

In Search of James Dean

By

Justin Murphy

Based On His Short Story "Do You Really Know Me?"

EXT. STREETS OF CHOLAME, CALIFORNIA DAY0

SEPTEMBER 30, 1955. A PORSCHE 550 SPYDER drives down the road. JAMES DEAN and a friend are in the car. Turn west on ROUTE 466. They whiz by a FORD station wagon.

Reach POLONIO PASS. Drive to the top. Head down THE ANTELOPE GRADE. Pass cars along the way. They hit the junction floor. It is between Route 466 and ROUTE 41. The drive continues.

A 1950 FORD TUDOR COUPE drives east down ROUTE 466. West of the SHANDON junction. Turns left on Route 41. Heads North toward FRESNO. Crosses over the center line.

The Porsche Spyder tries to side step. But CRASH! The two cars collide. Almost head on. The Porsche Spyder cartwheels. Three times. Now lands again. James Dean lies here.

An ambulance arrives. A couple paramedics wheel out a stretcher. VONDA, a nurse, also emerges. Walks over to the now bloody Dean. Checks his pulse. Squints his eyes.

VONDA

Can you hear me?

Dean does not answer. Submerged in the wreckage. She holds his hand. Hardly a breath emerges. Will he survive?

VONDA

I'm right here...I'm not leaving...

Holds her grip steady.

PARAMEDIC

We're going to have to get a road crew to pull him out.

Tears stream down her face. She nods. Paramedic reaches into the ambulance. Gets on the radio. Calls it in.

PARAMEDIC

Car crash...one of these Hollywood actors needs to be pried from the car...

Turns from the radio. Shakes his head.

PARAMEDIC

Damn fast drivers!

VONDA

Stay with me...stay with me...

(CONTINUED)

Grips Dean's hand. Remains by his side. Looks into his eyes. There is still some life here. Turns her head. Vehicle pulls up. POLICE and a ROAD CREW arrive with their tools.

ROAD CREW MEMBER
Please step out of the way.

Removes Vonda from Dean's grasp. Is walked back toward the paramedic. Chews her fingernails. Is worried.

PARAMEDIC
He'll be alright.

VONDA
He better be.

They watch Dean. He is pulled from the wreckage. Paramedic has his arm around her. She is not phased. Her eyes on him. Is it concern for his welfare? Or is love developing?

He is now out of the wreckage. Another paramedic lies him on the stretcher. Vonda and the first paramedic go to him. Both open the rear door. She stands by the ambulance.

VONDA
I'm here for you...

Holds his hand. He is wheeled in.

PARAMEDIC
Go ahead and stay with
him...there's another couple guys
we need to attend to...

INT. AMBULANCE DAY

Vonda gets in. Her hand grasps Dean's once again. Cover his hand with hers. She smiles. He is lucky to be alive. Sounds of paramedics rescuing the others. Caresses his face.

VONDA
We'll get you to that
hospital...fix you up real nice...

His friend is wheeled in on another stretcher.

VONDA
...you'll see.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

Dean lies on a hospital bed. A private room. Vonda walks in. Places her hand on his shoulder. Cliches his teeth in pain. She holds his arm steady. Stroking his hair. Comforts him.

VONDA

Anything I can get you for the pain?

DEAN

No...I'm alright.

VONDA

Your friend will need a lot of surgery on his hip and femur. Fractured jaw too.

DEAN

What about the guy in the other car?

VONDA

Just a gashed forehead and a bruised nose for him...

Dean turns his head. Laughs. Holds his stomach in pain. Coughs. Vonda holds his stomach. Her face gets closer to his. Smiles at him. Yet this fades. She is concerned.

VONDA

Try not to exert yourself too much.

Still holds his stomach. Their eyes remain locked.

DEAN

He barely has a scratch on him while.

Tries to rise in bed. Winces in pain. She lays him back down. He takes small breaths. Larger breaths hurt.

VONDA

I know...life can be unfair...

Dean looks away.

VONDA

...and healing will take a long time for you...

Hand on his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

VONDA
...but things will get
better...you'll see...

DEAN
No worse than doing another movie
for Warner Bros.

Wants to laugh. Holds back.

VONDA
That's for sure.

DEAN
Just wish I could get away...some
small town away from all this...

Smiles. His eyes widen.

DEAN
...some place where I could do
nothing but race cars.

VONDA
I don't think that's such a good
idea.

DEAN
Why not?

Turns back around. Faces her.

DEAN
Dream as if you'll live
forever...live as if you'll
today...

Vonda shakes her head.

VONDA
What is it with you macho types?

Dean hold back laughter.

VONDA
But moving to a small town away
from here isn't such a bad idea.

DEAN
Not at all.

INT. AIRPORT DAY

Vonda is in her nurse's uniform. Dean is in a wheelchair. Wears a hat and sunglasses. Draped with a blanket. She steps over to the front desk. Holds up her first two fingers.

VONDA

Two tickets to Dalton, Georgia
please...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

Dean's friend lies in his hospital bed. A doctor and a nurse arrive. Sees they are expressionless. Rises up in bed. The doctor waves his hand. The nurse touches his shoulder.

DOCTOR

I'm afraid we have some bad
news...it's your friend...

FRIEND

Jimmy?

Doctor nods.

DOCTOR

I'm afraid he was pronounced dead
on arrival...

Tears stream down his face. Covers it with his hands. The nurse pats him on his shoulder. Wraps her arm around him.

NURSE

It's alright...it's okay...

Eases him back into the bed.

DOCTOR

He must've died on impact...

Shakes his head.

DOCTOR

...just too many injuries...

He holds back more tears.

PASTOR (O.S.)

I shall remember the life of James
Dean as a drama in three acts...

EXT. CEMETERY DAY

Many mourners gather on this rural land. Sparse yet peaceful. A small group crying. The casket is lowered into the ground. The tombstone reads JAMES B. DEAN 1931-1955.

PASTOR

...act one was his boyhood and youth...

INT. MOVIE SET DAY

Someone comes on set. Holds his head down. Cast and crew are gathered. He breaks the news. Tears stream from their eyes. One dark haired woman falls to the ground. Sobbing.

PASTOR

...act two represents the career that gained national prominence...

EXT. STREETS OF CHOLAME, CALIFORNIA DAY

Dean and his friend drive fast. Going down the road. The wind in their faces. Not a care in the world. The road is open. No telling where it leads. Their lives ahead of them.

PASTOR

...and act three is the new life into which he had just entered...

INT. AIRPORT DAY

Vonda wheels Dean forward. They have got past the front desk. He curls within the blanket. Avoids any attempt to be recognized. Others board the flight. He and Vonda head out.

EXT. CEMETERY DAY

The mourners and their tears remain. THE PASTOR holds his Bible. Presides over this service. Stands close to the tombstone. He commands. Has them in the palm of his hand.

PASTOR

...to those of who were closest to James Dean, remember that this God of who we speak is trustworthy and can be trusted with your loved one...

Wipes a tear from his eye.

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR
...the career of James Dean has not
ended...it has just begun.

INT. JOHN CALEB HALVORSON'S LIVING ROOM DAY

PRESENT DAY. GARY HALVORSON walks in the door. He and his
mother carry boxes. He lays one box down. Rifles through it.
Pulls out a jacket. Belongs on an old World War II uniform.

MOTHER
There's still a lot of packing to
to do.

INT. JOHN CALEB HALVORSON'S HALLWAY DAY

Walks to the staircase. Looks up. Sees the entrance to the
attic. Gary heads toward her. Once again carrying the box.

GARY
Which one of us is going up there?

Mother shrugs.

MOTHER
I don't know...haven't been up in
there years...

Stares at it.

MOTHER
...probably a lot of cobwebs and
crap...

Steps away.

MOTHER
...you go up there!

Gary holds the box. She turns to walk.

GARY
Mom!

She turns back around.

MOTHER
You heard me...

Smiles.

MOTHER
you look through things up
there...I'll look at things down
here.

Leaves this part of the house.

INT. JOHN CALEB HALVORSON'S ATTIC DAY

The passageway opens. Gary makes his way up. Looks around at all the old junk. Notices an old chest against the wall. Kneels down. Opens the chest. All sorts of things inside.

GARY
Wow...

Pulls out an old photo. Black and white. There are many cars in the background. Some kind of racetrack. The two people in the photo. One is his grandfather. The other is...

GARY
James Dean?

Turns the old photo around. There is writing on the back. It is Dalton, Georgia -- 1965. Gazes at the photo.

GARY
...this can't be.

Rises to his feet.

GARY
Hey...you won't believe what I've
found..,

Heads out of the attic.

INT. JOHN CALEB HALVORSON'S LIVING ROOM DAY

Gary comes back down the steps. Hands the photo to his mother. Both are a little shocked. They remain silent. It takes a second or so. But they speak again.

GARY
...you never told me Grandpa knew
James Dean...

Mother gazes at the photo.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

He didn't...

Still focuses on it.

MOTHER

...but the resemblance is
uncanny...

Flips it over. Looks on the back of it.

