"MY ANGEL"

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A small and meagerly decorated apartment with a tiny Christmas tree atop a small silent TV set. A little Christmas music plays. By the window, a large drawing board with many pencils, ink pots, brushes, and an unfinished comic strip page.

Outside, through the window, it snows. A real Christmas Eve.

From behind the sofa we see a small TV. On the TV screen, in B&W, young Jimmy Stewart runs and happily shouts through snowy streets, a scene from Capra’s “It’s a Wonderful Life”.

There are also a bottle of Bourbon, a bottle of Coke and a bottle of Cranberry Juice and a half eaten Pizza on the coffee table.

A sniffling can be heard O.S.

LINDA (O.S.)
(crying a little)
This is still the best Christmas movie ever.

THOMAS (O.S.)
Yeah. “I wish I had a million dollars”.

LINDA & THOMAS (O.S.)
“Hot dog”!

Reveal THOMAS (30) is a good-looking guy-next-door. At his side, LINDA (33), an attractive gay woman, sniffles. They are both slouched on a small sofa and watching the TV.

Thomas wears his everyday clothes. Linda wears an elegant, low cut red dress. She is rather sexy and holds a glass of Cranberry juice. Thomas is eating a slice of pizza and drinking a cocktail. He seems a bit drunk.

LINDA
This movie’s such a great tradition.
And I’m glad it’s the black and white version. I can’t stand those colorized old movies.

Now on TV, Stewart warmly hugs his kids by a Christmas tree, surrounded by many people who sing.

Thomas starts to weep. Linda notices, thinks it’s sweet.
LINDA
Something in your eye Thomas?

THOMAS
(as an excuse)
Yeah.

LINDA
Oh Thomas relax, everybody cries over this movie.

THOMAS
It’s not the movie.

Linda looks at him, confused.

THOMAS
It’s me.

LINDA
OK, what about you?

THOMAS
God, I’m such a loser.

LINDA
You’re not a loser Thomas. Why would you say a dumb thing like that?

THOMAS
Because it’s true Linda! Look at me. It’s Christmas, I’m thirty, and all I’ve got in my life is you.

LINDA
And that makes you a loser? Thanks -- so much.

THOMAS
No, sorry, that came out wrong. But here I am on Christmas Eve with my best friend. Why aren’t I with my wife?

LINDA
Uh -- because you don’t have one?

THOMAS
Exactly!

LINDA
So?
THOMAS
So, I guess it gets to me more this time of year. I’m not getting any younger you know. I should have started a family by now.

LINDA
(sarcastically)
Yeah, I have that nightmare too.

THOMAS
My dream, your nightmare. Either way, I got nuthin’. So what's that make me then?

He takes a good drink.

LINDA
I don't know, single?
(beat)
You're not a loser Thomas!
(smiling with affection)
Look, I hate to burst your bubble but you really are a great guy.

THOMAS
So why does every girl I ever hook up with dump me?

LINDA
(shrugging and then hugging him)
‘cos you’re just too much of a softie, and you haven’t found your soul mate yet.

THOMAS
(drifting)
Sandy.

LINDA
What?

THOMAS
Sandy was my soul mate. I could have had a dozen kids with her.

LINDA
Oh please, she was a bitch.

THOMAS
(defensive)
No, she wasn’t.

LINDA
(under her breath)
Yeah, right.
THOMAS
(drifting again)
She had it all. Brown penetrating eyes, long dark hair, those cute bangs and that devastating smile. I melted every time I saw that smile.

LINDA
She wasn’t your soul mate pal, she was a manipulating bitch and a liar-- and she had an ugly ass.

THOMAS
I liked her ass.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - BATON ROUGE, LA. - NIGHT
It is a clear night, full moon, over a residential neighborhood in Baton Rouge, LA. A huge house is heavily decorated and illuminated with Christmas lights. The garden is covered with fake snowflakes. Loud party music is heard from inside the house.

EXT. HOUSE – BATON ROUGE - NIGHT
On the doorstep, PEOPLE smoke and drink, noisily chat and laugh. The front door opens and a couple appears.

SCOTT (30), relaxed, pleasant, informal, looks quite drunk. CHARLI (28) follows him. She is an attractive blonde woman with sad eyes. She appears not to have enjoyed the party.

On the threshold, she stares at Scott, rather worried to see him in such state.

SMOKING WOMAN
Bye Scott. Bye Charli.

CHARLI
See you, Trisha.

Scott chuckles and starts down the stairs, stumbles drunkenly and is caught by Charli and JERRY.

CHARLI
Scott!

JERRY
Hey there Scotty, watch your step pal.

SCOTT
Ooops! Sorry, sorry.

Scott and Charli head to the car.
MAN #1.
(sarcastic, under his breath)
Yeah, have another bevy buddy.

They chuckle.

CHARLI
(to Scott)
I’ll drive. Gimme the keys.

SCOTT
I’m okay, sugar.

CHARLI
You’re not. You know how I hate it when you drink this much. And you want to drive? At night?

SCOTT
(nervously)
I said I’m okay! C’mon.

Charli stops walking. The group on the stairs watches.

CHARLI
I’m not coming with you.

SCOTT
You what?!
(he grabs her arm)
Now you listen to me, you’re my wife. You go where I go.

CHARLI
Stop it! You’re hurting me!

Jerry and Man #1 stand up in case they have to intervene.

SCOTT
Back off Jerry!

Then, thinking the better of it, he releases her and grins.

SCOTT
I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to hurt you honeybunch. But, I’m okay, really.

CHARLI
Scott?!

SCOTT
I promise. I’ll drive.
(gently)
Come on.

He steps up to her and gently touches her nose.
CHARLI
(without conviction)
Don’t.

He touches her nose again. Charli can’t help sadly smiling.

CHARLI
(playing his game)
Beep.

INT. THOMAS’ APARTMENT - TORONTO - NIGHT

On the TV screen, the movie ends.

LINDA
(Still seated on the couch with Thomas)
So you’re definitely not coming out with me tonight?

THOMAS
Naw, I’ll pass thanks. I’m just gonna stay home and --
   (he raises his glass and toasts Linda)
   -- entertain myself. Ho, ho, ho.

He empties the glass.

LINDA
Hey buddy, you might wanna take it a little easier on that stuff.

THOMAS
Yeah, not so much. Not tonight anyway.

He pours another drink.

LINDA
OK, you’re a big boy.

She reaches behind her and pulls out a small Christmas present.

LINDA
So let me make your day. Merry Christmas Thomas.

She hands him the gift, a Christmas card in an envelope.

THOMAS
Aw Linda, ya shouldn’t a’.

LINDA
Just open it.
He opens it and finds the card and reads it.

THOMAS
Very sweet.

LINDA
And very true.

In the card Thomas finds a credit card of sorts. He reads it.

THOMAS
King Video?

LINDA
It’s a prepaid rental card, one free New Release a week for a year, or two that aren’t New releases.

THOMAS
Oh man that’s great. You know what a sucker I am for those Goldie Oldies. Cool! Hours and hours of free entertainment for a year!

LINDA
Free for you.

Thomas looks at Linda with real gratitude.

THOMAS
(as he gives her a heartfelt hug)
Thanks Linda, it’s a really great gift.

LINDA
You’re very welcome.

They separate. There’s an awkward moment. Linda becomes impatient.

LINDA
Well???

THOMAS
Well what?

She gives him a pissed off look.

THOMAS
OK, ok. Don’t worry, I didn’t forget you.

He reaches under the coffee table and retrieves a small, not very well wrapped box.
LINDA
Gimme, gimme!

He hands it to her.

THOMAS
Here you go.

She takes the box, notices the wrapping job, looks at Thomas. He shrugs. She opens it to find a beautiful silver necklace.

LINDA
Oh Thomas, it’s gorgeous. Put it on me!

He puts it on her. She gets up and goes to the door to admire it. He puts his drink on the arm rest and gets up to follow her. Standing behind her as she looks in the mirror.

THOMAS
That looks beautiful.

LINDA
Do you think it brings out my feminine side?

THOMAS
It does.

LINDA
I hope the girls at the party think so.

She lifts her boobs to create more of a cleavage, then turns to Thomas. They hug again.

LINDA
(some small tears smudge her mascara)
Thank you Thomas, I really love it.

THOMAS
My pleasure honey.

They separate. Linda turns away to get her coat.

LINDA
Well, that’s that for another year.

Linda takes her coat and Thomas helps her put it on.

LINDA
You sure you’ll be alright?
THOMAS
(to make her feel guilty)
Yeah -- ‘course -- I’ll be fine -- really.

LINDA
(turning back to face Thomas)
Ah c’mon, cheer up Thomas. Tonight it’s peace on Earth and --

THOMAS
(interrupting)
Your eyes are all black.

Linda stands in front of the mirror again and realizes her mascara is smudged.

LINDA
I’ll fix that in the car.
(beat)
You sure you’re not coming?

Thomas heads back to the sofa. He reaches for his drink, but knocks it off the arm rest. It spills onto the floor.

THOMAS
Damn. I really have to clean that carpet again.

LINDA
Leave it. It’s kinda avant garde artsy, right by the ketchup stain like that.

Thomas sighs.

LINDA
So, you coming?

THOMAS
(turning back to Linda)
No, I’ll pass thanks. I’ll make you a promise though. This is the last Christmas I’ll ever spend alone.

LINDA
(winking)
So you’re a winner after all!

He takes her to the door.

THOMAS
You really think so?
LINDA
Of course I do.
(serious)
Listen, I love you. And I don’t
love just anybody.

THOMAS
Thanks. I love you too.

They hug again. Thomas opens the door.

LINDA
Merry Christmas Champ.

THOMAS
Merry Christmas Linda.

She exits and leaves Thomas by himself. He heads over to
pick up his glass. Without cleaning the mess, he pours
another drink, sits on the sofa and takes a big gulp.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Though he has some trouble with the key, Scott manages to
start the engine. Charli fastens her seat belt.

SCOTT
(whining slightly)
Relax sugar. I said I was sorry?
(beat)
Hey, wanna see some magic?

Charli simply smiles. Scott rummages under his seat and
takes a small present out. He hands it to Charli.

SCOTT
Merry Christmas sugar.

Charli’s face brightens.

SCOTT
Hope you like it.

CHARLI
Oh, Scott.

Charli takes the present, unwraps it, and opens the little
box, sized like a jewelry box, to find -- a tiny MP3
player.

SCOTT
Now you can listen to your country
music anytime you want to.
CHARLI
  (bitterly)
  Yeah, and it won’t bother you anymore.

Scott doesn’t know how to respond. He just bursts out laughing and claps his hands.

SCOTT
  (like a kid)
  Okay. Where’s mine?

CHARLI
At home.

SCOTT
Why? Was it too big to fit in the car?

CHARLI
  (wisely)
  You’ll see. It’s a surprise.

SCOTT
Well OK then! Let’s go get it!

He puts the car into gear and speeds away. Charli turns the radio on. A song plays.

SONG ON RADIO
  “Daddy just loves his children every now and then, it’s a love without end, amen--”

After a while, Charli turns to Scott.

CHARLI
Scott. Why haven’t we ever talked about having a baby?

As he drives he acts as though he hasn’t heard her, Scott changes the station.

CHARLI
Why don’t we have a normal life?

SONG ON RADIO
  “Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn king--”

Scott turns the radio off.

SCOTT
Hell with it! I’m sick of that Country Music and Christmas crap!
Charli doesn’t answer. From under his seat, Scott grabs a bottle of whisky, uncaps it, and starts to drink. Silent, Charli stares at him with some disgust.

The car speeds up in the night.

6 INT. THOMAS’ APARTMENT - TORONTO - NIGHT

Thomas is cleaning the spilled drink on the carpet, gets up, tidies the coffee table up a bit, then pauses, looking at the bottle of Bourbon. Determinedly he picks it up, spins around and heads to the bathroom with the bottle.

7 INT. CAR - NIGHT

Scott still drives and sips his whisky. Increasingly drunk, he exhilaratingly sings “Winter Wonderland”.

SCOTT
(singing out loud)
Lacy things, the wife is missin’,
didn't ask, for her permission,
I'm wearing her clothes,
her silk pantyhose,
walking 'round in women's underwear --

He laughs, by himself.

CHARLI
This is definitely the last
Christmas I’m ever spending with
you.

He drinks up.

8 THOMAS’ APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

In front of his bathroom cabinet mirror, Thomas stares at his own reflection. He raises the bottle of whisky and toasts himself.

THOMAS
(sadly)
Merry Christmas, ya son-of-a-bitch.

He chuckles with irony, drinks a large gulp, as if it’s ice tea, chokes, and coughs, apparently not used to drinking so much whiskey.

9 EXT. COUNTRY SIDEROAD - NIGHT

Scott speeds up on the road. The engine roars.
CHARLI
Scott, please!

But Scott doesn’t listen to her. He lowers his window and waves at some cows.

SCOTT
Merry Christmas, ya sons-a-bitches!!

Scott does not see the pickup truck coming straight for him.

INT. THOMAS’ APARTMENT – BATHROOM – NIGHT

THOMAS
(to himself)
To Chris.
(another mouthful of whisky)
To Shelly.
(another mouthful)
To Sandy.
(chuckling)
Merry Christmas, bitches.

Another mouthful.

INT. CAR – NIGHT

His head out the window and still shouting.

SCOTT
Merry Christmas bitches!

Scott does not see the pickup truck coming straight for him. Its horn begins blaring. Its headlights light up inside the car.

INT. THOMAS’ APARTMENT – BATHROOM – NIGHT

Thomas, trying to drain the bottle, collapses on the tiled bathroom floor, dropping like a stone. As he falls he tips to one side and hits his head hard against the edge of the bathtub.

INT. CAR – NIGHT

At the very last moment, Scott pulls his head into the Civic and pumps the brakes. He saws away clumsily at the steering wheel and manages to avoid the pickup truck.
The car slides down the road, spins off of the road and into a ditch, then a field. Charli screams. She protects her face with her arms. Then the car slams into the base of a tree.

INT. THOMAS’ APARTMENT – BATHROOM – NIGHT

His face glued to the bathroom floor, Thomas slowly closes his eyes.

END OPENING

CREDITS

INT. HEAVEN’S GATE – NIGHT

SLOW FADE IN TO REVEAL A SHINING FOG

Through the fog, an ECHOING FEMALE VOICE can be heard, seemingly coming from a loudspeaker.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, we are delighted to welcome you.

Slowly, the fog vanishes and reveals a weird place looking like a huge airport arrivals hall. Instead of material walls, everything is made of the same shining fog.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Kindly wait in line. Our guides will present themselves to you directly. They will take charge of you and assist you with the arrival process. Please be patient. It won’t take long.

In front of different desks made of the same fog, there are parallel lines of PEOPLE of all ages, all races.

As they slowly advance to the desks, a MAN or a WOMAN comes to them and warmly hugs them. Wearing long dark coats, they each have a benevolent smile. Each NEWCOMER is led to any one of numerous escalators, also made of fog.

Standing in one line, Thomas waits for his turn and seems somewhat disoriented. He looks slightly hypnotized, as does everyone else.

In a parallel line stands Charli. She still has her sad eyes. Scanning the place, her look meets Thomas’. As she stares at him he smiles at her. She feels a bit bizarre.

Suddenly, she puts her hand to her heart as if it is pounding hard inside of her.
She lowers her head to her chest and smiles. Though she is far from the desk in front of her, she sees an OLD LADY coming.

OLD LADY
(sweet)
Would you mind coming with me my child?

She gently takes Charli by the hand and leads her through the hall. As they walk away, Thomas turns his head and watches Charli walk away. She turns to look back at Thomas again. She smiles at him, then continues on.

Puzzled, Thomas waits for his turn to be taken. He reaches the desk and a woman (FAITH) comes to him. She is Black, very attractive and in her mid-twenties, her dark-hair is in a bun. She is smiling benevolently. She hugs him. Thomas’ confusion deepens.

FAITH
Hello and welcome. My name is Faith and I’ll be your guide. Would you come with me please?

She gently takes him by the hand and they walk toward one of the escalators.

THOMAS
Where -- are we?

FAITH
Have you ever wondered what Heaven was like?

THOMAS
Am I -- dead?

Faith gently nods.

THOMAS
I must have drunk a lot more than I thought. Good thing I didn’t end up in Hell.

FAITH
You passed out and hit your head on the tub. And Hell is a myth. There is only one place, this place. Here even the evil are welcome. Redemption is offered to everyone.

THOMAS
(chuckling)
So, I’m really dead.
FAITH
(reciting)
You’ll be required to work through seven levels of achievement before you qualify to become an angel, or, if you wish, to be reincarnated.

Thomas interrupts her.

THOMAS
You mean I’ll be able to go back?

FAITH
Well, yes. But not like you’d expect.

INT. HEAVEN’S GATE – ESCALATOR – NIGHT

They reach an escalator made out of the same fog and start to make their way up.

FAITH
You’re sure to meet a lot of people here that you knew during your life, friends, relatives, so you’ll be able to reconnect with them. Then, pretty soon, you’ll be ready to welcome newcomers like I do.

As they go up, Thomas turns back, observing the huge hall.

THOMAS
I can’t believe it. There are so many people.

FAITH
It’s the circle of life, Thomas. This place is either the beginning or the end of it.

THOMAS
You know my name?

FAITH
We know everything about you.

THOMAS
(quisically)
Really? Everything?

FAITH
Well, not me. But it’s all in the Big Book.

THOMAS
The Big Book?
FAITH
Patience Thomas. You’ll soon get all the answers you need.

As they keep going up, they cross a second escalator on its way down. Charli and the old lady are on it. Charli’s eyes meet Thomas’. IT IS LIKE IT IS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

They can’t take their eyes off of each other. A deep and intense look is shared. Thomas isn’t listening to Faith anymore. All he hears is the old lady who tells Charli,

OLD LADY
(with a slight echo)
Don’t worry Mrs. McKenna, you’ll soon be back in Baton-Rouge as if nothing’s happened at all.

As Charli goes down and Thomas goes up, they keep their eyes locked on each other.

Thomas can see despair come into Charli’s eyes as she slowly gets further away.

While Faith keeps on talking, Thomas turns to her and interrupts her.

THOMAS
What’s that escalator?

