'm doing here.

MICHAEL

You lied to me--

CASSI

I was trying to protect you.

MICHAEL

Well, you didn't.

CASSI

Look, I'm sorry that I didn't tell you the house is..

MICHAEL

Haunted. I know.

CASSI

I didn't think you'd ever find it. Bill at the Custer Motel said you didn't come back last night. He was worried.

MICHAEL

Were you worried?

She doesn't respond. She just looks at Michael.

CASSI

It takes a great deal of energy for a ghost to manifest.

(more)

CASSI (cont'd)

That's why the temperature dropped so dramatically. Darien used you and the energy around you as a...battery.

MICHAEL

A fountain of information...

CASSI

You know what, suit yourself. I got better things to do--

She starts out. He grabs her arm. She stops.

MICHAEL

I'm a pretty smart guy. When people start worrying about me it's either because I'm missing a crucial piece of information or...

CASSI

What?

MICHAEL

They think they know better.

She frees her arm.

CASSI

You're a real piece of work, you know that? You want information? You're dealing with a ghost who doesn't realize that he's dead. His soul is trapped in limbo. He's alone and he's angry. And he's looking for playmates. If you fall asleep inside that house again you will die. That I guarantee you. Don't flatter yourself, Mr. Rene. You're just a stranger passing through town. I'm not worried at all. But you should be.

She glares at him, then steps out of the vehicle, slamming the door behind her. A smug look on his face, Michael watches her as she angrily climbs into her truck and drives off.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

The TV is on. A program on tornadoes.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Though rare, winter tornadoes have been known to occur in the South and in parts of the Mid-West. Associated with lines of thunderstorms that form at a front...

Michael's clothes are strewn on the bed. The door to the bathroom is ajar, the shower running...

**INT. SHOWER - DAY**

Michael is taking a hot one, his head pressed against the jet.

**INT. BATHROOM - LATER**

Michael stands in front of the mirror, shaving, the tap running. All of a sudden, the pipes start knocking and the water pressure dies down to a trickle.

Michael turns both handles --

His body suddenly stiffens, his face contorted, as if something had passed through him. He drops the razor blade on the floor and falls to his knees.

His breath condenses. He wraps his arms around his QUIVERING body. He looks up at the mirror over the sink which is now covered with FROST.

Michael rises to his feet and wipes the frost off the glass with his hand. Reflected on it he sees the room phone, the message light blinking...

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

Still quivering, Michael steps out of the bathroom. The TV is on, but no program, only heavy static.

Michael approaches the blinking telephone. He picks up the receiver, which is quite cold to the touch. He dials his voicemail and listens. Hears a familiar and distant voice...

DARIEN'S VOICE (V.O.)

(singing)

I had a little bird, its name was  
Enza. I opened the window, and in-flu-  
enza...I had a little bird, its name  
was Enza. I opened the window, and in-  
flu-enza...

Michael slams the phone.

**EXT. MOTEL LOBBY - DAY**

A visibly shaken Michael rushes in and confronts the Manager.

MICHAEL

Did someone just call my room?

MANAGER

What?

MICHAEL

MY ROOM. TWO-FOURTEEN. DID SOMEONE  
JUST CALL?!

MANAGER

No...I don't think so.

MICHAEL  
Are you sure?

MANAGER  
Yeah...phone hasn't rung in hours.  
What's going on?

A beat.

MICHAEL  
The water pipes are frozen. You better  
check them out.

Michael exits, leaving the Manager dumbfounded.

**INT. CITY HALL - HALL OF RECORDS - DAY**

Michael stands at the counter. A CITY CLERK lays a bunch of documents in front of him.

CITY CLERK  
No luck finding the deed that  
transferred the property from the  
government to the original  
homesteader. But the rest should all  
be here. You can use the counter over  
there.

MICHAEL  
Thanks.

Michael helps himself to the pile and walks over to the counter. He takes a chair and grabs the pen on a string and some scratch paper. He opens

THE FIRST DEED

"August 12, 1913, Dwight and Rachel Pope."

MICHAEL

jots down that information. He turns to the next deed...

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. HALL OF RECORDS - LATER**

Michael gathers all the stuff and walks over to a copy machine. He inserts some change and copies the piece of paper where the jotted down all the information.

He then walks over to the counter..

MICHAEL  
I need to find out which one of these  
people died and when.

Michael hands the Clerk the piece of paper. The Clerk takes a quick gander.

CITY CLERK  
 We're only open half-day tomorrow.  
 Come back Friday end of the day.

Michael jots his phone number on the piece of paper.

MICHAEL  
 In case you finish early.

Michael walks off.

**INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY**

Michael sits at a

COMPUTER

surfing the net, looking for information on ghosts, the  
 afterlife, dreams. RACK FOCUS...

FATHER AND SON

sit a nearby table, the father helping his boy with some  
 homework.

MICHAEL

stares at them, filled with sadness and guilt...

**INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - FRONT DESK - LATER**

Michael pays for pages he printed. The LIBRARIAN hands him  
 change.

MICHAEL  
 Anything on local history?

LIBRARIAN  
 Try the Stuhr Museum.

Michael waves "thank you" and walks off.

**EXT. STUHR MUSEUM - DAY**

Michael's sedan is parked outside.

**INT. STUHR MUSEUM - LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES - DAY**

Michael sits at a table sifting through several boxes of  
 documents, articles and photos from the early 1900's.

He's suddenly overcome by a wave of exhaustion. His eyelids  
 flutter, his head nods -- but he catches himself and continues  
 the research...

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. STUHR MUSEUM - LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES - LATER**

Michael keeps digging through the stuff. He finds

A NEWSPAPER

dated February 13, 1918. He flips through it. An article catches his attention: "MAGICIAN SUCCUMBS TO INFLUENZA." It has a photograph of DWIGHT POPE.

Dwight looks nothing like Michael. He has a thick mustache, long black hair, and wears a suit and a bowler hat.

MICHAEL

senses he's being watched. He looks up to see

A TALL, LANKY FELLOW

in his 50's, pushing a mop across the floor by the entrance. He wears green overalls and a hearing aid. He's the janitor. He and Michael exchange a quick glance.

Michael gets up to talk to him, but he's intercepted by one of the ARCHIVISTS.

ARCHIVIST

Still working on those?

Michael notices that the Janitor is gone. He motions for the Archivist to hold off, and walks over to the entrance. He pushes through the doors --

No janitor. Michael thinks about it. Maybe it was nothing...

**INT. CASSI'S BAR- RESTROOM - DAY**

Cassi lies on the floor, under the sink, with a FLASHLIGHT. She looks over to see

A MALE FIGURE

appear at the front door.

CASSI

Can't find the damn leak.

MICHAEL

kneels down beside her.

CASSI

It's you.

Michael holds up the thermos.

MICHAEL

Brought back your thermos.

She's not impressed.

MICHAEL

I wanted to apologize.

She rises to her feet, arms crossed with contempt.

MICHAEL  
We can either make this easy or hard.

CASSI  
Now I now why I never liked New York.

MICHAEL  
We're really very nice people.

She laughs half mockingly.

MICHAEL  
And I'm gonna prove it to you.

He grabs a few sheets of toilet paper from the stall.

MICHAEL  
See, finding a leak is a lot like  
fishing. You have to be patient.

He lays the sheets of toilet paper at the bottom of the cabinet under the sink. He then steps back and opens the faucet all the way.

MICHAEL  
And contrite. Definitely contrite.  
It's in the plumbers manual. I'm sure  
of it.  
(offers his hand)  
I'm sorry.

He gets her to crack a smile. She shakes his hand.

MICHAEL  
I did a little research. Darien Pope  
died of influenza June twenty-first,  
nineteen-eighteen. Dwight Pope died a  
few months earlier. Also from  
influenza. He's was apparently some  
sort of magician. I couldn't find  
anything on Rachel.

He looks at her rather pointedly.

CASSI  
That's because there isn't. She sold  
the house and disappeared right after.

He clicks on the flashlight and points at the tissues.

MICHAEL  
Any second now...

CASSI  
You're partly right about Darien. He  
had been ailing from influenza. But  
that's not how he died.  
(more)

CASSI (cont'd)

Apparently, one night, while Rachel was sleeping, he lumbered out to the barn and got on one of the horses. As he tried to ride out, the horse got spooked and threw him. His foot got caught in the stirrup. He was dragged out into the field, where he died during a violent storm.

MICHAEL

The dream...

CASSI

Darien in the field, choking, the black horse, the rain? How long have you been having it?

MICHAEL

About nine months. You also?

CASSI

No. Not me.

MICHAEL

Bingo!

He bends over and points the light at one of the sheets of toilet paper, where clearly a drop of water just hit. He grabs the paper and shows to her. He then turns off the water.

He grabs the wrench off her hand and gets under the sink. He cuts off the water supply.

MICHAEL

Give me some light, will you?

She bends down beside him and points the light at the pipes. Michael starts to tinker with them.

MICHAEL

When I fell asleep in the house. It's like I was there, back in nineteen eighteen. I remember everything. Every detail. Every smell. Every sensation...

CASSI

These dreams are like photographic records, film clips from the past, brought on by the energy of a traumatic event.

MICHAEL

Like Darien's death?

Cassi nods.

MICHAEL

What can you tell me about Jared Falconer?

CASSI  
 The Darien Club...  
 (a beat)  
 A small group in town. They think of  
 Darien as their surrogate child.

This is difficult for her. Michael stops working.

CASSI  
 Three members tried to stop Darien by  
 falling asleep in the house, hoping to  
 convince him to go into the light.  
 They were all found frozen to death  
 the next morning.  
 (a beat)  
 John, my boyfriend, was one of them.  
 We had a child together...

MICHAEL  
 I'm sorry. I want to meet this Darien  
 Club.

Cassi takes a deep breath, not sure about this. But Michael's  
 stare doesn't leave her much wiggle room.

CASSI  
 Go back to your motel. I'll see what I  
 can do.

Michael gets up. He hands her the wrench.

MICHAEL  
 Just needed a little tightening.  
 (a beat)  
 When I fell asleep in the house, the  
 dream changed.

CASSI  
 I know. Rachel...you were calling out  
 her name.

MICHAEL  
 The thing is. You were her. In the  
 dream, you were Rachel. How do you  
 explain that?

CASSI  
 It's your dream as much as it is his.