MOTHER

Wouldn't this be ten years after he
was killed in that crash?

GARY

1965...that's what it says...

Shrugs.

GARY

...but why would some Hollywood
actor come to some small town? Why
would he hang out with a nobody?

MOTHER

Beats me...someone got the year
wrong...

Nods.

MOTHER

...yeah...that's what I thought...

GARY

What?

She points to the photo. Gary looks.

MOTHER

See all the cars and the racetrack?
Your Grandpa had a thing for drag
racing when he was a younger...

Hands the photo back to Gary.

MOTHER

...probably just some celebrity
appearance at a race he was in...

Gary searches on his laptop. Some type of documents. His
mother boxes up old items. Googles certain items. A
curiosity has sparked him. These results turn up.

(CONTINUED)

BIRTH CERTIFICATE. Lists as James Byron Dean. Born in Marion, Grant County, Indiana. February 8, 1931. Winton Dean...his father. Mildred M. Wilson Dean...his mother.

ACCIDENT REPORT. Lists Traffic Accident. Cholame, California. On I-55 about 5:45 PM. Left side of face damaged more than right. Many fractures. Broken neck.

AUTOPSY REPORT. Lists the county as San Luis Obispo. State of California. His injuries received in two car collision. No indication of death through criminal act.

DEATH CERTIFICATE. Lists the same details as others. Gary's eyes move for a quick review. Now switches over to another document. Squints his eyes. Is puzzled...if anything.

CERTIFICATE OF LEGAL NAME CHANGE. Similar to Birth Certificate. Yet lists his name as James Byron DOUGLAS. Also lists Dalton, Whitfield County, Georgia. Gary looks up.

DOUGLAS

Something else I've found.

Mother carries another box. Walks over.

MOTHER

Does it have anything to do with your Grandpa or James Dean?

Gary points at his laptop. She looks.

MOTHER

Wow...is this for real?

Stares at it. Stunned. Dazed.

MOTHER

My father actually knew James Dean?

She and Gary both stare.

GARY

It looks that way.

Checks an online bank account. Mother returns to lugging boxes. Sees there is TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS in the account.

GARY

What do you think of taking a trip to find out more about this?

She drops a box.

MOTHER

What?

Gary gets up. Walks over to her.

GARY

Why not take a trip out to California and Georgia to see if this is true?

MOTHER

That's a lot of money.

GARY

There's enough.

She picks up the box.

MOTHER

In case you've forgotten my candle making business went bust...

Carries the box. Faces him.

MOTHER

...I'm damn lucky to even get a job interview right now!

GARY

I meant the money in my account.

Brings over the laptop. Shows her.

MOTHER

That was supposed to be your college fund...remember?

Shrugs.

MOTHER

Then you dropped out of high school...

GARY

I've been writing articles for that website.

MOTHER

Making chump change.

GARY

Better than some drug addict on the street.

(CONTINUED)

She shrugs and nods.

MOTHER

True.

GARY

Besides isn't it better to learn from experience?

Puts down the laptop.

GARY

You hear about all those college kids who take a year off after high school and go to Europe.

MOTHER

Well...this isn't Europe...

Opens the box. Rifles through some items.

MOTHER

...you want to blow your money and go on some wild goose chase?

GARY

Well...isn't this worth finding out?

MOTHER

Just to find out whether some dead movie star knew your grandfather?

GARY

Is this about Grandpa?

MOTHER

A little...

Puts down the box once more.

MOTHER

...he got into an accident when he was younger...his health never recovered...

Bites her fingernails.

MOTHER

...felt it ruined his life...

Picks up her box. Leaves.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Mom...

INT. JOHN CALEB HALVORSON'S HALLWAY DAY

Gary follows her. His mother wipes tears away. Walks up to her. Puts his hand on her arm. She turns around. Appears fine. Smiles. He sees it is an act. She tries to leave.

GARY

Let's talk about this...maybe we should take that trip...

She fiddles with the box.

MOTHER

There's too much for me to do around here...

Turns around. Looks at him. Smiles.

MOTHER

...you go...

Walks further down the hall.

MOTHER

...just pay attention when you make your travel and hotel arrangements...

Turns around. Leaves.

INT. JOHN CALEB HALVORSON'S LIVING ROOM DAY

Returns to his laptop. Goes to a travel site. Clicks on icons. Makes arrangements. Airplane flight. Hotel room. Rental car. Nods. Smiles. Making it happen.

INT. GARY HALVORSON'S BEDROOM DAY

Gary plops his suitcase on the bed. Opens it up. Places clothing in it. Among other items. Mother walks in. He continues packing. She dangles a cellphone. Smirks.

MOTHER

Forget something?

She throws it. Gary catches. Puts it in the suitcase.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

I want you to get with me at all times...

Faces him.

MOTHER

...understand?

GARY

I'll be sure to call you at every stop.

Nods.

MOTHER

So where do you plan to go exactly?

GARY

The site of his accident in Cholame...and scrounge around Dalton...see what I can find.

MOTHER

What else would need to find at the site of his accident?

Scrunches her nose.

MOTHER

If that's simply the place where they thought he died...case closed.

GARY

One would think so...

Pulls the laptop back out. Flips it open. Googles "James Dean Accident Inquest". Clicks on a search result. Reveals "Nurse Stopped To Check Him. Had A Weak Pulse".

GARY

...until this.

MOTHER

Wow...

Nods.

MOTHER

...don't know if that convinces me...but if this what you need to do...

Gary closes laptop. Places it back in suitcase. Zips it up. Everything appears to be ready. At least how things appear.

MOTHER

What time's your flight?

GARY

A few hours from now.

MOTHER

That's not much...

Walks toward the door.

MOTHER

...better get a move on.

Gary gets his suitcase. Both head out.

EXT. AIRPORT DAY

A car drives up. Gary and his mother get out. Watch others come and go. Grabs his suitcase. Shuts his door. Her door remains open. She walks over to bid him goodbye.

MOTHER

Are you sure you don't want me to go in with you?

GARY

I'm fine.

Smiles. Backs away from her.

INT. AIRPORT DAY

Gary enters. Goes to the front desk. Smiles at the attendant. She mans the computer. A few people in front. They all check with her. Now he moves up front. Smiles back.

ATTENDANT

How may I help you?

GARY

Yes...I have a reservation for a flight in a few hours.

ATTENDANT

Does that come with reservations for hotel and rental car?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Yes.

Gives her money. Is handed a plane ticket.

ATTENDANT

Thank you for flying with us.

Gary nods and smiles. Sits down. Waits.

A FEW HOURS LATER...

PA SYSTEM (O.S.)

All board flight to Cholame,
California.

Gary gets up. Walks to flight attendant. Hands her his ticket. She rips off the small stub. Gives this portion back. He leaves through the doors. Carries his suitcase.

EXT. STREETS OF CHOLAME, CALIFORNIA DAY

Rental car drives down the road. Only vehicle in view. No traffic. Just this one. And the quiet road. The tires move against the pavement. Gentle. No screeching.

INT. RENTAL CAR DAY

Gary drives. His cellphone rings. Caller ID reads MOM. Clicks the button. Holds cellphone up to ear. Answers.

GARY

Yes Mom...the flight landed.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Are you alright? Was there any turbulence?

GARY

Everything's fine.

MOTHER

Any other cars on the road?

GARY

No...but I might get killed talking on a cellphone while driving...

MOTHER

Go ahead...be a smart ass...you'll be glad I asked about other cars...

(CONTINUED)

Gary rolls his eyes.

MOTHER

...may I remind you what road
you're driving on? And who got
killed there?

GARY

We both know this damn well.

MOTHER

And did you remember to...?

GARY

Yes...I remembered to pack clean
underwear...

Widens his eyes. Opens his mouth. Disbelief. One hand mans
the steering wheel. The other holds the cellphone.

GARY

...I'm wearing some right
now...thank you...

Looks away from the road. Focuses once again.

MOTHER

I'm just concerned.

GARY

I know.

MOTHER

Will you call me when you get to
the hotel?

GARY

Yes...I've accepted your phone
calls every hour since I got
here...

MOTHER

I love you...

GARY

Yes...I love you too.

Hangs up. Puts the phone down.

EXT. JAMES DEAN MEMORIAL JUNCTION DAY

Drives down this road. The rental car stops. The window pulls down. Gary looks out. There is an old man walking. Watches him try to walk. Can barely get around.

GARY
You need a ride?

OLD MAN
No...that's alright.

Tries to hobble forward.

GARY
You sure?

The old man waves him off.

OLD MAN
Nah...that's alright.

GARY
I understand.

Gary drives forward. Turns west on State Route 46. Looks in his rear view mirror. Sees the old man. Waits a second.

GARY
Anything you can tell me about
James Dean?

Old man hobbies. Turns around. Smiles.

OLD MAN
Oh yeah...the car wreck...happened
not far from here...

Nods.

OLD MAN
...I remember the whole thing...

GARY
You've lived around here all these
years?

OLD MAN
Was one of the officers who pulled
him out of the car.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Are you sure you don't need a ride?