FAITH
(casually)
That one? Oh, it’s exclusively for people who weren’t supposed to die. It simply wasn’t their time. It’s back down to Earth for them.

She continues with her briefing to Thomas, looking ahead and upwards, not really watching him as she speaks. Thomas turns back to Charli for the last time.

As she looks up at him, Charli has a pale red glow begin to appear over her heart. She notices, this looking down at the area, and the red glow begins to grow brighter and pulse along with her heartbeat. She looks up at Thomas. He sees it too and smiles.

Charli, looking back at it again, watches as it intensifies even more and, still beating, sees it change color from the original red to pure white and back to red again.

She grins, a little helpless smile, and looking back up at Thomas she mouths the words “Thank you” to him as she touches her heart.
Then she disappears into the shining fog before he has a chance to respond, but as she vanishes, her light can still be faintly seen, pulsing from red to white to red again, from within the fog, until it too vanishes.

Thomas is almost beside himself, but can’t let on to Faith. He looks around for some way to get onto that escalator, to follow Charli down.

**FAITH**

We’ll be arriving shortly.

(to Thomas with a smile)

Even here we have administrative duties to perform.

They finally reach the top of the escalator. A BLACK ANGEL guards the escalator to Earth.

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**INT. HEAVEN’S GATE - OFFICES - NIGHT**

The entire floor is made of glass walled offices. In each office a NEWCOMER is seated in front of THREE CLERKS and apparently, answering questions.

**FAITH**

Your soul is going to be weighed and judged here. A merit point for every virtue, a demerit for every sin.

At the end of the hallway there is a shout. A man, MR. POPOVICH, in a real panic, struggles furiously with two angels.

**MR. POPOVICH**

No! I can’t be dead! I don’t want to be dead! This is a mistake! A huge mistake! My wife and my son, they need me!

Several angels try to calm him down, but the man keeps on violently struggling.

**AN ANGEL.**

Mr. Popovich, please!

(shouting)

Help! We need some help here!

Faith turns to Thomas.

**FAITH**

I’ll be right back.

She races to help her colleagues and leaves Thomas by himself.
He watches her rushing away for a short while, and then turns back. The black angel has just left his spot to help.

The way to the “Escalator to Earth” is now clear.

Slowly, step by step, Thomas walks back and gets close to the escalator. As he approaches, the escalator stops.

Thomas nervously presses the button at the top to get it going, but it doesn't work.

**INT. HEAVEN’S GATE - EARTH ESCALATOR - NIGHT**

Thomas starts to go down, stepping as though the escalator is actually working, trying to act naturally.

On his way down, he crosses NEWCOMERS and ANGELS on the escalator going up. But the angels are too busy briefing the newcomers that they don’t notice him.

A VOICE COMES FROM BEHIND HIM

ANGEL MAN (O.S.)
Hey you! Where do you think you’re going!!

Thomas turns back and realizes that an ANGEL MAN is calling to him. Thomas starts to rush down the stairs and doesn’t look back anymore, but the escalator starts moving upwards trying to bring him back up. The crowd on the other escalator takes notice.

Thomas stops for a second, travels back up a few feet, then starts running down again in spite of the escalator moving up.

ANGEL MAN
Come back here! Hey, you can’t go down there! Stop!

He runs to get Faith.

ANGEL MAN
Faith!

Thomas runs down for a long descent through the shining fog. Suddenly, the stairs disappear under his feet. He falls into a deep blackness.

**EXT. SKY - NIGHT**

Thomas falls through a black sky, through clouds, then he sees the earth getting closer and closer as if he was jumping with a parachute.

A LONG -- LONG -- UNREAL FALL --
INT. HEAVEN’S GATE - OFFICES - NIGHT

A flashing red light blinks and a soft alarm sounds through the entire floor. Several angels run in every direction. Mr Popovich looks around at this sudden confusion with amazement.

Through one wall of glass, we see Faith standing in an office, in front of a desk, where a bearded angel (SARIEL) looks like he’s rebuking her, making large gestures. Ashamed, Faith lowers her head.

Taking advantage of this agitation, Mr. Popovich starts to discreetly walk to the escalator where Thomas has disappeared, but his angel grabs him by the collar.

Faith is desperate as she hurries out of the office. Sariel is left standing there with great concern as he watches her leave. He goes back to his chair, sits down, leans back and covers his face with his hands.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Still falling, Thomas can rapidly see city lights --
-- city blocks -- a building -- a roof --
He closes his eyes at the moment of impact.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM – NIGHT

A FAINT BEEP IS HEARD

The room is dimly lit by a small bedside lamp. Two transparent tubes are connected to Charli’s nose and an IV drip is attached to her arm. She looks weak and seems to be sleeping quietly, breathing in rhythm with a monitor at her side.

CHARLI OPENS HER EYES WITH A FLUTTER

She hardly moves her head. Her eyes scan the room. She realizes she’s lying on a hospital bed. She notices that Scott is seated by the bed, dozing. He is bruised and has a bandage around his head.

Charli slowly moves her arm and her hand brushes against a steel tray on the side table. The tray falls on the tiled floor with a metallic crash.

The noise startles Scott, waking him. When he realizes that Charli is awake, he rushes to the room’s door, and shouts into the hallway.
SCOTT
Nurse! Nurse! She’s waking up!!

Scott comes back to the bed. He kneels by Charli, happy, and kisses her hand.

SCOTT
Oh, baby. You’re back! You’re back!

A NURSE enters the room, then quickly steps back out.

NURSE (O.S.)
(Irish accent)
Doctor Grant! Doctor Grant!

SCOTT
(sobbing)
Oh Charli, I’ve been so stupid!

He kisses her hand.

SCOTT
I love you so much. When I think, God I could’ve lost you! Say something Charli. Can you speak to me!

CHARLI
(weakly)
Scott --

SCOTT
Yes!

The nurse comes back with DOCTOR GRANT who leans over Charli and gently pushes Scott back.

DOCTOR GRANT
Mrs. McKenna. This is amazing. Welcome back. How are you feeling?

Charli smiles weakly.

DOCTOR GRANT
Well I’ve spent the night in a hell-of-a crapshoot with the Bearded One up there. Apparently, I won.

(sigh)
You’ve been in a deep coma Charli, and coming out of it so quickly is nothing short of a miracle. Never seen anything like it.

He checks her pulse and the print out from the equipment.
NURSE
And without a scratch no less. Sure and it's divine intervention.

She crosses herself.

SCOTT
Will she be alright doc? Will she be here long?

DOCTOR GRANT
All her vitals look perfectly normal Scott. Tell you what. Just give us one more night for observation, OK? If everything still looks this good tomorrow, you both can go home. Sound good?

Charli nods weakly. Scott kisses her hand again.

DOCTOR GRANT
(moving Scott toward the door.)
Take good care of your wife. My guess is she came back for you.

SCOTT
Yes Doctor. Thank you, thank you so much.

Doctor Grant and the nurse step out. Scott kneels by Charli again and takes her hand.

SCOTT
He’s right you know. You came back for me Charli. I was thinking, while you were out for so long, that if God gave you back to me, it would be to have the baby. A beautiful baby, with his mother’s eyes. What do you think sugar?

CHARLI
(interrupting him weakly)
Later Scott, OK?

SCOTT
No problem honey. You just rest now.

He puts his finger on her nose. This time, Charli turns her head away. Scott looks pained, dejected.
CHARLI
I’m so tired, Scott. So tired.

She closes her eyes.

INT. THOMAS’ APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

A commercial for Christmas bargains can be heard from the TV, O.S.

THOMAS OPENS HIS EYES WITH DIFFICULTY

He is lying on the bathroom floor by the empty bottle of whisky. As he moves, Thomas puts his hand on his forehead and winces with the pain in his head. He can hardly stand up. Woozy, he leans against the bathroom wall and struggles to raise himself to his feet.

Thomas clumsily staggers to the couch and drops heavily onto it. He sits there, slouched over and sighing. His hand reaches for the remote and he turns the TV off.

Someone knocks on his door. At first, Thomas doesn’t move, but she knocks again and Linda’s voice can be heard from behind the door.

LINDA (V.O.)
Thomas! Thomas, it’s me! Open up, please!

Thomas gets up, walks to the door, takes a look in the peephole, and opens the door. Linda enters in a fury.

LINDA
Jesus Thomas, where the hell have you been? I came over yesterday and you weren’t here. Then I came over again last night, you still weren’t here. I started to get worried. You don’t answer your door, you don’t answer your phone. Nothing!

THOMAS
Sorry. I’m okay.

LINDA
You’re okay?! Have you seen yourself? You look like shit.

Thomas holds his forehead and closes the door.

THOMAS
(pained)
Please, don’t shout.
LINDA
Don’t tell me you’ve got a hangover?

He steps back to the couch and sits down, trying to recover.

LINDA
Well finally, welcome to the grownup world.

She leans over to kiss his cheek. Linda wraps her arm around his shoulders like a best friend.

LINDA
I really wonder about you sometimes.

She notices a big bump on the side of Thomas’ head, just under the hairline.

LINDA
What the hell is this?

She touches it gingerly.

THOMAS
OUCH!

LINDA
That’s quite the goose egg Thomas. What happened?

She sits beside him.

THOMAS
I fell in the bathroom and I guess I hit my head on the tub or something.

LINDA
I’ll say. Looks like you damned near killed yourself.

THOMAS
If you only knew.

LINDA
What’s that supposed to mean?

THOMAS
I think I did kill myself.

LINDA
What? Oh, yeah, OK.
THOMAS
Fine don't believe me, but I'm telling you, I died and went to heaven last night.

LINDA
Right. I think what you need is a good strong cup of coffee.

She starts to get up, but he grabs her and sits her back down.

THOMAS
(Serious)
I'm not kidding.

Linda is confused, but she thinks she believes him.

LINDA
I'm not sure I'm following you.

24
EXT. STREET TORONTO - NIGHT
The skies open and a bright ray of light shines down onto a street corner. Then it stops suddenly and Faith is standing there. She takes a moment to get her bearings, then she marches up the street, determined.

25
INT. THOMAS’ APARTMENT - TORONTO - DAY
Thomas and Linda are still seated on the couch.

THOMAS
I'm saying I think I died, went to Heaven and came back. Do we know anyone named McKenna?

LINDA
McKenna?

She shakes her head.

LINDA
Nope. Why?

THOMAS
Ever since I came back, it's strange, but I have that name on my mind, and a city, Baton-Rouge.

LINDA
You really need to cut out the whisky.
THOMAS
It’s not the whiskey. It was like a really powerful dream. You know how sometimes you have a dream and you could swear it was real. This is like that.

LINDA
(innocently)
Was it in color?

Thomas doesn’t listen to her.

THOMAS
It was all really confusing at first, but, then I got kind of comfortable, like a quiet comfort, you know? And then I got this irresistible urge to come back, like I was almost panicking. I had to come back or I’d lose something, or miss something -- or someone -- a woman.
(beat)
I was in Heaven Linda.

LINDA
(creepeed out)
OKaaaay, what are you saying here? You’re telling me you died and came back? And you met a woman in Heaven?

Thomas is about to answer when someone knocks on his door. A bit surprised, he steps to the door and puts an eye to the peephole to see --

FAITH’S DISTORTED FACE

Shocked, pale, Thomas takes a quick step back. He can’t believe it. He has a second look and starts to panic.

THOMAS
Oh shit!

LINDA
What’s up?
(she stands)
Who is it?

Thomas faces Linda and takes her by the shoulders, serious.

THOMAS
Linda. Do you trust me?

LINDA
Well, yeah but --
THOMAS  
(interrupting)  
No questions!

ANOTHER KNOCK ON THE DOOR

Thomas disappears into his room and comes back with a bag.

THOMAS  
Follow me.

He takes his jacket and a scarf, opens the living room window, and puts a leg outside onto the fire escape. From behind the door, Faith’s voice is heard.

FAITH (V.O.)  
Thomas! I know you’re in there!

Linda looks at Thomas as if he was some kind of lunatic, but she is amused, even a little proud of him. There's actually a girl at his door!

Thomas is already outside. She decides to follow him.

26  
EXT. FIRE ESCAPE BALCONY - DAY

Thomas is running down the fire escape of his building from floor to floor. Two stories to go. Linda does her best to follow him, handicapped by her high heels she has trouble with the grate and the rusty metal ladder. She slips on the snow, holding the railing tight.

27  
EXT. STREET - THOMAS’ BUILDING - DAY

Thomas finally jumps, landing in the snow, followed by Linda, who is out of breath. He catches her, helping her to land.

LINDA  
(panting)  
I’ve never seen you run from a girl before. Who is she?

THOMAS  
I said no questions, okay?

LINDA  
(shrugging)  
Okay.  
(beat)  
Are you going to leave your window open?
THOMAS  
(not listening)  
Where’s your car?

She points at a new red Beetle and opens it automatically with her keys. Thomas rushes into it and slams the passenger door shut. Linda circles around to the driver’s side and opens the door and gets in.

LINDA  
She sure took care of your hangover in a hurry!

INT. LINDA’S CAR - DAY

Linda in the driver’s seat, starts the engine, and turns to Thomas quizzically. Thomas thinks for a short while.

THOMAS  
Take me to the airport.

LINDA  
The airport!?

Thomas just nods. Resigned, Linda puts the car into gear and pulls away from the curb. As Linda speeds up, Thomas turns back to check his building’s entrance.

NO TRACE OF FAITH

EXT. BATON ROUGE STREET - INT. CAB - DAY

Charli and Scott (still in bandages) are seated in the back of a cab, both are silent. Charli looks out the window, apparently trying to avoid looking at Scott. She’s very pale and tired. Scott looks rather nervous.

SCOTT  
So, have you given it any thought?

Charli emerges from her thoughts and turns to him with a sad smile.

CHARLI  
Sorry?

SCOTT (smiling)  
Have you thought about our baby?

CHARLI  
Listen Scott, I don’t know.
Scott’s smile fades as Charli turns her face back to the window.

SCOTT
You blame me for the accident, don’t you?

CHARLI
(without looking at him)
Yes.

INT. TORONTO AIRPORT – DAY

Toronto International Airport, Departures Hall, looks like Heaven’s Gate. The same cosmopolitan crowd, the same loudspeaker voice, the same escalators. Far less serene. Thomas looks lost in the crowd. Linda, on his tail, is still amused.

LINDA
And now, Sir?

Thomas does not answer. He steps up to an AIRLINE CLERK behind the counter.

THOMAS
(to the airline clerk)
Hi. Next flight to Baton-Rouge?

The attractive woman checks on her computer screen, then smiles at Thomas.

AIRLINE CLERK

Linda joins Thomas.

LINDA
What are you gonna do in Louisiana? You hate to fly.

THOMAS
I’m not sure, but I know I have to get there.

AIRLINE CLERK
How will you be paying?

He searches in his pockets.

THOMAS
Damn, forgot my wallet.
(to Linda)
Lend me some cash.
LINDA
Then I’m going with you!

THOMAS
But --

LINDA
(interrupting)
You want my dinero? I’m going with you!

Stuck, Thomas gives in. Suddenly aware that Faith could appear at any minute, he urges Linda to pay. She turns to the airline clerk with her most charming smile.

Anxious, Thomas turns back and scans the hall. Faith could be anywhere. Any woman here could turn out to be her.

Linda keeps on talking with the attractive clerk. She looks like she’s flirting. Thomas turns back to her and pulls her by the sleeve. She has the two tickets in her hand.

THOMAS
C’mon.

They start walking, but she turns back for another look at the clerk, then turns forward again and continues walking with Thomas. She’s smiling and looks like the cat that swallowed the canary. Thomas notices and appears a bit confused.

THOMAS
What?

No response.

THOMAS
What!?

LINDA
(with a big smile)
I got her number.

THOMAS
Oh man, c’mon.

LINDA
Hey, here.

She hands him his ticket. He takes it and keeps walking.

LINDA
Merry Christmas, again.

He stops and turns to her.
THOMAS
Thank you Linda.

He gives her a hug.

LINDA
You’re welcome. Now let’s go!

EXT. SCOTT AND CHARLI’S HOUSE – DAY
Scott and Charli pull up in the cab. Charli gets out while Scott pays. She deliberately walks up to the front door, opens it with her key and enters the house leaving the door open and leaving Scott behind.

He notices that she didn’t wait for him and is bothered by it as he approaches the door, enters and closes it behind him. The cab pulls away.

INT. DELTA AIRLINES PLANE – DAY
Thomas and Linda enter through the aircraft’s door and start down the aisle toward their seats.

Thomas is not comfortable flying. They approach a short, elderly BLACK WOMAN struggling to get her bag into the overhead compartment, but she is not tall enough.

Thomas casually takes her bag, places it above and skirts around her, continuing toward his seat.

BLACK WOMAN
Thank you young man.

THOMAS
No problem, ma'am. Merry Christmas.

Thomas and Linda find their seats side by side and settle into them. Thomas looks nervous. He stares at his trembling hand and clutches it on his seat arm, sweating.

Thomas looks through the porthole, anxiously staring at the plane’s wing. He doesn't realize that he is now grabbing Linda's leg instead of the arm rest of his seat, and squeezes it.

LINDA
Ow!

Thomas turns to her.

THOMAS
Sorry. I thought it was-- I have to focus on something.
From the back pocket of the seat ahead Thomas pulls out a magazine and nervously starts sketching on a page margin -- The sketch is of Charli's face. Linda turns to him with a smile and notices the drawing.

Then, she turns to look down the aisle, intensely watching --

A STEWARDESS' BUTT.

LINDA
Me too.

INT. CHARLI’S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Charli is seated alone on her bed. She sadly stare at the MP3 player. Someone knocks on the door.

JODEE (V.O.)
Charli, it’s me.

CHARLI
(passively)
Come on in.

JODEE enters the bedroom. She is a very pretty, freckled, young red-haired woman. She closes the door and leans back against it. She starts to crack her knuckles.

JODEE
How you doin’?
Charli grins, a smile that means “so-so”.

JODEE
Do you want me to leave you alone?

CHARLI
No, I actually could use someone to talk to right now.

JoDee moves, sits on the bed by Charli and cracks her knuckles again.

JODEE
How you holdin’ up?