MICHAEL  
 The Wizard of Oz...  
 (a beat)  
 But who's the wizard? Me or Darien?

Food for thought. They exchange a quick glance. Michael exits.

**INT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - MOVING - DAY**

Michael drives through town. He passes an elementary school. Little boys and girls, not much older than his son, run out to meet their waiting parents.

Michael catches glimpse of something on

THE REARVIEW MIRROR

A blue car seems to be following him.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Michael accelerates.

THE BLUE CAR

gives chase.

**INT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - REARVIEW MIRROR - MOVING - DAY**

The blue car draws closer...

MICHAEL

can't make out the driver. All of a sudden, at an intersection, Michael makes an unexpected, sharp left.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Michael's sedan pulls up to the curb and stops.

**INT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - DAY**

Michael turns around to see the blue car drive past the intersection and away. He sticks the car in gear and drives on.

**INT. MICHAEL'S MOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT DAY**

Michael lies on the bed, watching mindless TV. All of a sudden the phone rings. Michael waits several beats before answering.

MICHAEL

Hello?

He listens...

**INT. CASSI'S PICKUP TRUCK - MOVING - DAY**

Cassi drives, Michael rides shotgun. A country tune plays on the radio. A long pause before either one of them speaks.

MICHAEL

I appreciate you doing this.

She glances at him.

MICHAEL  
Ever think of leaving?

CASSI  
Grand Island? No.

MICHAEL  
Where's home for you?

CASSI  
San Juan Capistrano.

MICHAEL  
L'Hirondelle -- the Swallow. The name  
of my restaurant. Do they still come  
every year?

CASSI  
The swallows? As if driven by the hand  
of God.

MICHAEL  
You said that you and your boyfriend  
had a child...

Cassi isn't sure she wants to talk about this. She heaves a  
sigh, then opens up...

CASSI  
Her name was Amanda. When she was six  
months old she was kidnapped. They  
demanded fifty thousand dollars. The  
police didn't want us to pay. John and  
I decided not to listen and we raised  
the money. But they killed her anyway.  
They killed my Amanda even though I  
kept my end of the bargain.

Michael offers a grieving pause.

MICHAEL  
May I ask when she died?

CASSI  
You know the date.

MICHAEL  
June twenty-first...

CASSI  
A few months later John started having  
the dream. He became obsessed. At  
first he was convinced it was Amanda  
calling out to us.  
(a beat)  
We came here together.

Michael glances at her, acknowledging her grief.

MICHAEL

Do you know who currently owns the  
Pope House?

CASSI

An old woman by the name of Millicent  
Bosustow. She bought it a few years  
ago. Never moved in. Jared Falconer  
looks after it.

MICHAEL

Maybe Darien drove her away.

CASSI

Not as far as I know. The couple who  
lived there before never complained.  
Look, Michael, I know this is hard.  
But the only way you'll survive this  
is by telling yourself that it's only  
a dream. That you can control it. That  
you can make anything happen.

MICHAEL

Is that what your boyfriend did?

CASSI

He tried...

**EXT. LOTTIE'S HOUSE - DAY**

The pickup truck pulls into the driveway behind an old car.  
Michael and Cassi alight and walk over to the house. Something  
catches Michael's attention,

A BLUE CAR

parked across the street. The same one that was following him  
earlier.

MICHAEL

stops.

CASSI

What's wrong?

Michael shakes his head.

**INT. LOTTIE'S - DAY**

The front door opens. LOTTIE BELLINGHAUSEN (55) greets them.

LOTTIE

I'm Lottie. Come in, come in.

There's an uncomfortable moment between Lottie and Cassi.

LOTTIE

Cassi...

**INT. LOTTIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

They enter the living room, which is covered with ANTIQUE MIRRORS, all shapes and sizes, as well as dozens of LIT CANDLES.

LOTTIE  
Everybody. This is Michael Rene.

There are six people seated around a coffee table:

C.E. MOODY (75), navy man, white hair.

MARIA DELVECCHIO (27), pale, a wallflower.

LARRY KEOGH (54), tall and lanky, Mr. Fix It, wears a hearing aid (the janitor at the Stuhr Museum earlier).

BOB SCEETS (37), simpleton, taciturn.

ERICA SOLES (32), butch, outspoken.

And of course, Jared Falconer. "Hello, Michael" all around. Except Jared. Lottie holds up a tea pot for Michael

LOTTIE  
Tea?

Lottie pours and makes introductions.

LOTTIE  
C.E. Maria. Larry. Bob. And Erica.  
(to Jared)  
I believe you two have met.

JARED  
I'll say it again. This is a bad idea.

LOTTIE  
Calm down, Jared. We all agreed.

JARED  
You agreed. I didn't.

LOTTIE  
Darien is as much yours as he is Mr. Rene's.

MICHAEL  
So how do we stop him?

Jared laughs.

JARED  
Stop him? Tell him, C.E. Go ahead.

C.E. balks.

JARED

C.E. here's been having the dream  
since nineteen forty-four. Show him!  
Go ahead.

Jared grabs C.E.'s arm and rolls up

C.E.'S SHIRT SLEEVE

His arm bears a "Darrien" tattoo.

C.E.

pulls his arm away.

JARED

It all started right after his sixteen  
year old son killed himself. Then  
there's Lottie. Dream started fifteen  
years ago, right after her daughter  
was murdered. Maria. She's the baby of  
the bunch. Year and half ago, eight  
year old son drowned--

LOTTIE

Jared--

JARED

Let me finish. Erica. Fours years. Son  
killed during a mugging. Larry over  
there. How long ago was it?

LARRY

Twenty-six years. Right after my son  
died in Viet Nam.

JARED

Twenty-six years! What about you, Bob?

Bob doesn't answer. He seems a little shell-shocked.

ERICA

Leave him alone.

JARED

(to Michael)

Get the picture? Violent deaths, all  
of them. Just like you, we came from  
all over the country. Oklahoma City,  
Vegas, Florida, California, Chicago.  
You name it. Welcome to grieving  
parents anonymous.

Erica chortles.

ERICA

Grieving parents...his horse died. He  
shot it after it lost a race.

JARED

She had broken a leg! I had no choice.

ERICA

Oh, please. You always hated that thing for what it did to you. You couldn't wait to shoot it.

JARED

So who died on you, Michael?

Michael hesitates. Sensing his unease...

CASSI

Come on. Let's go.

Michael indicates it's okay. A beat.

MICHAEL

My wife was doing a play. I was at work. We had a baby-sitter. Sean was four years old. I had bought him a tricycle for Christmas. He was a little daredevil on that thing. Three wheels with supervision...I mean. What could possibly go wrong? Well, that day everything did. The baby-sitter decided to take him to the park which was only a block from our building. He wanted to ride his tricycle. He lived on that thing. Day and night up and down the hallway in our apartment. On the way back...they were at a street corner...I called her on her cell phone. I had to know what was going on every second of the day. Anyway, she became distracted for a couple of seconds. And that's all it took for Sean to ride his tricycle across the street...

(a long pause)

The bus didn't see him. He never had a chance. Somehow, his tricycle survived the impact without as much as a scratch.

(a beat)

If I hadn't called her. If I had trusted and let go, my son would be alive today...

The room becomes very still. Michael is on the verge of tears, but he holds back. Lottie places a comforting hand on his arm.

MICHAEL

Darien could have anyone. Why us?

LOTTIE

His spirit is like a beacon, a transmitter, constantly sending out a signal, hoping someone will answer.

(more)

LOTTIE (cont'd)

Somehow all these events, June twenty-first, the violent deaths, conspired to make us the chosen ones. The loss of our children awakened our psychic energy and caused us to pick up on that signal. Though we may not be his parents, we're the closest thing he has.

MICHAEL

You feel sorry for him...

No response, just quick glances all around.

MICHAEL

I still don't understand what makes him so powerful.

LOTTIE

Dwight Pope belonged to "The Golden Dawn." A secret society that performed ancient Egyptian rituals to empower the spirits.

MICHAEL

If you believe that then why not perform these very rituals to stop him?

Cursory glances all around. This is obviously a sore subject.

CASSI

They don't want him to stop. He's become their surrogate child.

JARED

You're just jealous because you never had the dream...

CASSI

He killed my boyfriend!

JARED

No one forced him to fall asleep in the house. You boyfriend didn't understand him!

CASSI

And you do?!

LOTTIE

Everyone, please!

She notices that Michael is standing in front of the fireplace, staring at something on the mantel piece. Cassi approaches.

CASSI

Michael..?

Michael stares at

THREE FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS

...a MIDDLE AGED WOMAN.

...a TEENAGE GIRL.

...a BLONDE-HAIRED YOUNG MAN. The same one Michael encountered in his first dream at the Pope House. The one who was staring at him from the adjoining field.

MICHAEL

is speechless. He grabs the photo of the Young Man for a closer look. Then glances at Cassi...

**EXT. LOTTIE'S HOUSE - DAY**

Cassi storms out, Michael after her. She's very upset. Michael catches up to her. She's crying.

CASSI

It's John, I know it. Darien has him...

MICHAEL

Look. You said it yourself. It's my dream as much as it is his.

CASSI

You've never seen John before. How could you have known what he looked like?

MICHAEL

You really think Darien is holding him hostage?

Cassi doesn't have an answer...

**INT. CASSI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON**

Michael and Cassi sit at the breakfast table, eating a couple of steaks Michael cooked up.

CASSI

Good.

Michael smiles.

CASSI

Did you always want to be a chef?

MICHAEL

Magician actually. I even went to magic school.

CASSI

What happened?

MICHAEL

Couldn't pull a rabbit out of a hat to save my life. So I took a job at a restaurant, grilling meat. I grilled so much meat I had train tracks on my arms. After a while, I started to think of them as a badge of courage. At parties I would always make a point of rolling up my sleeves. Ultimately, someone with a few too many drinks in them would mosey over and ask if I was either a drug addict or a self-mutilator. The last person who asked I ended up marrying.

CASSI

Which were you? Drug addict or self-mutilator?

MICHAEL

A little bit of both I guess.

A pregnant pause.

CASSI

When you first walked into the bar, something in me said "run...get out of there and run as fast as you can."

MICHAEL

Why didn't you?

CASSI

Maybe it's the self-mutilator in me.