OLD MAN

Nah...I may be a bit slow these days..but I know this trail like the back of my hand...

Waves. Leaves in one direction. Gary drives in another.

INT. RENTAL CAR DAY

Gary turns on the radio. Sees Polonio Pass. Some talk radio discussion starts. Turns. Pays attention to what is said. The announcer mentions "James Dean". Starts driving again.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1 (O.S.)

It's sad how Dean's career was headed upward when he crashed.

Slowly heads up the pass.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2 (O.S.)

Yeah..a lot of promise derailed by a fast lifestyle.

Inches up more.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1

If it hadn't been for his racing habit...there's no telling what he could have done as an actor.

Drives to the tip of the pass.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2

Some claim he was bored with acting...either wanted to direct or race cars full time.

Reaches the tip. Stays for a second.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1

Hm...wonder what he would've done there. Some even claim he already did best work.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2

He was great at playing the confused teenage rebel in East of Eden and Rebel Without A Cause...

Gary drives down The Antelope Grade.

(CONTINUED)

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2
 ...but in Giant. It was like Brando
 at his worst. Mumbling and phoning
 his way through every scene.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1
 Yeah.

Drives further.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2
 Going by this...would he have been
 some flash in the pan...or still
 very good depending on the role?

Hits the junction floor.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1
 I don't know.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2
 Sad we'll never find out.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1
 True.

EXT. JAMES DEAN MEMORIAL JUNCTION DAY

Heads toward State Route 41. Oncoming car barrels its way
 through. Rental car turns left. Miss each other by an inch.
 The car pulls over. Gary gets out. Takes a deep breath.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1
 Listen...we've got more on James
 Dean coming up for you in a
 minute...so stay with us.

Gary sees the other car drive fast. He walks. Radio
 commercial plays. Background noise. Widens his eyes.

GARY
 Wow...

Sees a shrine in the distance. Walks toward it.

GARY
 ...what is this?

A post of stainless steel. It grows around a tree of heaven.
 An inscription in front of it. This reads in bold letters:

(CONTINUED)

JAMES DEAN
1931 Feb 8 - 1955 Sep 30pm 5:59

Feels each letter. Index finger moves up and down. Walks around. Sees another inscription. A different portion of this memorial. This one is in cursive. He reads it.

GARY
What is essential is invisible to
the eye...

Nods. Intrigued. Reads the rest of the inscription.

GARY
...he liked The Little Prince?

Looks at the drawing next to it. Must be a sketch some child made. It is The Little Prince carried into the stars. He is led by many doves. Gary shrugs. Not a bad work of art.

EXT. SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COURTHOUSE DAY

Rental car drives up. Parks in front of a large courthouse. Gary gets out of the driver's seat. Shuts the door behind him. Looks at this building. Heads inside its structure.

INT. SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COURTHOUSE DAY

Gary walks in. He sees the clerk. Goes up to her desk. She types something into the computer. He waits for her to finish. She now has his attention. Smiles at him.

GARY
Hi...I'm looking records of an
inquest into an accident report.

CLERK
Anything specific?

GARY
The accident was in
Cholame...September 30, 1955.

The clerk nods. Smiles.

CLERK
You're looking for James Dean?

Gary shrugs. Nods back.

(CONTINUED)

CLERK

You're not the first one...

Laughs. Shakes her head.

CLERK

...but I'm sorry...unless you're
immediate family...I can't give
that out...

Leans close.

GARY

I'm from Grant County, Indiana
...one of the last living relatives
of Winton and Mildred Dean.

INT. FILING ROOM DAY

Gary and the clerk are here. Rifling through a filing cabinet. This one is labeled D. First row of files start with DA. Her hands goes through them. Now gets to DE.

CLERK

Let's see...Dean...Dean...where is
it?

A number of files. Each start with the last name DEAN.

CLERK

Dean...Dean...ah! Here it is!

Pulls out a file. Hands it to Gary. It reads DEAN, JAMES.

GARY

Thanks!

Opens the file. Rifles through paperwork. Looks at it.

CLERK

Anything else I can get you?

Gary looks up. Smiles. Shakes his head.

GARY

No thanks...you've been a big help.

Nods at her.

INT. SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COURTHOUSE DAY

Gary and the clerk emerge. She returns to the desk. Types on the computer. He leaves with the file. Walks out the door.

EXT. SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COURTHOUSE DAY

Gary walks to the rental car. Takes the file with him. Opens the door. Throws the file inside. Gets in the driver's seat. The engine starts. The rental car heads off.

INT. HOTEL ROOM DAY

Gary arrives. Throws the file on one of the beds. Opens his suitcase. Not one item unpacked. Just as it was when he loaded it. Cellphone buzzes in his pocket. Answers it.

GARY

Yes Mom...I made it to the hotel.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Did you have any car trouble getting there?

GARY

No.

MOTHER

Find anything on James Dean and your grandfather?

GARY

Not so much on Grandpa...but a little on Dean...got some documentation...

MOTHER

What?

Grabs the file. Looks through it.

GARY

A file confirming he did have a weak pulse at the scene of the accident...

MOTHER

Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

It says here a nurse on the scene
did check on him...yet was dead on
arrival at the hospital.

MOTHER

Well...that's a small bit of
something... still don't know if
I'm convinced...

Gary looks at more of the file.

MOTHER

...but if you must do this.

GARY

Thanks.

MOTHER

When's your flight to Dalton?

GARY

Tomorrow.

MOTHER

Look..I'm not too crazy over you
cleaning out your bank account and
going on this trip...

Reads more of the file.

MOTHER

...but I realize this is something
you've got to do. Whether it's for
your grandfather...yourself...

Puts the file back on the bed.

MOTHER

...maybe for James Dean...I don't
know...

Both laugh.

MOTHER

...but I support that you're doing
this...maybe we'll get an answer as
to what really happened...

Gary walks to the window. Looks out of it.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

...it'd be interesting to know my own father might have been friends with James Dean.

GARY

Yeah...I'll talk to you soon.

MOTHER

Remember to...

GARY

I know.

MOTHER

I love you...

Gary smiles.

MOTHER

...bye.

EXT. AIRPORT DAY

A day later. Gary purchases his airplane ticket. Leaves the desk. Sits down with his suitcase. Waits for the airplane.

A few hours later...

PA SYSTEM (O.S.)

Flight boarding for Dalton,
Georgia.

Gets up. Suitcase in hand. Walks up to flight attendant. Tears the stub off the ticket. Gary heads out.

EXT. STREETS OF DALTON, GEORGIA DAY

Another rental car drives down the street. A mid-sized town much different than Cholame. Yet it is more populated with cars. The rental car makes its way through.

INT. RENTAL CAR DAY

Gary is behind the wheel. Looks both left, right, and now left again. He drives. Looks at the buildings. The townspeople. Looks through the windshield.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

A lot more people around here.

EXT. STREETS OF DALTON, GEORGIA DAY

The rental car parks. Gary gets out. Sees a shopkeeper. Sweeps up part of the sidewalk. Goes up to him. Holds up a document. It is the legal name change certificate.

GARY

Do you know anything about a man
living here named James Byron
Douglas?

Shopkeeper holds up his broom.

SHOPKEEPER

Who wants to know?

Scowls.

SHOPKEEPER

Get away from my sidewalk...you're
holding up customers.

Gary looks around. There are no customers.

GARY

What custom...

Doors slams in his face. Shopkeeper is gone. Turns left. Sees a pay phone. A phone book hooked to it underneath. Gary goes to it. Flips through the pages. Looking...

GARY

Douglas...Douglas...

Flips some more. Reaches the D section.

GARY

...Douglas...Douglas...

Moves his finger down. Rows of Douglasses.

GARY

Here we are!

Listing for Douglas, James B.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Okay...

Pulls out a pen and paper. Writes down the address. Leaves the pay phone. Gets back in the rental car. Drives off.

INT. VONDA'S LIVING ROOM DAY

James Dean and Vonda are now much older. They sit around in this house. He reads a copy of THE LITTLE PRINCE. She folds a bedsheet. Quiet between the two of them.

VONDA

Shouldn't you be out working on your car?

Dean hides behind the book.

DEAN

Worked on that thing enough this week.

Turns the page.

VONDA

We could go out to a movie later if you want.

DEAN

As long as it's not from the fifties...or something at a drive in...like staying away from those.

VONDA

You never like going out...unless it's to some drag race...

He shrugs. Does not budge from his book.

DEAN

Big deal.

VONDA

How come you never made love to a woman?

Lowers the book from his face. Widens his eyes. Jaw drops.

DEAN

What?

(CONTINUED)

VONDA
You heard me.

Sits here. Stunned.

VONDA
How come you never made love to a woman?

Puts the book down. Gets off the couch.

DEAN
Oh come on...I've told you about Pier...Barbara...Ursuala...and Liz.

VONDA
Mm. Hm.

Not convinced.

VONDA
Was there anyone special in your stage days in New York? Or back in Indiana?

Dean shrugs.