CHARLI
You know, I’m thinking that I’ve been living a lie for a long time, and now I’m kinda stuck, and I don’t have a clue of what to do about it.
JOODEE
Well I just saw Scott downstairs. He’s going out somewhere. He looks devastated. So guilty. I’ve never seen him like that before.
(beat)
Do you think you’ll ever forgive him?

CHARLI
(sighing)
I don’t know.

JOODEE
Really?

CHARLI
Something in me got broken in that accident Jodee, and I don’t think it can be fixed. It’s like it woke me up, you know?

JOODEE
(incredulous)
You’re not leaving him?

CHARLI
I don’t know.

JOODEE
(there’s hope)
No way? After seven years?

CHARLI
I know, I’m not sure what I’d do without him.

JOODEE
Oh please, you’d do just fine.

CHARLI
OK, but what’d he do without me?

JOODEE
I’m sure he’d be fine too. But what you really need to be thinking about right now is what’s right for you.

CHARLI
He’s sure not the guy I married anymore. I was the centre of his universe once. That’s why I married him. I didn’t think that anyone on Earth could ever love me as much as he did.
(beat)
CHARLI (cont'd)
God Jodee, I was so young and so
dumb. And you all saw this
coming. You warned me, my parents
warned me. Did I listen?

JODEE
What about now?

CHARLI
I think I might have made the
biggest mistake of my life.

They hug.

JODEE
Oh Charli, I’m so sorry.

Jodee mouths the word “YES!” during the hug. Long beat, they stop hugging.

JODEE
Have you made a decision?

CHARLI
Not really.

JODEE
OK, well we can’t just sit here in limbo.

CHARLI
(Frustrated)
I know!

JODEE
(happily)
Fine. Let’s list his pros and cons like we did high school.

CHARLI
(smiling)
We’re not kids anymore JoDee.

JODEE
What, so it won’t still work?
C’mon. First, the pros.

Reluctantly Charli thinks and sighs.

JODEE
Well?

CHARLI
He made me laugh.

JODEE
Good point. Notice the use of past tense. That’s one. What else?
Charli notices the use of past tense, then tries to think about something else, but is stumped.

JO Dee
(a bit impatient)
So is he “talented” at least?

Charli doesn’t get it.

Charli
Is he a what?

JO Dee
Well, you know -- talented -- (she taps on the mattress) -- talented?

Charli still doesn’t understand.

JO Dee
(finally)
Is he good in bed?!

Charli
Oh, um, yeah, I guess so.

JO Dee
You guess so?!

Charli
Yeah, I guess so! It’s not like I have anyone to compare him to.

JO Dee
(realizing)
Oh man, you’ve never been with anyone else.

Charli
I’ve been married for seven years Jodee, and Scott was my first, so how could I? God, how can you not know that?!

JO Dee
You’re right, you’re right. I do. I just hadn’t really thought about it.

Charli
Well think about it.

JO Dee
OK, so let’s try another approach. (beat)
Do you usually reach the Big “O” with him?
CHARLI
(embarrassed)
I think so.
(beat)
I'm not sure.

JODEE
Oh Charli. A good sex life is really important. Both of you need to be satisfied.

CHARLI
Well he’s always satisfied. I know that for sure.

JODEE
That goes for all of them.

CHARLI
So what makes you the expert all of a sudden? You’ve been single for months.

JODEE
That's just because I haven't met my Mister Right yet. But this is about you, Charli.

She cracks her knuckles again.

CHARLI
Stop it.

JODEE
I can't. You know how I am when I'm nervous.
(she sighs)
So, do we put this down as a pro or a con?

CHARLI
Probably a con.

JODEE
(sighing)
So that’s it for the pros then?

CHARLI
Think so.

JODEE
Yikes! OK, now the cons.

This time, Charli does not take her time to answer.
CHARLI
He told me he wasn’t ready to have a baby. We don’t like the same music, don’t watch the same movies. We don’t usually go out together. He has his own friends. He never wanted me to work, not even a Joe Job. I just stay at home, waiting for him, watching the soapies or something.

JODEE
(silent)
I know. That’s always bothered me a lot.

CHARLI
(chuckling)
Me too! And all he cares about are the three “B’s”.

JODEE
The what?

CHARLI
(talking to herself)
The three “B’s”. They rule his life: “beer, bowling, and blowjobs”.

JODEE
Typical.
(silent)
Boy you sure came up with a grocery list of cons in a hurry. What’s that tell you?

CHARLI
The writing’s on the wall isn’t it?

Jodee sadly smiles.

CHARLI
Damn.

JODEE
Seven years. Man you’re so stubborn.

CHARLI
Not so stubborn as so determined to make it work. What else could I do?

JODEE
You could leave.

CHARLI
Never had the guts.

JoDee stares at her for a while, silent.
JODEE
What if someone could get you out of this mess?

CHARLI
Who could even find me way out here in the bayou?

Suddenly, JoDee gets excited.

JODEE
I could. Listen, I’ve got an idea. You remember my big sister Lou?

CHARLI
Yeah. ‘course I do.

JODEE
Well she’s moved out to Texas. She’s always begging me to come and join her. Why don’t we head out there and get ourselves a new life, and our own three “B’s”: boys, boys and boys?!

CHARLI
(sarcastic)
Yeah, OK. I’m sure Scott would be thrilled.

JODEE
To hell with Scott.

CHARLI
I can’t just walk out on him with no explanation.

JODEE
Of course you can. What about the accident? He was there too remember? That’s a damned good explanation.

CHARLI
I don’t know Jodee.

JODEE
Do you still love him?

Charli nods yes.

JODEE
Do you want out?

Struggling, Charli nods yes.

JODEE
Well this is your chance.
This realization comes to Charli and can be read in her face. This is her chance. JoDee stands up and heads to the dresser.

JODEE
Let’s get the hell outta Dodge girl!

Charli pauses, then gives Jodee a mischievous smile.

CHARLI
Jeez Jodee.

JODEE
Move your butt, baby!

Charli stands up slowly. JoDee opens the top drawer and starts pulling clothes out and handing them to Charli. Charli takes them, puts them on the bed.

JODEE
Don’t worry Charli, you’ll find someone else. You’re still young and hot and smart. You know the saying: so many men, so little time.

CHARLI
(Sarcastic)
Yeah right Jodee, that’s my style for sure.

Then she goes to the closet to pull out a bag. She brings it back and starts filling it with the clothes from the bed.

JODEE
(chuckles)
You know, I heard that a woman put an ad in the paper looking for a husband. The next day she got 200 responses, all of them from women saying “Take mine!”

Charli cannot help laughing.

JODEE
(laughing too)
Ah Charli, it’s so great to see you laugh again. That’s the Charli I used to know.
CHARLI
It’s been a long time since I had a real good laugh.
(beat)
Listen JoDee.

Thinking, she then pulls JoDee back to sit on the bed with her.

CHARLI
I need to tell you something that I would never tell Scott.

Charli hesitates. JoDee cracks her knuckles again.

CHARLI
Stop that.
(sigh)
You’ll probably think I’m nuts, but I keep getting these weird flashbacks from when I was in the coma.

JODeE
Yeah?

CHARLI
Yeah. They’re kinda fuzzy, but I remember this face in a crowd. A man’s face. And a feeling, like I was in love with him.

JODeE
Wow!

CHARLI
Yeah. And then I had this overwhelming sense of desperation when he disappeared. But the really strange thing is, just before he vanished, I distinctly remember saying “thank you” to him.

JODeE
Thank you?

CHARLI
I don’t know why.

JODeE
(excited)
You met someone, up there?

CHARLI
I think so.

JODeE
Weird place for a date.
CHARLI
I told you, you’d think I was nuts.

JODEE
No, no. I believe in this stuff! I’ve read a lot about it. Maybe you came back to find him, to be with him. Maybe the accident was fate!

CHARLI
Nah, I doubt it.

JODEE
Why?

CHARLI
Well for one thing, if I met him, up there, doesn’t that mean he’s dead?

JoDee’s excitement fizzles.

JODEE
Oh, yeah, you’re probably right. So finding him’s not keeping you here. That must have been strange.
  (she stands up)
Well, c’mon. What you need is some wide open spaces, and brand new faces.

Charli is about to speak. JoDee interrupts her.

JODEE
(smiling)
Yeah. I know. “You don’t know.” Hey, no second guessing now. Let’s do this.

Charli gets up and continues packing.

CHARLI
Hey JoDee?

JODEE
Yeah?

CHARLI
(with a smile)
I think you might be a bad influence.
INT. BATON-ROUGE METROPOLITAN AIRPORT – DAY
Thomas and Linda are in the arrivals hall. They are obviously too warmly dressed for the local weather. They find and head for the exit.

EXT. BATON-ROUGE METROPOLITAN AIRPORT – DAY
Thomas and Linda hail a taxi which picks them up and speeds away.

EXT. STREET - CHARLI’S HOUSE - DAY
Charli and JoDee exit the house and approach JoDee’s car. JoDee pops the trunk, puts the bags in, closes it and gets into the driver’s side. Charli turns back to take a last look at her home. JoDee gives her a moment, and starts the engine.
Charli confidently turns back to the car and gets into the passenger side. The car starts down the road.

INT. RICHMOND SUITES HOTEL - ROOM – DAY
Thomas and Linda enter a hotel room. Linda is sweating.

LINDA
Whew! I don’t know about you, but man I need a shower. I’m soaked.

As she disappears into the bathroom, Thomas notices a computer by the TV set. He switches it on, types on the keypad and finds the White Pages site. He keeps typing and a list of names appears on the screen. There are eight McKennas in Baton Rouge. Thomas sighs. He prints the page.

LINDA (O.S.)
(from the bathroom)
Thomas! Not that I want to pry or anything, but I think I’ve been patient enough. How about you tell me what the hell this is all about.

Thomas is rummaging through Linda’s purse and takes some cash. With the printed page, he steps out, closing the door.

MUSIC UNDER
EXT. HIGHWAY RAMP - DAY
Jodee’s car merges with the highway traffic.

INT. RICHMOND SUITES HOTEL - DAY
In front of the hotel, Thomas hails a cab and gets in.

INT. JODEE'S CAR - HIGHWAY - DAY
MUSIC UNDER -- is heard on JoDee's car radio.

JOODEE
You hungry?

CHARLI
I could eat.

JOODEE
Give it about an hour or two?

CHARLI
Sounds good to me.

Out the windshield the traffic flows smoothly.

EXT. HOUSE – BATON ROUGE STREET - DAY
Thomas is speaking with a WOMAN at her front door. The woman shakes her head. Disappointed, Thomas leaves her.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY – DAY
An OLD MAN slams the lobby door in Thomas’ surprised face.

EXT. TRAILER – BATON ROUGE STREET – DUSK
Thomas is talking with a very EFFEMINATE GUY who smiles at him, visibly flirting. He looks like he’s inviting Thomas in. Thomas graciously declines, then rushes back to the street.

He gets back into the cab and, as it drives away, he looks back through the rear window to see the guy waving goodbye to him with a chartreuse chiffon scarf. Thomas turns forward again and shakes his head slightly in disbelief.

CABBIE
We got all kinds down here.
THOMAS
So it seems.

EXT. HIGHWAY REST STOP - DUSK
JoDee’s car pulls into the parking lot and parks. The girls get out and head for the entrance.

END MUSIC
UNDER

INT. RICHMOND SUITES HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT
As soon as Thomas enters the hotel lobby decorated with Christmas trees, a voice calls him.

LINDA (O.S.)
Thomas!

She is inside the hotel bar seated in a booth, drinking a cocktail.

INT. RICHMOND SUITES HOTEL - BAR - NIGHT
Thomas steps over and joins her in the booth.

LINDA
For God’s sake, where have you been? I’ve been worried sick!

THOMAS
Looking for someone. Sorry.

LINDA
(serious)
Don’t you think you owe me some kind of an explanation?

THOMAS
I’m not sure you’d quite understand.

LINDA
Hey! What am I, stupid? Give me a little credit will ya, please?

THOMAS
Okay. But, promise me you won’t laugh, or get sarcastic and make it all seem like it’s just bullshit. You love to do that.

LINDA
(falsely outraged)
Moi?
Faith is outside the hotel. As she starts through the main entrance, Sariel comes out.

SARIEL
Faith, we need to talk.

FAITH
(surprised)
Sariel, what are you doing here?

SARIEL
(leads her off to the side)
We’re very concerned about how this retrieval is going.

FAITH
Why, what’s wrong?

SARIEL
Well for one thing we’ve watched you chase him from the top of this continent to the bottom.

FAITH
A minor mishap. I’m about to take care of it.

SARIEL
Well see that you do, and now. This was supposed to be a simple exercise.

FAITH
It will be.

SARIEL
Perhaps you might be well advised to make Thomas aware of the gravity of his situation. He might be more inclined to return without a fuss.

FAITH
I’m about to speak to him and I don’t anticipate any further problems.

SARIEL
I hope you’re right, for your sake. Now get in there and bring him back. You have Carte Blanche.

Faith leaves him and enters the hotel.
INT. RICHMOND SUITES – BAR

Thomas and Linda are still seated in the booth.

THOMAS
-- and so I managed to check
three of them out this afternoon,
but no luck yet.

Thomas and Linda are now both drinking.

LINDA
This is insane. You’re insane.

THOMAS
Always told you I was.

LINDA
No. It’s crazy for you to come
all the way down to Louisiana, at
Christmas, just to go on this
wild goose chase.

THOMAS
Do you think that’s what this is?

LINDA
Oh I don’t know Thomas. If it was
anyone but you I’d say he was
loopy for sure.

Suddenly, Thomas freezes and spills his drink on his lap.
Linda follows his eyes. Faith has just entered the bar. She
still wears her long black coat. She slowly walks directly
to Thomas. He does not know what to do. In the booth,
there’s no escape.

FAITH
(austere)
Hello Thomas. We have to talk.

Linda rearranges her hair, takes a charming pose, and
stares invitingly at Faith.

LINDA
(to Thomas)
Thomas, aren’t you going to
introduce us?

Thomas feels increasingly trapped.

THOMAS
Linda, this is -- Faith.

Linda holds her hand out to Faith.
LINDA  
(with a come-hither look)  
Pleased to meet you. All of  
Thomas’ friends are my friends.

Faith doesn’t move, ignoring Linda as though she wasn’t  
even there. Linda drops her hand, a bit insulted, then  
sizes Faith up, trying to guess what her body’s like under  
her coat.

FAITH  
Thomas, it’s important.

Thomas starts to dry his trousers up with a napkin.

THOMAS  
(confused)  
Fine.

FAITH  
Can we talk --  
(she looks at Linda)  
-- in private?

LINDA  
(getting up)  
Okay. I get it.

As Linda steps over to the bar, Faith sits down, facing  
Thomas.

FAITH  
(gently)  
You know why I’m here, don’t you?  
No need to refresh your memory?

THOMAS  
(firmly)  
I’m not going back.

FAITH  
You have to Thomas. You don’t  
belong here anymore. Do you have  
any idea what you’ve done?

Thomas nods.

THOMAS  
I do. But look at me, I’m fine.  
I’ve got my life back, and my  
friends and --
FAITH
(interrupting)
Don’t do this to me, Thomas. I know everything about you now. You didn’t think your life was all that great before. You’ve got nothing worth going back to.

THOMAS
How is that your call?

FAITH
I’m your angel.

THOMAS
My angel. Alright, fine, you’re my angel. So if you know everything about me, then you tell me why I came back.

FAITH
Because you don’t know what you’re missing up there. Because you’re still holding on to this miserable life of yours, like all of you people do. There are millions of reasons --

THOMAS
(interrupts, with a smile)
Sorry, you’re wrong.

Faith is quite surprised. She gets Thomas to give her his hand.

FAITH
May I?

Thomas gives her his hand. Faith holds it and closes her eyes. Thomas turns to Linda, who stares at them, astonished.

FLASHBACK - INT. HEAVEN’S GATE - NIGHT

THOMAS’ P.O.V.: as he speaks with Faith on the upward escalator, Thomas turns a last time to Charli as she descends down the Earth bound escalator.

She has a helpless little smile and mouths the words “Thank you” to him. Thomas can see regret in her eyes as she slightly waves to him before she disappears into the shining fog.

END OF THE FLASHBACK:
Thomas turns back to Faith who reopens her eyes.

    FAITH
    (shocked)
    It’s because of her? That woman on the escalator?

    THOMAS
    You see. You can’t know everything.
    (trying to joke)
    I’m just full of surprises.

Faith looks embarrassed.

    FAITH
    Well, I have to be straight with you Thomas. If I don’t get you back, my superiors will be very upset with me. It would be my first dereliction of duty in over a hundred and fifty years.

She lowers her head.

    FAITH
    In fact, they may not even let me go back.

Thomas looks at her, dumbfounded.

    THOMAS
    They can’t do that to you!

    FAITH
    You broke Heaven’s laws Thomas. No one has ever escaped before. And it was my fault.

    THOMAS
    It wasn’t your fault at all. There was a diversion, I saw that girl, I saw my chance and I took it. They can’t blame you for something I did.

    FAITH
    They can and they will.

    THOMAS
    Nah, that's not right. There's gotta be a way.

    FAITH
    What way?
THOMAS
I don't know yet, but I'll think of something.

FAITH
Good luck!

THOMAS
Don't worry about it.
(beat)
So I'm the first, eh? You know, I think I'm kind of proud of that.

FAITH
(straight-faced)
Be that as it may, this is a very serious situation.

THOMAS
Listen --

Confused, he tries to remember her name.

FAITH
-- Faith.

THOMAS
-- Faith. If I was that determined to come back, I must have had a really good reason.
(beat)
I think I've found true love, for the first time ever. So I've got to find her.

FAITH
But --

THOMAS
Think about it for a second. Meeting her up there. Being the first ever to escape, giving you the slip back in T.O., getting across the continent, all the way to her home town, getting this close. It can't all just be a coincidence.

Faith stares at him, thoughtful.

FAITH
Just a second.

She gets up and, as she steps to the back of the room, discreetly hidden from everyone, Faith lays her right hand out flat.
In her hand some kind of cellular phone materializes. It is in the form of a small cloud with little sparks of lightning flashing within it. She puts it to her ear.