They both look at each other and smile.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

Michael enters and closes the door. He puts his keys down and takes off his jacket. He draws an exasperated breath when he sees

HIS ROOM PHONE

is blinking.

MICHAEL

walks over and picks up the receiver -- then quickly hangs up.

As a matter of fact, he disconnects the phone, wraps the wire around it, and throws it inside the closet and slams the door shut.

He's tired. He closes the curtains and plops down on the bed. He takes a deep breath and shuts his eyes, longing for some uninterrupted slumber. But he just lies there, fully awake.

Michael sits up and turns on the light. He reaches over for the notebook with Darien's sketches. He opens it, and flips to a blank page. He grabs a pencil and starts to draw.

His movements are quick and purposeful. It's as if his pencil were making love to the page. He makes finishing touches and puts the pencil down. He then admires his

DRAWING OF CASSI

her gentle smile beaming at

MICHAEL

who smiles at himself. All of a sudden, he hears a gentle TAPPING NOISE.

**INT. BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

Michael enters. Something seems to be hitting the bathroom window. He can't see through to the other side because the glass is frosted.

Michael tries to open the window, but it's stuck.

**EXT. MOTEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

Michael exits the room and goes downstairs. He heads to the back of the building...

**EXT. BACK OF MOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON**

Michael walks over to where he thinks his bathroom is. Right next to the building is a dormant tree.

A light breeze causes one of its naked limbs to hit the window repeatedly. Michael draws closer. That's when he realizes that

A LONE YELLOW FLOWER

is sprouting on the branch hitting the window.

MICHAEL

shakes the tree, hoping to get the flower loose. He then turns to see the Motel Manager and his Daughter standing behind him, a critical look on the Manager's face.

MICHAEL

Do you have a ladder?

**INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

As Michael and the Little Girl watch, the Manager climbs into the shower. After fussing with it for a bit, the window slides open.

He steps out of the way and gives Michael a look: "Wasn't so hard, was it?" Michael climbs in and sticks his arm out the window. He yanks the flower off the branch.

Flower in hand, He smells the sweet aroma. It's an American Basswood. The same one Cassi had in the dream. He turns to the Manager.

MICHAEL  
Doesn't seem strange to you? A flower  
budding in the middle of winter?

The Manager shrugs. So does the Little Girl.

**INT. BOOKSTORE - LATE AFTERNOON**

Michael sits on the floor in one of the aisles perusing several books on dreams, spirits, the afterlife.

**EXT. BOOKSTORE - EARLY EVENING**

Bag of books in hand, Michael exits the store and proceeds down the street. Sensing he's being followed, he glances over his shoulder.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

A MAN, wearing a heavy coat with the hood over his head, walks right behind him.

MICHAEL

picks up his pace. The Man seems to do likewise. Michael crosses the street, and so does the Man. Michael seems to lose the Man for a second and sneaks into an alley. He waits.

THE MAN

walks past. Michael grabs him and pushes him against the wall.

MICHAEL  
Why are you following me?

Michael removes the Man's hood. It's Bob Sceets from the Darien Club, scared look on his face...

**EXT. COFFEE SHOP - EARLY EVENING**

Michael's sedan, and the blue car, are parked outside...

**INT. COFFEE SHOP - EARLY EVENING**

Michael and Bob sit at a booth, drinking coffee. Bob is a chronic stutterer.

BOB  
...you-you-you have to stop him.

MICHAEL  
I'm not sure I can.

BOB  
P-p-p-please.

MICHAEL

Look, I want the dream to go away as much as you do --

BOB

It's not the d-d-d-dream. I don't c-c-c...I don't c--care about the damn dream. Darien looks just like my s-s-s-son. It's too-too-too m-m-m-much.

Michael feels bad for him. He doesn't know what to say. Bob points to the bag of books.

BOB

Those books. If they tell you how t-t-t-to stop him. You gotta do it. The others w-w-w-won't. B-b-b-but you have t-t-t-o.

MICHAEL

Let me ask you something, Bob. Let's say I were to go back...and things didn't work out.

BOB

You mean if you-you-you died?

MICHAEL

Yeah. What if I died -- and bare with me as I ask this question -- but what if I died but still got the girl?

BOB

I d-d-d-don't unders-s-s-stand.

Michael smiles. He leans in and offers confidentially.

MICHAEL

When I dream in the house, Rachel is Cassi.

Bob looks at Michael and sips his coffee. Michael does likewise. Bob then puts the cup down and leans forward.

BOB

It's only a d-d-d-dream.

MICHAEL

I know...

A beat. Bob regards Michael with a mixture of concern and understanding. They both sip more coffee...

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - SUNSET**

Michael's sedan is parked in front of the house. Michael sits behind the wheel, engine off.

**INT. MICHAEL'S SEDAN - SUNSET**

Michael sits there, pondering. He holds

THE NOTEBOOK

with Cassi's drawing in his hand.

MICHAEL

puts the notebook away. He fires up the engine.

THE SEDAN

drives away.

**EXT. ELECTRONICS STORE - EARLY EVENING**

Michael exits with a small package in hand. He gets into his sedan.

**EXT. SPORTING GOODS STORE - EARLY EVENING**

Michael's sedan pulls up. He gets out and walks up to the front door just as an Employee is about to lock up. Michael insists. The Employee lets him in.

**EXT. SPORTING GOODS STORE - LATER**

Michael sticks a sleeping bag and a flashlight he just bought into the trunk and closes it.

**INT. L'HIRONDELLE - NIGHT**

The restaurant is closed. The staff is cleaning up. Rusty sits at a table, having an informal meeting with some of the kitchen staff, cigar stub between his fingers.

The Bartender calls out to him and holds up the phone. Rusty gets up and walks over. He grabs the phone. He listens. Whatever it is, it seems to be important. He hangs up.

**INT. HOSPITAL I.C.U. - NIGHT**

Rusty enters. Claire is waiting for him. In the background are a couple of Anna's FAMILY MEMBERS.

Rusty approaches Anna's bed. She came out of the coma. Rusty and Anna exchange a few words. One of her relatives walks up and helps to translate.

Though she doesn't say much, her words cause Rusty's demeanor to change. He looks over at Claire, a concerned look on his face.

**INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT**

Rusty punches a number on his cell phone.

MANAGER (V.O.)  
Custer Motel. How can I help you?

RUSTY  
Yeah. Michael Rene, please...

The Manager puts him through. The line rings several times, then goes to voicemail.

RECORDED MESSAGE (V.O.)  
The guest you're trying to reach is not in. Please leave a message after the tone.

RUSTY  
Buddy, call me when you get this message. It's important. I'm calling your cell phone.

He hangs up. He thinks for a second, then dials another number...

**INT. SEDAN - NIGHT**

Michael's cell phone, which is on the passenger seat, rings several times. Michael is not in the car...

**INT. POPE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Michael shatters one of the living room windows with a tire iron. He reaches in and undoes the latch. He opens the window and climbs inside.

He carries the flashlight with him, as well as the sleeping bag and the package from the electronics store.

He looks around, flashlight in hand. The light falls on the Doll, which lies on the coffee table, face down. Michael walks over and picks it up.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Michael drops the package and the sleeping bag on the bed. He places the Doll on the rocking chair.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER**

Michael sits up on the bed, inside the sleeping bag. He pops batteries into a small tape recorder. He turns it on and speaks into it.

MICHAEL  
Testing. Testing.

He stops it and rewinds it. He plays it back. It works. He aims the flashlight at the Doll, which continues to stare at him from the chair.

He turns the tape recorder on and talks into it.

MICHAEL

Remember. It's only a dream. I can change the outcome. I can change the dream...

He pauses for a second. Then starts up again, repeating the same mantra into the tape recorder over and over again...

**INT. MICHAEL AND RUSTY'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

The restaurant is closed. Other than A small light over Rusty's desk, the place is dark.

RUSTY

lies on the small leather sofa, thinking. He looks at his watch. He gets up and picks up the phone on his desk. He dials.

RUSTY

It's me again...are you sure he hasn't come back?...can you ring his room one more time?...thanks...Buddy, if you're getting this, please call me. I'm at the office. I left a couple of messages on your cell phone as well. Is everything alright?

Rusty hangs up. He's not sure what he's going to do next...

**INT. POPE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER**

The tape recorder on the night table is on.

MICHAEL'S VOICE (V.O.)

...Remember. It's only a dream. I can change the outcome. I can change the dream. Remember. It's only a dream. I can change the outcome. I can change the dream...

MICHAEL

tosses and turns inside the sleeping bag. He can't sleep. He gets up and turns off the tape recorder. He turns on the flashlight and checks

HIS WATCH

It's 1:30 A.M.

MICHAEL

aims the light at the Doll, which continues to stare at him.

**INT. DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT**

Flashlight in hand, Michael bounds down the creaky old stairs. He walks over to the front door and opens it. He shines the light on his sedan, which is still parked out in front.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Michael snoops around. He aims the light at the empty shelves. There's a small pantry off to the side. He goes inside. He notices the outline of a door on one of the walls.

That and a doorknob. Michael opens the door...

It leads down to a basement. He aims the flashlight down into the void. He thinks about it for a moment, and carefully starts down the flimsy steps.

**INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Michael looks around. The place is musty. There is some furniture piled up in the corner. He finds an old trunk. He pries loose the rusty old lock and opens the lid.

There's nothing inside.

As he's about to leave, he notices an indentation on the wall behind an old credenza. He pulls the credenza away from the wall.

He shines the flashlight on the wall and sees a small hole, about a foot and a half in diameter. He shines the light into the hole. There seems to be something behind the wall.

Michael grabs a chunk of wall and tears it out. It comes off easily. He keeps going, enlarging the hole until it's three to four times the original size.

He reaches in with his arm and grabs something. He pulls it out. It's a cardboard box. He shines the light as he opens the lid--

RATS

jump out and scurry away. Startled,

MICHAEL

drops the box. He kicks it a couple of times to make sure it's rat-free. Satisfied, he kneels down beside it.

He digs through the box. There are several items of men's clothing from the early 1900's. He pulls out a bowler hat, an old can of mustache wax, a pair of bifocals, a dusty

OLD BOOK

"CONVERSING WITH THE SPIRITS." And a folded playbill.

He unfolds it. It reads: "DWIGHT POPE - MAGICIAN AND MENTALIST EXTRAORDINAIRE. APPEARING SATURDAY, P.M., APRIL 12, 1916, ETC." At the bottom of the playbill is a picture of Dwight.