VONDA
Just asking.

He backs against the wall. Turns to it. His fingers picks something off it. Tries to ignore Vonda.

VONDA
You don't have to retreat...hide from me or any other woman...

Walks over to the wall. Gets close to him.

VONDA
...we all want you Jimmy...

Puts her arms around him.

VONDA
...this handsome movie actor...

Lays her head on his chest.

VONDA
..forever etched in time on the screen.

Backs away from her.

(CONTINUED)

DEAN
That's in the past.

Walks away.

VONDA
All these years and it's still an
issue for you...

Follows him.

VONDA
...why?

Tries to get close again. He resists.

VONDA
Jimmy...please open up...

Walks away from her again.

VONDA
...you can tell me anything...

Will not stop in her pursuit.

VONDA
...what's wrong?

Does not look at her.

DEAN
I don't want to talk about any of
that...alright?

Sits down.

DEAN
That all happened years ago...want
to leave it all behind.

She touches his arm.

VONDA
But why...why was it so terrible?

Shrugs. Shakes his head.

DEAN
I don't know...

Faces her at last.

DEAN
...it just was.

EXT. VONDA'S HOUSE DAY

The rental car pulls up. Gary emerges. Shuts the driver's side door. Walk through the front yard. Up to the porch. Facing the door. Pushes the doorbell. It rings.

INT. VONDA'S LIVING ROOM DAY

Vonda inches toward the door.

VONDA
Do you want me to get it?

Dean is once again on the couch. Reading The Little Prince. Grumbles. Vonda shakes her head. Turns around. Opens door.

EXT. VONDA'S HOUSE DAY

Vonda peeks out the door. She and Gary look at each other. She smiles. Steps out to greet him. Seems warm and inviting.

VONDA
May I help you?

GARY
Is this the home of a James Byron
Douglas?

VONDA
Why yes it is...

Looks away. Trying to find the right words. Now looks back.

GARY
I don't know how to say this...

Pulls out the old photo. His grandfather and James Dean.

GARY
...it's possible he knew my
grandfather years ago.

Flips it on the back. Shows her. Dalton, Georgia -- 1965. Hands it to her. Vonda looks at it. Purses her lips.

(CONTINUED)

VONDA
Have no idea what to tell you...

Steps back.

VONDA
...I don't remember him too much...

Gary holds the photo steady.

VONDA
...it was so long ago...

GARY
His name was John Caleb
Halvorson...are you sure?

Vonda widens her eyes. Puzzled.

VONDA
I'm sorry I couldn't help you.

Walks back into the house. Shuts the door.

GARY
Well...thanks anyway.

She is no longer here. Gary leaves.

INT. VONDA'S LIVING ROOM DAY

Vonda comes back inside. Dean once again lowers the book.
Gets up. Walks over to her. Curious. She is taken aback.

DEAN
Who was that?

VONDA
Do you remember anyone around here
named John Caleb Halvorson? That
was his grandson.

DEAN
Grandson? Never knew he even had a
family...

VONDA
How do you know him anyway?

DEAN
Used to see him at the drag strip.

(CONTINUED)

VONDA

And that was long after I told you
to quit racing too...

Nods.

VONDA

...and you're still doing
it...every Saturday...

Shakes her head.

VONDA

...why?

Walks to him. He remains seated on the couch.

VONDA

Why?

He smiles.

DEAN

The gratification comes in the
doing...not in the results.

VONDA

You've been saying that for far too
long...

Paces around the room. Incensed.

VONDA

...hell...you almost got yourself
killed once...the rest of the world
thinks your dead!

DEAN

I don't need a history lesson!

Gets off the couch.

VONDA

You barely had a pulse when I
arrived! Don't you owe me
something?

Dean tries to leave.

VONDA

Don't you dare turn away from me!

He stops.

VONDA

I saved your life...I even gave you
a life in this small town...with a
new name. Can't you be good to me?

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE DAY

Gary walks next door. Rings doorbell. Some guy opens the
door. A dark haired middle aged man. Hand on the doorknob.

GARY

Do you know anything about a James
Byron Douglas who lives around
here?

NEIGHBOR

The moody old fart next door?

Nods.

NEIGHBOR

Still drag racing at his age...you
thought he would've learned his
lesson a long time ago...

GARY

You mean he's still...

Leans forward.

GARY

...as old as he is?

NEIGHBOR

Yep.

GARY

Anything else?

NEIGHBOR

He lives with some registered nurse
who's been taking care of him for
years...

Waves it off. No big deal.

NEIGHBOR

...some car accident that almost
killed him....

Shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

NEIGHBOR
...hear it's a miracle he's still
alive.

Squints his eyes. Suspicious.

NEIGHBOR
Why so interested?

Chuckles.

NEIGHBOR
You some private investigator...a
reporter or something?

Gary laughs.

GARY
Nah...he was once friends with my
grandfather.

Shows him the photo.

NEIGHBOR
Wow...

Looks at the photo.

NEIGHBOR
...he was a drag racer too?

GARY
Found out not long ago...he died
awhile back.

NEIGHBOR
I'm sorry.

Shrugs. Backs toward the door.

NEIGHBOR
I don't know how else to help
you...already told you all I
know...

Snaps his finger. An idea comes to him.

NEIGHBOR
..but maybe someone at the drag
strip here in town can help...he
also used to work for a mechanic.

GARY
Anything else?

NEIGHBOR
He was also friendly with an old
guy at the planetarium...some say a
little "too" friendly.

GARY
Thanks for your time.

Nods. Leaves this porch. The middle aged man waves.

EXT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE DAY

Gary walks up. The garage is open. A couple guys work on a
car. One is under the hood. The other fixes something.
Wrench in his hand. They turn around. He holds up the photo.

GARY
Do these two look familiar?

The two mechanics walk up. Gaze at the photo.

MECHANIC #1
Wait...is that James Dean?

MECHANIC #2
No you idiot...there's a guy around
town who looks like him...used to
work here!

MECHANIC #1
Oh yeah...who's this?

Leans at Gary. Points to the other guy in the photo.

GARY
My grandfather...they used to know
each other. Was wondering if you
could tell me anything...

MECHANIC #1
Sorry...I...uh...

Shakes his head. Backs away.

MECHANIC #2
Let me see...

Gary hands him the photo.

(CONTINUED)

MECHANIC #2
...don't know much about him...your
grandfather?

Points to him.

GARY
Yeah.

MECHANIC #2
Never met him...but the other guy
is James Douglas. He worked here
for years. Best mechanic around.

GARY
Already went to his house...met the
nurse taking care of him...and the
guy next door.

MECHANIC #2
He still comes here every once in
awhile...piddles around.

GARY
Do you know anything about him
racing cars at a drag strip...or
knowing someone at a planetarium?

Mechanic #2 nods. Laughs.

MECHANIC #2
Oh yeah...every Saturday he would
race some of those old roadsters...

Smiles. Thinks about it.

MECHANIC #2
...there's this one car he spoke
well of...one he loved.

GARY
What was it?

MECHANIC #2
This silver looking car from the
fifties...Porsche Spyder I think.

GARY
You mean the one he crashed in?

Both mechanics look at him. Puzzled.

MECHANIC #2

What crash?

GARY

Something I heard around town.

Shrugs.

GARY

What about the guy at the
planetarium?

Mechanic #2 looks at him.

MECHANIC #2

Yeah...he used to mention having
some friend there...

Waves his hand. Trying to find the right words.

MECHANIC #2

...it was complicated...sometimes
it was like this best friend he
missed...

Shakes his head.

MECHANIC #2

...sometimes acted like he was glad
...whoever it was...was out of his
life...just weird stuff!

GARY

What do you mean?

MECHANIC #2

I don't know...as if he couldn't
live with 'em...couldn't live
without 'em! Told you he was odd.

GARY

Sounds like he...

MECHANIC #2

I know...like he was in love with a
woman.

GARY

You don't think he was...you know?

Mechanic #2 grabs a wrench. Gets under the hood. Works on
the car. Gary stands here. Observing his work ethic.

(CONTINUED)

MECHANIC #2

Was what? Ow!

Raises up. Hits his head under the hood. Moves out of the way. Nods. Realizes what Gary meant. Walks back over to him.

MECHANIC #2

Nah...he never seemed like that kind of guy....at least I don't think so...but who are we to judge?

Shrugs.

MECHANIC #2

His business is his business.

GARY

Right.

Gary's pocket buzzes. It is his cellphone. Pulls it out.

GARY

Yes Mom?

Both mechanics laugh.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Have you landed in Dalton yet? Why haven't you called?

GARY

I've only been here a day or so...haven't had time!

MOTHER

Find out anything on James Dean and your grandfather?

Moves to a garage wall. A safe distance from the mechanics.

GARY

Nothing on Grandpa...but quite a bit on Dean.

MOTHER

What?

GARY

If he's still alive...then he still might be drag racing...from those I've talked to.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

Wouldn't he be far too old for that now?

GARY

No shit.

MOTHER

So...who have you spoken with?