Thomas stares at her, though he can’t see the phone. He turns to Linda who mouths to him “What’s going on?”. He shrugs and turns back to face towards Faith. She turns her back to him, speaking in a low voice on the phone.

She hangs up making the cloud disappear, and sighs. She doesn’t move for a short while and then steps back over to Thomas and sits down.

FAITH
I have permission to make a special arrangement with you.

THOMAS
(A bit suspicious)
What kind of arrangement?

FAITH
You have seven days to find her and prove that it’s true love. If you don’t, you’ll go straight to purgatory.

THOMAS
(happy)
Deal!

FAITH
Does that word, purgatory, mean anything to you?

THOMAS
I missed a lot of Sunday school.

FAITH
(serious)
Who’d have guessed? Do you remember that area you saw at the top of the escalator, the offices where the Newcomers were being interviewed?

THOMAS
Yeah.

FAITH
Well there’s another area you didn’t see, where those of questionable character are sent. They wait there for their chance to get into those offices. They’re squeezed in whenever possible. So they wait, and they
FAITH (cont'd)
wait, and they wait some more,
and that’s all they do, sometimes
for centuries.

THOMAS
They must get really bored.

FAITH
At first, but then they get
frustrated, and it can get really
ugly in there.

THOMAS
And you told me Hell was a myth.

FAITH
It’s not Hell Thomas, it’s
purgatory.

THOMAS
Well for her, I’ll risk it.
(self confident)
So let’s do this. Is there some
kind of contract or something I
need to sign in blood?

FAITH
(chuckling)
How melodramatic. No. Your word is
good enough. But just so you know
Thomas, whether you manage to find
her or not, I can’t help you.

THOMAS
How could you anyway, unless
you’re going to be on my tail the
whole time?

Faith smiles.

THOMAS
What?

FAITH
Well I'd rather not have to chase you
around the planet again, thank you.

A beat.

THOMAS
(charming)
Fine with me. I couldn’t have a
nicer, sweeter angel shadowing me.

Faith blushes. Thomas notices it.
FAITH
(another topic)
Oh, by the way, you forgot this
in your apartment.

She hands him a wallet.

FAITH
I thought you might need it.

THOMAS
Oh great, thank you.

He slips it into his pocket.

FAITH
And one last thing Thomas. I know
she’s your best friend and all,
but-- you need to get rid of
Linda -- gently?

She looks towards Linda

THOMAS
But, she’s helped me get this
far and --

FAITH
(interrupting)
The deal is that you do this
thing on your own. Make something
up. You’re a comic strip writer.
Make up a story, like I’m one of
your ex-girlfriends or something.

THOMAS
(sarcastic)
Isn’t lying a sin?

FAITH
(embarrassed)
Well, not a deadly one.

He stands up and walks over to Linda. Thomas and Linda have
a brief conversation, then Linda, looking disappointed,
reluctantly nods.

She hugs Thomas, turns to Faith, and whispers something to
him that makes him laugh. Then, with a seductive glance at
Faith, she leaves the bar. Thomas returns to Faith, still
laughing.

FAITH
What’s so funny?
THOMAS
I can’t tell you. You wouldn’t appreciate it.

FAITH
Come on Thomas.

THOMAS
She was only commenting on a particular part of your anatomy.

Faith is not amused.

51 INT. CHARLI’S HOUSE – NIGHT

THERE ARE NO CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS IN THE HOUSE

The front door opens and Scott appears, a bunch of roses in hand. The house is dark and quiet. Scott closes the door.

SCOTT
Sugar?

NO ANSWER

He switches on the lights, puts the flowers on a table, and starts to look worried.

SCOTT
Charli?!

He goes to the bedroom and opens the door. Charli is not there. He explores the entire house and finally tries the bathroom.

52 INT. CHARLI’S HOUSE – BATHROOM – NIGHT

Something doesn’t look right. In a flash, he notices that half of the shelves are empty. He rushes out and heads back to the bedroom.

SCOTT (O.S.)
Charli!!

53 INT. CHARLI’S HOUSE – BEDROOM – NIGHT

Scott enters the bedroom and opens the closet. All of Charli’s clothes are gone. Scott’s fist hits the closet door and goes through it.

Pale, he steps backward to the bed and collapses on it. He feels something under him. He reaches down and finds the small MP3 player and an envelope.
Looking at the envelope, then touching it lightly to his forehead, hoping it's not the bad news he knows it is, he lowers the envelope and looks across the room where, placed on top of the dresser, he scans a framed picture of himself and Charli in better times.

Trembling, he opens it and starts to read.

CHARLI (V.O.)
“Dear Scott. I had to leave. I don’t see things like I used to anymore. I don’t want to hurt you, but I need you to give me a chance to work things out. Please believe me when I say that I’ll always love you. I’ll call you when I can. Charli.
P.S. I know it's not a very Merry Christmas this year, but I hope you like your present anyway.”

Scott looks around briefly and sees a medium sized wrapped gift placed just behind him on his pillow.

After a beat, he takes it, places it on his lap and opens it to find a beautiful carved wooden sign with the logo of a beer company, a gift that would look wonderful hanging on the back wall of his games room bar.

Scott’s eyes begin to tear up, he drops his head briefly, then in a rage he throws the sign across the room hitting the top of the dresser, knocking off the framed picture of himself with Charli and cracking the mirror of the upper part of the dresser.

He lets himself fall back on the bed, and covers his eyes with his arms.

The picture ends up on the floor with it's glass insert shattered.

INT. RICHMOND SUITES HOTEL - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

In the hotel dining room, Thomas and Faith face each other at a dinner table. Thomas is the only one eating. In fact, he appears to be ravenous.

FAITH
Slow down Thomas, you might actually taste your meal.

THOMAS
(mouth full)
God, I could eat a horse.
(a beat)
Are you on the diet?
FAITH
I don’t need to eat anymore.

THOMAS
That's a real shame. You sure you don't want to try a little of this fabulous Crawfish Etouffee?

Faith shakes her head with a smile.

THOMAS
Too bad. Don’t drink either?

He raises his glass of white wine.

FAITH
Nope.

THOMAS
Well. Cheers.
(he drinks up)
Ah, a very nice, buttery Chardonnay. Perfect with the crawfish.

FAITH
You're a wine enthusiast?

THOMAS
I know my way around a grape or two. You sure you wouldn't like to try some?

FAITH
I only thirst for wisdom Thomas.

Thomas frowns and stares at her.

THOMAS
Tell me. Does everybody where you come from speak in parables?

FAITH
(with a smile)
An old habit from the boss.
(more seriously)
So tell me, have you started your search yet?

THOMAS
Yeah. There’re eight McKennas in Baton Rouge. I’ve already met three of them, no luck. I’ll meet the other five tomorrow.

FAITH
Well, good luck.
THOMAS
Thank you --
(worried)
Wait a minute. Somehow you seem a little too supportive.

FAITH (innocently)
Do I?

THOMAS
How can you wish me luck when you’re trying to bring me back with you? You’re up to something.

He frowns. Faith smiles, she thinks he’s very cute.

THOMAS
Do you only influence people to lie or can you actually lie yourself?

FAITH
We’re not allowed to lie.

THOMAS
Well that’s something I finally know about you. It’s not fair you know, that you know everything there is to know about me, and all I know about you is your name. Who were you when you lived?

FAITH (elusive)
I’ve forgotten.

THOMAS
Tss, tss. Remember, you can’t lie.

FAITH
Okay. I was a free descendant of slaves in New Orleans, what was known as the Genes de Couleur.

THOMAS
Oh, I’ve read about those people. They were generally quite well off weren’t they?

FAITH
Some were, but we were very poor.

THOMAS
So were you into Voodoo and casting spells and all?
FAITH
You have to understand, that kind of thing was very common among our people back then.

THOMAS
So is that a yes?

FAITH
I admit to dabbling in the dark arts a little, but never for personal gain.

THOMAS
Ah, a spell caster of noble virtue. Is that why they let you in, up there?

FAITH
I already told you Thomas, everyone is offered redemption.

THOMAS
Lucky for you I guess.

FAITH
As I recall you’ve got your share of indiscretions catalogued in the Big Book too.

THOMAS
Touché. So how did you pass?

FAITH
(beat, her eyes tear up a bit) I died giving birth to a beautiful little girl who grew up never knowing her mother.

Thomas has stopped eating and he listens to her with real interest.

THOMAS
I’m sorry Faith. When was this?

FAITH
In the Spring of 1834.

THOMAS
That’s fascinating.

FAITH
Oh, it is not. It was a horrible life, living in squalor. Nothing but death and misery everywhere. A lot of people died young back then Thomas, including me.
THOMAS
So do you ever think about New Orleans, your life back then?

FAITH
Of course I do, especially about my daughter.

THOMAS
Haven’t you met her up there?

FAITH
Well yes, but I missed being a part of her life entirely.

THOMAS
That must have been difficult for you.

FAITH
You’ve no idea.

THOMAS
Have you ever been back?

FAITH
No, I haven’t had the opportunity.

THOMAS
You know we’re not that far from there right now.

FAITH
That fact hasn’t escaped me. I was actually thinking how nice it would be to take a little stroll through the Vieux Carré again.

THOMAS
What’s that?

FAITH
What you English call the French Quarter, the old town. I’d like to see how much it’s changed over the years.

THOMAS
I hear things haven’t changed very much, especially in the old town.

FAITH
Still, it’d be nice to see it all again.

THOMAS
So why don’t you? We’re here anyway.
FAITH
We do have more pressing matters to attend to.

THOMAS
Maybe you could squeeze it in later.

FAITH
Maybe, we’ll see how things go.

THOMAS
(beat)
So, you’ve been an angel since your daughter was born?

FAITH
(embarrassed)
Lower your voice, Thomas.

THOMAS
Don’t worry about it. People nowadays don’t care. Watch.

He suddenly gets up and shouts throughout the dining room.

THOMAS
Hey everybody! This is an angel!!
She’s my angel!!

CUSTOMERS turn their heads with a smile and return to their dinners as if nothing has happened. Thomas sits back down and starts to eat again.

THOMAS
See?
(he drinks a sip of wine)
People don’t believe in much of anything anymore. Too focused on things like paying their bills and keeping their jobs. Spiritual devotion doesn’t put food in the fridge, you know?

FAITH
I know.

THOMAS
Too many wars, too many diseases, too much misery. Not so different from back in your day I guess. And if there’s supposed to be some kind of divine guidance from above, they’re not seeing any of it. So they’ve all pretty much lost their faith.
FAITH
Free will Thomas. That makes all
the difference. We try to guide
you, but you choose not to listen.
Sometimes, we have to act, so we
give man visions, like daydreams,
to help him make the right
decisions. Visions so powerful that
you actually think they’re real.

THOMAS
Is there really any free will then?

FAITH
Most of the time. But hey, what’s
the difference? Like you said, no
one believes anymore anyway.

THOMAS
Day dreams? They don’t seem that
powerful.

FAITH
You underestimate the power of
the subconscious.

INT. JODEE’S CAR – NIGHT

On a desert highway, through the night, JoDee drives her
three door coupe. Smooth Country music gently plays on the
radio.

By her side, on the passenger seat, Charli dozes, her head
against the window. She sleepily hums along with the song.
JoDee turns to her with a smile and keeps driving, humming
along with the music as well.

CHARLI
(sleepily)
I just love this guy.

JODEE
Who, Tim Spears?

CHARLI
Yeah. He’s gotten me through some
rough times.

JODEE
Really? Yeah he’s pretty great.

JoDee glances over to Charli with an amused look. Charli is
still dozing.
INT. RICHMOND SUITES HOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

From behind a door, the shower can be heard with Thomas happily humming. Faith is simply seated on an armchair, still wearing her black coat. The shower noise stops and Thomas appears, his hair wet, wearing a bathrobe. He towel dries his hair.

THOMAS
You sure you’re not too hot with your coat on?

FAITH
I’m fine.

THOMAS
Why don’t you try to relax a little and enjoy your stay. You’re sure you don’t want to take off your coat?

Reluctantly, Faith takes her coat off. She wears a neat cotton dress, revealing a very nice body.

Thomas can’t help but notice and his reaction is obvious. This brings a smile to Faith’s lips as she looks him in the eye. Faith takes off her shoes with some relief. Thomas sits on the bed, drying his hair.

After a long beat, she strikes a serious pose.

FAITH
Thomas, what do you like about her?

THOMAS
I’m not sure. I mean, I obviously don’t even know her really, but something happened to us up there, a connection. I’ve never been big on souls and religion as I’m sure you know.

FAITH
No doubt.

THOMAS
But what happened up there made me a believer. And I don’t mean all that religious stuff. It was her. It sounds corny, but she really did touch my soul, and that changed me. She made me a better person in a heartbeat. Anyone who can do that is worth finding.
FAITH
But like you said, you don’t know her. This isn’t love Thomas, it’s infatuation.

THOMAS
No way. This is as real as me being up there and you being down here right now. They say there’s someone for everyone you know.

FAITH
And you’re convinced that she’s the one for you?

THOMAS
I’m sure of it.

Faith stays thoughtful for a while. Then, she shakes her head a little, doubtful.

THOMAS
Think what you want. I need to get some sleep now, if you don’t mind.

He switches off the light, takes his bathrobe off, and crawls into the sheets.

THOMAS (V.O.)
Good night Faith.

FAITH (V.O.)
(With some affection)
Good night Thomas.

As if she was wearing infrared glasses, Faith can see through the darkness. She scans Thomas’ body. As he rolls over and turns to her, she stares at his face.

CHARLI’S DREAM

A succession of quick shots in Charli’s P.O.V.:
- Scott drinking behind the wheel
- The car crash
- Charli stuck inside the wreck
- A bright white light that blinds her
- As the light fades the frame turns to negative
- A crowd and an unclear voice from loudspeakers
- The steps of an escalator
- Thomas’ face
- Charli mouthing the words “Thank you”
- The bright light again and a voice in echo:

  **JODEE (V.O.)**
  Charli. Charli!

58 **EXT. GAS STATION - INT. JODEE’S CAR - DAY**

As Charli wakes up, the bright sunlight blinds her.

**JODEE**
Charli, wake up!

JoDee is outside the car at a gas station.

**JODEE**
God. You were really in la la land.

Charli stretches.

**CHARLI**
Where are we?

**JODEE**
Wichita Falls. Four more hours to go. I’m exhausted. Mind driving for a while?

**CHARLI**
Sure, after a nice cup of coffee.

She steps out of the car and yawns.

**CHARLI**
That was the best sleep I’ve had in years.

**JODEE**
So I noticed.
(beat)
You know you were talking in your sleep?

Charli shakes her head.

**JODEE**
You kept saying “Thank you”.

**CHARLI**
Oh yeah? I don’t remember.
(Shes shivers)
Coffee!
They step into the gas station store.

INT. CHARLI’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Scott is lying on top of the living room table, sleeping and snoring, an empty bottle of Scotch by him. The doorbell rings. Scott does not move. It rings again.

Scott grunts and raises his head. He is unshaved and disheveled. It rings again. He stirs, rolls off of the table shakily and onto his feet. It rings again.

    SCOTT
    Alright! I’m coming!

He walks to the small mezzanine where he opens the front door. He faces Thomas and, a few steps behind him, Faith.

Blinded by the daylight, he raises his hand to shield his eyes.

    SCOTT
    Yeah?

    THOMAS
    Hi. I’m looking for Mrs. McKenna.

    SCOTT
    (aggressive)
    Not home. I’m her hubby. What do ya want?
    (he looks at Faith in her long black coat)
    You FBI?

Thomas frowns and shakes his head.

    THOMAS
    No, no. We’re just -- friends of hers.

    SCOTT
    (woozy)
    Well I don’t know you. If you’re friends of hers, go ahead and find her. She left me. Gone. Phhht!

    THOMAS
    So where is she?

    SCOTT
    (bitterly)
    Back in Hell where she should’ve stayed.

Thomas and Faith exchange “a look”.
THOMAS
What do you mean "back in Hell"??

SCOTT
She came back from the dead with some eerie ideas and then took off.
(emotional)
She said she’d always love me though.
(resolved)
She’ll be back.

THOMAS
You don’t have the slightest idea where she could be?

Faith notices that Scott is clenching his fists. She gently pulls on Thomas’ arm.

SCOTT
It’s none of your damn business!
Now buzz off!

Scott slams the door in Thomas’ face. He’s nearly crying, fuming inside.

SCOTT
(to himself)
Leave me be.

INT. TAXICAB - DAY

Thomas and Faith are seated in a taxicab, back seat. As the FAT CAB DRIVER speeds through the street, Thomas looks bewildered.

THOMAS
(almost to himself)
Great! Story of my life. As soon as I get something I want to hold on to, I lose it.
(he looks desperate and turns to Faith)
Well I guess that’s it then.

Faith looks at him with some kind of pity.

FAITH
I don’t get you. You give up on your first try?

THOMAS
(frustrated)
Well what can I do? She’s gone. I have no clue where she is. How am I supposed to find her now?
He leans his head against the cab window, dejected, his eyes lost. They stay silent for a while.

Faith cannot help looking at him, and feeling sorry. She sighs.

FAITH
Suppose you’re a woman and you’re leaving home. Where would you probably go?

THOMAS
I don’t know, to her folks?

She simply nods. Her phone rings inside the cab. She does not answer it. Thomas looks amazed.

FAITH
(shrugging)
They’ll leave a message.

THOMAS
(beat to digest this)
I thought you weren’t supposed to help me?

The telephone stops ringing.

FAITH
You figured it out for yourself, didn’t you?
(looking towards the sky)
He got it by himself.

The fat cab driver looks at her in his rear view mirror.

THOMAS
Figured what out. How am I supposed to find her parents?

Faith closes her eyes for a second.

FAT CAB DRIVER
1137 Covenant Drive? Yes, Ma'am.

As Thomas turns to her, she innocently puts her hand to her lips.

FAITH
Oops --

Her telephone rings again.
INT. JODEE’S CAR – DAY
Charli now drives. She and JoDee happily sing along to a Country rock song on the radio. They shake their heads and wildly toss their hair.

CHARLI & JODEE
(singing together)
Girls with guitars,
There's just no stopping those,
Girls with guitars,
Get your money for nothing,
And your guys for free --

On the highway, a road sign reads AMARILLO.