It's just like the one Michael found in the newspaper article at the Stuhr Museum --

Only this photo clearly shows that Dwight is missing the tip of his left index finger.

MICHAEL

looks at his own bandaged index finger--

The sound of a door slamming shut startles Michael.

**INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT**

Michael bounds up the stairs. He aims the flashlight at the door to the master bedroom, which is closed. He approaches with halting steps, the floorboards creaking under his feet.

He grabs the doorknob and immediately pulls his hand away in pain. He aims the light at the doorknob which is frozen, then at his hand --

The skin on the palm of his hand peeled off when he pulled his hand away.

He hears a horrific guttural, groaning sound coming from inside. He wraps the bottom of his shirt around the doorknob and turns it again with his other hand.

The door barely moves. He pushes it with his body. But ice on the floor impedes it from opening easily.

Michael enters the room, which is completely covered with ice. The temperature is well below zero.

The eerie sound he heard was his own voice, coming from the tape recorder, playing at half speed.

He aims the flashlight at the Doll, which also frozen. All he can see are its eyes, staring dead ahead. He aims the flashlight at the bed.

There seems to be someone or something inside the sleeping bag. First, Michael turns off the tape recorder. He then reaches out for

THE LUMP

on the bed and turns it over -- it's Michael! He's looking at HIMSELF once again, frozen and dead, blank eyes staring on. Startled, the

LIVE MICHAEL

jumps back. Confused and frightened, he backpedals...

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Michael slips and slides out into the hallway, to find that frozen as well. He starts down the stairs, which are also frozen.

He loses his footing and tumbles down the stairs, bumping his head and landing on the floor. Michael's forehead is bleeding. He sits up and runs his hand over the cut --

He looks at his hand, and to his shock realizes that the tip of his injured index finger is missing, blood spurting out of it.

Horrified, Michael issues a silent scream -- which is followed by complete darkness and silence. We hear the familiar labored breathing and wheezing, accompanied by a creaking sound --

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1918**

Darien rocks back and forth on the rocking chair in the corner (the very same chair where Michael placed the Doll). Darien wears a white gauze mask over his face. He stares at

MICHAEL

who lies in bed, wheezing. Michael is terribly sick. Cassi sits on the bed next to him. They both wear white gauze masks.

Cassi dunks a rag into a bowl of water, wrings the excess water and lays it over Michael's forehead.

MICHAEL

I had a horrible dream. I was frozen...

Michael's teeth chatter.

CASSI

You're running a fever.

Michael grabs her arm. We notice that he's missing the tip of his left index finger.

CASSI

Don't try to talk.

Michael coughs a couple of times, trying to clear the phlegm from his congested lungs.

CASSI

(to Darien)

Honey, will you please go get me more water?

Darien just sits there, rocking back and forth.

CASSI

Darien, did you hear what I said?

Like the precocious child that he is, Darien drags himself out of the chair and grabs the bowl.

DARIEN

Will dad be able to come out and play soon?

CASSI

The sooner you get me that water the sooner he'll be up and about. Run along now.

Not totally persuaded by her fib, Darien exits the room. When Darien is out of earshot, Cassi turns to Michael.

CASSI

Dwight, there's something you need to know. You have influenza...

Michael coughs.

CASSI

But we're gonna beat this.

Michael doesn't respond.

CASSI

You believe me, don't you, Dwight?

His coughing intensifies. Cassi helps him sit up. She starts to pat his back, trying to clear the phlegm --

CASSI

You're gonna be fine. Just fine. You're my King Tut...

They both hear the sound of a horse neighing. Cassi looks in the direction of the window, then at Michael.

CASSI

Darien...

She lays Michael back down. She then gets up and rushes over to the window. She yells out.

CASSI

Darien, get off that horse now!

Michael stumbles out of bed and staggers over to the window.

CASSI

Dwight, what are you doing? Get back in bed.

Cassi rushes over to help him. Michael looks

OUT THE WINDOW

and sees Darien on top of a horse, bareback. The horse is very agitated and it has a big white spot on its neck.

CASSI

Put Sweet Thing back in the barn right now!

Darien is having trouble managing the horse, which almost bucks him. Darien then glances at Michael as if saying "come and get me" and rides off.

CASSI  
Darien, NO!!

She glances at Michael, exasperated look on her face.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT - 1918**

Cassi aides a feeble Michael into the barn.

CASSI  
This is crazy! You can't ride. You're ill...

They approach

THE STALLS

--which are empty. Michael accidentally knocks into

THE BLONDE FARMER

Cassi's boyfriend, John, dangling at the end of a rope, noose around his neck, DEAD. No sight of Cassi. She's gone.

A shocked Michael steps back. He sweeps around to see

SWEET THING

sans Darien, at the barn entrance, fully saddled and ready to go.

MICHAEL

walks over to the animal with halting steps. Sweet Thing seems a little edgy, snorting, bobbing his head.

MICHAEL  
Easy there...

Michael gets close enough to pat the horse's head. Sweet Thing seems to simmer down a bit. Michael carefully climbs atop the animal. He grabs the reigns and pats the horse again.

Suddenly, we hear VOICES in the background uttering that eerie Egyptian chant. This causes Sweet Thing to freak out.

Michael does his best to hold on as the horse starts kicking its hind legs, jumping about.

MICHAEL  
Whoa! Whoa!

Sweet Thing rises up on its hind legs and Michael falls off, hitting the ground--

MICHAEL'S RIGHT FOOT

gets caught in the stirrup.

SWEET THING

takes off, dragging Michael on the ground as if a human sled.

MICHAEL

tries to break free, but not avail...

**EXT. SKY - NIGHT - 1918 - A FULL MOON**

glows overhead. The night is clear. All's quiet. PAN DOWN to reveal

SWEET THING

standing on the road, Michael lying on the ground, his foot still stuck in the stirrup. They are both very still. Tall wheat shoots up on each side.

MICHAEL

is a mess, his clothes torn up, his body bloodied and bruised. He's barely alive.

A CHILD'S HAND

reaches out and frees Michael's foot from the stirrup. It's

DARIEN

He looks down at Michael whose eyes flutter and open...

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

A blurry Darien stands over him.

MICHAEL

reaches out to him. But Darien keeps his distance.

DARIEN

You're a liar.

Michael wants to speak, but he can't form the words.

DARIEN

A liar and a fake. You're not sick at all.

Black clouds gather overhead. A wind kicks up.

DARIEN

The only reason you were pretending to be sick is so that you could leave again.

Michael is finally able to form a few words.

MICHAEL

That's not true. I got better so that  
I could take care of you and your  
mother.

DARIEN

Well, we don't need you.

Snow starts to fall, quickly covering everything.

DARIEN

I hate you! I hate you!

Darien backpedals. Michael reaches out for him again.

MICHAEL

Darien...

The storm turns into a violent blizzard. Michael yells out,  
but his voice is barely audible.

MICHAEL

It's a complicated world, you hear  
me?! I'm trying to do the best I can.  
Darien, come back!

Darien runs into the field of wheat. Michael, who can't move,  
is quickly getting covered with SNOW.

MICHAEL

Darien..!

**INT. POPE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY - MORNING**

PARAMEDICS stand over a semi-frozen Michael, defibrillating  
him. Jared and a COP watch from a few feet away. The room is  
covered with a thin layer of ice.

PARAMEDIC #1

Clear!

They shock Michael's heart.

PARAMEDIC #2

We got a pulse.

PARAMEDIC #1

Okay, let's get him outta here.

They load Michael's body onto a gurney. One of the Paramedics  
notices

MICHAEL'S RIGHT HAND

The tip of his left index finger is actually missing, and the  
skin in the palm of his hand has peeled off.

## THE PARAMEDICS

glance at each other. One of them finds the missing finger and holds it up, pincer-like. He then sticks it into a bag. They wheel Michael out of the room. The Cop turns to Jared.

COP  
Wanna press charges?

JARED  
No. He's done for.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING**

Michael lies on the bed, asleep, I.V. drip stuck in his arm.

He has a medium-size bandage on his forehead, covering the wound from the fall at the house, as well as a large bandage around his left hand.

They were NOT able to reattach the finger.

Cassi sits on a chair, knees hugged to her chest, staring pensively at Michael. The door opens...

RUSTY

enters, small suitcase in hand. Rusty indicates for Cassi to keep quiet. Cassi remains seated as Rusty approaches Michael and stares at him, concerned...

**INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - LATER**

Rusty and Cassi sit cross from each other, remnants of breakfast in front of them.

RUSTY  
...Michael never forgave himself.

CASSI  
What about Sean's mother?

RUSTY  
Layla? After Sean died, so did their marriage. They loved that boy. I think it was the only thing that kept them together all those years.

CASSI  
He wasn't trying to kill himself...

RUSTY  
He spent the night inside an old house without any heat, in the middle of winter. Doesn't take a genius to figure that one out.

CASSI  
You really think he would do that?

RUSTY  
Yes. I really think he would.

**INT. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Rusty and Cassi enter to find the bed empty and a Nurse on the phone.

RUSTY  
Where is he?

The Nurse shrugs...

**EXT. HOSPITAL ROOFTOP - DAY**

Michael, who wears nothing but a hospital gown, stands on the ledge, staring down at the ground.

RUSTY (O.S.)  
Buddy?

Michael turns to see Rusty and Cassi a few feet away. Though clearly disturbed, he manages to keep his composure.

MICHAEL  
Russ, what are you doing here?

RUSTY  
Come on, let's go back inside. It's cold out here.

MICHAEL  
You flew all the way out here to tell me that?

CASSI  
He's right, Michael. Come back inside.

MICHAEL  
Do you know that a few days ago I actually leaped off the roof and survived. Was I dreaming? What do you think?

Rusty glances at Cassi for support.

MICHAEL  
It's gotten to the point where I'm not sure what's real and what isn't.

CASSI  
Michael, you're not dreaming. But you did again at the house. They found you. Your heart had stopped.

Rusty and Cassi draw closer.

MICHAEL  
Why did you lie to me about your boyfriend?

Cassi doesn't know what to say.

MICHAEL  
He didn't freeze to death. He hung  
himself.

Cassi wasn't expecting that. A beat.

CASSI  
He was depressed...

MICHAEL  
--Because of Darien.