GARY

Some old lady at his address...a neighbor...and a couple mechanics I'm talking to.

MOTHER

Mechanics?

GARY

Understand he worked here for years...still does some occasional work when he's able.

MOTHER

Still nothing on your grandfather?

GARY

No one seems to remember him.

MOTHER

That's odd...you figure someone would've.

GARY

Same here...I think the reason they remember this guy...James Dean...James Douglas...

Shrugs.

GARY

...or whoever he is...well...isn't it obvious?

She laughs.

MOTHER

Yeah...any of them make the connection he might be James Dean?

GARY

One the mechanics mentioned a resemblance offhand.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER
But that's it?

GARY
Right.

MOTHER
Any other leads?

GARY
He still goes to this drag strip
every Saturday...has for
years...also has some friend.

MOTHER
Who?

GARY
Someone who runs the local
planetarium...they seem to have
this complicated friendship.

MOTHER
Wow...think you might find
something?

GARY
I don't know.

MOTHER
Well...let me know if you do.

GARY
If you don't call me out of the
blue first!

MOTHER
Love you too...bye!

She hangs up.

MECHANIC #1
Aw. Did Mommy have to call and
check on her little boy?

Both mechanics rush out. Taunting Gary. Making kissy faces.

MECHANIC #2
Did she call to see if you needed a
diaper change?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Listen...I've got to go...thanks
you guys!

Gary smiles. Leaves.

INT. VONDA'S LIVING ROOM DAY

Dean and Vonda sit here. Not a word spoken. He has finished
reading The Little Prince. It lies on the coffee table.
Vonda sees he is lost. Drowning in his own thoughts.

VONDA

Do you ever think about your
upbringing in Indiana?

DEAN

You know I do.

Turns away. Does not want to talk to about it.

VONDA

What about your parents...Winton
and Mildred?

Dean chuckles.

DEAN

We've talked about them before.

VONDA

But not too much....

Touches his hand.

VONDA

...I think they're the root of your
problem...always have been.

DEAN

What problem?

VONDA

You're so
funny...sweet...intelligent...

Smiles at him.

VONDA

...so introspective...

Her smile fades.

VONDA
..but it's these same qualities
that hold so much anger.

DEAN
I thought you were some registered
nurse...not a psychiatrist.

VONDA
I know...but you hardly ever open
up.

Dean chuckles.

DEAN
Oh come on...I've been opening up
to you for years.

VONDA
But not anything deep.

VONDA
What about your aunt and
uncle...The Winslows?

Dean nods.

DEAN
Marcus and Ortense were nice
people...took good care of me.

VONDA
Lived and worked on their farm in
Fairmount?

DEAN
Right.

VONDA
What about that pastor?

DEAN
Oh yeah...

FLASHBACK:

EXT. CEMETERY DAY

The Pastor presides over Dean's funeral. Mourners cry.
Preaches to them. Holds a Bible close to his heart. The
headstone reads James B. Dean 1931-1955.

(CONTINUED)

DEAN (O.S.)
...he did a lot...mentored
me....gave me a passion for the
arts...

INT. BARN DAY

The Pastor and a young James Dean do pottery. The wheels spin. Clay sculptures ascend to a larger scale. They both smile. Looking at what they create. His first exposure.

DEAN
...taught me a lot about
sculpting...

INT. REVEREND DEWEERD'S OFFICE DAY

A young Dean enters. The Pastor takes the cover off an LP Record. Places it on the phonograph. Puts the needle on the end of it. A symphony starts playing. He smiles.

DEAN
...turned me on to classical music
and jazz...

Later...

DEAN
...showed me how to play the
bongos...

Dean and The Pastor both bang sets of bongos.

Later...

DEAN
...opened the door for me to love
classical literature and
philosophy...

The Pastor hands him a new book. The Little Prince.

DEAN
...above all he turned me onto the
theater...

INT. STAGE DAY

A young Dean moves to the front of the stage. Presenting a scene to the crowd. The crowd is in awe. He spouts dialogue with another actor. The Pastor watches. Smiles.

INT. CHURCH BACKROOM DAY

A young Dean walks into a secret room. The Pastor follows. There is a bed. The Pastor lifts the pillow. Pulls back the blanket and sheets. Dean watches. The Pastor takes his hand.

DEAN
...and he also.

INT. VONDA'S LIVING ROOM DAY

VONDA
Also what...

Dean holds back tears.

VONDA
...what is it Jimmy?

He turns away.

VONDA
You can tell me...

Looks at him. Wants to help.

VONDA
...I love you Jimmy.

DEAN
I need to get that little bastard
ready for that drag race.

Gets up from the couch. Wipes his tears. Heads out the door.

VONDA
Dammit Jimmy!

Turns around. Faces the door.

VONDA
You can't always run to that car
when you have a problem!

(CONTINUED)

DEAN

Watch me.

Shuts the door behind him.

EXT. DRAG STRIP DAY

Engines roar. A few roadsters have a practice run. Gary sees a couple old guys. They talk. He walks up to them. Holds the photo of James Dean and his grandfather. They see it.

RACING GEEZER #1

What's that?

Gary hands him the photo.

RACING GEEZER #1

Hey...I remember these two...

Looks at Gary.

RACING GEEZER #1

...where did you get this?

RACING GEEZER #2

What's going on here?

Walks over to this spot. Racing Geezer #1 hands him the photo. Looks at it. Nods. Hands it back to Gary.

RACING GEEZER #2

He still races here every weekend...

Points to James Dean in the photo.

RACING GEEZER #2

...but I don't know what happened to him...he moved away years ago!

Points to Gary's grandfather.

RACING GEEZER #1

How did you get this?

GARY

Found it in my grandfather's trunk.

RACING GEEZER #2

One of them your grandfather?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

He is.

Points to his grandfather. John Caleb Halvorson. The two geezers look amazed. Gary smiles and nods.

RACING GEEZER #2

Yeah...he slammed into a tree once...didn't get hurt...but he totaled the car...

Shrugs.

RACING GEEZER #2

...shook him up pretty bad though.

RACING GEEZER #1

Last we saw him...he was moving somewhere else...got some woman pregnant and had to marry her.

GARY

My mother.

RACING GEEZER #1

Right...what is he up to these days?

Sad look on Gary's face.

RACING GEEZER #1

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

Shrugs.

RACING GEEZER #1

...when did he pass on?

GARY

Not long ago.

RACING GEEZER #1

He was a good racer...and a good man.

Puts his hand on Gary's shoulder.

GARY

Thank you.

RACING GEEZER #2

He'll be racing later today...as old as he is.

(CONTINUED)

Points to James Dean in the photo. Both geezers laugh.

GARY
I should...but there's somewhere
else I need to be.

Both geezers give a sad nod.

RACING GEEZER #1
We understand.

GARY
But if you can tell me what time
he'll be here to race...I can make
it back.

RACING GEEZER #2
Alright...

Pulls out a pen and notepad. Writes it down. Tears it off.

RACING GEEZER #2
...here you go!

Hands him the note.

RACING GEEZER #1
You better be here!

Points to him.

GARY
I will!

Nods and leaves.

EXT. PLANETARIUM DAY

Gary gazes at a domed building. A large structure. An oddity in this small town. Yet he persists. Walks toward the entrance. Makes it across a long stretch. Enters.

INT. PLANETARIUM ENTRANCE DAY

Makes it inside. Long stretches of decor. Maps of stars. Depictions of planets. Mock ups of astronauts. As well as the space shuttle. Sees someone inside. A group leaves.

INT. PLANETARIUM DAY

Gary encounters THE CURATOR. Short and skinny old man. Bifocals underneath his dark hair. He takes them off. Gary shows him the photo. James Dean and his grandfather.

GARY

Did you know James Byron Douglas many years ago?

THE CURATOR

Yes I did...

Takes the photo from him.

THE CURATOR

...how did you get this?

GARY

My grandfather's the other guy in the photo.

THE CURATOR

I see.

GARY

His name's John Caleb Halvorson...you know him?

The Curator paces around. Looks at the photo.

THE CURATOR

No...I'm afraid not...

Looks at the photo. Now at Gary.

THE CURATOR

Did he give this to you?

GARY

Found in his trunk.

THE CURATOR

Does he know you have it?

GARY

No...he passed away.

THE CURATOR

My condolences...

Remains stern.

(CONTINUED)

THE CURATOR
...I'm one of the two people who
know him better than anyone in this
town...

Does not crack a smile.

THE CURATOR
...even better than this
grandfather of yours...

Nods.

THE CURATOR
...there was something special
between he and I...

Turns his head.

THE CURATOR
...I'm one of the few whom he
allowed to call him Jamie....

Looks at Gary once more.

THE CURATOR
...not James...Jim...or Jimmy...

Moves closer to him.

THE CURATOR
...Jamie!

Hands the photo back to Gary.

GARY
He must have been a very good
friend.

THE CURATOR
He was more than that...

Looks at projector slides. Turns attention back to Gary.

THE CURATOR
...he was my best friend.