EXT. CHARLI’S PARENTS’ HOUSE - DAY
An old house decorated with multicolored shells. The cab pulls over by the gate. Thomas and Faith step out of the taxi. Thomas pays and walks to Faith as the taxi speeds away.

THOMAS
Why did you help me?

FAITH
I can’t stand to see people suffer. I never could.

THOMAS
You’ve got your work cut out for you.

They enter the garden and step up to the front door where Thomas presses the doorbell. A lady in her mid-fifties answers. She’s VIOLET, Charli’s mother. She looks tired.

VIOLET
Yes? Can I help you?

THOMAS
Hi. My name is Thomas Hanson. I’m looking for your daughter.

VIOLET
Charli?

Thomas turns to Faith who simply nods.

THOMAS
Yes, Charli.

Violet stares at them for a short while.
VIOLET
Are you with the FBI?

Thomas cannot help smiling.

THOMAS
No ma’am. Just friends of hers.
May we -- come in?

Violet stares at Thomas for a moment.

VIOLET
You’ve got a good face. Come on in.

THOMAS
Thank you ma’am.

Thomas and Faith enter the house.

INT. CHARLI’S PARENTS’ HOUSE – DAY

The rooms are dull and poorly decorated. It looks as though time has stopped within these walls. Violet leads Thomas and Faith to the living room where the TV is on by a tiny Christmas tree.

In front of the TV, in a wheelchair, watching Joyce Meyer on God TV, a man in his early sixties is seated. GEORGE cannot speak anymore.

VIOLET
This is my husband George and I'm Violet by the way.

She and Thomas shake hands.

THOMAS
A pleasure, Violet.

Violet extends her hand to Faith as well.

FAITH
Faith.

VIOLET
Oh, what a lovely name.

FAITH
Well, thank you.

VIOLET
Please, sit down.

The three sit down around the table.
THOMAS
Is -- Charli here?

VIOLET
I wish she was. We haven’t seen her for seven years. I hoped you’d be able to give me some news about her.

FAITH
Seven years?

VIOLET
I’m afraid so. Charli was always very independent, a woman with a mind of her own. That made for a fair bit of friction around here, especially with her father. She couldn’t stand him trying to control any part of her life, so when she met her husband she saw a chance to get out on her own and she took it.
(beat)
We weren’t even invited to the wedding.
(a beat)
Coffee?

THOMAS
Sure. Thanks

Violet gets up and fixes them a cup of coffee.

VIOLET
Two years later, my husband had a stroke. I tried to contact her but she wouldn’t even talk to me.
(turning to the Christmas tree)
Since then, every Christmas, we keep a present for her under the tree, just in case she should pop by.

There’s a big present at the foot of the Christmas tree.

THOMAS
Maybe she will. I’ve heard she left her husband.

Violet smiles sadly, hands them their coffee and sits back down.

THOMAS
Thank you.

He sips his coffee, Faith does not.
VIOLET
I always knew she couldn’t be happy with him. But she was too stubborn to admit it. Now I’m afraid we’ll never see her again. Poor George doesn’t have very long you know.

FAITH
There are always miracles at Christmas time.

VIOLET
Seven years I’ve prayed for one. I don’t believe in miracles anymore.

FAITH
Seven years is a long time, but don’t give up on praying, Violet. There’s always someone listening.

The telephone rings. Violet stands up and picks up the phone.

VIOLET
(on the phone)
Yes.
(beat)
Charli!? My princess! Are you OK?

Thomas turns to Faith and wonders “Is that you?”. She shakes her head “no”.

VIOLET
(on the phone)
Of course I’m glad to hear from you. Where are you?
(beat)
Amarillo, in Texas? What are you doing there?

THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION IS INTERCUT

EXT. AMARILLO STREET - INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Charli stands in a phone booth. JoDee waits for her outside.

CHARLI
(on the phone)
I’m with JoDee. We’re on our way to visit her sister Lou.

VIOLET
(on the phone)
Oh I remember JoDee and Lou honey.
CHARLI  
(on the phone)  
Mom, I’m sorry. I don’t have much time. I just wanted to say I love you, you and dad, and I’m okay.

VIOLET  
(on the phone)  
Oh Charli, we love you too honey. And it’s so wonderful to hear your voice.

CHARLI  
(on the phone)  
It’s great to hear your voice too mom. Don’t worry about me, OK? I’m sorry for everything and I’ll call you when I’m settled and we’ll talk some more. And mom --

VIOLET  
(on the phone)  
Yes honey?

CHARLI  
(on the phone)  
Merry Christmas to you mom, and to dad.

VIOLET  
(on the phone)  
Oh, thank you Charli. We couldn’t have asked for a better present. Merry Christmas to you too sweetheart.

CHARLI  
(on the phone)  
Thanks mom. Talk to you soon. Bye.

Violet hangs up, delighted.

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EXT. AMARILLO STREET - DAY  
Charli hangs up, steps out of the phone booth, and comes to JoDee.

JODEE  
So? It went well?

Charli smiles at her.

CHARLI  
(sheepishly)  
Thank you JoDee.
JODEE
(proud of herself)
I was inspired.

JoDee hands her the car keys.

INT. CHARLI’S PARENTS’ HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Violet is seated again, delighted. She is almost shaking.

VIOLET
I can’t believe it. I didn’t think she’d ever call.
(she turns to her husband)
If only he could know.
(to Thomas)
She’s with her girlfriend JoDee in Amarillo, in Texas. It looks like she’s finally made her move.

Thomas gets up.

THOMAS
Well, then I guess we’re headed for Texas. Thank you for your kind hospitality.

They get up. Violet takes his hand.

VIOLET
Now I’ll pray that you bring her back to us. She deserves to have someone like you in her life.

THOMAS
How do you mean?

VIOLET
I can see the love you feel for her. It’s in your eyes.

Puzzled, Thomas turns to Faith.

THOMAS
Well thank you. I only wish everyone could see it.

Thomas and Violet step toward the door, Faith lags behind a bit. She steps over to George and simply puts her hand on his. The man smiles.

GEORGE
(weakly)
Thank -- you --
Violet hears this and spins around in shock. She can’t believe it. She rushes to George and kneels by him.

VIOLET
(emotional)
Did you just say something honey?!
George! Did you just talk?!

Faith walks past her to follow Thomas.

FAITH
Merry Christmas Violet.

George raises his hand and puts it on her cheek, smiling. Violet turns to Thomas and Faith.

VIOLET
(beat)
What have you --?!

She stops. They are already gone.

EXT. LOU’S RESIDENCE - INT. JODEE’S CAR – DAY

JoDee parks in front of a luxurious house made of glass. The sun reflects off of it.

CHARLI
You sure you’ve got the right address?

JOODEE
Positive.

JoDee leans over to honk the horn and a woman steps out of the house, carrying a little, white Westie dog and laughing. She happily walks to the car. She’s LOU (35, very attractive), JoDee’s sister, a tall blonde woman, the perfect “cow girl” in heels.

She opens JoDee’s door. JoDee gets out of the car and happily hugs her. Charli follows out of her side.

LOU
Little sister! At last!

JOODEE
Hey Lou, how ya doin’ honey?

LOU
Well I’m just dandy now that y’all are finally here.

JOODEE
This is Charli, Lou. Remember her?
Lou moves to Charli and hugs her.

LOU
‘Course I do. Hey Charli. Last time I saw you, you was wearin’ pigtails and splashin’ around in that bitty plastic wadin’ pool o’ yours.

CHARLI
Thanks for having us Lou.

They hug.

LOU
Shoot! T’aint nuthin’. Welcome to the Lone Star State girls! C’mon in!

They grab their bags, head for the house.

CHARLI
Cute dog.

LOU
Oh, this is Twinkie, girls.

CHARLI
Hey Twinkie!

She gives the dog a little pat on the head as they enter the house, first Lou, then Charli, then Jodee. Charli turns briefly toward Jodee.

JODEE
Twinkie?!

The well-to-do and cozy interior of the house is entirely dedicated to Country music. Several guitars are hanging on the walls as well as a large framed promotional poster of Tim Spears. Charli notices it, then looks around some more. She cannot believe her eyes.

LOU
Y’all can stay as long as you like. Tim spends so much time on the road, it’s like I’m livin’ here alone.

JODEE
(to Charli)
Her husband’s Tim Spears.

CHARLI
What!
JODEE
Lou doesn’t like to talk about it. She figures if people knew they’d treat her differently. That’s why I never told you.
(with a smile)
Sorry.

Charli takes another look at the poster.

CHARLI
No way!

INT. ART STORE – BATON ROUGE – DUSK

Thomas and Faith are at the counter. Thomas has bought a sketchpad and pencils and is paying the STORE CLERK.

THOMAS
So, Amarillo, eh?

FAITH
I guess so.

THOMAS
You know what I thought it was called when I was kid?

She thinks for a moment, then starts to laugh.

THOMAS
What?

FAITH
Armadillo?

THOMAS
Hey, I was just a kid!

Faith looks like she’s really staring to like him. They exit the store.

STORE CLERK
(to himself)
Now how’d she know that?

INT. LOU’S RESIDENCE – BEDROOM – DAY

Lou, JoDee, and Charli enter a sumptuous bedroom with silky wall coverings.
LOU
(to Charli)
I guess this’ll be your room. No
one’s ever slept in here before.
You’ll be the first.

Charli scans the room. There’s a king-sized waterbed with
silk sheets on it. On the walls, a dozen framed gold
records. She sits on the bed and sinks into it, falling to
one side a bit.

CHARLI
Woa!

LOU
Waterbed. Ya don’t mind, do ya’?

CHARLI
(recovering)
No. It’s fine.

LOU
I’ll give ya ‘nother room if ya’d
like.

CHARLI
No, no. This is great.

LOU
(to JoDee)
Alright. C’mon, Jodee, I’ll show
you yours.

Lou and JoDee step out of the bedroom, leaving Charli
alone. She lies down, feeling good, and trying out the
waterbed.

INT. GREYHOUND TERMINAL – DUSK

In the Baton-Rouge Greyhound terminal hall, Thomas speaks
with a CLERK behind the counter, his Visa in hand.

THOMAS
Two tickets to Amarillo please.

The clerk punches up the tickets and hands them to Thomas,
who pays.

CLERK
Bus leaves in two hours, platform
six.
THOMAS
Fine, thanks very much. Merry Christmas.

He turns and heads toward Faith.

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INT. LOU’S RESIDENCE – KITCHEN – NIGHT

Lou, JoDee and Charli are seated around a table in the kitchen. They drink Margaritas. Lou looks rather drunk.

CHARLI
So where’s Tim, Lou?

LOU
He’s gone on a three-month cross country tour, including Canada. He calls me everyday, but I still feel pretty alone. It’s hard bein’ a Country singer’s wife. They’re all married to their music. He’ll be droppin’ by for New Years though.

JODEE
Oh, that’s great Lou.

CHARLI
Yeah!

She's a bit excited that she might get to meet Tim Spears!

LOU
Yeah, I'm really lookin' forward to it.

(beat)
Say, I’m real glad y’all came by to keep me company. So Jodee, how’s things goin’ in Baton --

(burp-beat)
-- Rouge?

JODEE
(sighing)
Boring as usual.

LOU
And mom and dad?

JODEE
Boring as usual.

Lou laughs. Charli doesn’t. JoDee notices it.
JODEE
(to Lou)
Charli broke up with her husband yesterday. She needs to have some fun.

LOU
(A bit drunk, to Charli)
Cheer up Charli. Y’ain’t the first and ya sure as hell ain’t gonna be the last. Listen. Ya gotta think o’ men like Kleenex. You use ‘em up and then ya toss ‘em out, before they do it ta you. Tim’s my third husband and I ain’t even sure if he’s Mr. Right, but hey, I got a comfortable life. I sure enjoy it, most a’ the time. But “c’est la vie”, like them Eyetalians say.

She toasts them. Charli and Jodee glance at each other, giggle, then toast.

JODEE
(to Charli)
Yeah! Enjoy! Remember the three “B’s”! Boys, boys and boys!

LOU
(to Charli)
Yeah, she’s right! Have a drink and don’t give a damn!

CHARLI
I don’t give a damn!!
(raising her glass)
To Kleenex!!

The three raise and clink their glasses.

EXT. HIGHWAY - INT. BUS - NIGHT

As the bus speeds through the night, Thomas and Faith are seated side by side. Obsessively, Thomas keeps sketching Charli’s face in the sketchbook.

FAITH
Why do people keep asking us if we’re with the FBI?

THOMAS
It’s the way you’re dressed. They watch too much TV.

Faith nods to the sketchbook.
FAITH
(looking at the sketchbook)
You’re very talented.

THOMAS
I wish some other people thought so. I might actually be able to sell a comic strip.

FAITH
Just believe in yourself, Thomas. That’s how things work. It’ll come to you.

She turns her head back and realizes that a GUY and a GIRL seated just behind them are kissing.

FAITH
So, Amarillo.
(long beat)
Have you taken any time to consider what you’re risking here?

Thomas appears confused.

FAITH
Think about it for a second. You’re on your way to Amarillo, a Toronto boy in Texas, and for what really? To try to find this fantasy girl who probably doesn’t have any idea who you are.

Thomas smiles slightly with a “give it your best shot” look.

FAITH
Say you do find her, say she even remembers you from up there. How do you know that won’t scare her to death? You might be part of a bad dream to her. She might want nothing to do with you. But if you come back with me Thomas, eternity in paradise, that’s guaranteed if you want it, or you could come back here to a whole new life in the future.

THOMAS
Nothing you can say’ll change my mind. I’m gonna find my own piece of Heaven, right down here with her. Besides, you should know better than anyone, ya gotta have faith.
Charli is lying alone in the king size bed. She turns and stares at the phone by the bed. She sits, reaches out her hand to the phone, hesitates and, finally, deciding against it, lies back.

Almost everyone on the bus is asleep. Faith is still awake. She stares at Thomas who sleeps too, but her expression has changed. She seems to have some affection for him. Delicately, she caresses his hair with two fingers.

Then, she hears a hum, shivers, and materializes her phone.

**FAITH**
(on the phone)
Yes?
(beat)
What about my behavior? You told me I had carte blanche.
(beat)
Don’t worry, I have a plan.
(beat)
No, I don’t feel anything more for him than any of us feels for an Earthling soul.
(beat)
I know I can’t. I know, but I’m really just doing my job.
(beat)
Er -- I’ve got static. I can’t hear you and --

Irritated, she makes the phone disappear. Then she turns again to Thomas with a tender smile. Her telephone hums again, but she doesn’t answer it. The phone stops humming.

A telephone rings in the seat behind her. The guy back there answers his phone and whispers into it. He leans forward towards Faith, his cell phone in hand.

**GUY**
(whispering to Faith)
Excuse me, is your name Faith?

Faith turns to him, pissed off. The guy sits back and hangs up. The girl at his side wakes up and turns to him.

**GIRL (O.S.)**
Who’s that on the phone? And who the Hell is Faith?
Faith unties the bun in her hair and lets it fall out. The black locks fall draping over her shoulders. She looks back over to Thomas. It is clear that she has feelings for him. He is dreaming.

THOMAS’ DREAM

In a big wheat field, a huge crowd made up of HUNDREDS OF WOMEN of all ages and races. Thomas is stuck in the middle, being pushed around like a pinball by every woman he bumps into.

As he is pushed ahead, the crowd separates to form a path to a single woman -- Charli. She stands in the middle of the field and stares at Thomas with a smile. She slowly reaches her hands out to him.

Thomas starts to run to her, but, as the soil gives under his feet, he falls into an infinite darkness.

Thomas screams in his dream and on the bus --

INT. BUS - DAWN

THOMAS’ P.O.V.:

Thomas opens his eyes with a start. Faith’s face enters the frame.

FAITH
Thomas! Are you alright?

Faith is leaning over him, her hair almost caressing his cheeks, her cleavage inches from his face. Almost panting, staring at her breasts, Thomas pulls his eyes away

THOMAS
Where are we?

FAITH
(pulling back)
Amarillo. I tried to wake you up but you were too far gone.

He stares at her.

THOMAS
(confused)
You look different.
(beat)
Your hair --

FAITH
(casually)
I just took out the bun.
Thomas stares at her, almost as if in awe. The rising sun from the window behind her forms a halo around Faith’s head. She seems to be aware of the effect she is having on him.

**FAITH**
Something wrong?

**THOMAS**
(recovering)
No, no. It looks very nice.

**FAITH**
(a bit flattered)
Well thank you.

**THOMAS**
It’s true.
(beat)
Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m gonna have a really busy day.

He gets up. Faith gets up and steps back out of his way. He steps past her and heads toward the door. She follows him as they get off the bus.

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**INT. LOU’S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - DAY**

Charli is slowly waking up in her bed as someone gently knocks on the bedroom door. JoDee enters, embarrassed.

**JODEE**
Sorry to bother you Charli, but there’s someone here to see you.

Surprised, Charli sits up in the bed and stretches. She wears golden silk pajamas.

**CHARLI**
Who is it?

**JODEE**
You’ll have to come down and see for yourself.

She cracks her knuckles.

**CHARLI**
OK, gimme two minutes. And stop cracking your knuckles!

She tries to shake off the grogginess as JoDee exits.
Wrapped in a silk bathrobe over her pajamas, Charli enters the living room and sees Scott, with a bunch of flowers in his hand. As soon as he sees Charli he falls to one knee. He raises his flowers to her and starts to sing.

**SCOTT**

(singing)

I've just got to show you
How differently I feel,
That I can be true to you,
That my love is real.
But my past will forever haunt me,
If you say that you don't want me,
I'm down on my knees,
I'm begging you please,
Won't you have a change of heart —

His voice is trembling and he is obviously moved. Charli is embarrassed. At first, she does not know what to do. Then she stares at him blankly.

**CHARLI**

What are you doing here Scott?

**SCOTT**

(smiling)

I’ve come to take you home, honey. It’s time. I’ve fixed you up a welcome back party.

**CHARLI**

How did you find me?

**SCOTT**

JoDee’s parents. I told them you forgot to give me your address so I could write.

(scanning the room)

Nice place.

**CHARLI**

(nervously chuckling)

You’re kidding, right?