CASSI  
I didn't want you to become  
despondent.

MICHAEL  
--and kill myself? See, there you are  
again. Worried about me.

CASSI  
I didn't want to go through that  
again, alright?!

MICHAEL  
Go through what?

Cassi doesn't respond.

MICHAEL  
Go through what?

As Michael shifts about,

ONE OF THE BRICKS

loosens...and dislodges itself --

MICHAEL

slips and falls. Cassi screams. Michael grabs the ledge with  
his uninjured hand. Rusty rushes over and wraps his hand  
around

MICHAEL'S WRIST

just as Michael's fingers slip off.

MICHAEL

dangles off the side of the building. Cassi reaches out for  
Michael's other hand.

CASSI  
Michael, give me your hand!

Michael can't quite reach. Rusty starts to lose his grip.  
Despite his predicament, Michael seems quite at peace.

MICHAEL  
What's today?

CASSI  
Thursday...Michael, please...

MICHAEL  
I met a woman on the plane. Today is  
her ninety-ninth birthday.

RUSTY'S HAND

can't hold on any longer.

CASSI

reaches down even further.

CASSI  
Give me your hand!

MICHAEL'S RIGHT HAND

almost touches Cassi's. And just as

RUSTY'S HAND

opens...

CASSI'S HAND

grabs Michael's wrist, catching him just in time.

RUSTY

reaches down and helps to pull Michael up to safety. They all  
end up on the floor of the roof. Michael and Cassi are almost  
on top of each other.

RUSTY  
You alright?

They all get up. Michael turns to Cassi.

MICHAEL  
You said Millicent Bosustow was an old  
woman. Not very practical of her to  
buy the Pope house and never move in,  
wouldn't you say?

CASSI  
I say we go back inside.

Michael, who's shivering from the cold, half nods.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER**

Rusty talks into his cell phone, while Cassi leans against the  
bathroom door, talking to Michael who is getting dressed  
inside the bathroom.

RUSTY  
 ...I don't know, order five dozen!..

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
 Why did she buy that house?

CASSI  
 I think you're reading too much into it.

RUSTY  
 ...well, make the decision yourself.  
 That's why pay I you the big bucks!

Rusty hangs up. Michael exits the bathroom.

RUSTY  
 My battery's dead...

Rusty indicates he was using Michael's cell phone.

MICHAEL  
 We have to find her.  
 (to Cassi re: his shirt)  
 Do you mind?

Cassi helps Michael button up his shirt. She takes her sweet time, eyes stealing glances.

RUSTY  
 Find who?

Cassi finishes buttoning. She and Michael stare at each other. The moment is interrupted by Rusty.

MICHAEL  
 Millicent Bosustow. The woman who owns the Pope house.

Rusty inadvertently sticks Michael's cell phone into his own pocket. Michael starts to gather his stuff.

RUSTY  
 Michael. There's something you need to know.  
 (a beat)  
 Anna came out of her coma.

That gets Michael's attention.

RUSTY  
 She asked me to give you this.

He produces Anna's wooden crucifix, which he hands to Michael.

RUSTY  
 She said something about looking in the mirror to see..."the true nature of your soul."

MICHAEL

You and Claire...you broke up, didn't you? That's why you came here?

RUSTY

No. Yes. I'm telling you the truth.

MICHAEL

"The true nature of my soul..." You believe this?

RUSTY

I don't know...

Those words seem to resonate with Michael, who turns and stares at his

REFLECTION

in the mirror over the bathroom sink.

MICHAEL

thinks back.

MICHAEL

King Tut...

RUSTY

She died, Michael.

MICHAEL

What?

RUSTY

Anna. She's dead.

MICHAEL

She was trying to warn me...

RUSTY

It was an accident.

MICHAEL

Are you telling me that she died for no reason?

Michael grabs his jacket.

RUSTY

Where're you going?

MICHAEL

To get some answers.

Michael exits the room.

RUSTY

Michael...

He glances at Cassi, who shrugs.

**EXT. HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY**

A "Falconer Realty" sign adorns the front lawn, which is covered with snow.

**INT. HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY**

Michael enters the empty house.

JARED (O.S.)  
Hello? In here!

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Jared sits at a folding table with a pile of brochures, a thermos, some business cards and his cell phone. He's making notations into a little book.

Michael walks in. He means business.

MICHAEL  
I want to see Millicent. Where is she?

JARED  
Excuse me?

MICHAEL  
Why did she buy that house?

JARED  
How the heck do I know? She liked the view.

Michael grabs Jared's cell phone and holds it up.

MICHAEL  
I wanna talk to her.

Jared starts to laugh. In a sudden fit of rage, Michael flips the table over.

MICHAEL  
I'm not spending the rest of my life  
in this shithole dreaming about  
Darien, you got that?!

JARED  
Millicent Bosustow is senile. You're  
wasting your time.

MICHAEL  
I know you tried to drown yourself in  
the pond. It was because of him,  
wasn't it? He drove you to it.

Jared doesn't respond.

MICHAEL  
DIDN'T HE??!!

Jared looks away. Michael tosses the cell phone. Jared barely catches it.

MICHAEL  
I'll find her. With or without your help.

Michael exits.

**EXT. CENTRAL NEBRASKA REGIONAL AIRPORT - DAY**

Cassi's pickup truck pulls up. She drives. Rusty rides shotgun.

**INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY**

Rusty turns to Cassi.

CASSI  
He needs you, you know?

RUSTY  
Michael Rene doesn't need anyone. He's the most selfish, bullheaded, stubborn son-of-a-bitch I've ever met.

Rusty opens the door and pauses.

RUSTY  
In case you haven't noticed. He's stuck on you.

She looks at him, not fully convinced.

RUSTY  
It's been a long time since I've seen him look at a woman the way he looks at you. He's a good man. Look after him, will you?

Cassi doesn't respond. Lots to think about. Rusty steps out of the truck and closes the door. She watches as he disappears into the terminal.

**INT. CASSI'S BAR - DAY**

Michael sits at the bar, nursing a drink. He's shitfaced. All of a sudden, Cassi plops down on the stool next to him.

CASSI  
Your friend left.

Michael raises his glass.

MICHAEL  
New Yorkers. They hate to stay away too long.

CASSI  
You're not responsible for that  
woman's death.

MICHAEL  
Tell that to her.

He downs his drink. He gets up and starts to wobble away.

CASSI (O.S.)  
I can help you find Millicent.

Michael stops cold in his tracks. Cassi walks over. He looks at her.

MICHAEL  
I thought I was just some stranger  
passing through town.

He looks at her. She doesn't respond. She just smiles.

**INT. CENTRAL NEBRASKA REGIONAL AIRPORT - DAY**

Rusty stands at the check-in desk.

CLERK  
We have incoming weather. The flight's  
been indefinitely delayed.

RUSTY  
When is the next flight out?

CLERK  
If the weather clears, tomorrow  
morning.

**EXT. U.S. POST OFFICE - DAY**

Cassi's pickup truck is parked near the loading area. Michael sits inside the truck while Cassi chats with a Postal Worker, whose back is to us.

The Postal Worker seems a little nervous. He hands Cassi a little piece of paper. She thanks him and gives him a quick hug.

That's when we realize that it's Ever, the drunken patron from the opening of the story. She walks over and climbs into the truck. She hands Michael the piece of paper.

CASSI  
She's in a home in Lincoln. It's about  
an hour and half away.

Cassi fires up the engine.

**INT. AIRPORT BAR - DAY**

Rusty sits at the bar, finishing a beer, chomping on a cigar. A LADY sitting next to him throws him a dirty look.

RUSTY

Don't worry. I'm not gonna light it.

He reaches into his pocket for some money. Instead, he finds Michael'S cell phone. He looks at it. He thinks about it...

**INT. AIRPORT HALLWAY - DAY**

Rusty talks on the cell phone as he ambles down the hall.

PETE (V.O.)

...Cassi's.

RUSTY

She there?

PETE (V.O.)

Nope.

RUSTY

I'm actually looking for my friend Michael. The guy from New York.

PETE (V.O.)

They hit the road about an hour ago.

RUSTY

Any way to reach her?

PETE (V.O.)

Nope.

RUSTY

If you see my friend tell him that I have his cell phone...

**EXT. NURSING HOME - DAY**

The pickup truck is parked outside. It's still snowing.

**INT. NURSING HOME - DAY**

Michael and Cassi sit in the waiting area. MRS. FRIAR (60), the administrator, approaches them.

MRS. FRIAR

Mr. Rene?

Michael looks up.

MRS. FRIAR

I'm Mrs. Friar.

They shake hands.

MRS. FRIAR

Follow me, please.

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

Michael and Cassi follow Mrs. Friar. They pass several residents in the hallway. They come to a door and stop.

MRS. FRIAR  
She hasn't spoken since she's been here. So don't expect much.

**INT. ROOM - DAY**

Michael and Cassi follow Mrs. Friar into the small room. A game show plays on the small TV. Seated in the corner, facing the TV, is

MILLICENT BOSUSTOW (LATE 90'S)

She's quite frail. Hunched shoulders support a small round head, crowned with thinning curly white hair. She holds the remote control in her arthritic hands.

MRS. FRIAR  
Millicent, you have visitors.

Millicent doesn't respond.

MRS. FRIAR  
I'll leave you be.

Mrs. Friar exits. Michael and Cassi approach.

MICHAEL  
Hello, Millicent. I'm Michael. This is Cassi. We understand that you own the old Pope house out on Pond Drive.

The old woman doesn't respond.

MICHAEL  
Millicent, we wanted to ask you a couple of questions if it's okay with you.

Nothing.

MICHAEL  
How come you bought the house?

She keeps watching TV.

MICHAEL  
Millicent...do you know Darien?

Michael kneels down beside her. He's wearing Anna's crucifix around his neck.

Millicent finally looks at Michael and reaches out with her hand. She's trying to touch the crucifix. Michael glances at Cassi.

He then removes the crucifix and places on Millicent's palm. She closes her hand and brings it to her heart.

**EXT. NURSING HOME - NIGHT**

Michael and Cassi exit the home and head for her truck, which is covered with snow.

MRS. FRIAR (O.S.)

Mr. Rene?

Michael and Cassi turn around. Mrs. Friar stands there.

MRS. FRIAR

She wants to see you.