Gary flips the photo over. Shows him the handwriting.

GARY
...right here in Dalton, Georgia
...1965.

The Curator shrugs.

THE CURATOR

And?

GARY

Don't you find it odd your "Jamie"
looks like a famous dead movie
star?

The Curator nods.

THE CURATOR

There's no denying it.

Laughs.

GARY

Do you know anything about a car
accident he may have had in the
past?

THE CURATOR

Oh yes...

Nods.

THE CURATOR

...only too well...

Tries to find the right words.

THE CURATOR

...years ago...he moved here with a
private nurse...

Moves his hands down his arms. Demonstrating.

THE CURATOR

...his entire body was scarred.

Shakes his head.

THE CURATOR

...my understanding is he barely
had a weak pulse when she found
him...

Shrugs.

THE CURATOR

...miracle he lived beyond age
twenty four.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

What about his drag racing?

THE CURATOR

Some people never learn.

GARY

He's still doing it...even at his age.

THE CURATOR

I'm well aware.

GARY

You want to go?

The Curator waves him off.

THE CURATOR

No...too much history..it'd be weird.

GARY

What happened between the two of you?

THE CURATOR

Long story.

GARY

I've got some time.

THE CURATOR

Look...it's far too complicated...and there were a lot of hurt feelings.

Looks away. Does not want to get into it.

GARY

I'm sorry.

THE CURATOR

Now's not a good time...maybe you should go.

Walks away. Gary remains here.

GARY

I'm sorry I disturbed you.

Leaves.

INT. PLANETARIUM ENTRANCE DAY

Gary walks out. Take one last look. The diagrams of stars and planets. The mock up of the astronauts. The space shuttle. He leaves through the doors. Not a sound.

EXT. PLANETARIUM DAY

Gary walks across the long stretch. Between here and the parking lot. Pulls out his car keys. Walks to the rental car. Open the driver's side door. Gets inside. Drives off.

INT. PLANETARIUM DAY

The place is dark. One of the slides is in focus. Showcases a sea of stars above. Billie Holiday's WHEN YOUR LOVER HAS GONE plays somewhere. Crying is heard. It is The Curator.

A portable record player sits next to him. The record spins. He wipes his tears. Has a photo in one hand. One of him, Vonda, and James Dean. They were much younger.

THE CURATOR

Why did you leave me?

Looks at the photo. Holds a gun in his other hand.

THE CURATOR

Why did you leave me?

Wipes more tears.

EXT. DRAG STRIP DAY

Dean drives a Porsche Spyder into the area. Similar to the car he crashed in. Yet not quite the same. Gets out. Meets the two racing geezers. Smiles. They nod and smile back.

RACING GEEZER #2

Ready to race today?

DEAN

Sure.

RACING GEEZER #1

Listen...there was some kid around here asking about you.

(CONTINUED)

DEAN

Who?

RACING GEEZER #1

He was around here asking all these questions...all kinds of stuff.

DEAN

Like what?

RACING GEEZER #1

When you first started racing around here...when you first came here from California.

DEAN

Who is this little twerp?

RACING GEEZER #1

I don't know...just some brat.

RACING GEEZER #2

Didn't he mention being someone's grandson?

RACING GEEZER #1

Yeah...that's right.

Snaps his fingersv. Trying to remember.

DEAN

Who?

RACING GEEZER #2

It was that guy you used to race with...what was his name?

RACING GEEZER #1

Back in the sixties...Halvorson?

RACING GEEZER #2

That's it!

Moves around. Bends over. Checks one of the cars.

DEAN

John Caleb Halvorson...are you sure?

Shocked.

DEAN

Haven't heard anything out of him
in years.

Gary pulls up in his rental car.

GARY

It's him.

Turns off the engine. Gets out of the car. Racing Geezer #2
goes to Gary. Points of Dean. Who preps for the race.

RACING GEEZER #2

You'll have to wait 'til after the
race.

Dean and Racing Geezer #1 head over to the Porsche Spyder.
Dean gets a small clump of sand. Rubs it between his hands.
The sand goes through his fingers. Onto the ground.

RACING GEEZER #2

...you'll get your shot.

Another racer does the same.

WOMAN

Everyone to their vehicles...

This woman stands in the center. All eyes on her. The other
driver gets in. Turns the engine on. Drives into place. Dean
gets into his Porsche Spyder. Does the same.

WOMAN

...ready?

Holds her arms in midair.

WOMAN

Hit your lights!

Raises her arms higher. Headlights on both cars come alive.

WOMAN

GO!

Both cars head on out.

RACING GEEZER #1

Look at 'em run...

The other driver is in the lead. Porsche Spyder tails him.

(CONTINUED)

RACING GEEZER #1
...get 'em Jimmy!

GARY
How fast do they go?

RACING GEEZER #1
Fast as they need to!

WOMAN
Best one they've hand in awhile...

She comes over. Joins them.

WOMAN
...woo hoo!

Claps and cheers.

RACING GEEZER #1
Watch him go after that young punk!

The woman and both racing geezers are attentive. Gary stands behind them. Not saying a word. Just observing.

RACING GEEZER #2
Still a rebel after all these
years.

Porsche Spyder gains on the other vehicle. Dean has his hands on the steering wheel. They are neck and neck.

RACING GEEZER #1
You watching this?

Looks at Gary. Who nods.

RACING GEEZER #1
Move up here...you'll get a better
view.

Waves for Gary to move up.

GARY
No thanks...I'm fine.

Holds his hands up.

RACING GEEZER #1
Suit yourself.

Shrugs. Turns back around.

(CONTINUED)

RACING GEEZER #1
Burn some rubber!

The woman and both racing geezers clap and cheer. Gary turns away. Pulls out his cellphone. Dials his mother.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Gary? This is a surprise...what's that noise in the background.

Walks around. Finger goes in his ear.

GARY
I'm at a drag race.

MOTHER
What? You're just as bad as your grandfather!

GARY
Mom...would you forget that for a second...

Walks a further distance from the track.

GARY
...I think I found James Dean...

MOTHER
Are you serious?

GARY
If this old guy is really him.

MOTHER
Did you get a good look?

GARY
Couldn't see him much...but I did get a good look at his car...

Looks back at the race.

GARY
...it's almost exactly the car he crashed in...

MOTHER
Wow.

GARY
...you're telling me.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

Did he or anyone else mention your grandfather?

GARY

Just these two old farts here at the drag strip.

MOTHER

What did they say?

GARY

That he and this James Dean...whoever he is...used to race here all the time...

Eyes both cars in the race.

GARY

...and stopped racing...moved away after marrying a girl he got pregnant.

MOTHER

Yeah...your grandmother.

GARY

Oh believe me...you've told me a million times.

MOTHER

I never told you about your grandmother being pregnant with me when they married.

GARY

Yes you have!

MOTHER

I never said...oh never mind.

Gary smiles. Holds back laughter.

GARY

They also mentioned Grandpa's accident....said he crashed into a tree.

MOTHER

Right.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

You mentioned it ruined his
life...how?

MOTHER

Don't worry about that...did you go
to the planetarium...find out
anything?

GARY

The curator there was real close
with the guy we believe is James
Dean.

MOTHER

How so?

GARY

He seemed hurt and upset by the
fact they didn't talk anymore.

MOTHER

Why don't they?

GARY

Have no idea...but he really cared
about him.

MOTHER

He must've...you said none of them
knew my Dad?

GARY

Except for those couple racing
buddies...yeah.

MOTHER

Hm.

GARY

Probably just knew each other from
the drag strip.

MOTHER

True.

GARY

There's only one thing left to
do...

Eyes Dean. Drives in his Porsche Spyder.

(CONTINUED)

GARY
...I need to confront him.

MOTHER
I hear you....

GARY
Yeah...

Nods.

GARY
...got to go.

MOTHER
Let me know what happens.

GARY
I will.

Hangs up the phone.

RACING GEEZER #1
Oh he's leading...he's leading...

Gary walks up. Gets larger view of this race. Dean leads the younger driver. He heads further. The younger driver's car falls by the wayside. The woman and racing buddies cheer.

WOMAN
Way to go!

Dean drives his car a bit further. Stops. Gets out of the car. Hears them cheering. Smiles. Walks over to them. They huddle around him. Sees Gary. Watches him.

DEAN
Who's the punk?

RACING GEEZER #2
That kid we told you about earlier.

DEAN
Huh?

Realizes what he meant.

DEAN
Oh...the one who's related to Halvorson?

Walks over to Gary.

(CONTINUED)

DEAN

Hi there.

GARY

Is it really you?

DEAN

What do you mean?

GARY

You knew my grandfather.

Holds up the photo. John Caleb Halvorson and James Dean.

DEAN

Haven't thought about him in a long time...

Puts his hand on Gary's shoulder. They walk around.

DEAN

...so what brings you here?

GARY

Searching for the truth.

DEAN

Like what?

GARY

Would like to know more about my grandfather...he passed away recently.

Dean's eyes widen.

DEAN

Damn...had no idea...

Looks at Gary.