**SCOTT**

(very calm)

I’m dead serious. You know, I’ve been reflecting on all of this —

(he stands)

-- and you were right. I was stupid and childish. But I’m putting all that behind me now. I’ve changed. You’ll see.

(beat)

Trust me.
CHARLI
Oh please don’t start all of that again. We’ve been through it too often. “I’ll change, you’ll see, trust me”. There’s never any change Scott! Well not this time pal. It’s game over. I’m on my own now, thinking for myself, doing for myself, and loving it.

SCOTT
But baby, you never gave me any warning. How can your feelings for me change, “like that”?

He snaps his fingers.

CHARLI
It wasn’t “like that” Scott!
(she snaps her fingers)
Do you have any idea how that accident affected me? I almost died Scott! You did that to me! You had to drive that drunk, and you nearly killed me. You risked my life, and your life, and everything we had together, “like that”!
(she snaps her fingers again)
Well that just makes me wonder if any of that even matters to you. And the short answer is, it doesn’t.

Scott is about to speak.

CHARLI
Now, you listen to me. I’ve thought about this a lot over the last few days. Thinking about how you have no idea of the days and nights I’ve spent waiting for you, and worrying. Guessing you were drunk again, too drunk to even call me. Putting up with your stupid friends and their stupid jokes. Feeling like nothing more than your trophy wife. I’ve kept this to myself for way too long. I want a real life. I want the youth you stole from me back! I need something important to do in my life Scott, and you wouldn’t let me work! That’s why I wanted a baby. You wouldn’t even give me that. You’re a selfish bastard and I’ve had enough of it. Now get the hell out and don’t come back.
A long beat. Scott succeeds in remaining incredibly calm, though his eyes reveal rage and frustration.

SCOTT
Fine. Well then I just got one thing to say. I’ll be there when you need me. Deep down inside I know you, you’ll come back. You know why? ’Cause you’re nothing without me.
(beat)
I’ll stay in town for a few days. My hotel’s card’s in with the flowers.
(he takes the MP3 player out his pocket)
And here, you forgot your present.

He gently leaves the flowers and the MP3 player on the floor and quietly steps out of the house.

JoDee appears from the corner where she was hiding.

JODEE
Damn girl, what a speech! I didn't think you had it in you.

CHARLI
Me neither!

Charli folds herself into JoDee’s arms and starts sobbing.

JODEE
OK honey, let it out. These things are always hard.

CHARLI
(sighing heavily)
That scared the hell out of me. But once I started I couldn’t stop! I just hope I did the right thing.

They hug tighter.

JODEE
Don’t worry honey, you did.

INT. HOLIDAY INN RECEPTION - DAY

Thomas and Faith enter a hotel lobby heavily decorated for Christmas.

Faith has a very seductive way of walking and her blouse now has the top few buttons undone. Everyone in the hall looks at her. She’s radiant. Thomas steps to the reception desk.
Howdy folks. Welcome to the Holiday Inn, Amarillo.

Hi, I’d like two rooms please.

Faith joins him and takes his arm.

Come on darling. Why two rooms?

We’re on our honeymoon. He’s still a bit confused.

Name?

(a bit flustered).

Hanson.

Mr. and Mrs. Hanson. Address?

The receptionist holds a magnetic key out to Thomas. Faith takes it from his hand.

Thank you.

I’m off to take a shower. Don’t be too long sweetheart. I miss you already.

She heads to the elevator and turns back to blow Thomas a kiss. Thomas looks stunned.

Congratulations. Address?

Faith enters the room and immediately notices Sariel seated on a chair.

What?

Exactly what in Heaven’s name do you think you’re doing?
FAITH
(Innocently)
Whatever do you mean?

SARIEL
You’re playing with fire here Faith.

FAITH
(She sits on the bed
across from him)
Oh relax. I’ve got the situation
well in hand.

SARIEL
From the looks of things you’re
about to have a lot more than
that well in hand. This is
outrageous and unacceptable
behavior.

FAITH
Oh please Sariel. It’s all part of
my plan. Now let me get on with
it.

SARIEL
You know what you’re risking
here.

FAITH
I’m not risking anything.

SARIEL
I hope you know what you’re
doing, but I doubt it.

Furious, Thomas enters the room. Faith is still seated on
the bed. Sariel is gone.

THOMAS
OK, what game are you playing?!

FAITH
(Innocently)
Game?

THOMAS
You know what I’m talking about.
That little show you just did in the
lobby. What are you up to Faith?
FAITH  
(seriously)  
You know, maybe you’re right. I’m  
starting to realize how much I miss  
real life. It’s not that bad down  
here. So since I’m stuck here for a  
few days anyway, maybe I should  
enjoy it a little? Understand?

THOMAS  
(no longer angry, sighs)  
I guess so.

FAITH  
(sighing)  
Oh Thomas, stop being such a yes  
man. You’re too nice, you know?  
That’s a big problem. Fight back  
sometimes. You can’t go through  
life being so laid back. No wonder  
you get crushed all the time.

Thomas drops his head, ashamed.

FAITH  
Promise me you’ll stick up for  
yourself from now on.

Head still down, Thomas nods.

FAITH  
Hold your head up and talk to me!

THOMAS  
(lifting his head)  
OK!

FAITH  
Good. Now, how would you like to  
show me the bright side of life --  
(beat)  
-- please?

Thomas is about to speak.

FAITH  
(interrupting)  
Don’t worry, she’ll wait a few  
more hours.  
(beat)  
Okay?

Thomas nods.

FAITH  
Great! I’m gonna live a little!
She kisses Thomas lightly on the lips and then heads for the bathroom. Thomas is a bit surprised by the kiss, pleasantly.

INT. LOU’S KITCHEN – DAY
Charli and Jodee are seated at the kitchen table having a coffee.

JODEE
Are you sure you’re OK?

CHARLI
I guess so.

JODEE
God he can be a real dick!

CHARLI
Yeah, but in a way I’ve got to give him some credit for trying.

JODEE
I suppose, in a way.

CHARLI
It’s still depressing as hell though.

JODEE
That’s for sure.
(beat)
Hey, wanna go shopping?

CHARLI
What?

JODEE
C’mon! It always cheers me up.

CHARLI
Why not?!

JODEE
Great! You need me to lend you some money?

CHARLI
Oh, no thanks honey. I’ve got “Plasticash”. Let Scott pay for it.

JODEE
Damn right! Let’s go!

They exit the kitchen.
INT. DRESS SHOP - DAY

MUSICAL SEQUENCE

Thomas and Faith are in a store buying a dress for her. Several shots where Faith tries different dresses on for Thomas’ approval. As Faith appears in a beautiful, sexy dress, Thomas looks tempted. She is a really attractive woman.

LATER

It is now Thomas’ turn to try on some new clothes for Faith’s approval. After a number of attempts he finds a very stylish outfit that she likes.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - DAY

Thomas and Faith have fun riding a roller coaster.

EXT. AMARILLO STREET - DAY

Thomas and Faith listen to a Country music singer playing guitar on a street corner.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Thomas and Faith are seated, in a cafe, sharing a giant ice cream sundae and laughing. She gives him a spoonful, they exchange a long and intense look. Her seductive spell appears to be working like a charm.

Outside, Thomas has not seen Charli and JoDee walking by across the street. On the sidewalk facing the cafe is a homeless lady. She is sitting there with all her belongings packed neatly in shopping bags.

Charli stops and gives her some money. The lady thanks her with a smile. Then they hear someone calling Charli.

SCOTT (O.S.)
Hey Charli!

END MUSIC

Charli turns and stops. Scott is crossing the street toward them, very drunk.
SCOTT
(cynical)
My lovin’ wife. The apple of my eye.
As you can see, your hubby is himself
today, a little boozy-woozy.

A car stops, tires squealing, almost hitting Scott.

SCOTT
(to the car)
Oh, easy does it pal!

He keeps coming to Charli and JoDee. The car moves on.

SCOTT
(to Charli)
Listen, I’ve had ‘nough of your
crap now! You’re my wife and
you’re coming home with me!

JoDee interferes.

JODee
Get away from her, you loser, or --

Scott threatens to slap her but he stops himself. Charli
grabs Jodee’s arm and pulls her back out of harm’s way.

SCOTT
(to JoDee)
Or what?! You gonna spank me, you
bitch?! She wouldn’t have left if
it wasn’t for you! It’s all your
fault!

JODee
Bullshit Scott! You wanna know who’s
fault it is? Look in a mirror!

SCOTT
(to Charli)
Come on, let’s go.

He grabs her arm. The homeless lady looks scared.

JODee
Hey Scott!!

CHARLI
(coldly)
Forget it! It's over!

She struggles slightly and pulls her arm free.

CHARLI
Even if I did come back, I’d run
again, first chance I got!
She takes her wedding ring off of her finger and hands it to Scott. He takes the ring.

SCOTT
But you told me you’d always love me.

Scott pockets the ring.

CHARLI
I suppose I always will, in some way. Goodbye Scott.

She resumes walking with JoDee, leaving Scott.

SCOTT
Sugar.

Charli and JoDee walk away.

SCOTT
Charli!!!
Panting, Thomas tries to stand up, helped by Faith.

THOMAS
She was there. I saw her!

He indicates the place where Charli just was. The CAR DRIVER steps out of his car.

CAR DRIVER
Hey! Are you okay?

Thomas just nods.

CAR DRIVER
You sure?

THOMAS
Yes, thank you.

CAR DRIVER
(worried)
You ain’t gonna sue me?

THOMAS
No, thank you.

Thomas is already walking away, limping, along with Faith. Scott takes notice of them and seems to recognize them. The homeless lady watches.

CAR DRIVER
Nice fella, thank God.

He gets back into his car and drives off.

FAITH
Are you really sure?

THOMAS
Yes Faith, I’m fine.

FAITH
I mean, are you really sure it was her?

THOMAS
Definitely. She’s real alright.

They reach the street corner. Charli and JoDee have disappeared. Thomas turns back.

THOMAS
Damn!
   (beat)
The guy --
FAITH
What guy?

THOMAS
The guy who was yelling at her.
Her husband.

He turns back. Scott is up and starting to head back to the bar.

THOMAS
There he is. Hey buddy!

Scott stops and turns.

THOMAS
Those ladies you were just talking to, where’d they go?

SCOTT
How the hell should I know. Why?

THOMAS
I need to find Charli.

SCOTT
Oh yeah?!
(beat)
Wait a minute. I know you.

Scott sucker punches Thomas in the face and knocks him to the ground.

SCOTT
Give her that message for me. The bitch!

Scott turns and walks away, heading back to the bar. Faith goes over to Thomas.

THOMAS
(rubbing his jaw)
What the hell’d he do that for!?

FAITH
He’s mad. You’re in his way and asking the wrong question. C’mon, get up.

She helps him up again.

THOMAS
Ouch! OK, that’s gonna be sore.

Faith looks suddenly annoyed. Thomas notices it.
THOMAS
What’s that face for?

FAITH
(smiling)
Nothing.
(she has noticed that
his arm is bleeding)
I hope she’s worth it. Let’s get
back to the hotel and patch you up.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ROOM - DAY

Thomas is seated on the bed, half naked. He has a scrape on
his arm. Faith is seated by him, cleaning the wound with a
wet towel. With delicate and sensual moves, she gently rubs
his skin.

Thomas stares at her. She looks up to him. Their eyes meet.
Imperceptibly, their faces get closer, and closer. They are
about to kiss, when Thomas grimaces and moans. Faith
freezes, afraid she’s hurt him.

FAITH
Sorry.

With a look of wondering what to do next, Thomas gets up,
goes into the bathroom, and closes the door.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ROOM - BATHROOM - DAY

Thomas leans over the sink and looks at his own reflection
in the mirror. He looks lost.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ROOM - DAY

Faith’s eyes shows a mix of sadness and anger.

INT. LOU’S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charli and JoDee come in through the front door of Lou’s
house. Charli looks on the verge of a nervous breakdown.
They go to the living room where JoDee helps her to sit
down.

JODEE
Here, have a seat honey and try
to relax. I’ll get you a drink.

She pours a glass of whisky and hands it to Charli.

CHARLI
What’s this?
JODEE
Just drink it. You’ll feel better, believe me. This is the voice of experience.

Charli lifts the glass to her lips and frowns.

CHARLI
Whisky?

She drinks it all up and coughs. JoDee is amazed. Charli hands JoDee her glass.

CHARLI
More.

JoDee pours her another. Charli is about to drink it when Lou enters, as happy as a little girl.

LOU
Okay girls! Git on yer boots an’ yer britches an’ saddle up! We’re having a party here tonight! I invited everyone I know. It’s gonna be huge! Are y’all in?

Charli raises her glass.

CHARLI
I’m in!

She drinks it, bottoms up.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ROOM - DAY

Thomas steps out of the bathroom. He’s dressed up. Faith hasn’t moved.

THOMAS
I’m off.

FAITH
Where are you going?

THOMAS
(bitterly)
Listen, Faith. I don’t need a chaperon anymore.

FAITH
You’re my responsibility, remember?

THOMAS
You don’t know where I’m going.
THOMAS
If you must know, I’m going to hit a few bars.

He steps out. A bit shocked, she follows.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ELEVATOR - DAY
Thomas and Faith stand in the hotel elevator as it goes down to the lobby.

FAITH
Are you going out to get drunk?

THOMAS
Would you stop preaching to me please? I’m just gonna have a look for Charli’s husband. He’s probably hanging around a bar on that street.

Faith smiles.

THOMAS
I still have free will, don’t I?

INT. BAR #1 - DAY
Loud Country music plays. Thomas enters a bar, followed by Faith. He scans the place but doesn’t see Scott.

INT. BAR #2 - DUSK
Same situation in another bar. The place is a dive, full of bikers and thugs. But no trace of Scott.

INT. BAR #3 - DUSK
A bar with a Jamaican atmosphere. Still no trace of Scott.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT
Thomas and Faith enter another Country music bar.
Thomas and Faith enter the bar. Once again, Thomas scans the place. Scott is nowhere to be seen.

FAITH
(to Thomas)
Hey sailor, buy a lady a drink?

THOMAS
(surprised)
Say what?

FAITH
I’ve never tasted a beer.

THOMAS
Well, we can sure do something about that.

Thomas steps up to the bar. Before following him, as her phone rings, Faith raises her eyes to the ceiling.

FAITH
(sighing, then under her breath)
I know what I’m doing, OK?

She joins Thomas at the bar. He has just ordered two beers. By them, an OLD WINO, wearing a large Stetson hat is sprawled over the bar, staring at his full glass and an almost empty bottle as if he was admiring a famous statue. Then, he raises his glass.

OLD WINO
(drunk)
To Zsa Zsa Gabor. My first and only true love.

He drinks up and sloppily fills his glass again. As soon as the BARTENDER puts the two glasses of beer on the counter, Faith grabs hers and looks at Thomas.

FAITH
Cheers. Is that what you usually say?

THOMAS
Yup, cheers!

They touch glasses. She puts her glass to her lips and pretends to drink. Thomas drinks up.

MAGICALLY, FAITH’S BEER DISAPPEARS IN HER GLASS
The old wino is about to drink when he sees what happened in Faith’s glass. His eyes bulge with shock. He quickly and desperately drinks his shot.

After a few gulps, Thomas puts his glass on the counter and realizes Faith’s glass is empty.

FAITH
Mmmm, I love that.

THOMAS
You --?

She nods, smiling. By then, the old wino is watching their every move.

FAITH
Ready for round two?

Astounded, Thomas orders two more beers.

THOMAS
Two more please. You sure downed that in a hurry.

FAITH
Beginner’s luck.

The beers are served. Faith nods at Thomas’ glass, encouraging him.

FAITH
Come on. Cheers.

THOMAS
Bottoms up?

FAITH
(happily)
Okay.

They both take their second glasses and clink them. Thomas smiles and drinks his glass down. Faith’s beer disappears as before. The old wino, in shock, downs his shot. Thomas puts his glass on the bar and notices that her glass is empty again. He has foam on his lips. Faith gently wipes it up with her thumb and then licks it off.

THOMAS
Damn, we should enter you in a contest. You’re amazing!

FAITH
One more.

Thomas shrugs and orders another round. The beers are served.
THOMAS
What’ll we drink to?

FAITH
To dreams fulfilled.

THOMAS
To dreams fulfilled.

While Thomas drinks, Faith’s glass is again magically emptied. This time it is Thomas’ turn to wipe the foam off of Faith’s lips. They look at each other as though they might kiss.

Thomas glances over Faith’s shoulder and freezes. He sees Scott who steps out from the bathroom and sits at the table where he had left his drink. Thomas walks directly over to him. Faith is about to follow him when she is stopped by the old wino.

OLD WINO
Hey darlin’, any chance ya could see yer way clear to fillin’ this here bottle like ya emptied that there glass?

Faith smiles at him and touches the bottle. It fills instantly.

FAITH
(sweet)
Merry Christmas old timer.

She heads over to join Thomas.

OLD WINO
Same to you ma’am, and thank ya.

He pours himself another drink.

The bartender turns and notices the newly filled bottle. He wonders how that happened. He checks the bottles on the shelf behind him, as if the Old Wino had somehow managed to get one.

SCOTT
(raising his eyes to them)
Well, well, look who’s here. My favorite FBI agents. Come on, have a drink with me. Let’s celebrate my divorce.

Between his fingers Thomas notices Charli’s wedding ring. Thomas sits at the table. Faith stays standing.
THOMAS
Where is she?

SCOTT
(frowning)
Who are you people?

FAITH
(sitting)
Like you said, we’re with the FBI.

Struck by Faith’s reply, Thomas decides to play along.

SCOTT
(chuckling)
I knew it. Listen, sorry about that sucker punch. I hope I didn’t hurt you too bad.

THOMAS
Naw, I’m OK.

SCOTT
Good.
(sigh)
So what’s she done?

THOMAS
We’re not at liberty to discuss it, but we do need to find her.

He empties his glass and stares at Thomas who turns to the bartender and signals him to bring Scott another shot.

SCOTT
I always thought she was happy, you know? Never had to work. I even got a second job. I made her laugh. But she wanted a baby. A baby. Who needs a baby nowadays? Where’s the fun in being up to your elbows in shitty diapers?