**INT. MILLICENT'S ROOM - LATER**

Cassi stands at the doorway, watching

MICHAEL AND MILLICENT

who sit next to each other, watching some silly program on the TV. Millicent tightly clasps

MICHAEL'S RIGHT HAND

Neither one of them speaks.

**INT. PICKUP TRUCK - LATER**

They both sit quietly inside the truck, in the parking lot. Michael is behind the wheel, Cassi in the passenger seat. It's still snowing outside.

MICHAEL

I know what you're gonna say. But I can't just walk away. I can't accept that all this happened for no reason. The death of my son, the dreams, you, me, the Darien Club. It all has to add up to something.

CASSI

What if it doesn't?

MICHAEL

You said the members who died in the house were alone. I survived twice--

CASSI

You got lucky.

MICHAEL

You know what they say. Third time's the charm.

CASSI

Oh, no...

MICHAEL

All I ask is that you be there for me.

CASSI

Forget it.

She opens the door and steps out of the truck.

**EXT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT**

Michael goes after her.

MICHAEL

Cassi. Wait!

He catches up to her and grabs her arm.

MICHAEL

Darien has to be stopped. I can get him to go into the light, I'm certain of it. But I can't do it alone. Will you help me?

She tries to avoid eye contact. She finally turns and gazes at him for several beats. She softens and nods her head semi-reluctantly.

CASSI

At the first sign of trouble--

He smiles. He then does the old reach behind the ear trick--

He produces the American Basswood flower he plucked off the tree at the motel earlier. He hands it to her. She smells it.

CASSI

American Basswood. Where did you get this?

MICHAEL

I told you. I'm a magician...

**EXT. CENTRAL NEBRASKA REGIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT**

Rusty stands by a sign marked "TAXI" yelling at someone on Michael's cell phone as snow swirls around him. There are no taxis around.

RUSTY

...I ordered that cab an hour ago!..what do you mean he's not coming -- never mind.

Frustrated, he hangs up and looks back at the terminal...

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT**

It's still snowing. Cassi's pickup truck is parked outside.

**INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Michael lies on the bed, inside the sleeping bag, Cassi by his side. The room is illuminated by several lit candles.

CASSI  
Are you sure you want to go through  
with this?

He takes her hand.

CASSI  
What's the mantra?

MICHAEL  
It's my dream. I control it. I can do  
whatever I want.

CASSI  
Michael...  
(a beat)  
Be careful.

MICHAEL  
Don't worry...

She pecks his cheek and steps back, wrapping blanket around her shoulder. She takes a seat on the rocking chair. Michael smiles at her and closes his eyes.

MICHAEL  
It's my dream. I control it. I can do  
whatever I want...It's my dream. I  
control it. I can do whatever I  
want...

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - LATER**

Michael lies on the bed, sleeping, as Cassi watches him from the rocking chair, arms clutching her knees to her chest...

DISSOLVE TO:

MICHAEL'S EYELIDS

as they flutter. He's experiencing REM sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

CASSI

having trouble staying awake herself, her head nodding...

CUT TO:

MICHAEL

as he bolts up on the bed.

MICHAEL

WAKE UP!

...only he's inside the dream again. It's 1918, and it's morning.

Michael, who no longer has influenza, is in bed with Cassi. She also awakens. They're both naked and under the covers.

CASSI

What is it, baby?

Michael is sweating, breathing hard. She caresses him.

CASSI

You must've had a nightmare.

He looks at her. Cassi smiles. She sits up and starts to kiss his bare shoulders, his neck. Michael turns and kisses her lips. He wraps his arms around her.

They fall back onto the bed, naked bodies intertwined. Michael devours her as if it were the first time. He lies on top of Cassi and makes love to her, hands locked.

Cassi moans with pleasure as their lovemaking crescendoes--

All of a sudden, Michael stops.

CASSI

What is it, Dwight?

MICHAEL

Where's Darien?

CASSI

I don't know. In his room.

**INT. DARIEN'S ROOM - DAY - 1918**

A half-dressed Michael bursts in. Darien is not there. Michael sees an OLD TRICYCLE in the corner. He approaches and bends down to examine it.

CASSI (O.S.)

What's wrong?

CASSI

stands at the doorway, bedsheet wrapped around her body. She walks over to Michael. He gets up and heads toward the door. He notices the mirror over the chest of drawers--

CASSI

Dwight..?

Michael steps closer to the mirror and stares at his

## REFLECTION

It's DWIGHT POPE, the man with a thick mustache from the photo on the playbill. He's dressed in 1918 clothes, bowler hat, suit -- and he's missing the tip of his left index finger.

**INT. DOWNSTAIRS - DAY - 1918**

Michael races down the stairs, Cassi after him.

MICHAEL

Darien!

He goes around the house, yelling out.

MICHAEL

Darien! Where are you?

All of a sudden, we hear a strange noise. Michael whirls around --

## DARIEN'S TRICYCLE

careens down the steps and crashes at the bottom of the stairs, wheels spinning...

MICHAEL

turns to Cassi.

MICHAEL

I have to stop him...

Michael opens the front door. He's met by a blinding light which fills the screen...

MATCH CUT TO:

**EXT. POND - DAY - 1918**

Michael finds himself standing on the landing. He sees a small rowboat floating at the other end of the pond.

Darien emerges from under water, behind the boat, giggling, splashing water, frolicking. He doesn't seem to be alone. He sees Michael and stops playing. He grabs the side of the boat.

All Michael can see are Darien's hands and his head.

MICHAEL

Why do you keep running away from me?

Darien swims away, pulling the boat with him. The boat disappears behind some tall weeds into a little cove. Darien gets out of the water and crouches behind some weeds.

Michael steps off the landing, and on top of the water. He then walks across the pond like Jesus and arrives on the other side, on firm land.

He sees Darien, hiding behind the bush. The boy rises to his feet.

DARIEN  
How did you do that?

MICHAEL  
I'm a magician.

DARIEN  
Yeah, but your kind of magic is fake.

MICHAEL  
How do you know?

DARIEN  
I know lots of things.

MICHAEL  
Like what?

DARIEN  
I'm not telling.

He hears rustling coming from the bushes.

MICHAEL  
Who's your friend? Can I meet him?

DARIEN  
No!

Michael stares up at the hot sun. He then approaches Darien and reaches behind the boy's ear, magically producing an ice cream cone.

DARIEN  
I'm not falling for that.

MICHAEL  
I'm not trying to trick you.

DARIEN  
Does that mean you're gonna stay?

MICHAEL  
No. I can't.

DARIEN  
I hope you die.

Angry, Darien stares up at the sky. Black clouds appear and quickly gather, blocking the sun. A wind starts up.

CASSI (O.S.)  
Michael!

He turns around. He sees Cassi now standing on the other side of the pond, dressed in modern clothes, yelling out something he can't make out.

MICHAEL

I have to stop him.

We hear the sound of an approaching tornado. Michael turns back around to see --

A LITTLE BOY

standing next to Darien, hand in hand. It's SEAN, Michael's 4 year old son. He yells out to Michael:

SEAN

Daddy!

Not sure who the child is, Michael extends his hand. But all of a sudden, Michael is sucked into the tornado funnel --

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. CENTRAL NEBRASKA AIRPORT - MORNING - PRESENT DAY**

--Rusty awakens to the sound of a janitor vacuuming the floor. He has a a look of dread etched on his face. He had fallen asleep in one of the lounges, across a couple of chairs.

He gets up and looks out the window. The storm has passed.

**INT. POPE HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING - PRESENT DAY**

Michael lies on the bed asleep. All of a sudden

A RED DROP

lands on Michael's nose. He opens his eyes.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

The walls are covered with frozen blood, which is quickly melting.

MICHAEL

dabs his nose with his finger. He sits up and is shocked to see --

CASSI'S ROTTING CORPSE

on the rocking chair, in the same position she fell asleep the night before --

CUT TO:

**INT. POPE HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Michael lies on the bed asleep -- he opens his eyes. The whole thing was a dream. The room is indeed thawing, but there's no blood and Cassi is nowhere to be seen.

He notices something on the wall in front of the bed. He climbs off the bed and approaches. He brushes off the frost. At first, we don't see what he sees.

He wipes off more frost -- he steps back. The wall is covered with GRAFFITI obviously written by a child: "HE'S MINE." Michael backpedals--

His foot bumps up against something. He looks down to see

CASSI

lying on the floor, next to the bed, unconscious. Michael goes to her.

MICHAEL

Cassi..!

He shakes her. But she doesn't awaken. He listens to her pulse. She seems to be alive.

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - LATER**

Michael gives a statement to a COP. An unconscious Cassi is taken away on a stretcher by a couple of PARAMEDICS, oxygen mask over her face.

MICHAEL

...no, we weren't doing any drugs. Are we done?

COP

Do me a favor and stick around for the next forty-eight hours. And stay away from this house!

Michael motions "sure thing" and rushes over to the ambulance. He knocks on the back door, which opens. He climbs inside and the ambulance takes off.

**INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY**

Michael talks to an ATTENDING PHYSICIAN.

ATTENDING PHYSICIAN

...her vitals seem to be normal. I'm not sure what's causing the sleep state.

MICHAEL

What do we do?

ATTENDING PHYSICIAN

Run more tests. Then we wait.

The Physician walks off. We stay on Michael for a beat...

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Cassi lies unconscious on a bed, hooked up to an I.V. and a monitor. Michael sits next to the bed, gazing at her lovingly, keeping vigil...

**INT. LOTTIE'S HOUSE - DAY**

Lottie serves Michael some tea. He looks quite upset.

MICHAEL

In the dream, when I gazed into the mirror I saw Dwight's face...

Michael shows her the playbill with photo Dwight Pope advertising his magic show. Lottie puts on her reading glasses and examines it. She then looks at Michael.

MICHAEL

First time I walked into the Pope house I knew I'd been there before.

Lottie takes off her glasses, puts the playbill down.

MICHAEL

I'm the reincarnation of Dwight Pope. A few days ago I would have never believed it. But I'm sure of it now. It all makes sense. In a previous life I was Darien's father. I'm the one he's been looking for all these years. And he's not gonna rest until he has my soul by his side.

LOTTIE

Michael, you can't go back. Darien's harnessed a hundred year's worth of anger and resentment. Those are strong emotions. Dangerous emotions.

MICHAEL

He's a child and he needs to be shown the way.