DEAN

How long ago? Hope he went peacefully.

Gary nods.

GARY

Yeah...died awhile back of cancer.

DEAN

Sad way to go...can't imagine anything worse...

(CONTINUED)

Shrugs. Chuckles.

DEAN
...except maybe a bad car crash...

Chuckles some more.

DEAN
...he was a good man.

Nods at Gary.

GARY
How good was he...drag racing I mean.

DEAN
He was very good...not as good as me...but still...

Wraps his arm around Gary.

DEAN
...the first time I met him...he was the guy in the other car racing me...almost beat me too.

GARY
Anyone ever beat you?

Shakes his head.

DEAN
He's the only who came close.

GARY
Really?

Squints his eyes.

GARY
So...you've never lost a drag race?

DEAN
Not even once in over sixty years.

GARY
Wow.

DEAN
Liked him from the start...he must have a lot of guts to try and outrace me like that...

Shrugs.

DEAN
...so I just figured why not get to
know the guy...

Gary nods.

DEAN
...we talked...got along pretty
well from the start...so I got him
to ride shotgun with me.

GARY
Hm.

DEAN
Just a dependable guy all around.

GARY
How many years did you guys race
together?

DEAN
Only three.

GARY
What? You're kidding...

DEAN
Nope...just had him for those few
years...but he was the best.

GARY
But one in a long list of guys who
rode with you?

DEAN
Not really...just him and one guy
back in California.

GARY
Seriously?

DEAN
Not many of them were that
good...the other guy was the best
mechanic I've ever had...

Walks over. Checks his Porsche Spyder. Gary follows.

(CONTINUED)

DEAN
...and the other was best driver I
ever raced...

Points to Gary's photo.

DEAN
Yep...that's him...

They both laugh.

DEAN
At some point...he got a girl
pregnant...married her...left town.

GARY
That was my mother...right.

DEAN
So...what kind of grandfather was
he?

GARY
Great...used to take me
fishing...read me stories.

DEAN
Did he ever talk about any of this?

GARY
No...only found out about you or
this place when I saw this in his
old trunk.

DEAN
You mean he never mentioned drag
racing at all?

GARY
No...my mother mentioned it after
he died.

DEAN
Oh.

GARY
Was he in an accident?

Dean tries to walk away.

GARY
Was he?

Remains here.

DEAN

Yeah...just before he met that girl.

Turns around. Returns to the Porsche Spyder. Opens the hood. Chucks under it. Gary remains. Waits for him to answer.

GARY

Told me he slammed into a tree.

DEAN

Right...didn't seem to have the passion for racing anymore after that...

Gary eyes the photo once more.

DEAN

...maybe it was a wake up call. Yet even after the accident I had...I still can't get out of dreamland.

Stares into nothing.

GARY

By any chance...did you know the curator at the local planetarium?

Dean's eyes widen. Looks at Gary.

DEAN

Why?

GARY

Just asking.

DEAN

Did you talk to him?

GARY

What's wrong?

DEAN

Nothing...it's just...

Steps away from his Porsche Spyder.

DEAN

...way too much to get into...

Turns away from Gary.

GARY
You alright?

Dean waves his hand.

DEAN
I'm fine...

Turns back around.

DEAN
...it's nothing.

GARY
I'm sorry if I brought up any bad feelings.

DEAN
Don't worry about it.

GARY
Before coming here...I asked around town about you.

Dean laughs.

DEAN
So...you're stalking me?

Gary shakes his head.

GARY
No...

Smiles.

GARY
...just searching for the truth.

DEAN
What does the truth mean to you?

GARY
I don't know.

Shrugs.

DEAN
Come on...what do you think the truth means...

Nudges Gary.

DEAN
...it's nothing to hide from.

GARY
I guess not.

DEAN
So tell me...what is it?

GARY
I found documentation for you
online after your accident in
California.

DEAN
And?

GARY
According to what I've found
out...you're James Dean.

Dean laughs.

DEAN
What makes you think that?

GARY
Found everything...birth
certificate...accident and autopsy
report...death certificate...

Looks at Dean.

GARY
...and your certificate of legal
name change after you moved here.

DEAN
So you think I'm some dead movie
star from way back?

GARY
Are you?

DEAN
What do you think?

Smiles.

GARY
You are him...aren't you?

DEAN

Listen..I searched for answers at
your age too...

Reaches into Porsche Spyder.

DEAN

...you know what helped me?

GARY

What?

DEAN

This...

Pulls something out. Hands him his old book. The Little
Prince. Gary opens it. Flips through it. Reads a few words.

DEAN

...taught me a lot about
life...left me in a complete mellow
high...without using drugs...

Laughs. Puts his hand on Gary's shoulder.

DEAN

...I think it'll do a lot for you.

GARY

Thanks...

Gazes at the book cover. It features a little boy. He stands
on top of the world. Looks at stars and moons outward.

GARY

...but you didn't answer my
question.

Looks up. Sees Dean head for his Porsche Spyder. Gets in.
Revs up the engine. Dean drives off. Leaves dust behind.

RACING GEEZER #1

Yeah..he don't say much and don't
stay for long...

Sees the two racing geezers.

RACING GEEZER #1

...but when he's here...he's
amazing.

GARY
Guess you're right...

Nods and shrugs.

GARY
...listen...I need to go.

Turns around. They are gone. Gets in his rental car. Opens and shuts the door. Starts the engine. Drives off.

INT. VONDA'S LIVING ROOM DAY

Dean returns from the race. Vonda sees him. She is not too pleased. He moves over to the couch. Sits down. Vonda does not say anything. Both gaze at each other.

VONDA
So...you're through smashing into another car?

DEAN
Please don't start...

Puts his hands together. Tired.

DEAN
...you know racing and fixing cars are what I live for.

She sits next to him.

VONDA
Alright...I've said enough...every time I try to warn you or remind you of the past..we argue.

DEAN
Alright then.

VONDA
Do you regret leaving Hollywood?

DEAN
We've been over this a million times.

VONDA
Well...do you?

(CONTINUED)

DEAN
For the most part...no...

Shrugs.

DEAN
...I do regret leaving him behind
though.

VONDA
You mean that German mechanic who
rode with you when you crashed?

DEAN
Right.

VONDA
Did you ever find out what happened
to him?

DEAN
I read something years ago about
him moving back to Germany...

Shakes his head.

DEAN
...something about him never being
the same after he was hurt in the
crash...all those surgeries.

VONDA
What do you mean?

DEAN
From what I read...he was pretty
messed up...mental issues...getting
in trouble with the law over there.

VONDA
What became of him?

DEAN
Later found out he died in a
similar accident...had to be pried
from the car just like I was.

VONDA
We did him wrong...

Holds his hand.

VONDA

...we faked your death and put him through hell...we deserve to be tortured for that.

DEAN

Yeah.

Nods.

VONDA

What about the guy in the other car?

DEAN

Read somewhere he went on to have a decent family life...started his own business as an electrician...

Chuckles.

DEAN

...died of lung cancer at an old age...even had grandchildren

Chuckles some more.

DEAN

...not bad for a guy who escaped the accident with a forehead gash and a bruised nose.

VONDA

You could have some consideration for his family.

DEAN

I do...

Holds back laughter.

DEAN

...it's just funny how he and I got hurt so bad in that wreck...have messed up lives...

His index fingers over his lips.

DEAN

...this guy barely gets a scratch on him and ends up having it so good!

Laughter stops. Brooding begins.

DEAN

Shows you how much life sucks!

VONDA

Bad things happen to people every day...

Looks into his eyes. Tries to reason with him.

VONDA

...and you're the one who felt the accident was an opportunity to get away and start over...

Dean curls his lips.

VONDA

...so in an odd way...the accident is the best thing that could've happened to you.

Dean shrugs. Not wanting to admit it.

DEAN

Sure...having broken bones all over...almost dying. Having the whole world think you're dead.

Vonda gets closer to him.

VONDA

If I hadn't stopped on the road to check your pulse...you wouldn't be where you are now.

Wraps arms around Dean. Hugs him.

DEAN

I guess not.

Tries to turn away.

VONDA

See? You just admitted I saved your life.

DEAN

So what if you did?

Scoots away from her.

VONDA

Can't you ever show me any
affection or gratitude?

Gets off the couch.

VONDA

What is wrong with you? You spent
your life being young and brooding
to now being old and bitter!

Tear streams from her eye.

VONDA

Why can't you be satisfied
Jimmy...and why can't I satisfy
you?

INT. HOTEL ROOM DAY

Gary returns here. Copy of The Little Prince in hand. Lays
it on the bed. Unzips the suitcase. Clothes still in it.
Wrinkled and a bit messy. Laptop also remains inside.

GARY

Hm...

Picks copy of The Little Prince back up. Squints his eyes.
Reaches toward the suitcase. Holds the book over it.

GARY

...nah.

Holds the book. Zips the suitcase. Carries both. Leaves the
room. The Little Prince in one hand. Suitcase in the other.
Opens door. Shuts it behind him. There is a click sound.