The bartender brings Scott another drink and steps back.

SCOTT
I tried my best. I’ll never understand why she did all this to me.

FAITH
Did you try asking her?

SCOTT
How do you ask the Ice Queen anything?
FAITH
She must have some good reasons.

SCOTT
Who knows what goes on in a woman’s mind?

FAITH
Her husband might.

SCOTT
(chuckling)
Not this one.

He drinks his shot.

THOMAS
So, where is she?

Scott digs into his pocket and takes a out a folded paper. He hands it to Thomas.

SCOTT
Here. I don’t give a damn anymore.

Thomas unfolds the paper and reads it. He gets up and drops some cash on the table and leaves. Faith stares at Scott with some warmth.

FAITH
You’ll find someone else. She’ll be good to you.

SCOTT
Go to Hell.

Faith smiles sadly and follows Thomas out of the bar. Scott stares at them as they leave, then orders another shot.

101  EXT. AMARILLO STREET - NIGHT  101

Thomas walks down the street with some determination. Faith can hardly keep up with him.

FAITH
Well this could be your moment of truth Thomas. Maybe you should hope for the best, and prepare for the worst. Life’s full of surprises.

Thomas stops and turns to her.

THOMAS
What’s that supposed to mean? Is there something you’re not telling me?
FAITH
No, of course not. But you’re
going to meet her now. What if
things don’t turn out right? What
if she doesn’t even recognize you?

THOMAS
(firmly)
We’re meant for each other.

FAITH
Don’t be childish Thomas.

THOMAS
Look, I need to believe in
Christmas miracles today.

Thomas resumes walking.

INT. LOU’S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A wild party is on. A large crowd is gathered in Lou’s
living room. Extravagant people, couples, cowboys, Santa
Clauses, people dancing and talking. Lou winds her way
through the dancing couples, carrying empty glasses, toward
a food table where Charli and JoDee are chatting.

They have to shout to be heard.

LOU
C’mon, girls!! Shake your booties!
Get sexy!!

JODEE
We don’t know anybody!!

Lou signals JoDee to wait. She turns to the DJ and signals
him to stop the music.

MUSIC STOPS

LOU
(speaking loudly)
Your attention please! I got an
announcement to make. Right here, by
my side, there’s two lovely single
young ladies lookin’ for their Prince
Charmin’! I leave the rest to you.
Gentlemen, start your engines!

Charli and JoDee are blushing. Lou signals the DJ to start
the music up again.

MUSIC RESUMES

About ten men rush to the two young women.
INT. LOU’S RESIDENCE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The bell rings at the front door. Lou, walks up, a half full glass of red wine in her hand, and opens the door. Thomas and Faith are on the doorstep.

LOU
Hi. Can I help you?

THOMAS
(hesitating)
Hi there. I’m looking for Charli.

LOU
Charli? Yeah, ‘course. She’s here. Come on in.

Thomas and Faith step in.

LOU
(As she closes the door)
Did she invite you?

THOMAS
(hesitating)
Not exactly, but we’ve come a long way to see her.

LOU
Hold on a minute, lemme go fetch her fer ya.

She gives Thomas her glass and leaves them for the living room. Thomas looks very nervous, not knowing what to do with the glass, he figures “what the hell” and drains it for some liquid courage. Then he puts it down and starts trying to make himself presentable.

INT. LOU’S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lou makes her way through the party crowd to Charli who is talking to a man (BRAD). JoDee talks with a cowboy (KENNY). Lou leans over, close to Charli’s ear.

LOU
There’s someone at the door fer ya!

CHARLI
(to JoDee)
Scott!

LOU
Nope. A man and a woman! They say they come a long way ta see ya!
Charli frowns and hesitates, then heads out.

JODEE
(to Charli)
Hold on, I’m coming with you.

They slip through the dancers and out to the mezzanine.

INT. LOU’S RESIDENCE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Thomas stands stiff. Charli enters and stops. She frowns as if she were trying to remember if she knows the man standing before her. There’s definitely something familiar about him.

Thomas takes a step toward her and reaches out his hand with some confidence. Faith notices this subtle change in him.

THOMAS
Hi Charli, I’m Thomas Hanson.

They shake hands and as they touch, they both feel a connection.

CHARLI
(confused)
Hello. Do-- Do I know you?

THOMAS
We -- met in a -- special place, a few days ago. Do you remember me?

CHARLI
A few days ago? I would remember.
(beat)
Somehow --
(a bit of recognition comes to her, frightened, shaking her head)
No, I’m sorry mister. I don’t know you. No.

She is about to step back.

THOMAS
We met up -- there. In Heaven. We were both dead.

JoDee is transfixed, astonished. Frozen, Charli looks at him with fearful eyes.

CHARLI
No! That’s not possible! I don’t know you! Leave me alone! Okay?!
She turns her back on him and rushes into the living room, leaving JoDee behind, still dumbfounded.

THOMAS
Charli!

JODee
(gathering her composure, to Thomas)
Listen, please don’t push it. She said she doesn’t know you.

THOMAS
Are you JoDee?

JODee
That’s right.

THOMAS
Please, just tell her I’m telling the truth. I really have to talk to her.

As JoDee leads them back to the door, Thomas turns to her.

THOMAS
If she remembers me, tell her I’m staying at the Holiday Inn. Thomas Hanson.

JODee
Bye now.

Thomas and Faith step out. Thomas turns back to the door to say something, but JoDee closes it on him.

EXT. LOU’S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Disappointed, Thomas walks down to the front gate and stops. Faith stands two steps behind him.

FAITH
I’m sorry Thomas. I tried to warn you. I wanted to spare you this pain, but you’re too stubborn.

THOMAS
(desperate)
Fine, you were right! You were right all along, OK?! But this isn’t over. I’m not giving up that easy. I need this to happen Faith. This is my one shot at happiness. I just know it!

He heads out to the street. Faith follows.
They reach the street and start walking down it.

FAITH
She can’t remember you.

THOMAS
God Dammit!

FAITH
Please don’t say that Thomas.

THOMAS
I’m sorry, but God Dammit!

FAITH
Thomas please!

THOMAS
So explain something to me. How come I can remember everything about our time up there and she can’t remember any of it?

FAITH
You didn’t step through the Memory Wash.

Thomas stops.

THOMAS
The what?!

FAITH
The Memory Wash. Everyone who comes back to life goes through. It erases any memory of their experience up there. You broke the protocol Thomas, so you didn’t go through it. She did.

THOMAS
So she’ll never remember me?

FAITH
She can’t. That’s one of the conditions of coming back.

THOMAS
(increasingly furious)
And you knew this all along! Then why did you even help me?! Oh I get it. Just to stay close to me, to be sure I’d go back with you after I failed? Oh yeah!
THOMAS (cont'd)
A desperate man is easier to play, right? Build up his faith and his trust in you and then crush him when he’s down.

(with spite)
That’s despicable! You’re not any better than any of us. If being an angel means manipulating people like that, and to hell with the consequences, then I’m not interested in any part of it. Now you listen to me. I’ve still got four days left. I’m going to do whatever it takes to get her to believe me. If I can do it and it still doesn’t work, then I’ll have nothing left to lose. But if it works, I’ll have a new life, with her, regardless of what you do!

(beat)
Are you receiving me loud and clear?!

FAITH
(Submissive)
Yes Thomas.

He walks away and leaves Faith standing there.

THOMAS
I’m going back to the hotel.

INT - LOU’S RESIDENCE - BATHROOM - NIGHT
Charli is leaning over the sink, splashing her face with cold water. JoDee enters the bathroom.

JODEE
Hey Charli.

CHARLI
Hey.

JODEE
You alright?

CHARLI
Yeah, I guess so, but that was pretty weird.

JODEE
Ya think?

(beat)
So you really have no clue who that guy is?
CHARLI
Nope. I bet Scott sent him. No one knows what happened to me besides him and you. He’s a cruel bastard.

JoDee hesitates for a short while and cracks her knuckles.

JODEE
You mentioned this guy to me though, remember?
(beat)
But you didn’t tell Scott about him. You told me so. So, how could he send this guy with this story?

Charli thinks for a while.

CHARLI
But if you remember, we also agreed that if I met him in Heaven, he must be dead.

JODEE
You were there and you came back, didn’t you? Why not him?

CHARLI
But why does he remember it all and I don’t?

JODEE
Hey, I don’t have all the answers! I’m just trying to help here.

CHARLI
Yeah, I know.

JODEE
(beat)
So, what are you gonna do?

Charli turns the water off and grabs a towel.

CHARLI
(firmly)
Nothing. I’m gonna forget all about this and get on with my life.

INT. LOU’S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The party is still going on. Charli dances close, having fun with Brad. By the buffet, JoDee chats with Kenny, keeping an eye on Charli.

Outside, Faith stares at Charli through the window, thoughtful. Her eyes start to tear up.
Faith turns away from the window and makes her phone materialize.

\[
\text{FAITH} \\
\text{(on the phone)} \\
\text{Sariel? We have to talk.}
\]

The party goes on. Charli and Brad are dancing to a slow dance. She leans her head on his shoulder. He slides his hand down and cups her ass. She raises her head, then puts it back on his shoulder. He gently caresses her ass. She lets him.

Faith and Sariel stand in a cow pasture, in front of ten graffiti-covered cars, some half-buried, nose-down in the ground.

\[
\text{FAITH} \\
\text{(Stressed)} \\
\text{I can't do this anymore Sariel.}
\]

\[
\text{SARIEL} \\
\text{I know you're tormented Faith, but your torment is a sacrifice you have to make.}
\]

\[
\text{FAITH} \\
\text{I can't do it. I can't survive the emotional turmoil. I've finally had to admit it to myself.} \\
\text{(beat) I love him Sariel.} \\
\text{(she starts to cry) I haven't felt romantic love since I lived, and even then it was nothing even close to this. I don't know how to deal with it.} \\
\text{(beat) I can't let Charli have him. I'd kill her first.} \\
\text{(a desperate howl) Ohhhh Did I just say that? Did you hear me say that?} \\
\text{(beat) What a horrible thing for me to even think, never mind actually say, but it's how I feel! Ohhhh I'm so ashamed.}
\]
What kind of an angel am I? I don't deserve to even lie at His feet. How can I even hope to represent Him? I'm falling, Sariel, I know it! God forgive me.

SARIEL
He won't you know.

FAITH
I know, I know, but what can I do? I love him so much, and I hate myself.

(crying)
I need guidance Sariel, please. Please help me.

SARIEL
No one can help you Faith. Only you can help yourself. You know this is an absolutely unacceptable and unforgivable situation. You must find the strength and the discipline within you to distance yourself from your emotions. Separate yourself from your feelings for Thomas. See him for what he is, just another case, and treat him that way. Become clinical, even mercenary if you must, but do what it takes to complete your mission. Believe in yourself Faith, in your strength and your devotion. Suffer for Him, and you will free yourself.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas is lying on the bed, hands under his head, staring at the ceiling. Faith enters the room.

FAITH
(sweet)
Hi Thomas.

He doesn’t answer.

FAITH
Thomas, I’m sincerely sorry.

(beat)
I mean it. I’ve come to realize that for me this should be just another mission. For you it’s so much more.
I should have made some better choices, been more sensitive.
(she gently sits on the bed by him)
But it’s wasn’t a lie when I told you I wanted to protect you Thomas.
Human beings are so fragile, so emotional. Especially you.

Thomas looks at her.

FAITH (cont’d)
And you’ve stirred up feelings in me I forgot I had.
(beat)
Can I lie down beside you please?

Thomas nods. She lays down by him, her head on his arm, her hair almost touching his lips.

FAITH
(quietly afraid)
You know it’s totally unacceptable for angels to fall in love with human beings. That’s why I’ve been fighting these feelings. But the closer we get to the deadline, the more afraid I get.
(with difficulty)
Afraid of losing you, to Charli.

Thomas can smell her hair. He closes his eyes and inhales deeply.

FAITH
Something tells me that you might have feelings for me too. I can hear your heart beating hard in your chest.
(she turns to face him)
Am I wrong, Thomas?

Their faces are very close. Faith puts her hand on Thomas’ cheek and forces him to look at her. Their lips are very close.
FAITH
(whispering)
I’ll make you forget all this,
Thomas. Your troubles will be
over. No more pain.

Their lips are almost touching --
Closer --
CLOSER --

FAITH
No more tears.

She caresses his face. Thomas closes his eyes again. Her
lips touch his and they kiss. A long kiss that begins
softly and builds to more and more passion.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ROOM - DAY

Thomas is awakened by a ray of sun through the window.
Faith is naked, covers on, lying beside him, up on her
elbow, staring at him. As he turns to her, she kisses him
on the cheek.

FAITH
Morning Thomas.

THOMAS
(feeling good)
‘morning.

FAITH
Did you sleep well?

THOMAS
Like a baby.

He gets closer to her and is about to kiss her but Faith
avoids his kiss and gets up.

FAITH
Thank you for last night.

THOMAS
(a bit taken aback)
No, thank you.
(recovering)
I’ve never had anyone make love
to me like that. It was-- divine.
(sighs, long beat)
How ‘bout some breakfast? I’m
starving.
JoDee is having a huge breakfast in the kitchen. Charli enters, woozy, half-asleep, holding her robe closed.

CHARLI
‘morning.

JODEE
Hey! Up already? You were really rockin’ last night.

CHARLI
I guess.
(beat)
I’ve got a date tonight, with Brad. Did you see how cute his little round ass is?

JODEE
I sure saw you drinking a lot more than you should.

Charli starts to fix her breakfast.

CHARLI
Well, to Hell with my ex dull life.
(yawning)
I need some coffee.

JODEE
What about that guy from last night, Thomas? He looked pretty sincere to me.

CHARLI
Told you, he’s just some kind of schizo. No one can come back from the dead.

JODEE
But -- Everything you told me. Your dream? The face in the crowd?

CHARLI
It’s just a dream JoDee, not a memory. You can’t build a life on a dream.

JoDee stays silent for a short while, staring at Charli. She sighs.

JODEE
Do me a favour Charli. Just talk to the guy. Why don’t you invite him to the concert on New Year’s Eve?
Charli stares at her, confused.

JOdee
Oh, sorry, I forgot to tell you.
We’re all invited to a Country
music gig on Saturday night.
Invite him along and spend the
evening with him. You’ll get to
find out if he really is a schizo.

Charli
Aw, c’mon JoDee.

JOdee
What have you got to lose? If he
turns out to be a fruitcake, you
can forget about him.

Charli
I don’t even know where to find him?

JOdee
Holiday Inn.

Charli
(thinking)
I don’t know.

JOdee
(with a smile)
You know you say that a lot.

Charli
(irritated)
Well a lot of the time I don’t
know!

JOdee
Seriously. Think about this.
Think about what you told me,
think about what you felt when
you saw him.

Charli reflects for a moment. JoDee is about to crack her
knuckles. Charli frowns and JoDee freezes.

Charli
Holiday Inn?

JOdee
His name is Thomas Hanson.

Charli
(resigned)
Yeah. That much I remember.
(beat)
Got any aspirin?
EXT. HOLIDAY INN - TERRACE - DAY

Faith is on her phone on the hotel terrace, walking around. She wears sunglasses.

FAITH
(on her phone)
He still has three days left but there’s no hope now. She doesn’t remember him at all, so he’s ready to come back.
(beat)
Me? I’m fine. I’m just playing this game to set him up better, that’s all. But I can’t really see--
(beat)
What do you mean I’ve changed? So maybe I’m trying to enjoy a little of my stay while I’m here. OK, maybe a little more than I thought, so what?!
(beat)
Yes. Why not? Who wouldn’t? I’m an angel, not a saint. Listen, if you really feel that your confidence in me has been compromised then tell me straight up.
(beat)
Have I ever let you down before? Look, I’ve been doing this for over a hundred and fifty years and how many complaints have you had? Huh? Tell me!
(beat)
I lied to him, so what? OK, so let’s just say, I sinned by omission. I had to. It’s part of my plan.
(beat)
I know, it’s my fault that he escaped.
(beat)
Fine, I’ll risk it. I’m just doing my job!

She hangs up, furious.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - RESTAURANT - DAY

Faith enters the restaurant where Thomas sits at a table having a large breakfast. As she enters, Thomas stares at her with new, loving eyes. Then he notices that she is upset. His expression changes.
(worried)

What?

Faith tries to smile.

Nothing. I’m fine.

Thomas doesn’t believe her.

Let’s just say, they’re getting a little pushy about me bringing you back.

Did you tell them that I’m finally OK with it?

Yes. But, they’re still in kind of a hurry.

(continues to eat)

Why, what’s the big rush?

They’re afraid you’ll change your mind again.

And what about us being together up there?

Faith stares straight into his eyes.

(lying)

They’re fine with it.

Well then why would I change my mind?

Thomas focuses again on his meal. Faith glances upward and freezes. She sees Charli entering the restaurant and scanning the room. Thomas has his back to Charli.

Faith quickly gets behind him, trying to block him from Charli’s view.

You seem stressed Thomas. Let me try to relieve some of that tension.
She starts to massage his shoulders. Thomas appreciates this and closes his eyes. Charli has spotted them and seen this apparent intimacy. She approaches them.

CHARLI
So why do I bother?

Thomas opens his eyes, but Faith keeps on massaging him.

THOMAS
(embarrassed)
Oh -- No!

He manages to get away from Faith.

CHARLI
(to Thomas)
I came by to give you a chance. I was going to invite you out, but I see you’ve got better things to do.

Thomas gives Faith a dark look.

THOMAS
But Charli, she’s only --

Thomas does not know what to say.

CHARLI
(frowning)
Yeah? Only what?

THOMAS
(stuttering)
She’s -- a friend of mine. My best friend. She helped me find you.

FAITH
(not helping)
That’s right. I’m his best friend.

CHARLI
(shaking her head)
This is pathetic. Look, I don’t know who you are, but if you came such a long way to find me like you say, you better just turn right around and get back to wherever it is you came from. There’s sure as hell nothing for you here!

Upset, she rushes out of the restaurant. Thomas gets up to follow her, but Faith grabs his arm and holds him back.

THOMAS
(struggling)
Let go of me!
He tries to break free, but she holds on tight.