Lottie places her hand on Michael's arm.

LOTTIE

He's using your son and Cassi to lure you. But your son is dead. Cassi is still alive.

MICHAEL

Is that what you think? That I want to go back to be with her?

LOTTIE

Do you?

MICHAEL

He has my son! Do you understand! He's holding Sean's soul hostage!

LOTTIE

You forget that we all lost someone. I'd like nothing more than to see my daughter again. But I'm realistic. If you want to go back make sure that you're doing it for the right reason. So that the soul of your son, and that of Darien's, moves on. But if you're doing this to be with her...

Michael has gotten up. He ambles over to the fireplace, where the three photos of the dead members hang. He stares at them.

MICHAEL

Will you help me?

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

An E.R. NURSE is checking Cassi's vitals. She's still unconscious.

MICHAEL

appears at the door. The Nurse sees him.

MICHAEL

Any change?

The Nurse shakes her head. She heads out.

E.R. NURSE

I'll check up on her a little later.

She exits. Michael approaches the bed. Cassi looks very peaceful.

MICHAEL

I don't know if you can hear me, but I'm coming to get you. So you need to hang in there a little longer. And if you see my boy, tell him dad is coming to take him home. Can you do that?

Michael produces the snapshot of Sean and leans it against the lamp on the night table, facing Cassi. He smiles at Cassi, then walks out of the room.

PUSH IN on Sean's SNAPSHOT...

**INT. CASSI'S BAR - DAY**

Rusty, suitcase by his side, talks to Pete, the bartender, who's on the phone.

PETE

No answer at her house either.

He hangs up.

PETE  
Did you try your friend's motel?

RUSTY  
He checked out.

All of a sudden, Rusty reaches into his pocket and pulls out Michael's cell phone, which is vibrating. He answers it.

RUSTY  
Michael?...no, I'm his friend...go ahead...I see...are you sure?...okay...I'll tell him. Thank you.

Rusty hangs up, looking kind of befuddled.

RUSTY  
Some guy from city hall. Said that two of the owners of the Pope house share the same social security number, and they're both alive. What do you know about a Millicent Bosustow?

Pete shrugs.

EVER (O.S.)  
She lives in a retirement home.

Rusty turns and looks at Ever, who sits a few stools away...

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT**

Michael and the entire Darien Club stand in front of the house, their parked cars behind them. Jared and two COPS block their way.

JARED  
This is private property! Go home!

C.E.  
Come on, Falconer. Cut the guy a break. Cut us a break!

LARRY  
(to Michael)  
I thought you were taking care of this. I came out here because you said you'd take care of this.

BOB  
L-l-eave him al-alone.

MARIA  
I don't want to get arrested.

ERICA  
Will everybody calm down?

MICHAEL

(to Jared)

Look. You're right. I screwed up. I should have been honest with you from the very beginning.

JARED

But you weren't. You treated me like I owed you something.

MICHAEL

Darien has Sweet Thing.

JARED

What?

MICHAEL

Darien. He's got your horse. I saw him. Hell, I even rode him.

JARED

Her! And you're lying!

MICHAEL

I have no reason to lie.

JARED

Tell me about his gait!

Michael thinks about it.

MICHAEL

His gait...I don't know...something with his right leg...

JARED

You could've read that anywhere.

MICHAEL

I'm trying to save my son's soul, you son of a bitch.

JARED

Your son's soul? You should've thought of that when he was still alive. But I guess you were too busy worrying about your career.

Michael loses it. He lunges at Jared and punches him in the face. The Cops restrain him. The Darien club runs over. All hell breaks loose.

-- Just then a car pulls up and HONKS. Everyone pauses. Ever and Rusty exit the vehicle.

RUSTY

What's going on?

Jared rises to his feet, massaging his aching jaw. He faces Michael.

JARED  
You're done. I'm pressing charges.

RUSTY  
Not so fast.

He glances at Ever who opens the rear passenger door--

MILLICENT BOSUSTOW

sits in the back, unfazed by the fracas.

JARED  
Mrs. Bosustow!

RUSTY  
I believe she owns the property.

COP #1  
That true?

JARED  
Yes, but--

The Cop approaches the old lady.

COP #1  
Ma'am? Would you like these people to  
leave?

A moment of silence as Millicent ponders. She crooks her index  
finger. The Cop kneels down beside her. She mutters something  
into his ear.

The Cop then glances at his partner, who releases Michael

JARED  
What are you doing? Aren't you going  
to arrest him?

The two Cops head for their cruiser.

COP #1  
If you want to press charges come down  
to the station. By the way, she said  
you're fired.

They climb into their car and drive off.

JARED  
Come back! You can't do this!

RUSTY  
Meet Rachel Pope.

Everyone quiets down. Rusty hands Michael

AN OLD DRIVER'S LICENSE

It reads: "Rachel M. Pope - Expiration date 1985."

MICHAEL

examines it then passes it to Lottie, who in turn shows it to the rest of the group.

RUSTY

Millicent is her middle name. She always hated the name Rachel. Terrence Bosustow was her second husband, who died ten years ago.

As Michael listens he glances at Jared who stands away from the crowd. It's obvious he knew all this and he kept it from Michael.

Michael kneels down beside Millicent.

MICHAEL

Millicent, you think I'm Dwight, don't you?

Her rheumy eyes light up.

MICHAEL

Why did you buy the house?

MILLICENT'S LIPS

quiver as they try to form a word.

MICHAEL

leans closer. She finally speaks:

MILLICENT

For you...I bought it for you...

It's as if Michael was just hit by a boulder. He's stunned. He stands up and walks away. He runs his hands over his head. He breathes hard. Rusty approaches.

RUSTY

What is it?

MICHAEL

It was all meant to be. It was fate...

Michael pauses for emphasis. Rusty begins to understand. Michael faces the group.

MICHAEL

Can someone help her in to the house?  
Let's get this show on the road!

Michael smiles at Rusty and places a hand on his shoulder. He then proceeds toward the house. The Darien Club follows. Jared watches. He's a man torn...

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER THAT NIGHT**

The bed frame has been moved out of the room and the mattress placed in the center. Michael lies on top of it, under several blankets, falling asleep, muttering the mantra to himself...

The Darien Club encircles Michael. They sit on the floor, all bundled up, holding hands. Burning candles illuminate the room.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Rusty stokes the fire in the fireplace, while Millicent sits on the rocking chair.

**INT. JARED'S CAR - NIGHT**

Jared sits behind the wheel, in front of the house, angry and filled with self-pity. A beat. He fires up the engine...

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

Cassi continues to sleep peacefully, monitors beeping, I.V. dripping...

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The Darien Club keeps vigil over Michael, their hands clasped.

MICHAEL'S EYEBALLS

rapidly shift under his eyelids. He's dreaming.

MARIA

turns to Lottie.

MARIA

How do we know it's working?

A beat. A very cold breeze blows out some of the candles. Lottie smiles.

LOTTIE

It's working.

(FROM THIS POINT ON WE WILL INTERCUT BETWEEN DREAM STATE AND REALITY WHICH WILL OFTEN MATCH)

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT (DREAM)**

Michael finds himself standing in front of the house. It's no longer 1918, yet Michael is dressed just like Dwight Pope in a 1918 suit and bowler hat. He gazes up to see

A LIGHT

glowing in one of the upstairs windows.

MICHAEL

tries the front door, which is locked...

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)**

The room has become extremely cold, frost starting to cover everything. Everyone in the Darien Club shivers, including

MICHAEL

His dreaming seems to have intensified...

**INT. POPE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)**

All of a sudden the creaking sound ceases as Millicent stops rocking, and her expression changes. She glances at the front door, then at Rusty...

**INT. POPE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (DREAM)**

The front door swings open on its own. Michael steps inside the totally empty house...

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Rusty finishes opening the front door. He turns to Millicent.

RUSTY

I told you. There's no one out there...

But Millicent isn't so sure of that...

**INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT (DREAM)**

Michael reaches the top of the stairs.

THE DOOR

to the master bedroom is wide open and a bright light emanates from inside.

MICHAEL

approaches. Inside the room he sees

A WHITE ORB OF LIGHT

hovering over where the bed should be.

MICHAEL

then turns around and writes something on the wall, using his amputated finger.

He steps back and looks at the words, which are etched backwards in blood: "THGIL EHT OT MIH EKAT".

He thinks about it, then produces

A HANDHELD MIRROR

which he runs across the words: "TAKE HIM TO THE LIGHT."

MICHAEL

whirls around to see

DARIEN

standing at the end of the hallway, Sean by his side.

MICHAEL

steps forward.

MICHAEL

Darien...

But the closer he gets to the two boys, the farther away they appear.

DARIEN

sneaks into his room, Sean in tow. Just as

MICHAEL

reaches the doorway, the door starts to shut in his face--

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)**

The Darien club reacts to the sound of a door slamming shut.

**INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Larry runs out to take a look. He notices that the door to Darien's room is closed -- and covered with frost.

He approaches and places his hand over the frozen doorknob -- too cold! He shrinks back. Just then Rusty runs up the stairs.

RUSTY

What happened?

Larry shrugs...

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Jared's car zooms past.

**INT. JARED'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Jared drives like a maniac. Opera blaring on the radio. All of a sudden, the emergency broadcast system comes on.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
 This is a tornado alert for Grand  
 Island, Southwest of the downtown  
 area. This is not a drill. I repeat.  
 This is not a drill...

Jared reacts...

**INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT (DREAM)**

Michael pounds his body against the door to Darien's room,  
 screaming.

MICHAEL  
 Open the door! You hear me?! Open the  
 door!

A familiar voice pipes in.

CASSI (O.S.)  
 You have to be firm with him.

He turns to see

CASSI

standing a few feet away.

MICHAEL  
 Do I know you?

Cassi rolls up her sleeves to display

THE BURN MARKS

on her arms.

MICHAEL

examines his own arms, which are also covered with burn marks.  
 Suddenly, Michael feels weak and collapses onto the floor...

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)**

The Darien Club continues to encircle a sleeping Michael, who  
 is covered with a layer of frost. All of a sudden we hear a  
 pounding noise on the roof.

LARRY  
 Tornado!

**INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Everyone stampedes out of the room in a panic as a hailstorm  
 breaks out.

LARRY  
 Into the shelter!

## INSIDE THE BEDROOM

Rusty tries to awaken a frozen Michael by shaking him and slapping his face.