INT. AIRPORT DAY

Gary walks in. Over to the front desk. Sees the female
attendant. She smiles and nods. Pulls the plane ticket from
his pocket. Shows it to her. It is already stubbed.

GARY

Return from round trip flight to
Dalton, Georgia...

ATTENDANT

No problem...enjoy the journey
home.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Thank you.

Walks to a nearby seat. Sits down. Suitcase by his side.
Opens The Little Prince. Reads a quote aloud.

GARY

What is essential is invisible to
the eye.

A few hours later...

PA SYSTEM (O.S.)

Flight boarding.

Gary gets up. Suitcase in one hand. Two items in the other.
The plane ticket and The Little Prince. Walks over to the
attendant. She stands near the boarding gate.

ATTENDANT

May I see your ticket?

Gary hands it to her.

ATTENDANT

It checks out...you may board.

Hands the ticket back to Gary. He leaves.

INT. AIRPLANE DAY

Gary is seated on the plane. Reads more of The Little
Prince. Another attendant comes up. He looks up. Nods at
her. She leans over. He listens. The book is in his lap.

ATTENDANT

Would you like anything to eat or
drink after we take off?

GARY

No...that's alright...thanks!

Smiles at her.

ATTENDANT

Well...let me know if you need
anything.

Smiles back.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

I will.

She leaves.

INT. AIRPORT DAY

A few hours later. The airplane docks. Passengers get off. Gary is one. Still carries The Little Prince. His suitcase along with it. Walks amongst others. Sees the exit.

ATTENDANT

Did you enjoy your flight?

GARY

Yes I did.

ATTENDANT

Thanks for flying.

EXT. AIRPORT DAY

Gary walks. His mother waits. Holds her arms out. They hug. Both stand next to her car. She is so happy to see him. Smiles. A big teeth full. Gary smiles in return.

MOTHER

Did you see him at the race track?

GARY

Sort of...

MOTHER

What do you mean?

GARY

Asked him if he was...you know...but he didn't give me a straight answer...

Holds up The Little Prince.

GARY

...he gave me this...told me it would give me all the answers I need...

MOTHER

How?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Have no idea...but it's starting to help some.

MOTHER

Really?

Confused.

MOTHER

Well...that's good.

They walk to the car.

MOTHER

Did you find anything else about your grandfather?

GARY

He was only one of two people who this James Dean...or whoever he is...rode shotgun with...

They open the car doors. Both get inside.

INT. MOTHER'S CAR DAY

Put on their seat belts. She puts the key into the ignition. The engine revs up. Starts driving. Both hands on the steering wheel. They head away from the airport.

MOTHER

How come only two of them?

GARY

One was a German mechanic he really respected...

She nods. Listening.

GARY

...but Grandpa almost beat him in a drag race.

MOTHER

Ah...so they practically killed each other to earn respect?

GARY

Seems that way.

Holds back laughter.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

I will never get why men do that to each other...

Gary shrugs.

MOTHER

...sick male bonding.

GARY

Not many people around there remembered Grandpa...two old geezers were fond of him.

MOTHER

What did they say?

GARY

They talked about them being very good friends and riding together for a few years.

MOTHER

Anything else?

GARY

Yeah...just what they said about him getting Grandma pregnant with you...and having to marry her.

MOTHER

Right.

Looks to her left. Turns back to windshield.

GARY

They also mentioned him crashing into tree.

Snaps fingers. Remembers.

MOTHER

He never lived that down...

Looks ahead at the road.

MOTHER

...even after he settled with your grandmother and me...

Turns. Looks at her son.

MOTHER
...always conflicted about the
crash...couldn't handle drag racing
anymore...yet regretted quitting...

Shrugs. Looks through windshield.

MOTHER
...do you feel you learned anything
about James Dean or your
grandfather deep down?

GARY
Not much...starting to think I'm
learning more about myself.

MOTHER
That's always good...

Looks to the left again.

MOTHER
...we're here.

Pulls the car to a stop.

EXT. JOHN CALEB HALVORSON'S HOUSE DAY

Gary and his mother emerge. Shut the car doors behind them.
She has the car keys in her hand. They walk across the yard.
Approach the front door. She puts the key in the doorknob.

MOTHER
Let's get in here...and we'll talk
more...

Turns the key.

MOTHER
...okay...got it...

Opens the door. They go inside.

MOTHER
...thanks.

Gary holds it open for her. Follows her inside.

INT. JOHN CALEB HALVORSON'S LIVING ROOM DAY

They enter. Gary shuts the door behind them. His mother pulls off her sunglasses. She seems tired. He lays down the suitcase. Remains by his side. Holds The Little Prince.

MOTHER

What do you think has been the biggest take away from your trip?

GARY

Haven't given it too much thought.

MOTHER

You just said you were starting to learn more about yourself.

GARY

Starting to...

Gazes at The Little Prince. Now looks back at her.

GARY

...I don't really see myself yet.

MOTHER

In time...you probably will...

Nods.

MOTHER

...and you'll see what you really want in life...

Shrugs.

MOTHER

...maybe I was wrong to try and make you finish high school or hoping you'd go to college...

Nods and shrugs himself.

MOTHER

...we all have to find our own path.

GARY

But you were right about one thing...I was stupid enough to blow my money.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

But you took the risk and you
learned from the experience...

Smiles.

MOTHER

...you'll find a way to make that
money back and save it...maybe
more...so don't worry!

Smile gets wider.

GARY

I need to go unpack.

Picks up his suitcase. Carries it.

INT. GARY HALVORSON'S BEDROOM DAY

Throws his suitcase on the bed. Unzips it. Lifts up the
cover. All the contents remain. Slightly messy clothes.
Laptop. Among other items. Gary unpacks. She walks in.

MOTHER

Any ideas on what you'll do for
money?

GARY

I don't know...

Shrugs. Going through his clothes.

GARY

...maybe that paid blogger job I
read about...

MOTHER

You sure it's still open?

GARY

Haven't checked since I left.

MOTHER

Maybe it's still listed...hasn't
been that long.

GARY

True.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

Let me know if they're still
open...and when you apply make sure
the pay's good...

GARY

Well...the pay wouldn't be much.

MOTHER

Any money is good money.

She turns. Leaves the room.

GARY

I know.

The suitcase is now empty. His laptop and clothes are
outside of it. Among other items. Now opens the closet. Put
the clothes back on the hangers. Zips the suitcase.

GARY

Okay...

Zips the suitcase. Throws it into the closet. Closes the
door. Gets laptop off the bed. Heads out of the room.

GARY

...there we go!

INT. JOHN CALEB HALVORSON'S LIVING ROOM DAY

Not long after. Gary sits at his laptop. Makes a blog post.
Headline reads DO WE SPEND TIME CHASING GHOSTS? Photos of
James Dean. One is of him and John Caleb Halvorson.

MOTHER

So...how are those blog posts
coming?

She enters. Cup of coffee in hand.

GARY

Not bad...and...

Clicks the "Post" icon.

GARY

...finished.

Turns around. Smiles at her.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

Good...you've made quite a bit there.

GARY

One thing still troubles me...

Clicks on browser. Minimizes blog screen. Maximizes FIND A GRAVE.com. These two look at the page.

GARY

...if an older James Dean is alive...drag racing around Dalton, Georgia...

Clicks on the photo of a grave. A larger image is shown.

GARY

...then who or what is buried here?

The tombstone pictured has an inscription. It reads James B. Dean 1931-1955. His mother sees this. Snaps her fingers.

MOTHER

You should blog about this...

Nods.

MOTHER

...or some online petition inquiring the cemetery about it.

GARY

I think it's best left alone...

Shakes his head.

GARY

...do you think it's possible whoever I met down there could've either lied about this for years...

Shrugs.

GARY

...or maybe it's a case of two people looking exactly alike?

His mother sips her coffee.

GARY

If so...what does that say about Grandpa?

MOTHER

I don't know.

Gary closes out the photo of James Dean's grave.

INT. JAMES DEAN'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Dean stands in front of a mirror. It sits on the dresser drawer. Shirtless body covered in scars. Midsection is a skin graft. There is a row of old photos. Candles burn.

DEAN

For my mother...Mildred...who
always loved me...

Lays down a Peony flower. Photo of Mildred Wilson.

DEAN

...for my father...Winton...who
never understood me...

Lays another Peony. It is across the first. Side by side photos. Winton Dean and Mildred Wilson.

DEAN

...The Winslows of Fairmount...for
giving me a good home...when my
father couldn't anymore...

Lays down three more Peonys. One for each Winslow. A family photo. Uncle Marcus and Aunt Ortense. His little cousin Marcus Jr. It also features his younger self.

DEAN

...for the pastor who influenced
and...traumatized me...

Chokes up. Holds back tears. Lays down a Peony. Photo of the pastor. Also lays down two small diaries.

DEAN

... and for you...I'm sorry I put
through so much pain...but at least
you're suffering is over.

Lays down a Knapweed flower. Photo of himself with the German mechanic. Walks away. Wipes tears from his eyes.