   FAITH
   Didn’t you hear her? You’re wasting your time.

   THOMAS
   Hey, you’re playing with my life here?

   FAITH
   (letting go)
   Fine go.

Thomas stares at her.

   THOMAS
   (realizing)
   I don’t believe it! You’re jealous!

   FAITH
   What are you talking about?

She sits.

   THOMAS
   You’re jealous!

Everybody in the restaurant stares at them.

   FAITH
   I’m not jealous Thomas! I’m just trying to protect you!

   THOMAS
   Protect me?! Protect me from what?! My own happiness?!

   FAITH
   So what we did last night, that doesn’t mean anything to you.

   THOMAS
   What YOU did!

   FAITH
   You betrayed her last night Thomas, not me.

Thomas turns pale as he finally realizes the ramifications of what he did. It’s like a spell has been broken. He sighs, turns, and heads for the restaurant exit where he bumps into JoDee.
THOMAS
(in a flurry)
Where is she? I have to talk to her!

JOdee
Not now Thomas. She’s too upset. Trust me, I’m her best friend. Nobody knows her better.

Thomas sighs.

THOMAS
Can we talk?

JOdee
(indicates the terrace)
Step out to my office.

They step outside.

EXT. HOLIDAY INN - TERRACE - DAY

Thomas and JoDee stand on the terrace.

JOdee
So give it to me straight. Did Scott send you?

THOMAS
What?

JOdee
(beat)
OK, guess not.
(sigh)
Look, I’m not supposed to talk to you. Charli would kill me if she knew. But if you really are who I think you are, maybe I can do something to work this out. Now, you said you met her in Heaven?

THOMAS
Yes. You must think I’m a psycho.

JoDee cannot help smiling.

JOdee
That’s sure what Charli thinks.

Thomas sighs.
THOMAS
It’s the truth though.
(beat)
A few days ago, I almost died --

INT. HOLIDAY INN – RESTAURANT
Sariel is seated at the table with Faith.

FAITH
You didn’t have to come back down here again.

SARIEL
Well you seemed very upset when we spoke just now.

FAITH
I am upset! What exactly is it that you’re all so worried about?

SARIEL
We’re angels Faith. We have a moral code. And you’re dangerously close to crossing the line.

FAITH
I’m perfectly aware of the code thank you, and I’m aware of how close I am to “the line”, as you call it.

SARIEL
I fear for you.

FAITH
I know, and I appreciate it, but everything’s under control. OK?

Sariel does not appear to be convinced.

EXT. HOLIDAY INN – TERRACE
Thomas and Jodee are still talking.

THOMAS
-- and then she disappeared into the mist.
JODEE
Man, your story’s almost as whack as Charli’s. She says she can remember some of it, but it’s mostly a blur, but the one thing she does remember is that just before this man vanished, she tried to say --

THOMAS
(interrupting)
-- “thank you”.

JODEE
That’s right!

JoDee is dumbfounded.

JODEE
(excited)
So, it is you. Wow! You’re the real deal.
(beat)
Look, I think Charli’s just a little scared right now. Who wouldn’t be?
(she cracks her knuckles)
So listen. There’s something I need to share with you.

THOMAS
OK, I’m listening.

JODEE
OK, first off, Charli and I really are like sisters. We’ve been best friends since we were kids. To tell you the truth, I’m closer to Charli than I am to my real sister. So we’ve been watching out for each other for a long time. I even tried to convince her not to marry Scott. I don’t like him, never have. Couldn’t stand the way he treated her, like she was his pet or something. I guess he loves her, in his own way, but you wouldn’t believe the number of times I’ve seen her really sad, even tormented in that marriage. I’ve never told anyone this, not even Charli, but that marriage is a big reason I’ve always been so reluctant to commit to a relationship.

THOMAS
So why would Charli stay with Scott for so long? Is she that stubborn?
JODEE
She can be, but this is more like, determined. I warned her not to marry Scott, but she was just so determined to make it work.

THOMAS
But in the end, it didn’t work.

JODEE
So it seems. Who’d a thunk, huh? I guess we’ve got a few culprits to thank for that. The accident for one, the seven year itch for another, and who knows, maybe even her time up there with you.

THOMAS
Here’s hoping.

JODEE
Look, you seem like a decent enough guy, and God knows Charli could finally use a decent guy in her life, but I’m still watching out for her and I don’t want her to get hurt again, especially now, when she’s so vulnerable.

THOMAS
Oh no, JoDee. No. Believe me, please. I was there. I shared that experience with her. I know how I felt, and what’s more, I know how she felt. This is something beyond mortality, it’s Heaven sent, really. I wouldn’t have come this far and gone through all this grief unless I knew it was worth a try. Even if I failed, I had to try. If Charli will have me, I’ll commit every part of my life to her.

JODEE
(smiling)
That’s pretty much what I was hoping to hear.

THOMAS
Thanks JoDee. I’ll be there.
JoDee puts her hand on his arm.

JODEE
You’re welcome. Say, where’d you say you were from anyway, that you had to come so far?

THOMAS
Toronto.

JoDee needs more.

THOMAS
Canada?

JODEE
Canada!? Damn you did come a long way. I’m impressed Thomas. That’s very romantic.

(beat)
We don’t get a whole lot of Canadians around these parts. Welcome to Texas. I hope you have a wonderful stay.

THOMAS
(Southern accent)
Well I do thank ya kindly ma’am. Y’all might just be able ta make that happen.

JODEE
(laughing)
We’ll give it our best shot.

She kisses him on the cheek and rapidly steps off of the terrace.

THOMAS
(loses his accent, under his breath to himself)
Probably my last shot.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - RECEPTION - DAY

On his way back, Thomas passes the reception desk. The receptionist calls him.

RECEPTIONIST
Mister Hanson?

Thomas steps over to the counter.

THOMAS
Yes?
RECEPTIONIST
You forgot this last night in the lounge.

He hands Thomas his sketchbook.

THOMAS
Last night?

RECEPTIONIST
Yes sir. The waiter picked it up after you left.

THOMAS
(bewildered)
But -- I spent the whole night --

RECEPTIONIST
He told me you spent most of the night drawing in the lounge and you left around three.

Thomas takes the sketchbook and looks through it.

THOMAS
(Furious)
Thank you, thank you very much.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - RESTAURANT - DAY

Faith sees Thomas coming to her. She notices that he’s mad.

THOMAS
We have to talk.

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ROOM - DAY

Thomas lets Faith enter the room and closes the door behind him.

FAITH
What’s wrong Thomas?

THOMAS
What the fuck have you done to me this time?!

Faith stares at him curiously.
THOMAS
According to the front desk, I spent most of last night drawing in the lounge. I left this.
   (he throws the sketchbook on the bed)
What’s the deal?

FAITH
There’s no “deal”, Thomas. We made love, that’s all. He must be mistaken.

THOMAS
Oh cut the crap Faith! It’s full of drawings I don’t remember! My drawings!
   (he tries to calm down)
Did you cast some kind of spell on me?

She is about to speak.

THOMAS
And no bullshit this time!

 Faith is stuck.

FLASH-BACK – HOLIDAY INN – ROOM – NIGHT

FAITH (V.O.)
   (sweet)
Last night, I tried to seduce you.

Faith is laying by Thomas and turns her head to him. Their faces are very close. Faith puts her hand on Thomas’ cheek and forces him to look at her. Their lips are getting closer.

FAITH
   (whispering)
I’ll make you forget all this, Thomas. You’ll know no more troubles. No more pain.

Their lips are almost touching -- CLOSER

FAITH
No more tears.

She caresses his face.

FAITH (V.O.)
Only, it didn’t work.
At the very moment they are going to kiss, Thomas gets up, grabs his sketchbook from the table, and steps out of the room.

END OF FLASHBACK:

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ROOM - DAY

FAITH
You left with your sketchbook and didn’t come back until early this morning.
(she lowers her eyes)
I set it all up.

Thomas stares at her, eyes very angry.

FAITH
I’m so sorry, Thomas.

She reaches her hand out to him but does not dare to touch him.

THOMAS
And how do you explain my waking up this morning thinking I’d just had the most incredible night of my life?

FAITH
What you said. It was a spell, of sorts, like a waking dream. It’s called a dream weave. We use them when we’re desperate. I told you about them over your Crawfish Etouffee in Baton Rouge, remember?
(beat)
I wasn’t trying to hurt you, Thomas.
I love you,
(beat)
but it’s obvious to me now that your love for Charli is very real. What can I do to make it up to you? Tell me. I’ll do anything.
(beat)
Anything.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CIVIC CENTER - NIGHT

A large and crowded concert hall. On stage, a band plays Country music. The audience jumps around to the music and cheers. It’s a frantic concert atmosphere.
In the VIP area, several people listen to the music, drinking champagne or dancing. Lou is there, talking to her husband Tim Spears. Charli holds Brad’s arm. She looks glad to be with him. They happily clink their champagne glasses.

JoDee is on her own, looking nervous. She looks as if she is expecting someone. She’s cracking her knuckles again.

As the band ends their song, the audience cheers.

Brad leans over to Charli’s ear and says something. Charli laughs like a little girl. She speaks into his ear and they laugh together, drinking.

Charli holds her glass up in a cheers to JoDee who answers by lifting her glass with a smile. She takes a peek at her watch impatiently. Then she looks up. She smiles. Thomas has just entered the VIP area, followed by Faith. She wears her long black coat.

On stage, a female Country singer starts a slow song.

Charli is about to dance with Brad when JoDee pats on her shoulder and nods towards Thomas. When she sees him, Charli freezes, angry.

JoDee speaks into Charli’s ear. Exasperated, Charli says a word to Brad and steps over to Thomas, leaving Brad by himself.

CHARLI
What the hell are you two doing here? Who invited you?

Thomas turns his head to JoDee who smiles at them and shrugs her shoulders.

CHARLI
What do you want?

THOMAS
Just one dance with you.

CHARLI
(nodding toward Faith)
What about her?

FAITH
Please Charli, you don’t have to worry about me.

CHARLI
One dance?

He nods.
Then you’ll leave?

If that’s still what you want.

Then you’ll leave.

Thomas nods.

Okay.

They come together tentatively and begin to dance. The rest of the group watches them. Brad is perturbed, but JoDee calms him down.

Why do you keep harassing me?

You really don’t remember anything, do you?

(sarcastic)

What’s there to remember, being dead?

When we met.

No.

Not even when you tried to say “thank you” to me?

Charli turns to JoDee, furious.

I can’t believe she told you that. I’m gonna --

(interrupting)

She didn’t tell me, Charli. I was there. It was me that you said thank you to.

He turns to Faith and simply nods. Faith closes her eyes and concentrates on them. As if she were waking up from a dream, Charli stares at Thomas with different eyes.
CHARLI
It was you? The man on the escalator?

THOMAS
(smiling)
Yes, Charli.

CHARLI
It was all so fuzzy in my head, but it’s clear now. How did you find me?

THOMAS
Let’s just say I had an angel come down to give me a hand.
(he indicates Faith)
But it hasn’t been easy.

CHARLI
(turning to Faith)
You mean, she’s an --?

THOMAS
(smiling)
Yes, she is. And she just gave you back your memory.

Suddenly, Charli stiffens. She pushes Thomas back with some kind of fear in her eyes.

CHARLI
No, it can’t be! It’s not possible! I never --

JoDee stares at them, floored by Charli’s reaction.

CHARLI
(to Thomas)
No, I didn’t die! We never met!
You’re a liar! It was just a bad dream!

She starts to sob. Thomas approaches her, his arms out to try to comfort her, but she pushes him away roughly.

CHARLI
NO! GET AWAY FROM ME!!

Jodee and Brad step forward to help her.

CHARLI
ALL OF YOU, GET AWAY FROM ME!!

They all freeze. Charli turns and races out of the VIP area and heads for the exit.

Thomas does not know what to do anymore. He turns to Faith.
FAITH  
(to Thomas)  
Go after her, quick!

Without a second thought, Thomas chases after her.

127 INT. CIVIC CENTER - HALLWAYS - NIGHT  

Through the hallways, out of breath, Thomas runs, searching everywhere, but Charli is nowhere to be seen. On his way, he bumps into several people. Suddenly, at the end of one hallway, he sees her making her way outside.

128 EXT. CIVIC CENTER - NIGHT  

It is pouring rain. Thomas rushes out. As soon as he steps out, he is instantly soaked and he stops. He sees Charli running into the parking lot.

THOMAS  
Charli!!

But the thundering rain drowns out his voice. Thomas starts running after her again.

129 EXT. CIVIC CENTER - PARKING LOT - NIGHT  

A game of hide-and-seek starts in the parking lot. Thomas stops, lost, scanning everywhere. Charli could be behind any of these cars.

THOMAS  
CHARLI!!

He feels a presence behind him. He turns and sees Faith. In the pouring rain, somehow she is not wet. She slowly points her finger in a direction and Thomas follows it. Charli is there, running down the road in the rain.

130 EXT. AMARILLO STREET - NIGHT  

Blinded by the rain and out of breath, Charli runs straight ahead. She is still crying, on the edge of a nervous breakdown. A few feet behind her, Thomas is faster, catching up to her.

THOMAS  
Charli!! Stop, please!
Charli reaches an intersection and runs into it. She doesn’t see a pickup truck hurtling toward her. At the very last moment, Thomas grabs her from behind and pulls her into his arms and safety.

The pickup truck drives on, horn blaring at her, and disappears into the rainy night. Sobbing, Charli cuddles up against Thomas and holds him tight.

THOMAS
(out of breath)
Are you okay?

Charli catches her breath, trembling. Sobbing and panting, she collects herself a little.

CHARLI
That’s the second time you’ve saved my life.

THOMAS
The second time?

CHARLI
The first time was when we were up there. My heart started beating again the moment I saw you. That’s why I came back to life. That’s why I tried to say thank you.

THOMAS
Why did you run away?

CHARLI
I don’t know. I was scared. I guess I panicked. All this seems too crazy, and too good to be true.

Thomas hugs her.

THOMAS
Now that I’ve finally got you, I’m not letting you go, ever.

She hugs him back. Thomas turns and sees Faith. She smiles contentedly and tilts her head back. Huge white feathered wings grow out of her back. She tilts her head forward again, still smiling at Thomas and Charli. Thomas mouths the words “Thank you” to her.

She nods slightly and begins to flap her wings. She creates a great wind, blowing the rain around Thomas and Charli in a whirlwind as she begins to rise.
Thomas hugs Charli tighter and the two of them watch as Faith ascends into the heavens, eventually disappearing into the rain.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Thomas and Charli are seated together. Thomas seems comfortable flying. Charli is leafing through Thomas’ sketchbook, looking at the many wonderful drawings he has made of her.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek, then leans her head on his shoulder and continues to leaf through the book.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - BOURBON STREET - DAY

Faith is walking along the crowded street, just taking in the sights of her old stomping grounds. As she walks she passes many people, most of whom pass her by normally.

A few people however, stop dead in their tracks as they pass her and turn to watch her as she continues down the street. They know she's "special". Eventually they turn and continue on their way again.

Everyone else continues on in a perfectly normal fashion.

Then an old Black woman stops as she passes. She continues to watch Faith as she gets absorbed by the crowd and eventually disappears.

INT. TORONTO APARTMENT - NIGHT

A large apartment with bright white walls. The same Christmas song from the opening credits plays.

In a corner is Thomas’ large drawing board with a finished comic page.

Close-up on a series of framed pictures:
- Thomas and Charli at the Grand Canyon
- Thomas and Charli with Violet and George, standing and healthy
- Thomas and Charli on their wedding day with Linda and JoDee as bridesmaids
- Charli in a hospital bed holding a baby in her arms
- A printed comic book cover signed “Thomas Hanson”
Out the window the snow falls. Thomas and Charli are decorating a huge Christmas tree. Thomas stands on a footstool. He places garlands on the tree, while Charli hangs glass balls.

CHARLI
This will be another unforgettable Christmas Thomas. It’s still amazing to me that there’s actually snow falling here. That just doesn’t happen in Louisiana.

THOMAS
(chuckles)
This is true.

CHARLI
Is Linda still coming over tonight?

THOMAS
Yes she is, with her new girlfriend. By the way, your dad called. They’re expecting us for New Year’s Eve.

LITTLE FAITH, a four-year old little girl, with blonde curly hair, enters the living room. She wears red pajamas and a Christmas hat with moose horns.

LITTLE FAITH
Can I do some too?

THOMAS
Sure sweetie. See that star in the box?

She looks, sees it and nods.

THOMAS
Give it to mommy honey.

She picks up the star and brings it to Charli.

CHARLI
What a good girl. Can you put it on the tree?

Little Faith finds a spot on the tree and hangs the star.

CHARLI
Clever girl.
(she takes some candy canes out of a box)
Find another one now and put it up too.

Little Faith starts rummaging through a box. She takes out a large beautiful angel.
LITTLE FAITH
This one’s my favorite daddy.

THOMAS
Really? Why honey?

LITTLE FAITH
Because it looks like the lady.

THOMAS
What lady?

LITTLE FAITH
The lady I see in my sleep. She talks to me. Her name is Faith too.

Thomas and Charli exchange a surprised look.

LITTLE FAITH
Did you name me after her mommy?

CHARLI
Yes darling.

Thomas steps down off of the footstool, kneels by the girls and takes Little Faith in his arms.

LITTLE FAITH
She told me to wish you a Merry Christmas.

She shows the angel to Thomas. He realizes then that the angel— in fact has — FAITH’S FACE. Surprised he shows it to Charli who also sees the resemblance and is surprised. He then holds the angel up to face Little Faith.

THOMAS
Do you want to wish her a Merry Christmas too?

LITTLE FAITH
Yes daddy.

Charli joins them in a group hug. They look at the angel.

THOMAS, CHARLI & LITTLE FAITH
(together to the angel)
Merry Christmas Faith!

At this moment, in response, all of the lights on the tree brighten.

LITTLE FAITH
Oh mommy, daddy, look.
(to the angel)
Thank you Faith.
THOMAS
(Looking at Charli and then at the angel)
Yes, thank you Faith.

Thomas and Charli look at each other again. Charli smiles. The Christmas tree lights fade back to normal.

FADE OUT:

THE END

ROLL CREDITS