RUSTY  
Come on, buddy! Wake up!

But he's not having any luck. He listens to Michael's heartbeat.

LARRY

sticks his head in the door. Rusty looks to him.

RUSTY  
His pulse is very weak.

LARRY  
Well, you better get him outta here now!

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Cassi's monitor beeps loudly. One of the NURSES rushes in. Her breath condenses as she quivers from the cold.

The Nurse checks Cassi's pulse. She presses a button on the wall...

**INT. POPE HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Rusty, Michael in his arms, follows Larry down the stairs and out of the house.

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Everyone files into the underground shelter as they dodge the hail.

JARED'S CAR

fishtails into the property. Jared jumps out and rushes over. Millicent grabs his arm and mutters:

MILLICENT  
The door to Darien's room...

The hailstorm turns into wind and rain. Erica tugs on Millicent.

ERICA  
We have to go.

Jared stares at Millicent, not sure what to do. Millicent raises her bony hand and lovingly touches Jared's cheek, as if pleading for him to do the right thing.

Over this, overlap a loud roaring noise, much like a locomotive...

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (REALITY)**

A tornado races toward the house. It's bigger and fiercer than anything we've seen before, eating everything in its way.

**INT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Jared runs in. He stops when he notices that the inside of the house is frozen solid. He carefully proceeds up the icy steps, slipping a couple of times.

**INT. UPSTAIRS POPE HOUSE - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Jared pads over to Darien's room. He places his hand on the doorknob -- the cold stings his hand and he yanks it away.

Jared wraps the bottom of his shirt around his hand and tries again, turning the doorknob with all his might.

JARED

Come on, you bastard! Come on!

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - ON MICHAEL'S HAND (DREAM)**

as he turns the knob. He's so weak, he can barely stand. The door opens. He sees

DARIEN

standing in the corner of the room, shielding Sean with his body.

MICHAEL

slowly approaches.

DARIEN

STAY AWAY FROM ME!!!

As Darien yells out those words, a massive wind explodes out of his mouth and blows

MICHAEL

across the room and against the wall. He tries to get up, but Darien yells out again, spewing out more wind.

DARIEN

I HATE YOU!!! I HATE YOU!!! I HATE YOU!!!

Michael desperately tries to get up, but the wind beats him back against the wall. He glances at a moribund

CASSI

who lingers on the floor...

**INT. DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Jared reaches the bottom of the stairs and is immediately assaulted by the wind blowing through the front door, which slams open and shut.

**INT. SHELTER - NIGHT (REALITY)**

Michael has stopped breathing. Everyone watches as Rusty administers C.P.R.

RUSTY  
Don't give up on me!

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)**

A CRASH TEAM is trying to revive Cassi.

DOCTOR  
Clear!

They step back. He applies the paddles to her chest and shocks her...

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT (REALITY)**

The tornado crosses the field toward of the house...

**INT. POPE HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT (DREAM)**

The house starts to rattle and shake, debris falling from the ceiling. Michael is sprawled out on the floor...

DARIEN'S SHOES

come into frame, little Sean by his side. Michael, his eyes fluttering, looks up at

DARIEN

who snickers. Behind him appear the three other dead members of the Darien Club: the Blonde Farmer, a MIDDLE AGED LADY and a TEENAGE GIRL...and Sweet Thing.

They all look very peaceful and tranquil. They step aside and

CASSI

looking beautiful and radiant as ever also joins them. Big smile on her face, she holds her hand out to Michael, as if saying "come with me." But Michael hesitates.

She kneels down beside Michael and speaks into his ear:

CASSI  
(whispers)  
Remember how we used to make love in  
the field?

A beat, then...

DARIEN

NOOOO!!!!

SEAN

has stepped away and is standing in front of the light, trying to touch it with his little hand.

DARIEN

rushes over to him. But the light quickly grows, its white glow nearly blinding Darien, who immediately stops cold in his tracks. Meanwhile,

MICHAEL

turns to Cassi, who is now Millicent, the old lady, wrinkled and frail. She whispers into his ear again.

RACHEL

Take him to the light.

SEAN (O.S.)

Daddy!

SEAN

holds up the

THE MIRROR

the glass facing Michael. On it plays the home video of Sean riding around on his tricycle in central park.

In this version, Michael grabs Sean and takes him into his arms.

SEAN

puts the mirror down. The house continues to rattle and shake.

SEAN

Are you coming, daddy?

Michael starts to drag himself over to Sean. He passes Darien, who now lies on the floor, wheezing, his breath shallow and labored. The boy turns to Michael.

DARIEN

Why did you leave me?

More debris falls. Michael places his body over Darien, shielding him.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry.

Tears start to stream down the boy's cheeks. Michael takes Darien into arms and rocks him back and forth.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry...

Suddenly,

THE ROOF

blows off. We can see the sky above.

MICHAEL

turns to Darien.

MICHAEL

Don't be afraid.

Michael manages to get up, and he places Darien on his feet. The boy throws his arms around Michael.

MICHAEL

You have to go.

Darien hangs on. Michael pulls him away.

MICHAEL

It's okay.

He smiles at Darien. The Boy nods. He faces the light and takes a step forward. He then stops. He reaches out for Sean, who in turn looks at Michael

SEAN

Daddy?

Tears now form in Michael's eyes. Happy tears. He grabs Sean and hugs him tightly. He then kisses the boy, and presses him forward. Sean takes Darien's hand.

The two boys enter the light, Darien first. But Michael has second thoughts and grabs

SEAN'S HAND

squeezing tightly.

CASSI

calls out to him.

CASSI (O.S.)

Michael..!

Michael doesn't release Sean's hand.

CASSI

Let go!

Michael's arm enters the light.

CASSI

Let go!

Michael starts to step into the light. But as he's about to be absorbed by the light,

MICHAEL'S HAND

opens...releasing

SEAN

who disappears into the light, which explodes in front of Michael, and a white flash fills the screen --

CUT TO:

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT (REALITY)**

At that very same moment, the tornado tears through the house, smashing it into a thousand pieces. The dream has ended...

**INT. SHELTER - NIGHT**

Everyone hunkers down as the storm passes over them. Rusty has given up on Michael, who seems to be dead...

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

Same goes for the doctors and nurses, who stand over Cassi's lifeless body, the monitor flatlining...

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT**

The house has been destroyed. Only rubble remains. The tornado is nowhere to be seen.

The shelter doors flip open. Bob Sceets steps out...

**INT. SHELTER - NIGHT**

Rusty rocks his friend's body, unwilling to accept what just happened.

**EXT. POPE HOUSE - NIGHT**

Larry and Bob clear out some of the debris.

BOB

Jared, where are you?

LARRY (O.S.)

Down here!

WHAT THEY SEE

Jared lies on the floor of what once was the basement. He's covered with dirt and debris, but he's alive, and apparently unharmed.

**INT. SHELTER - NIGHT**

Rusty continues to rock Michael's body. Suddenly, Michael coughs. Rusty's face brightens.

RUSTY

Buddy!

Michael opens his eyes. Rusty yells out.

RUSTY

He's alive! He made it!

Michael looks at Rusty, then at Millicent. He gives her a thumbs up. She smiles...

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

As the hospital staff starts to walk out, the monitor comes alive. Cassi opens her eyes. She also made it. The staff rushes back to her side...

FADE TO BLACK.

**EXT. CENTRAL NEBRASKA REGIONAL AIRPORT - DAY**

Cassi's pickup is parked in front of the terminal. Rusty and Michael get their stuff out the back. Rusty goes over to Cassi.

RUSTY

Thank you for everything.

They both smile. She gives him a hug. Rusty turns to Michael, who's wearing a much smaller bandage over his injured hand.

RUSTY

I'll meet you inside.

Rusty goes inside. Michael approaches Cassi.

MICHAEL

What can I say?

An uncomfortable moment between them. Michael hugs Cassi. For a second, it looks like he's going to kiss her lips. But he doesn't. She's clearly disappointed.

CASSI

Don't be a stranger.

He pulls away from her and starts to go inside...

CASSI

Michael?

He stops. She knows that she'll never see him again. She smiles. He smiles back and goes inside.

FADE TO BLACK.

**EXT. L'HIRONDELLE - NIGHT**

It's a beautiful summer night. A cab pulls up and lets a COUPLE out. They enter the restaurant...

**INT. L'HIRONDELLE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

The place is packed with customers. Cecile greets the Couple. We see Rusty standing over a table, chatting with a FOURSOME.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Michael and his crew are hard at work. Michael is no longer wearing a bandage on his right hand. His amputated finger has healed.

MICHAEL  
Seven's ready!

He puts the finishing touches on a couple of plates and slides them onto the window with a little English.

MICHAEL  
(calls out)  
Still waiting on the mashed for the  
*boudins!*

Suddenly, Michael sees something beyond the swinging doors.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Cassi stands just outside the kitchen, staring at

MICHAEL

who stares back at her, transfixed.

KITCHEN HELPER (O.S.)  
Boss? Boss?

Michael doesn't respond. He walks over to Cassi, takes her into his arms and kisses her passionately.

CUT TO:

**INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Michael awakens on his bed. The whole thing with Cassi was a dream. He thinks back and smiles to himself...

**INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - LATER**

A couple of MEN come out of Sean's bedroom, carting away the last of the boy's furniture.

Michael stands back, coffee cup in hand, watching. Though he has a pained look on his face, we sense a lightness on his shoulders, a breeziness in his soul. Michael moseys over to

## SEAN'S BEDROOM

and looks inside. The room is empty. All furniture and personal belongings gone. The walls bare. But in the corner sits Sean's tricycle. Michael stares at it

MAN

Did you want to keep that?

The Man hands Michael a clipboard with a receipt. Michael thinks about it. It's as if his entire life had come down to this very moment. A moment of truth. A moment of surrender.

Michael signs the receipt and hands the clipboard to the Man.

MAN

No. It's all yours.

Michael walks away from the room...

**EXT. MICHAEL'S BUILDING - DAY**

A beautiful winter day. Snow covers everything. Michael exits the building and walks away. In the background, the Men load the tricycle in the back of the Salvation Army truck.

The hint of a smile on his face, Michael produces his cell phone and dials a number. The phone rings several times and a familiar voice answers...

CASSI (V.O.)

Hello?

FADE OUT.